France in Rhodesia: French policy and perceptions throughout the era of decolonisation

Joanna Warson

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Portsmouth

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Abstract

This thesis analyses French policies towards and perceptions of the British colony of Rhodesia, from the immediate aftermath of the Second World War up until the territory’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980. Its main objective is to challenge notions of exceptionality associated with Franco-African relations, by investigating French engagement with a region outside of its traditional sphere of African influence.

The first two chapters explore the development of Franco-Rhodesian relations in the eighteen years following the establishment of a French Consulate in Salisbury in 1947. Chapter One examines the foreign policy mind-set that underpinned French engagement with Rhodesia at this time, whilst Chapter Two addresses how this mind-set operated in practice. The remaining three chapters explore the evolution of France’s presence in this British colony in the fourteen and a half years following the white settlers’ Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Chapter Three sets out the particularities of the post-1965 context, in terms of France’s foreign policy agenda and the situation on the ground in Central Southern Anglophone Africa. Chapter Four analyses how the policies of state and non-state French actors were implemented in Rhodesia after 1965, and Chapter Five assesses the impact of these policies for France’s relations with Africa, Britain and the United States, as well as for the end of European rule in Rhodesia.

This thesis argues that France’s African vision began to expand to include Anglophone Africa, not in the post-colonial or post-Cold War eras, but immediately following the Second World War, thus challenging the view that France was solely concerned with its own African Empire at this time. Throughout, Rhodesia was intertwined with France’s policies towards Francophone Africa in terms of motivations, methods and men. This, in turn, had far reaching consequences for France’s presence on the African continent, its relationship with “les Anglo-Saxons” and the course of Rhodesian decolonisation.
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Author’s declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Direction Afrique-Levant, MAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOF</td>
<td>Afrique Occidentale Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Direction des Affaires Politiques, MAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELC</td>
<td>Bureau pour l’Enseignement de la Langue et de la Civilisation Française à l’Etranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF</td>
<td>Central African Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTA</td>
<td>Commission de Coopération Technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>Compagnie Française des Pétroles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNCE</td>
<td>Centre National du Commerce Extérieur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Colonial Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Relations Office</td>
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<td>CSC</td>
<td>Cold Storage Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>Service du Chiffre et des Transmissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAM</td>
<td>Direction des Affaires Africaines et Malgaches, MAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>Dominion Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREE</td>
<td>Direction des Relations Economiques Extérieures, MAEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDC</td>
<td>European Defence Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDF</td>
<td>Electricité de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EF</td>
<td>Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières, MAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIDES</td>
<td>Fonds d’Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FISB</td>
<td>Federal Intelligence Security Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Libération National, Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAE</td>
<td>Ministère des Affaires Etrangères</td>
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<td>MAEF</td>
<td>Ministère des Affaires Economiques et Financières</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOCI</td>
<td>Moniteur Officiel du Commerce International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOD</td>
<td>French Ministry of Defence/ Ministère de la Défense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOF</td>
<td>Ministry of Overseas France/ Ministère de la France d’Outre-Mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>National Party, South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organisation of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCAM</td>
<td>Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFEMA</td>
<td>Office Français d’Exportation de Matériel Aéronautique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONU</td>
<td>Organisation des Nations Unies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Parti Communiste Français</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Direction des Relations Culturelles et Techniques, MAE</td>
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<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Rassemblement Démocratique, France</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Rassemblement Démocratique Africaine</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECAMP</td>
<td>Renforcement des Capacités Africaines au Maintien de la Paix</td>
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RF - Rhodesian Front
RhAF - Rhodesian Air Force
RIO - Rhodesian Information Office
RRAF - Rhodesian Royal Air Force
SAD - Southern African Department, FCO
SADC - Southern African Development Community
SCAC - Société Commerciale d’Affrètements et de Combustibles
SDECE - Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage
SEITA - Service d’Exploitation Industrielle des Tabacs et des Allumettes
SGG - Séretariat Général du Gouvernement, France
SI - Service d’Information du Consulat Général de France en Afrique Centrale Britannique
SUCDEN - Sucres et Denrées
TRANSACO - Compagnie Française de Transactions Internationales
UAT - Union Aéromaritime de Transports
UC - Union Carbide
UDI - Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN - United Nations
UNGA - United Nations General Assembly
UNSC - United Nations Security Council
UNSCSC - United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee
UTA - Union des Transports Aériens
WCAD - West and Central Africa Department, FCO
WED - Western European Department, FCO

Archival Abbreviations

Archives
AD - Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes
AMAE - Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
AN - Archives Nationales, Paris
ANOM - Archives Nationale d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence
BL - Bodleian Library, Oxford
CL - Cory Library, Grahamstown
TNA - The National Archives, London

Collections and file names
CPA – Conservative Party Archives
FM - Fonds ministériels
GGM - Gouvernement Général de Madagascar
LCC – Leader’s Consultative Committee
MAD - Fonds Territoriaux, Madagascar
PB - Possessions Britanniques
RGCCM - Rhodesian Government Cabinet Minutes and Memoranda
RGCM - Rhodesian Government Cabinet Minutes
SC - Smith Collection
SEAB - Sud-Est Africain Britannique
WP - Welensky Papers
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2012


‘Une histoire croisée: Britain, France and the decolonization of Rhodesia’, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Postgraduate Study Day, University of Portsmouth, 16 May 2012
‘Une histoire croisée: Britain, France and the decolonization of Rhodesia’, Decolonization Workshop, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 9 March 2012

2011
‘France in Rhodesia: an alternative account of France’s African policy’, Francophone Africa Symposium, University of Portsmouth, 16 November 2011

‘Plus ça change, plus c’est le même chose?: The legacy of the 4th Republic in De Gaulle’s Anglophone African policy’, Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France Annual Conference, University of Stirling, 1-3 September 2011


‘Inside and outside empire: Britain, France and the Rhodesian problem, 1965-1969’, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Postgraduate Study Day, University of Portsmouth, 18 May 2011

‘France’s Rhodesian Policy: Pride or Prejudice?’, Association des Études Françaises et Francophones en Irlande Postgraduate Symposium, University College, Cork, 1 April 2011

2010
‘Britain, France and the Rhodesian Problem, 1964-1969’, “Year of Africa” Conference, University of Portsmouth, 6-7 September 2010
Introduction

France and Francophone Africa: an exceptional relationship?

France’s relationship with Francophone Africa is frequently represented as exceptional. At the heart of this discourse of exceptionality lies an ingrained belief, which can be traced back to 1789, that France is predestined to Great Power status, simply because it is France (Chafer, 2008, p.38; Keiger, 2001, p.18). According to this view, the French language and culture, legal and administrative practices, and moral values are superior (Martin, 1985, pp.189-190). In light of this, it is France’s duty, its vocation, its mission, to spread French civilisation beyond the “Hexagone” (Bourmaud, 2000). This vision of France’s world role was expressed first during the Revolutionary era, seen for example in François Antoine de Boissy d’Anglas’s claim in 1794 that “There can only be one right way of administering: and if we have found it for European countries, why should [the colonies] be deprived of it?” (cited in Cumming, 2005b, p.233). In the nineteenth century, Victor Hugo recapitulated this view when he claimed that, “Without France the world feels alone” (cited in Bourmaud, 2000).

In the late nineteenth century, the second wave of European colonial expansion, and especially the “Scramble for Africa”, presented France with a particular opportunity to act upon these imperatives, as universalist
Republican values intersected with the growing momentum for European expansionism. France’s presence on the African continent was founded, therefore, on an ingrained belief in the unparalleled superiority of France in moral, cultural, social and scientific spheres (Conklin, 1997, p.1-3). This, in turn, fuelled a uniquely French version of the European civilising mission, which, in contrast to France’s European counterparts, was elevated to the status of imperial discourse (Conklin, 1997, p.1) and became an entrenched strand of the collective French mentality (Keiger, 2001, p.19). The French mission civilisatrice was also distinctive due to its emphasis on revolutionary ideals, its advocacy (in official discourse at least) of the application of direct rule, its belief that the colonies should be assimilated into a Greater French Republic and, above all else, its staunch commitment to the diffusion of the French language and, more broadly, the rayonnement of France’s superior civilisation (Cumming, 2005b, p.234). The exceptionality of the French presence in Africa, therefore, was founded upon the belief that “la France est exceptionnelle par nature” (Guburt and Saint-Martin, 2003, p.162, cited in Drake, 2004).

This discourse of uniqueness dominates scholarly accounts of Franco-African relations in the post-colonial period. Adjectives commonly used to describe the interaction between France and its former colonies in Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF) and Afrique Equatoriale Française (AEF) after 1960 include ‘exceptionalist’ (Bourmaud, 2003, p.14), ‘distinctive’ (Cumming, 2013, p.26), ‘particular’ (Médard, 1997, p.22), ‘special’ (Charbonneau, 2008, p.2) and ‘unique’ (Golan, 1981, p.3). These
characterisations centre on the enduring nature of France’s relations with its former African dependencies after decolonisation, where many institutional structures from the colonial period remained in place after the end of formal French rule. The franc zone, whereby the currency in Francophone Africa was tied to the French franc at a fixed rate, was maintained, thus permitting the French government to exercise considerable influence over economic and budgetary policies, whilst the Ministry of Cooperation was founded as a direct successor to the Ministry of Overseas France (MOF) and solely responsible for Francophone Africa. Numerous cultural, technical and military cooperation agreements served to reinforce the bond between Francophone Africa and its former colonial rulers in Paris, and acted as a prerequisite for France’s continued interventionism in the region. In addition, non-institutional apparatus, also established during the colonial period – notably the appropriation of Franco-African relations by the French President, who was advised by a *cellule africaine*, with little or no accountability to Parliament or civil society, and the close, personal friendships between the directors of France’s African policy at the Elysée and members of the Francophone African political élite – are also used to support arguments that stress the exceptionality of Franco-African relations after 1960 (Martin, 1995; Chafer, 2002a, p.346; Cumming, 2013, p.25). This system of relations is represented as a uniquely Francophone phenomenon, implemented by France solely in its former sub-Saharan colonies. As such, Médard (1997, p.23) has argued that relations between France and Francophone Africa were distinct from France’s relations with
the rest of the African continent, as well as France’s international relations as a whole.

Recent revisionist scholarship has begun to challenge this discourse of exceptionality. Much of this new work has centred on the shifts that took place in France’s approach to the African continent after the end of the Cold War (Chafer, 1992, p.47), the death of Houphouët-Boigny in 1993 – described by Martin (1995, p.1) as ‘a major diplomatic turning point’ due to the Ivorian President’s status as the last Francophone African leader with close personal relations to the French policy making élite – and the highly criticised role played by France during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 (Chafer, 2002a, pp.347-9). This, in turn, has led scholars to begin to apply ‘concepts of normalization and even disengagement’ to the study of Franco-African relations (Chafer, 2002a, p.343), emphasising, for example, the ‘multilateralization’ of French military policy towards Africa, seen in the replacement of old style, direct military interventions with action led by Renforcement des Capacités Africaines au Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP) (Chafer, 2002a, p.349; Charbonneau, 2008, p.50). The reduction in developmental aid allocated to Francophone Africa is cited as proof that French policy was being brought in line with international norms (Chafer, 2002a, p.352; Cumming, 2001, p.104), whilst the dissolution of the Ministry of Cooperation and the transfer of its responsibilities to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is identified as a signal of change to France’s approach to the African continent (Chafer, 2002a, p.353).
In addition, Chafer (2005, p.18) has described ‘a move away from the traditional pré carré as a privileged sphere of influence in Africa’ during the Chirac Presidency (1995-2007), evidenced by French interaction with non-Francophone African countries during this period. This shift is evident in the cultural sphere, with successful initiatives to make French the second language taught in schools in Nigeria as well as a working language for the eleven member states of Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Cumming, 2005b, p.246). Changes are also apparent in economic strategy, with French trade and capital investment redirected from Francophone Africa to other countries, including Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe (Martin, 1995, p.1). In a similar vein, Majumdar (2007, p.241) has documented how France was ‘keen to stretch out a hand to the former African colonies of other European powers, notably those of Britain’, by sending invitations to Anglophone African countries to attend the Franco-African summits.

Other scholars have proposed different timelines for France’s growing engagement with territories outside of its traditional sphere of influence. Torrent (2012, p.13), for example, identifies Louis de Guiringaud’s visit to Ghana in 1977 as marking ‘a radical change’ in France’s African policy, as the state actively began to promote contacts with Anglophone Africa. Alden (1996) and Bach (1980; 1982; 1990) have gone back further in time still. Bach’s studies of French policies towards Nigeria (1980; 1982) and South Africa (1990) begin in 1960 and 1963 respectively, indicating that France’s interest in these non-Francophone territories commenced almost
immediately after the independence of French West and Equatorial Africa. More generally, Alden (1996, p.12) has described France’s ambition to play a truly continental role in the years that followed the decolonisation of Francophone Africa by extending its influence into Anglophone and Lusophone Africa. The expansion of France’s African vision to include countries beyond France’s traditional sphere of influence is represented, therefore, as a post-colonial phenomenon.¹

However, over the past decade, a small number of historians have begun to explore France’s relations with non-French speaking Africa during the colonial period. Keese (2007b), for example, has explored French policies towards and perceptions of Lusophone Africa between 1930 and 1961, whilst Stanley (2004), Moukambi (2008) and Konieczna (2009) all examine Franco-South African relations in the post-war period, although the former two are unpublished doctoral theses, and the latter is only available in the French language. This, in turn, demonstrates French interest in and engagement with regions of Africa outside of the French colonial domain prior to the independence of AOF and AEF. However, with the exception of the studies noted above, there remains very little work that explores France’s participation in parts of the African continent outside of its traditional sphere of influence in the late colonial period. This neglect is especially acute with regards to Anglophone Africa where, despite studies of Anglo-French relations in the context of West Africa (Michel, 1983;

¹ In this instance, the post-colonial period is taken to mean the years following the independence of Francophone sub-Saharan Africa in 1960. The term “post-colonial”, however, is highly problematic especially as, in contrast to French West and Equatorial Africa, the territory under investigation - Rhodesia - in this thesis remained a British colony throughout the period in question.
Kent, 1992), French North Africa (Thomas, 2000) and the Middle East (Barr, 2011), there has been no systematic analysis of France’s direct engagement with Britain’s African Empire. It is the aim of this research, therefore, to build upon this existing research and begin the task of filling in this gap in the historiography, by analysing French policies towards and perceptions of Southern Rhodesia from the immediate aftermath of the Second World War up until this British colony’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980. In so doing, it will be possible to obtain a more nuanced understanding of France’s presence on the African continent during the late colonial era and throughout the period of decolonisation.

Why Rhodesia?²

This project was originally envisaged as a study of French relations with Anglophone Africa throughout the transition to independence on the African continent. However, it quickly became apparent that such an investigation was far too broad for a doctoral thesis of 80,000 words, particularly following the unanticipated discovery of vast quantities of archival material relating to Franco-Rhodesian relations prior to 1960 in the Archives Diplomatiques in Nantes and the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères at La Courneuve in Paris. Thus, the decision was made to focus on one case study, but over a broad temporal period, permitting this

² ‘Rhodesia’ officially became ‘Southern Rhodesia’ in 1901. From 1953 until 1963, Southern Rhodesia was a member of the Central African Federation with its British-ruled neighbours of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi). In 1965, following the break-up of the Federation and UDI, the territory reverted to its original name, Rhodesia. For simplicity in this discussion, the term ‘Rhodesia’ will be used to refer to the country known today as Zimbabwe. When considering alongside its neighbour, Northern Rhodesia, the territory will be distinguished as Southern Rhodesia.
research to transcend the divide between the colonial and post-colonial epochs so often applied to studies of European engagement with the African continent. The selection of Rhodesia as the principal case study for this research was made in light of the opportunities it presents to us as a lens through which to explore an array of different questions relating to Franco-African relations, Anglo-French rivalry, French foreign policy and the history of African decolonisation.

Southern Rhodesia had an unusual constitutional status in the British Empire as a self-governing colony without dominion status (Watts, 2012, p.16). In fact, in light of the role played by Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company (BSAC) in the conquest and colonisation of this region south of the Zambezi River in the late nineteenth century, Britain never governed Southern Rhodesia directly (Wood, 2005, p.6). In 1922, the growing settler population of the region was given the choice between joining the Union of South Africa or responsible government. They chose the latter, leaving the colony with a status close to that of a dominion, with wide-ranging powers, such as defence. However, in light of the territory’s official colonial status, external affairs remained the responsibility of the UK government. Britain also retained reserved powers under the Southern Rhodesian Constitution Letters Patent (1923) and the Rhodesian Constitution, giving the British Monarch power of disallowance and requiring the Secretary of State’s approval before any subordinate legislation that discriminated against Africans in a manner not authorised by the Patent Act could be implemented (Wood, 2005, p.9). The British
Parliament, therefore, had full powers to legislate in Southern Rhodesia, but would not do so without the consent of the Southern Rhodesian Legislative Assembly. Moreover, in spite of the fact that Southern Rhodesia was, technically, a British colony, the territory was the responsibility of the Dominions Office, not the Colonial Office (CO), and the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister was invited to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ Conferences (Wood, 2005, p.9). In constitutional terms, therefore, Rhodesia was without parallels, not only in the British African Empire, but also in French West and Equatorial Africa. Thus, this case study provides us with a unique lens through which to explore France’s policies towards and perceptions of Africa.

There are, of course, a number of parallels between Rhodesia and France’s African Empire, the most obvious of which is Algeria. Both Rhodesia and Algeria had influential European populations with close ties to the colonial metropole. Both were economically important to the colonial metropole. Both experienced a three-way struggle between settlers, the indigenous population and the colonial administration during their transition to independence. In addition to the comparison between Rhodesia and Algeria, the question of Federations also binds together the British and French experiences in Africa in the late colonial period. Collins (2013, p.35) has described ‘a genuinely trans-national, world historical’ decolonising “Federal moment”, where Federations were seriously contemplated as an alternative to imperial rule and individual sovereign nation states, by colonisers and the colonised alike. In 1953, in British Africa, the Central
African Federation (CAF) was formed of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in response to fears in Whitehall that the region’s white settlers might ‘gravitate – by desire, design or accident – towards South African-style apartheid’ (Collins, 2013, p.29). The Federation was conceived, therefore, as ‘a desirable liberal counterpoise to Afrikanerdom in southern Africa’ (Wood, 2005, p.12). In French West Africa, it was the African nationalists who looked primarily to the Federal model, seen in the unsuccessful indigenous efforts to form the Mali Federation of Senegal, Soudan, Haute-Volta and Dahomey in the late 1950s on the grounds that a confederation in which France and its former colonies were equal partners would be preferable to the division of AOF into independent nation-states (Burbank & Cooper, 2010, p.11). These alternating parallels of Algeria and the Mali Federation underline the potential that the Rhodesian case study has to illuminate our understanding of the French approach to the African continent in the post-war period.

The use of the Rhodesian example also permits the examination of French policy towards and perceptions of a region of Africa where Britain faced particular challenges and complications in its retreat from Africa. In the post-war period, especially following the establishment of the Central African Federation, Rhodesia’s white settlers increasingly sought to build upon their ‘quasi-dominion status’ (Murphy, 2006, p.750) and become a full dominion within the Commonwealth of Nations, with a similar degree of independence to Canada and Australia. According to Murphy (2006, p.751), ‘the threat of a settler revolt [against Britain] ran throughout the lifetime of
the Federation and, indeed, predated it’, with Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia (1933-1953) and Federal Prime Minister (1953-1956), and his successor, and longstanding advocate of the Federation, Roy Welensky, Federal Prime Minister (1956-1963), threatening a “Boston Tea Party” as early as December 1952 if the territory’s European population did not receive further political concessions. Throughout the Federal period, Southern Rhodesia’s European population, which in 1960 stood at 219,000 in contrast to the territory’s 3.4 million African inhabitants (Barber, 1967, pp.4-5), stubbornly resisted British efforts to introduce majority rule to the region. This intransigence contributed to the collapse of the Federation in 1963.

Thus, when Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland achieved their independence in 1964 as Zambia and Malawi respectively, Southern Rhodesia’s continued commitment to maintaining “the real bastion of Christian civilisation in Southern Africa” (Macleod cited in Barber, 1967, p.181) acted as a barrier to the decolonisation of the region, setting its European settler population on a collision course with the UK government. The settler revolt eventually came on 11 November 1965, with the proclamation of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain by the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, and steadfast supporter of white rule in Africa, Ian Douglas Smith. This marked the beginning of fourteen-year rebellion against Britain by its own “kith and kin”, which created problems for successive UK governments at home (Dowden, 2008, p.132; Hyam, 2006, pp.367-370), in

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3 Smith was Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister (1964-1965), before becoming Prime Minister of Rhodesia (1965-1979) following UDI and the decision to drop the prefix ‘Southern’.
the Commonwealth (Watts, 2012, pp.85-87) and in the world at large, evidenced by the ‘vociferous’ criticism of Britain’s Rhodesian policy received in United Nations (UN) and the loss of Britain’s prestige amongst its closest international partners (Watts, 2012, p.207). Thus, UDI seriously challenged Britain’s efforts, not only to draw a line under its colonial venture in Africa, but also to find a new role in a Cold War-dominated world order.

Little is recorded in the secondary literature about France’s response to UDI. Alden (1996, p.15) has described the ‘tacit’ support given to the white settler regime, particularly through the existence of a Rhodesian interest office in Paris and the assistance provided to Ian Smith’s government by the Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage (SDECE). Bach (1990, pp.185-186) echoes these sentiments, noting, in addition to the points raised by Alden, the presence of French arms in Rhodesia, the continued activity of French companies, including Total and Peugeot, in the region despite international economic sanctions, and French willingness to turn a blind eye to the continuous flow of goods out of Rhodesia to the former French colony of Gabon. Investigative journalist, Pierre Péan (1983, pp.80-89), also explores French participation in the illegal trade between Rhodesia and Gabon in his wider study of Affaires Africaines. In addition, there are a number of references in the literature relating to the Rhodesian problem in the UN (Gowlland-Debbas, 1990, pp.196-197; Kapungu, 1973, pp.28-29; Strack, 1978, pp.101-102; Zacklin, 1974, pp.17-21), as well as in works on France and the UN (Smouts, 1979, p.332-336; Wood, 1973, p.36),
that single out France as the sole power not to oppose UDI in the multilateral setting. These citations point, therefore, to a surprising trend, whereby France, the self-styled champion of African decolonisation (Chafer, 2002a, p.353) offered covert support to an illegal, white regime in Anglophone Africa.

The historiography of UDI, however, is virtually silent about France’s role in the crisis, focusing instead on Anglo-Rhodesian relations (Coggins, 2006; Meredith, 1979). Two highly detailed accounts of the events leading up to the Rhodesian rebellion and its aftermath by Wood (2005; 2008) make only passing references to France, such as a note regarding Rhodesian hopes that they would secure overt French support prior to UDI (Wood, 2005, p.395) and a reference to a press report from 1967 that accused a French company of exporting textiles to Rhodesia in exchange for Rhodesian tobacco (Wood, 2008, p.268). Even studies purporting to be international histories of the crisis, such as Watts’ (2012) recent publication, fail to take into account any French perspective. As such, further investigation is required into France’s relations with Rhodesia after UDI that takes into account evidence from British, French and Rhodesian archives, and gives consideration to the foundations for this post-UDI Franco-Rhodesian interaction. This thesis seeks to achieve this end.

The neglect for French involvement in Rhodesia in the existing historiography is especially acute in light of what we know about the long-standing Anglo-French rivalry on the African continent. Surrender to the
British at Fashoda in 1898 left the French humiliated and fearful of all British activity in Africa, a legacy that, according to Chafer and Cumming (2010a, p.1130), shaped French African policy throughout the twentieth century. This can be seen in West Africa during and after the Second World War, with Kent (1992) and Michel (1983) exploring the numerous obstacles to Anglo-French cooperation in this setting. We also know of French fears about Anglophone infiltration and expansion into le pre carré français in sub-Saharan Africa, a concern that was articulated in a National Assembly debate on the loi-cadre in 1957, with the following warning that ‘quand vous aurez disloqué la fédération d’Afrique noire, craignez que les territoires [français] ne se tournent l’un vers Lagos [Nigeria], l’autre vers Accra [Ghana].’ The work of Thomas (2000) and Wall (2001) reveals the tensions created in relations between France, on the one hand, and the UK and the USA, on the other, as a result of “Anglo-Saxon” involvement in French North Africa. Looking to the post-colonial period, Torrent (2012, p.261) has described ‘the difficult dialogue between the French and British worlds and the intersecting but fundamentally distinct decolonisation processes at work in the respective spheres of influence of France and Britain’ and how this, in turn, informed the shape of the post-independence Cameroonian nation-state. The Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), where France supported the Biafran separatists in their struggle with the British-backed Federal Nigerian government (Bach, 1980; Melville, 1979), is a further example of the ways in which Franco-British hostilities influenced the course of events in Africa, even after the end of formal colonial rule, and

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how interaction in the African setting continued to influence Anglo-French relations.5

The impact of French involvement in Rhodesia on Anglo-French relations and vice versa, however, remains underexplored by scholars. Less than one paragraph in a study of ‘Franco-British Relations during the Wilson Years’ by Young (2006, p.16) is dedicated to the difficulties created in Anglo-French relations as a result of France’s Rhodesian policy, whilst Mtisi, Nyakudya and Barnes (2008, pp.133-134) are content with the conclusion that ‘political rivalry’ was the main motivation for France’s refusal to observe all of the sanctions against Rhodesia, failing to develop this argument further. Alden (1996, p.15) argues that France ‘used the issue of Rhodesia to subvert British interests in the region,’ but does not elaborate. In light of these assertions, and their underdevelopment, there is a pressing need to examine French involvement in Rhodesia as a source of insight into Anglo-French relations in the post-war period. It is the aim of this study to probe this issue, using official UK and French government archives to explore how far French involvement in Rhodesia was informed by Anglo-French relations, as well as the reverse question of how the tumultuous Franco-British relationship was influenced by French engagement with this Anglophone African territory.

5 My undergraduate dissertation (LSE, 2009), entitled Britain, France and the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970, explored UK government responses to French backing of Biafra, arguing that it was a major bone of contention in Anglo-French relations in this period. However, the damage to Anglo-French relations was not irreversible as, immediately following the collapse of France’s Biafran policy and the end of the conflict in 1970, British hopes were once raised of future Anglo-French cooperation in Africa.
A connected history of decolonisation

In order to understand European colonialism in Africa, scholars have long looked beyond the boundaries of a particular empire. In fact, according to Dimier (2004), efforts at theorising colonial administration and policy in the inter-war years, led by political scientists in France and the UK, centred on comparing British and French approaches to their respective colonies. After independence, the practice of comparing empires continued, with scholars such as Crowder (1964) and Kiwanuka (1970) seeking respectively to differentiate or equate the British and French methods in Africa. Historians have also compared the processes of decolonisation in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, seen for example in the work of Smith (1978), which analyses the different contexts that underpinned the transfer of power to the African majority in British and French Africa, arguing that Britain had four key advantages over France that facilitated the process by which rule was handed over to the majority, and Kahler (1984), which investigates how the alternating courses of decolonisation in Anglophone and Francophone Africa produced different effects on metropolitan society.

In recent decades, this methodological approach has evolved, particularly in response to the rise of transnational and global history. This ‘international turn’ (Sluga, 2011, p.222) has led historians to ‘an intellectual frontier unbounded by geographies, hemispheres and continents, let alone national borders and parish boundaries’ (O’Brien, 2006, p.4). Leading the charge in this new field of research are historians such as McNeill and McNeill (2003), who have emphasised the ‘webs of interaction’ in human history,
exploring how human webs of ideas, people and practices have evolved in both their meaning and their degree of integration since the first world wide web was formed 12,000 years ago (pp.3-5). Other pioneering work has come from Bayly (2004), whose study of The Birth of the Modern World combines what he describes as “lateral history” - the history of connections - with “vertical history” - the history of the development of ideas - in order to obtain a fuller understanding of the development of modern political institutions and ideologies (p.4) in the period between 1780 and 1914.

Imperial historians have also enthusiastically championed this methodology. According to Colley (2006, p.380), empires are ‘a vast, diffuse and recurrent phenomenon’, a view that is echoed by Burbank and Cooper (2010) who contrast the nation state, which they describe as ‘a blip on the historical horizon’ (p.2), with the enduring nature of empires, emphasising particularly how ‘varied but intertwined imperial trajectories repeatedly transformed the world over two millennia’ (p.444). In light of this, there have been appeals to imperial historians to broaden their perspectives and adopt a global, connected history methodology. Cooper and Stoler (1997, p.34), for example, have called upon historians to study the circuits of both colonised and colonising people and ideas, within and among empires, whilst Colley (2006, p.380) has emphasised the need for ‘a relentlessly wide-ranging, eclectic, comparative and questioning vision, [and] uncompromisingly plural approaches’. 
The impact of these calls can be seen in the recent rise of global histories of empire, such as that of Darwin (2008) and Burbank and Cooper (2010), which analyse the ‘intersecting trajectories’ (Burbank & Cooper, 2010, p.21) between different empires across vast geographical and temporal spaces. Similarly, amongst scholars of decolonisation, this broad, world history perspective is increasing in its popularity, seen in the work of Shipway (2008a) and Thomas, Moore and Butler (2008). Connected histories of empire were also the subject of a recent conference that took place at the University of Bristol in July 2013,6 demonstrating the growing momentum within the historical discipline for global imperial history.

This PhD thesis takes its inspiration from these studies’ focus on broadening our perspective on the history of empire and decolonisation, whilst also looking to works concentrated on more confined geographical spaces and chronologies, which analyse the cross-cutting influences between different colonial empires. Dimier (2004), for example, has examined how British and French political scientists represented the colonial policies of their counterparts across the Channel during the inter-war period and how these observations, of what were essentially very similar administrative practices, contributed to the creation of the myth of the difference between British and French approaches to colonial rule in Africa and, subsequently, to decolonisation.

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Perceptions of different colonial systems are also at the centre of Keese’s (2007b) work on Francophone and Lusophone Africa. Rather than conducting a simple comparison between the end of French and Portuguese rule in Africa, Keese examines the cross influences and interconnections that linked and shaped these interdependent processes. In order to achieve this end, Keese employs the “mirror” of French perceptions of Portuguese Africa to examine the interests and strategies of the French administration during the transition to majority rule. Simultaneously, Portuguese responses to French overseas reform are analysed in order to provide new insights into the Portuguese colonial system (Kesse, 2007b, pp.35–36). He also investigates how France and Portugal’s perceptions of each other influenced their respective policy-making in Africa, and uses this study of mutual influences between colonial regimes to analyse the transfer of power in Africa (Keese, 2007b, p.12). In so doing, Keese offers an entirely innovative interpretation of the end of empire on the African continent, shedding new light on the ways in which colonial and decolonising policies were formulated with reference to another European colonial power’s approaches to the same challenges. This thesis will build upon and go beyond this work, by analysing the connections and cross influences between the British and French Empires, investigating French perceptions of British decolonisation as an insight into French strategies in its own sphere of African influence, whilst also exploring how certain French actors crossed national and colonial boundaries into Anglophone Africa and how these interventions influenced happenings in both British and French Africa, Anglo-French relations and French foreign policy more widely. As such, this thesis will
employ a transnational perspective for the study of a transnational object of study.

**Worldviews, mind-sets and unspoken assumptions**

In order to understand how and why French policy towards Rhodesia was formulated, as well as the diversity of actors and agendas engaged in this decision-making process, this thesis will examine the “mind-set” that underpinned French action towards this British colony. Historian, James Joll, was one of the first to highlight the advantages of studying a “worldview”, “mind-set” or set of “unspoken assumptions”. In his inaugural lecture as Stevenson Professor of International History at the London School of Economics in 1968, Joll called for the upbringing and education of policy-makers to form part of the analysis of the causes of the First World War, whilst also emphasising the significance of investigating ‘the general ideas in the air’ (1968, p.8), a universal set of shared assumptions that underpinned the European decision to go to war in 1914 (Bell, 1992, p.119). Thus, Joll (1968, p.24, cited in Winter & Prost, 2005, p.52) concluded, “It is only by studying the minds of men that we shall understand the causes of anything”. According to this method, therefore, analysing the “worldview”, “unspoken assumptions” or “mind-set” shared by a particular group of decision-makers makes it possible to understand what motivated them to make certain decisions that, in turn, shaped the course of history.
This approach is particularly pertinent in analysis of French foreign policy formulation. As has already been explored in the opening section of this introduction, since the Revolution, French policy-makers and ordinary citizens alike have presented the French nation as unique and the sole guardians of universalist Republican values, with a duty to spread this superior civilisation across the globe (Keiger, 2001, p.1). This, in turn, fuelled the French mission civilisatrice in Africa and elsewhere, whilst also influencing the histories written about France’s engagement with the outside world. As such, according to Keiger (2001, p.1), the ways in which decision-makers and the French population understood France’s world role was as significant as the realities that underpinned it.

The concept of the “mind-set” has been applied to the French colonial context in two recent volumes edited by Thomas (2011b & 2011c). In the introduction to the first of these volumes, Thomas (2011a, pp.xi-xxxvii) defines ‘the colonial mind’ as the shared attitudes, presumptions and expectations that underpinned French decision-making towards its empire (p.xvi). By studying these ‘mental processes’ (p.xii) which preceded French action in empire, it is possible to ‘unpick the constituent parts of imperialist… thought and daily practice’ (p.xvi) and bring together ‘the seemingly endless colonial minds’ (p.xi) and ‘the multiple influences, domestic, colonial and foreign’ (p.xviii) which made actions ‘possible, indeed probable, and, in some cases, even inevitable’ (p.xxvi). This thesis will apply this approach to the Rhodesian context, exploring the worldview of the policy-makers, bureaucrats and diplomats engaged in Rhodesian
affairs during this period, how this “mind-set” manifested itself in the Rhodesian context and how this, in turn, shaped French action in the region. In so doing, it will be possible to explore the factors that motivated certain French actors to participate in Anglophone African affairs, whilst also obtaining a deeper understanding of the nature of French activity in Rhodesia. The application of the concept of the “mind-set” also provides us with the space to study the diversity of French actors, actions and agendas in Rhodesia, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the existence of shared foreign policy imperatives.

In the context of the French Empire, Thomas (2011a, p.xviii) has acknowledged how foreign experiences, both at the ‘international level of competition between states and the transnational level of economic, cultural and political ties between communities across imperial boundaries’, combined with both local and metropolitan concerns to shape the French colonial mind. French participation in Rhodesia is, by its very nature as a French foreign policy, intertwined with external forces, not least French relations with Rhodesia’s colonial ruler - and France’s long-standing rival - Britain. Moreover, the extensive impact of the French Empire on France’s wider foreign policies, as well as Rhodesia’s geographical location in Africa, at the epicentre of France’s post-war efforts to restore its international position, suggests that assumptions that informed the French colonial “mind-set” may have also affected attitudes towards Rhodesia and, thus, French action in the region. As such, in applying the concept of the “mind-set” to this study of French engagement with Rhodesia, it will be
possible to enhance not only our understanding of the motivations behind French involvement with this region of British Africa, but also the ways in which French experiences in Rhodesia shaped, and were shaped, by France’s wider foreign policy objectives.

There are two further reasons why this ‘essential and familiar analytical tool’ (Thomas, 2011a, p.xii) provides a particularly useful framework within which to analyse France’s participation in British Africa in the post-war period. According to Thomas, the study of the colonial mind provides an insight into the stereotypes used to legitimise the sometimes bizarre methods employed by the French in their colonies (p.xxiv). Similarly, French participation in Rhodesia appears out of the ordinary, particularly in light of the absence of geographical, historical and cultural ties between this British colony and the French metropole, as well as the extensive domestic and international challenges facing the French government in the post-war period. The concept of the “mind-set”, therefore, will permit this study to probe the unusual nature of French participation in Rhodesia and facilitates our understanding of the forces that made this involvement in a British colony possible.

Another strength of this model is the flexibility it gives to the historian to go beyond the simple binaries of coloniser and colonised (Thomas, 2011a, p.xvii). Thus, employing the concept of the “mind-set” can help this work avoid ‘the colonial trap’ (Zorn, 2012, pp.215-232) and contribute to wider efforts to shake the study of empires “loose from the domination of
categories and ideas” that they produced (Prakash, 1995, p.5, cited in Colley, 2006, p.380). This endeavour has particular resonance in the case study of Franco-Rhodesian relations, where the very presence of French actors in a British colony challenges the traditional opposition between metropole and colony, highlighting the need for a model that goes beyond these rigid categories. Thus, in employing the methodological tool of the “mind-set”, this study seeks to contribute to the development of a new historical understanding of colonial rule and decolonisation in Africa.

**Methodology and sources**

This thesis is based primarily on archival research, carried out in France, the UK and South Africa. The decision to prioritise material found in the archives was made in light of the focus of this research on foreign policy formulation and diplomacy, and the subsequent need to draw upon official documentary evidence in order to understand these processes. There are, of course, disadvantages inherent in such a methodological approach. In the 1960s and 1970s, the historical discipline came under attack from postmodernists who, amongst other things, criticised historians for ‘documentary fetishism’ (Evans, 1997, pp.84-85). With poststructuralist linguist theory as the foundation for arguments, postmodernists claimed that the primary document was no different to a literary artefact, as it was subject not only to the bias of its author, but also the personal bias of the historian examining it. According to this view, the study of history is fundamentally flawed due to its reliance on documents (Jenkins, 2003, pp.47-8).
The historical discipline, however, has proved itself to be remarkably resilient, using the postmodernist attack to reinvigorate and reinvent the practices used to study the past (Passmore, 2003, p.138). As a result, historians have become more cautious in their use of documentary evidence, acknowledging openly the need to read sources ‘against the grain’ (Kelly, 1991, p.212). This PhD project has endeavoured to adopt a similar approach to primary documents. All sources have been viewed critically, reflecting on the authorial intent and the nature of the document, as well as the context in which the document was written (Stone, 1992, p.189-190). The papers written by white Rhodesian settlers, for example, were approached with particular caution in light of their inherent bias towards the white Rhodesian cause as well as the insulated nature of Rhodesian society as a result of extensive censorship and propaganda (Windrich, 1981). Furthermore, every effort has been made to put aside any personal bias. While it may be impossible to achieve complete objectivity, it is hoped that this PhD will, to use Ranke’s famous phrase, “show how, essentially, things happened [wie es eigentlich gewesen]” (cited in Warren, 2003, p.26).

This research project also faced other challenges common to conducting archival research but which were especially acute in light of the particular nature of the topic under consideration in this thesis. According to Evans (1997, p.89),

doing historical research is rather like doing a jigsaw puzzle where the pieces are scattered all over the house in several boxes, some of which have been destroyed, and where once it is put together, a significant number of the pieces are still missing.
This statement is especially true of this study, as the transnational scope of the topic under consideration means that source material is deposited in various archival facilities, in three different countries and on two continents. Moreover, the destruction of documentary evidence has posed considerable obstacles to this project, notably with regards to papers produced by the Rhodesian settler government. Following Rhodesia’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980, the former white rulers were anxious to eradicate any documentary evidence that might implicate them in the country’s suffering following UDI. As such, many of the papers and secrets of the Rhodesian government were burnt by supporters of the minority regime during the tumultuous transition to majority rule. A collection of documents from the Rhodesian Cabinet did survive this period, having been smuggled out of the country and deposited at the Cory Library at Rhodes University in South Africa by Ian Smith during the Lancaster House peace negotiations in 1979 (Murambiwa, 2008, pp.4-5). In addition, the Cory Library also houses a collection of Ian Smith’s personal papers, donated to the library by Smith’s daughter, Mrs Tholet, in April 2010. The fact that the deposit by Mrs Tholet was made very recently has permitted this project to draw on sources previously unexamined by scholars. However, the collections are frustratingly incomplete, with numerous files missing, pages torn out and text covered up, and we are left only to speculate what might have been removed. In addition to these documents that we know were destroyed by the Rhodesians, there may also be numerous other French and British papers eliminated from the archival record without our knowledge, either consciously or unconsciously. The recent controversy surrounding the cover
up and destruction of British government papers relating to the Mau Mau Emergency in Kenya serves to reinforce this point.\textsuperscript{7} Furthermore, it is very likely that, with regards to some of the covert dealings explored in this thesis, things were simply not written down, meaning that there is not always an archival record to consult.

In addition, for a variety of reasons, it was not possible to access certain documents relevant to this project, despite their known existence. At Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères at La Courneuve, for example, it was not possible to examine any of the fifty three cartons in the Série: Afrique, Sous-Série: Rhodésie-Zimbabwe (1971-1980) as these files are not currently catalogued and are, therefore, unavailable to researchers. In addition, only limited access was given to the Série: Afrique-Levant, Sous-Série: Sud-Est africain britannique (1966) and Série: Afrique-Levant, Sous-Série: Rhodésie (1967-1970) as the cataloguing of these files is still on going. Access to certain papers from the archives of Charles De Gaulle, President of France (1958-1969), and Georges Pompidou, President of France (1969-1974), was denied under article 20 of French law No.78-753. The Rhodesian Army Association Archive was similarly out of reach at the time of the researching and writing of this thesis, as a result of the closure of British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol, where these papers were originally catalogued and housed, along with issues of licensing.

agreements with the software company that designed the specifications from which the catalogue needs to work.

In order to overcome these obstacles, this project draws upon a wide range of archival sources, so as to fill in some of the gaps left by the pieces missing from the puzzle. At the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, for example, the Série: EU-Europe, Sous-Série: Grande Bretagne (1970-1976) and Série: Nations Unies et Organisations Internationales, Sous-Série: Décolonisation (1970-1973) were extremely useful in gaining insight into French policy towards Rhodesia in the early 1970s, as well as the perspectives of different departments within the Quai. Similarly, at the Archives Diplomatiques in Nantes, papers repatriated from Pretoria were an invaluable resource for the late 1970s, containing documents not housed elsewhere. Official documents from the UK government, especially papers from the Foreign Office (FO) and, after its merger with the Commonwealth Office in 1968, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), were instrumental in providing additional insight into France’s position towards Rhodesia at this time, whilst also shedding new light on Anglo-French relations with regards to the Rhodesian problem. Although these pieces have not always fitted precisely into the spaces of the puzzle left by missing evidence, they have nevertheless helped put together a more complete picture of Franco-Rhodesian relations, particularly with regards to the latter years under consideration in this thesis.
This archival material has been supplemented by a small number of oral history interviews conducted with former Rhodesian settlers. Potential interviewees were identified via snowball sampling, as existing contacts - notably Dr. Sue Onslow, who was one of the lead researchers on the Rhodesian Forces Oral History Project (Onslow & Berry, 2010) and who put me into touch with Derek van der Syde, a former Rhodesian civil servant, and Brian Oliver, who was in charge of the UN at the Rhodesian Ministry of External Affairs - and those already interviewed provided the details of further potential participants. A chance meeting that took place whilst I was conducting archival research in South Africa put me into contact with Dinah Townsend, daughter of Hardwicke Holderness, a liberal politician in Southern Rhodesia during Sir Garfield Todd’s premiership (1953-1958).

This evidence was very problematic as it tended to be biased towards the white Rhodesian cause. There was also the problem of the time lag since the events in question took place, which meant interviewees might have forgotten exactly what happened, or have been very elderly or deceased. For example, I met with Collie Hill, a former employee of the Rhodesian sugar industry, and his wife Stella, in 2012. However, Mr Hill, who was 92 years old at the time of this interview, was unable to add any further details to that set out in his memoirs published in 2001. Another potential interviewee,

9 Oliver to Warson. (2011, November 11). Personal communication. Mr Oliver was not interviewed, as he professed to knowing very little about France’s involvement in Rhodesia via email correspondence.
Rodney Davies, a representative of the Cold Storage Commission (CSC) who operated in the Ivory Coast in the 1970s, died in 2006, so I had to rely on the recollections of his wife and son in 2011, whose account, by their own admission, may have been influenced by the reading of Péan’s (1983) *Affaires Africaines*.\(^{12}\) In addition, not all of the potential interviewees I identified were willing to share their personal recollections with me. Brian Reavill, who worked at the Rhodesian Information Office in Paris in the late 1960s, for example, declined to be interviewed by me on the grounds that he did not wish to involve himself in any debate regarding Rhodesia.\(^{13}\) In spite of this, these oral history interviews provided valuable details to back up archival evidence, whilst also providing an interesting personal insight to events that took place and a sense of the era.

**Thesis structure**

This thesis will be divided into two parts, the first dealing with the period prior to UDI and the second focusing on the years that followed this pivotal event in the history of Rhodesian decolonisation, up until the territory’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980. The decision to divide the thesis along these lines was made in response not only to the importance of UDI to the process by which British rule was concluded in the region, but also because of the way in which rebellion against Britain transformed Rhodesia into an illegal entity (Brownell, 2010, p.479), thus fundamentally transforming its ability to interact with the outside world and, by implication, France.

\(^{13}\) Reavill to Warson. (2011, April 18). Personal communication.
The first part of the thesis will be split into two chapters, the first of which will deal with the mind-set and policy context that underpinned French engagement with Rhodesia in the period between 1947 and 1965. The second chapter will then analyse how this mind-set operated in practice, investigating French policy towards Rhodesia during this period. The second half of the thesis, which will be slightly longer than the first and comprise of three chapters, will examine the evolution of French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI, exploring the new setting for French engagement with Rhodesia (Chapter Three), the implementation of French policy towards the region (Chapter Four) and, finally, the impact of this policy for white Rhodesian efforts to maintain minority rule, France’s African policies and Anglo-French relations (Chapter Five). In so doing, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of French policy towards and perceptions of Rhodesia in the years between 1947 and 1980, analysing the impetuses behind France’s interpretations of and involvement in Rhodesia, and assessing throughout the significance of Franco-Rhodesian interaction in historical and historiographical terms.
Part One

France and Rhodesia before 1965
Chapter One

France and Rhodesia before 1965: the mind-set and the policy discourse

On Saturday 6 September 1947, a French diplomat arrived in Salisbury, the capital of Southern Rhodesia, to take charge of the newly established French Vice Consulate in this British colony. In the weeks that followed, the new French Vice Consul Francières was warmly received by the British Colonial Governor, Sir John Kennedy, as well as high-ranking members of the settler-dominated Southern Rhodesian government, including the long-serving Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, and George Arthur Davenport, the Minister of Commerce and Industry. In one of his first despatches to Paris, Francières described his surprise at ‘des attentions dont j’ai été l’objet à plusieurs reprises’, concluding that his welcome to Rhodesia was ‘cordial et empressé’.¹

This friendly reception marked the beginning of a new Franco-Rhodesian friendship, the development of which in the eighteen years that followed will be the subject of Chapter Two of this thesis. However, in order to understand the establishment and subsequent development of France’s relations with the British, white minority-governed colony of Rhodesia – a region in which France had few geographical, cultural or historical ties, and at a time when the French Fourth Republic faced many challenges both at

home and in its Empire - it is necessary first to explore the setting that underpinned this new, Anglophone dimension of French African policy. In order to achieve this end, this chapter will first analyse the wider foreign policy mind-set that underpinned French decision-making overseas in the aftermath of the Second World War. In particular, it will reflect upon the privileged position accorded to Africa by France in a wider strategy to restore and enhance France’s standing in the new post-war, Cold War-dominated world order. Consideration will also be given to how the French viewed the “Anglo-Saxon” powers during this period and, especially, to the way in which the memory of humiliation at the hands of the British at Fashoda in 1898 intersected with new hostilities born during the Second World War and in its aftermath.

In order to understand the specificity of French engagement with a territory in Central Southern Anglophone Africa, this chapter will then examine France’s existing regional presence. On the basis of existing, albeit limited, secondary literature, this section will begin by exploring relations between France and the Dutch, Portuguese and British-ruled territories in Southern Africa prior to 1939. In light of the shared border between Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, as well as the parallels and interconnections between these two, white-ruled regions, this chapter will then probe the development of relations between France and South Africa in the post-war period. Finally, on the basis of the small amount of archival evidence available relating to France’s presence in the possessions britanniques in Central Southern Africa in the immediate aftermath of the Second World
War, this section will piece together a picture of France’s presence in Southern Rhodesia in the years immediately preceding the establishment of the French Consulate in Salisbury in 1947. The third and fourth parts of the chapter will follow directly on from this to analyse French perceptions of Rhodesia in the years that followed the arrival of Francières on Rhodesian soil and, in particular, how these perceptions can be understood in the context of France’s wider foreign policy mind-set. Finally, this chapter will adopt a micro-perspective to analyse how and why France’s foreign policy mind-set manifested itself in different ways amongst the various, diverse French actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs, in the period between 1947 and 1965.

“La France ne peut être la France sans grandeur”: The French foreign policy mind-set in the post-war period

In 1945, France emerged battered and bruised, yet victorious from the Second World War. Despite being on the winning side, France’s position in the post-war period was highly ambiguous, a legacy of being ‘at once conqueror and conquered’ (Bourmaud, 2003, p.14). The Fall of France, described by Heimsoeth (cited in Jackson, 2003, p.45) as “the fulcrum of the twentieth century”, dealt a humiliating blow to French prestige and left its mark on a generation of French policy-makers (Grosser, 1989, p.7). The repressive and racist policies of the Vichy regime, both at home and in the colonies, and the occupation of France’s South East Asian Empire by the

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Japanese, further undermined France’s claims to Great Power status, as well as to the superiority of French civilisation and moral virtues. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the principal concern of France’s policy-making élite was, therefore, to restore France’s rank as a Great Power, a commitment that is best expressed in the words of De Gaulle, who in his memoirs described his belief that France “n’est réellement elle-même qu’au premier rang”. It was in this context that France’s Empire took on a renewed significance in the French national psyche, as a symbol of France’s continued greatness on the international stage (Jackson, 2003, p.45) and as a means of reversing the humiliation and territorial losses suffered during the war (Charbonneau, 2008, pp.34-35). Empire was crucial, therefore, in the restoration of France’s rank amongst the nations of the world (Rioux, 1989, p.85).

**Le pré carré français and the restoration of French rang**

This renewed commitment to empire was particularly acute with regards to Africa. After the fall of metropolitan France in 1940, when other allies disappointed and abandoned France, Africa remained loyal. Afrique Equatoriale Française allied itself with Free France, permitting the establishment of a new capital in Brazzaville and allowing ‘the Free French to claim continuity with an honourable France’ (Burbank & Cooper, 2010, p.407). Moreover, 200,000 African troops fought in the French army, playing a moderate but significant role in the liberation of France in 1944.

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and 1945 (Eichenberg, 1985, p.365; Chafer, 2008, p.37). The significance of Africa’s contribution to the French war effort was, therefore, two-fold. On the one hand, it provided concrete evidence to support the French ‘colonial myth’: ‘the belief in an indivisible republic composed of France and its overseas territories’ (Marshall, 1973; Chafer, 2002b, p.85). On the other hand, according to Smith (1978, p.80), it proved once and for all that if France wanted to assure international greatness ‘she must count on her empire since in this enterprise she had no certain friends’. Africa’s privileged status in French foreign policy, and across French popular consciousness, was, therefore, confirmed.

In the immediate post-war period, this renewed attachment to African Empire is evidenced by France’s willingness to resort to violence in order to maintain control across the continent. In 1945 in Sétif, Algeria, a peaceful demonstration was met by a brutal French clampdown that, in turn, fuelled a violent nationalist insurrection, resulting in the deaths of 102 Europeans. According to Evans (2012, pp.85-88), the French response was ‘swift and brutal’, and ‘characterized by the systematic humiliation of prisoners’. The terms ‘swift and brutal’ are also used by Shipway (2008a, p.147) to describe the French military action used to put down the Malagasy Uprising, on the island of Madagascar, in 1947 and 1948. The human cost of this “pacification” (Shipway, 2008a, p.146) was vast, with some estimations of the final death toll as high as 89,000 (Clayton, 1994, p.85). France was not alone in its use of violence as a tool to maintain colonial authority in the post-war period, seen by Britain’s harsh clampdowns in Malaya, Cyprus and
Kenya. Yet, these examples serve to emphasise France’s willingness to employ force to maintain its foothold on the African continent and, as such, the prevalent position of Africa in its foreign policy mind-set.

In contrast to its approach in Algeria and Madagascar, in West and Equatorial Africa, the regions most closely linked to France’s survival both during and after the war, France sought to reassert its position through development and reform. The recommendations set out at the Brazzaville Conference in 1944, including increased African political representation and investment in development projects, are an open expression of this new approach to colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa in the post-war period (Chafer, 2002b, pp.56-61). Although, the Brazzaville recommendations were not implemented immediately, or in full, they did mark the beginning of a new phase in France’s presence in Black Africa, which saw the abolition of forced labour, the expansion of investment through the Fonds d’Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Social (FIDES) in 1946, and substantially expanded African political participation, both at territorial level and in the Assemblée Nationale in Paris (Chafer, 2002b, pp.63-64).

As with the use of force, France not unique amongst its European colonial counterparts in adopting these reformist measures. Increasingly, the European powers looked to their colonies to aid post-war metropolitan economic reconstruction and help reduce dependency on the United States. As such, Darwin (2008, p.464) has described how ‘the “nightwatchman”
state, which let sleeping dogs lie’ became ‘the “developmental” state, which interfered everywhere’. This period saw, therefore, an influx of European bureaucrats, experts, settlers, and capital, along with the expansion of developmental projects, in what has been characterised as a “second colonial occupation”, a strategy that both Britain and France hoped would simultaneously ‘make empires richer and more politically legitimate’ (Cooper & Burbank, 2010, p.420).

The future of European colonial rule, however, was far from secure. The changed international context, in particular the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and the establishment of the UN in the 1945, as well as the overarching reality of Britain and France’s weakened international standing in the new global age of bipolarity, meant that it was no longer possible to justify empire in the same terms. This, in turn, contributed to a fundamental reassessment of the colonial project by coloniser and colonised alike, a process that Shipway (2008a, p.13) has described as the ‘late colonial shift’. Colonial rule was no longer seen as an inevitable part of the international order. Rather, a dramatic, and quite probably violent, transformation of the existing system was anticipated in the foreseeable future. Although many Europeans were slow to envisage national independence as the outcome of this process, it was clear, to both the rulers and the ruled, that colonialism, as it had been understood before the Second World War, could not, and would not, continue for much longer.
What stood France apart in this process was the unwavering belief that, despite necessary changes to the way in which French rule would be practiced and articulated in Africa, France’s African Empire would ultimately remain French. A clear statement of this was made at Brazzaville in 1944 when, despite recommending significant reforms to the French colonial system, “any possibility of evolution outside the French imperial block” and “the eventual creation, even in the distant future, of self-governments in the colonies” (cited in Chafer, 2002b, p.57) was explicitly ruled out. As such, it was intended that ‘the only independence they [the Africans] will want will be the independence of France’ (Shipway, 2008b, p.751). This stands in marked contrast to the position of Britain, expressed by the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, in 1938, that “the ultimate, if distant, aim of British colonial policy was evolution towards self-government” (cited in Chafer, 2002b, p.57). During the early years of the Fourth Republic, therefore, the commitment to sustaining a presence on the African continent was amplified to an extent not seen under previous French administrations.

The unwavering commitment to the maintenance of French influence on the African continent was undeterred by the coming of the decolonisation of AOF and AEF in 1960. Rather, Africa was consistently viewed as ‘guarantor of France’s standing in the world’ (Bourmaud, 2000), something that is largely attributable to the fact that Africa was the only arena in which France had enough power to guarantee its claims to middle power status (Bach, 1986, p.75; Chafer, 2008, p.39). In the words of Louis de Guiringaud
(cited in Bourmaud, 2003, p.17), “Africa is the only place where France can, with 500 men, change the course of history”. The desire to maintain the French pré carré in Africa as a means of restoring and sustaining French rang was, therefore, an immovable feature of the French foreign policy mind-set throughout the years under investigation in this thesis.

**France and “les Anglo-Saxons” after the Second World War**

In the same way that commitment to the preservation of France’s chasse gardée was heightened in the post-war period, so too was French hostility and suspicion of the “Anglo-Saxon” powers. The French experience of the Second World War compounded existing antagonisms towards Britain and the US, with the Fall of France in 1940, and all subsequent French losses during the war, frequently explained with reference to the weakness of Anglo-American support. France’s exclusion from Yalta in 1945, an act that Jackson (2003, p.241) has claimed Charles De Gaulle never forgot or forgave, compounded this French hostility towards Britain and the United States.

It was events in Africa, however, that had the most damaging effect on France’s position towards “les Anglo-Saxons” during and after the war, demonstrating not only the privileged position of Africa in France’s foreign policy mind-set but also the resilience of suspicions rooted in the humiliation suffered at the hands of the British at Fashoda in 1898 (Chafer & Cumming, 2010a, p.1130). In July 1940, misunderstanding and miscommunication led to the British Navy bombardment of the French fleet
at Mers-el-Kébir, resulting in France’s largest naval losses of the entire war (Tombs & Tombs, 2006, pp.562-563). Moreover, Britain and America were increasingly viewed as a threat to French sovereignty in Africa, evidenced by the Allied Landings in North Africa in November 1942 (Evans, 2012, p.92). Celebrations to mark the end of the war in Algeria in 1945, which saw Algerians carrying placards proclaiming “long live the Atlantic Charter”, only served to rub salt in already open wounds (Evans, 2012, p.85). In French West Africa, these fears of “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration were equally evident, with the perception that the Americans had ‘flirted excessively’ with Pierre Boisson, the Vichy Governor General of AOF and AEF (Michel, 1999, p.155), and resentment of French West Africa’s military and economic dependence on the Allies during the Free French period (Chafer, 2002b, p.41). Thus, Michel (1999, p.155) has described the ‘mistrust’ and ‘animosity’ that characterised France’s relations with Britain and the United States in the African context at this time.

The French, therefore, increasingly viewed Britain and America with distrust, particularly in the African setting. The statements of France’s intention to retain its African colonies made at Brazzaville Conference in 1944 can be interpreted as an attempt to ward off further Anglo-Saxon intervention in Francophone Africa (Chafer, 2002b, p.55). The post-war period also witnessed growing fears of an “Anglo-Saxon” conspiracy in the French Empire (Michel, 1999, p.155) evidenced in the widespread rumours of a plot to push France out of the Middle East and Africa by placing France’s colonies under a UN Trusteeship (Evans, 2012, p.92). American
proposals to introduce Marshall Aid to the colonies and fears about the US providing a pole of attraction to French-educated *évolués* heightened these French fears (Michel, 1999, p.155). This anti-“Anglo-Saxon” sentiment was also present in France’s wider foreign policies in the post-war period. Shepard (2011, p.286) has explored French efforts to find allies in Latin America to help contain the “clan anglo-saxon” (Maurel, cited in Shepard, 2011, p.286) and create a “Latin-European-Arab” bloc “to outmanoeuvre the ‘Anglo-American groups’” (Maritain, cited in Shepard, 2011, p.286). These efforts yielded positive results, for example, in 1955 when Mexico and Columbia supported French attempts to keep Algeria off the UN agenda (Shepard, 2011, p.286). This demonstrates how France’s “Fashoda Syndrome” was not merely a concern in Africa, but infiltrated France’s foreign policy mind-set as a whole.

Hostility and suspicion of the “Anglo-Saxons” fuelled a growing French conviction in the importance of preserving national independence (Jackson, 2003, p.239). France’s junior position in the Atlantic Alliance, the belief that the Cold War exacerbated France’s colonial problems - American participation in Indochina and encouragement of the Algerian nationalists were seen as prime examples of this – and France’s humiliation at Suez in 1956 served to enhance French efforts to assure its strategic autonomy (Bozo, 2010, p.164). Thus, in the post-war period, in spite of France’s position in the Western “camp”, the Fourth Republic government frequently sought to act autonomously from Britain and the United States, and break free from the constraints of bipolarity (Bozo, 2010, p.175). French
opposition to the European Defence Community (EDC), for example, was founded on fears that the EDC was ‘a device for sacrificing French national sovereignty to the imperatives of the bloc system’ (Chafer & Jenkins, 1996, p.2). More broadly, many policy-makers under the Fourth Republic conceived of Europe, with France at its helm, as a potential ‘third force’ in global politics (Chafer & Jenkins, 1996, p.2; Hitchcock, 1998, p.204). French efforts to build a “Eurafrican sphere centred on the Mediterranean, tied by common interests and equally accepted by the two blocs, East and West, and free of them both” (De Wailly, cited in Wall, 2001, p.158) similarly was part of this broader French strategy to maintain national independence and provide a non-aligned alternative to a world dominated by Western capitalism and Eastern communism.

After the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958, this pursuit of independence remained central to French foreign policy, appropriated by the Gaullists to such an extent that the Fourth Republic foundations for this strategy of national assertion are often overlooked (Hitchcock, 1998; Wall, 2001). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the commitment to the cause of autonomy shaped French efforts to prevent Anglo-Saxon infiltration of the European integration project, particularly the rejection of Britain’s application to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 (Chafer & Jenkins, 1996, p.2). The early years of the Fifth Republic also saw the first concrete manifestation of the French commitment to developing an independent French nuclear deterrent, or force de frappe, seen by the explosion of France’s first atomic bomb over the Sahara in
February 1960 (Jackson, 2003, p.243). In the African setting, French support for Moïse Tshombe and a Katanga-centred Federation in the former Belgian Congo can similarly be conceived of as a strategy that aimed to offer an alternative to a world dominated by the superpowers (Bat & Geneste, 2010, p.94; Williams, 2011, p.166). Thus, throughout the two decades that followed the conclusion of the Second World War, French suspicions of “les Anglo-Saxons” were crucial to France’s foreign policy “mind-set”. This, in turn, fuelled the French desire to protect their chasse gardée from UK and US infiltration, and efforts to secure French autonomy on the international stage.

**Beyond the Francophone fold: France in Southern Africa**

Although the historiography of French engagement with Africa in the post-war period is dominated by discussions of France’s relations with its colonies, the decolonisation process in AOF and AEF, and the subsequent form of the post-colonial friendship between France and its former sub-Saharan dependencies, France’s view of the African continent in the years immediately following the end of the Second World War was not - and never had been - uniquely Francophone in its focus. Chapter Two will develop this argument through analysis of French policies towards the British colony of Rhodesia in the period between 1947 and 1965. However, in order to fully comprehend the nature and extent of French engagement with this British colony during these years, it is necessary to first explore France’s existing regional presence. This section will draw together the
existing literature in this field – although limited, there is a growing body of literature concerning France’s relations with the British, Portuguese and Afrikaner-dominated territories south of the Equator – with archival evidence, to piece together a picture of France in Southern Africa at this time. This, in turn, will be crucial to our understanding of how and why France’s Rhodesian policies developed in the post-war period.

_Une présence modeste: France and Southern Africa before the Second World War_

France was traditionally an outsider in Southern Africa, a region dominated by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and later their Afrikaner descendants, and the British. France was excluded from the “Scramble” in Southern Africa (Alden, 1996, p.14) and its nearest territorial possessions were the islands of Madagascar and Réunion in the Indian Ocean. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, French missionaries, explorers and traders travelled to Portuguese-ruled Angola and Mozambique. Their numbers, however, were small. Pélissier (1990) has estimated that less than one hundred French citizens visited Angola each year prior to 1914 (p.74), prompting him to describe the French presence in the territory as ‘superficielle’ (p.69). In Mozambique, although French interest in the region was greater due to its close geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean (p.74) and there existed a small _colonie française_ comprising of at least half a dozen mixed-race

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4 The French first occupied Réunion in the seventeenth century, before the island became a _Département d’Outre-Mer_ in 1946. Madagascar became part of the French colonial empire during the period of aggressive European colonisation in the late nineteenth century and achieved its independence along with Francophone sub-Saharan Africa in 1960.
families of French descent (p.83), the French presence remained relatively minor. In Anglophone Central Southern Africa, the state of affairs was similar. In the nineteenth century, missionaries from the Catholic order of the Pères Blancs and the Protestant Société des Missions évangéliques de Paris played a role in the establishment of British rule in Lesotho and Northern Rhodesia (Siegfried, 1949, p.110; Holmes, 1990, pp.85-109; Perrot, 1990, pp.111-132). However, beyond this limited religious engagement, which, as was also the case with missionaries active within their own nations’ colonial sphere, often went against the broader French project in Africa due to collaboration between French missionaries and colonial administrators from other European powers, France had few ties in the region.

In South Africa, France’s experience was slightly different. French Huguenots were amongst the original white settlers that came to the Cape in 1652 (Moukambi, 2008, p.85). Their long-term influence over the development of the Afrikaans language and culture, however, was limited, the result of the first French settlers’ rapid absorption into the Dutch population (Vigne, 1990, pp.35-36). In the late nineteenth century, Franco-South African contacts were reignited, as Boer grievances with British rule converged with French hostility towards British activity on the African continent (Tombs & Tombs, 2006 pp.432-434), permitting the French to

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5 In their respective studies of religious workers in the British and French Empires, Porter (2004) and Foster (2013) have explored how missionaries had a complex relationship with the colonial project and often acted in opposition to the desires of the European administrations.
offer the Boers ‘soutien enthousiaste’ (Maubrey, 1990, pp.39-40) during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). This, in turn, increased France’s standing amongst the Afrikaners. The mixture of limited territorial, cultural and linguistic ties alongside long-standing connections has led Jacques (2003, p.26) to conclude that ‘the relationship between France and South Africa has always been solid, if not intimate’. In a similar vein, Konieczna (2009, p.323) has described how,

au lendemain de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, les liens historiques entre la France et l’Afrique du Sud sont déjà anciens. Mais la position de la France dans ce pays reste modeste.

Relations between France and South Africa may have had deeper historical roots and been more developed than those between France and the dependent territories in Anglophone and Lusophone Southern Africa, but they nevertheless remained highly circumscribed prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.

The development of Franco-South African relations in the post-war period

The post-war period witnessed a shift in France’s presence in South Africa. Declining relations between London and Pretoria, manifest especially in the May 1948 defeat of the United Party, the political party favoured amongst South Africa’s English-speaking settlers, by the Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP), on a platform of apartheid⁷ (Iliffe, 2007, pp.281-2),

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⁷ Apartheid, literally translated into English from Afrikaans as ‘separateness’, was the policy of rigid, racial segregation, enforced by the centre, along with the idea that each race should be allowed to manage its own affairs and practice its own culture. The NP enforced
‘ouvre la voie à la redefinition des relations entre les deux pays’ (Konieczna, 2009, p.323). Less than a year later, in March 1949, this new Franco-South African rapprochement led the Quai d’Orsay to elevate the status of its diplomatic representation in Pretoria from a Legation to an Embassy, a move that was reciprocated with the arrival of a South African Ambassador to France in Paris in October of the same year (Konieczna, 2009, pp.323-4). Initial French efforts concentrated on the expansion of economic relations with South Africa (Konieczna, 2009, p.324), a strategy that yielded some positive results seen, for example, by the arrival of French firms such as Total and Peugeot in the region in the 1950s (Cuddumbey, 1996, p.69). As the 1950s progressed, attention was also given to the promotion of French military equipment in the region, although progress in this domain was initially limited (Konieczna, 2009, pp.325-335).

Events taking place in South Africa led to further expansion of relations between Paris and Pretoria in the early years of the Fifth Republic. The Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 – an incident over which the French authorities remained remarkably silent – revealed the weakness of the apartheid regime, prompting them to accept the military support offered to them by the French in the form of arms contracts (Konieczna, 2009, pp.335-338). South Africa’s rupture with the Commonwealth in the following year pushed Pretoria further into the Francophone fold, as part of a wider strategy to balance its desire to escape British dominance with criticism of the United States’ African policy and isolation on the continent (Konieczna,

policies of apartheid in South Africa following their election victory in 1948 (Iliffe, 2007, pp.281-283).
This approach aligned with France’s own strategic considerations on the African continent in the context of the Cold War, particularly their desire to oppose Communist infiltration whilst simultaneously maintaining national independence (Konieczna, 2012, pp.93-4). Thus, according to one British MP, France found in South Africa ‘a natural alliance’ that ‘suits the French book wonderfully’.

It was in this setting that Franco-South African ties began to grow rapidly, particularly in the military domain, with France becoming, from 1962, one of the principal suppliers of arms to the apartheid regime, in spite of France’s vote in favour of UN Security Council Resolution 182 in December 1963 that imposed an arms embargo against South Africa (Bach, 1990, p.177; Konieczna, 2012, p.94). Engagement with South Africa provided the French with access to raw materials crucial to the pursuit of national independence, in particular the uranium necessary for the development of an independent strategic nuclear force. In 1963, Pretoria agreed in principal to sell uranium ‘libre d’usage’ to France (Bach, 1990, p.175). This was followed, in 1964, by the signing of a contract between the South African Atomic Energy Commission and the Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique (CEA), something that Bach (1990, pp.175-176) has claimed profoundly irritated the United States. Alongside these commercial and military ties, the early 1960s also witnessed the establishment of France-Afrique du Sud friendship groups in the Assemblée Nationale and the French Senate (Konieczna, 2012, p.95). Thus, although France was not

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an active colonial power in South Africa, the post-war period saw the expansion of France’s presence in the region, especially in the early 1960s, as the foundations laid by the Fourth Republic aligned with the evolving situation on the ground in South Africa and France’s geo-strategic interests to create the context in which Franco-South African relations could begin to flourish. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, the existing patterns of interaction between Paris and Pretoria were to have important consequences for the development and evolution of Franco-Rhodesian relations.

Franco-Rhodesian relations before 1947

Prior to 1947, France’s position in South Africa’s neighbour, the self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia, was highly limited. Certainly, French Protestant and Catholic missionaries remained active in Lesotho and Northern Rhodesia throughout the war and after, ensuring a continued French religious presence in the surrounding area. A number of men from the Southern Rhodesian military had also fought alongside the Free French in Africa and were decorated for their service to the French cause, while others served in Europe during the Second World War playing an important role in the Allied victory, including later Prime Minister Ian Smith, who served with the British Royal Air Force (RAF) in Western Europe in the latter years of the conflict (Smith, 1997, pp.13-21).

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10 French Legation, Pretoria, to MAE. (1944, October 30). AL/Possessions britanniques (PB)/16/No.160. Paris:AMAE.
11 Roux, French Vice Consul, Nairobi, to MAE. (1947, February 8). AL/PB/16/No.42. Paris:AMAE.
Yet, the Franco-Rhodesian relationship remained extremely constrained in the mid-1940s. The French diplomatic presence in Salisbury was confined to a solitary Consular Agent, meaning that the principal sources of French information about the region did not come directly from Rhodesia, but from the French Consulate in the neighbouring British territory of Kenya as well as the French diplomatic representation in South Africa. In Paris, interest in Rhodesia in this immediate post-war period was limited. Despite being established in 1944 to oversee all non-Francophone territories in Africa, the Afrique-Levant department at the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE) initially appeared unconcerned by this region of Anglophone Central Southern Africa. This central indifference is evidenced by the explicit failure of the Quai to reply to repeated requests from Nairobi in early 1947 for a government bursary for a South African student resident in Salisbury to study in France and improve her language skills in preparation for doctoral studies in French literature. French trade in the region was also minimal during this period, as strict duties and tariffs imposed on countries outside the sterling zone restricted the quantity of trade between France and Britain’s territories in Central Southern Africa. A few private companies attempted to breach these regulations and establish closer trading links with Southern and Northern Rhodesia, such as Nice-based Parfums Jean Duff. However, such efforts were condemned by those on the ground in British Africa and believed to have a negative impact on France’s interests in the

12 Roux to MAE. (1947, February 8). AL/PB/16/No.42. Paris:AMAE.
Beaulieux, French Consul, Nairobi, to MAE. (1947, August 7). AL/PB No. 239. Paris:AMAE.
region. Beyond engagement in these limited spheres, relations between France and Rhodesia did not exist.

**French perceptions of Southern Rhodesia in the post-war period**

In 1947, however, this all changed, with the establishment of a French Consulate in Salisbury providing the catalyst for the expansion of relations between France and Rhodesia. Before exploring the development of the Franco-Rhodesian connection in the years that followed - the focus of Chapter Two - it is necessary to obtain a deeper understanding of how Rhodesia was viewed by the French observing and operating in this region of Anglophone Southern Africa, and how and why these French interpretations were formulated. Therefore, this chapter will now examine the predominant French perceptions of Rhodesia during this period, before assessing the different influences that informed these views.

‘*Un pays jeune et en pleine expansion*’: French views of Rhodesia after 1947

In contrast to the relative neglect and disinterest in Rhodesia in the pre-war and immediate post-war periods, it is possible to detect in the years following Francières’ arrival in Salisbury a growing awareness about

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14 Roux to MAE. (1947, February 7). AL/PB/16/No. 41. Paris:AMAЕ.
Rhodesia amongst certain French policy-makers, diplomats and bureaucrats in Paris, London and on the ground in Anglophone Africa. France’s new interest in Rhodesia stemmed from common conceptions of the region as ‘un des centres d’évolution les plus actifs de l’Afrique’. According to Réginald de Warren, French Vice Consul to Salisbury (1950-1955), Rhodesia’s wealth and economic vibrancy was the result of ‘les richesses naturelles, le climat, les conditions d’installation… la modicité des taxations ainsi que des frais de main d’œuvre’. This, in turn, contributed to the region’s industrial and economic development on a scale described by Paul-Marc Henry, Deputy Director of African Affairs at the Quai, as ‘magnifique’ and ‘remarquable’. Positive interpretations of Rhodesia’s economy continued into the late 1950s, with the ‘amélioration spectaculaire’ of the Federation’s trade deficit in 1959 cited as evidence of the region’s ‘dynamisme’ and ‘développement extraordinairement rapide’. The Southern Rhodesian capital city was also likened to ‘une ville américaine neuve, étonnante dans ce décor africain’.

Alongside these perceptions of economic vitality and modernity, the French observing and operating in the region also viewed Rhodesia’s white settler minority in a favourable light. The territory’s European population, which in

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the 1950s comprised of a unique blend of British, South African and Rhodesian-born settlers, was perceived of as being well acquainted with the French language; aware of ‘l’importance et la valeur’ of France, its culture and its social, economic and political action in its overseas territories; and, as such, was perceived as ‘sincèrement francophile’. This francophilia was evidenced by the enthusiastic reception given to André Siegfried of the Académie Française during his visit to Rhodesia in September 1948, as well as through numerous favourable accounts of France in the Rhodesian press. In 1954 and 1955, for example, sympathetic articles concerning the French plight in Indochina were published in the colony’s main settler newspaper, The Rhodesia Herald, including an editorial that expressed the view that France was better qualified than any other European power to resolve the crisis in South East Asia. Other positive press reports included an encouraging account of the Assemblée Nationale’s decision not to ratify the EDC treaty in 1954 and glowing commentaries on French colonial policies. Rhodesian politicians also publically aired their admiration for France, such as Abrahamson, a member of the Southern Rhodesian Parliament who, prior to a visit to France in

21 Barber (1967) has estimated that, in 1951, 32.7% of Rhodesia’s 125,000 white settlers had been born in Rhodesia, 30.5% had been born in South Africa (of which 13.5% were of Afrikaner descent) and 28.8% had been born in Britain.

Warren to MAE. (1951, October 9). AL/PB/16/No.43. Paris: AMAE.
AL/SEAB/2/No.265. Paris: AMAE.
1956, described his ‘vive sympathie’ for France. In light of its amenable settler population, France’s “men-on-the-spot” in Anglophone Africa believed that French initiatives in Rhodesia had ‘bonne chances de succès’.

This new French interest centred on a common conception of Rhodesia as a separate territory, open to a fresh French presence, with the region’s international status as a colony in the British Empire viewed merely as a secondary concern. This sentiment is expressed explicitly in diplomatic correspondence from the French post in Salisbury, where Rhodesia was frequently described as ‘un jeune pays’ or a ‘nouvel état africain’. These sentiments were echoed across the government in Paris. A report produced by the Ministère de la France d’Outre-Mer (MOF) in the late 1940s, entitled ‘L’évolution récente et les tendances actuelles de la politique coloniale britannique’, emphasised the likelihood that an eighth British dominion would be formed from the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland. The Afrique-Levant department of the Quai also portrayed Rhodesia as a ‘futur dominion… en pleine expansion’. This shared vision of Rhodesia as a vibrant and increasingly independent entity contributed to the development of a sentiment amongst certain groups in the French government and

28 Warren to MAE. (1953, March 30). AD/Salisbury/1/No.68. Nantes:AD.
29 Anonymous. (nd.). L’évolution récente et les tendances actuelles de la politique coloniale britannique. Fonds ministériels (FM)/1AFFPOL/393. Aix:ANOM.
diplomatic service that Rhodesia was a region in which France had ‘un
grand intérêt’.\textsuperscript{31}

At first glance, this growing disregard for Rhodesia’s status as a colony
within the British Empire could be interpreted simply as a French
observation about the growing fissure between Britain and Rhodesia in the
post-war period. The French engaged in Rhodesian affairs often reported
upon Anglo-Rhodesian differences at this time. In 1949, following his visit
to Rhodesia the previous year, Siegfried wrote of the desire of the
Rhodesian settlers to establish a Central African Dominion of Southern and
Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Siegfried noted, however, that
‘l’Angleterre n’envisage pas le projet avec faveur’ (1949, p.137), indicating
a breach between the Rhodesian white minority and the British government.
Similar sentiments emanated from the Quai and the French diplomatic
service. A report from the MAE in 1957, for example, noted how ‘les
rapports quotidiens difficiles entre Salisbury et Londres accroissent le désir
d’indépendance des Rhodésiens’,\textsuperscript{32} whilst France’s representatives in
London described ‘la menace d’une nouvelle “Boston tea Party” en
Rhodésie’.\textsuperscript{33}

The fact that the British authorities transferred increasing responsibilities for
external affairs to the settler government during this period also contributed

Paris:AMAE.
to French conceptions of the territory as an increasingly independent entity and, subsequently, an area in which France could legitimately participate, in spite of its colonial status. This can be seen in despatch from Warren that cited Rhodesia’s membership of the Commission de Coopération Technique en Afrique au Sud du Sahara (CCTA), its inclusion in the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and Huggins’ participation in the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conferences as proof of the settler government’s autonomy.  

More generally, the Federation was described as ‘un état, membre pour son compte de diverses organisations internationales, doté d'un gouvernement propre et d'un statut se rapprochant beaucoup de celui des États du Commonwealth britannique’. Thus, it is possible to interpret the French conception of Rhodesia, not in terms of its status as a colony within the British Empire, but as a new, young and autonomous country, as a commentary upon the state of Anglo-Rhodesian relations, as well as a response to Rhodesia’s economic growth and the existence of an amenable, francophile settler minority.

**Manifestations of France’s foreign policy mind-set in Rhodesia**

The long-standing Anglo-French rivalry on the African continent, however, suggests that France’s new conceptions of Rhodesia might have been more than a mere observation about declining Anglo-Rhodesian relations.

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Moreover, the fact that this shift in France’s understanding of Rhodesia took place in 1947, at the moment of the onset of the Cold War, indicates that the new French understanding of Rhodesia could be linked to France’s wider foreign policy concerns in the growing bipolarity of the post-war era. In light of this hypothesis, it is the purpose of this section to explore the manifestations of France’s foreign policy mind-set in Rhodesian setting and assess the extent to which this framework can be usefully applied to explain France’s growing interest in the British colony of Rhodesia after 1947.

*Rayonnement in Rhodesia: Anglophone Africa and the maintenance of France’s Great Power status*

The first element of France’s foreign policy mind-set – the desire to use the French presence in Africa as a means of assuring France’s position on the world stage – can clearly be identified in the Rhodesian setting. At a simple level, Rhodesia was seen as a new trading partner for France’s overseas colonies, with the potential to enhance the economic wellbeing of the French Union and, subsequently, the strength of France’s position overseas. This was especially true with regards to the French colony in closest geographical proximity to Rhodesia, the island of Madagascar. Thus, from 1948 onwards, trade between British Central Southern Africa and Madagascar was actively encouraged by France’s “men-on-the-spot” in Salisbury, Nairobi and Tananarive.36

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Economic relations were also promoted between Rhodesia and France’s African Empire at large. In 1952, the MOF sent the following request to the High Commissioners in AOF, AEF, Cameroun and Madagascar:

je vous demande d’encourager et de multiplier les contacts avec nos voisins britanniques (ceci intéresse particulièrement nos territoires continentale, mais concerne aussi bien qu’un moindre degré Madagascar).37

The following year, the decision was made to grant Mr MacFarlane (Southern Rhodesian Trade Commissioner in British East Africa) jurisdiction in Madagascar and AEF.38 Similarly, economic motivations were cited alongside concerns about French prestige in the Afrique-Levant department’s promotion of the participation of AEF, Madagascar and Réunion in the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition of 1953 to mark one hundred years since the birth of Rhodesia’s founder (Shutt & King, 2005).39 All of these measures aimed to enhance the French colonial economy, revealing how the new French interest in Rhodesia stemmed from wider concerns about the maintenance of France’s presence on the African continent.

Alongside this belief that Rhodesia could indirectly influence the restoration of France’s Great Power status, there was also a perception amongst the French observing and operating in Rhodesia that this British colony might have a direct role to play in France’s pursuit of grandeur on the international stage. Cultural ventures lay at the heart of France’s strategies

Beaulieux to MAE. (1949, February 26). AL/PB/16/No.68. Paris:AMAE.
37 MOF to AOF, AEF, Madagascar & Cameroon. (1952, April 22). MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/83. Aix:ANOM.
38 AL to MOF. (1952, November 7). AL/PB/16/No.1848. Paris:AMAE.
MOF to MAE (1953, October 7). FM/IAFFPOL/2126/No.7187. Aix:ANOM.
MOF to Madagascar (1953, October 23). MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/84/No.7690. Aix:ANOM.
39 MAE to MOF. (1952, November 7). PB/16/No.1848. Paris:AMAE.
in the region from the outset, with the French language and culture consistently promoted as a means of securing the ‘rayonnement exceptionnel du prestige français’ in Rhodesia. More broadly, Rhodesia was viewed as a base from which to pursue ‘le rayonnement française sur le continent noir’, with this British territory increasingly integrated into a ‘un plan plus général’ that sought to develop ‘une position privilégiée par rapport aux pays tiers’ for France. It was this imperative that prompted, for example, France’s representatives on the ground to promote to the Quai the participation of citizens from the former French African colonies in a summer school set to take place at the University of Salisbury in June-September 1963 on the grounds that it would ‘permettre une meilleure connaissance par les rhodésiens, blancs ou noirs, de l’œuvre que nous avons accomplie en Afrique et de la situation économique et politique de ces anciennes colonies’. According to Jean Desparmet, French Consul General to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1963-1965), initiatives such as these were as essential in light of ‘les intérêts et les responsabilités de la France sur une fraction importante du continent’ and ‘le rôle capital que nous jouons dans “l’autre Afrique”’, which meant that France had ‘une obligation de consacrer à ces activités une attention toute spéciale’.

Engagement with Rhodesia, therefore, created new avenues through which French influence on the African continent – perceived as a vital source of

42 Siguret to MAE. (1956, February 3). AL/SEAB/8/No.44. Paris:AMAE.
44 Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:AMAE.
Desparmet to MAE. (1964, February 20). AL/SEAB/15/No.68. Paris:AMAE.
strength in the post-war period - could be both directly and indirectly maintained. This, in turn, demonstrates the application of the wider French belief that Africa was crucial to the maintenance of France’s Great Power Status not only to the French African Empire, but also to Anglophone Africa.

Friend or foe?: France’s relations with “les Anglo-Saxons” in the Anglophone African context

Kent (1992) and Michel (1983) have described the extremes of conflict and cooperation that characterised Anglo-French relations in the post-war African context. With the onset of the Cold War, Britain and France’s shared interest in ensuring that their colonies developed in ways that would keep them in the Western sphere (Kent, 1992, p.160), along with the need for a common agenda to combat growing criticism of colonialism; the UN trusteeship agenda, especially in the case of Togoland; and the possibility that increased American aid to Africa would undermine Britain and France’s credibility as enlightened colonial powers, raised the possibility of Anglo-French cooperation in the African setting (Kent, 1992, p.198-199; Michel, 1983, pp.155, 162). However, although collaboration was sometimes possible a local level (Kent, 1992, p.329), as well as with regards to technical issues (Michel, 1983, p.168), large-scale political and economic cooperation initiatives in Africa were persistently blighted by different aims, approaches and administrative practices (Kent, 1992, pp.329-332), along
with France’s growing concerns about the involvement Britain’s closest ally, the USA, on the African continent (Michel, 1983, p.166).

These patterns in Anglo-French relations also emerged in the Rhodesian setting. Rhodesia’s status as a British colony meant that collaboration with the UK government was essential for France to operate in the region. Thus, French diplomats and policy-makers sought British approval for the development of France’s relations with Rhodesia. This is evidenced in French requests in 1955 for permission to receive Rhodesian statesmen in Paris, consult with the British Board of Trade before finalising Franco-Federal commercial agreements in 1956, and efforts to gain British support for the technical and commercial mission to the Federation by Alstom, a large French firm involved in transport and power generation, in 1959.

In the immediate post-war period, Rhodesia also formed part of broader Anglo-French efforts to cooperate to preserve their respective African Empires. Direct Anglo-French exchanges of information concerning Rhodesia took place during this period, in much the same way that MOF collaborated with the Colonial Office, and Afrique-Levant section of the Quai maintained contacts with the West Africa Department of the FO over the question of West Africa (Michel, 1983, p.156). In August and

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September 1952, for example, on the request of Henry Hopkinson, Minister of State for the Colonies (1952-1955), Warren met with Peter Smithers MP to share information about events taking place in Rhodesia in line with the ‘désir commun des deux gouvernements d'harmoniser leur politique en Afrique’. 48

Southern Rhodesia was also the only non-independent African member of the CCTA, an organisation founded by the UK and French governments in 1949 with the aim of preserving European colonial rule in Africa in the face of growing international interventionism, in particular pressure from the Americans (Kent, 1992, p.284; Michel 1983, p.162). The French Foreign Ministry also viewed Southern Rhodesia as part of a strategy of Franco-British cooperation in the Indian Ocean. A report from the Direction des Affaires Politiques at the Quai to the MOF attests to this fact, listing the various interactions between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa, especially the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar, and stating how the department has ‘toujours recherché le plus grand nombre d’occasions possibles de multiplier les contacts dans tous les domaines et à tous les échelons, avec nos voisins britanniques’. 49 In addition, Rhodesia was of interest to the Comité Franc-Sterling, an organisation linked to the Centre National du Commerce Extérieur (CNCE) and the Ministry for Economic Affairs, with the objective of promoting French economic exchange with the UK. The committee’s remit extended beyond the UK metropole, to its colonies, seen in the important role it played in arranging a technical mission to the

49 MAE to MOF. (nd). MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/83. Aix:ANOM.
Federation in 1957,\textsuperscript{50} as well as the visit to Salisbury from Henry Caustelnault, the organisation’s Secretary General, in February 1960.\textsuperscript{51}

However, French concerns about Anglo-Saxon imperialism on the African continent, along with the desire to maintain foreign policy autonomy, were persistently present in the minds of the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs. This can be seen especially in the way in which certain French policymakers, diplomats and bureaucrats identified opportunities in Rhodesia for France to combat British and American dominance and to act independently from the “Anglo-Saxon” powers. Although there were clear limits to this strategy - it was obviously impossible to prevent “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration in a region already ruled by the British and in which the United States occupied a privileged position due to its “special relationship” with the territory’s colonial ruler – the French observing and operating in Rhodesia nevertheless conceived of the region as one in which the broader objective of assuring autonomy from “les Anglo-Saxons” could be achieved. On the one hand, engaging with the settler government created the possibility to reduce France’s reliance on the sterling and dollar currencies. This opportunity is explicitly outlined in an Agence France Presse Special Bulletin published by the \textit{Central African Review} in 1956 that noted how,

\begin{quote}
France has a heavy balance of trade against her when dealing with Sterling bloc. The opportunity to redress this by selling to the Federation is becoming well known in France, but plans for a full scale
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50} Colmant to Comité Franc-Sterling. (1956, October 8). AL/SEAB/8/No.561502. Paris:MAAE.
\textsuperscript{51} Colmant to DREE. (1957, June 19). AL/SEAB/1/57861. Paris:AMAE.
assault on the Central African market must inevitably mature slowly.\textsuperscript{52}

On the other hand, by promoting Franco-Rhodesian trade and the French language and culture in Rhodesia, it was possible to reduce the “Anglo-Saxon” stranglehold over commerce and culture in the region. As such, in 1951, efforts were made to supersede Britain as the main supplier of lorries and locomotives to the region,\textsuperscript{53} whilst in 1953 Warren held talks with the Rhodesian authorities about France’s possible replacement of the US as Rhodesia’s principal provider of tyres, whisky, utility vehicles and cigarette papers, all of which were important French exports. This was all the more appealing in light of the French perception that ‘Mr Bertram [the Secretary General of the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry] ne semble pas s’inquiéter de la zone dollar’.\textsuperscript{54} Equally, cultural initiatives were conceived of as a chance to reduce Anglophone dominance in the region, with arguments for the extension of an exhibition of French contemporary art touring South Africa to Southern Rhodesia in 1951, for example, centring on Rhodesia’s position in the Anglophone world in contrast to its separation from the Francophone sphere,\textsuperscript{55} and the importance of creating a French Chair at the University of Salisbury heightened by Rhodesia’s status as an “Anglo-Saxon” country.\textsuperscript{56} France’s interest in developing ties with Rhodesia after 1947 can be understood, therefore, as part of a broader


\textsuperscript{55} Note pour Erlanger. (1950, July 17). AL/PB/16. Paris:MAAE.

\textsuperscript{56} Warren to MAE. (1955, March 17). AL/SEAB/1/No.51. Paris:MAAE.
strategy that aimed to reduce France’s reliance on the “Anglo-Saxon” powers, particularly in fiscal terms, and prevent Anglophone cultural and economic dominance of the African continent.

French concerns about “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration of the African continent grew in line with the growing closeness of the Anglo-American “special relationship”, particularly in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis of 1956, when Britain moved ever closer to the United States, convinced that ‘only America could be the buttress of their security, power and interests’ (Tombs & Tombs, 2006, p.617). The French, who attributed their humiliation at Suez to the fact that ‘once again, timorous Albion had let France down’, resented their exclusion from the Anglo-American rapprochement, which they viewed as confirmation of their need to act autonomously from the “Anglo-Saxons” (Tombs & Tombs, 2006, p.617). Thus, according to Vaïsse (1989, p.335, cited in Tombs & Tombs, 2006, p.617), for France, relations with Britain were “never the same again”.

This shift informed French approaches to Rhodesia, particularly in the context of the CCTA. A report from 1956 prepared by the Afrique-Levant department noted how ‘l’échec britannique dans l’affaire de Suez’ contributed to ‘une perte de confiance à l’égard de la métropole’ amongst Rhodesia’s white settler population. Moreover, the French observed how, au sein de la CCTA notamment... la politique française bénéficie de cette évolution. Nous pourrions en bénéficier également dans le domaine des relations économiques quoique ici la préférence
impériale et la dépendance vis-à-vis des capitaux de la cité soit très étroite. 57

Thus, in certain quarters of the French government, possibilities in Rhodesia were identified as a result of Britain’s declining position in the region, opportunities that were all the more appealing in light of French resentment of British behaviour at Suez and its aftermath. In a similar vein, in 1957, a centrally produced paper noted how the growing divide between Salisbury and London led Rhodesia’s white settlers to be more open ‘aux conseils et aux offres étrangers’. 58 This underscores not only an awareness of the problems Britain faced in Rhodesia, but also the opportunities it afforded to France to break free from the stranglehold of Anglophone economic dominance of the region. France’s desire to exploit Britain’s weaknesses in the region is symptomatic, therefore, of the persistent French hostility towards Britain and the growing French desire to operate autonomously from the UK and the United States, even in regions that formed part of the Anglophone African sphere.

As relations between London and the white settler government in Salisbury soured in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the opportunities for France in Rhodesia and elsewhere in Britain’s traditional African domain increased further. The French observing the situation in the region noted Britain’s growing difficulties on the African continent, as its inability to deal with the Rhodesian problem clashed with the momentum towards majority rule in Anglophone West Africa and the British rhetoric of decolonisation, as set


des contaminations se sont produites entre les hommes : si Lumumba est allé recueillir la bonne parole à Accra, il en est de même du Dr. Banda (Nyassaland) [sic] jusqu’alors homme très modéré. 59

This demonstrates a growing French awareness of the disconnect between the different British approaches to the question of African decolonisation and how the decision to introduce majority rule to the Gold Coast and Ghana was contributing to the unravelling of British control over its colonies in East and Central Southern Africa.

The French were consistently perplexed by the British approach to Rhodesia and Africa more broadly. The term ‘curious’ was often used in French descriptions of Britain’s Rhodesian policy, seen in 1957, when Siguret, French Vice Consul to Salisbury (1955-1958), labelled events surrounding an attempt to amend the Federal constitution as ‘curieuse’; 60 whilst the

Anglo-Rhodesian conversations in 1959 was described as having ‘une curieuse sècheresse’.  

61 This, in turn, reveals an ingrained French incomprehension of the British approach to African affairs. More explicitly, Southern Rhodesia’s quasi-independent status, the perceived root of Britain’s problems in the region, was attributed to ‘la souplesse de l’articulation administrative anglaise’, something that stood in contrast to the more rigid, refined approach adopted by the French, where either ‘un pays est totalement indépendant ou il ne l’est pas’.  

62 In the minds of the French, therefore, Britain’s problems in Rhodesia were unique to the British context and could not occur in the French Empire. This conception is an interesting mirror image of the British belief that many elements of the Algerian conflict were ‘specifically French problems unlikely to occur in the British context’ (Thomas, 2000, p.213), in spite of the obvious similarities between the situation in Algeria and the problems that the British faced as a result of growing white settler influence over the colonial administrations in Southern Africa. This, in turn, reveals the persistent disconnect between British and French approaches to the African continent.

Of course, until 1962, France faced its own, arguably graver problems in Algeria, where ‘the scale and intensity’ of the colonial war ‘surpassed anything in Britain’s recent imperial past’ (Thomas, 2000, p.11). Thomas (2000, p.213) has described the British government’s relief, alongside ‘the occasional glimpse of smugness’, that its difficulties in the colonies were not as bad as the problems that the French faced in Algeria. More broadly,

prior to 1962, Britain had tended to gain the upper hand in the Anglo-French battle for legitimacy on the African continent, with victories over France in the context of the League of Nations Mandate Commission in the inter-war period and, later, success in presenting their methods in Africa as more suitable preparation for independence than French assimilationary tactics (Dimier, 2004, p.275).

However, as Anglo-Rhodesian relations continued to decline in the early 1960s, the situation shifted substantially, as Britain’s inability to resolve its disagreements with the Rhodesian authorities prevented the full decolonisation of Anglophone Africa. The French engaged in Rhodesian affairs acknowledged this obstacle to the end of the British African project. In November 1962, Desparmet claimed that ‘les anglais devront mettre dans leur jeu les leaders africains et convaincre les européens de la Fédération encore très réticents’, if the British government was to achieve its objectives in Rhodesia and ‘mettre fin dès que possible à ses difficultés coloniales’.63 The pivotal position of Rhodesia and its settler leaders to the wider success of Britain’s efforts to retreat from Africa was also noted by the French in London, who claimed in February 1962 that ‘l’échec de la Conférence de Lancaster House marque un sérieux à-coup dans le processus de décolonisation mis au point par M. Macleod’.64 At this stage, Jean Chauvel, the French Ambassador to London (1955-1962), claimed that ‘il serait prématuré de parler d’échec de sa politique africaine’. However, there was nevertheless the growing perception amongst the French observing and

operating in Rhodesia that Britain faced considerable difficulties in the region and that these difficulties, in turn, created a substantial obstacle to Britain’s ability to draw a line under its African Empire.\footnote{Courcel, French Ambassador, London, to MAE. (1962, February 27). AL/SEAB/16/No.229. Paris: AMAE.}

Britain’s continued problems in Rhodesia after 1962 stood in contrast to France’s own much more positive position on the African continent by this time. France had transferred power to the African majority in West Africa, successfully orchestrating the process so as to maintain France’s considerable influence over the region. Thus, according to Torrent (2012, p.43), France had gained ‘the lead in the decolonisation of West and Central Africa’ due to its ‘rapid, albeit superficial, transformation of its West and Equatorial territories’. The resolution of the Algerian conflict in 1962 further increased the French feeling of superiority when it came to African affairs as, despite eight years of violent conflict, France emerged with its reputation relatively intact, successfully “inventing” decolonisation to allow ‘the messy episodes’ of the Algerian War to disappear (Shepard, 2006, p.2).

By contrast, Britain’s position on the world stage was increasingly under threat, something that was acknowledged by the French Embassy in London in 1963. In a report on the subject of ‘trois ans de décolonisation britannique’, the French in London noted how,

\begin{quote}
La politique du "wind of change" a perdu évidemment de son dynamisme et de son prestige auprès de l’opinion internationale comme de l’opinion britannique. Les raisons de cet état de chose sont multiples… La plupart des problèmes
\end{quote}
sont résolus. Ceux qui ne le sont pas, comme le Rhodésie, ne peuvent pas l’être par simple application des principes du "wind of change".66

Speaking later about diplomacy and the independence of Rhodesia, Michael Palliser (cited in Charlton, 1990, p.15), a British diplomat who, amongst other things, served at the British Embassy in Paris in the late 1960s and early 1970s, set out a British perspective,

The French have been wiser than we have… While playing a leading role in Europe they’ve also managed to play a neo-imperial role. We have lost, and they dominate West Africa. Of course, the French empire was, essentially, a west African black empire, but they decided to keep as much as they could and by indirect methods they’ve succeeded. The French gave independence, quicker than we did, to all their African colonies. But they so managed the retreat from empire that they were able to leave garrisons behind and civil servants behind...

The roles had been reversed, therefore, with France gaining the upper hand over Britain in African affairs, as the UK government faced spiralling difficulties in dealing with an increasingly reactionary settler minority in Rhodesia.

This shift was especially evident in the UN, as France’s successful resolution of the Algerian crisis meant that it was no longer ‘the choice imperial villain’ (Thomas, 2000, p.213). Instead, attentions turned to the British and their failure to introduce majority rule in Southern Rhodesia. In 1961, limited constitutional reforms, which set out plans for the eventual introduction of majority rule, albeit at some point in the undetermined future, were implemented by the Southern Rhodesian government. In Britain, this reform was viewed as a sufficient safeguard that African

representation would soon be achieved and the UK parliament responded by surrendering its reserve powers over the territory. As such, according to Butler (2000, p.136), ‘settler leaders saw this constitution as the basis for Southern Rhodesia’s imminent independence’, although it was rejected by the National Democratic Party, an African nationalist party in Southern Rhodesia, which was the predecessor of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

It was in this context that Britain’s Rhodesian policies came under increasing scrutiny in the UN. In October 1961, for example, in the UN General Assembly’s (UNGA) Fourth Committee (the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee), Ghana demanded that Britain provide information on Southern Rhodesia under Article 732 of the UN Charter. Such a demand was unprecedented. Britain had never submitted information on Southern Rhodesia as, not only did it not receive information from the territory, but also because it did not believe it was required to do so in light of Southern Rhodesia’s self-governing status. Therefore, this created a situation that was highly problematic for the British government. In light of the expectation that a resolution was likely to be passed to this effect at the resumed sixteenth session in 1962, Britain sought measures to limit the damage inflicted on its Rhodesian policy and its international reputation (Watts, 2012, pp.187-188). One such initiative, although hitherto neglected in the historiography, was to approach the French government for its support for its Rhodesian policies in this international arena.

67 In his recent international history of the Rhodesian UDI, Watts (2012) has explored how Britain looked to the United States and its partners in the Old Commonwealth to help it manage the Rhodesian problem in the UN, but neglects British efforts to obtain French support for its Rhodesian policies in this international arena.
support. In February 1962, Hugh Foot, British Ambassador to the UN Trusteeship Council, approached Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, Permanent French Delegate on the UN Trusteeship Council, in an official capacity, to ask if the French delegation would take the initiative and propose to the Fourth Committee that it should no longer examine a resolution concerning Rhodesia on the grounds that ‘le Royaume-Uni n’a ni la possibilité ni le droit d’exiger du gouvernement de la Rhodésie du Sud des renseignements que ce dernier ne voudra pas lui communiquer’.68

Despite viewing this British argument as ‘parfaitement pertinents’ and acknowledging ‘l’importance réelle que nos alliés britanniques attachent au service qu’ils nous demandent’, France’s diplomats in New York expressed doubts about proposing a motion on the grounds that ‘nos amis africains pourraient s’étonner que nous nous départissions de notre réserve habituelle dans un problème où leur sensibilité est vive’. There was also the ‘risque supplémentaire d’attirer l’attention sur nos territoires, et départements d’outre-mer’ as well as ‘les accusations dont nous avons été l’objet à propos des problèmes du Katanga’.69 Similar reservations were raised by Paris and, as such, the French representation in New York was advised to inform Foot that France would be unable to propose a motion on Britain’s behalf, although it would support ‘toute motion hostile à l’examen d’une résolution

qui tend à attribuer à l’Assemblée un pouvoir d’appréciation que nous lui avons toujours contesté’.  

With France unwilling to act on their behalf, the British delegation was forced to put forward its own motion that the Committee not debate a resolution concerning Rhodesia. Although France supported Britain by voting in favour of this motion, it was defeated, and the UNGA adopted Resolution 1745 (XVI) by 57 votes to 21 (Britain, the United States and France all opposed the Resolution) that asked the Special Committee of Seventeen to examine the question of Southern Rhodesia and determine whether the territory could be viewed as non-self-governing as defined by Article 73 of the UN Charter (Watts, 2012, p.188). The instance is interesting not only as evidence of the ways in which the Rhodesian problem left the UK vulnerable to attack in the UN, but also how France, unwilling to risk the same fate, limited its support for Britain’s Rhodesian policy to actions that did not pose a risk to its international reputation, especially amongst the newly independent states in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa.

The French, and particularly those in the Elysée Palace, were acutely aware of Britain’s growing difficulties and the opportunities it gifted to France in Southern Africa and beyond. These sentiments are explicit in a note housed in the private archives of Jacques Foccart, which described ‘les cruels échecs de la décolonisation britannique’. Moreover, these failures are

represented as being of benefit to France, particularly the way in which Britain’s ‘multiples erreurs’ permitted France to replace ‘progressivement l’Angleterre en Afrique du Sud’. According to the author of this report, the British viewed this process with ‘inquiétude’ and ‘amertume’, something that may have been received with glee amongst certain parties in French government in light of the aforementioned smugness amongst the British with regards to France’s earlier problems in Algeria.  

The crisis in Rhodesia not only created opportunities for France to increase its activity in the region. It also permitted France to take the moral high ground on the international stage, attacking Britain’s African policy whilst simultaneously presenting France’s own approach to the continent in a more favourable light. This had consequences not only in Africa, but also more broadly. For example, the French often used Britain’s difficulties in retreating from Africa as a way to attacking Britain’s wider foreign policies. In 1963, for example, De Gaulle claimed that Britain’s failure to decolonise fully was evidence of its lack of commitment to the project of European integration and, as such, a strong motivation for keeping the United Kingdom out of the EEC (Shepard, 2006, p.7). Thus, Britain’s persistent problems in Rhodesia enhanced French efforts to prevent “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration of the European integration project and, as such, France’s wider Cold War strategy to secure foreign policy autonomy.

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Diplomats, bureaucrats, policy-makers and businessmen: the agents of France’s Rhodesian policy

The principal agents of France’s Rhodesian policy in the post-war period were French diplomats stationed in the Anglophone world. French “men-on-the-spot” in British Africa were often the first to bring opportunities in Rhodesia to the attention of those in Paris and the colonies. In 1948, for example, it was the French Consul in Kenya who initiated the extension of the commercial network that existed between Madagascar and British East Africa to Rhodesia, whilst, in 1953, it was Warren who first advocated the need for a Commercial Attaché in Salisbury.73 Even official trade negotiations were initially the responsibility of Frenchmen based in Southern Africa, notably in 1953, when the Commercial Advisor to the French Embassy in South Africa led the brokering of an official Franco-Rhodesian trade accord.74 In light of Rhodesia’s status as a British colony throughout the period in question, the French in London were also at the forefront of France’s presence in the region. In August 1949, for example, a visit to Salisbury from the French Commercial Advisor to Pretoria was carried out at the request of Jean de Sailly, the French Commercial Advisor in London.75 De Sailly remained active in the Franco-Rhodesian connection

75 Francières to MAE (1949, August 10). AL/PB/16/No.99. Paris:AMAE.
throughout the 1950s, travelling to Salisbury in 1956 on a goodwill mission as part of a broader effort to expand Franco-Rhodesian trade.⁷⁶

Although often responding to a push from the periphery, it is also possible to detect a growing interest in the development of Franco-Rhodesian ties in the French metropole during this period. Perhaps unsurprisingly given their department’s responsibility for Anglophone African affairs, the greatest metropolitan enthusiasm for France’s growing presence in Rhodesia came from the Afrique-Levant department of the Quai d’Orsay. In a letter to the Cultural Relations department of the MAE in April 1948, for example, the department openly claimed to attach ‘le plus grand prix’ to the development of relations with this British colony.⁷⁷ Thus, the department played a particularly active role in the establishment of Franco-Rhodesian links, such as in 1952, when it was vocal in its encouragement of French colonial participation in the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition planned for 1953.⁷⁸

Looking to French government more broadly, although interest in Rhodesia did not begin to develop until slightly later in the 1950s, there is clear evidence of a growing awareness of this British colony amongst certain policy-makers and bureaucrats outside of the Direction d’Afrique-Levant. In 1955, for example, the Quai sent a delegation to Rhodesia that included Louet, the Chef de Service of the Direction des Affaires Economiques at the MAE, Roussillon, a civil servant from the Secrétariat d’Etat aux Affaires

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⁷⁸ AL to MOF. (1952, November 7). AL/PB/16/No.1848. Paris:AMAE.
Economiques, who had also visited Rhodesia in 1954, and a representative from the French state-owned tobacco monopoly, the Service d'Exploitation Industrielle des Tabacs et des Allumettes (SEITA). This visit was intended to demonstrate to Rhodesia ‘l'intérêt que nous attachons au développement des échanges commerciaux, entre les deux pays’.79 Similarly, Welensky’s visit to French hydroelectric and railway plants in 1955 was viewed by the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières with ‘le plus grand intérêt pour le développement de notre expansion économique dans ce pays’.80

Alongside these state participants in Rhodesia, this period also saw the expansion of the activities of private companies and individuals in Rhodesia who, whilst operating largely within the broader interests of the French state, were nominally independent. This can be seen especially in the case of the Union aéromaritime des transports (UAT). After the departure in 1956 of the then government-owned airline, Air France, UAT became the only non-British or South African airline operating out of the Central African Federation.81 The creation of a twice-weekly air link with the French métropole led not only to UAT profits but also to a rise in Franco-Rhodesian tourism, with, for the first time, French tourists holidaying in Rhodesia.82 The success of UAT, was the result of individual endeavour, notably the two years of prospecting by an Air France representative that

82 Reynolds. France and the Federation.
prepared the ground for the establishment of a strong UAT base in the region.¹³

**Alternating actors, alternating agendas: the importance of context in shaping French responses to Rhodesia**

In the context of the French Empire, Thomas (2011, p.xvi) has described how,

> the professional, social, and familial milieus inhabited by colonial officials, soldiers, educators, religious orders, or settlers… molded responses to the workaday challenges of colonial life, whether at the level of high policy or at that of personal interaction with indigenous people.

This, in turn, shaped the nature of France’s relationship with its colonies, as is demonstrated by Chafer (2011, p.276), who argues that the overlapping, often contradictory, aims and approaches of different colonial élites influenced the process and outcomes of decolonisation in French West Africa. Similarly, the actions of each individual or group engaged in Rhodesian affairs were subject to numerous diverse influences and constraints that subsequently determined the shape and extent of Franco-Rhodesian relations following the establishment of the French Consulate in Salisbury in 1947.

France’s representatives in Anglophone Africa were generally men with military experience. The second and fourth French Consuls to Rhodesia, Warren (1950-1955) and Louis de Cabrol (1958-1961), for example, both

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served in the French army prior to their postings in Salisbury, Warren as a cavalry officer (1937-1946) and Cabrol in an array of roles in the period between 1932 and 1945, including fighting with the Forces Françaises Combattantes. This experience is likely to have imbued these diplomats with the French foreign policy mind-set, in particular the desire to restore France’s position on the world stage. The existence of this sentiment is manifest in the justifications given by French diplomats for the development of France’s position in the region. When promoting the appointment of a Commercial Attaché to the French office in Salisbury in 1953, for example, Warren expressed his concerns about France’s prestige in Rhodesia and its neighbours being ‘éclipsé par une propagande envahissante issue de certaines nations ex ennemies et absentes du sol africain’. Similarly, in 1954 and 1955, when the air link between Livingstone and the Madagascan capital of Tananarive was threatened with suspension, Warren warned of the ‘répercussions fâcheuses’ not only for relations between the Federation and Madagascar, but also for French companies wishing to establish themselves ‘dans ce pays neuf’, as it would give the local authorities ‘une fausse impression sur les qualités d’organisation, de persévérance et de sérieux des Français’. As such, the move posed a great risk to French prestige in the region and it was necessary to act quickly to ‘sauver la face vis-à-vis des Rhodésiens’. This, in turn, led Warren to

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Cabrol (baron Louis, Philippe, Mortimer de). Who’s who in France, p.346
86 Livingstone was a town in Northern Rhodesia, on the border with Southern Rhodesia. It is known today as Maramba, Zambia.
conclude that it was essential that ‘la lutte continue’ – ‘qu’une liaison soit maintenue avec Tananarive’.88

However, despite a shared appreciation of the wider French foreign policy mind-set, those in Paris and those on the ground in Anglophone Africa interpreted France’s foreign policy imperatives in different ways. This can be seen, for example, in debates surrounding automobile quotas in the mid-1950s. Perhaps in light of the importance attributed to the automobile industry in the French post-war economy, the privileged position of German car exports to the Federation was a source of envy amongst the French involved in Rhodesia. In 1956, for example, Pierre-Marie Colmant, Commercial Attaché to the French Consulate in Salisbury (1954-1957), wrote to the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry contrasting Southern Rhodesia’s imports of £61,750 worth of German automobiles during a six-month period with the paucity of France’s own yearly quota of just £8,625. As such, Colmant requested that a minimum yearly quota of £70,000 be established for Rhodesian purchases of French cars, based on the ratio of 1:2 (tobacco exports: automobile imports).89 However, Colmant’s efforts to bring quotas for French automobiles in line with German levels were met with concerns from the Direction Economique of the Quai, who believed that a request to increase the ratio of motorcars to tobacco might permit Germany to gain the same advantage, demonstrating a different interpretation of the situation in the context of the metropole.90

88 Warren to MAE. (1955, February 24). MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/84/No.20. Aix:ANOM.
90 Sebilleau to Salisbury. (1956, June 10). AL/SEAB/8/No.43/44. Paris:AMAE.
Although those in Salisbury and Paris both formulated their ideas in response to the same desire to consolidate France’s position in the region vis-à-vis other European powers, notably the source of its most recent domestic humiliation, Germany, their different contexts contributed to divergent approaches to the situation. Thus, although a shared worldview drove French economic engagement with Rhodesia in the post-war period, the alternatives ways in which the different actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs interpreted this foreign policy mind-set shaped French responses to the situation in Rhodesia.

Splits within the Quai were also apparent. In 1953, for example, following the establishment of the Federation, Warren called upon Paris to increase the status of the French Consulate in Salisbury. In this instance, the Afrique-Levant department quickly took up the cause, claiming that the elevation of the French Consulate to a Consulate General was ‘indispensable’ especially as ‘le Gouvernement Fédéral est devenu responsable… de l’exécution des obligations internationales du nouvel Etat’. In pressing for the improved status of the French representation in Salisbury, those in Paris charged with Anglophone African affairs, along with those on the ground, were also responding to the actions of other European powers in the region and, in particular, ‘l’ouverture, avec nombreux personnel, d’un Consulat général d’Allemagne en Rhodésie’. According to Warren, the German representation threatened to ‘nuire au

prestige française’,” an appeal, perhaps, to sensibilities in the central administration about France’s standing in Africa. The French Embassy in London also advocated the elevation of the status of France’s diplomatic representation in Salisbury, although their justification was based on requests from the British Foreign Office, evidence, once again, of how context was vital in informing the responses of French actors involved in Rhodesian affairs.

In spite of support in Salisbury, London and at the Afrique-Levant department for the elevation of the French Consulate in the Federation to the status of Consulate General, along with the positioning of this initiative within a broader strategy to project French power in the African setting, the Direction Générale du Personnel at the Quai claimed that such a move was ‘absolument impossible’, with funding unavailable ‘au moment où celui-ci demande au Département le suppression de huit consulats et consulats généraux’. As such, the only solution was to represent the mission locally as a Consulate General, without officially according the office this title or status. This instance reveals, therefore, how different interpretations of the same imperatives influenced French action in Rhodesia.

A similar divergence can be detected between the approaches of French state and non-state actors on the ground in Rhodesia, where, despite a shared enthusiasm for the expansion of the Franco-Rhodesian connection,

94 Warren to MAE. (1953, August 4). MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/62/No.177. Aix:ANOM.
the relationship was not always a smooth one. This can be seen in the activities of a Paris-based organisation, L’Expansion Economique Française à l’Etranger.⁹⁷ In 1953, this independent society organised a touring exhibition of several countries in Southern Africa, including Southern Rhodesia, entitled “Crosière Afrique Australe”, with the explicit aim “to make France better known and give South Africans and Rhodesians a chance of inspecting samples of its products”.⁹⁸ Despite this self-affirmed intention, the venture was not endorsed by French officials on the spot, who believed the tour would yield few ‘resultats tangibles’ and feared that efforts to expand Franco-Rhodesian trade, in contravention of the restrictive trade regime, risked creating ‘mécontentements tant chez les milieux professionnels que chez les consommateurs’.⁹⁹ By contrast, a hand-written response to a note from the Direction des Relations Culturelles at the Quai indicates that the Afrique-Levant department actually approved of the participation of France’s Johannesburg post in this enterprise.¹⁰⁰ This example serves to emphasise, therefore, on the one hand, the widespread influence of France’s foreign policy mind-set across the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs, and, on the other, the different ways in which this wider purpose was interpreted.

In addition to this divergence in interpretations of the French foreign policy mind-set between the centre and the periphery, as well as amongst private and public “men-on-the-spot”, the particular experiences and contexts of each individual agent of France’s Rhodesian policy informed the nature of their enthusiasm for the development and extension of Franco-Rhodesian ties. For diplomats representing France in English-speaking countries, the fact that their career paths were focused on the Anglophone world was of significance. Prior to his posting in Salisbury, Cabrol had been head of the military liaison mission to the Second British Army and represented France in various capacities in its engagement with the English-speaking countries, including as French Consulate to Boston (1946) and head of the mission in British-administered Khartoum (1952). He went onto serve as French Consul General to Los Angeles (1962) and to Edinburgh and Glasgow (1965-1972).  

Similarly, following the end of his posting in Salisbury, Warren took on roles in Cardiff (1956-1959), London (1959) and Philadelphia (1968).  

Similar patterns emerged amongst France’s commercial agents in Rhodesia, such as Colmant, who prior to his posting as the Head of Economic Expansion at the French Consulate General in the Central African Federation (1954-1957), served as Commercial Attaché to the French Embassy in London (1946-1954).

The links between France’s representatives on the ground and the Anglophone world were further augmented by the fact that British nationals were often called upon to act on behalf of the French state in Rhodesia. In

101 Cabrol (baron Louis, Philippe, Mortimer de). *Who’s who in France*, p.346
1953, for example, when a consular agency was established in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Southern Rhodesia, a French-speaking, British national by the name of James Gilchrist filled the post.\textsuperscript{104} Closer to the heart of the French presence in the region was Frank de Saint-Jorre, another UK national who in the late 1950s acted as a close contact of Colmant, facilitating the development of a strong French commercial presence in the region.\textsuperscript{105} Later, when Colmant’s successor, Hullo, had to return to Paris temporarily after just six months in his post, Saint-Jorre acted as French Commercial Attaché until a suitable official candidate was found to take up the position.\textsuperscript{106} France’s representatives on the ground in Rhodesia were oriented, therefore, towards the English-speaking world. This, in turn, may have increased their desire to promote the ties between France and British Africa.

Another significant influence over France’s “men-on-the-spot” was their physical presence on British African soil and, in the case of those based in Salisbury, their regular interaction with Rhodesian politicians. France’s diplomats enjoyed a privileged position in Rhodesia and were invited to official state events often as the sole foreign representatives in attendance, notably at the opening of the Theatre Royal in June 1953 and a ceremony to mark the establishment of the Supreme Court in 1955.\textsuperscript{107} The French on the ground in Rhodesia also maintained close personal relations with high-

\textsuperscript{104} Warren to MAE. (1953, April 20). AL/SEAB/2/No.95. Paris:AMAE.
\textsuperscript{105} Colmant to DREE. (1957, June 19). AL/SEAB/1/No.57861. Paris:AMAE.
\textsuperscript{106} Siguret to MAE. (1957, November 25). AL/SEAB/1. Paris:AMAE.
\textsuperscript{107} Warren to MAE. (1953, June 3). AL/SEAB/11/No.129. Paris:AMAE.
ranking Rhodesian politicians, including Huggins, Welensky, Bertram and F. H. N. Parry, Secretary to the Prime Minister and Cabinet (1953-1963), leading to the development of what the French Commercial Attaché to South Africa described as ‘un rapport constant avec les autorités rhodésiennes’. Relations also grew between Frenchmen and Southern Rhodesian businessmen, creating ‘réseaux commercial’.

These close links, in turn, shaped the approach of France’s “men-on-the-spot” to this British colony. In 1953, for example, Warren was the first to call for the consulate’s mandate to be extended to include Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland following the establishment of the Central African Federation in August 1953. Here, Warren’s situation on the ground was crucial, as it was an approach from the Federal Secretariat for External Affairs that prompted his request to Paris. The influence of this personal contact is also demonstrated by the justification of language teaching initiatives as a means to counterbalance the influence of South Africa in the region. In 1947, Francières claimed that the establishment of a branch of the Alliance Française in the Rhodesian capital ‘serait d’ailleurs vue sans déplaisir par les autorités locales qui favoriseraient sans doute tout ce qui pourrait balancer l’influence de l’Union [de l’Afrique du Sud]’.

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Siguret to MAE. (1955, August 31). Salisbury/1/No.325. Nantes:AD.


in 1953, Warren was vocal in his encouragement of the creation of a Chair in French at the new University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, on the grounds that ‘le chaire de française, dans l’esprit des fondateurs de l’Université, devait contrebalancer l’influence d’Afrique du Sud.’ More generally, it was claimed that,

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\text{tout effort, si modeste soit-il, de notre part... serait très apprécie par le gouvernement local qui veut absolument combattre une mouvement en formation, dans les milieux afrikaans, tendant a demander que l’Anglais et l’Afrikaans soient les deux langues officielles dans les écoles de la Rhodésie.}
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Thus, in promoting the spread of French language in Rhodesia, French “men-on-the-spot” were responding not only to an ingrained commitment to rayonnement, but also to their specific context. It is possible to argue, therefore, that by justifying ventures in Rhodesia in terms of the potential positive or negative impact for France’s international reputation, the French on the ground in Anglophone Africa were attempting to exploit the prevelance of the foreign policy mind-set in Paris so as to further an agenda based on links with Salisbury.

By contrast, in the French metropole, alternative priorities were at the forefront of the minds of policy-makers and bureaucrats engaged in Rhodesian affairs. The importance of adhering to international diplomatic protocol limited the extent to which metropolitan enthusiasm could be translated into action. In 1955, for example, when both Huggins and Welensky expressed their interest in visiting Paris as part of a wider effort to expand Franco-Rhodesian connections, the Federation’s status as ‘une


\[113\] Warren to MAE. (1951, May 21). AL/PB/16/No.76. Paris:AMAE.
colonie de la Couronne’ prevented the Quai from offering the two Rhodesian statesmen ‘une invitation officielle’. There was also the problem of creating a precedent that would permit official invitations to be sent to the Prime Ministers of the Gold Coast or Nigeria if they visited Europe. The department went to great lengths to ensure that the inability of the French government to receive representatives from this British colony officially would not discourage Huggins and Welensky from making these stopovers, with claims that ‘les autorites Français seraient heureuses de les accueillir’. However, Rhodesia’s status as a British colony was a persistent obstacle for those in Paris wishing to conduct direct relations with Rhodesia.

There were also other, more pressing concerns, both at home and in France’s Empire, during this period, which distracted the attentions and resources of metropolitan policy-makers and bureaucrats away from the British colony of Rhodesia. This is manifest in the way in which the French Consulate in Salisbury remained consistently underfunded throughout the period in question. In 1955, for example, Warren complained to Schafflauer, Diplomatic Advisor to the French High Commission in Madagascar, about how the Department’s refusal to pay for an additional secretary at French office in Salisbury meant that he had to personally type

correspondence, something that he acknowledged he did extremely poorly.\textsuperscript{117} The following year, similar grievances were aired by Warren’s successor, Siguret, who complained about the insufficient expenses accorded to his office and the fact that the head of the post was often forced to cover the cost of accommodation and transportation for more than a year before reimbursement from Paris. Such weak financial backing, he warned, risked reducing the quality of the service offered by the Consulate.\textsuperscript{118}

There was, therefore, shared enthusiasm for the development of Franco-Rhodesian ties across a range of departments in French government and the diplomatic service, as well as amongst an array of private individuals and groups. This interest was formulated with reference to the wider French foreign policy mind-set. However, the way in which these foreign policy imperatives were interpreted varied substantially between those based in the centre and on the periphery, as well as between departments in the Quai and amongst state and non-state actors on the ground in British Africa. Moreover, the varying contexts and experiences of the agents of France’s Rhodesia presence both propelled and constrained French action in Rhodesia. Careers based in the Anglophone world and personal relations with Rhodesian politicians, civil servants and businessman, enhanced enthusiasm for the expansion of France’s presence in Rhodesia amongst “men-on-the-spot”. By contrast, in Paris, despite interest in certain quarters for the development of French links with this British colony, diplomatic protocols, intra-departmental differences and alternating priorities served to

\textsuperscript{117} Warren to Schaffauser, Diplomatic Advisor, French High Commission, Tananarive. (1955, February 10). MAD/GGM/D/6(9)/102/No.20. Aix:ANOM.

limit the central support accorded to Anglophone African initiatives. This, in turn, further increased the importance of France’s private and public “men-on-the-spot” in the Franco-Rhodesian connection, something that, as we shall see in the second half of this thesis, was to have important consequences for the nature of French relations with Rhodesia after 1965.

Conclusions

In the post-war period, France’s engagement with the outside world was founded upon a foreign policy mind-set that was preoccupied with restoring France’s status on the world stage. Africa was situated at the heart of this venture and viewed as having a privileged role to play in the restoration of French grandeur. Preventing Anglo-Saxon infiltration of the French chasse gardée and maintaining foreign policy autonomy from the Anglo-American allies was equally crucial to this endeavour. France’s particular commitment to its African Empire in the post-war period renders the new interest of certain French actors in the British colony of Rhodesia after 1945 as somewhat perplexing. Yet, as this chapter has demonstrated, it was precisely because of France’s broader foreign policy objectives at this time that Rhodesia began to enter the African vision of small group of policy-makers, diplomats and bureaucrats in the post-war period. In this British colony, French actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs found a new arena in which to enhance France’s position on the African continent, in the existing French colonies and beyond. In addition, although it was obviously impossible for the French to eradicate completely the Anglo-American
partners from this British dependency, the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs nevertheless identified possibilities in the region to reduce Anglophone dominance whilst simultaneously pursuing a policy that was, at least in part, autonomous from the “les Anglo-Saxons”. The French foreign policy mind-set fuelled, therefore, a new interest in Rhodesia amongst certain French diplomats, policy-makers, bureaucrats and businessmen based in Paris, London and on the ground in Anglophone Africa in the post-war period.

The way in which this foreign policy mind-set manifested itself, however, was not homogenous. In the same way that colonial minds were ‘far from uniform’ (Keese, 2011, p.331), the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs were influenced by their experiences and the context in which they were situated. The French on the ground in Anglophone Africa, with their ties to the settler political and business élite, were, for example, more inclined than their counterparts in Paris to promote, without reserve, the development of Franco-Rhodesian relations. By contrast, despite a keen interest in certain metropolitan quarters about the growth of France’s presence in the region, the extent to which those in the Quai could act upon this enthusiasm was restricted by the realities of making foreign policy in the post-war period, in particular the diplomatic protocols associated with Rhodesia’s colonial status, but also France’s more pressing commitments at home and overseas which took precedence in the allocation of French resources and attentions. Put another way, despite a growing awareness of the potential opportunities
for France in British-ruled Central Southern Africa, Rhodesia was not a foreign policy priority in Paris.

Nevertheless, in spite of its relatively low-status on the French foreign policy agenda after 1945, Rhodesia did become, during this period, part of France’s African vision. Cooper (2005, p.29) has claimed that, after 1946, in response to the challenges of legitimacy to the French Empire, the colonial nature of the empire was replaced by a broader, imperial vision of Greater France. Through analysis of the case study of Rhodesia, it is possible to take this argument one step further, and argue that in order to protect and enhance France’s influence overseas, French policy-makers were forced to diversify their approach to the African continent, seeking new, and previously untapped arenas in which France’s wider foreign policy objectives could be achieved. The post-war period witnessed, therefore, a reconfiguration of France’s understanding of the African continent, as certain French actors went beyond the traditional binaries of colonial and foreign policy, coloniser and colonised, that had previously dictated France’s engagement with the African continent.
Chapter Two

France and Rhodesia before 1965: the policy and its significance

Chapter One has charted the process by which France’s African vision began to expand in the post-war period to include the British colony of Rhodesia. This stands in contrast to the existing literature of France’s engagement with Africa in the years prior to 1960, which concentrates on relations between France and its colonial dependencies. Although, as was explored in the introduction to this thesis, scholars have begun recently to explore France’s engagement with regions outside of its traditional sphere of African influence in the post-colonial period,¹ French engagement in non-French speaking territories before 1960 remains the subject of only minimal scholarly consideration.² French participation in Rhodesia in the post-war period has not yet been the subject of any historical analysis. This is in spite of its interconnection to France’s broader foreign policy objectives at this time, as outlined in Chapter One.

It is the aim of this chapter, therefore, to fill in this gap in the historiography by exploring the practical consequences of the expansion of France’s African vision to include a British colony and examine the development of

relations between France and Rhodesia (as well as, to a lesser extent, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as, from 1953 until 1963 they were joined to Southern Rhodesia in the Central African Federation and administered by the Federal authorities in Salisbury) in the period between 1947 and 1965. The temporal scope of this chapter is intentionally broad to take into account Rhodesia’s colonial status throughout the period in question, but also to permit this study to break free of the binaries that dominate existing studies of France’s foreign and African policies, in particular the tendency to separate the Fourth Republic from its successor and the artificial divide between the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Given the importance of the establishment of the French Consulate as a catalyst for the growth of Franco-Rhodesian relations in the post-war period, the chapter will take as its starting point France’s expanding diplomatic presence in the region. It will then explore the development of Franco-Rhodesian cultural and commercial ties during this period. Following on from this analysis of the growing bilateral relations between France and Rhodesia, and in light of the fact that certain French actors identified Rhodesia as a means to strengthen the French African Empire, this chapter will then explore the development of the triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia in response to this imperative. Consideration will be given to how these relations shifted following the formal transfer of rule to the African majority in West and Equatorial Africa in 1960. This investigation, in turn, will provide us with
the framework essential to analysing French involvement in Rhodesia after 1965, the subject of the second part of this thesis.

Putting France on the ‘map’ in Rhodesia:³ the development of Franco-Rhodesian relations, 1947-1965

Diplomacy

As has already been noted in Chapter One, in the immediate post-war period, diplomatic relations between France and Rhodesia were limited to a solitary consular agent in Salisbury.⁴ The arrival of Francières to take up the post of French Vice Consul in Rhodesia in 1947, however, marked the beginning of the incremental expansion of Franco-Rhodesian diplomatic ties. By December 1963, the French post in Salisbury comprised of a Consul General, a Deputy Consul, a Vice Consul, a contractual agent responsible for information, and two additional auxiliaries, one French and one British. In addition, although there was no French cultural advisor or military attaché based in Salisbury, the post benefitted from two SDECE agents as well as four individuals responsible for economic expansion, including a dedicated Commercial Advisor.⁵ The French physical presence on the ground in Salisbury was larger than any other Western European power in the region - only the United Kingdom and the United States were better represented than France in Southern Rhodesia, with 157 and 52 diplomatic

⁴ Roux to MAE. (1947, February 8). AL/PB/16/No.42. Paris:AMAE.
representatives respectively\(^6\) - demonstrating the extent of the growing French interest in this area of Anglophone Africa during the period in question.

France’s diplomatic presence in the region expanded in line with the evolving political situation on the ground. Following the establishment of the Central African Federation in 1953, for example, France also opened Consular Agencies in Bulawayo, the home of the Southern Rhodesian territorial government;\(^7\) Lusaka, the capital of Northern Rhodesia;\(^8\) and Blantyre, the main city in Nyasaland.\(^9\) This measure, which was approved by all those engaged in Rhodesian affairs on the ground in Anglophone Africa, in London and across the Quai, was intended to ensure a French diplomatic presence at both a Federal and a territorial level and, in so doing, capitalise on the opportunities presented to France in the region.\(^10\) Later, the problems associated with only having a single Consul General overseeing all three Federal territories, in particular the need for the French representative in question to frequently leave the post in Salisbury to visit other areas in the Federation,\(^11\) prompted the creation of a new post of

\(^7\) Warren to MAE. (1954, February 1). AL/SEAB/1/No.31. Paris:AMAE
Deputy Consul, to which Daniel Oriez was appointed in the autumn of 1958. This, in turn, demonstrates how France’s diplomatic presence in this part of Anglophone Africa evolved in response to the shifting political circumstances in the region in the 1950s.

This continued into the 1960s, as ‘les transformations politiques que subissent actuellement l’Afrique Centrale et Orientale’ prompted a reassessment of France’s diplomatic strategies towards the Federation. During this period, the French observing and operating in the region became increasingly aware of the growing possibility that the Federation would collapse and that Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland would achieve independence. In April 1962, for example, Balthazar, a representative of the Inspection Générale des Postes Diplomatiques et Consulaires, visited the Federation and reported that ‘tout le monde s’accorde pour voir ce pays [Nyasaland] souverain en 1963’. Similar sentiments emanated from those observing the situation in Rhodesia at the French Embassy in London. In April 1963, almost exactly a year after Balthazar’s report to the Afrique-Levant Department, Geoffrey Chodron de Courcel, French Ambassador to London (1962-1972), wrote to Couve de Murville, French Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958-1968), reporting that ‘il est donc vraisemblable que

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13 Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:AMAE.
The French engaged in Rhodesian affairs acknowledged the need to respond to this shift, calling for the establishment of separate French diplomatic representations in Lusaka and Blantyre, as well as a dedicated commercial office for Northern Rhodesia. A key motivation for setting up these autonomous diplomatic and commercial bureaus was a growing concern about French relations with African nationalists in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The Afrique-Levant department, for example, promoted separate diplomatic posts on the grounds that France did not wish to appear to have ‘un ordre de prioritaire entre deux membres de la Fédération’ by favouring Salisbury over Lusaka and Blantyre. Concerns were also raised about the problematic nature of defending French interests in an independent Northern Rhodesia or Nyasaland from the French Consulate in Southern Rhodesia in light of ‘l’opposition qui existe entre le régime de Salisbury et ceux de Lusaka et du Blantyre’, and, in particular, the growing perception within these territories of Salisbury as a ‘siège lointain d’une fédération moribonde et d’un gouvernement sud-rhodésien que les nationalises considèrent comme leur ennemi’. The promotion of the establishment of autonomous French offices in Lusaka and Blantyre is further evidence,

18 AL to Personnel. (1964, April 15). AL/SEAB/14/No.20. Paris:MAAE.
therefore, of the growing momentum for the expansion of France’s diplomatic presence in Central Southern Anglophone Africa in response to the changing situation on the ground.

That is not to say, however, that the development of diplomatic relations between France and British Africa was without its difficulties. We have already seen in Chapter One how, in 1953, a limited financial budget informed the decision to represent the mission locally as Consulate General rather than officially elevating the status of the French post in Salisbury.\(^{20}\)

In fact, weak metropolitan backing created an obstacle to the growth and progress of the French mission in Rhodesia throughout the period in question. This can be seen especially in the selection of diplomats to oversee the French post in Salisbury. Although the first two French Consuls in Rhodesia, Francières and Warren, were described as ‘très actif’,\(^{21}\) their immediate successor, Siguret, was, according to a report produced by the Quai in March 1957, ‘passif’ and demonstrated ‘peu d’intérêt pour son métier’. In the same report, an equally damning assessment was made of Siguret’s deputy, Trachta, who was labelled as ‘un agent doté de faibles moyens intellectuels et dont le seuls soucis sont d’ordre pécuniaire’. These poor quality diplomatic representatives, the report concluded, contributed to ‘la modicité des effectifs du poste de Salisbury’ and, as such, ‘le remplacement de M. Siguret et du vice-consul, M. Trachta, sont la condition


préalable à toute réorganisation du poste’. In spite of this critical account, Cabrol was not appointed to replace Siguret until the summer of 1958. Moreover, Trachta remained in post and was actually called upon to cover the gap between Siguret’s departure and the arrival of Cabrol in 1958, in the same way he had taken charge of the post in the interim period between Warren and Siguret’s postings in the summer of 1955. This slow-paced response to a centrally produced report, along with the willingness to overlook key elements of its findings, underlines the limitations placed on France’s diplomatic presence in Rhodesia by the centre.

The effectiveness of the French post in Salisbury was also hampered by its distance from France and, in particular, the limited channels of communication to the French office in Rhodesia, a problem that expanded in line with France’s growing activity in the region. In January 1960, for example, in response to the increased quantity of encoded telegrams being received by the Salisbury post, Cabrol asked the Afrique-Levant department to approach the Service du Chiffre et des Transmissions on his behalf and request for certain non-confidential material to be sent already decoded, on the next flight to the Federation. This, Cabrol believed, would not only permit telegrams to arrive in Salisbury in a more timely fashion, but would also mean that he could avoid spending, in his own words, ‘tout mon temps au déchiffrement de ces télègrammes’.

passed this proposal onto the relevant department, demonstrating the desire of those engaged in Anglophone African affairs at the Quai to respond favourably to Cabrol’s request. The Service du Chiffre et des Transmissions also responded positively, agreeing to send the requested telegrams on the next flight.26 Here, therefore, Cabrol’s demands yielded favourable results. Yet, the wider issue – the fact that the Consulate in Salisbury did not benefit from an unaccompanied diplomatic bag and, subsequently, a secure channel of communication between Paris and Salisbury – remained unresolved.27 Thus, throughout the period in question, despite enthusiasm for the growth of Franco-Rhodesian diplomatic relations amongst a small group of French diplomats, bureaucrats and policy-makers, and the expansion of France’s diplomatic presence on the ground in the region, the extent of France’s formal presence on the ground in Rhodesia was consistently restricted by the practicalities of engaging with a region so far removed from the traditional Francophone sphere.

Other obstacles stood in the way of France’s diplomatic presence in the region, notably the problem of operating in a British colony. Despite championing the establishment of separate diplomatic posts in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as the two territories moved towards independence in the early 1960s, it was not entirely simple for the French to set up new offices in Lusaka and Blantyre. For those French diplomats in London especially, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland’s constitutional ties to the UK

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prevented the implementation of any measures prior to independence. In the words of Courcel, ‘rien ne peut être fait sans l’accord de Whitehall puisqu’il s’agit de territoires coloniaux relevant encore de la souveraineté anglaise’.

Courcel opposed the immediate establishment of a French diplomatic representation in Lusaka, therefore, on the grounds that ‘il est probable que Londres et Salisbury objecteraient… avant l’accession de la Rhodésie du Nord au self-government’, concluding that,

les intérêts de la France dans cette partie d’Afrique ne sont pas telles que nous devions dès maintenant diversifier fondamentalement notre représentation et nous ne devons pas, en tout cas, paraître précéder l’évènement.  

This, in turn, reveals the existence of another impediment to the growth of France’s diplomatic presence on the ground in this region of Anglophone Africa. Thus, despite the substantial growth of Franco-Rhodesian diplomatic ties after 1947, a range of factors persistently limited the extent of these relations.

Culture and propaganda

From the outset, as was also the case in France’s strategies towards its African colonial sphere, cultural ventures in Rhodesia were prioritised. In November 1947, just two months after his arrival in Salisbury, Francières called for the establishment of a branch of the Alliance Française in Salisbury aiming to,

propager la langue française, contribuer à accroître l’influence intellectuelle et morale de la France, grouper les Français et les amis de la France afin de

maintenir chez les uns, de développer chez les autres le culte de la langue et de la pensée française, [et] susciterait un grand intérêt en Rhodésie du Sud et trouverait aisément les concours nécessaires pour vivre se développer.29

Francières’ requests that educational material for the Alliance Française library and film club be sent ‘malgré les temps’ demonstrates the importance certain French actors attributed to spreading French culture in this British colony.30 Efforts were also made to ensure that French be taught in Rhodesian schools to assure ‘le rayonnement’ and ‘la diffusion de notre langue’,31 whilst the creation of a Chair in French at the new university in Salisbury in 1952 was seen as having ‘importance capitale’ ‘pour le développement de notre culture et notre langue… et aider puisement à consolider notre position’.32 In addition, the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition in July and August 1953 provided a unique opportunity to showcase French culture to a broad section of Rhodesian society, through a French Union-themed Pavilion and a French cultural week comprising of lectures, documentary film screenings, a tourist exhibition, two artistic evenings and a ball.33 According to the Afrique-Levant department, French participation in this three month event, which would attract 750,000 visitors, was vital, in order to,

assurer à la France une place et une participation dignes de ses intérêts et de son prestige à cette manifestation africaine qui marquera une étape dans l’évolution de l’Afrique transformée par la colonisation blanche.34

34 MAE to MOF. (1952, November 7). AL/PB/16/No.1848. Paris:AMAE.
This particular emphasis on cultural activities in Rhodesia continued in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. A report by a representative of the Quai on his visit to British Africa in April 1962, for example, records how French was the second foreign language taught in Rhodesian schools after Afrikaans and that ‘nombreux jeunes gens et jeunes filles s’adressent d’autre part à l’Alliance Française pour se perfectionner dans notre langue’. In addition, the Southern Rhodesian Secretary for Education travelled to Paris to observe French teaching methods, in particular the use of audio-visual material.\textsuperscript{35} Thus, as in Francophone Africa, so in Anglophone Africa, cultural rayonnement was a vital component in a wider strategy to enhance France’s standing in Rhodesia.

Closely interlinked to these efforts to project French cultural power in Rhodesia were propaganda initiatives. These efforts fell into two broad categories: ‘passive’ dissemination of information about France through the press, French language teaching and the provision of clear and precise documentation on France in the English language, and ‘active’ efforts to directly approach persons of influence in Rhodesian society, including politicians, newspaper editors and university professors, to share ‘des informations régulières sur les questions politiques ou économiques françaises et le point de vue français dans les affaires internationales’.\textsuperscript{36} An example of the former was \textit{Nouvelles de France}, a monthly English language information bulletin about France established in 1954 for

\textsuperscript{36} Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:MAE.
distribution amongst Rhodesian political and education establishments.\textsuperscript{37} The diffusion of information about France in Rhodesia was justified in similar terms to cultural ventures. \textit{Nouvelles de France}, for example, was seen as an opportunity to enhance French prestige in the region, as well as a vital response to similar measures introduced by the Americans, the Italians and the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{38}

Alongside concerns about France’s standing in Rhodesia, cultural and propaganda initiatives were often also imbued with economic objectives. For instance, the Afrique-Levant department promoted French colonial participation in the Rhodes Exhibition, not only on the grounds of the potential benefits for France’s prestige in the region, but also because the prospective economic benefits made French involvement in this event ‘indispensable’.\textsuperscript{39} Equally, \textit{Nouvelles de France} was founded with both ‘notre prestige et notre économie’ in mind.\textsuperscript{40} The content of the bulletin serves to reinforce this point. Each edition contained details of France’s domestic and international economic activities, such as a feature on the economic policy of the Mendès-France government\textsuperscript{41} and a summary of the Franco-German agreement on the Saar.\textsuperscript{42} Alongside these explicit attempts to promote French economic policy, \textit{Nouvelles de France} also contained more trivial articles, such as a discussion of chain smoking in France\textsuperscript{43} and a


\textsuperscript{38} Warren to MAE. (1954, September 7). AL/SEAB/8/No.262. Paris:AMAE.

\textsuperscript{39} AL to MOF. (1952, November 7). AL/PB/16/No.1848. Paris:AMAE.

\textsuperscript{40} Warren to MAE. (1954, September 7). AL/SEAB/8/No.262. Paris:AMAE.


report on the French soccer team victory over Germany.\textsuperscript{44} Yet, even these more frivolous features served a purpose in this wider project to further economic ties between France and Rhodesia. The article on chain smoking, for example, becomes more decisive given the importance of the tobacco trade to the Southern Rhodesian economy (Scott, 1952, p.189) and the growing purchases of Rhodesian tobacco by the French tobacco monopoly.\textsuperscript{45} Efforts to increase knowledge about France in Rhodesia were, therefore, closely tied to France’s economic aims in the region.

In spite of the benefits for France’s standing in the region, both in terms of economic stakes and prestige, there existed persistent obstacles to the success of French cultural and propaganda initiatives in Rhodesia, which were similar to the problems faced in the diplomatic sphere. From the outset, for example, the activities of the Alliance Française were hampered by inadequate metropolitan support. It was not until April 1951, three and a half years after Francières’ initial proposal, that the Salisbury branch of the Alliance Française was established.\textsuperscript{46} Moreover, the activities of the Alliance Française were persistently blighted by a lack of central funding, seen by repeated requests to the Quai for financial support, in 1956 to pay the rent and, a year later, for audio-visual equipment.\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, and in spite of support from the Afrique-Levant department for the venture, funds

\textsuperscript{45} For example, purchases of Rhodesian tobacco in 1956 were £355,295, more than double the £163,913 imported by France and the French Union in 1955. Colmant to DREE. (1957, February 4). AL/SEAB/8/No.57179. Paris: AMAE.
\textsuperscript{46} Roux to MAE. (1947, February 28). AL/PB/No. 61. Paris: AMAE.
\textsuperscript{47} Beaulieux to MAE (1947, August 7). AL/PB No. 239. Paris: AMAE.
\textsuperscript{47} Siguret to MAE. (1956, September 11). AL/SEAB/12/No.104. Paris: AMAE.
Siguret to MAE. (1957, May 3). AL/SEAB/12/No.35. Paris: AMAE
for the establishment of a French Chair at the University in Rhodesia in 1952 were not forthcoming and it was left to the already overstretched Alliance Française and the institution itself to foot the bill for this venture.48

The fact that French professor at the University was a Dane, not a native French speaker, further underscores the limitations imposed on French cultural activity in Rhodesia by limited metropolitan support.49

These restrictions remained in place into the 1960s, seen when at least two requests from Cabrol in the autumn of 1960 for some high quality French films and television programmes to be sent for broadcast on Rhodesian television alongside the existing South African, British and American shows were left unanswered by the Direction Générale des Affaires Culturelles et Techniques at the Quai.50 Cabrol did not disguise his distaste with the metropolitan inaction and his subsequent concern about dominance of the region by the inferior “Anglo-Saxon” culture, in particular the fact that ‘les services d’informations américains occupent exclusivement les écrans rhodésiens avec les habituelles stupidités du Far West.’51 Thus, in spite of concerns on the periphery about combatting Anglophone cultural dominance, weak support from the centre held back efforts to spread French culture and language in Rhodesia.

The same was also true in the field of propaganda. *Nouvelles de France* was a short-lived venture and less than a decade later, in 1963, the Consulate in Salisbury once again called for an increase in the availability of information about France in English. According to Desparmet, existing strategies, ne correspondent encore ni à l’importance de la mission de la France en Afrique ni aux efforts que dispensent d’autres puissances dont les intérêts dans ces parages et les relations historiques avec ce continent ne se comparent nullement avec les nôtres.\(^{52}\)

This, in turn, reveals how, despite a definite increase in France’s cultural presence in the region, and regardless of ambitious plans set out by “men-on-the-spot” – in his note to the Quai, Desparmet set out his design to transform the Information Services at the Consulate, which he described as ‘une organisation plus étoffée’, into an active department, similar to that of the United States, comprising of ‘des vitrines, des salles de lecture, une bibliothèque, une salle de projection et une filmothèque’\(^{53}\) – insufficient backing from Paris hampered efforts to expand French culture and propaganda efforts in Rhodesia.

**Commerce and industry**

The years following the establishment of the French diplomatic post in Rhodesia witnessed a substantial expansion of French economic activity in the region. At first the rate of growth of France-Rhodesian trade was relatively small (Table 1). Discussions took place about increasing economic exchanges between the two countries, such as a meeting between

\(^{52}\) Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:AMAE

\(^{53}\) Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:AMAE
Francières and Sir Arthur Griffen, the Director General of Rhodesian Railways, concerning the possible exchange of French metallurgical products for Rhodesian chrome in early 1949. Later that year, the MAE sent the French Commercial Advisor in South Africa to Rhodesia to meet with high-ranking economic officials, including Halsted, Minister of Commerce, MacLachlan, Director of Customs Services, and Watson, President of the Federal Commercial Chambers in Southern Rhodesia, as well as various Rhodesian businessmen. In July 1951, Rhodesia reciprocated these advances, sending Harper, General Secretary of the Federation of Rhodesian Industry, to Paris to discuss ‘les possibilités d'accroître le marché français en Rhodésie’.

Table 1: Franco-Rhodesian trade, 1947-1952.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>French imports from Rhodesia (in £ Sterling)</th>
<th>French exports to Rhodesia (in £ Sterling)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>209,630</td>
<td>182,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>271,275</td>
<td>236,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>309,225</td>
<td>361,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>172,695</td>
<td>704,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>289,017</td>
<td>923,118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet progress was minimal, as new restrictions on trade outside of the sterling zone, set up in response to the Rhodesian trade deficit and rising living costs in the region, had particularly detrimental consequences for the expansion of traditional French export products, including textiles, wines.

54 Francières to MAE. (1949, March 3). AL/PB/16/No.28. Paris:AMAE.
55 Francières to MAE. (1949, August 10). AL/PB/16/No.99. Paris:AMAE.
and liqueurs. Furthermore, the absence of a dedicated French Commercial Advisor directly responsible for Rhodesia meant that French efforts to promote Franco-Rhodesian trade lacked clear leadership, further limiting the growth of commerce between these two regions.

Following the establishment of the Central African Federation in 1953, French trade with the region increased dramatically and continued on an upward trajectory throughout the remainder of the life of the Federation (Table 2).

Table 2: Franco-Federation trade, 1953-1963.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>French imports from CAF (in £ Sterling)</th>
<th>French exports to CAF (in £ Sterling)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>373,660</td>
<td>168,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1,923,033</td>
<td>244,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>5,117,578</td>
<td>512,374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>4,259,254</td>
<td>797,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>3,713,768</td>
<td>998,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>4,367,143</td>
<td>1,213,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>4,662,000</td>
<td>1,587,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6,142,000</td>
<td>1,953,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>6,834,000</td>
<td>2,058,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>7,861,000</td>
<td>2,164,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 (1st 10 months)</td>
<td>5,477,000</td>
<td>1,862,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a superficial level, this shift can be attributed to the inclusion of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland alongside Southern Rhodesia in the trade statistics. However, it is important to note that Southern Rhodesia dominated the Federation, geographically, with the Federal capital in Salisbury;

economically, with revenues from the Northern Rhodesian copper mines used to finance economic development in the South, and the growth of Southern Rhodesian commerce and industry fuelled by the expanded size of their markets following the establishment of the Federation; and politically, as white Southern Rhodesians controlled the Federal government that oversaw internal affairs and had a growing degree of influence over foreign and defence policy (Meredith, 1979, p.23). Southern Rhodesia also retained the upper hand over its Federal partners by remaining the responsibility of the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO),\textsuperscript{58} in contrast to Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland’s administration by the CO (Murphy, 2006, p.751). In light of this, the French focused their attentions principally on the Federal capital, Salisbury,\textsuperscript{59} and viewed Southern Rhodesia as ‘le chemin à l’ensemble de la Federation’.\textsuperscript{60} Thus, even though Northern Rhodesia accounted for a substantial proportion of France’s growing trade with the Federation after 1953 - according to a note written by the Afrique-Levant department in 1964, the territory accounted for ‘la plus grande partie du commerce entre la France et l’ancienne fédération’\textsuperscript{61} – the organisation of the Federation, along with French perceptions of the region, combined to ensure that attentions remained focused on Southern Rhodesia.

Increased Franco-Federal trade in the years following 1953 was also a consequence of a more systematic French strategy towards the region. This began on 5 August 1952, when France and Southern Rhodesia signed an

\textsuperscript{58} The Dominion Office became the CRO in 1947.
\textsuperscript{59} Warren to MAE. (1954, March 10). AL/SEAB/3/No.74. Paris:AMAE.
\textsuperscript{60} French Embassy, London to MAE. (1958, June 6). AL/SEAB/6/No.781. Paris:AMAE.
official trade agreement for the sale of tobacco in exchange for French wines and liqueurs. Whilst the terms of this deal may not have been particularly favourable for the French – sales of wine and liqueurs were restricted to £15,000 for every £100,000 of Rhodesian tobacco purchased – this agreement did act as the catalyst for the increase in France’s trade with the region, as well as providing the context in which France could become the first country outside of the sterling zone to benefit from a direct trade agreement with Federation as a whole, demonstrating the importance given to France in a commercial system largely dominated by Britain, the Commonwealth and South Africa. The establishment of a Commercial Office attached to the French Vice Consul in Salisbury and the arrival of Colmant to take up this new post in 1954 provides further evidence of a more concentrated French approach towards the region, which can help explain the dramatic increase in Franco-Federal trade after 1953. According to Colmant, the substantial rise in French trade with Rhodesia that took place in the period that followed his appointment, notably the three-fold increase in exports between 1954 and 1956, was directly ‘le résultat de la décision du Gouvernement français d’ouvrir à Salisbury un poste du Service de l’expansion économique’. Rising Franco-Federal economic interaction after 1953 is also symptomatic of the shifting nature of French engagement with the region and, in particular, the move towards participation in larger-scale infrastructure

63 Siguret to MAE. (1956, February 3). AL/SEAB/8/No.44. Paris:AMAE.  
MAE to MAEF. (nd). AL/SEAB/1. Paris:AMAE  
65 Colmant to DREE. (1957, June 19). AL/SEAB/1/No.57861. Paris:AMAE.
projects, something that echoes very closely France’s increased emphasis on the economic and social modernisation of its sub-Saharan colonies in the post-war period, exemplified by the activities of FIDES. Established in 1946, FIDES was a regional development fund with powers to use the metropolitan budget, the budget of overseas territories and loans from the Caisse Centrale de la France d’Outre-Mer to provide investment grants to colonies (Cumming, 2001, p.59). In addition, in the immediate post-war period, with the implementation of the first Ten Year Plan for the social and economic development of the French Union, attentions were concentrated on channelling money towards infrastructure projects, such as roads, railroads and ports, with health and education as secondary concerns (Betts, 1991, pp.118-119; Cumming, 2001, p.59). Thus, in the decade or so that followed, Massigli (1957, p.413) estimated that investments in Tropical Africa from metropolitan funds totalled £550 million, with £80 million invested each year by the state, along with at least £18 to £20 million in private capital. The uses of this money were diverse, but the majority was focused on infrastructure projects, including the development of cooperatives, funding extensive basic public works and technical and rural equipment, and providing price stabilisation and textile support funds.

According to Cumming (2001, p.59), ‘colonial assistance was by definition only available to colonies’. And whilst it is certainly true that the quantity of funds available to territories outside of the French Union was minute in comparison to the money invested in France’s African colonies, the focus in Francophone Africa on investment in infrastructure and development was
reproduced and adapted to the Rhodesian setting. Of particular note was French participation in the Kariba dam project. French technical expertise played a central role in the initial planning stages of this venture, with a team of hydraulic technicians, led by then state-owned Electricité de France (EDF) providing expertise and advice. These technical advisors influenced the Rhodesian decision to build their hydro-electric plant at Kariba, in opposition to the backing from Anglo-American, the UK and US-owned mining company, for a similar venture in Kafue. Following the formal announcement of plans for the Kariba dam, EDF experts were also named as technical advisors for the realisation of the scheme. In addition, various Rhodesian politicians travelled to Paris to investigate French hydro-electric technology, such as Malcolm Barrow, Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry, who was invited by the French government to visit various hydroelectric plants in the Rhône in November 1954, whilst a visit to Paris in September 1955 from Welensky centred on possible French participation in the realisation of the dam. The high esteem accorded to French technical expertise continued even after it became apparent that the costs of this project would be substantially higher than original French estimates.

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70 Reynolds. France and the Federation
As a result of this ‘indispensable’ role in the inception of the Kariba dam project, hopes were high amongst France’s “men-on-the-spot” for large-scale French investment and industrial participation in the venture.\footnote{Warren to MAE. (1954, October 7). AL/SEAB/11/No.31/33. Paris:AMAE. Siguré to French Embassy, London. (1956, January 13). Paris:AMAE.} In the event, this was never attained, with the Imperial Preference – a system designed to stimulate trade within the British Empire by according the colonies and dominions lower import tariffs than other countries - handing a British company the advantage in securing a bid to provide electrical and mechanical equipment to the value of £5.08 million in 1955.\footnote{Siguré to MAE. (1957, July 17). AL/SEAB/11/No.81/82. Paris:AMAE.} Italian involvement in the building of the dam was also extensive, something which was officially blamed on the higher cost of French equipment.\footnote{Siguré to MAE. (1957, July 17). AL/SEAB/11/No.81/82. Paris:AMAE.} In private, however, the French on the ground in Rhodesia ascribed France’s failure to the better technology offered by the British and Italians,\footnote{Colmant to DREE. (1956, August 15). AL/SEAB/11/61302. Paris:AMAE. Colmant to DREE. (1956, August 15). AL/SEAB/11/561302. Paris:AMAE.} along with the fact that ‘les offres françaises aient été mal placées’.\footnote{Siguré to Negre. (1956, December 20). AL/SEAB/1. Paris:AMAE.} NEYPRIC, a Grenoble-based producer of hydroelectric turbines, had to settle, therefore, with a £1.1 million sub-contract through an Italian company. Although this did represent one of the largest supply contracts accorded to a private French company in Rhodesia up until this date, it was nevertheless far from the lofty heights initially anticipated, and certainly not in keeping with the ‘indispensable’ role that French technical expertise had played during the planning stages of the venture.\footnote{Colmant to DREE. (1956, August 15). AL/SEAB/11/61302. Paris:AMAE. Colmant to DREE. (1956, August 15). AL/SEAB/11/561302. Paris:AMAE. Siguré to Negre. (1956, December 20). AL/SEAB/1. Paris:AMAE.} In addition, French state investment in the project was deemed impossible due to Rhodesia’s status as a British colony,
not just because of the Imperial Preference, but also due to French fears about investment in Rhodesia setting a precedent that might upset the preferential systems in place in AOF and Algeria.\textsuperscript{78} It is apparent, therefore, that French priorities lay elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that certain French actors sought to adapt the models implemented in the Union Française to the Anglophone African context. To add further weight to this argument, there are a number of other examples of French efforts to participate in the expansion of Rhodesian infrastructure, in particular the development of Federal railway network. During his aforementioned visit to Paris in September 1955, Welensky drove a new French locomotive\textsuperscript{79} and was reported to have been ‘très favorablement impressionné par les réalisations qui lui on été par la SNCF’ (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français).\textsuperscript{80} In light of this, the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières at the MAE noted the opportunities for ‘vastes programmes d’équipement’ in the rail industry.\textsuperscript{81} Subsequently, French transportation and power generation company, Alsthom, sent a technical and commercial mission to the Federation in 1959,\textsuperscript{82} which, in turn, led to a purchase of locomotives by the Nyasaland Railways.\textsuperscript{83} More generally, a visit to Paris from R. L’Ange, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Public Works, in January 1957

\textsuperscript{79} Reynolds, France and the Federation
\textsuperscript{82} De Margerie to Salisbury. (1959, January 30). AL/SEAB/8/No.5. Paris: AMAE.
\textsuperscript{83} Cabrol to MAE. (1959, February 10). AL/SEAB/8/No.3. Paris: AMAE.
was arranged with a view to increasing French technical participation in Federal Public Works. French involvement in Rhodesia mirrored, therefore, the growing technical and developmental emphasis of France’s colonial policies in the post-war period, although the extent to which this vision of French participation in the expansion of Rhodesian infrastructure could be translated into action was limited, like so many other aspects of French engagement with Rhodesia during this period, by Rhodesia’s colonial status, alternative French priorities and the practicalities of engaging with a region far removed from the Francophone sphere.

French trade with Rhodesia continued to expand in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in spite of a relative slow down of the Federal economy. France was one of just five countries that saw its sales to the Federation expand between 1958 and 1959, as countries including Great Britain, the United States, Germany and the Netherlands witnessed a decline in exports during the same period. The growth of French commerce in the region at this time was the direct consequence of the foundations laid during the Fourth Republic period. This is something that can be seen especially in the military sector, where French exports increased as a direct result of efforts before 1958. In December 1957, a demonstration was given to the Rhodesian Royal Air Force (RRAF) of the French-designed and

Siguret to MAE. (1957, January 22). AL/SEAB/9/No.15. Paris:AMAE.
86 The other four countries that witnessed increased exports to the Federation in this period were South Africa, Iran, Japan and Sweden.
87 Hullo to DREE. (1960, April 6). AL/SEAB/33/No.0481. Paris:AMAE.
manufactured Alouette 2 helicopter. Although a mechanical problem overshadowed this particular display, Siguret and Colmant persisted in their promotion of French aviation equipment in the region, explaining the technical difficulties to the Rhodesians and arranging for a replacement turbine to be sent, thus permitting a more successful demonstration of the French-manufactured helicopter to take place later in the month.

These efforts fuelled considerable interest in Alouettes amongst the local authorities, which led, in 1961, to the signature of a contract between the Federal authorities and the Office Français d'Exportation de Matériel Aéronautique (OFEMA) for the sale of five Alouette III helicopters. This deal, valued at 4.5 million NF, was followed immediately by a strong expression of interest from the RRAF in purchasing an additional seven helicopters with 1962/1963 credits, to increase their fleet to a total of twelve Alouettes. Although the French archives do not provide evidence of this later deal taking place, Watts (2012, p.62) reports in his recent international history of Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence that, at the time of the dissolution of the Central African Federation in 1963, the RRAF ‘was equipped with around seventy aircraft… including a squadron of Alouette helicopters’ indicating that at least twelve French-manufactured helicopters had been sold to Rhodesia prior to this date. Thus, in the same way that the strategies pursued by France in the immediate post-war period

88 Siguret to MAE. (1957, December 10). AL/SEAB/12/No.79. Paris:AMAE
89 Siguret to MAE. (1957, December 12). AL/SEAB/12/No.81. Paris:AMAE.
90 Siguret to MAE. (1957, December 19). AL/SEAB/12/No.85. Paris:AMAE.
provided the foundations for the successes of the Fifth Republic in its relations with Europe and the United States (Hitchcock, 1998, pp.6-7), the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs under the Fourth Republic established the bases for France’s continued economic presence in the region after 1958.

Throughout the period in question, France’s “men-on-the-spot” were at the forefront of France’s growing economic presence in the region. Of particular importance was the growing number of private French companies active in the region. In addition to NEYPRIC and UAT noted above, automobile manufacturers, such as Renault, Peugeot and Citroen, became active in the Federation during this period.\(^92\) Renault, for example, had offices in Salisbury, Bulawayo and Lusaka by 1953.\(^93\) The provision of oil was another sector in which private French businesses actively participated. Total, a subsidiary of the Compagnie Française des Petroles (CFP), ‘invaded’ the Central African Federation from their bases in South Africa and Mozambique during this period, establishing sixteen filling stations across the two Rhodesias and a bulk depot in Salisbury, demonstrating the importance of France’s existing regional ties as the foundation for increased engagement with the Federation.\(^94\) The extent of the activities of private French companies in the region led Hullo, the Commercial Attaché to the French Consulate General in Salisbury (1958-1961), to conclude that the six-fold increase in French exports in the six-year period following the creation of the Federation in 1953 was ‘une performance à porter à l’actif

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\(^92\) Reynolds, France and the Federation.
\(^94\) Reynolds, France and the Federation.
des Exportateurs français qui ont réellement fait œuvre de pionniers sur ce marché. Moreover, the fact that these private companies were especially active in the transportation and communication sectors underlines the argument set out above regarding the particular French focus on infrastructure in Rhodesia, in line with France’s wider African strategies at this time.

France’s diplomatic representatives on the ground were also crucial to the expansion of Franco-Rhodesian trade in this period. However, as was also the case in the diplomatic and cultural domains, their efforts were persistently blighted by insufficient support from the French metropole. In 1953-1954, for example, it took at least two separate requests and the best part of a year for the Quai to respond positively to appeals from “men-on-the-spot” for a representative from SEITA to visit the region with a view to increasing French purchases of Rhodesian tobacco. This important Rhodesian export product remained a topic of contention, notably in 1956, when the French Commercial Advisor in Salisbury called upon Paris to guarantee that French tobacco purchases met the levels set out in the trade agreement between the two countries. The Quai’s Economic Department, however, claimed not to be able to help, attempting to deflect the question of quotas by proposing to link tobacco imports to French exports. Paris eventually agreed to grant import licenses of £430,000 for Rhodesian tobacco.

95 Hullo to DREE. (1960, April 6). AL/SEAB/33/No.0481. Paris: AMAE.
tobacco, but only after making it clear that this figure represented a potential market rather than a firm agreement to purchase. However, discord between Paris and the French in Anglophone Africa persisted, as further demands for long-term assurances were met by metropolitan assertions that they could not guarantee a minimum quota for French imports of tobacco in 1957.

After Welensky’s departure from office and the collapse of the Central African Federation in 1963, the difficulty of balancing French interests in Rhodesia with the realities of its colonial status continued. This can be seen in October 1964 when Rudland, the Southern Rhodesian Minister for Industry and Commerce, visited Paris as part of a tour of the main European capitals. In the weeks prior to his arrival in Paris, the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs corresponded regarding the risks and benefits of developing this contact. Although the visit was enthusiastically championed by France’s “men-on-the-spot” – Desparmet, for example, claimed that ‘la visite de M. Rudland paraît extrêmement intéressante pour notre implantation économique en Rhodésie du Sud’ – and was seen by some in Paris as ‘une chance réelle d’implantation française dans un nouveau pays anglophone qui démure notre plus important client parmi les membres de l’ancienne fédération’, concerns were raised in the French metropole about the development of governmental ties outside the channels of the

100 Colmant to MAE. (1956, August 2). AL/SEAB/8/561138. Paris:AMAE.
British authorities. Rudland persisted in his requests for audiences with various high-ranking French officials.

Fortunately for Rudland, French concerns about securing British support soon dissipated as the British Embassy in Paris wrote to the French Foreign Ministry informing them of Rudland’s visit and making requests for audiences with French politicians and diplomats on Rudland’s behalf. Thus, Rudland travelled to Paris, as planned, in late October 1964, accompanied by P.K. van der Byl, the Southern Rhodesian Parliamentary Secretary for Information. During his visit, he met not only with representatives from various private French companies, but also the Secretary General of the CNCE, the President of the Comité Franc-Sterling and a representative from the Direction des Relations Economiques Extérieurs (DREE) of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. He was also received by members of the Groupe France-Rhodésie, a parliamentary friendship group, led by the Rassemblement Démocratique (RD) député for Gironde, Franck Cazenave, with the aim of developing ‘des contacts avec le Parlement et le Gouvernement Rhodésiens’ and ‘d’informer les entreprises françaises sur les débouchés éventuels en Rhodésie’. This visit demonstrates, therefore, the enthusiasm amongst certain parties in

French government about the expansion of Franco-Rhodesian ties, but also how this enthusiasm was tempered by Rhodesia’s colonial status. Thus, across all three key areas of French engagement with Rhodesia in the period between 1947 and 1965 – diplomatic, cultural and economic – enthusiasm for Franco-Rhodesian on the peripheries was tempered by the metropole. This, in turn, shaped the nature and extent of France’s bilateral relations with this region of Central Southern Anglophone Africa.

The triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia

From 1947 onwards, Rhodesia formed part of France’s African vision and was identified by certain French policy-makers, diplomats and bureaucrats as an arena in which France’s position in its colonies on the continent could be strengthened. This, in turn, contributed to the diversification of France’s relations with Rhodesia to include the French dependencies in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. The remainder of the chapter will explore the development of these triangular ties between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia, before considering how these relations were altered by the coming of Francophone African independence in 1960.
The expansion of ties between Rhodesia, France and the French African Empire, 1947-1960

As we have already seen in Chapter One, in the immediate post-war period, various French actors viewed interaction between Rhodesia and France’s African dependencies as a means of enhancing the French colonial economy and, thus, capable of contributing to a broader effort to shore up French power in the Union Française. This, in turn, led to the growth of relations between the white settler government in Salisbury and the colonial administration in Francophone Africa, especially the French colony in closest geographical proximity to Rhodesia, Madagascar. From the late 1940s, a conscious French effort was made to promote trade between this French-ruled island in the Indian Ocean and British Central Southern Africa. Initial interest centred on the export of nitrogen fertiliser (meat and blood meal) from Madagascar to the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, where demand for these products was high. Rhodesian-Madagascaran relations were cultivated into the 1950s, demonstrated by visits to this British colony from various high-ranking French colonial officials, including Robert Bargues, High Commissioner to Madagascar, in 1953 and Clotaire Bee,

Beaulieux to MAE. (1949, February 26). AL/PB/16/No.68. Paris:AMAE.
Beaulieux to French High Commission, Madagascar. (1949, February 14). AL/PB/16/No.64. Paris:AMAE.
Director of Economic Services to Madagascar, in 1954. M. Bee’s visit, especially, provides evidence of the desire to expand Rhodesian-Madagascan economic relations. During his stay, Bee met with high-ranking Federal officials to discuss Madagascan interest in purchasing electric cabling, fruit juice, tea, clothing and shoes from the Federation in exchange for Madagascan coffee, semi-precious stones, graphite and vegetable oil. Rhodesian politicians also indicated to Bee their desire to learn more about the French-built railways on the island and expressed a wish to secure material for Rhodesian railway expansion from Madagascan sources.

In addition, transportation between the Rhodesias and Madagascar was promoted, notably through a direct air link between Livingstone and Tananarive that would ‘consolider les liens de bon voisinage, et les possibilités d’échanges dont les bases avaient été solidement établies par la visite du Gouverneur Général de Madagascar en Rhodésie du Sud’. In 1953, following the establishment of an Air France Office in Salisbury, the Paris-Alger-Brazzaville line was extended to include Livingstone and Tananarive, creating a direct connection between France, Francophone Africa and the British-ruled Central African Federation.

Military exchanges also took place during this period, with visits to Rhodesia from General Jean Landouzy, Superior Commander of the

111 MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/102. Aix:ANOM.
Madagascan Forces, in August 1954 and General Fleurquin, Commander of the French Air Forces in Madagascar, in May 1955.‘Establishing contact with, and exchanging views between’ the French Air Force and the RRAF was the objective of the latter’s five day stay in the region, with particular emphasis placed on obtaining information about the recruitment and training methods used by the RRAF; observing their equipment and training facilities; and exploring opportunities for a regular exchange of information and the future possibility of combined manoeuvres. Landouzy’s mission had a similar remit, but was also conceived of as part of a wider strategy of ‘échanges et de contacts avec les autres Territoires Africains voisins de l’Ocean Indien’. This, in turn, demonstrates how Rhodesian-Madagascan interaction was situated within France’s broader African strategies in the post-war period, as certain actors looked to British Central Southern Africa in order to preserve and enhance French influence across the continent.

As Francophone Africa neared independence in the late 1950s, efforts were made to enhance the ties between white Rhodesians and Francophone Africans. This can be seen by efforts in 1959 to secure the representation of the French Union at the International Congress of African Culture that was to be held in Salisbury in June and July 1960. In July 1959, Cabrol relayed a request to Paris from McEwen, Director of the National Gallery in Salisbury and President of the local section of the Alliance Française, calling for the

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115 MAD/GGM/D/6(1)/102. Aix:ANOM.
participation of France and other governments in the Communauté in this international celebration of African culture. In particular, requests were made for ‘quelques œuvres d’art… la participation aux colloques de 8 à 12 spécialistes français ou d’Afrique Français et la présence, ici, d’un ou deux orchestres indigènes’. The strength of language employed in these requests, for example the use of the adverb ‘vivement’, underscores the importance attached to this initiative amongst the French in Salisbury.\footnote{Cabrol to MAE. (1959, July 22). AL/SEAB/12/No.158. Paris:AMAE.}

Paris claimed to be unable to support this venture financially, an additional example of the ways in which metropolitan action was constrained by ‘des raisons budgetaires’.\footnote{Fouchet (RC) to Monod, Director, Institut Francais d’Afrique Noire, Dakar. (1959, November 17). AL/SEAB/12/No.1143. Paris:AMAE.} Yet, it is clear that the Quai viewed this endeavour as significant, seen by their decision to pass the request from Salisbury onto the Institut Français d’Afrique Noire (IFAN) in Dakar and their subsequent profuse thanks to IFAN for their collaboration in this endeavour.\footnote{RC to Monod. (nd). AL/SEAB/12. Paris:AMAE. RC to Salisbury. (nd). AL/SEAB/12. Paris:AMAE. Fouchet to Monod. (1959, November 17). AL/SEAB/12/No.1143. Paris:AMAE.}

Dakar, in turn, was enthusiastic about Francophone African participation in this event, seen by the Director of IFAN’s claim that,

\begin{quote}
une participation française à cet effort international serait heureusement souhaitable et il va sans dire que l’IFAN est prêt, dans la mesure de ses moyens, à s’associer à la manifestation projetée.
\end{quote}

Thus, IFAN offered to send some examples of West African art, along with a specialist from the Ethnographic section of the organisation, to the Congress in Salisbury in the summer of 1960. Moreover, although musicology was outside of IFAN’s area of specialism, Monod passed on the
details of a relevant expert of African music to the Cultural Relations department of the Quai. 122 This instance, in turn, underscores Rhodesia’s situation within a broader French strategy to maintain its position on the African continent and how this, in turn, brought Rhodesia’s white settlers into contact with Francophone African nationalists and their culture.

The multiplication and diversification of the triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia after 1960

The independence of Francophone sub-Saharan Africa in 1960 and Algeria in 1962 in augured a new era of optimism about France’s presence in Anglophone Africa amongst French diplomats on the ground in Salisbury. In the words of Desparmet,

Pour la première fois depuis des années notre dossier africain est excellent. La fin de la guerre d’Algérie a marqué la clôture de l’ère de décolonisation en Afrique si l’on en excepte Djibouti et les Comores. Il serait cependant optimiste de penser que nos efforts et nos sacrifices nous vailient [sic] pour celà [sic] les éloges de l’Afrique anglophone. 123

The praise that the French received from African nationalists in Southern Rhodesia provided evidence to support this view. In 1962, Jasper Zengeza Savanhu, the former African Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Federal Ministry, and a close colleague of Zimbabwean activist, Joshua Nkomo, spoke at length in the Federal Assembly in extremely favourable terms about France and its policies towards its former African colonies:

… la France est dans une autre catégorie que la Grande Bretagne en ce sens que les nouveaux

123 Desparmet to MAE. (1963, 1 August). AL/SEAB/14/No.296. Paris:AMAE.
dirigeants des territoires qui étaient sous la domination française, furent toujours traités en égaux par les Français ; ils ont représenté leurs pays à l’Assemblée Nationale Français depuis que ces territoires ont été considérés comme des provinces d’outre-mer de l’Union Française. Ils fréquentait les Universités françaises, ils étaient pénétrés de culture française et ils étaient accueillis sans restrictions sur la base de leurs mérites et de leurs travaux, comme être humains, comme n’importe quel français. En fait, ces mêmes personnalités qui représentaient ces territoires à l’Assemblé Nationale Française sont maintenant les chefs politiques de leurs pays respectifs, ici en Afrique, et ils n’ont pas l’impression de continuer à être attachées par des liens économiques à leurs anciens maîtres. Il y avait aussi une complète égalité entre les africains parvenus à un certain niveau d’éducation et les français.124

The idealism of this intervention aside, it is striking to see such a positive interpretation of France held by someone so closely engaged in the Zimbabwean nationalist cause and it is evidence of the success of France’s efforts to present a favourable image of itself and its African policies to the native population of Southern Rhodesia.

With regards to the European settler population, there was a disconnect between the image that France presented of itself as a ‘champion’ of African interests in a Cold-War dominated world order (Chafer, 2002a, p.353) and as ‘a respectable middle power, free from superpower hegemony, truly non-aligned, and thus a natural ally of the Third World’ (Martin, 1995, p.8), and the desire of many white Rhodesians to maintain their privileged position in this region of Central Southern Anglophone Africa. In spite of this, many

high-ranking Rhodesian officials continued to hold France in high esteem and viewed it as an important ally on the African continent. One notable Francophile was Welensky who, during his time as Federal Prime Minister, actively sought to promote ties between France and the Rhodesian authorities seen, for example, by his aforementioned visits to Paris and efforts in this context to gain an audience with Charles De Gaulle. According to Cabrol, ‘le premier ministre fédéral ayant toujours manifesté beaucoup de sympathie pour notre pays [France]’. Welensky himself explicitly set out this sentiment in a personal letter written in February 1963 in which he described De Gaulle as ‘a man of courage and character’, sentiments that he echoed after his resignation from office. Welensky also praised De Gaulle’s governance, asserting that he had done a ‘marvellous job’ for France, evidenced by everything he had done ‘to pull France out of the mess she was in – she was certainly on the way to becoming a Communist state before he appeared on the scene’. Even the most reactionary Rhodesians identified France as a potential ally. For instance, in August 1964, the new Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, advocate of “no majority rule in my lifetime” (cited in Meredith, 2006, p.133), approached a French representative in Salisbury personally, requesting that he inform the French authorities that,

le gouvernement de Rhodésie du Sud attache le plus haut prix à l’intensification des relations économiques avec l’Europe et principalement avec

125 Cabrol to Sauvagnargues, AL, MAE. (1960, October 20). AL/SEAB/34. Paris:AMAE.
A question that remains unanswered, however, is why these Rhodesian settlers identified so closely with France in light of their publically opposing stances to African affairs? In the years prior to Algerian independence, it is possible to hypothesise that these sentiments resulted from a sense of affiliation with the French plight in North Africa and a belief that France understood the question of European settlers in Africa better than their own colonial rulers, the British. In October 1960, Cabrol noted how Welensky,

\[\text{n'a cessé de s'interesser à l'évolution de notre Communauté, et au problème algérien, pour lequel il espérait – et espère toujours – que le Général de Gaulle trouvera une solution susceptible d’avoir d’heureuses repercussions sur les problèmes et l’avenir de la Fédération.}\]

Similarly, in 1961, a report prepared by the Federal Intelligence Security Bureau (FISB) claimed that if negotiations for self-determination in Algeria reached a successful conclusion, Algeria would be in a similar position vis-à-vis France that Australia was to the United Kingdom, a fate that Rhodesia’s Europeans also desired for themselves. The report concluded that it was ‘most unlikely that France would ever agree to total severance of the links between France and Algeria’. It is possible to suggest, therefore, that the Rhodesians looked to France’s Algerian policy as a potential example that could be employed by Britain, which might allow them to

\[130\] Salisbury to MAE. (1964, August 22). AL/SEAB/27/No.95/98. Paris:AMAE.
\[131\] Cabrol to Sauvagnargues. (1960, October 20). AL/SEAB/34. Paris:AMAE.
achieve the status of a fully independent Dominion in the Commonwealth of Nations and, as such, maintain European rule in the region.

Yet, this does not explain the continued Rhodesian interest in developing relations with France and the persistence of positive interpretations about France amongst Rhodesia’s European settlers after 1962. In fact, the Federation’s settler population actually gave its approval to France’s decision to grant independence to Algeria. Despite concerns that the Evian Accords of March 1962 marked ‘un nouvel affaiblissement de la position des blancs en Afrique’, press reports in the immediate aftermath of Algerian independence indicate that Rhodesian society continued to have confidence in De Gaulle’s approach to situation in Algeria, believing that ‘les négociations avec le GPRA étaient nécessaires et que les accords conclus constituent, sans doute, un moindre mal’. 133 The Rhodesia Herald condemned the acts of terrorism by the OAS, whilst an article in the Daily Mail paid homage to De Gaulle’s policies as ‘courageuse et réaliste’. 134 Similarly, despite congratulating the OAS on “ses glorieux sacrifices pour la cause de l’auto-détermination” [of the colons] - a statement that was interpreted by Cabrol as an indication that European settlers in the Federation might also consider employing terrorist actions - Colin Cunningham, the Vice-President of the Rhodesian Republican Party (Northern Rhodesia), appeared to overlook De Gaulle’s role in leading Algeria to independence, focusing instead on the French support for the British during the Second World War and “les maquis de France luttaient et

se sacrifiaient avec les Forces Alliées”. De Gaulle’s “invention” of decolonisation in Algeria clearly influenced the Rhodesians as much as it did the French.

Why then did the Rhodesians remain so resolute in their feelings of affiliation with France throughout the first half of the 1960s, despite France’s African policies that, on the surface, appeared to counter the interests of Europeans in Africa? One explanation for this conviction could be pragmatism. As has been discussed above, France was increasingly the strongest European power in Africa. In attempting to ally itself with France, Rhodesia’s settlers could be seen to be responding to the evolving situation on the continent and attempting to better preserve their position. This is evidenced particularly in the ways in which the European authorities in Rhodesia identified France as an important partner in their efforts to break free from the British stranglehold. A record of a meeting between Noreau, Commercial Attaché to the French Consulate General in Salisbury (1961-1965), and Rudland in September 1964, for example, notes the Rhodesian interest in

dégager progressivement de l’influence économique de la Grande-Bretagne de des capitaux sud-africaine. Ils se tournent, l’un et l’autre, tout naturellement vers la seul pays qui apparaisse indépendant, à la fois de l’Afrique et de la Grande-Bretagne, c’est à dire: la France.136

This view is reiterated in the surviving papers from the Rhodesian Cabinet.

In July 1965, for example, a report from Rudland on the ‘External trade

representatives: Paris and Lisbon’ states ‘the absolute necessity for the post
in Paris’ in order to ‘diversify our trade and the sources from which we receive investment’. The importance of opening an office in Paris was
further enhanced by Rudland’s belief that ‘with proper handling, the French could be persuaded to extend their interests to Rhodesia’. The Rhodesians clearly viewed France as an important ally, therefore, in their efforts to achieve independence from Britain.

**France, Rhodesia and the secession of Katanga**

There were also issues over which the French and Rhodesia’s white settlers held similar positions, notably the question of the Belgian Congo, especially following the secession of the mineral rich province of Katanga on 11 July 1960. As was also the case elsewhere on the African continent in the Cold War context, the French worried about “Anglo-Saxon” and Communist infiltration of the region, concerns that were particularly acute in the case of the Belgian Congo in light of its close geographical proximity to the former French Congo, with its capital, Brazzaville, separated only by the Congo River from the once Belgian-ruled territory’s principal city, Léopoldville (Kinshasa). Thus, the French supported Katangese secession ‘car elle permet de morceler le « Grand Congo » et de redistribuer ainsi les cartes de l’hégémonie de la zone’ (Bat, 2012, p.276). However, as France was unable to intervene openly outside of its traditional sphere of influence, the Elysée sought unofficial means of protecting France’s African interests. As such,

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Foccart made his deputy in Brazzaville, Jean Mauricheau-Beaupré, responsible for controlling the situation in Katanga by providing support, notably in the form of mercenaries, to the leader of the Katangese separatist movement, Moïse Tshombe, against the UN and the government in Léopoldville (Bat & Geneste, 2010, p.93; Williams, 2011, p.165).

The Belgian Congo also shared 2000 miles of its border with the Central African Federation, with Katanga lying next to the Copperbelt region of Northern Rhodesia. European settlers in Ndola, the main urban centre in the Copperbelt, often crossed over to the Katangese capital, Elisabethville, and vice versa, leading to much interconnection between the white communities in these two regions (Williams, 2011, pp.50-51). According to Chauvel,

les liens ethniques et économiques [between Katanga and the Federation] sont nombreux. L’idée d’une fusion des deux territoires avait d’ailleurs été lancée par certains "ultras" britanniques, porte-parole du groupe de pression rhodésien.\(^\text{138}\)

There were also fears amongst the European settlers in the Rhodesias that the crisis in the Congo would spread to the Federation, a fact that the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs were acutely aware of. A despatch from Cabrol sent in August 1960, for example, noted the growing concern amongst ‘certain elements de la minorité blanche’ about ‘des évènements du Congo’.\(^\text{139}\) In a similar vein, a report by the Direction Afrique-Levant acknowledges how ‘les évènements du Congo Belge… ont accru leurs [the white settlers’] inquiétudes’.\(^\text{140}\)


\(^{139}\) Cabrol to MAE. (1960, August 18). AL/SEAB/16/No.177. Paris:AMAE.

\(^{140}\) AL. (1960, October 4). AL/SEAB/16. Paris:AMAE.
the Federation, therefore, Katanga was central to the preservation of white rule in the region. In the words of Welensky, Katanga was “an ideal buffer between ourselves and the wilder forms of pan-Africanism to the north of us” (cited in Williams, 2011, p.51). A report from the French post in Salisbury similarly notes how ‘Sir Roy attribute à l’évolution de la situation au Katanga “une importance vitale” pour la Fédération’.141

Thus, the Rhodesians had a vested interest in sustaining “a strong and friendly regime in Katanga” (Welensky, cited in Williams, 2011, p.51) and, as such, turned a blind eye to the passage of mercenaries, including private French soldiers, from the Federation to Katanga. The Federation’s settler-dominated government also allowed the Union Minière du Haut Katanga, which provided the breakaway state with its main source of income, to continue to send its exports through the Rhodesias to South Africa (Williams, 2011, pp.32-34). Rhodesian support for Katanga, in turn, contributed to ‘une vive critique’, particularly on the part of Welensky, of ‘l’actuelle politique d’intervention des Nations Unies au Katanga’, which he characterised as ‘illégaile… et contraire au principe de la liberté des peuples à disposer d’eux-mêmes’.142 This opposition to UN involvement in Katanga was shared by the French, founded on their long-standing hostility towards supranationality (Smouts, 1979, p.252) and manifest in the Elysée’s covert military support for the secessionist state which has been described as a ‘French war against the UN’ (Williams, 2011, p.169).

This shared approach to the Katanga crisis created a new focal point for Franco-Rhodesian interaction. Just two months after the Katangese secession, for example, during a personal meeting with Cabrol, Welensky requested that the French post in Salisbury share with him, ‘à titre tout à fait confidentiel’, all the information that it received on the evolution of the situation in the Congo. Welensky was interested in information received from the French Ambassador in Léopoldville and especially wished to glean greater knowledge about the response to Tshombe’s policies from Fulbert Youlou, the President of the Republic of the Congo.\footnote{Cabrol to Sauvagnargues. (1960, October 13). AL/SEAB/14. Paris:AMAE.} Even after a UN-led force reintegrated Katanga into the Congo in January 1963, France and Rhodesia continued to cooperate over the crisis in the region. In May 1963, Mauricheau-Beaupré and Daniel Richon, the Director of External Affairs at the Union de Transports Aériens (UTA),\footnote{The Union de Transports Aériens (UAT) was formed by a merger between UTA merged with Transports Aériens Intercontinentaux (TAI).} sought Welensky’s support, via a Rhodesian intermediary, in their attempts to receive information direct from Léopoldville ‘because there is some risk of leakage en route and they [Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon] believe that the consequences of a leakage might be serious’.\footnote{Anonymous to Welensky. (1963, May 7). WP/231/4/6-7. Oxford:RH.} Welensky, for his part, was unconvinced by this approach and continued to view Brazzaville as a crucial linchpin in Franco-Rhodesian efforts to share information over the Congo Crisis, as is evidenced by a handwritten note from Welensky at the end of the secret minute, in which he expressed his reservations about a Léopoldville connection, proposing Brazzaville as an alternative point of exchange.\footnote{Welensky. (nd). WP/231/4/6-7. Oxford:RH.}

Notwithstanding this difference of opinion, Franco-Rhodesian contacts over
the Congo crisis reveal the growing sense of affinity towards France amongst Rhodesia’s European settler population with regards to certain African questions in the post-1960 period.

**Rhodesia and the réseaux franco-africains**

The situation in the Belgian Congo is useful, therefore, in explaining how the French and Rhodesians were able to reconcile themselves to relations with each other in spite of their seemingly opposing stances to African affairs. It also draws our attention to the growing participation of members of Foccart’s *cellule africaine*, such as Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon, in Rhodesian affairs during this period. Both men were pivotal to the Franco-African post-colonial réseaux. According to Bat and Geneste (2010, p.82), Mauricheau-Beaupré was central to the remarkable durability of France’s African policy after decolonisation, whilst in his role as Director of External Affairs at the UTA, Richon was situated ‘à la croisée stratégique de l’univers de transport, des agences de renseignement et des hautes sphères politiques’. This, along with his fervent commitment to Gaullism, made Richon ‘le parfait honorable correspondant’ for Foccart and his right-hand man, Maurice Robert, the head of the African branch of SDECE (Bat, 2012, pp.173-176).

The connections between members of Foccart’s *cellule africaine* and the white Rhodesian political *élite* forged in response to the crisis in Katanga opened the door for further Franco-Rhodesian collaboration in the early
1960s. Of particular note were French-led efforts to establish ‘a small secret working organisation’ that would counter the Anglophone African dominance of the Organisation of African Unity ahead of its first summit in Addis Ababa on 25 May 1963. Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon were at the heart of this initiative, travelling to Salisbury in early May 1963. During this visit, the two Frenchmen met not only with Welensky’s private secretary, Stewart Parker, but also Welensky himself, as is evidenced by a personal letter from Mauricheau-Beaupré to Welensky in which he thanks Welensky for his kindness during his stay in Rhodesia and twice expresses his hope that Lady Welenksy’s health has improved.

According to a secret minute written for the Federal Prime Minister, Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon believed that the time was ‘ripe’ to establish a group that could ‘canalize’ their existing efforts ‘to disrupt the unity of the Addis Ababa Conference’. The note also emphasised Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon’s desire ‘to prepare for a possible broadening into an effective organisation in the future’. In order to achieve this end, Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon proposed a meeting in Paris between Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast, described as ‘pretty much clay in their [the French] hands’, Moïse Tshombe and representatives from the white-governments in South Africa, Rhodesia and Portuguese-rulled Angola and Mozambique.

Strikingly, the French seem to have been more enthusiastic and overt in their advances regarding this proposed organisation than the Rhodesians. In

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a letter to Parker, Mauricheau-Beaupré unreservedly set out his intentions, openly calling upon the Rhodesians to ‘find some competent African to “play” with us and our friends and to create a new deal in Central Africa’. Moreover, in contrast to the French proposal that a close associate of Welensky, probably Parker, attend the planned meeting of the “club” in Paris, the Rhodesians opposed the direct involvement of those close to the Federal Prime Minister’s Office in this venture. Instead, they suggested that Sydney Wynne of Voice and Vision Limited attend on behalf of the Rhodesians. The Rhodesians also repeatedly raised concerns about leakages and the need for the use of secretive channels of communication, even going as far as to contact Mauricheau-Beaupré directly to tell him ‘not to sign any letters or address them to anyone by name, and generally to take greater precautions’ after the Frenchman sent several letters with the names of their intended recipients clearly visible and his own name signed at the end of each letter. Rhodesian concerns about secrecy seem to have been justified as plans to establish a counter-pan-African “club” eventually were scuppered by a security breach. According to an anonymous note included in Welensky’s papers, in the end, ‘nothing more’ came ‘of certain meetings which were contemplated… as a result of certain property belonging to someone now in Paris falling into wrong hands and of certain other

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152 Voice & Vision were a London-based public relations firm charged by Roy Welensky with promoting the political and economic system in the Federation (Cohen, 2009, p.113).
circumstances’. As such, Mauricheau-Beaupré was advised ‘that a short period of inactivity would not come amiss’. 155

Despite the apparent failure of the “club”, these attempts to establish a counter pan-African organisation in 1963 are significant not only as evidence of the new connections between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa, through the intermediary of France, but also of the new directions in which these relations developed in the post-1960 period. Whereas in the late 1940s and 1950s, contacts between Francophone Africa and Rhodesia had been confined to the economic and cultural domains, in the years after the independence of France’s colonies in sub-Saharan Africa these relations took on a distinctly political flavour. The new political dimension of the triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia is also apparent in the Rhodesian “Goodwill Mission” to Francophone Africa, which took place at the behest of Welensky and organised by UAT in 1962. 156 A few days prior to the arrival of the Rhodesian delegation in Libreville on 20 February 1962, Risterucci, the French Ambassador in Gabon, reported that correspondence relating to the visit received by the local UAT representative indicated ‘qu’en plus d’une contribution à un développement des liens économiques et culturelles entre la Rhodésie et les États africains d’expression française’, the Rhodesians also saw the mission as being useful ‘dans le cas d’une évolution de la situation en Afrique Australe’. According to Risterucci, ‘ce qui confirmait indiscutablement le

caractère politique, pour partie au moins, de ce voyage’.

The fact that UAT had been active in the region since the departure of Air France in 1956 underscores the importance of foundations laid under the Fourth Republic for the subsequent development and diversification of Franco-Rhodesian relations after 1960.

In the years after 1960, the triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia were also increasingly transnational in their character, not only in the sense that they crossed national and colonial boundaries, but also because they were increasingly informed by the wider international context of decolonisation. In the case of the 1962 “Goodwill Mission”, this broader setting was the evolving situation in Southern Africa, particularly growing opposition to white rule and the subsequent need for European settlers to seek alternative allies in the face of their increasing isolation on the African continent. Similarly, 1963 efforts to establish a ‘Pan-African counter-organisation’ were born of a shared Franco-Rhodesian affiliation over a crisis beyond the boundaries of both British and French Africa, in the formerly Belgian-ruled Congo. The new post-colonial setting led, therefore, to the creation of new transnational points of contact between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia.

The 1962 “Goodwill Mission” and 1963 counter pan-African organisation also underline how after 1960, in line with the broader shifts in Franco-African relations, control of the Franco-Rhodesian connection shifted away

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from the Quai to the Elysée. The traditional drivers of France’s policy in Rhodesia - members of the Afrique-Levant department at the Quai and French diplomats on the ground in Anglophone Africa - saw their influence eroded during this period. This can be seen by the absence of any evidence in the archives of the French Foreign Ministry of the ‘Pan-African counter-organisation’, implying that the Quai was not only not involved in this initiative, but also that it probably had no awareness of these efforts having taken place.

Similarly, the declining control of the Quai over Franco-Rhodesian relations in the years after 1960 is apparent with regards to the “Goodwill Mission”. UAT’s directors were convinced that they had French government approval for this mission, seen in the statement from Weiss, the local UAT agent in Salisbury, that ‘d’après les renseignements que je possède, les instances gouvernementales françaises ont été averties de ce projet’. ¹⁵⁸ This is despite the uncertainty surrounding the mission amongst France’s diplomatic representatives in Salisbury. Cabrol, for instance, was unwilling to accept the assurances given to him by Weiss that ‘la direction générale de sa compagnie a organisé ce voyage en accord avec les administrations françaises intéressées’ and decided instead to approach the MAE for confirmation instead.¹⁵⁹ Although the archives do not contain a reply to this note, a report prepared for the attention of De Gaulle on 16 February 1962 indicates that the Quai did not approve of the mission and attempted to make known ‘à tous les représentants de la France dans les capitales

intéressés qu’ils aient à rester à l’écart d’une entreprise qui en tout état de cause, devait être considérée comme peu opportune’. It appears, therefore, that the UAT’s confidence in the official backing of their mission came from a source other than the French Foreign Ministry. The known links between Foccart’s African cell and the UAT, notably the personal contacts with Richon noted above, make it possible to hypothesise that this source of authority was linked to the Elysée.

The participation of representatives of the UAT/ UTA alongside members of Foccart’s cellule africaine in the 1962 “Goodwill Mission” and the 1963 proposed counter-pan-African “club” brings to light another new trend in the webs of connections between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia in the post-1960 period, which also dominated the bilateral relations between France and its former colonies: the development of réseaux in which the lines between state and private action were increasingly blurred (Médard, 2005, p.42; Chafer, 2008, p.39). These highly complex networks, in turn, created the context in which new, secretive channels of communications could be established. In the case of the “Goodwill Mission”, these covert contacts appear to have taken place via the UAT representatives on the ground in Rhodesia and Gabon. Of particular note is the importance of Weiss, who informed the French Consulate in Salisbury of the Rhodesian plans for the “Goodwill Mission”.

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Similarly, efforts to establish a “club” to disrupt OAU unity were established through unofficial methods. A letter from Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker, for example, ends with the instruction that replies should be given to ‘the bearer’, as opposed to being sent through any diplomatic bag. This route permitted Mauricheau-Beaupré to receive replies ‘in Brazzaville the same evening’.\footnote{Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker. (1963, June 21). WP/231/4/No.41-42. Oxford:RH.} Letters often did not indicate an author or a recipient, whilst pseudonyms were frequently used. The name ‘Hyde’, for example, is given to one Rhodesian representative who met with Mauricheau-Beaupré and Richon in Brazzaville, whilst general terms such as ‘the chief’, ‘the old man’ and ‘the doctor’ are often used in place of personal names.\footnote{Hyde to Welensky. (1963, May 5). WP/231/4/No.9. Oxford:RH. Anonymous to Wynne. (1963, May 10). WP/231/4/No.13. Oxford:RH. Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker. (1963, May 9). WP/231/4/No.16-20. Oxford:RH.} Furthermore, a considerable amount of contact between the French, Francophone Africans and the Rhodesians is likely to have taken place in person, at informal and unofficial meetings, like the one proposed by Mauricheau-Beaupré to take place in Paris on 24 May 1963 between Houphouët-Boigny, Tshombe and representatives of the Rhodesian, South African and Portuguese governments.\footnote{Anonymous to Welensky. (1963, May 7). WP/231/4/No.6. Oxford:RH. Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker. (1963, May 9). WP/231/4/No.16-20. Oxford:RH.} Another indication of these informal, personal meetings having taken place can be found in a letter from Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker, in which the former states:

> If you are passing through Paris, you will be able to see the Doctor then and get fresh news about Addis. A later date must be chosen, after the meeting in Addis, preferably the last few days of the month. The Abbe [Fulbert Youlou] will probably be in Paris then.\footnote{Mauricheau-Beaupré to Parker. (1963, May 9). WP/231/4/No.16-20. Oxford:RH.}
The development of these contacts outside of official channels and unnoticed by the official French record, provides evidence of the growing opaqueness of Franco-Rhodesian relations, in line with the absence of transparency and accountability so frequently associated with Franco-African relations after 1960 (Médard, 1997, p.26). The increasingly covert and underhand nature of Franco-Rhodesian contacts in the years immediately following the independence of Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, in turn, had significant consequences for relations between France and Rhodesia after UDI, as it created new spaces hidden from international view in which Franco-Rhodesian interaction could persist despite Rhodesia’s illegal status. Moreover, the fact that many of the key French players in these networks also participated in Francophone African affairs situates Rhodesia directly within the Franco-African réseaux, binding France’s relations with this region of Anglophone Africa to its policies in its former colonies. Thus, as was also the case in the late colonial period, Rhodesia formed part of the strategies to preserve France’s influence in Africa after 1960. The particular post-1960 context, however, permitted Rhodesia to be directly integrated into the mechanisms used to sustain France’s presence on the African continent.
Conclusions

In contrast to the existing literature on Franco-African relations in the late colonial period, the years after the end of the Second World War witnessed an expansion of France’s relations with the British-ruled colony of Rhodesia. Although the extent of these contacts was consistently curtailed by limited central support, a consequence of Rhodesia’s relatively low status on Paris’ foreign policy agenda in the post-war period and the territory’s constitutional ties with the UK, the eighteen years between September 1947 and November 1965 saw diplomatic, cultural and economic ties between France and this region of Anglophone Africa reach new heights. The methods employed in Rhodesia, such as the importance of infrastructure projects and the prioritising of cultural rayonnement, mirrored the policies adopted in France’s colonial empire. Moreover, from the outset, French engagement with Rhodesia formed part of a conscious French strategy to maintain and extend its influence on the African continent.

The identification of Rhodesia as an arena in which France’s position on the African continent could be assured and extended contributed to the multiplication and diversification of France’s relations with Rhodesia. The French belief that Rhodesia could also enhance the economy of its African colonies, in particular, contributed to growing interaction between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa, and the subsequent development of new, triangular ties between France, the French Empire and Central Southern Anglophone Africa. After the independence of Francophone Africa in 1960, Rhodesia
continued to be included in French efforts to sustain its African presence. This contributed to declining Quai influence over France’s involvement in Rhodesia and the growing participation of French actors linked to the Elysée by way of Foccart’s African cell, as well as the proliferation of the three-way contacts between France, certain of France’s best African “friends” and Rhodesia. Thus, Franco-Rhodesian interaction not only mirrored the patterns of France’s relations with its former colonies. Rhodesia was directly included in the Franco-African réseaux.

Although the period after 1960 saw a marked shift in Franco-Rhodesian relations – not least the introduction of key players from Foccart’s cellule africaine into the fray and Rhodesia’s subsequent participation in the réseaux that formed the basis of Franco-African engagement in the post-colonial era - the precedent for using Rhodesia as a means of securing France’s position on the African continent had already been established as early as 1947. Franco-Rhodesian interaction in the late colonial period provided, therefore, the necessary framework for the development of Franco-Rhodesian relations after 1960 and, in particular, the growing participation of members of Foccart’s cellule africaine in Franco-Rhodesian relations.

This sense of continuity between the Fourth and the Fifth Republics, the colonial and the post-colonial periods - divides that are so frequently imposed on histories of France’s foreign policies - is also apparent in France’s diplomatic, cultural and economic engagement with Rhodesia,
where the policies of the late 1950s and early 1960s built directly upon the foundations laid during the Fourth Republic epoch. Thus, the case study of Rhodesia provides further evidence to support the work of scholars who have demonstrated that the foreign policies of the Fifth Republic were contingent upon the efforts of its predecessor (Hitchcock, 1998; Wall, 2001). It also adds further weight to arguments regarding the continuities in France’s African policies before and after 1960 (Chafer, 2002a; Keese, 2007a). The study of French engagement with Rhodesia makes a contribution, therefore, to our knowledge of French foreign policy in the post-war period.

To return to the Rhodesian case study, it is important to underline three key trends in Franco-Rhodesian relations that emerged during this period. Two of these trends were established during Fourth Republic period, whilst the third did not emerge until after Francophone African independence. The first relates to the drivers of France’s presence in the region, who, from the outset, were state and non-state “men-on-the spot”. With regards to the former, although who these official “men-on-the-spot” were shifted after 1960, with the introduction of members of Foccart’s cellule africaine as the new lynchpins of the Franco-Rhodesian connection, throughout this period French representatives on the ground played a pivotal role in the development of France’s relations with this British colony. It is also interesting to note the part played by certain French companies operating on Rhodesian soil, such as UAT (after 1963, UTA), Renault, Peugeot, CFP, Alsthom, NEYPRIC and others, in the establishment and expansion of
Franco-Rhodesian relations. Secondly, it is necessary to emphasise how this period witnessed a growing feeling of friendship towards France amongst the white Rhodesian population. Although this built on existing francophilia amongst Rhodesia’s settler population, it nevertheless increased due to growing Franco-Rhodesian contact after 1947, and especially after 1960, as the shift towards majority rule on the African continent created new transnational points of convergence between Rhodesia’s settler élite and certain key players in the Franco-African connection. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the years after Francophone African independence in 1960 saw Rhodesia’s inclusion into certain Franco-African réseaux. This, in turn, created new spaces, hidden from international view in which Franco-Rhodesian engagement could take place. As the second part of this thesis will now explore, these three trends were to become vital to the shape of Franco-Rhodesian relations after 1965.
Part Two

France and Rhodesia after 1965
Chapter Three

France and Rhodesia after 1965: the setting

At 11.30am GMT on 11 November 1965, after months of failed negotiations, Ian Douglas Smith proclaimed Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence from the United Kingdom. This declaration, which was intentionally reminiscent of the American Declaration of Independence (Evans, 2007, p.181), was an illegal act under both British and international law, as, in light of Rhodesia’s status as a British colony, an act of the British parliament was required before any change to its constitutional status could be made (Brownell, 2010, p.479). However, Smith’s proclamation signalled not only a rebellion against Britain, but also a challenge to international efforts to end European domination of Africa and transform it into a continent of independent, majority-ruled nation states. As such, according to Coggins (2006, p.371), ‘UDI caught the attention of the world’.

Global opinion was steadfastly opposed to an independent, white-ruled Rhodesia. In the immediate aftermath of 11 November, the United States publically ‘deplored UDI’,¹ whilst there were ‘sharp reactions to Mr Ian Smith’s announcement’ ‘from all over the world’, including from New Zealand, Japan, Norway, Kenya, Turkey and Singapore.² No country offered formal recognition to Smith’s regime, and the UN Security Council

UNSC) and UNGA both repeatedly declared UDI as illegal under international law (Brownell, 2010, p.480). In spite of this, the white regime in Salisbury remained intransigent for nearly a decade and a half, consistently imagining itself to be a state and striving to be recognised as one by the outside world (Brownell, 2010, pp.479-480), but never fully appreciating the fact that an act had to be passed in the UK parliament in order for them to gain legal status in front of the international community (Wood, 2008, p.3). As such, UDI became ‘a festering sore on the international body politic for the next 15 years’ (Watts, 2012, p.2).

As the first part of this thesis has explored, by 1965, France had an established network of economic, diplomatic, cultural and personal relationships with Rhodesia. This Franco-Rhodesian connection, in turn, was founded upon an array of imperatives that combined to create a particular French foreign policy mind-set. At the heart of this French worldview was the desire to reverse the humiliations and disappointments of the Second World War, and to restore France’s status on the international stage. In this pursuit, the African continent was vital, as it was seen as a privileged arena for the projection of French power overseas and, as such, the maintenance of France’s position on the world stage. Closely interlinked with French pursuit of international status, was a deeply entrenched hostility towards Britain and the United States, and the desire to limit “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration, particularly in the African context. The hardening of Cold War tensions further heightened these sentiments and prompted a growing French conviction in the need for a foreign policy that was not only anti-
communist but also autonomous from that pursued by the Anglo-American partners in the Western Alliance. The establishment of a French Consulate in Salisbury in 1947, and the subsequent development of commercial, cultural, diplomatic and personal relations with this semi-autonomous British colony throughout the 1950s and first half of the 1960s, demonstrates how these foreign policy concerns were not only applied in the Francophone context. Rather France’s African vision expanded in the post-war period to included territories formerly beyond France’s traditional sphere of influence. The period prior to Smith’s UDI in 1965 witnessed, therefore, a reformulation of France’s approach to the African continent.

In light of the multifaceted policy-making universe that underpinned French engagement with Rhodesia prior to 1965, an analysis of France’s position towards this British colony after UDI that assumed a uniform French acceptance of Rhodesia’s illegal status in the international arena would be highly one-dimensional. Rather, a more nuanced understanding of the setting in which French policy towards Rhodesia after 1965 was formulated is required. It is the aim of this chapter to delve into the intricacies that provided the backdrop for French engagement with Rhodesia throughout the UDI period, analysing the ways in which assumptions about France’s position in the world shaped French perceptions of Rhodesia in the aftermath of Ian Smith’s proclamation. It will then assess the wider setting for French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI, focusing particularly on the following four themes: France’s position towards Southern Africa as a whole, the United Nations, Franco-British relations and France’s Cold War
strategy. In so doing, it will be possible to acknowledge and analyse the multifaceted, and often contradictory, impetuses that informed France’s position towards Rhodesia, whilst simultaneously unpicking the heterogeneous, and sometimes conflicting, mechanisms involved in the formulation of French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI. This, in turn, will provide a vital backdrop for the discussion of the implementation of France’s Rhodesian policies after November 1965 in Chapter Four.

**French perceptions of Rhodesia after UDI**

The official French response to Smith’s proclamation of 11 November was in keeping with the position adopted by the majority of the international community towards the Rhodesian crisis, which was a stance founded on the conception of UDI as an illegal act in terms of both UK and international law. On 12 November, Maurice Couve de Murville, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958-1968), condemned the action of the Rhodesian Front (RF), Rhodesia’s white minority government, stating that France had no intention of recognising an independent Rhodesia. Three days later this stance was reiterated in a telegram circulated to all of France’s overseas representations by the Sous-Directeur d’Afrique at the Quai d’Orsay, Jean François-Poncet, which stated that ‘le Gouvernement Française désapprouve catégoriquement la déclaration unilatérale d’indépendance à laquelle il ne

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reconnaît aucun validité’.4 This French position was maintained throughout the UDI period, seen, for example, in note prepared by the Direction d’Afrique at the Quai in December 1970, which asserted that ‘la France a désapprouvé la déclaration unilatérale d’indépendance des autorités de Salisbury’.5

France, like the rest of the international community, viewed Smith’s announcement as an affront not only against Britain, but also against global efforts to secure self-determination for the African people. A diplomatic briefing prepared for De Gaulle on 12 November 1965 described UDI as a rebellion ‘non seulement contre l’Angleterre… mais surtout contre la conception dominante de l’ordre et de la morale’. This report went on to play down the importance of Rhodesia’s illegal breakaway from ‘la mère-patrie’, emphasising instead the principal objective of UDI ‘pour sauvegarder le monopole politique d’une race minoritaire’.6 In a similar vein, a report prepared in 1970 for the Centre des Hautes Etudes Administratives sur l’Afrique et l’Asie Modernes, by a French diplomat formerly based in Salisbury, described UDI as having one objective: ‘se débarrasser de la tutelle, fut-elle formelle, de Londres et mettre en place un appareil étatique légalisant une stricte ségrégation raciale’.7 The French were also critical of Smith’s government’s segregationist tendencies. For

example, the RF was described as ‘un clan des ultras partisans’,\(^8\) whilst a report prepared by the central administration described the new Rhodesian constitution, which was introduced following a referendum in June 1969, as ‘fondée sur la séparation des races et la suppression de toute perspective d’évolution vers un régime de majorité africaine en Rhodésie’.\(^9\) In a similar vein, Jean Bellivier, Manager of the French Consulate, characterised Rhodesia as,

> le bastion blanc d’Afrique Australe qui résiste par tous les moyens au "vent du changement" et pratique le suffrage censitaire et la discrimination raciale afin d’assurer la pérennité de la suprématie politique européenne dans ce sub-continent.\(^10\)

The public French assessment of Rhodesia was, therefore, in keeping with international opinion that opposed UDI as a rebellion against Britain and an attempt to maintain white rule in Africa, contrary to the “wind of change” blowing across the African continent.

However, in spite of this openly stated position of opposition to the white regime and its racial policies, building on perceptions developed in the eighteen years prior to UDI, Rhodesia was consistently viewed as land of opportunities for France, in which it was possible to pursue France’s main foreign policy objectives. In particular, Rhodesia continued to be identified as a country in which France could project its commercial and cultural influence overseas. This was especially evident in the economic sector,


where Franco-Rhodesian trade was seen as a means of furthering metropolitan commerce and industry. The identification of these opportunities by the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs can be found in a note sent in March 1970 by the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières to the Direction du Personnel at the Quai, which described Rhodesia as an important component in ‘un ensemble économique intégré qui englobe toute l’Afrique Australe’ with,

\[
\text{des richesses minières indispensables pour l’industrie européenne et les programmes d’équipement qui y sont poursuivre sur une grande échelle en font un important marché pour les exportations des pays industrielles.}^{11}
\]

Rhodesia also continued to be seen as region in which the French language could be promoted as part of a Francophone wider project. This intention is evidenced by the visits to Rhodesia organised by the Bureau pour l’Enseignement de la Langue et de la Civilisation Française à l’Etranger (BELC) in January 1968 and August 1969.\(^{12}\) In a report on the first of these trips, the BELC representative concluded that it was ‘essentiel’ to support ‘le naissant enseignement du français aux Africains de Rhodésie’, ‘améliorer l’enseignement existant dans les écoles européennes’ and, in so doing, ‘toucher un plus nombreux public’.\(^{13}\)

Alongside these opportunities to obtain commercial and cultural capital in the region, Rhodesia also continued to be viewed as an important region in geopolitical and geostrategic terms. As had also been the case before 1965,


\(^{13}\) David to Bellivier. (1968, September 6). Salisbury/5/No.909. Nantes:AD.
Rhodesia was situated by the French within a new post-colonial “scramble” for influence on the African continent. For the French, this struggle was especially acute in light of their privileging of the African continent in the pursuit of greatness on the international stage. Rhodesia’s close geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean is likely to have heightened these sentiments. France had a number of key military bases in the region, notably at the city of Djibouti in French Somaliland\textsuperscript{14} on the Horn of Africa and at Tananarive, and viewed these regions as crucial to wider French strategic ambitions in Africa (Alden, 1996, p.14). There was also Réunion, a Département d’Outre-Mer since 1946. The maintenance of French influence over these bases, however, was contingent upon France’s wider regional position. For example, according to Alden (1996, p.14), the Cape Route was a lifeline to France’s Indian Ocean bases, thus dictating a policy of support for the established interests in the region.

Alden applies this theory to the apartheid regime in Pretoria, but it is also likely that this vision extended beyond South Africa, to the white rulers of Rhodesia. Despite being landlocked and, thus, not directly situated within the Indian Ocean littoral zone, Rhodesia was conceived of by the French in terms of its geographical location within this broader, oceanic region. We have already seen in the first part of this thesis how, in the late colonial period, France included Rhodesia in its wider Indian Ocean strategy, seeking, for example, to develop the ties between Rhodesia and the French dependencies in the region, and including stopovers in Salisbury on wider

\textsuperscript{14} Between 1967 and 1977, French Somaliland was known as the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas. After its independence from France in 1977, the country became known as the Republic of Djibouti.
regional tours. After UDI, Rhodesia continued to be positioned with this regional context, seen in a report from 1970 that emphasised the importance of Rhodesia and its Southern African neighbours as a means of securing access to the Indian Ocean after the Suez expedition fourteen years earlier.\(^\text{15}\) Thus, in the post-UDI period, Rhodesia continued to form part of a wider strategic vision to use French influence in the Indian Ocean zone to shore up France’s broader continental ambitions as part of a wider plan to enhance French *rang* on the world stage.

The continued importance of wider foreign policy concerns in shaping French engagement with Rhodesia after UDI is especially evident in the discussions concerning the future of France’s diplomatic representation in Salisbury following the Rhodesian referendum of June 1969, in which the majority of the white electorate voted in favour of declaring Rhodesia a Republic. In the aftermath of this resounding “yes” vote, the British government acted immediately to ‘break relations with the illegal regime completely’ (Brownell, 2010, p.488). The French, however, declined to take action straight away, waiting and watching the actions of other Western powers in the region before making any decision about the future of their Consulate in Salisbury. The conclusion of these observations was that France should not terminate its diplomatic ties with Rhodesia whilst other foreign representations remained active in the region. In July 1969, for example, Pierre Carraud, the Deputy Director at the Quai charged with non-French speaking territories in Africa, reported how,

Il semble que personne ne soit vraiment désireux de suivre dans l’immédiat l’exemple de la Grande-Bretagne. Dans ces conditions, nous ne fermerons pas notre consulat à Salisbury.\textsuperscript{16}

The note concludes by stating that France would only be willing to close its post in Salisbury if ‘nos amis réviseraient leurs positions’.\textsuperscript{17} In November 1969, the Sous Direction d’Afrique reiterated this stance in a report on Consular representation in Salisbury, which described how no other Western power - with the exception of Belgium, who closed their Consulate General immediately after the referendum for economic reasons - had the intention of severing entirely diplomatic ties with the region. This, in turn, informed the report’s recommendation ‘de ne pas procéder pour le moment à la fermeture totale de notre Consulat Général à Salisbury’.\textsuperscript{18} This persistent unwillingness to sever French diplomatic ties with Rhodesia unless other Western powers also took similar action demonstrates how France’s much broader concerns about maintaining influence on the African continent – or at least not losing out to other European countries - were transferred to the Rhodesian context, This, in turn, situates Rhodesia within a wider project to protect France’s interests on the world stage.

The continued identification of opportunities for France in Rhodesia stemmed from optimistic French interpretations of the country’s future prospects. In the immediate aftermath of UDI, a report summarising


\textsuperscript{17} Carraud to Bellivier. (1969, July 9). AL/Rhodésie/1/1. Paris:AMAE.

diplomatic affairs prepared for De Gaulle expressed the belief that ‘la Rhodésie a quelques chances de son côté’ as it was, assez riche pour supporter quelques privations, assez forte pour s’opposer aux entreprises de ses ennemis, assez proche enfin de l’Afrique du Sud et du Portugal pour compter sur leur aide et envisager avec eux la constitution, dans la portion méridionale de l’Afrique, d’un vaste ensemble animé par un nationalisme inverse de celui qui inspire le reste du continent.\textsuperscript{19}

A report from the Afrique-Levant department at the Quai also highlighted the likelihood of white Rhodesia’s survival as a result of its strong financial position and the support it received from Lisbon and Pretoria.\textsuperscript{20}

Positive French interpretations of the Rhodesian economy persisted into 1970s, despite the introduction of UN mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia in 1968. In June 1971, for example, a report from the Commercial Advisor at the French Embassy in South Africa acknowledged that ‘la Rhodésie a accompli, depuis l’UDI, une performance d’autant plus remarquable qu’on la rapporte au chiffre de sa population blanche forte’.\textsuperscript{21} Another cable from France’s diplomatic representation in Pretoria sent to Paris in May 1974, reported ‘une forte expansion’ in 1973 ‘malgré les sanctions et une mauvaise récolte céréalière’ and predicted ‘une nouvelle bonne année’ in 1974 with ‘les conditions climatiques laissent prévoir une saison record’ and ‘le secteur minier… en expansion rapide’.\textsuperscript{22} In the minds of the French observing and operating in this region of Central Southern Africa,

\textsuperscript{20} AL. (1965, November 23). 5AG/FPU/297/No.35. Paris:AN
Rhodesia’s economy continued to flourish. This, in turn, is likely to have contributed to the continued identification of commercial possibilities for France in Rhodesia.

Perceived opportunities in Rhodesia were also founded upon France’s existing economic, diplomatic, cultural and personal ties to the region. The potential for French profit as a result of foundations laid prior to UDI was highlighted in a letter from Smith to Michel Debré, French Minister of Foreign Affairs (1968-1969), which described France’s ‘commerce traditionnel avec la Rhodésie depuis nombreuses années’ and recorded Smith’s ‘plus grand espoir’ that these links should be ‘non seulement maintenus mais renforcés et étendus’.

Although this statement is from a Rhodesian perspective, it nevertheless underlines the ways in which the established French presence in Rhodesia, built up in the eighteen years following the establishment of a Consulate in Salisbury in 1947, created a situation in which France could benefit economically from the region after 1965.

The French themselves also acknowledged how pre-UDI initiatives provided the basis for continued French activity in the region. A document housed in De Gaulle’s archive from 1965 or 1966, for example, highlighted how French exporters would suffer the loss of the Rhodesian market, suggesting a pre-existing French economic presence in the region that

would be damaged by UDI. Existing cultural ventures were also seen as the springboard for further French *rayonnement* in region. This is apparent with regards to the diffusion of the French language where, according to the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles at the Quai, the ‘excellent travail’ of the French Department at the University of Salisbury, ‘non seulement en milieu européen mais encore en milieu africain’, produced a context in which ‘l’étude de notre langue en Rhodésie et en particulier chez les Africains’ could continue. Furthermore, in spite of Rhodesia’s increasingly reactionary behaviour, the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs maintained their hopes that earlier, more formal patterns of relations could soon be re-established. This sentiment is expressed explicitly in a report prepared by the Direction du Personnel at the Quai in March 1970, which claimed that ‘nous conservons l’espoir qu’une modification de la position de la Rhodésie nous permettra de reprendre à l’avenir avec elle des relations que nous aurions aimé pouvoir maintenir’.

In the meantime, the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs at the Quai sought to protect French stakes in the region. In the aftermath of the Rhodesian referendum of 1969, the Direction d’Afrique emphasised the importance of sustaining a French diplomatic presence in Salisbury as ‘une condition impérative d’une reprise rapide des échanges commerciales entre la France et la Rhodésie lorsqu’aura été réglé le conflit qui oppose la

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Grande-Bretagne au territoire rebelle’. Following the closure of the French Consulate in Salisbury in March 1970, the importance of sustaining sources of news on the political and economic circumstances in the region was reiterated by the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières as a means of safeguarding French ‘intérêts économiques, par rapport aux autres grands pays occidentaux’. In keeping with the weight given to cultural ventures in Africa more generally, there was also a consistent desire to maintain France’s ‘action culturelle’ in Rhodesia. In 1969 and 1970, this sentiment led the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles to promote the maintenance of a permanent contact with the University of Salisbury as ‘indispensable’ to assure ‘une certaine présence culturelle française en Rhodésie’. Furthermore, attention was given to the importance of promoting the French language amongst the region’s indigenous population. This can be seen in measures proposed to ‘encourage l’étude du français en milieu autochtone’, a strategy that was described as ‘lucide et payante à moyen terme car un jour ou l’autre le Cabinet de Salisbury devra comprendre des Africains et pratiquer la promotion économico-sociale des autochtones’.

These instances offer evidence of the ways in which certain French actors sought to limit the damage inflicted upon France’s position in the region as a result of Rhodesia’s illegality and their desire to pave the way for a future

re-establishment of a permanent French presence in the region. Nevertheless, the Quai remained acutely aware of the prohibitions on French action in the region as a result of UDI. Put simply, whilst Rhodesia’s white rulers remained unwilling to introduce majority rule, it was impossible to pursue actively French interests in the region. However, these circumstances did not prevent interested French officials, both in Paris and on the spot in Salisbury, from continuing to identify opportunities for France in Rhodesia. There was, therefore, an inherent tension between the desire to further France’s foreign policy objectives in the Rhodesian context and the RF’s insistence on the maintenance of white rule in the region.

**France’s Southern African strategy**

One strategy implemented in an attempt to overcome this conflict between, on the one hand, the reality of Rhodesia’s international status, and, on the other, the desire to protect French stakes in the region, was to make use of France’s existing regional presence in Southern Africa. French representatives based in newly independent Zambia and Malawi, for example, continued to act as commercial antennae in the region, through their administrative attachment to the more established French base in Nairobi.33 Rhodesia’s former federal partners also provided a means through which France could continue to disseminate its language and culture amongst the African population in Rhodesia. In April 1970, for example, the French Embassy in Malawi was charged with guarding ‘un lien avec

l’Université de Salisbury (gestion du Lecteur français, en particulier) et
d’assurer la continuité de notre présence culturelle en Rhodésie’. 34

Furthermore, strategies for the spread of the French language adopted
elsewhere in Anglophone Africa were implemented in Rhodesia. The use of
French National Servicemen to perform civilian duties, particularly the
teaching of the French language, was seen in Rhodesia, Zambia, Malawi,
Kenya and Tanzania, 35 whilst the visit to Rhodesia from a BELC
representative in August 1969 was part of a longer stay in Anglophone
Africa, which also included stopovers in Lusaka and Gaborone, the capital
of Botswana. 36 More generally, in spite of Rhodesia’s distinctive status in
comparison to these independent African nation states, it continued to be
conceived of as part of a ‘domaine “Afrique Anglophone” classique’. 37 This
characterisation of Rhodesia alongside other English-speaking territories in
Africa implies that approaches to Rhodesia formed part of a wider French
strategy towards majority–ruled Anglophone Africa.

However, it was not only the African-governed countries on Rhodesia’s
borders, but also the white-ruled territories of South Africa, Mozambique
and Angola, that formed part of France’s Southern African vision at this
time. With regards to the latter two Lusophone territories, the French had
viewed the Portuguese approach to colonial rule in Africa with an
ambiguous combination of scepticism and admiration since the inter-war

National Archives (TNA).
period (Keese, 2007b, p.289). Later, after the independence of Francophone Africa, France became an ally to Portugal in Africa, cooperating with the Portuguese Empire in economic, military and, to a lesser extent, political spheres (Frappat, 1990, p.215), with the French supporting Portuguese interests in the UNSC (Alden, 1996, p.15).

For the purposes of this discussion of the setting for Franco-Rhodesian relations in the aftermath of UDI, it is interesting to note that many of the French companies that operated in Rhodesia also had a presence on the ground in Lusophone Africa. The CFP, for example, was active in both Mozambique and Angola, whilst Alsthom also had a Mozambican base. In addition, the principal French arms in the service of the Portuguese military in Southern Africa were Alouette helicopters (Frappat, 1990, pp.215-218), which, as we have already seen in Chapter Two, were also popular amongst the RRAF. This, in turn, reveals the considerable overlap of French interests in Rhodesia and Portuguese-ruled territories nearby, demonstrating the existence of broader French interests across the region. More widely, it is also noteworthy that the French emphasis on development and infrastructure in Francophone Africa and Rhodesia was also apparent in the Lusophone context seen, for example, in the role played by a French business consortium in the financing of the Cahora Bassa dam project in Mozambique (Alden, 1996, p.15). There was, therefore, a shared French approach to Africa that was implemented regardless of the artificial national boundaries imposed on the continent by European colonialism.
South Africa also formed part of the French Southern African vision, a state of affairs that, as Chapter One has explored, had its roots in the seventeenth century and developed in the years after the Second World War as part of France’s wider efforts to secure foreign policy autonomy. In the 1960s and 1970s, facilitated by the continued break down of relations between London and Pretoria over the question of apartheid, French interaction with South Africa continued to grow. For example, according to Wood (2008, p.307), a feeling of isolation from Britain prompted South African businessmen to turn increasingly to other Western European powers, including France and Germany. Thus, according to a study produced in 1975 by the Moniteur Officiel du Commerce International (MOCI) to encourage French trade with South Africa,

La combinaison de facteurs historiques, politiques et économiques font que la France est sans doute le pays aujourd’hui le mieux placé pour développer ses relations avec l’Afrique du Sud… la France est considérée comme le seul véritable soutien de l’Afrique du Sud parmi les grands pays de l’Occident. Non seulement elle lui fournit l’essentiel des armements nécessaires à sa défense, mais elle s’est montrée bienveillante, sinon un allié, dans les débats et les votes des organisations internationales. 38

As such, in the 1960s and 1970s, French arms flowed into South Africa - 4 billion francs of French military material was sold to South Africa in the period between 1960 and 1975 (Bach, 1990, p.178) - a strategy that furthered France’s national assertion strategy by reducing French dependency on the US dollar; increasing access to South African uranium;

and creating the context in which the NP granted the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales permission to establish a centre for satellite observation at Paardefontein (Bach, 1990). By the 1970s, France was also one of South Africa’s most important overseas clients, particularly in the nuclear, industrial and military domains, where companies from France were in the top ten when it came to the ‘big contracts’ that dominated 45% of these sectors (Cuddumbey, 1996, p.71; Darbon, 1990, p.245). Amongst these French firms was Alsthom who, in consortium with Framatome and Spiê Batignolles, fended off US, Dutch and Swiss competition to secure a contract for the Koeberg nuclear plant (Cuddumbey, 1996, p.71). This, in turn, reveals how, as was also the case in Lusophone Africa, many of the same companies operated across Southern Africa, demonstrating the existence of a broader French approach to the region. Moreover, this instance once again underscores the infrastructure and developmental focus of France’s engagement with Southern Africa, mirroring the practices implemented in Francophone Africa.

Alongside this economic engagement with South Africa, Paris also provided Pretoria with an entrée into certain Francophone African states, notably Gabon and the Ivory Coast, facilitating the NP’s ‘dialogue policy’, which had the objective of improving South Africa’s relations with the rest of the African continent as part of a broader strategy to avoid diplomatic isolation (Alden 1996, p.14; Konieczna, 2012, p.94). This French initiative, in turn, may have had its roots in the failed French efforts to form a counter-pan-African “club” in 1963, explored in Chapter Two.
France’s strong base in South Africa created the context in which France could rely on its diplomatic representatives in Pretoria and Johannesburg for information on events taking place in Rhodesia, particularly following the closure of the French Consulate in Salisbury in March 1970. Throughout the 1970s, reports from the French mission in South Africa constituted the principal means by which Paris was informed of the evolving situation in Rhodesia. These reports were often based on the South African press as well as close personal contacts between the French on the ground in Pretoria and high-ranking South African ministers, including the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Brand Fourie. France’s strong commercial presence in South Africa also represented a potential launch pad from which French economic interests in Rhodesia could be protected after UDI. These opportunities in Rhodesia as a result of the French position of strength in South Africa were highlighted by Smith in a letter to De Gaulle, sent in July 1968, in which he states that ‘French commercial interests have already established strong ties with South Africa and so are particularly well placed to fill part of the vacuum in Rhodesia’.

Rhodesia was inextricably linked to South Africa in the minds of the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs. In light of the shared desire of the RF and the NP to maintain white rule in Southern Africa, it is perhaps unsurprising that

39 See the papers repatriated from France’s Embassy in South Africa: Pretoria 89, 90 & 91. Nantes:AD.
40 For example, a Dépêche d’Actualité from March 1970 recounts responses from South African journalists to the declaration of a Republic in Rhodesia and a shared ‘sympathie’ for the plight of the settlers in the region.
apartheid South Africa frequently provided a point of reference in French
descriptions of Rhodesia. A 1968 note summarising the situation in
Anglophone Africa, for example, likened the segregationist polices
introduced by Smith’s government to apartheid. More specifically, the
Rhodesian Land Tenure Act of 1969, which reinforced the division of land
between whites and blacks, was claimed to ‘ouvre la voie à l’Apartheid’ in
Rhodesia. In this context, the close relations between Salisbury and
Pretoria were acknowledged, seen in the description of Rhodesia after UDI
as ‘un état libre aligné sur l’Afrique du Sud’ and a report about how
Rhodesia was passing away from ‘l’ombrelle britannique à celle de
l’Afrique du Sud’. The NP was also described as a ‘voisin amical’ and a
“grand-frère” to Smith’s regime, which held ‘dans ses mains le destin de
la minorité blanche’ in Rhodesia.

However, the connections between South Africa and Rhodesia in the minds
of the French went beyond a mere acknowledgment of the similarities and
close relations between Pretoria and Salisbury. The factors propelling
French action in both countries were the same. According to Konieczna
(2009, p.338), the introduction of a policy of apartheid in South Africa
weakened British pre-eminence in the region, prompting an intensification

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43 Anonymous. (1968). Note résumant la situation générale, politique, économique, et les
affaires en cours dans les états anglophones de l’Afrique occidentale, orientale, central et
australe. 5AG/FPU/1374. Paris :AN.
45 Anonymous. (1968). Note résumant la situation générale, politique, économique, et les
affaires en cours dans les états anglophones de l’Afrique occidentale, orientale, central et
australe. 5AG/FPU/1374. Paris :AN.
Nantes:AD.
48 Legendre to DAM. (1973, August 30). Pretoria/90/No.647. Nantes:AD.
of French efforts to raise its modest position in the country and ‘rattraper le retard qu’elle a pris par rapport aux autres puissances occidentales’. This closely echoes the motivations that underpinned enthusiasm in certain quarters for the development of Franco-Rhodesian relations. We have already seen, in Chapter Two, how certain French actors, notably those linked to the Elysée, relished the growing possibilities for France in Rhodesia as a result of Britain’s declining position in its colony. Similarly, as has been explored above and in the first half of this thesis, concerns about being outdone or left behind by other Western powers were also present amongst the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs. Furthermore, these shared imperatives make it possible to situate France’s approaches to minority-ruled Southern Africa within the broader framework of Franco-African relations, where the maintenance of French influence was a crucial component in a wider project to assure France’s standing on the international stage.

**France and the question of Rhodesia in the United Nations**

The desire to safeguard France’s privileged position in Africa was at the heart of De Gaulle’s preference for bilateral relations with African states over multilateral contacts. Such sentiments were directed especially towards the UN, perceived to be an “Anglo-Saxon” Trojan horse that might damage French interests on the world stage. This sentiment, in turn, contributed to French suspicion of the involvement of this international organisation in colonial affairs (Smouts, 1979, p.252). This French conception of the UN is best summarised in the words of Smouts (1979, p.274),

France’s commitment to the principle of “non-interference” over the question of Rhodesia

This commitment to the principle of “non-interference” is evident in the French responses when the question of Rhodesia was raised in the UN. Prior to UDI, the French delegation to the UN declared that Rhodesia ‘outrepasse les pouvoirs du Conseil de Sécurité’. As such, the French consistently abstained in all debates concerning Rhodesia, such as in October 1963, in a vote for a resolution put forward by 38 delegations, principally from the Afro-Asian bloc, which reaffirmed the right of the African majority in Southern Rhodesia to self-determination and called upon Britain to take action to bring about independence in the region. A similar position was set out in a note from the Foreign Ministry in April 1965 that instructed France’s delegation at the UN to abstain ‘dans l’hypothèse où le Conseil aurait à se prononcer sur l’envoi d’émissaires à Londres’ on the grounds that ‘la situation dans ce pays ne constitue bien évidemment pas une menace contre la paix et la sécurité internationales’. 

51 Seydoux, France’s Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, to MAE. (1963, October 17). ONU/Decolonisation/1077/No.2365. Paris:AMAE.
In the aftermath of UDI, and in spite of France’s public position of opposition to the RF, the principle of “non-interference” continued to be applied when Rhodesia was discussed at the UN. On 12 November 1965 France’s representative in the UN abstained in a Security Council vote for the adoption of Resolution 216 that condemned the Rhodesian UDI, on the grounds that ‘le conflit entre le Royaume Uni et la Rhodésie du Sud n’est donc pas de nature internationale’. This attitude was reiterated just a few days later in a despatch from Paris to New York that described ‘l’affaire rhodésienne’ as ‘un problème intérieur britannique’ and, as such, ‘le Conseil de Sécurité n’a pas à statuer à son sujet’. France also abstained in votes for the adoption of Resolutions 217 (1965), 221 (1966) and 232 (1966). France was, therefore, the sole country not to oppose UDI in the Security Council in the immediate aftermath of Smith’s Declaration as well as the only power not to vote in favour of a resolution declaring that the situation in Rhodesia was a threat to international peace and calling upon states to break economic relations with Rhodesia (Smouts, 1979, p.333).

In light of what we already know about France’s desire to halt the spread of British and American influence in Africa and, to this end, prevent UN involvement in African affairs, it is possible to interpret ‘l’attitude indépendante’ of France towards the Rhodesian question in the UN as a continuation of a wider French anti-“Anglo-Saxon” strategy. However, it is

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important not to overlook France’s deeply rooted legal traditions with regards to this matter, which existed alongside the Gaullist hostility towards Anglo-American dominance of the UN. According to this view, the UN had no jurisdiction in the internal affairs of a state. This judicial approach led the French delegation at the UN to maintain throughout the Algerian War of National Liberation (1954-1962) that, in spite of the increasingly internationalist activities of the Algerian nationalist movement, Algeria was an internal French concern and, thus, one in which the UN had no right to intervene (Evans, 2012, p.193). This opposition to UN involvement in internal affairs was also employed with regards to independent territories, seen, for example, in April 1960 when the French delegation vetoed Resolution 134 that called upon Pretoria to abandon its racial policies (Konieczna, 2009, p.336).

Many of the policy-makers, bureaucrats and diplomats who formulated French policy towards Rhodesia in the UN had received legal training prior to their postings in the Central Administration or overseas. Roger Seydoux, for example, France’s Permanent Representative at the UN (1962-1967), who was responsible for many of the French interventions on Rhodesia in this context, studied law and political economy at the University of Paris. More generally, Keiger (2001, p.27) has emphasised how graduates of Sciences-Po and the Ecole Nationale d’Administration dominated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This legal background, in turn, is likely to have informed the position set forth by the French delegation at the UN that the

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constitutional links between Great Britain and Rhodesia created an obstacle to any external intervention in the crisis, including that directed by the UN. The strength of these traditions had led Smouts (1979, p.333) to conclude that the French position towards Rhodesia in the UN was,

purement juridique. Sur le plan politique, la France adopte une attitude qui est fréquemment la sienne: ne pas voter une résolution mais faire une déclaration acceptant le contenu de cette résolution.

This judicial framework, therefore, provides an important explanation for France’s refusal to oppose UDI in the UN in the immediate aftermath of Smith’s declaration.

In 1968, however, France’s steadfast application of the principle of “non-interference” to the Rhodesian case appears to have come to an abrupt end. In May, following the Rhodesian Court of Appeal ruling in March that the RF was permitted to carry out executions against murderers convicted and sentenced prior to UDI, France participated for the first time in a UN vote on Rhodesia, supporting the extension of mandatory UN sanctions on all goods, including oil, under Resolution 253.58 The decision to discard the French tradition of abstaining and vote in favour of Resolution 253 was justified by ‘le souci de tenir compte de l’émotion soulevée en Afrique par l’évolution de la situation en Rhodésie’.59 However, the French maintained that this move ‘n’impliquait aucune modification de nos positions de principe… le règlement de cette affaire relève de la compétence interne de

la Grande-Brétagne’. The fact that the text of Resolution 253 affirmed the primary responsibility of Britain for the resolution of the Rhodesian crisis reinforces the fact that it was possible for France to vote in favour of this resolution, without undermining its legal traditions.

In the years that followed, the French continued to openly express their ‘réserve traditionnelle à l’égard de l’intervention des Nations Unies dans une affaire qui nous paraît ressortir à la compétence exclusive de la Grande-Bretagne’, even after the announcement in June 1969 of the new Rhodesian constitution and the plans for a Republic. A clear statement of the persistence of this outlook came on 24 June of the same year when the French delegation abstained in a vote for an Afro-Asian resolution that demanded UN members sever all relations with Rhodesia. In the minds of the policy-makers defining France’s position towards Rhodesia in New York, this commitment to the principle of “non-interference” could not be altered unless ‘la situation en Rhodésie menaçait la paix ou la sécurité internationale ou si le régime de M. Smith commettait un acte d’agression contre les Etats voisins’. Thus, in cases where Rhodesia was perceived to threaten international peace, notably acts of aggression and provocation towards Zambia (Resolution 326), Botswana (Resolution 403 and 406).

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and the People’s Republic of Mozambique (Resolution 411), France voted in favour of the relevant Resolution.

**UK responses to France’s position towards Rhodesia in the UN**

The fact that France’s consistent commitment to the principle of “non-interference” was the result not simply of anti-“Anglo-Saxon” sentiments but also an ingrained legal tradition is underscored by British responses to France’s position towards Rhodesia in the UN. In spite of France’s unwillingness to support the British line in the UN if it meant a departure from the French judicial framework, for the most part, the British authorities did not view the French stance in a negative light. In fact, in 1966, the FO characterised the French position that the Rhodesian problem was ‘exclusively a United Kingdom’ responsibility as a ‘very correct attitude’. Moreover, the French attitude towards Rhodesia in the UN was described in a 1973 briefing from the British Embassy in Paris as ‘generally helpful’ to the UK government’s Rhodesian policy. France’s legal stance that it was the sole ‘right of the colonial power to determine the conditions in which any overseas territory comes to independence’ appeared, therefore, to align with the British authorities desire to resolve the crisis through bilateral talks with the Rhodesians.

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68 Murray, FO to Palliser, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. (1966, November 9). PREM/13/1154. London:TNA.
The French were often encouraged to abstain so as to help the British government maintain this stance. In November 1971, for example, nervous about African opposition to an agreement between Smith and Alex Douglas-Home, UK Foreign Secretary (1970-1974), on a proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement, Martin Le Quesne, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the FCO (1971-1974), made a request to the Geoffroy Chodron de Courcel, French Ambassador to the UK (1962-1972), that the French delegation abstain on any vote opposing the proposed settlement tabled by the Africans in the UNSC. \(^71\) This instance serves to emphasise how France’s commitment to “non-interference” was sometimes interpreted as supportive of the British cause, thus countering the suggestion that the French position in the UN was motivated solely by hostility towards the “Anglo-Saxon” powers.

Despite sometimes adopting the same stance, the British and French legal positions towards Rhodesia in the context of the UN remained substantially distinct. In 1973, for example, the UK vetoed a resolution tabled in the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee (UNSCSC) calling for the extension of the Beira Patrol to Lourenço Marquês (Maputo, Mozambique). In this instance, the British found the French abstention frustrating, calling upon Paris to take a more proactive stance on resolutions that the British believed must also be unacceptable to the French.\(^72\) The French delegation, however,

\(^72\) Byatt, Rhodesia Department, to Le Quesne. (1973, May 22). FCO/36/1401/7. London:TNA.
maintained their position that Rhodesia was beyond the competency of the UN and abstained.

The legal impasse between Britain and France over the question of Rhodesia is also evident when the question of a possible reversal of the trade embargo was raised following the Smith-Home agreement of November 1971. The FCO hoped to be able to end sanctions against Rhodesia immediately that the proposed settlement came into effect. The Quai, by contrast, insisted that, in light of Resolution 253, the UN must revoke sanctions before the embargo could be lifted. The British Embassy in Paris were aware of the strength of France’s commitment to this principle, emphasising in a note to the Rhodesia Department of the FCO the anticipated ‘difficulty’ of getting the Quai to change its position with regards to this matter, concluding that there was ‘little point’ in ‘trying to convince them at the moment’. The Embassy did, however, highlight the possibility that ‘bilateral talks between legal advisors’ ‘at a later stage’ might yield more positive results, an approach that was backed by the Rhodesia Department. This impasse with regards to the judicial aspects of the Rhodesian crisis did not, however, alter British perceptions of the Quai as being ‘well-disposed’ towards the proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement. Britain’s continued representation of France’s position towards Rhodesia in the UN in a positive light, as well as the British tendency to emphasise the different legal traditions in the multilateral setting as a

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justification for the Anglo-French divide, underscores the entrenched legal position motivating the French approach to Rhodesia in the UN.

**Rhodesia and French efforts to prevent Anglophone dominance of the UN**

That is not to say, however, that fears about Anglo-Saxon dominance were entirely absent from French policies towards Rhodesia in the UN. Throughout the UDI period, policy-makers and diplomats involved in Rhodesian affairs raised their concerns about UK and US control over the UNSCSC in contrast to the relative weakness of France and other Western European powers. In 1970, for example, the department at the Quai responsible for the UN and other international organisations criticised the replacement of Algeria with Sierra Leone on the UNSCSC on the grounds that the replacement of a Francophone representative with an Anglophone one reinforced ‘la neutralité bienveillante’ of the committee, a state of affairs that benefited ‘les entreprises anglo-saxonnes au sein du Comité’. By contrast, the shift was allegedly detrimental to French companies.\(^76\)

The French also resented the ways in which Anglo-American companies, perceived to be the main Western culprits when it came to sanctions busting, successfully evaded criticism in the UN. This resentment was especially acute in light of the frequent naming of ‘les sociétés d’autres nationalités’ by Britain and the US in the Sanctions Committee, ‘lorsque le

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même type d’infraction peut être relevé à l’encontre des dénonciateurs’.  

This was evident in the case of petrol sales to Rhodesia, where French companies were frequently denounced in very public settings for continuing to supply oil to refineries in Mozambique which re-exported supplies to Rhodesia, despite the belief held by the Quai that Anglo-American companies – including Mobil, Caltex and Shell - based in Lourenço Marquês accounted for 80% of petrol supplies arriving in Rhodesia from Mozambique, ‘en violation flagrante tant de l’ordre en conseil britannique que de la résolution du conseil de sécurité du 16 décembre 1966’.  

Moreover, France’s commitment to the principle of “non-interference” was sometimes framed, most notably by those linked to the Élysée, in terms of a wider hostility towards the “Anglo-Saxon” powers. A report housed in the archives of the Secretariat of African and Malagasy Affairs, for example, criticised the decision to associate France with the petrol embargo against Rhodesia in December 1965 as ‘contradictoire avec la position prise précédemment (notamment a l’ONU) laquelle consistait à considérer l’affaire comme une affaire intérieure entre les Rhodésiens et les Anglais’. Beyond this contradiction, the note also highlighted the risks created for France in adopting this stance. The French decision was reported as having been represented by London and Washington as evidence that,

la France semblait renoncer à la position privilégiée qui est la sienne en Rhodésie, comme en Afrique du

The implication, therefore, was that France should adopt a position towards the petrol embargo that demonstrated its commitment to the principle of “non-inference” not only for the sakes of consistency and adherence to legal traditions, but also to maintain France’s upper-hand in Rhodesia and its neighbours, an opportunity that was especially appealing due to perceptions of Britain’s weakening position in Southern Africa discussed in Chapter Two.

It is possible to detect, therefore, the existence of Gaullist concerns about the spread of “Anglo-Saxon” influence in Africa alongside, and intertwined with, the highly centralised and inflexible French judicial approach that provided the framework for France’s position towards Rhodesia in the UN. This, in turn, reveals the two main strands of the French approach to Rhodesia after UDI. On the one hand was the position advanced by the Quai d’Orsay, a stance that was, for the most part, cooperative with the British over the question of Rhodesia, albeit within the boundaries imposed by French legal traditions. On the other hand, we see a parallel official position, more hostile to the United Kingdom and its ally, the United States, which situated the French commitment to the principle of “non-interference” within a wider anti-“Anglo-Saxon” agenda. These two stances were not mutually exclusive and there was sometimes overlap between the two, as we have seen above in concerns within the Quai about Anglophone dominance of the UN and the Elysée’s adoption of French legal traditions to

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reinforce a position founded on hostility towards Britain and the United States. Yet, it is important, nevertheless, to explore in further detail the existence of these two opposing positions towards Britain and the United States when it came to the Rhodesian question.

Franco-British relations in the Rhodesian context

An entente in Anglophone Africa?: Franco-British cooperation and the Rhodesian crisis

As was also the case in a multilateral context, and in keeping with the publically friendly state of Anglo-French relations in the 1960s, bilateral relations between Britain and France concerning Rhodesia were officially founded upon cooperation and alliance. The Quai articulated the French position of collaboration with Britain’s Rhodesian policy in the immediate aftermath of UDI. On 12 November 1965, following a meeting between Patrick Reilly, British Ambassador to France (1965-1968), and Michel Habib-Deloncle, French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1962-1966), during which Reilly set out the UK government’s position that UDI was an act of rebellion, the French Minister made it known to the British Ambassador that ‘le gouvernement français condamnait le comportement des autorités de Salisbury, ne saurait reconnaître la situation créée par la déclaration unilatérale d’indépendance’.

Across the Channel, the British authorities looked to France as an important ally over the Rhodesian question. The FO, and after its merger with the CRO in 1968, the FCO, kept their counterparts at the Quai well informed of the evolving situation in Rhodesia, with Rhodesia featuring on the agenda in Anglo-French talks on Africa throughout the UDI period, such as at the meetings that took place in Paris in May 1973 and June 1976. Informal discussions also took place between Britain and France over the Rhodesian problem on a frequent basis. In 1969, for example, Leslie Fielding and Michael Simpson-Orlebar from the British Embassy in Paris regularly met with members of the Department for non-Francophone African territories at the Quai to discuss Rhodesia.

In the documents reporting upon these bilateral discussions, individual French diplomats and policy-makers were often described in favourable terms, such as Fielding’s characterisation of Jean Guerey, Deputy Director for Anglophone Africa at the MAE, as ‘very co-operative and friendly’. This, in turn, demonstrates the existence of positive relations between certain members of the British and French Foreign Ministries with regards to Rhodesia. These feelings of Anglo-French friendship extended beyond the personal, with France repeatedly represented as Britain’s ally over the Rhodesian problem and in Africa in general. For instance, in January and

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June 1967, during two separate tête-à-têtes between the British Prime Minister and the French President, Wilson emphasised to De Gaulle Britain and France’s ‘intérêts communs’ on the African continent. 86 These sentiments continued into the 1970s and were also held by less senior members of the British government seen, for example, in May 1973, when Le Quesne claimed, during Anglo-French talks on Africa, that ‘British and French interests in Africa were important and by and large the same’. 87

In the early 1970s, this alleged convergence of interests in Africa was situated within wider British efforts to secure friendly Anglo-French relations as a foundation for the UK’s entry into the EEC. In November 1971, following a visit to London from Maurice Schumann, French Minister of Foreign Affairs (1969-1973), during which Schumann met with Douglas-Home and discussed, amongst other things, the question of Rhodesia, a public statement was issued by the FCO describing ‘the long and deep-rooted friendship between the French and the British peoples’ and expressing the ‘great satisfaction that this historic friendship will be reinforced by Britain’s entry into the European Community’. 88 The statement also made references to other nodes of Anglo-French cooperation, in particular technical alliances over the Concorde Project and the Channel Tunnel. 89 This, in turn, reveals Britain’s desire to maintain friendly Anglo-French relations over Rhodesia to assure the UK entry into Europe.

89 James, WED. (1971, October 4). FCO/36/795/11. London:TNA.
These feelings of friendship and affiliation provided the context in which Britain looked to France for support over its Rhodesian policy. French cooperation was, according to Gywn Morgan, Labour Party Overseas Secretary (1965-1969), ‘essential to the success of economic sanctions’, the principal means by the British government hoped to end the Rhodesian rebellion.\(^90\) This sentiment prompted British efforts to try and get the French government to take action against French companies active in Rhodesia after UDI. In April 1966, for example, the FO, via the British Embassy in Paris, asked the French authorities to warn the Compagnie Française des Transactions Internationales against purchasing Rhodesian sugar.\(^91\) Requests were also made for French help in cutting off oil supplies to the breakaway colony. In April 1966, during a conversation between George Brown, British Foreign Secretary (1966-1968), and Courcel, the French Ambassador in London, requests were made that the CFP follow the lead of other companies by operating a petrol-rationing scheme in Mozambique, to prevent supplies being re-exported to Rhodesia.\(^92\) Higher-level appeals were also made to the French regarding oil sales to Rhodesia, with the issue raised during talks between Wilson and De Gaulle in June 1967.\(^93\) Away from the question of the petrol embargo, France was also called upon to use its influence beyond the metropole with regards to sanctions-busters, seen for example by the request that France speak to Hendrik Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa (1958-1966), on Britain’s behalf and impress to

\(^{92}\) Courcel & Brown, UK Foreign Secretary. (1967, April 14). FCO/36/189/2. London:TNA.
him ‘les dangers de l’attitude du gouvernement sud-africain qui peut permettre à M. Smith de neutraliser l’effet des sanctions économiques, notamment dans le domaine pétrolier’, a notable British acknowledgement of France’s increasing ability to punch above its weight in the previously Anglophone-dominated South Africa.

The British also looked to the French for support in their efforts to find a settlement in Rhodesia. In June and July 1971, for example, in an effort to avoid too much ‘drama’ over Rhodesia in the UN, Christopher Soames, British Ambassador to France (1968-1972), advised Whitehall that a forthcoming meeting at the Quai d’Orsay could provide an opportunity,

> to remind the French of our common interest in keeping the international temperature as low as possible over Southern African affairs and that with Kosciusko [Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, France’s permanent representative at the UN (1970-1972)] in the chair at New York, the French government could have rather a special responsibility over the next few weeks.

The French responded favourably, with Bruno de Leusse, Director of African and Malagasy Affairs at the Quai (1970-1971), agreeing to send instructions to Kosciusko to keep in touch with the UK mission in New York and consenting for the French to do everything that they could to help Britain in the UN, in particular by trying to hold back the Africans, over

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whom they had considerable sway, if they tried to stir up a debate on Rhodesia.96

This significance attributed to French support was especially great following the Smith-Home agreement on a proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement in November 1971. France’s approval of the proposed settlement, as well as the close ties between France and its former African colonies, led the FCO to express their hopes that France would ‘undertake not to vote against’ Britain if the settlement received a hostile response in the UN. This, it was hoped, would provide a model for the Francophone African countries, whose backing was viewed by the British as ‘vital’ in securing international support for the proposed settlement.97 Once again, the Quai’s response to this request was favourable, seen by the expression of willingness to send instructions to French Ambassadors in Francophone Africa and a confirmation from de Leusse that Britain could ‘count on French support and assistance’. 98

British efforts to secure French backing for the proposed Anglo-Rhodesian settlement were not only applied to the French Foreign Ministry. In a sign of their awareness of the Presidential Palace’s control over French African policy, representatives of the FCO also approached the Elysée. In November 1971, for example, Soames met with Michel Jobert, the Secretary General at the Elysée, to discuss the situation in Rhodesia, requesting that the

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Presidential Palace use its influence over African leaders, such as the Ivory Coast’s Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Senegal’s Léopold Senghor, to get them to give the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement, and the arrangements for testing its acceptability, careful consideration before ‘jumping into ill-considered attitudes’. In response, Jobert expressed the French willingness to ‘do what they could with the Africans’. 99

The British also went to the very top of the Franco-African pyramid, Jacques Foccart. In December 1971, for example, Christopher Ewart-Biggs met with Foccart and, after presenting “Monsieur Afrique” with substantial documentary evidence concerning British policy in Rhodesia, requested that Foccart use his influence over French-speaking African leaders ‘to get them to approach the question reasonably and to keep the temperature down’. In response, Foccart confirmed that ‘he was constantly in touch with the francophone African leaders and was on close terms with them’ and that, in line with Jobert’s response, as well as the position advanced by the Quai on the matter, he would ‘do what he could to help’. 100

‘Un test de leur [Britain’s] influence mondiale’: 101 French perceptions of the UK government’s Rhodesian policy

These requests demonstrate the significance of France, in the minds of the British, to the successful resolution of the crisis in Rhodesia, a substantial

domestic and international problem facing successive British governments in the late 1960s and 1970s. At home, there were tensions between the sympathisers of the white Rhodesian community – generally members of the Conservative Party, who viewed the white settlers as their “kith and kin” (Dowden, 2008, p.132)¹⁰² – and more liberal elements in society who supported the African nationalist cause – most notably, Barbara Castle, described by Hyam (2006, p.370) as ‘Wilson’s fiercest critic on Rhodesia’, who constantly pressed the Labour Prime Minister to take firmer action in Rhodesia (Childs, 2001, p.110), and the archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Michael Ramsey, who privately advised the British Prime Minister that ‘morality demanded the use of force if all else failed’ (Hyam, 2006, p.367). Overseas, the British government faced great reproach in the Commonwealth, especially from new African member states who ‘became increasingly vociferous’ in their ‘condemnation of the Rhodesian Front and Wilson’s handling of the deepening Rhodesian crisis’ (Watts, 2012, p.87). The Commonwealth African states also called upon the British government to use force to end the Rhodesian rebellion, with Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah, going as far as to suggest that a unified African armed force should be deployed in Rhodesia if Britain refused to intervene militarily (Coggins, 2006, p.370). As such, Watts (2012, p.85) has claimed that the Rhodesian problem ‘threatened to tear the Commonwealth apart’.

The French perceived of UDI as a crisis of monumental proportions for Britain. Both the Quai and the Elysée acknowledged, for example, the

negative consequences for the British economy as a result of the implementation of an international trade embargo against Rhodesia, not least ‘le coût exhorbitant [sic] du pont aérien pour alimenter la Zambie en essence’,\(^3\) a measure introduced to prevent the severance of Zambia’s oil supplies via land from Rhodesia damaging the Zambian copper industry, on which Britain, the United States, France and other Western powers were highly reliant. A report synthesising the diplomatic situation in December 1966 prepared for De Gaulle described the dual pressures on Wilson at home, as many Conservatives ‘trouvent excessive la sévérité du gouvernement à l’égard des rebelles’, whilst ‘la gauche travailliste estime les décisions de M. Wilson encore trop timides’.\(^4\) Moreover, Wilson’s Rhodesian policy was represented as ‘un grave échec politique’ as it provided the Conservative Party with an opportunity to attack the Labour government.\(^5\)

The French observing the situation in Rhodesia also acknowledged the international problems created for Britain by the crisis. A report following the seventeenth Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference in January 1969 described how ‘M. Wilson a fait front à une majorité écrasante de nations exigeant une ligne dure’, demonstrating the French awareness of the growing opposition Britain faced amongst its former colonies with regards


to its handling of the Rhodesian problem. More generally, the
decolonisation of Rhodesia was represented as,

particulièrement complexe car il s’agit d’une
epreuve de force triangulaire où chacun lutte sur
deux fronts: M. Smith contre la Grande-Bretagne ou
le movement “Zimbabwe”; Whitehall contre le
Cabinet rebelle et la politique tout ou rien de MM.
Nkomo et Sithole; enfin, les africains cherchent
simultanément à démanteler le regime européen et à
se dégager de la tutelle britannique. Assessments from the Elysée Palace were frequently more damning than
those emanating from the Quai. A note housed in Foccart’s archive, for
example, described the Labour government’s policy towards Rhodesia as
‘incohérente’, the negative consequences of which would, according to the
author, be added to ‘la déjà trop longue liste de ses échecs africains qu’il
s’agisse de l’Afrique du Sud, de la Tanzanie, de la Rhodésie, du Nigeria et,
enfin, du Ghana’. In a similar vein, a report from 1966, also kept with
Foccart’s papers, emphasised Wilson’s ‘échecs africains’. These
pessimistic interpretations, in contrast to the more neutral and descriptive
language adopted by the Quai, underscore not only the division between the
Foreign Ministry and Presidential Palace over Rhodesian affairs, but also
the persistence of anti-British sentiments alongside France’s position of
support for Britain’s Rhodesian policy.

5AG/FPR/302. Paris:AN.
5AG/FPR/302. Paris:AN.
The pursuit of a French alternative to a bipolar political system in the context of Rhodesia

As we have already seen, in the post-war age of bipolarity, this oscillation between cooperation and conflict characterised relations not only between France and Britain, but also those between France and Britain’s principal ally, the United States. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the realities of defeat and reconstruction contributed to the French movement firmly into the Western “camp”. In spite of this, the French position towards the Cold War remained highly ambiguous, with France’s historic suspicion of the British and growing anti-Americanism impinging upon France’s role in the Western Alliance (Jenkins & Chafer, 1996, p.2). In the context of Rhodesia in the post-UDI period, it is possible to identify a microcosm of this French approach to the Cold War, which Bozo (2010, p.159) has characterised as ‘distinctive’, ‘complex’, and founded upon a ‘paradoxical combination of accommodation and dissatisfaction with the status quo’.

The Communist threat in Rhodesia

As Metz (1984, p.518) has argued, ‘cold war considerations and the global containment of communism’ were ‘undoubtedly the most important’ factors shaping US attitudes towards the decolonisation of Africa. These American concerns are clearly apparent in the Rhodesian context. From as early as 1963, the US increasingly viewed Rhodesia as “the new African time bomb”, at risk of Soviet infiltration or, worse still, a potential partner to
South Africa and Portugal in ‘an unholy alliance against Black Africa’ (Butler, 2000, p.144). In 1964 and 1965, as Rhodesian discrimination against Africans increased and violence became more widespread, American fears that Rhodesia would create an obstacle to their wider strategy of containment on the African continent began to spiral (Watts, 2012, pp.161-165). According to Horne (2001, p.11), the Cold War context remained central to US interpretations of and actions towards Rhodesia in the years that followed UDI.

The existence of similar concerns amongst the French observing the situation in Rhodesia demonstrates France’s position within the Western “camp”. Rhodesia was described by Bellivier, for example, as ‘un "point chaud" du globe’, demonstrating how certain French actors perceived of Rhodesia as a region vulnerable to infiltration by the East-West conflict.\textsuperscript{110} These sentiments are explicitly stated in a 1970 report, also by Bellivier but not prepared until after his return to the central administration in Paris following the closure of the French post in Salisbury in March 1970, that concluded by noting how Rhodesia will have ‘un rôle certain dans l’issue du conflit Est-Ouest’.\textsuperscript{111}

France’s situation in the Western “camp” is also apparent in its interpretations of the Zimbabwean nationalist movement. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, French officials feared a ‘Communist conspiracy’ in sub-Saharan Africa (Keese, 2007a, p.136), suspecting, for

\textsuperscript{110} Bellivier to AL. (1969, August 8). AL/Rhodésie/1/1/No.282. Paris:AMAE.
example, that the Rassemblement Démocratique Africaine (RDA) in the AOF territories was ‘a Communist satellite organisation’ (Chafer, 2002b, pp.104-105) with links to the leadership of the Parti Communist Français in Paris, as well as to Moscow (Keese, 2007a, pp.135). In a similar vein, Evans (2012, p.160) has described how ‘international anti-communism’ informed French approaches to Algeria, with this North African country conceived of as ‘another cold-war front’, thus prompting suspicions that the Algerian Communist Party was manipulating the Front de Libération National (FLN), even if the FLN itself was not Communist. Moreover, perceptions of the Communist threat informed the French understanding of non-Francophone territories. For instance, Egypt’s major arms deal with the Czechoslovakia in September 1955 was viewed as proof that ‘Even if Nasser was not a Communist, he was being infiltrated and controlled by the Soviet Union’ (Evans, 2012, p.160). Similarly, British West Africa was viewed through this Cold War lens, fuelling French anxiety that the Communists would use Anglophone Africa as a springboard into the AOF, as part of a major, global Communist offensive (Keese, 2007a, p.137). Although, according to Keese (2007a, p.138), this Communist threat was more imagined than real, ‘it clearly was the point of reference for the activities of the French administration’ and contributed to the creation of ‘a real “culture of panic”’.

This ‘point of reference’ was also present in the minds of the French operating and observing in the Rhodesian setting, particularly amongst certain far-right elements in French society, such as the Comité France-Rhodésie. Established in January 1966 by right-wing writer and former Nazi
collaborator, Marc Augier (also known by the pseudonym Saint-Loup),\textsuperscript{112} this organisation set about informing ‘the French public of the background to the Rhodesian problem and other racial problems in Africa’.\textsuperscript{113} In order to achieve this end, the society organised information meetings about Rhodesia, such as one held at the Musée Social on 18 March 1966, with guest speaker, François d’Orcival, a former OAS supporter and author of \textit{Rhodésie: pays des lions fidèles} (1966),\textsuperscript{114} a rather one-sided, right-wing account of Rhodesia’s history up until and including UDI, with a preface written by Smith himself (pp.9-12). In February 1966, the group’s secretary, Jean-Pierre Maire, travelled to Salisbury, carrying with him a ‘bidon symbolique d’essence’.\textsuperscript{115} In a televised interview during his visit, Maire spoke of his admiration for Rhodesia’s courage to stand up in the world struggle against communism.\textsuperscript{116} It is clear, therefore, that certain far right French activists identified with white Rhodesia’s ‘world struggle’ ideology, that viewed UDI as a heroic stand for Western civilisation in Africa (Evans, 2007, pp.180-181) and a defence against ‘Western decrepitude and communist encroachment’ (Meredith, 1979, p.44).

\textsuperscript{112} Another renowned member of the Comité France-Rhodésie was Dominique Venner, a historian, writer and leading figure in French far right-wing politics, who shot himself dead in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in May 2013, allegedly in protest at same-sex marriages in France. For more information on Venner’s activities in support of white rule in Africa in the 1960s, see his obituary: Anonymous. (2013, July 31). Dominique Venner. \textit{The Telegraph}. Retrieved, August 2, 2013, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/10214897/Dominique-Venner.html
It is also possible to detect more subtle versions of these fears amongst a broader section of French society in the descriptions of African nationalists in Rhodesia after UDI. Reports from French “men-on-the-spot” in Salisbury frequently remarked upon the links between Zimbabwean nationalists and Communist organisations overseas, seen for example in a despatch from Bellivier in December 1965 that recorded the influence of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) over ZAPU exiles based in Lusaka, Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, particularly through dissemination of the *Peking Review*.\(^\text{117}\)

Similarly, an account of guerrilla activity in Rhodesia in October 1966 highlighted Soviet military material being used by the nationalist forces,\(^\text{118}\) whilst the aforementioned report prepared for the Centre des Hautes Etudes Administratives sur l’Afrique et l’Asie Modernes in 1970 recorded Zimbabwean nationalists receiving training in China, Cuba, Russia and Algeria.\(^\text{119}\)

Away from the French diplomatic service, the Cold War also provided the backdrop for Elysée interpretations of Rhodesia’s native population. A note summarising the situation in Anglophone Africa in 1968, for example, emphasised the links between nationalist guerrilla activity in Rhodesia and the Communist parties in the USSR, the PRC, Egypt, Cuba and Tanzania.\(^\text{120}\)

These concerns were also present amongst French intelligence officers linked to the Presidential Palace, seen in a 1969 SDECE report...

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concentrating on students with Rhodesian nationality studying in the Eastern bloc, which included a detailed statistical breakdown by discipline and country.\textsuperscript{121} Such attention to detail reveals the persistent French preoccupation with Communist infiltration of the African continent and how these Cold War concerns informed French interpretations of the Zimbabwean nationalist movement.

**Preventing “Anglo-Saxon” dominance and maintaining France’s foreign policy autonomy**

Yet, in spite of French fears of Communist infiltration in Africa, anxiety about “Anglo-Saxon” dominance remained an important factor shaping French approaches to the continent. As has already been discussed above, these concerns manifested themselves particularly in the context of the UN, where the French resented a perceived Anglophone dominance of the UNSCSC and the subsequent ability of “Anglo-Saxon” companies to escape judgement for continuing to trade with Rhodesia, in contrast to the criticism targeted against French and other Western individuals and businesses.\textsuperscript{122} British and American pre-eminence in the Sanctions Committee was conceived of as the result of Britain’s long-standing presence in the region and, in particular, its “réseau de renseignements très actif” on the ground in Rhodesia, which allowed the collection of extensive information about companies and individuals involved in sanctions busting, in contrast to the

Quai’s relative ignorance of such matters. These obstacles to obtaining the full picture of sanctions busting activities in Rhodesia left France vulnerable to criticism in the UN, as they often found themselves surprised by the information presented to the UNSCSC. This, in turn, led the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières to conclude that ‘les délégations ainsi informées se trouvent mieux armées pour faire justice, auprès de l’Organisation des Nations-Unies, des accusations portées souvent à tort contre leurs nationaux’. Furthermore, Anglo-American control over information gathering in Rhodesia, particularly in the economic domain, and their subsequent ability to avoid criticism in the UN, was conceived of both as a symptom and a cause of “Anglo-Saxon” dominance of ‘cette zone, où les sociétés et les investissements anglo-saxons sont prééminents’. British and American strength stood in contrast with France’s relative weakness in the region, a position that was made all the more acute in light of the perceived opportunities for French economic expansion in Rhodesia identified above.

Reports housed in the archives of the Secretariat for African and Malagasy Affairs reveal that these sentiments also informed the Presidential Palace’s understanding of events taking place in Rhodesia. In 1965, for example, the Elysée raised concerns about the introduction of sanctions against Rhodesia providing ‘le prétexte d’une intrusion massive des Etats-Unis dans cette région’. These fears were founded upon American and Canadian military

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aviation control over the air transportation of oil between Léopoldville and Lusaka, a measure that was intended to limit the impact of economic sanctions against Rhodesia in its landlocked neighbour, Zambia. According to this French report, it was possible that ‘cette affaire de pont aérien serve à installer des moyens permettant par la suite une opération militaire américaine ou onusienne contre Salisbury’. The fact that this position was being advanced at the very same time that Washington was orchestrating the rise of Mobutu to power in the former Belgian Congo is likely to have augmented France’s concerns about “Anglo-Saxon” dominance in the Rhodesian context. According to Schraeder (2000, pp.399-400), Foccart believed that the US’s close ties to the new Congolese President facilitated “Anglo-Saxon” penetration of the largest Francophone country on the continent and, as such, represented a clear victory for the US over France in Africa. This defeat is likely to have brought the memory of Fashoda to the forefront of French minds and reinforced the desire in certain French quarters to act in Rhodesia to prevent the region succumbing to the same fate.

Fears of an “Anglo-Saxon” conspiracy subsequently informed Elysée opposition in March 1966 to British aircraft being sent to Majunga (Mahajanga) in the Malagasy Republic to assist with the Royal Navy's Beira patrol, ‘a maritime-intercept operation’ whereby the RAF and Royal Navy (RN) monitored shipping in the Mozambique Channel in an attempt to prevent oil reaching Rhodesia from the port of Beira in Mozambique.

128 Between 1960 and 1975, Madagascar was known as the Malagasy Republic.
(Mobley, 2002, p.63). After claiming that ‘l’installation de la RAF à Majunga n’aurait de sens véritable que dans le cas d’une intervention militaire contre Salisbury’, an anonymous report kept with Foccart’s private archive asserts that Britain’s motivations for the establishment of a base on this former French dependency were uniquely political in their nature.\footnote{Anonymous. (nd). *L’Angleterre et l’échéance rhodésienne, et l’affaire de Majunga.* 5AG/FPR/302. Paris:AN.} In particular, emphasis was placed on what was perceived to be Britain’s ‘utilité ultérieure de Majunga’: its potential as a base for the British to use in the eventuality that they launched a military offensive against the rebellious Rhodesians. According to this note, Nairobi and Entebbe (Uganda) had been ruled out as potential transit sites through which six battalions of Ghurkha soldiers could be deployed from the British military base in the Red Sea to the Rhodesian capital, on the grounds that ‘il y a encore trop d’amis de l’Afrique du Sud et de la Rhodésie sur ces deux aéroports et il est probable qu’ainsi l’effet de surprise sur lequel compte M. Wilson, en serait perdu’. In light of this, the author believed that Wilson identified Majunga as ‘un aéroport inutilisé et désert’ suitable for the establishment of a base that could act ‘comme relais entre Aden et Salisbury, s’ils se décident à lancer l’opération militaire’.\footnote{Anonymous. (nd). *L’Angleterre et l’échéance rhodésienne, et l’affaire de Majunga.* 5AG/FPR/302. Paris:AN.} The author of the report did not view such an overt attempt to establish a British military base in a former French colony favourably. Rather this operation was seen as an attempt ‘à irriter gratuitement Paris’ and ‘compromettre les francophones’. It was suspected, therefore, that this British initiative was not simply an attempt to resolve the Rhodesian crisis. It was also part of a
wider strategy by Britain and its ‘Global-masters américains’ to infiltrate Francophone Africa and, thus, undermine France’s standing on the world stage.\footnote{Anonymous. (nd). \textit{L’Angleterre et l’échéance rhodésienne, et l’affaire de Majunga.} SAG/FPR/302. Paris:AN.} The Cold War, therefore, provided a crucial backdrop against which French interpretations of Rhodesia were formulated, heightening fears of “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration of the region and Africa more widely.

**Conclusions**

In the years after 1965, the setting for French engagement with Rhodesia was comprised of an intricate intertwining of the particularities of the Rhodesian context with France’s broader foreign policy concerns. The settler rebellion against Britain and the white minority’s efforts to stall the introduction of majority rule to this region of Central Southern Africa meant that it was impossible for France to directly pursue diplomatic, economic or cultural relations with the RF. However, for the French engaged in Rhodesian affairs, it was not a simple case of severing entirely France’s ties with the region. For one, France’s existing presence in the region, alongside the perception of Rhodesia as an important node in a wider French strategic vision and an awareness of Rhodesia’s economic prosperity and potential, contributed to the continued identification of commercial, cultural and geopolitical opportunities for France in this British colony. There was also the question of the French judicial framework, which viewed Rhodesia as an internal British problem whilst constitutional ties existed between Rhodesia...
and the UK. This, in turn, influenced the French decision not to oppose the RF in the UN in the immediate aftermath of UDI.

The French approach to Rhodesia after 1965 was further complicated by the overlapping, and occasionally opposing, imperatives that informed French foreign policy in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s. This is especially evident with regards to France’s relations with Rhodesia’s colonial ruler, the UK, and its closest ally, the USA. On the one hand, France was an important supporter of British efforts to resolve the Rhodesian crisis and friendly, cooperative contacts characterised Quai-FCO exchanges with regards to the situation in the region. On the other hand, certain French actors, particularly those linked to the Elysée, were highly cynical about British policy in Rhodesia and in Africa more generally, indicating that the stance of cooperation as advanced by the French Foreign Ministry may not have been so staunchly supported by certain members of Foccart’s cellule africaine. Similarly, looking to the Cold War context more broadly, anti-communism and fears about Soviet or Chinese infiltration of the African continent conditioned French understanding of the situation in the region.

Yet, hostility towards the “les Anglo-Saxons” and concerns about Anglo-American dominance on the African continent and in the UN fuelled an alternative strand in the French approach to Rhodesia. It is possible to identify in the Rhodesian case study, therefore, France’s wider foreign policy objectives on a micro-scale, albeit sometimes disguised or distorted by the reality of Rhodesia’s illegal standing on the international stage. Thus, as had also been the case before 1965, French policy in Rhodesia after UDI
was intertwined with and dependent upon France’s broader foreign policy objectives.

Concerns about communist or “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration were not uniquely present amongst those in the Presidential Palace. Certain French diplomats and policy-makers based in the central administration at the Quai expressed their reservations about the spread of British and American influence in Southern Africa and beyond. Yet, the ability of representatives of the French Foreign Ministry to act upon these imperatives was limited by the strict, diplomatic parameters resulting from Rhodesia’s illegal status. By contrast, on the basis of what we know about Elysée pre-eminence over African affairs in the post-colonial period and the consequent development of an alternative, opaque system of relations with France’s former African colonies – a network in which, as we have already seen in Chapter Two, certain Rhodesians participated - it is possible to hypothesise that there were certain private and state actors linked to Foccart’s *cellule africaine* more willing to contemplate continued Franco-Rhodesian engagement so as to further a wider, Gaullist foreign policy agenda. It is interesting to note, by way of a provisional response to this hypothesis, that concerns about Communist and “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration of Rhodesia appeared to be heightened in reports emanating from those operating within or on behalf of the Presidential Palace. This can be seen in the detailed enquiries into Communist links with Zimbabwean nationalists and explicit statements of concern about US and UK infiltration of Southern Africa discussed above. The extent to which this theory can be usefully applied to the Rhodesian
context will be explored at length in Chapter Four. For the purposes of this chapter’s discussion of the setting for French policy making in Rhodesia after UDI, it is important to stress how, after UDI, France’s position towards this British colony was increasingly divided between that advanced by the Quai and an alternative, para-official stance as set out by the Elysée and its African operatives. This was a split that not only mirrored the patterns of France’s relations with its former dependencies in West and Equatorial Africa, but also built on precedents in Franco-Rhodesian relations established in the early 1960s and explored in Chapter Two. In the context of post-UDI Rhodesia, this division was to become crucial to the shape of French engagement with this breakaway British colony.
Chapter Four

France and Rhodesia after 1965: implementing policy

Chapter Three of this thesis set out the foreign policy landscape that underpinned French policies towards and perceptions of Rhodesia in the years that followed Ian Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain on 11 November 1965. Some factors shaping the backdrop were specific to the Anglophone African setting, notably Rhodesia’s pariah status on the international stage and France’s relations with Rhodesia’s minority and majority-rulled neighbours. Yet other elements were common to French foreign policy more generally. An established French judicial framework, for example, was an important factor in shaping France’s position towards Rhodesia after UDI. In addition, the persistent desire to maintain France’s position on the African continent; relations, both friendly and hostile, with Britain and the United States; and France’s Cold War strategy all continued to contribute to the multifaceted framework within which French actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs approached this breakaway British colony. Thus, the logic of France’s policies towards Rhodesia after UDI, as had also been the case after 1965, was interconnected to, and dependent upon, a wider French foreign policy universe. The resilience of the French foreign policy mind-set in the Anglophone African setting, in the face of Rhodesia’s illegal status, adds further weight to the argument set out in the first part of this thesis, that France’s post-colonial relations with Africa were not as exceptional as hitherto has been presented by scholars.
In addition, the discussion of these different imperatives brought to light the increasing fragmentation of France’s approach to Rhodesia in the aftermath of UDI, between an official stance as adopted by the Quai, which publically opposed the Smith regime and sought, within the limitations of the existing French judicial framework, to support Britain’s Rhodesian policy, and a parallel, quasi-official position associated with the Elysée, which placed much greater stress on French hostility towards the “Anglo-Saxon” powers in Southern Africa. Although, as the previous chapter identified, these positions were not mutually exclusive, this separation builds on patterns established in Franco-Rhodesian relations in the years immediately preceding UDI, whilst also pointing to a wider continuity with French relations towards its former sub-Saharan African colonies, whereby African affairs were the domaine réservé of the Presidential Palace, in contrast to the limited influence exercised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chafer, 2008, pp.39-40, Médard, 2005, p.40). This, in turn, adds further weight to a central argument of this thesis that the modes of French interaction with its former sub-Saharan colonies were not unique, but reproduced in French engagement with the British colony of Rhodesia.

It is the objective of this chapter to unpick this argument in more detail by analysing how the foreign policy-making landscape set out in Chapter Three operated in practice in the post-UDI Rhodesian context. Taking as its starting point the divide between the Quai and the Elysée with regards to African affairs, a bifurcation that also manifested itself through French perceptions of Rhodesia after UDI, this chapter will explore official French
policy towards Rhodesia, as formulated and implemented by bureaucrats and diplomats from the Foreign Ministry, as distinct from the parallel, quasi-official strategies pursued by those linked to the Presidential Palace. The first section will investigate the former, unpicking in detail the public face of France’s Rhodesian policy in the aftermath of UDI. Although Franco-African relations in the post-colonial period were dominated by the President and his *cellule africaine* - an argument that this chapter hopes to reinforce through the Rhodesian case study - it is nevertheless important to give consideration to the official French position advanced by the Quai in bilateral relations with Britain and in multilateral arenas, including at the UN. Furthermore, as the previous chapter revealed, many French bureaucrats and diplomats viewed the situation in Rhodesia through the same foreign policy lens as those state and private actors linked to the Elysée, but found themselves limited by diplomatic conventions resulting from Rhodesia’s illegal status and legalistic responses to Rhodesia’s constitutional ties with the UK government. Thus, it is important not to discount entirely the Quai perspective and its participation in France’s Rhodesian policies after UDI.

The remainder of the chapter will be dedicated to the exploration of France’s quasi-official Rhodesian policy and how this policy was implemented through state and private actors, metropolitan French companies and Francophone Africans. This discussion will be broken down into three sections. The first will concentrate on the involvement of members of the Elysée’s *cellule africaine* in Rhodesia after UDI. Chapter
Two of this thesis revealed the initial contacts between Rhodesian settlers and certain representatives of Foccart’s African cell in the immediate aftermath of Francophone African decolonisation. This chapter will explore the development of these relations following UDI, focusing especially on how the particular nature of the Presidential Palace’s participation in French-speaking sub-Saharan African provided the motivation, the model and the means for French engagement with Rhodesia’s white rulers.

The final two parts will explore how this parallel French policy was implemented through actors outside of the French state. According to Médard (1997), the close links between France and Africa were founded upon the instrumentalisation of patrimonialism and the subsequent confusion between the public and private spheres (p.23). This system, ‘where business is blithely mixed with politics’ contributed to the ‘intrinsically corrupt nature’ of Franco-African relations (p.26). This view has been substantiated in works on the Franco-African réseaux, including Glaser and Smith’s (1992) investigation into Ces Messieurs Afrique which describes how ‘Gaullists, freemasons, intelligence agents, adventurers, advisors of all sorts, and spooks (barbouzes)’ (Bourmaud, 2012, p.213), under the direction of Foccart and his cellule africaine, implemented France’s African policy. This section will analyse the role played by private French individuals and companies, operating principally in the economic and military domain, analysing more broadly how the blurring of the lines between private and public action created opportunities for the continued
pursuit of French relations with Rhodesia’s European settlers alongside France’s official condemnation of white rule on the African continent.

Another central feature emphasised in the scholarly analysis of Franco-African post-colonial relations is the pivotal role played by Francophone Africans in the cultivation and maintenance of the close ties between France and Africa. Médard (1997, p.33) has applied models of clientelism to Franco-African relations, stressing how African clients were more than mere puppets of their French patrons. More specifically, Charbonneau (2008, p.2) has argued that security policy was the product of relations between French and African transnational élites, and their mutual interest in sustaining and reproducing the status quo, and was, as such, ‘Franco-African’ rather than purely ‘French’. In light of these arguments, the final part of this chapter will investigate the involvement of Francophone Africans in the Franco-Rhodesian connection after UDI, analysing how the majority leaders of independent French-speaking Africa interacted with the white-minority rulers of Anglophone Africa. It is the aim of this chapter, therefore, to unpick the official and quasi-official dimensions of French policy towards Rhodesia after 1965 and investigate the ways in which existing patterns for Franco-African relations were applied, adapted and distorted in the unique setting of a breakaway, white minority-ruled Anglophone territory.
Official relations between the French state and Rhodesia

France’s official position of opposition to UDI and its condemnation of the actions of the Rhodesian Front, a stance that was set out clearly in a statement by Couve de Murville on 12 November¹ and explored in further detail in Chapter Three, had a number of practical consequences. Firstly, it informed the progressive severance of formal French diplomatic ties with the white government in Salisbury, commencing with the almost immediate recall of Desparmet, the French Consul in Rhodesia, who returned to Paris on 19 November 1965.² The Commercial Attaché to the French post was also withdrawn from Salisbury.³ Thereafter, there remained at the French-run office in the Rhodesian capital a skeleton diplomatic operation, managed by Jean Bellivier, the Consul-in-Charge, who had ‘residual functions’ rather than the responsibilities of a fully-fledged Consular Officer,⁴ and was assisted by Mrs A. Foster, head of the intermediary chancellery, Mr J. L. Duclion, who oversaw press and information, Frank de St. Jorre, a British national who had been associated with the commercial post since the late 1950s and who continued to act as Commercial Secretary after UDI, and a typist.⁵ In addition, a French office remained open in Bulawayo, a post that had been supervised on behalf of France by a British

⁵ Desparmet to MAE. (1965, November 19). AL/SEAB/14/No.319. Paris:AMAE.
national named James Gilchrist since its establishment in 1953. A French diplomatic representation of this order remained until Smith’s declaration of a Republic on 11 March 1970 ‘rend inévitable la suspension des activités’ of the French post in Salisbury. Eleven days later, on 22 March, this decision was put into effect and the doors of the French Consulate in Century House East on Baker Avenue were closed, marking the formal end to France’s twenty-two and a half year diplomatic presence in the region. This state of affairs remained unchanged until Rhodesia’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980, when a French Embassy was opened in Harare.

Official economic relations between France and Rhodesia followed a similar pattern of gradual lessening, leading ultimately to the termination of formal commercial ties. This process mirrored and responded to the gradualist approach to economic sanctions adopted by the British Labour government. Immediately after UDI, alongside a range of other measures aimed to financially weaken the Rhodesian regime, the British government banned imports of Rhodesian tobacco and sugar to the UK, and prohibited the export of arms to Rhodesia (Minter & Schmidt, 1988, p.212). The Quai responded almost straight away, pledging that France would no longer purchase Rhodesian tobacco and openly affirming its commitment to the prevention of French arms exports, in particular helicopters, to Rhodesia.

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Further products were added to the embargo list by the UK government in early December, including asbestos, chrome, steel and beef, leaving just five per cent of Rhodesia’s previous exports to Britain outside of the trade embargo (Minter & Schmidt, 1988, p.212). In the months that followed, the French government confirmed its cooperation with this programme of sanctions by introducing an embargo on sugar purchases, suspending export credits to Rhodesia and advising French industrialists to find new suppliers of chrome and asbestos. Moreover, in December 1965, in response to Wilson’s announcement that oil imports into Rhodesia were banned (Meredith, 1979, p.57), the French government called upon ‘toutes les principales Sociétés françaises engagées dans le commerce international du pétrole et des produits pétroliers à cesser toute livraison à la Rhodésie’ and declared its intention to refuse export licences for Rhodesia on any petrol products from French-owned refineries. Official French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI was characterised, therefore, by a progressive severance to relations and, ultimately, an end to formal French ties with this breakaway British colony, in support of UK policy.

However, behind this public policy of opposition, there is a more complex picture of relations between the French state and white Rhodesia, which corresponds to the continued identification of opportunities for France in the region after UDI explored in Chapter Three. In the first instance, state-led cultural initiatives continued after UDI, albeit on a relatively small scale and often linked to wider French regional strategies. In November 1967, the

British government received reports of French National Servicemen performing civilian duties in Rhodesia and receiving payment from Ian Smith’s regime. The Quai denied these allegations, claiming that France did not recognise Rhodesia and that the supply of National Servicemen and technical assistance to the breakaway state was, therefore, impossible. Yet, a report from April 1970 from the Direction Générale des Relations Culturelles at the central administration suggests that, to the contrary, ‘un Volontaire du Service National Actif’ was posted as a lecturer in the department of French at the University of Salisbury. Other state-led cultural ventures included visits to Rhodesia organised by BELC in January 1968 and August 1969; plans for a television-based French-language teaching programme in Rhodesian schools; the allocation of 3000 francs to the French consulate in Salisbury for the purchase of French-language books in 1969, and the continued operation of the Alliance Française in Salisbury. The branch remained open throughout the UDI period to the present day, celebrating its sixtieth anniversary in 2011. Although these ventures were relatively minor in their outreach, they represent a continued official effort to maintain a French cultural presence in Rhodesia after UDI, despite the end of formal relations with this British colony. This, in turn, is

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in keeping with the wider privileging of cultural action as a means of preserving French influence in Africa.

These official efforts to maintain links with Rhodesia were not confined to the cultural sphere. Certain members of the central administration also remained in direct contact with members of Rhodesia’s settler government, including P. K. van der Byl, a close ally of Smith who frequently represented the RF overseas under the code name 001(R), in his roles as Deputy Minister for Information (1964-1968), Minister of Information, Immigration and Tourism (1968-1974, 1977-1979), and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1974-1979). In 1966, van der Byl recorded attending a luncheon in Paris, hosted by Ernest-Antoine Seillière, who was based in the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières. Also present was Jean François-Poncet, who, in his capacity as Deputy Director for Africa at the Quai des Affaires Economiques et Financières. Also present was Jean François-Poncet, who, in his capacity as Deputy Director for Africa at the Quai (1963-1965) travelled to Salisbury on a number of occasions prior to UDI, including a visit in 1963,20 and was, according to van der Byl, ‘quite well disposed’ to the Rhodesian cause.21 These patterns were replicated elsewhere in French government, seen, for example, in the meeting that is reported to have taken place in 1966 between van der Byl and Charles de Chambrun, Secretary of State for External Commerce (1966-1967), ostensibly in public view at the Ministry. During this encounter, the Minister for External Commerce is alleged to have agreed to do nothing to inhibit the development of Franco-Rhodesian commerce and requested that

van der Byl provide him with a list of trading requirements that France might be able to help with Rhodesia with.\textsuperscript{22}

Certain representatives of the French legislature also travelled to Rhodesia after UDI. In 1966, Ian Smith invited Franck Cazenave, the RD deputy for Gironde, and a founding member of the France-Rhodésie parliamentary friendship group, to visit Salisbury. Four other deputes, two of whom were amongst the original members of the Groupe France-Rhodésie,\textsuperscript{23} also received invitations from the Rhodesian Prime Minister: Lucien Neuwirth (Union pour la nouvelle République, Loire; parliamentary administrator (questeur)) Jean Montalat (Socialiste, Corrèze), Michel d’Aillières (Républicains indépendants, Sarthe), and Jean Valentin (non inscrit, Charente).\textsuperscript{24} The latter four declined this invitation.\textsuperscript{25} By contrast, despite being strongly advised against travelling to Salisbury by Guerey, the Deputy Director for Anglophone Africa at the Quai,\textsuperscript{26} Cazenave set about making plans for ‘une “mission de bonne volonté non-officielle”’ to Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{27}

During his week long stay, which took place between 27 February and 5

\textsuperscript{23} D’Aillières and Valentin were amongst the original members of the Groupe France-Rhodésie, formed a meeting on 25 October 1963, where d’Aillières was nominated as one of the group’s Vice Presidents.
March 1966,²⁸ Cazenave is reported in the Rhodesian Press as having met with Ian Smith, Bruce Mussett, Minister of Commerce and Industry, James Graham, Marquess of Graham, Minister of External Affairs, and ‘a cross-section of industrialists and businessmen’ from Salisbury, Bulawayo, the Lowerveld, Kariba and the Umtali region.²⁹

Cazenave’s visit reveals the desire of certain French government representatives to continue to cultivate Franco-Rhodesian economic ties, despite official French adherence to British, and later UN, sanctions legislation. The type of contacts that Cazenave made, as well as his visits to key commercial and industrial hubs, suggests that economic motivations lay at the heart of his visit. The fact that Cazenave is also quoted as having said “I believe Rhodesia is a country with a great future” reinforces this point.³⁰ Moreover, there is a sense in which this interest in the expansion of French commerce in Rhodesia went beyond the individual level. Although Cazenave’s visit was not carried out under official auspices,³¹ during his stay, the Assemblée Nationale député represented his mission as part of a wider French national project in Rhodesia. For example, he is recorded as having asserted that ‘the general attitude in France was one of sympathy towards Rhodesia’, claiming that he would report back to the Franco-

Rhodesian Parliamentary Committee and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on his visit.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Franck Cazenave.\textsuperscript{33}}
\end{figure}

British and Rhodesian archival material indicates that there was, in fact, some central support for the growth of Franco-Rhodesian trade after UDI. According to a note housed in Ian Smith’s archives, an official French bulletin published in January 1966 contained an announcement that brought to ‘the attention of French exporters… the quarrel which presently exists

\textsuperscript{32} Anonymous. (1966, March 1). ‘Sad error’ on Rhodesia, says Deputy. The Rhodesia Herald.
between the Governments of Britain and Rhodesia.’ The statement went further, stating that ‘the cessation of trade between these two countries [Britain and Rhodesia]… represents a unique opportunity for French exporters’. The existence of this announcement is verified in a telegram from the British Embassy in Paris to the FO that reported how a British Minister in Paris ‘protested orally [to the Quai] about a notice in the official trade journal encouraging French exporters to supplant us in Rhodesia’. The British government certainly seemed to believe that the French government was directly involved, seen by the reply from Whitehall, instructing the British Embassy to bring to the attention of the French the potential consequences if they continued ‘actively to encourage their businessmen to replace us in the Rhodesian market’.

Moreover, despite France’s rhetoric of support for the trade embargo against Rhodesia, manifest in Quai inter-departmental correspondence, bilateral exchanges with the FCO, and the French delegation at the UN’s vote in favour of Resolution 253 implementing UN mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia in 1968, these practices appear to have continued into the 1970s. In 1971, according to one Rhodesian source, the Quai gave its approval, ‘although admittedly couched in guarded terms’, for the sale of Rhodesian ferro-chrome and lithium into France. Although this report cannot be

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37 Carberry, Rhodesia Department, FCO, to FCO. (1976, April 8). FCO/36/1907/9. London:TNA.
verified directly by French archival material, reports of ferro-chrome and lithium being imported by France provide evidence of this approval leading to action.\(^{38}\)

This Rhodesian description of the Quai’s response to efforts to expand Franco-Rhodesian commerce as being ‘guarded’ is also interesting because it re-emphasises the persistent tension between the identification of opportunities for France in this region of central Southern Anglophone Africa, especially in the economic domain, and the inherent limits to French official action in Rhodesia created by UDI. This was a tension that many in the Quai acknowledged could not be resolved whilst the white minority’s rebellion against Britain continued. Diplomatic conventions, UN sanctions legislation and France’s public alliance with Britain all combined to make it impossible for any substantial, direct economic or political relations to develop between the French state and the RF. Put simply, despite the efforts of certain representatives of the Quai, other French ministries and the French legislature to cultivate relations with Rhodesia, the constraints on official French action in Rhodesia after UDI were too great for this to translate into a formalised Franco-Rhodesian friendship.

Parallel official relations between France and Rhodesia

At the top of the French Executive, however, the restrictions placed on French interaction with Rhodesia appear to have been less constraining. In particular, relations existed between those engaged in African affairs at the Elysée and high-ranking Rhodesians, who, after UDI, travelled to Paris, and other European capitals, in an attempt to expand Rhodesia’s overseas commerce and garner support for their cause. These Rhodesian representatives included van der Byl; H. R. T. (Harry) Oxley, an assistant secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs; W. C. Hawes, a trade commissioner at the Rhodesian High Commission, Rhodesia House, in London, who was also part of the CAF delegation that visited Paris in January 1963; and Geoffroy Follows, a former member of the FISB and close advisor on intelligence matters to Roy Welensky, who after the Federation’s dissolution in 1963, continued to operate in an advisory capacity for the RF, and was also involved in Franco-Rhodesian efforts to form a counter-pan-African club discussed in Chapter Two.

Of particular note on the French side of the Franco-Rhodesian connection was the involvement of Jean Mauricheau-Beaupré, who, as we have already seen, first became embroiled in Rhodesian affairs in the early 1960s. After UDI, Mauricheau-Beaupré remained in touch with his Rhodesian associates,

personally meeting with van der Byl in Paris on at least two occasions that we know of, in 1969 and 1971.\textsuperscript{44} It is possible that direct contacts also took place between Mauricheau-Beaupré and Ian Smith, evidenced by a handwritten comment on the top of a letter from Smith to Georges Pompidou, President of France (1969-1974), housed in Foccart’s private archives that records ‘A R verbalement par M. Mauricheau’,\textsuperscript{45} implying that Mauricheau-Beaupré corresponded personally with the RF leader. The existence of this note within the archive of the Secretariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgaches also suggests not only that Mauricheau-Beaupré was at the forefront of Elysée-Rhodesian relations after UDI, but also that these contacts took place outside of the traditional decision-making mechanisms.

The Rhodesians were also in contact with Philippe Lettéron, a long-standing member of the \textit{cellule africaine}, sent to Côte d’Ivoire by Foccart in 1968 to act as personal advisor to President Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Bat, 2012, pp.280, 300). On 14 April 1966, Lettéron met with van der Byl, Oxley and Hawes in Paris. In his account of this meeting, van der Byl described how Lettéron,

\begin{quote}
    placed himself at my disposal and was able unofficially to find answers to the queries that we had and also unofficially act as a channel for advice to come from to use from the authorities.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Lettéron was also designated ‘Sir Geoffrey Follows’ principal link at the Elysée’, underlining the extent of Lettéron’s involvement with Rhodesia’s

\textsuperscript{44} Van der Byl to Smith. (1971, March 8). SC/15(TS3)/8. Grahamstown:CL.
white settlers. Moreover, Lettéron was alongside Mauricheau-Beaupré at his later meeting with van der Byl in Paris in 1971.

The emphasis on “unofficial” action highlighted in van der Byl’s 1966 report, like Mauricheau-Beaupré’s verbal contacts with the Rhodesians noted above, brings to the fore how, after UDI, relations between France and Rhodesia were conducted through alternative mechanisms, separate from the directors of French foreign policy at the Quai and France’s official stance towards Rhodesia but, nevertheless, controlled by actors linked to the French state. These contacts built on patterns of Franco-Rhodesian relations established in the early 1960s, explored in Chapter Two, whilst simultaneously mirroring French interaction with its former sub-Saharan African dependencies after their independence in 1960. The links between France’s Francophone African policies and its engagement with Rhodesia are further underscored by the participation of certain actors – such as Mauricheau-Beaupré and Lettéron – in both enterprises.

The existence of this parallel, quasi-official apparatus for the pursuit of Franco-Rhodesian contacts, outside of the traditional state policy-making machinery, is further demonstrated by the persistent failure of the Quai to clamp down on Rhodesian activity in France after UDI. This is evidenced especially in the contacts that took place in Paris in 1966 between van der Byl and Zinovy Petchkoff, a Gaullist general and diplomat, of Russian origin, who served in the French Foreign Legion and represented France on

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49 Petchkoff is also sometimes spelt as Peshkov, Pechkov and Pechkoff.
diverse overseas missions, including as De Gaulle’s chief representative in Taiwan between 1944 and 1946 (Xiang, 2011, p.73). In late March 1966, the Direction d’Afrique-Levant were informed, after the event, of a meeting that had taken place between van der Byl and Petchkoff earlier in the year, at which van der Byl had shared the Rhodesian desire to send ‘une mission officielle de bonne volonté à Paris’ so as to develop and formalise the ties between France and Rhodesia. In response to this report, a representative of the Quai contacted Petchkoff by telephone to reaffirm France’s official position towards Rhodesia - its opposition to UDI and its unwillingness to conduct official relations with the RF - presumably in an attempt to dissuade Petchkoff from pursuing any further contacts with van der Byl.50 Yet, this démarche appeared to have no effect as, less than a month later, van der Byl returned to Paris and was again received by Petchkoff. Moreover, according to van der Byl, this second meeting with Petchkoff on 19 April was more positive than the first, with Petchkoff ‘very strongly and sympathetically disposed towards’ the Rhodesian cause, something van der Byl attributed to ‘contact with De Gaulle, or people close to him, to find out what the official attitude was’ in the interim period between these two encounters.51 It is clear, therefore, that in continuing to pursue relations with van der Byl, Petchkoff was acting under the auspices of a French authority separate from the Quai. Petchkoff’s Gaullist sympathies and known close personal relations with De Gaulle mean that it possible to believe van der Byl’s assumption that this was someone in the Elysée, perhaps even the French President himself.

Rhodesia’s links to the Elysée may even have gone as high up as the French President himself. In the period between November 1965 and April 1969, Smith wrote at least five personal letters to De Gaulle, in which he openly expressed white Rhodesia’s fraternal feelings towards France, as well its hopes for further French support. The archives do not contain any responses from De Gaulle. Yet, a handwritten note recording that ‘le Général fait dire qu’il a bien reçu’, as well as words of appreciation for De Gaulle’s reply in the opening of a letter written by Smith in February 1966, suggest that De Gaulle himself was certainly aware of Rhodesian expectations and personally replied on at least one occasion. Although this argument is somewhat speculative, in the context of what we know about De Gaulle’s direct involvement in Franco-African relations (Chafer, 2008, pp.39-40), as well as the role played by some of his key African operatives in Rhodesia, it is possible to suggest that De Gaulle might have responded to Smith’s letters via one of the informal channels established by Mauricheau-Beaupré, Lettéron or another member of the cellule africaine.

Another instance of this parallel, Elysée-centred mechanism for pursuit of Franco-Rhodesian relations after UDI can be found in the Rhodesian Information Office (RIO). Established in 1968, the RIO’s official remit was ‘the dissemination of tourist and cultural news’ as well as the development cultural links between France and Rhodesia. This allowed the directors of

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the office to claim that the organisation was ‘entirely within the law’.\textsuperscript{55} Yet, it was evident from the outset that there was a substantial commercial dimension to the Rhodesian operation in Paris. For one, the RIO’s office at 110 Rue de la Boétie in the 8\textsuperscript{th} arrondissement, was based at an address formerly occupied by the Société Syndicat d’Etudes pour le Développement des Echanges Économiques entre la France et l’Afrique, an organisation established by Harry Oxley in 1967 with the explicit aim of developing Franco-Rhodesian trade, in conjunction with a Frenchman, Charles Pollet.\textsuperscript{56} In August 1968, following the re-registration of the commercial bureau as a tourist office on 13 July 1968,\textsuperscript{57} Pollet remained at the office, suggesting a continuity of its earlier remit, and was joined by Brian Reavill, a UK national born in 1931, who emigrated to Rhodesia following the completion of his university education.\textsuperscript{58} According to a British source, Reavill was sent to the French capital with the ‘mission of promoting tourism and trade and conducting information activities’, and using the office on Rue de la Boétie as a base from which to visit neighbouring European countries.\textsuperscript{59} The commercial activities of the bureau are confirmed in a report from the British Embassy in Paris, as well an oral history interview conducted with a Rhodesian civil servant in 2011, which both emphasise how the RIO provided access to markets for the export of Rhodesian tobacco as well as contacts with the French tobacco industry.\textsuperscript{60} Moreover, the use of a tourist

\textsuperscript{55} Isolani, Rhodesia Department, FCO. (1969, May 19). FCO36/589/7. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{56} Rhodesia Department, FCO to Cairns Committee. (1969, November 3). FCO/36/589/21. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{58} Anonymous. (nd). FCO/36/589/5. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{59} Reavill to Warson. (2011, April 18). Personal communication.
\textsuperscript{60} Anonymous. (nd). FCO/36/589/5. London:TNA.
or travel agency as cover for a commercial venture is consistent with the suggestion made to van der Byl by Willem Dirkse Van Schalkwyk, South African Ambassador to France (1964-1969), that such an approach was a means of maintaining Franco-Rhodesian economic relations in a way that ‘might be more acceptable to the French government’. 61

The Quai were aware of the existence of the RIO from its establishment. However, Guerey claimed in discussions with Simpson-Orlebar from the British Embassy in Paris in June 1969 that there was nothing ‘legally objectionable about the Information Office’s statutes’, so the French government could not take action against it under the UNSC Resolution. 62

Thus, the RIO remained active for much of the 1970s, evidenced by reports in December 1975 that Pollet was using the office as a base from which to produce and circulate an official French-language bulletin about Rhodesia. 63

It was not until January 1977 that the bureau was ordered to close (Bach, 1990, p.185). 64 However, the power of the French authorities to enforce this closure was not confirmed until after the adoption of UN Resolution 409 on 27 May 1977, 65 which stated that,

> all Member States shall prohibit the use or transfer of any funds in their territories by the illegal regime, including any office or agent thereof, or by other persons or bodies within Southern Rhodesia, for the purposes of any office or agency of the illegal regime that is established within their territories

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65 Harrison, Rhodesia Department, FCO, to Graham. (1977, August 5). FCO/36/2013/21. London:TNA.
other than an office or agency so established exclusively for pensions purposes.\textsuperscript{66}

Here again, therefore, the Quai was bound by legal and diplomatic conventions, limiting its ability to control Rhodesian action, even within the “Hexagone”.

By contrast, the alternative arm of the French state involved in Rhodesian affairs linked to the Elysée appeared to be directly involved in the establishment and maintenance of this bureau, thus facilitating illegal Rhodesian activity overseas. In April 1966, when van der Byl and his associates visited Paris with the objective of establishing a commercial representation in the capital, they met with Lettéron to discuss their plans and ‘again cleared with him that what were doing was acceptable, unofficially, to the French government’.\textsuperscript{67} This statement suggests that a seal of approval was given to this Rhodesian venture by this quasi-official branch of French policy-making in Africa. Further evidence of this backing can be found in a SDECE report from January 1970, which records how Oxley received ‘l’autorisation de créer à Paris une société destinée à promouvoir le commerce entre les deux pays’ as a result of the growing importance of Franco-Rhodesian economic relations.\textsuperscript{68} This note implies that the RIO operated with the permission of the French authorities. The fact that this is recorded in a document prepared by SDECE suggests that those granting this approval were most likely linked to the Elysée Palace. The assertion made by Péan (1983, p.86) that Max Dumas, a member of the

\textsuperscript{68} SDECE. (1970, January 13). 5AG/FPU/2151/4051IN. Paris:AN.
Rhodesian Secret Services based at the RIO, operated in Paris with the support of the Renseignements Généraux (intelligence service of the French Police) and SDECE, whilst not backed up by archival evidence, is consistent with this growing picture of a mechanism, beyond the remit of vast swathes of the French state, and helps explain why this office was able to remain in action for the best part of a decade. Ken Flower, Head of Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Agency, also supports this view, describing in his memoirs how his opposite number at SDECE was ‘always anxious to help’, providing the RF with access to SDECE’s ‘best offices’ to aid its efforts to break diplomatic and economic isolation (1987, pp.74, 206).

The instance of the RIO also reveals the persistent inability of the Quai to prevent Rhodesians from entering France throughout the UDI period. In November 1968, the Afrique-Levant department actively sought to prevent van der Byl from returning to Paris in light of his status on Britain’s blacklist of Rhodesian personalities and France’s vote in favour of UNSC Resolution 253, which called upon all member states ‘to prevent entry into their territories, save on exceptional humanitarian grounds, of any person travelling on a Southern Rhodesian passport’. Yet, these efforts appeared to be to no avail, with van der Byl entering France in 1969, 1970 and 1971, and possibly on several other occasions not recorded in archival evidence. Similarly, Collie Hill, a representative of the Rhodesian sugar industry who

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was blacklisted by the British government, records in his memoirs (2001, p.120) how a member of the French Police de l’Air escorted him through French customs on his regular visits to Paris in the 1960s and 1970s.

The case of Brian Reavill, the UK-born Rhodesian based at the RIO, provides us with a similar example. Reavill was admitted to France in August 1968 on a British passport, although it later emerged that the expiry date on the passport had been falsified. In line with standard border procedures, he was issued with a three month tourist permit, and later received a temporary resident’s permit valid until August 1969. The British Embassy in Paris, anxious to put a stop to Reavill’s activities in Europe, approached Guerey at the Quai, expressing their hopes that Reavill would be prevented from re-entering France or that he would be denied an extension for his resident’s permit. In keeping with the friendly and cooperative relations that existed between the French Foreign Ministry and the British Embassy in Paris with regards to Rhodesian affairs, the Quai complied with this request. Thus, when Reavill left France on 24 July 1969 for six weeks leave to Rhodesia, the Quai appealed to the Ministry of the Interior to take steps to prevent his re-entry into France. Yet, by October, Reavill was back at the RIO, having successfully re-entered France, the cause of which, according to Simpson-Orlebar could have been ‘the Ministry of Interior’s inefficiency, or because they decline to comply with the Quai’s request, or because of second thoughts by the Quai itself’.

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The latter is perhaps the least likely of these suggestions, given the department’s open statements of compliance with British requests, seen for example in discussions between Claude Lebel, Director of African and Malagasy Affairs at the Quai (1966-1969),\(^{75}\) and James Bottomley, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Southern Africa and Rhodesia at the FCO (1968-1970), in October 1969, during which the Frenchman claimed that despite being ‘slow’ and ‘cumbersome’, the ‘machinery’ was ‘in operation against Mr Reavill’\(^{76}\). Although not substantiated by archival evidence, a more plausible explanation could be that French state representatives, linked to the Elysée, were intervening to allow Reavill to enter France freely.

The Quai’s inability to stop Rhodesians entering France, therefore, provides further evidence of the existence of an alternative French decision-making mechanism that was beyond the control of traditional policy apparatus, including the Quai and the French legislature, a practice that both mirrored and was directly connected to France’s engagement with Francophone Africa after 1960. This separate strand in the French approach to the Rhodesia after UDI contradicted the official stance of opposition to the RF set forth by the French government, and led to policies that enabled the white Rhodesians to continue to operate on the international stage. The French authorities were, therefore, officially opposing white Rhodesia, whilst another, unaccountable arm of the French state was simultaneously providing it with covert support.

\(^{75}\) It is interesting to note that Lebel had previously participated in Rhodesian affairs during his posting at the French Embassy in London in the 1950s.

Private French individuals and groups in Rhodesia

As has already been noted above, the principal means by which the UK government sought to bring the Rhodesian rebels to heel was through a range of economic sanctions. However, the impact of these sanctions was, according to the Quai, ‘négligeable, du moins minime’.\textsuperscript{77} The Elysée advanced a similar view, claiming that ‘la Rhodésie ne sera pas asphyxiée, car les sanctions économiques n’ont que des effets très limitées’.\textsuperscript{78} The failure of Britain’s sanctions programme was the result of the willingness of various individuals and groups to trade with the rebellious regime in Salisbury. The RF’s biggest international lifeline came from Rhodesia’s white-rulled neighbours, the apartheid regime in South Africa and, up until its independence in 1975, Portuguese-ruled Mozambique, where state backing was given to commercial ventures that might aid Smith’s illegal regime (Stephenson, 1975, p.377; Minter & Schmidt, 1988, pp.213-214). Pretoria, in particular, had a vested interest in ensuring that the trade embargo against Rhodesia failed to reduce the prospect that a similar strategy might be used against South Africa (Meredith, 1979, pp.58-59, 145).

Businesses based in other Western countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, West Germany and France, also breached the international trade embargo (Meredith, 1979, p.59; Wood, 2008). In the immediate aftermath of UDI, French trade with Rhodesia


actually increased, seen for example in the first three months of 1967 when France imported 200% more Rhodesian merchandise than it had done in the same period in 1966, including a 106% rise in purchases of unembargoed commodities such as diamonds and precious stones. After UDI, French businessmen remained a common sight in Salisbury, accounting for a high proportion of the growing ‘colonie française’ in Rhodesia. From importers of Rhodesian tobacco, sugar, and metals, to exporters of French oil, arms and automobiles, allegations were made against French companies throughout the UDI period, in French and British official diplomatic and

83 In the decade after UDI, 348 French citizens acquired Rhodesian franchise qualifications. See Mussett (Rhodesian Minister of Internal Affairs). (1975, August 8). Electoral Act, 1969: Acquisition of franchise qualifications by non-citizen residents. RGCM/1/78/36/2/RC(S)(75)106. Grahamstown:CL
88 These included Renault and Peugeot who, according to the French Embassy in Pretoria, retained a fifty per cent share of the Rhodesian automobile market in 1979. See: Le Seac’h, French Vice Consul, Johannesburg. (1979, November 27). Pretoria/91. Nantes:AD.
government correspondence, as well as more publically in notes to the UN Sanctions Committee\(^89\) and in the international press.\(^90\)

French companies were neither the most prolific nor the most significant of the Western sanctions busters in Rhodesia. US companies were, for example, ‘heavily involved’ in Rhodesia after UDI, with reports of US-Rhodesia trade tripling in the period between 1965 and early 1974 (Horne, 2001, p.178). Moreover, of the 593 companies accused of sanctions breaching in the UN in 1978 only one French company – Total – was named, in contrast to the 444 British companies and 92 American companies denounced in this context (Bach, 1990, p.186). Furthermore, other Western governments are alleged to have provided support – or at least turned a blind eye – to the activities of companies from their country in Rhodesia. According to Horne (2001, pp.181-182), American firms with big stakes in Rhodesia, such as Union Carbide (UC), who had been active in Rhodesia since 1923 and by the time of UDI had invested $17 million in chrome in Rhodesia, had ‘heavy influence’ over the White House and the State Department, guaranteeing that the US ‘would be viewed widely as a significant supporter of Salisbury’. This was especially true following the election of President Nixon in 1969.

\(^89\) In June 1979, for example, the Société commericale de minerai de tungstène et de ferrotungstène was named in a note to Sanctions Committee. See, UNSCSC. (1979, August 10). Case No. 323: Wolfram ore – “Malange”. Addendum. FCO/36/2653/7. London:TNA.

However, as this chapter will now demonstrate, sanctions busting by French companies stands apart because of the particular nature of state complicity. In the case of France, it was not just about a powerful business lobby influencing a conservative government. Rather, as was also the case in Francophone Africa, the interests of private French companies intersected with those of the influential *cellule africaine*, who directed France’s African policies with little accountability to the vast majority of the French government. Although the increasingly blurred lines between state and non-state action, as well as the inherently opaque nature of sanctions busting, make this story difficult to unravel, it is possible to detect the role of an autonomous policy mechanism, linked to the Elysée Palace, in various different breaches of the international trade embargo by private French individuals and companies.

**Sugar, tobacco and air transportation: French economic engagement with Rhodesia after UDI**

The blurring of the lines between state and private action in Rhodesia is evident with regards to purchases of Rhodesian tobacco. According to Rhodesian sources, in the immediate aftermath of UDI, Henry Dhavernas,91 President-Director of a powerful French financial group, the Compagnie Française de Transactions Internationales (TRANSACO), approached representatives of Smith’s government during a visit to Paris and indicated the company’s interest in importing large quantities of Rhodesian tobacco

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via South Africa and Portugal and then re-exporting their produce to France. TRANSACO claimed that they were acting with the approval of the French authorities, which had allegedly given them,

    a clear confidential undertaking that they could do as much trade as they liked with Rhodesia provided the business was invoiced to a S. African or Portuguese subsidiary or something along these lines.⁹²

Although this permission was obviously not granted by the arm of the French state that supported the embargo on imports of Rhodesian tobacco – that is to say, the Quai and other executive ministries outside of the Presidential Palace – there are a number of different factors that indicate that this backing was secured from another source in government. Firstly, the representative who visited Rhodesia on behalf of TRANSACO in February 1966 was Charles Pollet, the same Charles Pollet who was based at the RIO, a bureau that, as we have already seen, operated with support from some official source, probably the Elysée.⁹³ The fact that this “state”-sanctioned office also allegedly provided Rhodesia with access to markets for its tobacco and contacts with the French tobacco industry points to the involvement of certain actors in the Presidential Palace in the illegal import of Rhodesian tobacco into France.⁹⁴ Additional links between the Elysée and Rhodesian tobacco purchases can be found in a note from van der Byl to Smith from 1971 that reports a planned deal for the purchase of 16,000 tons of Rhodesian tobacco, valued at US$16 million, by the French tobacco

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monopoly, with 15% of the profits going to the Gaullist party.\textsuperscript{95} The fact that throughout the UDI period there were ‘rumeurs persistantes’ in the UNSCSC about Rhodesian tobacco being purchased by the French state further reinforces this argument.\textsuperscript{96}

The case of sugar imports is perhaps even more revealing as it implicates specific French actors with known links to the Elysée’s \textit{cellule africaine}. In March 1966, the British Embassy in Paris reported a planned purchase of Rhodesian sugar by a French company, Sucres et Denrées (SUCDEN), registered at 55 Avenue Kléber in the 16\textsuperscript{th} arrondissement in Paris.\textsuperscript{97} Following an approach from the French authorities, at the behest of the UK Foreign Office, SUCDEN allegedly agreed not to conclude this deal.\textsuperscript{98} However, the principal partner of SUCDEN, Maurice Varsano, known as the “roi de sucre”, also owned another firm based out of Geneva, Compafino, which had, in the past, been used by Varsano ‘for some of his less reputable deals when they appeared to have run foul of the French authorities’. This, in turn, led Rodgers from the British Embassy in Paris to hypothesise that there was ‘a pretty good bet that this firm… may have taken the deal up’.\textsuperscript{99}

Rodgers’ suspicions are confirmed in the memoirs of Collie Hill (2001), a representative of the Rhodesian sugar industry, who later went to work with

\textsuperscript{95} Van der Byl to Smith. (1971, March 8). SC/15(TS3)/8. Grahamstown:CL.
\textsuperscript{96} Kosciusko-Morizet, French Permanent Representative, UN, to MAE. (1974, January 26). Libreville/101/No.642/49. Nantes:AD.
Hill first made personal contact with Varsano at an international sugar convention held in Geneva in the autumn of 1965 (pp.70-1), just a few weeks before UDI was declared. Shortly after Smith’s proclamation, Hill travelled to Paris to visit Varsano at the SUCDEN headquarters and a deal was concluded for SUCDEN to take up a contract for the purchase of 90,000 tons of sugar a year, for a period of three years. According to Hill, this was ‘the beginning of a long and successful business relationship with the Rhodesian sugar industry’ (p.78), which involved finding destinations for raw Rhodesian sugar exported in cargos of about 12,000 tons from the bulk loading terminal at Lourenço Marquês (p.109), an operation that Hill personally oversaw from Paris following his relocation there, with his wife, in January 1978 (p.154).

To return to the question of quasi-French official involvement in Rhodesian sanctions busting, it is interesting to note that Maurice Varsano’s son, who took control of SUCDEN after his father’s death, was Serge Varsano, a key player in France’s African presence in the 1980s and 1990s. In their investigation into the réseaux franco-africains, Glaser and Smith (1992, pp.185-207) describe Serge as ‘le négociant’ in ‘le Paris-Village du continent noir’, tying these deals for the purchase of Rhodesian sugar, by familial link, to the apparatus for the implementation of the Elysée’s African policy. Moreover, Glaser and Smith quote Houphouët-Boigny speaking of his dealings with Varsano the elder, indicating that Maurice, like his son Serge, was part of the Franco-African network (p.185). SUCDEN’s

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Rhodesian connections appear, therefore, to have been bound up with the *réseaux* that formed the foundation for the maintenance of French influence in West and Equatorial Africa after the formal transfer of power to the indigenous majority. This is underscored by the fact that SUCDEN also operated in Francophone Africa (Glaser & Smith, 1992, pp.185-207).

The blurred lines between state and private action in Rhodesia, as well as the integration of this British colony into the Franco-African *réseaux*, is also apparent in the case of the UTA. As we have already seen in the first part of this thesis, UTA had been active in Rhodesia since the early 1950s, when its predecessor, UAT, took over Air France’s operations in the region.¹⁰¹ After UDI, UTA continued to operate in Rhodesia, despite the termination of the UTA’s commercial flights to the country in January 1966,¹⁰² a measure that was later enforced by UNSC Resolution 253,¹⁰³ which prohibited airline companies from operating flights to or from Rhodesia (Minter & Schmidt, 1988, p.213). According to a representative of the department responsible for the UN at the central administration of the Quai, this move meant that ‘aucun moyen de transport officiel ou subventionné par l’Etat français n’existe à destination ou en provenance de la Rhodésie du Sud’.¹⁰⁴ Yet, a UTA office was maintained in both Bulawayo and Salisbury,¹⁰⁵ and representatives of the airline met with van der Byl in Paris in 1971.¹⁰⁶ UTA

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¹⁰³ UN. (1968, May 29). *Resolution 253 (1968).*
¹⁰⁵ Legendre to MAE. (1976, August 30). Pretoria/90/No.647. Nantes:AD.
was also at the forefront of various initiatives to promote Rhodesian trade and tourism overseas, seen for example in inter-office correspondence highlighting the advantages of allowing Rhodesian passengers to enter France, promoting student tours to Europe for Rhodesian students, and advocating the ‘possibilités immenses’ of cooperation between UTA and Air Rhodesia.\(^{107}\)

Furthermore, in 1971, when the Smith-Heath agreement raised hopes of a settlement to the Rhodesian crisis, UTA were quick to endorse the prompt re-establishment of an air link between Rhodesia and metropolitan France. A UTA mission to Rhodesia in October and November 1971 set out a number of possible routes, including one that would link Salisbury to Nice and Paris via Libreville.\(^{108}\) A note from the Rhodesian local UTA representative to the head office in Paris called for the resumption of flights between Salisbury and the French metropole ‘as soon as practically and politically acceptable’.\(^{109}\) The Rhodesians shared this enthusiasm, as can be seen in a personal letter from Follows to Richon in which the establishment of a cargo service is described, repeatedly, as ‘absolutely imperative’, even ‘if the cargo aircraft comes in surreptitiously in the middle of the night to load up’. Plans for a passenger service ‘to start directly the [Anglo-

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Rhodesian] settlement has been regularised’ were also discussed in this letter.\footnote{Follows to Richon. (1971, December 23). 5GU/FPU/2132. Paris:AN.}

In the event, the 1971 proposals for a settlement failed to bring an end to the Rhodesian rebellion, scuppering UTA plans to officially re-launch either a cargo or a passenger service between Salisbury and Paris. Yet, this French airline’s continued participation in Rhodesian affairs after UDI is significant for the purposes of this discussion into the ties between the Elysée and Rhodesia, as well as between France’s Francophone African and Rhodesian policies, because UTA were also active in Francophone Africa after 1960 (Bat, 2012, pp.173-176). As part of the growing embroilment of UTA in the activities of Foccart’s \textit{cellule africaine} in Francophone Africa after 1960, this French airline’s Rhodesian business simultaneously became interconnected with the wider French African project, seen most notably in the context of French-led efforts in 1963 to establish a counter pan-African organisation, discussed in Chapter Two, where Richon was beside Mauricheau-Beaupré’s side in negotiations with the Rhodesians.\footnote{Anonymous to Welensky. (1963, May 7). WP/231/4/No.6. Oxford:RH. Hyde to Welensky. (1963, May 5). WP/231/4/No.9. Oxford:RH. Mauricheau-Beaupré to Welensky. (1963, May 9). WP/231/4/No.16-20. Oxford:RH.}

The ties between the UTA’s Rhodesian activities and the Elysée continued into the 1970s. A 1971 note written by Richon on the importance of the Rhodesian market is housed in Foccart’s archives, with a cover note signalling that the document was meant for Foccart’s personal attention.\footnote{Richon. (1971, October 10). \textit{Note relative à l’importance du marché de Rhodésie.} SAG/FPU/2132. Paris:AN.}
Similarly, a comment handwritten on Richon’s business card attached to the front of a letter from Richon to Follows indicates that Richon communicated the contents of this correspondence to Foccart for his information and opinion.\textsuperscript{113} Richon’s direct channels of communication to the Secretary General for African Affairs are also explicitly noted in a letter from Jean Ribo, French Ambassador to Gabon (1972-1975), to Foccart that records how Richon sent a letter to Foccart regarding the possible risks facing UTA action in Rhodesia due to its exposure in the South African and Rhodesian press.\textsuperscript{114} The inclusion of various other papers relating to the UTA-Rhodesia connection in archives of the Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgaches underscores the links between the airline and Foccart’s \textit{cellule africaine}.\textsuperscript{115}

Furthermore, the discourse used by the UTA to frame and justify their action in Rhodesia echoed many of the preoccupations closely associated with the French African project, in particular the importance of protecting France’s status in the face of opposition from other Western powers, including Britain. For example, when arguing for the swift resumption of the UTA air link between Paris and Salisbury in October 1971, Richon declared that,

\begin{quote}
\textit{il devient donc indispensable que la position française soit autant que faire de doute et, si l’on ne veut pas que les intérêts anglais, allemands, italiens,}
\end{quote}

In a similar vein, UTA proposals for a scheme to transport Rhodesian beef to France via South Africa were calculated with reference to a ‘compétition avec nombre de compagnies aériennes internationales qui maintiennent contact et pression’. The note concluded that ‘il serait dommage que cette compagnie [UTA] soit à la fois frustrée d’un marché utile à l’économie française et de la position privilégiée que ne manquerait pas de lui acquérir le transport de la viande’. These two instances demonstrate how private companies and individuals also shared national concerns about securing France’s interests and preventing the infiltration of other Western powers. This, in turn, reveals not only the application to the Rhodesian setting of the ideological imperatives most frequently used to justify French action in Africa, but also the increasing overlap between state interests and those of nominally private actors.

Southern African intermediaries in the Franco-Rhodesian connection

A common theme in the discussions above concerning Elysée participation in Rhodesian tobacco and sugar purchases, as well as in the case of UTA, is the importance of France’s Southern African intermediaries in the maintenance of post-UDI Franco-Rhodesian connections. In the examples of tobacco and sugar imports explored in the previous section, these goods were transported to France and onto French clients overseas via Rhodesia’s

white-rulled neighbours, South Africa and Mozambique. South Africa was also important in UTA strategies in Rhodesia. Proposals for the export of Rhodesian beef to France, for example, centred on South Africa as a crucial intermediary, whilst South Africa’s largest international airport at Johannesburg was suggested as the point of departure for the proposed, re-established UTA air link between Salisbury and Paris in 1971.\textsuperscript{118} More generally, the UTA’s wider operations in Southern Africa provided the foundations for the company’s efforts to maintain their stakes in Rhodesia, with the airline’s representatives in Johannesburg also operating in Salisbury, seen for example by the 48 hour stopover in the Rhodesian capital by Philippe Doumenc, UTA General Manager for Southern Africa, in November 1971.\textsuperscript{119} South Africa also provided the base from which the UTA could fly their planes into Rhodesia, seen for example in November 1971 when forty French businessmen and industrialists were flown into Salisbury from Johannesburg on a UTA French Airlines jet.\textsuperscript{120} Although this example of UTA planes flying from Johannesburg to Salisbury in itself is perhaps not anything surprising, given South African sympathy for the settlers across the border and the NP’s willingness to provide the RF with economic and military support despite their officially neutral position towards UDI (Meredith, 1979, pp.145-150), this instance does underline the pivotal importance of the other white-rulled states in Southern Africa for French engagement with Rhodesia after UDI. This, in turn, is in keeping


\textsuperscript{120} Anonymous. (1971, November 4). Natal Mercure. 5AG/FPU/2132. Paris:AN.
with the broader French strategy in Southern Africa outlined in Chapter
Three.

France’s bases elsewhere in Southern Africa, particularly in South Africa,
but also, up until its independence from Portugal in 1975, in Mozambique,
were also crucial to the continued flow of French exports into Rhodesia
throughout the UDI period. As reference back to the first part of this thesis
will show, most of the French products that continued to reach Rhodesia
after 1965 via these Southern African intermediaries were goods that had
been fundamental to the establishment of a French economic presence in the
region under the Fourth Republic and were controlled by some of the first
French private and state-owned companies active in Rhodesia. One such
example is Alsthom,121 a French power generation and transportation firm
that had operated in the Rhodesian setting since the late 1950s,122 and were
also active in Mozambique (Frappat, 1990, p.216) and South Africa
(Cuddumbey, 1996, p.71). After UDI, when it was no longer possible to
deal directly with the Rhodesians, Alsthom made use of its existing regional
presence to maintain ties with Rhodesia through indirect routes. In the early
1970s, for instance, Alsthom, in collaboration with Chantiers de
l’Atlantique, a shipyard in Saint-Nazaire that, interestingly, was taken over
by Alsthom in 1984, sold diesel motors and electrical components to a
Portuguese firm, where they were allegedly used to build locomotives
destined for Rhodesia. 123 Here, therefore, Franco-Portuguese links in the

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121 Alsthom changed its name to Alstom in 1998.
123 Dutton, Rhodesia Department, FCO. (1971, February 25). Brief for Anglo-French talks
Southern African context provided a vital backdrop for the continued presence of French goods in Rhodesia.

Another French product reaching Rhodesia from its white-ruled neighbours was oil. Following the introduction of an oil embargo against Rhodesia in December 1965, all oil plants in Rhodesia owned by foreign companies were requisitioned, including those run by the CFP. The Rhodesian government then entrusted the monopoly over oil purchases to a state-controlled holding company, GENTA\textsuperscript{124} (Nyangoni, 1985, p.127).\textsuperscript{125} In an attempt to cut off GENTA’s supplies, the British government blockaded the port of Beira, in Mozambique. Yet, oil companies continued to send oil to Rhodesia through alternative land routes in Southern Africa throughout the UDI period (Meredith, 1979, p.58). According to Britain, in the immediate aftermath of the introduction of the oil embargo, a significant proportion of petroleum products reaching Rhodesia by rail originated from refineries in Lourenço Marquês, Mozambique, property of the Portuguese-owned Sociedade Nacional de Refinação de Petróleos (SONAREP),\textsuperscript{126} but supplied exclusively by CFP.\textsuperscript{127} Although the CFP supplies were technically destined...
for the Mozambican market, substantial quantities of oil were allegedly transported over land to the Rhodesian refinery at Umtali (Maputo). Rhodesia’s other principal supplier of oil, especially after Mozambique’s independence from Portugal in 1975, was South Africa, a region in which Total also had a strong base.

The CFP categorically refuted all accusations made against them, claiming that they were complying with international directives prohibiting the supply, either directly or indirectly, of petrol to Rhodesia. In a press release on 22 March 1968, the company also emphasised that, since UDI, Total Rhodésie, like the Rhodesian subsidiaries of all other international oil companies, had been placed under a regime of requisition by the Rhodesian administration. This did not, however, quell suspicions of Total activity in Rhodesia. A report carried out by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1973, for example, concluded that ‘Total semble être la marque d’essence la plus répandue’, whilst Kenneth Kaunda, Zambian President, denounced, in 1977, the role played by Total in the provision of petrol to Rhodesia. Moreover, a 1977 report from the French Commercial Advisor in Johannesburg affirms Total’s continued involvement in the purchasing and distribution of petrol via GENTA in Rhodesia. It is

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apparent, therefore, that this French-owned oil company was active in Rhodesia, through indirect channels elsewhere in Southern Africa, throughout the UDI period.

Another visible French presence in Rhodesia after 1965 was to be found on Rhodesian roads. Automobiles were some of the first French goods exported to Rhodesia under the Fourth Republic, a trade that grew during the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. After 1965, and in spite of the trade embargo, Renault and Peugeot dominated the Rhodesian automobile market, a state of affairs that is noted in the aforementioned Carnegie Report. This position of strength was maintained throughout the UDI period, with these two French car manufacturers retaining a fifty per cent share of the Rhodesian automobile market and a good image in the region in 1979, leading the French Vice Consul in Johannesburg to conclude that Renault and Peugeot were well placed to maintain their position in the region after independence. More anecdotally, in her memoirs of her childhood in Rhodesia, Alexandra Fuller (2003, p.104) recalls being driven around the country in an ‘avocado-green Peugeot’, whilst during a visit to Paris in 1976, Joshua Nkomo, leader and founder of ZAPU, claimed that seventy per cent of all motor cars in Rhodesia were French. Peugeot and Renault’s ability to maintain this position of dominance was contingent upon the neighbouring apartheid regime, with automobiles in kit form, spare parts and whole vehicles exported via South Africa to Rhodesia, where they

135 Siguret to MAE. (1956, February 3). AL/SEAB/8/No.44. Paris:MAE.
137 Le Seac’h. (1979, November 27). Pretoria/91. Nantes:AD.
were then assembled at plants owned by the French car manufacturers.\textsuperscript{139} Webs of Southern African contacts provided, therefore, the basis for the continued presence of French automobiles on Rhodesian roads.

The same is also true with regards to French arms exports to Rhodesia following UDI. French arms, like automobiles, were first exported to this British colony during the Federal period. After UDI, and most notably following the outbreak in 1972 of a seven-year long guerrilla war, French military equipment was crucial to the RF’s physical defence of white rule on the African continent. In particular, French-manufactured Alouettes were the favoured helicopter used by the Rhodesian Air Force (RhAF).\textsuperscript{140} Precise figures of the number of Alouettes in the service of the RhAF vary, with French reports ranging from 23 to 55.\textsuperscript{141} More recently, Wood (1996) has estimated that the Rhodesians had access to at least 50 Alouettes in the period between 1965 and 1980. In addition to these helicopters, the 1970s also saw the expansion of the use of other French-manufactured military equipment by the RhAF, including Cessna aircraft (Klare & Prokosch, 1979, pp.45), \textsuperscript{142} Mirage FI planes\textsuperscript{143} and Matra Rocket Launchers.\textsuperscript{144} As a

\textsuperscript{140} In 1970, following the declaration of a Republic, the Rhodesian Royal Air Force removed the prefix “Royal” and became the Rhodesian Air Force.
\textsuperscript{141} Schricke to MAE. (1976, March 4). Pretoria/90/No.220/2. Nantes:AD.
\textsuperscript{142} Barlow to Rumble & Carberry. (1976, August 16). FCO/36/1907/28. London:TNA.
result, a report in the Zambian Press from 1977 claimed that 22% of all military material used by the RhAF was "de type français".\(^{145}\)

The central administration of the Quai and French representatives posted overseas alike maintained throughout that France was not involved in arms trading with Rhodesia. According to Lieutenant Colonel F. Blanuet, the Attaché to the Armed Forces at the French Embassy in Pretoria, ‘la France n’a jamais vendu d’hélicoptères à la Rhodésie depuis la décision des sanctions par l’O.N.U’.\(^{146}\) Instead, it was asserted on numerous occasions throughout the 1970s that many of the Alouettes being used by the Rhodesians were quite old and likely to have been exported to Rhodesia prior to UDI.\(^{147}\) It was also argued that various countries seeking to modernise their military might have sold French-manufactured Alouettes to Rhodesia, a process that was ‘pas trop difficile’ due to the existence of ‘un marché de l’occasion’.\(^{148}\) Newer material in the service of the RhAF was reported to have been constructed in South Africa under licence, then supplied to Rhodesia ‘en entier ou sous forme de pièces de rechange’.\(^{149}\)
France adopted similar excuses when accusations were made against the French regarding state involvement in automobile exports\textsuperscript{150} and oil sales.\textsuperscript{151} The blame was always placed firmly on the shoulders of the South African intermediary.

The innocence of the French state in these operation, however, is far from certain. The Rhodesians certainly pinned their hopes of continued Franco-Rhodesian trade on these indirect channels. In the aftermath of the adoption of mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia by the UN in May 1968, Smith wrote to De Gaulle expressing his hope that the French vote in favour of Resolution 253 would ‘not restrict the activities of French commercial interests to a degree that would make the continuation of trade with us through third countries impossible’.\textsuperscript{152} This direct approach to the French President was followed, just over a month later, by a personal letter to Michel Debré, in which Smith described how Rhodesian external commerce could now only continue ‘par des voies qui ne sont peut-être pas orthodoxes’, appealing to the French Foreign Minister to permit the ‘commerce traditionnel’ between France and Rhodesia to continue through these alternative routes.\textsuperscript{153}

Moreover, various allegations were made against the French state during the UDI period. The Rhodesia Department at the FCO, for one, was far from


\textsuperscript{152}Smith to De Gaulle. (1968, July 2). 5AG1/Ély/775. Paris:AN.

convinced of French state innocence. In a note from 1976, the office responsible for Rhodesian affairs claimed that,

it is simply not true that the French have a good record on sanctions. They are... substantial suppliers of arms to Rhodesia, and in this role are acting consciously and not as the innocent victims of South African re-exports.\footnote{Barlow to Colvin. (1976, June 10). FCO/36/1907/17. London:TNA.}

Suspicons were also raised about French state involvement in oil supplies to Rhodesia, with Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, asserting during discussions with De Gaulle in 1967 that ‘les Rhodésiens comptent sur la France pour augmenter les livraisons si elles sont coupées par ailleurs’.\footnote{De Gaulle & Wilson. (1967, June 19). 5AG1/Ély/171. Paris:AN.} In addition, Rhodesian sources attest to French state involvement in automobile exports, seen in the claim made by van der Byl in 1971 that ‘the steadily increasing’ supply of motor car assembly kits, in particular the assembly of Renault cars, ‘means that the French Government is directly involved in this because they have the major holding interest in the Renault Company’.\footnote{Van der Byl to Smith. (1971, March 8). SC/15(TS3)/8. Grahamstown:CL.}

The strong ties between Paris, Pretoria and Lisbon under the Fifth Republic, links that for the most part were controlled by the Elysée (Bach, 1990; Stanley, 2004; Moukambi, 2008; Konieczna, 2009) provide us with grounds to support these assertions. After 1960, French ambitions to play a ‘truly continental role’ (Alden, 1996, p.12) on the African continent led them to pursue strategies that might increase their influence in Anglophone and Lusophone territories. As Chapter Two of this thesis has shown, Rhodesia was integral to this post-colonial French strategy, as can be seen by its
inclusion in French-led efforts in 1963 to collaborate with the white-rulled territories in Southern Africa to oppose an Anglophone-dominated pan-African organisation, but also more generally in France’s continued and expanding engagement with this British colony in the five years leading up to UDI. This, combined with what we know about the nature of France’s dealings with South Africa and Mozambique, in particular the focus on arms and oil, and the established regional presence of companies such as Total, Peugeot, Renault and Alsthom, make it possible to hypothesise that the ‘réseaux franco-sud-africains’ (Bach, 1990, p.74), along with the French networks in Mozambique, may have facilitated the continued flow of French goods into Rhodesia after UDI. Although this argument is difficult to definitively prove, the inherently opaque nature of France’s relations with Africa in the post-colonial period mean that it is possible to believe this hypothesis that Rhodesia was integrated into France’s wider Southern African réseaux.

The importance of French “men-on-the-spot”

As we have already seen in Part One of this thesis, France’s “men-on-the-spot” were vital in the establishment and development of a French presence in Rhodesia. In the years immediately following the independence of Francophone Africa, new “men-on-the-spot” entered the fray, in particular, those linked to Foccart’s cellule africaine. After UDI, this state of affairs continued, evidenced in the economic relations discussed above. French

“men-on-the-spot” also remained active in Rhodesia in the military domain, with French mercenaries alleged to have fought on the side of the RF in its guerrilla war with the African nationalists. Violence characterised UDI from the outset. However, it was only in 1972 that a full-scale civil war broke out. In the seven-years of conflict that followed, 30,000 lives were lost, 275,000 were wounded and 1.5 million were made refugees (Evans, 2007, p.176). As archival evidence relating to the Rhodesian Bush War is relatively minimal – although catalogued, the Rhodesian Army Archive is currently inaccessible to researchers and the nature of mercenary action means that documentary evidence is notoriously scant - the purpose of this brief discussion is to situate the limited British, French and Rhodesian government source material relating to this topic which has been uncovered during the course of this research project within the secondary literature and personal accounts of the role played by French mercenaries in Rhodesia.

French mercenaries first came into contact with the Rhodesians in the Belgian Congo, with both fighting on the side of the Katangese secessionists, along with mercenaries from Britain and South Africa (Williams, 2011, p.44). The French contingent comprised of former French counter-guerrilla specialists who had fought in Indochina and Algeria, such as Colonel Roger Faulques and Roger Trinquier, and private soldiers, such as Bob Denard (Williams, 2011, pp. 45, 163-165), the ‘archétype’ of a new generation of French mercenaries brought together by Mauricenau-Beaupré in the early 1960s to pursue French interests in the

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158 Brough to Warson. (2011, July 6). Personal communication. Alan Brough is an independent historian, currently researching and writing a biography of Jack Malloch.
Belgian Congo (Bat & Geneste, 2010, p.94). Franco-Rhodesian military contacts in this context are attested to in surviving Rhodesian Government Cabinet Minutes, which describe how an injured Bob Denard spent several weeks convalescing in a hospital in Kariba in 1967. French and Rhodesian mercenaries are also reported to have fought on the side of the Biafran secessionists during the Nigerian civil war (Péan, 1982, p.80), underlining the growing interconnections between these private soldiers in the 1960s.

Following the escalation of the Rhodesian Bush War in 1972, French mercenaries are reported to have fought alongside the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). One noted instance is the 7 Independent Company or ‘7 Indep.Coy’, which was a cover for a unit of French recruits, which included veterans of the Foreign Legion, in the Rhodesian forces (Moorcraft & McLaughin, 2009, p.53). This is verified in both British and French archival material. In 1977, a note prepared by the Rhodesia Department at the FCO reported the arrival in Southern Africa of a party of French mercenary soldiers, recruited in Paris by a Rhodesian emissary, whilst the papers repatriated from France’s Embassy in Pretoria include a series of personal letters from one of these French recruits, Gilles Boucher, to Michel Jorion, the French Consul General in Johannesburg. In his letters, Boucher

159 RGCM. (1967, August 8). 36th Meeting. Rhodesian Government Cabinet Minutes and Memoranda (RGCM/MM)/21/RGCM. Grahamstown:CL.
RGCM. (1967, August 15). 37th Meeting. RGCM/MM/21/RGCM. Grahamstown:CL.
described how he was offered substantial financial reward to guard Rhodesian farms. This incentive led Boucher to sign a three-year contract with the RLI, even though he, and many of his fellow recruits, did not speak English. Upon arrival in Salisbury in late November 1977, however, Boucher found himself fighting in a French battalion within the Rhodesian army. According to the French Consul General in Johannesburg, Jean-Paul Schricke, approximately one hundred young Frenchmen were recruited in a similar way to fight on behalf of the Rhodesians. In charge of recruitment in France was Stéphane Frachet, a former agent of the Service d’Action Civique (SAC), indicating some possible ties to Elysée. Frachet’s French contacts on the ground included three Majors - Laviola, de l’Assomption and Bessy – and Captain Toumi.¹⁶¹

This case study reveals the diversity of French actors and the different incentives that led them to participate in Rhodesia after UDI. For some, at the heart of their endeavour was a French nationalist, perhaps Gaullist, agenda, albeit interpreted at an individual level. For others, the motivation was less complex - the desire for personal profit and glory. This diversity of interests and agendas had been present from the beginning of the French presence in this region of Central Southern Anglophone Africa under the Fourth Republic, as diplomats on the ground clashed with bureaucrats in Paris over the direction of France’s policy in the region and the relative attention that it required, due to their respective, alternating interpretations of the French foreign-policy mind-set. Later, after the independence of

Francophone Africa, the introduction of new French actors and agendas augmented the fragmentation of the French approach to Rhodesia. After 1965, as we have seen, this fragmentation became even more pronounced, with an official French policy of opposition to UDI standing in stark contrast to the continued engagement of certain French state and non-state actors in this rebellious British colony.

This mirrors, in many ways, the French experience in Africa throughout the colonial period. From the outset, France’s presence on the continent was shaped by “men-on-the-spot”: military men, missionaries, explorers, administrators, settlers, traders, fortune hunters and adventurers of all descriptions. Thus, according to Evans (2004, p.2), France’s Empire was acquired ‘in a haphazard manner’ by ‘a motely array’ of “men-on-the-spot”, seeking glory, wealth or to convert the heathen, and ‘largely acting upon their own initiative to the indifference of governments and public opinion’.

The importance of “men-on-the-spot” was carried over into post-colonial period, as individuals, linked to the Elysée, but often simultaneously acting upon independent imperatives, became the principal agents of France’s African strategies. Here, Mauricheau-Beaupré is a case in point. In his interviews with Philippe Gaillard, Jacques Foccart describes Mauricheau-Beaupré as an ‘entrepreneur’ (1995, p.213) and a ‘homme d’ombre’ (1997, p.217). Yet, Bat (2012, p.220) has described how Foccart delegated responsibility to Mauricheau-Beaupré. According to Bat and Geneste (2010), Mauricheau-Beaupré was, therefore, ‘la cheville ouvrière de la
politique gaulliste en Afrique noire’ (p.87), ‘l’archétype des hommes qui, sur le terrain, développèrent et défendirent ardemment le concept de Communauté franco-africaine, de pré carré que la France gaullienne rêvait de façonner à son image’ (p.100). French “men-on-the-spot”, therefore, drove France’s post-colonial African policy. The fact that these agents also acted in the Rhodesian context binds France’s involvement in its former West and Equatorial colonies to Anglophone, minority-governed regions in ways that previously have been neglected by scholars.

The triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia

French engagement with Rhodesia, therefore, was closely intertwined with France’s post-colonial relations with its former sub-Saharan dependencies. This interconnection went beyond the involvement of the same individuals and companies in both French and English-speaking regions. Rather, certain Francophone African states were directly bound up in Franco-Rhodesian relations after UDI. The foundations for these triangular relations between France, Francophone Africa and minority-ruled Southern Africa were laid in the first half of the 1960s, as has been explored in the first half of this thesis. After UDI, this complex web of interconnection between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia continued to develop and diversify.

It is true that certain Francophone African states strongly opposed Rhodesian efforts to maintain white rule on the African continent. The day
after UDI, a report prepared for De Gaulle recorded the ‘vives réactions’ from Francophone Africans to the white rebellion.162 Three days later, another report on the ‘Réactions en Afrique noire francophone après l’indépendance de la Rhodésie’ described how all French-speaking Africans were united in their opposition to UDI. The most vehement criticisms came from the more radical of the Francophone states – Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Mauritania.163 Also vocal in his opposition to Ian Smith’s regime was Alphonse Messemba-Debat, the President of Congo-Brazzaville (1963-1968), who described UDI as an “affront à l’Afrique”, criticised the “complicité de l’Angleterre”, and called upon the British government to use force to stamp out the rebellion.164 A statement from l’Agence Congolaise d’information reiterated this view, claiming that “la Grande-Bretagne est aujourd’hui au bord de la rupture avec l’Afrique africaine”.165

However, it appears that Francophone Africa was not as united in its opposition to Rhodesia as it initially appeared. In fact, according to the aforementioned 1973 Carnegie Report, there was an ‘attitude hésitante’ amongst certain Francophone West Africans towards white-ruled Africa.166 The response to Rhodesia was most explicitly mixed amongst France’s best African “friends” – Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast, and Omar Bongo, President of Gabon. Both Gabon and the Ivory Coast publically opposed Smith’s regime in the late 1960s, evidenced by their vote

166 Legendre to MAE. (1973, August 30). Pretoria/90/No.647. Nantes:AD.
in favour of UN Resolution 253 and the statement given by the Gabonese Foreign Minister in 1967, which affirmed Gabon’s application of sanctions against Rhodesia (Péan, 1983, p.80). Yet, in spite of this, according to sources in the Rhodesian and French archives, Bongo is said to have claimed that ‘le Gabon a toujours fait preuve d’une très grande discrétion à l’égard du problème rhodésien’, going on to assert that, in the context of the Anglo-Rhodesian struggle, ‘Gabon is on the side of Rhodesia’.

France lay at the heart of this friendly stance amongst certain Francophone African leaders towards the white reactionary regime in Rhodesia. After UDI, building on the foundations laid in the first half of the 1960s and explored in Chapter Two of this thesis, certain French actors linked to Foccart’s cellule africaine sought to pursue their interests in Rhodesia through their Francophone African “friends”. The implementation of this strategy was facilitated by Rhodesia and Gabon’s shared scepticism about British approaches to Africa and to the question of decolonisation, in contrast to their praise of France’s methods on the continent.

The Rhodesian Front’s ‘world-struggle ideology’ attributed the rapid changes taking place in Africa to the spread of international communism, a process that was blamed on the Western policy of appeasement and, in particular, the leadership of ‘an effete and decadent post-imperial Britain’ (Evans, 2007, p.181). The Rhodesians expressed these sentiments openly to the French, contrasting them with their more positive interpretations of

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French action in Africa. In a note to De Gaulle, Smith openly deplored the
decolonisation of British Africa as a ‘failure’, evidenced by falling living
standards amongst the African masses and the drift towards anarchy in
Britain’s former colonies in the period following independence. By contrast,
Smith asserted that De Gaulle had ‘succeeded in effecting decolonisation of
former French Africa and in maintaining it as an economic entity’. Van
der Byl paints a similar picture, claiming that ‘the fabric of the French
dominion will remain long after the British influence has disappeared and that,
by and large, French will be the most widely used language in Africa’. The
Rhodesian goes on to describe Paris as ‘the centre of the world and
civilization rather in the way that Roman citizens in the most distant
provinces of the Roman Empire looked to Rome’, further underlining his
admiration for France in contrast to the discontent with Britain’s imperial
project manifest in the Rhodesian rebellion. Lower-ranking Rhodesian
officials also held a similar view. In a 2011 interview, Derek van der Syde,
a former Rhodesian Civil Servant, described his impression that the French
had arranged a ‘much neater and tidier’ and ‘smooth’ transfer of power in
West Africa, that allowed France to ‘in effect’ continue running the newly
independent countries, in contrast to the ‘untidiness’ and ‘piecemeal’ nature
of British decolonisation in Africa. Van der Syde went on to claim that the
French were ‘better diplomats’ than the British, emphasising in particular
the fact that,

the French ambassadors on the whole were
somehow better liked in their own sphere than the
British ambassadors were in theirs, I couldn’t tell

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170 Van der Byl. (1969, April). Report on visit to Gabon: an account on resulting
you why it is, but the French, and for that matter the Portuguese, were better colonists because they didn’t have so much prejudice with them when they came, they didn’t treat the locals… any [sic]… as an inferior person… British were rather aloof.\textsuperscript{171}

Interestingly, the Gabonese President offered a similar assessment, claiming that,

\begin{quote}
l’Angleterre, contrairement à la France, n’a pas compris ce qu’était la décolonisation réelle. Elle va d’ailleurs d’échecs en échecs (Irlande, Moyen-Orient, Rhodésie…).\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

The Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) created a context in which these shared sentiments could be transformed into something more concrete. Like the crisis in Katanga earlier in the decade, the conflict in Britain’s former West African colony provided a point of convergence between France, Gabon, the Ivory Coast and Rhodesia, with all four supporting the Biafran secessionists in their struggle against the British-backed Nigerian Federal authorities. The Francophone African states did so publically, as two of only a handful of developing countries that offered formal recognition to the breakaway Biafran Republic (De St. Jorre, 1972, pp.179-201; Melville, 1979). Despite stopping short of providing full diplomatic backing to Biafra, France openly declared its support for Biafran self-determination in a communiqué given by Joel Le Theule, the French Secretary of State for Information, on 31 July 1968,\textsuperscript{173} and henceforth provided Biafra with moral, diplomatic and military support (Stremlau, 1977, pp.230-231; Bat & Geneste, 2010, pp.96-97). Although Rhodesia’s own international predicament limited the support it

\textsuperscript{173} Everson to FO. (1968, July 31). FCO/25/234/60. London:TNA.
could accord to Biafra, it did not prevent the Rhodesians from openly expressing their sympathy for the Biafran cause. In a letter to Debré, for example, Smith claimed that,

Nous, en Rhodésie, sommes naturellement intéressés par la situation au Biafra, parce qu’elle a quelques similitudes avec la nôtre… Pour plusieurs raisons, il est très avantageux pour nous que le Biafra réussisse à maintenir son indépendance.174

This sense of affiliation over the crisis in Biafra permitted the nascent triangular relations between Rhodesia, France and the Francophone territories of Côte d’Ivoire and Gabon established during the early 1960s to begin to flourish after UDI. On the Rhodesian side, it contributed to a growing admiration for France, seen in Smith’s description of his ‘grande satisfaction’ at ‘la récente déclaration du gouvernement français sur le fait qu’un règlement ne peut être obtenu que sur la base de l’autodétermination’.175 For Bongo, the shared position over Biafra meant that Rhodesia, Gabon and the Ivory Coast, and by implication France as well, belonged to ‘the same family’.176 The importance of the Nigerian civil war in the development of relations between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa is also underscored in a note from Maurice Delauney, the French Ambassador in Libreville (1965-1972), which described how the conflict led Gabon to pursue relations with a variety of different countries, including Rhodesia.177

A clear indication of these blossoming relations came in March 1969, when Bongo personally received van der Byl at the Presidential Palace in Libreville. Matters discussed included aid to Biafra, the situation in Rhodesia and possible avenues for future Gabonese-Rhodesian cooperation. Rhodesia and Gabon’s ‘mutual French friends’, in collaboration with Houphouët-Boigny, are alleged to have arranged this meeting.\footnote{Bongo. (1969, March 14). *Meeting between Bongo and Van der Byl.* SC/12/TS(3)/68. Grahamstown:CL.} Here, the ‘French friends’ in question were members of Foccart’s *cellule africaine*, in particular Philippe Lettéron, who was in Libreville at the same time as the Rhodesian delegation and travelled back to Paris with van der Byl. Lettéron was also responsible for giving Houphouët-Boigny ‘an account’ of the meeting between Bongo and van der Byl,\footnote{Bongo. (1969, March 14). *Meeting between Bongo and Van der Byl.* SC/12/TS(3)/68. Grahamstown:CL.} underscoring the interconnection between France’s African réseaux and Rhodesia.

Henceforth, certain French actors linked to the Elysée actively promoted the expansion of ties between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa. Immediately following his first encounter with Bongo in Libreville, van der Byl reported how,

> the French made it very clear to me, and to use their own words, that they had given us a field to cultivate and that we should do so with the least possible delay; and that if we did it properly, before the seeds had sprouted, other fields would present themselves

– obviously indicating the Ivory Coast and possible [sic] Senegal.\textsuperscript{180}

This encouragement went beyond the general to specific, with the French proposing that the Rhodesians take advantage of the meat shortages in Gabon by establishing a charter air service to transport Rhodesian meat to Libreville. The French also allegedly proposed Jack Malloch – a South African-born former RAF pilot and lifelong friend of Ian Smith,\textsuperscript{181} due to their contact in Europe during the Second World War (Smith, 1997, p.13) - as a suitable candidate for overseeing this operation.\textsuperscript{182}

These plans came into fruition almost immediately. In May 1969, an official Rhodesian economic mission, comprising of van der Byl, Balcon, Director of Rhodesian Airways, Freeman, a tobacco specialist, and Stoen, a meat expert, arrived in Libreville. During their week long visit to the Gabonese capital, the Rhodesian delegation was personally received by President Bongo, proposing a number of avenues for Rhodesian-Gabonese collaboration, including plans to export Rhodesian meat by air to Libreville.\textsuperscript{183} Soon after, on 15 October 1969, the first delivery of meat, provided by Rhodesia’s main supplier, the CSC (Mlambo, 1996), landed in Libreville, on a plane owned by the Compagnie gabonaise d’affrètement

\textsuperscript{181} Eddy (1973, August 26). How Tango Romeo brings home the hard cash. \textit{The Sunday Times}.
\textsuperscript{183} Anonymous to Gabonese Minister of Finances and Budget. (1969, May 31). Libreville/101. Nantes:AD.
This marked the beginning of a commercial venture that saw substantial quantities of Rhodesian meat entering the Gabonese marketplace. According to Delauney, in the period up until the end of 1971, 3,600 tonnes of meat were delivered to Gabon on aircraft flown by Affretair. More anecdotally, an article in *The Rhodesia Herald* in March 1972 reported how ‘Rhodesian aircraft are flying in thousands of kilos of meat, fruit and vegetables every week.’ This, in turn, permitted ‘a typical meal’ ‘in a restaurant’ in the Gabonese capital to comprise of ‘avocado imported from Rhodesia, followed by a Matabeleland fillet steak and Cape peaches’. Rhodesian meat was also re-exported from Libreville to European capitals, whilst employing the same aircraft used to transport meat to carry out charter work on behalf of other airlines, including Air France, generated additional income for the Rhodesians.

This operation is frequently represented as ‘the brain child’ of Jack Malloch. Yet, as we have seen, the original idea for this operation came from Rhodesia’s French ‘friends’, who Malloch had first encountered in the context of Katanga in the early 1960s (Bat, 2012, p.220). Furthermore, the development and maintenance of this illegal trading network, and ties

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184 Delauney to Schumann, French Minister of Foreign Affairs. (1972, March 10). Libreville/101/No.49. Nantes:AD.
185 Delauney to Schumann. (1972, March 10). Libreville/101/No.49. Nantes:AD.
186 Matabeleland was a Western region of Rhodesia.

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between Rhodesia and Gabon more generally, was contingent upon various individuals and groups linked to the French state. At a quasi-official level, there was Mauricheau-Beaupré, Lettéron and Pierre de la Houssaye, a SDECE informant stationed in Libreville (Bat & Geneste, 2010, p.97), who travelled to Rhodesia in 1970 to negotiate a loan of one million Rhodesian dollars to the Gabonese government. Allegations have also been made against French state institutions, such as the suggestion made by French investigative journalist Pierre Péan (1983, p.86) that the Renseignements Généraux and SDECE offered support to Affretair operatives active in Paris, and oral history testimony that records the presence of the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST) on the ground in Libreville overseeing the arrival of the Affretair planes, containing Rhodesian meat.

Various private individuals and groups operated alongside, and in conjunction with, these official or quasi-official actors. Claude Milan, for example, a long-standing Rhodesian contact based in Paris who arranged meetings for the Rhodesians with high-ranking government representatives and businessmen, acted as ‘l’antenne parisienne d’Affretair’ (Péan, 1983, p.89). French businesses were also of vital importance to the success of this operation, seen for example by the involvement of SODUCO, the French agent of Guinness Overseas, in the distribution of meat in Gabon.

and the role of the Société Commerciale d’Affrètements et de Combustibles (SCAC) in providing Affretair with its ‘European base in Paris’ and, thus, facilitating the ‘circuits officieux qui permettraient au Gabon de violer les sanctions’. UTA was another crucial linchpin in this trading network, acting as ‘agents de liaison entre les divers éléments de la Société [Affretair]’ and servicing the planes used transport Rhodesian beef to Gabon throughout the 1970s.

Underpinning this illegal trading complex, therefore, was a complex network of French individuals and groups that provided the means, and the motivation, for an independent, Francophone African nation-state to help prop up a reactionary white regime in Southern Central Angophone Africa. This case provides evidence, therefore, of how certain French actors linked to the Élysée used their allies in Francophone Africa as proxies for the pursuit of a wider strategy to maintain French interests in Rhodesia after UDI. That is not to say, however, that Francophone Africans were mere puppets of a metropolitan-directed strategy. Rather, in keeping with the role played by Africans in shaping the nature of France’s relations with its

Payne (Rhodesia Department, FCO) to Margolis (Paris). (1979, March 6). FCO/36/265518. London:TNA.
former sub-Saharan colonies after their independence (Charbonneau, 2008, p.2; Méard, 1997, p.33), Francophone Africans were crucial in developing and maintaining the networks that permitted the exportation of Rhodesian meat to Gabon.

This operation simply would not have been possible without the cooperation of Omar Bongo, who was willing to overlook the international trade embargo against Rhodesia – Bongo is reported to have stated explicitly to van der Byl that ‘the problem of the blockade and sanctions is of no importance’\footnote{Bongo. (1969, March 14). Meeting between Bongo and Van der Byl. SC/12/TS(3)/68. Grahamstown:CL.} - welcoming the Rhodesians to the Gabonese Presidential Palace and offering them use of a site in the centre of Libreville.\footnote{Anonymous to Gabonese Minister of Finances and Budget. (1969, May 1). Libreville/101. Nantes:AD. SDECE. (1969, June 6). 5AG/FPU/722/7530II. Paris:AN.} Moreover, Bongo influenced the shape of Gabonese-Rhodesian interaction. This is especially evident in the case of the Rhodesian loan to Gabon, where negotiations were initially held up by the Gabonese President’s reluctance to let the Rhodesians have too much control over the uses of the funds.\footnote{Delauney to Paris. (1970, June 19). Libreville/101/No.331-339. Nantes:AD.} Moreover, it was Bongo who nominated de la Houssaye to travel to Salisbury to finalise the arrangements for the loan due to his participation in earlier loan negotiations.\footnote{Anonymous. (1970, May 9). Libreville/101. Nantes:AD.}

Houphouët-Boigny was also crucial in the development of the trading relations between Rhodesia and Gabon, although there is less concrete archival evidence to support this view. A footnote at the bottom of a report

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repatriated from Libreville, for example, states that Bongo received van der Byl and the Rhodesian delegation at the request of the Ivorian President.\(^{203}\)

His participation is further reinforced in van der Byl’s own account of his visit to Gabon in which he reported,

> It was also clear that Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast was following his normal procedure in using either Bongo or Tsiranana, President of Malagasy, to act as the vanguard before he was prepared to expose himself. Bongo made it clear that Houphouët knew all about the visit and was anxious for it to be a success and that the two of them would act in close collusion with regard to any results which might flow and any questions which we had to make.\(^{204}\)

The existence of direct personal contacts between the Ivorian President and the Rhodesians is underlined by van der Byl’s reference to the ‘answers to various messages and letters which I [van der Byl] passed to him [Houphouët-Boigny] through the French’.\(^{205}\) Francophone Africans, therefore, were crucial in the development of economic ties between Rhodesia and Gabon, as well as to the fashioning of France’s post-UDI contacts with Rhodesia.

Building on patterns established prior to UDI, the Rhodesians themselves were also important participants in these networks, with high-ranking members of government, such as Smith and van der Byl, enthusiastically pursuing the development of Rhodesian trade in Gabon. Following the conclusion of the Rhodesian loan to Gabon, for example, Smith wrote to Bongo expressing his,

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earnest hope that this loan will help to cement the
good relations which already exist between our two
governments… I look forward to the day when the
political climate will become sufficiently favourable
for the relationship to become even closer.\textsuperscript{206}

There are also lesser known Rhodesian figures who were crucial to the
establishment and maintenance of Rhodesia’s trading links with Gabon,
such as Max Dumas, of the Rhodesian Information Office in Paris, who was
described by the FCO as an ‘important Affretair contact’\textsuperscript{207} and Derek van
der Syde, a Rhodesian Civil Servant posted in Libreville to oversee arrival
of Rhodesian meat.\textsuperscript{208} In addition, there was Rodney Davies, a CSC
employee, with fluent French language skills and a French-speaking wife,
who was tasked with finding markets to sell Rhodesian beef. In this role, he
made regular trips to Libreville to supervise the arrival of Rhodesian meat
and was also stationed in Abidjan for seventeen months commencing in
1973.\textsuperscript{209}

The relationship between the Rhodesians and the French was not always a
smooth one. Despite French enthusiasm, initial exchanges between
Rhodesia and Gabon were limited to a ‘un modeste courant commercial’\textsuperscript{210}
due to the difficulty of finding sufficient return freight to ensure the
profitability of the venture.\textsuperscript{211} In light of this, the French expressed to the
Rhodesians their disappointment that they were ‘not moving quicker in
Gabon’, prompting van der Byl to propose to Smith that an intervention on

\textsuperscript{206} Smith to Bongo. (1970, August 30). SC/12(TS3)/81. Grahamstown:CL.
their part was required. Paradoxically, Rhodesian enthusiasm also occasionally led to clashes with the French. In 1971, for example, Mauricheau-Beaupré reprimanded the Rhodesians for planning a visit to Gabon from the Minister and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on the grounds that it was ‘premature and prejudicial to the continued success of his and our relationship with that country.’ Mauricheau-Beaupré was further incensed by an attempt made by a member of the Rhodesian Ministry to Foreign Affairs to enter the Ivory Coast, describing Rhodesian actions as ‘acutely embarrassing to the West Coast [of Africa] and to him personally’. Van der Byl attempted to dissuade Mauricheau-Beaupré from ‘using his influence to stop the visit’, but was unsuccessful. Although the Rhodesians quickly set about arranging another mission to Libreville, this exchange reveals Rhodesia’s reliance on those linked to the Elysée for its contacts in Gabon and the need ‘to do things their [the French] way’ in order to ensure the success of Rhodesian ventures in Francophone Africa.

The Affretair operation, and relations between Rhodesia and Francophone Africa more broadly, were, therefore, the product of a complex, and sometimes uneven, réseau of private and public individuals and groups from France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia. Although not the sole determinants of this web of contacts, French actors linked to the Élysée embroiled in these networks were vital in providing the impetus behind this trading operation. The networks that formed the foundation of the contacts between France and Rhodesia took as their model the patterns of relations

established by the French for the maintenance of French influence in its former sub-Saharan dependencies. Furthermore, more than just providing a model for interaction, Rhodesia was directly integrated into the Franco-African réseaux, giving French interaction with the African continent a particular triangular dimension and prompting the creation of networks that transcended racial, linguistic, colonial and national boundaries.

By contrast, despite having knowledge of the connections between Salisbury and Libreville, as well as the alleged involvement of French individuals and businesses in the operations of Affretair, the Quai appeared to have little control over the Gabonese-Rhodesian relations. France’s representatives at the UN denied all French state involvement and, in keeping with the wider French public stance of cooperation with international sanctions, asserted that the French authorities were conducting enquiries into the allegations against French companies and individuals named in press reports.215 The Quai also sought to deflect attention away from France, claiming that the Gabonese authorities should ‘répondre aux démarches du Secrétariat Général des Nations Unies’. 216 By their own admission, however, the French Foreign Ministry’s control over French nationals involved in the Affretair trading complex was limited. In response to accusations that a French national was operating on behalf of Affretair in Gabon, for example, the Sous-DIRECTION D’AFRIQUE AT THE MAE claimed that ‘ses activités en territoire gabonaise échappaient au contrôle des autorités

216 Remouville, DAM, to ONU, MAE. (1974, February 14). Libreville/101/No.120. Nantes:AD.
Furthermore, the Quai maintained that the company ‘n’est pas une société française et que par conséquent nous ne sommes pas compétents’. This could be interpreted as intransigence. More likely, however, is that the French Foreign Ministry did not know about the involvement of French state actors in the connection and, even if they did, they could do nothing to prevent it. Thus, in line with the divergence between the Quai and the Elysée in France’s relations with its former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as elsewhere in France’s engagement with Rhodesia, a split between the official policy as implemented by the French Foreign Ministry and the para-official strategies pursued by those linked to Foccart’s African cell is clearly visible in this case. This, in turn, represents continuity and connection across the geographical space separating Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

Conclusions

In the aftermath of UDI, in line with the bifurcation of France’s approach to its relations with its former African colonies, French engagement with Rhodesia was divided between an official position, as advanced by the Quai d’Orsay, and a quasi-official stance, linked to the Elysée Palace. The former was in keeping with France’s status as an ally of the United Kingdom and Rhodesia’s illegal status on the international stage, and saw the French government actively opposing UDI and supporting international sanctions

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217 Remouville to ONU, MAE. (1974, February 14). Libreville/101/No.120. Nantes:AD.
against this breakaway British colony. The latter stood in stark contrast to the position adopted by the majority of the French government, as certain actors linked to the Elysée actively pursued relations with the reactionary regime in Rhodesia, both directly and through intermediaries from the French metropole, white-rulled Southern Africa and Francophone Africa.

This fragmentation took place in response to Rhodesia’s shifting position on the international stage in the wake of UDI. However, it also built directly upon patterns established in Franco-Rhodesian contacts before 1965. The importance of “men-on-the-spot” in driving forward French relations with Rhodesia, for example, was a practice established during the Fourth Republic. The foundations laid in the immediate aftermath of Francophone African independence in 1960 – in particular the growing participation of members of Foccart’s cellule africaine and Rhodesia’s integration into the Franco-African réseaux - were also pivotal in creating the context in which an official stance of opposition towards UDI could coexist alongside the complicity of certain French actors in the propping up of Smith’s illegal regime. In the aftermath of UDI, therefore, Rhodesia was further integrated into the mechanisms for the maintenance of French influence on the African continent, creating complex réseaux that crossed racial, linguistic, national and colonial boundaries. After 1965, Rhodesia became an integral part of French engagement with the African continent in the post-colonial period.
Chapter Five

France and Rhodesia after 1965: impact

The picture that emerges from the previous two chapters is one of a complex and conflicted French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI. As Chapter Three explored, France’s position towards this British colony in the aftermath of UDI was founded upon the French foreign policy mind-set overlapping and intersecting with numerous individuals and groups’ own interests, transposed in the setting of post-1965 Rhodesia. In Chapter Four, we saw how this fragmented approach operated in practice, identifying the varying degrees of French involvement with Rhodesia after UDI and emphasising, in particular, the importance of the réseaux of French and Francophone African “men-on-the-spot”, along with a diverse array of private individuals and groups, in driving forward France’s continued involvement with Rhodesia after UDI. Thus, France’s policies towards Rhodesia after UDI not only built upon an eighteen-year French presence in this region of Central Southern Anglophone Africa, but were also tied to wider French activities on the African continent and to France’s broader international practices.

The purpose of this final chapter is to elucidate the significance of the findings of Chapters Three and Four, as well as the themes developed throughout the thesis more broadly, by assessing the impact of French engagement with Rhodesia after Smith’s proclamation of UDI. It will first analyse the importance of French policy for the situation on the ground in
this British colony, where the settlers maintained their defiant position towards the metropolitan authorities for well over a decade. What, therefore, were the consequences of the French approach to the Rhodesia during this period and, in particular, the continued involvement of certain French actors in the region, in contrast to France’s public opposition to the RF?

In light of the connections and continuities between French practices in Rhodesia and its activities elsewhere in Africa, this chapter will also analyse the impact of French involvement in Rhodesia on French strategies in other corners of the continent. As Chapter Three demonstrated, French engagement with Rhodesia was situated within France’s broader presence in neighbouring territories in Southern Africa. It is likely, therefore, that the French position towards Rhodesia after UDI fed back into France’s wider regional activities. This chapter will test this hypothesis and consider how far France’s position in Southern Africa after 1965 was shaped by French relations with Rhodesia during the same period. Another recurring theme in the previous two chapters has been the interconnection – in terms of motives, methods and men – between France’s engagement with Rhodesia and its relations with its former colonies in West and Equatorial Africa, especially its best African “friends”. Thus, it will also be necessary for this section to investigate the consequences of France’s involvement in Rhodesia for France’s relations with Francophone Africa and France’s wider continental presence in the post-1965 epoch.
Broadening the perspective further, and in light of Rhodesia’s status as a British colony throughout the period in question – albeit contrary to the white regime’s best efforts to gain recognition for Rhodesia as an independent state – this chapter will analyse the impact of UDI, and the diverse array of French responses to this crisis, on Anglo-French relations. It will explore both the opportunities for cooperation between the FCO and their counterparts at the Quai, and the possibilities for conflict and hostility, as the persistent participation of certain French actors in Rhodesia after UDI collided with the deeply rooted Franco-British rivalry on the African continent. Finally, this chapter will assess the consequences of French policy towards Rhodesia on France’s strategies in the international age of bipolarity. As Chapter Three demonstrated, France viewed Rhodesia through a Cold War lens. To what extent, therefore, did involvement with Rhodesia after UDI influence France’s approach to its allies in the Western Alliance, as well as its staunch anti-communism, and what opportunities for the development of France’s strategy of foreign policy autonomy were created in the Rhodesian context? In analysing the impact of French policy towards Rhodesia on these varying elements of France’s international activities, this chapter will reveal the significance of studying French engagement with Rhodesia after UDI as a means of enhancing our understanding not only of the decolonisation process in this British colony, but also of France’s post-colonial African strategies and its wider foreign policies.
The impact of French policy on the course of Rhodesian decolonisation

Despite British hopes that their disagreements with the Rhodesian settlers would be resolved in ‘a matter of weeks rather than months’ (Wood, 2008), UDI was not revoked until 21 December 1979, more than fourteen years after Smith’s proclamation of 11 November 1965. Under the London Agreement, which was signed following three months of talks between Smith and the African nationalist leaders at Lancaster House, all parties agreed to a ceasefire and a brief return to British rule, prior to elections and full independence in the spring of 1980 (Meredith, 2006, pp.325-328). On April 18 1980, at a midnight ceremony attended by Prince Charles and Bob Marley, the red, green, black and gold flag of Zimbabwe rose for the first time.\(^1\) It was, therefore, two decades after the independence of Francophone Africa that white minority-governed Rhodesia, ‘the last outpost of the British Empire in Africa and the last colony in the continent’, was transformed into majority-ruled Zimbabwe.\(^2\)

Explanations for Rhodesia’s delayed decolonisation often focus on the strength and tenacity of the white settler population in contrast to the weakness and factionalism of the Zimbabwean nationalist movement. Ethnic, linguistic and ideological differences plagued the Zimbabwean

\(^1\) Ashford (1980, April 18). Zimbabwe flag raised for the first time at midnight ceremony. *The Times*, p.1

nationalist movement, with the Ndebele-dominated ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo, seeking international recognition for the nationalist cause, in opposition to supporters of an armed struggle, who included Ndabaningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe and other members of ZANU, the party of the Shona people (Evans, 2007, p.178; Dowden, 2008, pp.138-139). There were also intra-organisational rivalries that further accentuated the weaknesses of the nationalist movement, seen most notably in ZANU, where Sithole’s leadership position was undermined by a group of ZANU detainees who appointed Mugabe as the new leader of the party (Mtisi, Nyakudya & Barnes, 2009, p.145).

By contrast, the white population, although demographically weak in the face of a rapidly expanding African population, remained remarkably united and committed to the maintenance of white rule in Rhodesia throughout the period in question. This unity was founded upon a shared ‘world struggle ideology’ that justified UDI on the grounds that it was an act necessary to prevent the spread of communism and protect Western civilisation in Africa (Evans, 2007, pp.180-182). White strength and cohesion was also facilitated by the maintenance of the prosperous ‘Rhodesian way of life’ (Godwin & Hancock, 1993) for much of the UDI period in spite of international sanctions and guerrilla war. The ability to sustain this privileged, yet insular, lifestyle is frequently attributed to the support provided by Rhodesia’s white-ruled neighbours, Mozambique and South Africa, as well as the willingness of foreign companies to continue to trade with Rhodesia in contravention of the international trade embargo (Mtisi, Nyakudya &
Barnes, 2009, p.144). The emphasis is most often placed on the former, with arguments for the eventual collapse of Rhodesia focusing on the independence of Mozambique in 1975, which severed key Rhodesian supply routes and left Rhodesia’s 764-mile eastern border vulnerable to attack from ZANU guerrillas operating in the former Portuguese-ruled territory, whilst simultaneously reducing the importance of Rhodesia to South Africa as a white buffer state (Meredith, 2006, p.321; Mtisi, Nyakudya & Barnes, 2009, pp.144-145).

Although not wishing to diminish the significance of the support from Pretoria and Lisbon in the maintenance of white rule, this thesis contends that the picture of external backing for the white regime is more complex than has been presented in the existing literature on the process of Rhodesian decolonisation, and that France was an important source of strength for the white regime. Certainly, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of French support for Rhodesia. As we have already seen, French companies were not unique in their willingness to breach the trade embargo and, in the grand scheme of things, French direct trade with Rhodesia was relative modest (Bach, 1990, p.186). The impact of direct French involvement in the Rhodesian military is also questionable. Although details are sketchy, we know that French mercenaries fought alongside the Rhodesians, forming the separate 7 Independent Company within the RLI. Yet, the participation of these private French soldiers’ in the Rhodesian military was not without its difficulties, as is evidenced in the case of Gilles Boucher, explored in Chapter Four. According to Boucher’s
testimony, a French recruitment agent tricked him into fighting with the RLI, leading him to believe that he would receive handsome remuneration in exchange for guarding Rhodesian farms. After his arrival in Salisbury and the realisation that his actual task in Rhodesia was to fight on behalf of the settlers, Boucher clashed with his French military superiors, notably following his interception and destruction of a letter from Frachet, the French recruiting agent, to the French commander of his company, Major Bessy. This, in turn, led to his Boucher’s incarceration in the RLI prison in Salisbury.\(^3\) This clash between a private French soldier and his superiors reveals the tensions amongst the French military contingent operating within the Rhodesian armed forces, tensions that are likely to have reduced the efficiency of the French unit within the RLI. The problematic role played by the French in the Rhodesian military is also noted in the secondary literature, with Moorcraft and McLaughin (2009, pp.53-54) describing how the independent company of French mercenaries were not successful in Rhodesian conditions, prompting the unit’s disbandment. The operational impact of French mercenaries in the Rhodesian armed forces is likely, therefore, to have been relatively meagre.

However, whilst direct French participants in Rhodesia may have made only a minor contribution to Rhodesia’s economic and military strength in the years between 1965 and 1980, the same cannot be said for France’s indirect involvement in this breakaway British colony. Rather, French commercial and military participation through intermediaries elsewhere in Africa had

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\(^3\) Boucher to Jorion. (1978, January 10). Pretoria/90. Nantes: AD.
substantial consequences for the course of UDI. For one, as we have seen in Chapter Four, Portuguese and especially South African involvement in Rhodesia, which is underlined by scholars as crucial both to Rhodesia’s continued economic vitality and its war effort, relied on the continuous supply of goods from French sources that could later be re-exported to Rhodesia. It is possible to hypothesise, therefore, that without the existence of well-established French commercial, military and diplomatic ties to South Africa and Mozambique, the support provided by Rhodesia’s white-ruled neighbours might not have been as extensive. Moreover, Rhodesian goods, such as sugar, tobacco, metals and minerals, were purchased by French companies and exported via Rhodesia’s white-ruled neighbours to the French metropole and onto French clients overseas. Although the intrinsically opaque nature of these contacts makes it difficult to quantify the full extent of this trade, it is nevertheless likely that persistent French indirect commercial engagement in the region provided the Rhodesians with significant material support vital to the maintenance of their privileged ‘way of life’ and, thus, UDI.

A further indirect French influence on the material wellbeing of white Rhodesia came in the form of public and private participation in the operations of Affretair, which oversaw the transportation of Rhodesian meat around the globe, especially to the former French colony of Gabon.⁴ The airline also generated additional income for the Rhodesians by carrying out

charter work on behalf of other airlines, including Air France. The impact of these ventures was substantial, something that two FCO reports from March 1976 attest to. The first, prepared by the Rhodesia Department, reported ‘the major importance of Affretair as a foreign currency earner for the illegal regime’. Ten days later, in a similar vein, a despatch authored by the Foreign Secretary described ‘the activities of Affretair’ as, vital to the illegal regime in Salisbury, since by its considerable exports of Rhodesian meat and by its charter activities for other airlines, Affretair is a major earner of foreign currency which the illegal regime need in order to pay for their clandestine imports.

Affretair continued to provide vital financial resources to the white regime right up until the eve of independence, seen by a UK government report from January 1979 that described the airline’s operations as ‘without doubt a major earner of foreign currency for the Rhodesian government’.

The Rhodesians themselves also viewed Affretair as important to their ability to defy the international trade embargo. According to Ken Flower (1987, p.76), Head of Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Agency, ‘Malloch and his aeroplanes contributed more than any other single factor to the defeat of economic sanctions’. More recently, in a 2011 interview, Derek van der Syde described Libreville as a ‘great big hole’ in the sanctions net, which contributed to the ineffectiveness of the trade embargo imposed on

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Rhodesia. French participation in this illegal commercial network had, therefore, a significant influence over the ability of Rhodesia’s settlers to sustain white rule throughout the 1970s. Thus, it is apparent that French indirect commercial involvement with Rhodesia after UDI had substantial, perhaps even transformative, consequences for the course of Rhodesian decolonisation as it provided the white Rhodesians with a lifeline crucial to their efforts to prevent the introduction of majority rule in the region.

However, the most important aspect of French direct and indirect involvement in Rhodesia after UDI was not its material effects, but rather its psychological impact amongst the white Rhodesians themselves. Throughout the UDI period, and in spite of France’s public denunciations of the RF, Rhodesia’s white settlers remained convinced that they had French backing. A letter to the editor of *The Rhodesia Herald* from February 1966, for example, called upon the Rhodesian government to make an appeal to De Gaulle for more formal support, a move that the author believed ‘would stop Harold Wilson in his tracks’. The extent of this Rhodesian optimism was also recorded in the UK press, seen in an article in *The Guardian* from March 1966, which reported how many Rhodesians believed France would offer diplomatic support to Smith’s regime.

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Downing Street dismissed such reports as a consequence of ‘Rhodesians whistling to keep their spirits up’, a view that was recapitulated by Whitehall, who concluded such rumours were merely ‘wishful thinking on the part of the Rhodesians’. And, it is certainly true that the presence of these sentiments amongst ordinary white Rhodesians, a highly insulated and inward looking population (Godwin & Hancock, 1993), is likely to have derived from reports in the highly censored Rhodesian press (Windrich, 1979). An article in the state-controlled *Rhodesia Herald* recording the aforementioned tour of Rhodesia by the French deputy, Franck Cazenave, in February and March 1966, for example, contrasted Cazenave’s assertion that Britain had made a “sad error” in the region with his claim that ‘the general attitude in France was one of sympathy towards Rhodesia’. Similarly, reports of a letter written by the right-wing Comité France-Rhodésie to the British Prime Minister were represented in the Rhodesian press in February 1966 as proof that ‘French society opposes Wilson’. These reports, in turn, are likely to have fuelled the conviction held by Rhodesia’s settlers that they had French backing.

Yet, the Rhodesian perception of French support should not be discounted entirely as a consequence of settler delusion resulting from state media censorship. For one, it was not just ordinary Rhodesians who viewed France as an ally. High-ranking, well-travelled and subsequently better-informed members of the RF also consistently saw France as a potential source of

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strength in the Rhodesian struggle. This is especially true of van der Byl, white Rhodesia’s principal representative overseas, who, as earlier chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, had direct, personal contact with various French officials both before and after 1965. This, in turn, fuelled van der Byl’s belief that ‘France will therefore, within the limits of her own self-interest, be prepared to do whatever she can to further trade and harmonious relations provided open confrontation is avoided at this stage’.\(^{16}\) Similarly, in 1969, van der Byl interpreted the French promotion of Rhodesian contacts in West Africa as a symbol of hope for a future ‘improvement of our status in France and, in due course, one hopes to final recognition’.\(^{17}\) Prime Minister Smith appears to have been equally convinced of French backing, demonstrated by the personal letters he wrote to De Gaulle in the period between November 1965 and April 1969, in which he openly expressed white Rhodesia’s fraternal feelings towards France, as well its hopes for further French support.\(^{18}\) After De Gaulle’s resignation, Smith also wrote to Pompidou on at least one occasion, calling for ‘the resumption of normal relations between France and Rhodesia’ and ‘an extension of French interests’ in the region.\(^{19}\)

The Rhodesian tendency to look to France for support in its struggle to maintain white rule continued throughout the UDI period, seen in October 1978 when the French Presidential Palace received a request from Smith

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that a French information mission be sent to Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, in a note sent to the French President and Minister of Foreign Affairs in January 1979, allegedly on behalf Ian Smith, van der Byl called upon the French ‘to take a positive line over the Rhodesian question’. In particular, the Rhodesian appealed to France to support the internal settlement agreement signed by Smith, Sithole, Abel Muzorewa, leader of the United African National Council (UANC), and Jeremiah Chirau, leader of the Zimbabwe United People’s Organisation (ZUPO) on 3 March 1978 (Meredith, 1979, p.331) and the first free elections in April.\textsuperscript{21} These elections resulted in the end of Smith’s fifteen-year tenure as Prime Minister on 31 May 1979 and his replacement by Muzorewa (Meredith, 2006, pp.324-325). This message, sent at a moment when the handover of power to the African majority was imminent, demonstrates the persistent Rhodesian perception that France was willing to help the white Rhodesian cause and was in a position to influence the outcome of events in the region, even when the only option left open to the settlers was to concede to some version of majority rule. It was hoped, therefore, that France might help preserve white influence in this new order.

The small number of oral history interviews conducted with former settlers during the course of this PhD project reveal the strength of the Rhodesian memory of French support. In 2011, Derek van der Syde claimed that ‘in one way and another the French were helping in a quiet way’, describing how ‘merely the fact that we felt ourselves that we had outside support’ was

\textsuperscript{20} Robin, Technical Advisor to Secretary General of the President, to Wahl, Secretary General of the President of the Republic. (1978, October 25). 5AG3/1058. Paris:AN.
highly influential.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, in another interview conducted in 2011, Benjamin Davies, who was born in Rhodesia in the early 1970s and whose father worked for the CSC, remembered how the Rhodesians received ‘a lot of help’ from the French, particularly in the context of their struggle with the African nationalist guerrillas.\textsuperscript{23} In his memoirs, Collie Hill (2001) also recalls at length the French involvement in the purchase of Rhodesian sugar after UDI and remembers the French, both at an individual and national level, in extremely fond terms.\textsuperscript{24}

The resilience of these memories of French support, and in particular, the continued representation of France as a friend to Rhodesia, demonstrates the long-lasting psychological impact of French involvement in the region. During the UDI period, the perception of French support is likely to have had a considerable influence on white confidence, hardening the Rhodesian resolve to maintain the rebellion against the colonial metropole, and thus delaying the transfer of power to the African majority. As such, it is possible to conclude that the lengthy process of Rhodesian decolonisation was, at least in part, the consequence of the moral support, both real and imagined, that the Rhodesians received from France. France made, therefore, a significant contribution to the longevity of UDI and the late transformation of this British colony into the independent nation-state of Zimbabwe.

The impact of French policy in Rhodesia on France’s Southern African strategy

France’s policies towards Rhodesia throughout the UDI period – both the official position of opposition to the RF and the quasi-official stance of support for the Rhodesians, albeit within the limits of individual and national self-interest – had substantial consequences for France’s regional position in Southern Africa. On the one hand, new opportunities arose for France in apartheid South Africa as a result of the French response to events taking place in Rhodesia. France’s initial neutrality over the Rhodesian question in the UN was viewed positively by Pretoria, as proof that the French would support the application of sanctions against the apartheid regime. According to the Afrique-Levant department at the Quai, this ‘attitude indépendante’, alongside the French position towards apartheid and ‘l’autorité incontestable du Général de Gaulle dans l’opinion politique sud-africaine’, left France in a stronger position in the region that the financially vulnerable British government. This shifting balance of power was also acknowledged by the FCO, who reported how the French increasingly had an advantage over the British in the region as the South Africans were ‘uncertain where H. M. G. stood in relation to economic action against South Africa’ whilst the French response to Rhodesia made Pretoria ‘more confident that the French government would not join in’. This, in turn, created opportunities for the expansion of France’s commercial presence in the region, such as through the construction of a new refinery in South

Africa by the CFP, a reverse scenario of how France’s strong position in South Africa created possibilities for France in Rhodesia. It is possible to argue, therefore, that the particular French approach to UDI reinforced France’s existing position of strength in Pretoria.

On the other hand, and somewhat paradoxically in light of French involvement in propping up Ian Smith’s regime, the French also successfully maintained positive ties with African nationalists in neighbouring regions in Southern Africa throughout the UDI period. This is especially true in the former British colony of Zambia. Franco-Zambian contacts were not entirely new in this period. During the Federal period, as the first half of this thesis has demonstrated, France’s economic, diplomatic and cultural relations with Northern Rhodesia grew as a result of the French base in Salisbury. As Zambian independence neared, the Zambians reciprocated these advances, seen by a request in early 1964 from soon to be President, Kenneth Kaunda, for the development of commercial relations between France and Northern Rhodesia, and Kaunda’s decision to include Paris in his European tour of May 1964. However, after 1965, the opportunities for France in Zambia increased, as British inaction in Rhodesia left many Zambians convinced that their ex-ruler was ‘a toothless bulldog’ (Hyam, 2006, p.369). Declining confidence in Britain led Kaunda to approach France for diplomatic, military and financial assistance. The French President responded to Zambian advances with the claim that France

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29 AL to Personnel. (1964, April 15). AL/SEAB/14/No.29. Paris:AMAE.
hoped to develop ‘entre nos deux pays une amitié dont les hasards de l’histoire avaient retardé la manifestation’. A little over six months later France’s friendship with Zambia appeared to be cemented when The Daily Telegraph reported that a ‘France-Zambia Cooper Deal [was] Foreseen.’

The second half of the late 1960s saw other new possibilities for the French in Zambia, including opportunities for the Compagnie de Construction Internationale Française (Grands Travaux Marseille) to participate in the construction of a new dam on the Kafue River and the development of a UTA air link between Libreville, Lusaka and Johannesburg. Interest in these infrastructure projects echoes the patterns of French engagement with Rhodesia in the 1950s explored in Chapter Two, as well as mirroring the French approach to Francophone Africa more broadly in both the late colonial and post-colonial periods. This, in turn, reinforces the argument that France’s African vision was not uniquely Francophone in its focus, but constantly evolving and expanding in response to the new opportunities created as a result of events taking place on the ground in Africa, including the crisis in Rhodesia.

The impact of French policy in Rhodesia on France’s African policy

France, Francophone Africa and white Rhodesia

The ability of the French to balance these paradoxical alliances with both white rulers and African nationalists in Southern Africa was reproduced in the broader context of Franco-African relations, with certain French actors successfully maintaining ties with the white minority governments of South Africa and Rhodesia alongside close personal friendships with Francophone African nationalists, and even going as far as to promote relations between the two.

Certainly, new tensions were created in France’s relations with its former colonies in West and Equatorial Africa as a result of French policy towards Rhodesia, seen especially in the context of the UN, where the French delegation’s initial abstentions in votes concerning Rhodesia in the Security Council provoked African hostility. In the month before UDI, for instance, the French delegation abstained in a vote for the adoption of a resolution regarding Rhodesia put forward by Guinea. According to a diplomatic synthesis in the French Presidential archive, this decision, semble avoir été mal comprise par les pays du tiers-monde, bien que notre représentant ait clairement expliqué que nous n’étions pas favorables à la politique de discrimination raciale pratiquée par le gouvernement rhodésien.33

Further criticism of the French came later in October from the Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM), who voiced their opposition to the creation in Southern Africa of ‘un vaste ensemble raciste dont la seule présence constituerait un danger pour l’évolution du continent tout entier’, and indicated a move towards the adoption of the OAU stance that Rhodesia was ‘d’une affaire internationale relevant la compétence de l’ONU’. The OCAM also highlighted the delicate situation created for France in Africa, particularly vis-à-vis the more revolutionary states, by its continued insistence that Rhodesia was not an international problem, emphasising how it would be difficult for members of the organisation to respond to accusations against France if the Rhodesian question was raised in the UNSC, a likely outcome in anticipation of UDI. This can be interpreted as a warning from France’s former African colonies that, if France did not alter its stance in the event of UDI, it risked losing Francophone African support.

After UDI, the impasse between France and Africa over the application of the principle of “non-interference” continued. In 1967, for example, the Brazzaville Group again voted in opposition to the French on a vote concerning Rhodesia (Alden, 1996, pp.15-16). There were also an increasing number of reports of growing hostility towards France across Africa more broadly, evidenced in an article from The Guardian’s Commonwealth Correspondent, Patrick Keatley, published on 20 December

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1967, which claimed that certain African nations were ‘ready to act against France’.35

However, the bifurcation of the French approach to Africa, along with the fact that France’s best “friends” – Bongo and Houphouët-Boigny - were not amongst the African critics of France’s policy in the Rhodesia, but were instead complicit in supporting the white regime in Rhodesia, is likely to have meant that the principal directors of France’s African policy were largely unaffected by this criticism. The fragmentation of France’s approach to the African continent between the Quai and the Elysée also permitted an official French stance of opposition to the RF to co-exist alongside the continued direct and indirect engagement in Rhodesia by certain private and state-linked actors. Moreover, the development of highly personalised relations between the directors of France’s African policy at the Elysée Palace and their closest allies in Francophone Africa provided the setting in which key players in the Franco-African connection, including Mauricheau-Beaupré, Lettéron and de la Houssaye, could introduce their best Francophone African “friends” to the rulers of white Rhodesia. The particular nature of Franco-African relations in the post-colonial period, therefore, facilitated the co-existence of these two opposing French approaches to Rhodesian affairs.

In the post-UDI period, as part of this strategy driven by certain representatives of Foccart’s *cellule africaine* to permit the continuance of French ties with Rhodesia alongside France’s public position of opposition to the RF, this white-ruled British colony became part of the wider French webs of African contacts. The example of Gabonese-Rhodesian links described in Chapter Four is just one example of the ways in which the directors of France’s African policies integrated Rhodesia into a continent-wide Franco-African network. The 1970s also saw the continued development of Rhodesia’s relations with Madagascar. Rhodesia’s links with this Francophone island extended back to the earliest days of France’s participation in this British colony, as France’s “men-on-the-spot” actively promoted the expansion of economic and cultural ties between the two dependent territories. In the immediate aftermath of UDI, these relations appear to have subsided and there are no references to contacts between Rhodesia and Madagascar during this period in the archives.

However, a visit to Tananarive by Oxley, an assistant secretary at the Rhodesian Ministry of External Affairs, in December 1969 suggests a renewal of contacts. According to the reports on this Rhodesian mission, during a secret meeting with a high-ranking member of the Malgache Foreign Ministry, Oxley expressed Rhodesia’s interest in establishing tourist and commercial relations with Madagascar. President Tsiranana is alleged to have welcomed these proposals on the condition that discretion was maintained.36 Oxley returned on an official visit to Madagascar in June

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1970. Papers in Ian Smith’s archive underscore the Rhodesian desire to expand relations with Madagascar, and the role played by France and certain of their Francophone African “friends” in the furtherance of these interests. For example, in addition to arranging a meeting between van der Byl and Houphouët-Boigny, Bongo is alleged to have put the Rhodesian Minister in contact with Tsiranana. Van der Byl also personally recorded how support from the Foccart organisation was crucial to the furtherance of Rhodesian interests in Madagascar.

Alongside providing Rhodesia’s settler élite with an entrée into Francophone Africa, the French also appear to have put the Rhodesians in touch with certain Anglophone African leaders. A letter from van der Byl to Smith reports extensive links between Mauricheau-Beaupré and Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of Ghana (1969-1972). According to van der Byl,

Beaupré and his people played some part in the accession of Busia to the premiership of Ghana after the military junta had overthrown Nkrumah and returned the country to civil government. Busia was harboured in Paris for some time by Beaupré’s organisation.

It was in this context that Beaupré introduced van der Byl to Busia, prompting van der Byl’s hope for further contact with the Ghanaian leader. In 1971, van der Byl records again the ‘friendly connections’

between ‘our French friends’, presumably Mauricheau-Beaupré and his associates, and the Prime Minister of Ghana.\textsuperscript{42}

It appears, therefore, that Foccart and his network had African “friends” not only in territories that once formed part of the French African Empire but also in countries beyond the Francophone fold. This situation is summarised by van der Byl in a letter to Smith written in 1971, in which he describes the ‘predominant interest’ of Foccart and his organisation in,

the maintenance of the French influence in Africa, principally in the ex French colonies, but not entirely, as is indicated by the part the organisation played in assisting Biafra in the Nigerian war and the extensive liaison that M. Beaupré maintains with various African Heads of State, again not confined to French ones, but including such people as Busia, the new Prime Minister of Ghana, as well as Mr Vorster and yourself [Smith].\textsuperscript{43}

Foccart’s African réseaux were not, therefore, a uniquely Francophone entity, but an extensive network that transcended traditional racial, colonial and linguistic lines. Thus, French involvement in Rhodesia in the period between 1965 and 1980 can be identified as a both a symptom and a cause of the widening of France’s African vision. The seeds of this process were sown in the immediate post-war period and began to sprout in the years following the independence of Francophone Africa in 1960. However, it was not until after UDI that this new French approach really began to flourish.

\textsuperscript{42} Van der Byl. (nd). Communist Chinese infiltration in Africa. SC/15(TS3)/17. Grahamstown:CL.

\textsuperscript{43} Van der Byl to Smith. (1971, March 8). SC/15(TS3)/8. Grahamstown:CL.
Franco-Zimbabwean relations in the late 1970s

As this thesis has demonstrated throughout, Rhodesia was consistently viewed as a land of economic opportunity and geopolitical importance for France, as well as a region in which France’s wider foreign policy objectives could be achieved. Although, as we have already seen, certain members of Foccart’s *cellule africaine*, along with various private individuals and companies, were willing to overlook Rhodesia’s illegal status in pursuit of these aims, the majority of French policy-makers, diplomats and bureaucrats were unable to participate in Rhodesia whilst it remained under white rule.

The growing momentum towards independence in the region in 1978 and 1979 altered the situation and contributed to the reduction of restrictions on international engagement with Rhodesia. In response, and in an attempt to preserve these French interests that had been present throughout the crisis but unattainable due to Rhodesia’s illegal status, the Quai reformulated its approach to Rhodesia. These new French strategies centred on the cultivation of ties with the rising Zimbabwean nationalist *élite*. In early 1979, Muzorewa wrote to Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, President of France (1974-1981), inviting a French delegation to Rhodesia to observe the elections in April of that year.⁴⁴ The Quai initially expressed hesitancy towards Muzorewa’s request, on the grounds that France must follow the

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Western line with regards to the Rhodesian affair, a response that it is in keeping with the Foreign Ministry’s approach to the region throughout the UDI period. Muzorewa was advised, therefore, that it would not be possible for France to comply with his requests. In spite of this French hesitancy, the tone of the French response, which was written by Gabriel Robin, a technical advisor in the Elysée, was extremely positive and openly expressed the French wish that ‘une démocratie respectueuse de l’égalité raciale et de la dignité de chaque homme’ be introduced in the region.

Moreover, in contrast to the initial claim that no French representatives would travel to Rhodesia during the elections, a small French group of deputies from the Assemblée Nationale were, in fact, permitted to go to Rhodesia to observe the elections in April 1979. France’s friendly feelings towards the Zimbabwean nationalists are also apparent in the government’s willingness to receive Muzorewa in Paris in July 1979.

In November 1979, with the Lancaster House conference taking place in London, the French were free, for the first time since UDI, to openly send an official representative to the region. This mission, carried out by Alain le Seac’h, the French Vice Consul in Johannesburg, was represented as having a humanitarian purpose, but was also intended as an opportunity to assess first hand the internal economic and political situation. Le Seac’h’s report of his visit was extremely optimistic about France’s future prospects in a

47 Dorin to MAE. (1979, April 13). Pretoria/90/No.930. Nantes:AD.
newly independent Zimbabwe, citing opportunities for construction contracts in Wankie, continued Peugeot and Renault dominance of the automobile market, the chance for French arms manufacturers to replace out-dated military equipment - which, it was acknowledged, was mostly of French origin - and the possibility that UTA would be the first airline to reconnect Salisbury to Europe. Moreover, politicians and civil servants in the territory were extremely positive about the presence of French companies in their country and were ‘bien disposés à l’égard de la France’. This, in turn, prompted le Seac’h to call for rapid French action and, in particular, the establishment of a French commercial post in Salisbury as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{50} Bernard Dorin, the French Ambassador in Pretoria (1978-1981), was equally enthused by the possibilities for France in the region, calling for DREE to establish ‘un programme d’intervention immédiate en Zimbabwe/Rhodésie, qui pourrait être mis en œuvre aussitôt après la levée éventuelle des sanctions’, placing particular emphasis on the need for ‘l’ouverture rapide à Salisbury d’une antenne commerciale légère placée sous l’autorité du poste d’expansion économique’.\textsuperscript{51} Thus, as they had done since the establishment of the French Consulate in Salisbury in 1947, France’s “men-on-the-spot” led the way in enthusiastically championing a French presence in Rhodesia as part of a wider, Southern African strategy.

In Paris, following the territory’s brief return to British colonial rule in December 1979, plans were laid for the development of more French formal

\textsuperscript{50} Le Seac’h. (1979, November 27). Pretoria/91. Nantes:AD.
\textsuperscript{51} Dorin, French Ambassador, Pretoria, to MAE. (1979, December 3). Pretoria/91/No.2801. Nantes:AD.
ties with Zimbabwe after power was officially transferred to the African majority. The MAE responded favourably to the enthusiasm of the French in Pretoria and backed the establishment of a French Commercial Office in Rhodesia as soon as the circumstances permitted.\footnote{Follin, MAE, to French Embassy, Pretoria. (1979, December 13). Pretoria/91/No.425. Nantes:AD.} A concerted central effort to turn this rhetoric into action came in early 1980 with the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.\footnote{Long, Secretary General of Government, to François-Poncet, Monory, Giraud, Deniau & Achard (SGCI). (1980, January 8). \textit{Relations de la France avec la Rodhésie-Zimbabwe [sic]}. 5AG3/1410. Paris:AN.} The record of the first meeting of the committee, which took place on 11 January 1980, records the instruction from Raymond Barre, French Prime Minister (1976-1981), that a French presence in Salisbury should be assured without any further delay, stressing, in particular, the importance of re-establishing a French Consul in the capital and the need for DREE to send an agent to the region charged with economic expansion. In addition, plans were discussed to increase automobile assembly in the region, French involvement in Wankie and the possibility of according a loan to the Zimbabwean treasury.\footnote{Sécrétariat Général du Gouvernement (SGG). (1980, January 14). Compte-Rendu de la Réunion interministerielle du 11 janvier 1980. 5AG3/1410. Paris :AN.}

It is interesting to note the participation in this inter-ministerial committee of Jean François-Poncet, French Foreign Minister (1978-1981), who, as has been noted above been, was involved in Rhodesian affairs from the early 1960s. This, in turn, reveals the presence in French government of actors who consistently viewed Rhodesia as a region of possibilities for France. In the late 1970s, François-Poncet’s position as the Minister of Foreign
Affairs, as well as the shift towards majority rule in Rhodesia, would have made the pursuit of these interests via white Rhodesians both unviable and unfruitful. Thus, François-Poncet’s attentions were re-directed towards the Zimbabwean nationalists in an attempt to preserve and extend French interests in the region. Throughout the period in question, therefore, Rhodesia formed part of France’s African vision.

The impact of French policy in Rhodesia on Franco-British relations

Anglo-French cooperation over the Rhodesian problem

In addition to the positioning of Rhodesia within a wider French agenda to use the African continent as an arena in which to secure French greatness on the world stage, this British colony was also a crucial component in Franco-British relations in the years after 1965. As we have seen in Chapter Three, throughout the UDI period, the UK government consistently viewed France as a vital ally over the Rhodesian question. This state of affairs continued right up until Zimbabwean independence in April 1980 and, if anything, was heightened in the latter years of the 1970s when hopes were high that a settlement to the crisis finally could be attained. Although Rhodesia had regularly featured on the agenda in Anglo-French bilateral talks since Smith’s declaration in 1965, it was an especially dominant theme in both high and low-level discussions between the British and French governments in 1979 and, even more so, after the commencement of talks between Smith
and the Zimbabwean nationalists at Lancaster House in the autumn of that year. The question of Rhodesia was raised, for example, at Anglo-French talks on Africa which took place in London in January 1979.\textsuperscript{55} It was also discussed at various informal meetings between British FCO officials and their counterparts in Paris, such consultations between Fell, from the Southern African Department at Whitehall, and De la Tour du Pin, responsible for \textit{Afrique Australe} at the Quai, in May.\textsuperscript{56} Similarly, in both June and October, Renwick from the Rhodesia Department, met with Georgy, the Director for Africa in the French Foreign Ministry, as well as representatives from the Presidential Palace, including Journiac, Giscard’s advisor on Africa, Levitte, a diplomatic advisor at the Elysée, and Robin.\textsuperscript{57} High-level Franco-British exchanges on Rhodesia also took place in the final months prior to Zimbabwean independence, including at a meeting between Britain and France’s respective Foreign Ministers, Carrington and Francois-Poncet,\textsuperscript{58} as well as during talks between Prime Minister Thatcher and President Giscard d’Estaing, both of which took place during the French President’s visit to London in November 1979.\textsuperscript{59} At the highest level of all, Queen Elizabeth II is alleged to have raised the issue of Rhodesia personally.

\textsuperscript{55} Rhodesia Department. (1979, January 22). FCO/36/2510/4. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{56} Fell, Southern African Department (SAD), FCO, to Dalton & Morrice. (1979, May 31). FCO/36/2510/11. London:TNA.
Renwick to Duff. (1979, October 18). FCO/36/2510/34. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{58} Anonymous. (nd). \textit{Record of discussion between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the French Foreign Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 3pm on 19 November 1979}. FCO/36/2510/64. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{59} Anonymous. (nd) Record of conversation between the Prime Minister and President Giscard: Plenary session 20/11/1979. FCO/36/2510/66.
with the French President at a dinner in October 1979. In this context, the FCO repeatedly described French support over the final resolution of the Rhodesian problem as ‘indispensable’ and ‘essential’, and expressed their desire that France and Britain could ‘continue to see eye to eye on the problem of Southern Africa’. In particular, the British called upon its "vrais amis" to help them garner support for the settlement amongst African states as well with certain Western governments, including Denmark and the Netherlands.

These intensive British efforts to secure French backing in 1979 underline not only the importance that the British attributed to securing the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia, but also how France was perceived to play a decisive role in the achievement of this aim. This, in turn, reveals the ways in which France continued to be viewed by the British as an important ally in Africa, and on the international stage more widely, throughout this period. The French were aware of their perceived, pivotal position in the success of Britain’s African policy, seen in an observation by Jean Sauvagnargues, the French Ambassador to the UK (1977-1981), in July 1979 that,

Mme. Thatcher continuait de considérer que les intérêts de la France et du Royaume-Uni en Afrique étaient très proches et que les deux pays devaient

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63 FCO. (nd) Annex A: UK Objectives. FCO/36/2510/48
Moreover, the Quai appeared to view the successful resolution of the Rhodesian problem as important for France’s position in Africa, evidenced by François-Poncet’s assertion in talks with Carrington that France’s problems in Africa ‘would be aggravated by a British failure in Rhodesia’. In light of this, the French Foreign Minister pledged to back a British bid to the EEC for financial help for Rhodesian refugees. This support, however, was contingent upon the British government backing Community assistance in Chad. In this instance, therefore, the French used Britain’s reliance on them in the Rhodesian context as a means of furthering their own aims in the wider African context. As such, Anglo-French interaction with regards to Rhodesia must be understood as a part of a wider strategy that existed in both Britain and France to secure the success of their respective African policies. This, in turn, meant that Anglo-French relations concerning Rhodesia had the effect of drawing Britain and France closer together over African affairs in the latter years of the 1970s.

Thus, publically at least, relations between the Quai and the FCO with regards to the Rhodesian problem remained positive right up until the eve of Zimbabwean independence, with the French continuing to offer their support for the UK line over Rhodesia, contributing to the FCO’s

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perception that the French were ‘generally helpful’ when it came to Rhodesian affairs.\footnote{Anonymous. (1979, September 3). \textit{Brief for Visit of the French Foreign Minister}. FCO/36/2510/No.20. London:TNA.} This constructive atmosphere, in turn, created new opportunities for France in Anglophone Africa, seen, for example, just a few weeks after ZANU’s electoral success in March 1980, when the British authorities actively encouraged the French government to make early contact with the new government in Zimbabwe and offer them assistance.\footnote{British Embassy, Paris. (1980, March 20). 5AG3/1058. Paris:AN.} Thus, the crisis in Rhodesia not only created a new arena for friendly Anglo-French relations, but also had the secondary effect of aiding France’s wider ambitions to become a continental player in Africa.

These positive and cooperative exchanges, however, were not the sole consequence for Franco-British relations of French policy towards Rhodesia after UDI. For one, French support for Britain’s Rhodesian policy was consistently constrained by France’s own African interests. In November 1979, for example, during the course of the Lancaster House talks, the Director of African Affairs at the Quai, although openly stating that ‘Londres compte bien sur notre soutien et nous l’a fait savoir’, admitted that future support would have to take into account ‘l’opinion des pays africains amis de la France’\footnote{Georgy, DAM. (1979, November 8). 5AG3/1410/No.764. Paris:AN.}. The FCO also acknowledged the limitations to French backing over the Rhodesian question and, in particular, the French desire to avoid jeopardising ‘their position in Africa by giving the UK strong support should a confrontation with the OAU develop’.\footnote{Anonymous. (1979, September 3). \textit{Brief for Visit of the French Foreign Minister}. FCO/36/2510/No.20. London:TNA.} In a similar vein, the
British Embassy in Paris noted how ‘they obviously have their eye very much on their own African clients’.

Additional restrictions were placed on cooperation by contrasting Anglo-French legal traditions, apparent not only in the UN, as explored in Chapter Three, but also in the judicial obstacles that initially prevented the French from lifting sanctions against Rhodesia as it neared independence. A provision in the Fifth Republic’s Constitution concerning the direct application of international obligations meant that sanctions were not imposed by a law passed in Parliament, but rather by a Presidential Decree based directly and exclusively on UN Resolution 253, which mandated the international trade embargo. This prevented the French from immediately lifting sanctions against Rhodesia, in line with British wishes, unless the UN Resolution was also reversed, as international obligations were still binding on France as a matter of international law. Even when a ceasefire was agreed at Lancaster House in December 1979, and in spite of the fact that a draft decree annulling French sanctions legislation had already been prepared, the Quai were unable to issue a decree lifting sanctions until after the British had sent a letter to the President of the Security Council and sufficient time had passed to ensure that there were no negative responses to this letter from members of the UNSC.

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75 Anonymous. (nd). Record of meeting between the Permanent Under-Secretary and the Secretary-General of the Quai d’Orsay, held at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at 11.45am on Tuesday 11 December 1979. FCO/36/2510/70. London:TNA.
The FCO were aware and largely sympathetic to the restrictions placed on the Quai by French legal customs, so this issue did not create any direct problems in relations between the UK government and France. And, when France finally announced on 20 December 1979 its decision to lift the economic sanctions against Rhodesia, this move was received as ‘a clear expression of support for the Lancaster House agreement’. However, in the same way that France’s legalistic approach to UN intervention in colonial affairs created an obstacle to the complete convergence of the Anglo-French positions towards Rhodesia in the immediate aftermath of UDI, the Constitution of the Fifth Republic and the Quai d’Orsay’s strict adherence to France’s judicial traditions acted as an impediment to the creation of a fully united Anglo-French front over the question of ending sanctions and Rhodesia’s return to legality. The case study of Rhodesia, therefore, brings to light the complex barriers that existed to Anglo-French cooperation in the African setting.

**The limits of the “new relationship”**

By far the greatest impediment to comprehensive Franco-British collaboration over the question of Rhodesia, however, was the continued involvement of French individuals and groups, both directly and indirectly, in Rhodesian sanctions busting throughout the UDI period. This fuelled discussion within the FCO about whether or not French companies accused...
of breaching the trade embargo should be named by the British in the UNSCSC. In 1971, in an attempt to avoid upsetting France and the other Western European powers, and jeopardising Britain’s application to the EEC, British ministers took the decision not to name members of the Community in notes to the Sanctions Committee. This willingness to prioritise Britain’s application to join the EEC over its successful resolution of the Rhodesian problems reveals the importance that the UK government placed on securing Britain’s position in Europe at this time.

Following Britain’s successful entry to the Community, the naming of EEC member states accused of sanctions legislation infractions by the British at the UN was officially resumed. However, the question of whether or not French companies should be named by the British in the UNSCSC prompted considerable debate within Whitehall and between British officials based in London and in Paris. Diplomats at the British Embassy in Paris favoured direct discussions with the French rather than action in a multilateral context, warning that the Quai would ‘react badly’ if French companies were named publically prior to bilateral discussions. Hibbert, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the FCO (1976-1979), echoed these sentiments, claiming that there was ‘no point in annoying the French on this issue’. This caution is especially evident with regards to the supply of French arms to Rhodesia via South Africa, a question that was described

as one of ‘extreme sensitivity’.\textsuperscript{82} The Western European Department in Whitehall acknowledged that the problem of arms supply was more important than commercial imports, in light of which the former should be prioritised.\textsuperscript{83} Furthermore, it was argued that ‘hitting them [the French] hard on commercial imports from Rhodesia… would not be an effective way of getting them to reappraise their policy on the supply of arms’.\textsuperscript{84}

On the one hand, this statement reveals the desire to maintain cooperative Anglo-French relations over Rhodesia, but also more broadly. In November 1969, the British Embassy in Paris advised the FCO against raising the issue of sanctions with the French on the grounds that the ‘African side of the Quai will be even less likely to want to be helpful to us over Nigeria if they feel we are being unhelpful to them over Rhodesia’.\textsuperscript{85} This desire to avoid disagreements over Rhodesia creating an obstacle to positive Franco-British contacts in Africa more generally is further underscored by a request in June 1976 from the Western European Department of the FCO to delay any action over sanctions until after Giscard d’Estaing’s state visit to the UK, during which he was expected to announce his desire for closer Anglo-French collaboration in Africa.\textsuperscript{86} This approach, in turn, is in keeping with the new phase in Franco-British relations ushered in by De Gaulle’s departure from office and, later, by Britain’s successful application to join the EEC in 1973.

\textsuperscript{82} James to Aspin (Assistant Under-Secretary, FCO). (1976, August 13) FCO/36/1907/27. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{83} Goodall, WED, FCO to Aspin. (1976, June 18). FCO/36/1907/23. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{84} James to Aspin. (1976, June 16). FCO/36/1907/18. London:TNA.
\textsuperscript{86} Goodall to Aspin. (1976, June 18). FCO/36/1907/23. London:TNA.
On the other hand, concerns about jeopardising French cooperation over arms sales by raising the issue of commercial imports could be interpreted as an indication of British uncertainty about the possible French reaction to such advance and, in particular, a worry that it might prompt the French to carry out further action in opposition to British interests in Rhodesia. Fears of French volatility were openly expressed in a handwritten comment on the edge of the aforementioned note advising against ‘annoying the French’ by naming them in notes to the Sanctions Committee, which stated,

The trouble about not annoying the French is that it does not prevent them from annoying us – indeed, I sometimes think it may encourage them to ignore our interests.\(^\text{87}\)

Not all members of the FCO were convinced, therefore, that France should be allowed to escape criticism in the UN simply because the British government ‘did not wish to upset them’.\(^\text{88}\) This hostility and suspicion was most acute amongst members of the Rhodesia Department of the FCO, probably because these officials had the greatest vested interest in the swift resolution of the Rhodesian crisis. A report from 1976, for example, attributes France’s ‘comparatively good record on ordinary commercial imports from Rhodesia’ to the fact that the French ‘are simply better at covering their tracks than, say, the Germans or the Swiss’, indicating the extent of British distrust of the French in some quarters.\(^\text{89}\)

\(^\text{88}\) Barlow to Colvin. (1976, June 10). FCO/36/1907/17. London:TNA.
\(^\text{89}\) Barlow to Colvin. (1976, June 10). FCO/36/1907/17. London:TNA.
Apparent French inaction over the persistent involvement of French companies in Rhodesia served to reinforce these sentiments. Another note from the Rhodesia Department of the FCO launched a tirade of criticism against the French, with the author asserting,

I am not convinced that the “new relationship” which has been established on sanctions matters is really meaningful. Apart from banning a couple of sporting visits there is no evidence that the French have taken any effective action as a result of our bilateral approaches.\(^{90}\)

The note concludes by accusing the French of having been ‘singularly unhelpful to us vis-à-vis the third world’ and, as such, Britain ‘have no good reason to be particularly helpful to them’.\(^{91}\) Continued French involvement in Rhodesia had the consequence, therefore, of fuelling British hostility and suspicion towards the French in Africa, sentiments that were only enhanced by the importance that the British attributed to French support in Rhodesia and Africa more widely.

After 1965, Rhodesia was, therefore, an important component in Anglo-French relations, as an opportunity for collaboration and friendship, but also as a source of tensions and grievances. With regards to the latter, French policy towards Rhodesia, in particular persistent sanctions busting by French companies, and the British perception of French state involvement in this operation, was the source of considerable strain in Anglo-French relations throughout the UDI period. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, tensions with regards to this matter existed alongside many other disagreements, ranging from clashes over the EEC to disagreements over

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transatlantic relations to the Nigerian civil war (Young, 2006, pp.165-168; Chafer & Cumming, 2010a, p.1131). In the 1970s, despite De Gaulle’s departure from the French Presidency, Britain’s membership to the EEC and officially friendly Franco-British relations, Rhodesia remained a point of conflict. Tensions over Rhodesia in the late 1970s, therefore, brought to the fore the long-standing Anglo-French rivalry in Africa, an intense competition that had its roots at Fashoda and which persisted into the post-colonial, post-Cold War era. French involvement in Rhodesia compounded these existing tensions, making a complete entente cordiale impossible.

Moreover, it could be argued that the existence of these hostilities so late in the 1970s, in opposition to friendly Franco-British relations over other questions, contributed to the persistence of Anglo-French competition on the African continent for much of the rest of the twentieth century, seen most notably in the 1990s with Britain and France standing on opposite sides over the Rwandan genocide and the question of intervention in Zaire\(^9\) (Chafer & Cumming, 2010a, p.1131). Therefore, the study of French involvement in Rhodesia, British responses to French action and inaction in this region of Anglophone Africa, and Anglo-French relations with regards to this crisis provides us with the opportunity to attain a more complete picture of Franco-British relations in Africa. In particular, it draws to our attention the persistent obstacles to Anglo-French cooperation in Africa, especially the way in which a national agenda - or at least different individuals and groups’ interpretations of these interests - triumphed over

\(^9\) Zaire is now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
Britain and France’s shared objectives on the continent. It is apparent, therefore, that the memory of Fashoda continued to loom large on both sides of the Channel.

**The impact of French policy in Rhodesia on France’s Cold War strategy**

French policy towards Rhodesia also provides us with an insight into France’s Cold War strategy. Chapter Three explored how the Cold War, and in particular the co-existence of anti-communism and hostility towards the “Anglo-Saxons” in the French psych, conditioned French perceptions of Rhodesia in the UDI period and provided the backdrop for the formulation of French policy towards the region, whilst Chapter Four considered how these imperatives operated in practice and informed the decisions of the French engaged in Rhodesia affairs after UDI. It is the purpose of this final section to consider this scenario in reverse and assess the extent to which France’s involvement in Rhodesia influenced its wider Cold War strategies.

According to Menon (1995, p.21), ‘the Cold War and the accompanying bipolar international order, although vilified in French rhetoric, provided the ideal setting for the exercise of national independence’. Throughout the post-war era, therefore, French foreign policy was driven by the desire to maintain an alternative, autonomous foreign policy. In the context of the 1960s and 1970s, this commitment to independence of action on the world stage influenced the prioritisation of the development of an independent
French nuclear deterrent, or *force de frappe*; informed De Gaulle’s decision to withdraw from the NATO military high command in 1966 and influenced his *Vive Quebec Libre* speech in 1967; shaped France’s desire to lead the EEC and to reject Britain’s application for membership for a second time in 1967; and provided the backdrop for the development of Franco-German relations. It also contributed to French efforts to woo non-aligned and newly independent states, seen most notably by French recognition of the People’s Republic of China in 1964; De Gaulle’s visits to Latin America in 1964 and 1965, and to Cambodia in 1966; French condemnation of US policy in Vietnam; and France’s increasing movement away from the Israeli alliance (Conklin, Fishman & Zaretsky, 2011, pp.286-8; Cumming, 2001, p.360).

In the context of post-UDI Rhodesia, France found a number of new opportunities to further their broader efforts at foreign policy autonomy. This can be seen especially in the way in which many viewed France as key to the resolution of the crisis. As we have seen, the white Rhodesians looked to the French for backing throughout the crisis, juxtaposing negative interpretations of British decolonisation with their favourable impressions of France and its African policies, and calling upon the French to play a defining role in the region, initially by helping the white settlers to maintain minority rule and, as this scenario became increasingly unlikely in the latter years of the 1970s, helping secure a settlement that was most favourable to the outgoing European administration in Rhodesia. It is interesting to note that, in order to achieve this aim, the Rhodesians regularly appealed to France’s sensibilities about the Cold War, especially its deeply rooted anti-
communism, a strategy that can be viewed as an attempt to present UDI as being aligned with France’s broader international concerns. For instance, in a letter to De Gaulle written in February 1966, just a month before France’s withdraw from the NATO military integrated command, Smith called upon NATO, focusing especially on the French by implication of the fact that this statement was personally directed towards De Gaulle, to prohibit the withdrawal of a British division from the Rhine Army so that ‘the British government would not have the means to mount an operation on the scale required’ to put down the Rhodesian rebellion. In an attempt to gain French support for this measure, Smith described the potentially ‘disastrous’ consequences of the use of force against Rhodesia, in particular, ‘the prospect of a large area of Central and Southern Africa laid waste by war’, a scenario that Smith claimed ‘could afford satisfaction to no-one except the Communists’.  

Such efforts to exploit France’s ingrained anti-communism continued throughout the 1970s, as can be seen in an interview with Smith published in *Le Figaro* in January 1977, in which the leader of the RF presented UDI as a struggle to prevent Communist infiltration of the African continent and called upon the Western powers to intervene should ‘les ennemis du monde libre’ become involved. Similarly, in 1979, when the Rhodesians called for French encouragement of the internal settlement, they justified the agreement as a necessary measure to prevent the country being taken ‘for

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Harrison to Wright. (1977, January 3). FCO/36/2013/1. London:TNA.
the Marxists through the barrel of their guns’. Thus, the crisis in Rhodesia presented France with an opportunity to play a leading role in halting the spread of communism in Africa.

In the early 1970s, the Rhodesians presented the French with a chance to go one step further, with an opportunity to stop the spread of communism not only in Rhodesia, but also across the African continent. In 1971, in a note on the growing Chinese presence in Africa, van der Byl proposed holding, conversations with our friends in Black Africa [Gabon, the Ivory Coast and Congo-Kinshasa] and to, again with the assistance of our French friends, penetrate others as quickly as possible with a view to forming, even though it might be unofficial, a general understanding and so-to-speak a league of those countries who oppose Chinese infiltration and, secondly, those who are well disposed towards Taiwan.

Rhodesia’s positioning of its French ‘friends’ as crucial to this venture is striking, not only as proof of the extent of the triangular relations between certain French and Francophone Africans actors and the Smith regime, but also because of the way in which it underscores how the white regime viewed France as a suitable partner in their struggle to prevent Communist encroachment on the African continent.

Moreover, the fact that the Rhodesians looked to France to help halt this growing Chinese presence in Africa indicates their disillusion with “Anglo-Saxon”-led efforts to stave off a Communist takeover of the continent. The solution proposed by the Rhodesians to help stop the spread of communism

in Africa echoed very closely, therefore, with France’s wider Cold War strategies, especially its unease with the bipolar world order. In the African context, France opposed the spread of communism, but it also resisted the “Anglo-Saxon” alternative, seen for example in the case of French policy towards the Katanga crisis in the 1960s, discussed in Part One of this thesis. Therefore, van der Byl’s proposed anti-Chinese grouping provides an example of an opportunity created for France, as a result of the relations between certain French actors linked to the Elysée and white Rhodesian settlers, to pursue a policy to stop the spread of communism that was autonomous from the Western Alliance. Whether or not this Rhodesian initiative came into being is unclear from the archival record. However, the continued engagement in Rhodesia by members of the cellule africaine throughout the UDI period means that it is possible to hypothesise that certain French actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs might have viewed this proposal in a favourable light. Furthermore, the persistent, covert French participation in Rhodesia after 1965, both directly and through intermediaries in France’s former West African colonies and in Southern Africa, suggests that certain French individuals and groups did, in fact, identify Rhodesia as an arena in which to challenge “Anglo-Saxon” dominance by actively opposing British and American policy towards the region.

Somewhat paradoxically in light of the above, France also successfully maintained its image ‘le pionnier de la décolonisation en Afrique et le
champion de l’égalité entre les races’, and was subsequently identified by Anglophone African nationalists as an important player in the quest to secure the introduction of majority rule in Rhodesia. This was especially true in the case of Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, who directed several emotive appeals for support towards the French during the late 1960s and 1970s. In spite of the Zambian President’s denunciations of the activities of French companies in Rhodesia throughout the UDI period, as well as Zambian concerns about French ties with South Africa, Kaunda perceived of France as a potential driver of change in Rhodesia, appealing to France’s carefully crafted self-image as the champion of African decolonisation. In 1968, the President of Zambia wrote to De Gaulle expressing his hope that the French government could,

\[
\text{help to do something to avert this tragedy from developing into something even worse. Your contribution would help the cause of human development and would improve tremendously the prospects of international co-operation regardless of race, colour or nationality.}\]

A similar appeal was made to Pompidou in 1973. After thanking France for its stand over the Zambia-Rhodesia border issue in the UNSC and recalling the ‘cordial and frank’ Franco-Zambian discussions in Paris in 1970, Kaunda conveyed his belief that ‘we can now work together even more effectively to help shape Southern Africa into a peaceful area where democracy will thrive on freedom and justice for all without regard to any distinction’, calling upon the French ‘Government and the French people as

a whole to understand our case and to join with us in our struggle to make non-racialism a practical reality, not only in Zambia but elsewhere in Southern Africa’.  

This perception of France as having an important role to play in bringing about Rhodesian decolonisation, as well as in securing stability across Southern Africa, continued amongst the Zambians throughout the UDI period, as is evidenced in June 1979 when Kaunda made a request to Giscard d’Estaing, via a French diplomat based in Lusaka, for France to back Britain to ensure the peaceful resolution of the Rhodesian problem.  

The Zambians may have viewed certain French activity in Rhodesia with suspicion, but they still acknowledged France’s pivotal role on the African continent, which by this time extended beyond the Francophone sphere. The crisis in Rhodesia, therefore, created the opportunity for France to enhance its position of strength on the African continent, by acting beyond its traditional sphere of influence. This, in turn, contributed to wider French efforts to demonstrate their prowess in Africa, independent from the other members of the Western Alliance.

The possibilities for France to act upon this imperative publically increased as the Rhodesian crisis began to draw to a close in the latter years of the 1970s. As has been noted above, following the internal settlement between Smith and the African nationalist leaders in March 1978, a group of deputies from the Assemblée Nationale travelled to Rhodesia to oversee the

first, democratic elections in the country. This mission alone does not represent an independent French strategy, as it was not unusual for foreign nationals to observe African elections to ensure their democratic credentials. The report on the mission given to Robin by Maurice Tissandier, one of the participants in this venture, however, is remarkably revealing. In his account of his time spent in Rhodesia, Tissandier observed the ‘rancune’ and ‘méfiance’ directed against the British by the white and black populations alike. By contrast, ‘la France jouit d’un préjugé très favorable’ and there was hope amongst the Zimbabweans that France would be the first external power to recognise the results of the election. France was, therefore, not only viewed as a suitable candidate to oversee the transition to independence in the region, but was also identified as a future source of strength for a majority-ruled Zimbabwe. Moreover, the fact that France was seen in a favourable light in contrast to the territory’s colonial ruler underlines how, in this British colony, France successfully achieved its Cold War ambition to use the African arena to demonstrate its strength on the international stage and, in so doing, exercise foreign policy autonomy from “les Anglo-Saxons”.

Conclusions

The consequences of France’s complex and often contradictory policy towards Rhodesia in the UDI period were numerous. Firstly, the willingness of certain French individuals and groups to act in opposition to France’s

official denunciation of UDI by providing the white regime in Salisbury with economic and military support contributed to the length of the crisis in the region. Although France’s direct engagement with Rhodesia after UDI was relatively minor, French companies, traders and mercenaries nevertheless contributed to the material prosperity of white Rhodesia, whilst simultaneously aiding the settlers’ physical defence of white rule in the region. More significant was France’s indirect participation in Rhodesia, through intermediaries in Southern Africa and its best African “friends” in West and Equatorial Africa. The intrinsically opaque nature of this indirect trade makes it difficult to quantify its full extent. However, we know that French arms, automobiles and oil exported to Rhodesia via Mozambique and South Africa were of substantial importance to white efforts to maintain their rebellion against Britain. Similarly, the Rhodesian tobacco, sugar and meat exported through South Africa and Gabon and purchased by French companies, both for consumption in France and for re-export to French clients overseas, provided the white Rhodesians with an important supply of capital, which was vital for their efforts to preserve white rule in the region. This, in turn, contributed to the slow-paced transition to majority rule in Rhodesia.

The most significant element of French support to Rhodesia after UDI is less tangible. Throughout the UDI period, and in spite of France’s public denunciations of the RF, the European settlers in Rhodesia consistently viewed France as a supporter of their struggle with Britain and in their efforts to secure an alternative future for the white race on the African
Certainly some of this support was more imagined than it was real. Yet, this does not detract from the fact that France was widely perceived of as an ally, something that is likely to have contributed to settler confidence that they could remain independent from Britain. As such, French involvement in Rhodesia after UDI and, in particular, the way in which it prompted Rhodesian conviction in French moral backing, can be viewed as an important factor delaying the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia. The fact that the memory of French support stands out in the recollections of former settlers further reinforces this view.

French engagement with this rebellious region of British Africa had an impact beyond the Rhodesian setting, with wide reaching consequences for France’s African policies. UDI, and French responses to it, created opportunities for the development of France’s friendships in regions of the African continent outside of France’s traditional sphere of African influence, in particular in South Africa and Zambia. Thus, the process of the expansion of France’s African vision that had begun in the immediate post-war period was heightened in the context of the late 1960s and 1970s, as new opportunities arose for France to develop its ties with former colonies of other European powers. This period also saw the diversification of France’s ties beyond Francophone Africa, as Rhodesia, along with other Anglophone and Lusophone territories, were integrated into existing Franco-African réseaux. The result was the creation of an extended network of French “friends” in Africa, which transcended racial, linguistic, national
and colonial boundaries, and through which France’s wider foreign policy objectives could be achieved.

French engagement with Rhodesia after UDI also had important consequences for Anglo-French relations. This crisis in Rhodesia provided a focal point for Anglo-French cooperation in Africa, with Britain frequently looking to France as an important ally in its efforts to draw a final line under its African imperial venture. Moreover, as Zimbabwean independence neared in the late 1970s, Britain actively encouraged France to engage with the new African administration, a consequence perhaps of Britain’s desire to finally be rid of its colonial ties. This, in turn, can be viewed as a precursor for Britain’s post-colonial disengagement with Zimbabwe due to its increasing lack of leverage in the region (Taylor & Williams, 2002, pp.547-565).

Yet, despite this official Anglo-French cooperation over Rhodesia and the largely friendly relations between the Quai and the FCO, French policy towards the region remained a sore point in Franco-British relations up until the territory’s independence as Zimbabwe in 1980. Rhodesia brought to light the acute differences in Britain and France’s approaches to Africa, something that served to increase the Anglo-French décalage when it came to African affairs. More disruptive to friendly UK-France relations, however, was the persistent involvement of certain French state actors in propping up the white regime in Rhodesia. Particularly in the 1970s, when relations between the British and French governments over so many other
issues were positive, Rhodesia created an obstacle to the full realisation of an Anglo-French alliance in Africa. This, in turn, may have contributed to the persistence of Anglo-French competition on the African continent throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

Finally, Rhodesia created new opportunities for the pursuit of France’s Cold War objectives, providing France with the chance to play a leading role in the resolution of a global crisis of monumental proportions. Furthermore, in this region of Central Southern Africa, it was possible for France to help stave off the spread of communism on the African continent, whilst simultaneously achieving this end separately from Britain and the United States. The extent to which this policy could be put into practice, for the most part, was limited by Rhodesia’s illegal status, although as we have seen this was not an obstacle for all French actors in the African arena, particularly those linked to Foccart’s African cell. However, as Rhodesia moved towards becoming Zimbabwe, these barriers gradually began to diminish and France found in this region an opportunity to act as a strong, global power and, in so doing, assure its standing as an important player on the world stage. Moreover, France successfully positioned itself in Rhodesia and beyond as an alternative to the “Anglo-Saxon” powers. This, in turn, would have legacies for Zimbabwe’s relations with the outside world after its independence in 1980, whilst simultaneously influencing the shape of France’s future presence on the African continent.
Conclusions

France and Rhodesia: an Anglophone dimension to Franco-African relations

Hitherto, the historiography of Franco-African relations has concentrated on the uniqueness of France’s policies towards its former colonies in West and Equatorial Africa, largely neglecting French engagement with territories that once formed part of other European powers’ colonial empires. In recent decades, certain scholars, such as Alden (1999), Bach (1980; 1982; 1990), Chafer (2002; 2005), Cumming (2005b) Konieczna (2012) and Martin (1995) have begun to break free of this Francophone focus, examining the expansion of France’s ties with Anglophone and Lusophone Africa, and South Africa, in the years that followed the independence of AOF and AEF, with a small number of historians even looking to the late colonial period for the roots of this French interest in non-French speaking Africa (Keese, 2007b; Konieczna, 2009; Moukambi, 2008; Stanley, 2004). Nevertheless, the dominant discourse remains one in which France’s African policies are exceptional and uniquely Francophone in their focus. In fact, a response that I often receive when explaining my research, is an expression of perplexity or confusion, or an indication that the person in question thinks that they might have misheard me! Put simply, French participation in non-French speaking Africa is not yet an integral part of the historical narrative of Franco-African relations.
Through analysis of French policies towards and perceptions of Rhodesia – a region far removed from the Francophone African sphere and in which France had few historical, cultural or geographical ties - this thesis has demonstrated that it is necessary to reconfigure our understanding of Franco-African relations. In contrast to the majority of the existing revisionist work in this field that indicates a post-colonial or post-Cold War departure from France’s singular focus on its former African colonies, this study has shown how interest in areas of Africa outside of the traditional French pré carré first appeared amongst certain policy-makers, diplomats, bureaucrats and businessmen in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. In the case of Rhodesia, this initial interest in the post-war period laid the foundations for France’s continued engagement with this British colony not only after the independence of Francophone Africa in 1960, but also after Ian Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, which left the white settler regime as an outcast on the international stage. As such, in order to understand France’s relations with regions of the continent traditionally dominated by the British, the Portuguese or the Afrikaners after 1960 or 1989, it is necessary to first look to the immediate post-war period in order to permit a more complete understanding of the nature and motivations behind French engagement with non-Francophone Africa to be attained.

As this thesis has demonstrated, from the outset France’s engagement with Rhodesia formed part of a broader strategy in Southern Africa. It was informed by existing patterns of relations with this part of the continent,
principally, but not exclusively, the Union of South Africa, a region in which France had long-standing ties, which expanded considerably in the years after 1948. Although France’s relations with Rhodesia never reached the extent seen in its white-rulled neighbour, French engagement with these two minority-governed regions did have much in common, not least the potential in both regions to capitalise on Britain’s declining position. In addition, the commercial foundations laid in the South African context provided the French with a stepping stone into the Rhodesian market, a route that was to prove crucial after direct contact with Salisbury was severed in the aftermath of UDI. Similarly, France’s relations with the Portuguese-rulers of Angola and Mozambique provided an important point of entry into Rhodesia, especially after 1965 when, as in South Africa, Portuguese sympathy for the white regime in Salisbury created a pathway for certain French actors to continue to engage with Rhodesia indirectly. Moreover, in the years following the independence of AOF and AEF, Rhodesia became part of a wider French African strategy that sought to bring together its “friends” in Francophone Africa and the white rulers of Southern Africa, in a broader attempt to stave off Communist and “Anglo-Saxon” expansionism on the continent.

Somewhat paradoxically, French relations with the settler government in Salisbury also provided the foundations for France’s growing engagement with majority-rulled territories outside of its traditional domain. In the 1950s, the French base in Salisbury led to the creation of Consular agencies in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, France’s first diplomatic engagement
with these British colonies, and the subsequent development of commercial and cultural ties across Central Southern Anglophone Africa. These early relations were to provide the basis for France’s presence in these territories following their independence from the UK in 1964. After 1965, the official French stance of opposition to UDI contributed to France’s growing image in Anglophone Africa as the advocate of the African people, thus prompting increased opportunities for France to operate beyond its traditional sphere of influence. As such, French engagement with Rhodesia was both a symptom and a cause of the expansion of France’s African vision throughout the post-war period.

Leading scholars in the study of France’s relations with Southern Africa, such as Alden (1996) and Bach (1990), have emphasised the particularities of French engagement with Southern Africa as opposed to France’s policies towards its former sub-Saharan dependencies. According to this view, France’s strategies in Southern Africa were distinct from those pursued in Francophone Africa, with their own economic and political rationale. This ‘système autonome de relations’ (Bach, 1990), in turn, helped overcome the contradictions between these two arms in French African policy and meant that the open cultivation of ties with reactionary, white settler regimes did not damage France’s relations with the majority rulers of French Black Africa. This thesis has challenged this view, demonstrating throughout that French engagement with Rhodesia was anything but autonomous from France’s relations with the French-speaking territories in West and Equatorial Africa. Rather, France’s approaches to Rhodesia and
Francophone sub-Saharan Africa were intertwined from the earliest days of France’s presence on the ground in this British colony.

Firstly, France’s expanding relations with Rhodesia in the post-war period were founded upon the same mind-set that informed French policy not only in Africa, but also more widely. In particular, the desire to restore, and later sustain, France’s status as a world power, propelled certain French policymakers, diplomats and bureaucrats to identify and exploit opportunities in the Rhodesian setting. On the one hand, involvement in Rhodesia was viewed by some as a potential antidote to the disconnect between the perceived importance of retaining an African Empire and the reality of France’s weakened position on the continent (Chafer, 2002, p.48). Rhodesia provided, therefore, the opportunity to overcome the paradox between the fact that France’s African Empire was at once the backbone and the Achilles heel of France’s position on the world stage. The possibility that interaction with Rhodesia might contribute directly to French efforts to secure grandeur on the world stage was also a key driving force behind French interest in Rhodesia, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

In addition, the legacies of France’s “Fashoda Syndrome” informed French activity towards Rhodesia, in much the same way that it shaped France’s strategies in Francophone Africa. The Anglophone context distorted this key foreign policy imperative. It was, for example, impossible to prevent “Anglo-Saxon” infiltration in a territory ruled over by Britain and in which the United States had privileged access as a result of the Anglo-American
“special relationship”, leading to much adaptation and improvisation. In addition, the varying contexts and experiences of the numerous different actors engaged in Rhodesian affairs served to influence interpretations of this broader French foreign policy mind-set, whilst simultaneously creating new incentives for French action in this British colony. Nevertheless, there remained a shared worldview that shaped French interaction with Rhodesia and binds it to France’s wider African strategies during this period.

In addition to these shared motivations, there were many common characteristics of the strategies implemented by the French in Rhodesia and in West and Equatorial Africa. The particular emphasis on cultural activities and the diffusion of the French language, for example, was seen in both the Francophone and Anglophone African settings. Economic policies that prioritised the development of infrastructure were also apparent in both contexts. Moreover, and especially after the independence of AOF and AEF in 1960, the private and public individuals and companies vital to the maintenance of France’s influence in its former colonial sphere, were also active in Rhodesia. Thus, in terms of motivations, methods and men, France’s policies towards Rhodesia were bound to its relations with Francophone sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, and as this thesis has demonstrated, the connections between France’s policies in Francophone Africa and Rhodesia went beyond these shared aims, approaches and actors. Rhodesia was integrated into the very mechanisms for the maintenance of France’s influence on the African
continent. This was especially true after 1960, when the transfer of power to the majority in Francophone Africa led to the creation of complex réseaux involving state and non-state individuals and businesses, in which Rhodesia participated. However, the inclusion of Rhodesia in these networks was founded upon the identification of this British colony by certain French policy-makers, diplomats and bureaucrats as an arena in which France’s position on the African continent could be cemented and protected in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. As such, the case study of Franco-Rhodesian relations serves to underline the importance of the Fourth Republic foundations for the foreign policies of the Fifth Republic. The nature of French activity in Rhodesia, alongside the continued participation of certain French companies in Rhodesia throughout the period in question, serves to further underscore this view. The case study of Rhodesia provides evidence, therefore, of an Anglophone dimension to Franco-African relations, which was established in the late 1940s, began to expand in the immediate aftermath of AOF and AEF independence, before proliferating in the years that followed Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence.

**A return to Fashoda or entente cordiale renewed? France’s relations with “les Anglo-Saxons” in the Rhodesian context and beyond**

In the twentieth century, France’s relations with the “Anglo-Saxon” powers on the African continent were informed by two opposing imperatives. On the one hand, the memory of events that took place at Fashoda in 1898,
alongside fears about American infiltration of France’s African Empire, particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War, served to fuel French suspicion of the UK and the US in Africa. This prompted the adoption of various policies by the French that aimed to combat the spread of “Anglo-Saxon” influence on the continent. On the other hand, the Entente Cordiale signed between Britain and France in 1904; the shared Anglo-French dilemma in the post-war period about how to preserve their status as enlightened colonial rulers, worthy of an important role in a world dominated by superpower rivalry; the French reliance on American financial aid in order to rebuild both colony and metropole after the humiliation of defeat in 1940; and France’s position within the Western “camp” in the Cold War, all served to bring France and “les Anglo-Saxons” closer together.

As this thesis has shown, these paradoxical imperatives were clearly present in the Rhodesian setting throughout the period in question. In order to operate publically in Rhodesia, France was required to seek assurances from the territory’s colonial ruler, Britain. Rhodesia also formed part of wider Anglo-French efforts to cooperate in Africa, particularly in the late 1950s as Britain and France looked to each other in an attempt to preserve their influence on the African continent. Moreover, France’s fears about Communist infiltration were explicitly manifest in the context of Rhodesia, providing additional evidence of France’s position within the Western “camp”. Yet, Rhodesia also presented France with an opportunity to act independently from the “Anglo-Saxon” powers, whilst simultaneously
combatting Anglophone dominance of the region. After 1965, these possibilities were increasingly restricted, as Rhodesia’s illegal status made public engagement with the white regime impossible. However, certain French actors acknowledged that the post-UDI context created particular opportunities for France to capitalise as a result of declining Anglo-Rhodesian relations, with some individuals and groups willing to ignore international convention so as to continue to undermine “Anglo-Saxon” pre-eminence in the region. As such, the case study of Rhodesia provides us with a microcosm of France’s relations with the “Anglo-Saxon” powers in the Cold War epoch.

Looking to Anglo-French relations specifically, on the basis of analysis of French policy towards Rhodesia, and Britain and France’s respective responses to each others’ Rhodesian policies, this thesis has argued that Rhodesia was an important component in Anglo-French relations, particularly after 1965. Archival records of the bilateral discussions that took place between Britain and France in the late 1960s and 1970s, as well as the correspondence between different departments of both country’s political and diplomatic apparatus, reveal Rhodesia was an issue over which Britain and France cooperated during this period, particularly at the level of their respective foreign ministries, mirroring earlier Anglo-French efforts at collaboration in the West African setting. However, the persistent involvement of certain French actors in Rhodesia after UDI meant that, in the latter half of the 1960s, Rhodesia existed as a bone of contention alongside other thorns in the side of the tumultuous Franco-British
friendship, in particular clashes over Britain’s application to the EEC, disagreements over Cold War alliances, and French support for the Biafran separatists during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). The end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970, the Cold War détente, and the accession of the UK to the EEC in 1973 removed some of these obstacles to Anglo-French relations. Yet, the situation in Rhodesia remained a source of antagonism and suspicion on both sides of the Channel throughout the 1970s. The exploration of Anglo-French diplomacy regarding the Rhodesian crisis in this thesis reveals, therefore, new facets of Franco-British cooperation and conflict that are crucial to our understanding of the complex relations between these two long-standing rivals and friends, in Africa and beyond.

Analysis of the “mirror” (Keese, 2007b) of French perceptions of British policy in Rhodesia and Africa more widely has also provided insight into France’s strategies in its own sphere of African influence. It has highlighted, for example, the resilience of the memory of Fashoda in shaping French calculations towards Africa, not only in the aftermath of the Second World War, when tensions were high as a result of French perceptions that the UK and the US had let them down in 1940, but also in the 1960s and even into the 1970s, when relations were officially cordial and based on cooperation. Moreover, French impressions of Britain’s African policies, particularly as Britain’s problems in Rhodesia grew, underscore France’s growing confidence in its own methods in Africa, with Britain’s Rhodesian troubles providing a useful counterpoint to justify France’s relations with the African continent. As such, this study of French perceptions of Britain’s Rhodesian
policies has enhanced our understanding of France’s ambitions in and approaches to the African continent. Thus, this thesis demonstrates the utility of applying Keese’s concept of the “mirror” not only to colonial rulers with similar ideologies and practices, such as the French and the Portuguese (Keese, 2007b, p.48), but also to European powers who had alternative visions for the African continent, such as France and Britain.

*Une histoire croisée: France, Francophone Africa and the end of empire in Rhodesia*

The study of Franco-Rhodesian relations in the years between 1947 and 1980 is not only significant for our understanding of French foreign policy in the post-war period. It is also an important strand in the history of Rhodesian decolonisation and the creation of an independent Zimbabwe. As this thesis has argued, in the aftermath of UDI, French support for Rhodesia, both real and imagined, was vital to the preservation of white rule in the region. Whilst not wishing to diminish the importance of other sources of Rhodesian support, most notably that received from South Africa and Portuguese-ruled Mozambique prior to its independence, it is vital nevertheless to acknowledge the other external and transnational forces that shaped the transition to majority rule in this region of Anglophone Africa.

Through analysis of the triangular relations between France, France’s best “friends” in Francophone Africa and the white rulers of Rhodesia, this thesis has shown how an argument about the transnational forces shaping
Rhodesian decolonisation can be taken in two further directions. Firstly, it was the particular nature of the decolonisation process in Francophone Africa, and the subsequent form of Franco-African post-colonial relations, that provided not only the impetus but also the mechanisms for France, the self-styled champion of decolonisation, and majority-ruled Francophone Africa to offer support, albeit covertly, to Rhodesia’s reactionary white rulers. This, in turn, influenced the slow-paced transition to independence in Rhodesia. Thus, the decolonisation processes in Francophone and Anglophone Africa were intertwined in ways that hitherto have been neglected by historians.

Moreover, transnational forces shaped the three-way ties between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia. This unconventional, triangular alliance was rooted in events taking place elsewhere in Africa, beyond the borders of both France’s former African colonies and Rhodesia. Of particular note was the shared support for an independent Katanga, a common stance that brought certain members of the Elysée’s cellule africaine into direct, personal contact with members of the white Rhodesian élite. Later in the 1960s, the Nigerian civil war was to prove pivotal in transforming the seeds sown as a result of the crisis in the Congo into a flourishing economic relationship between Rhodesia and Gabon, with France at its heart. As we have seen, the financial resources gained from this trading complex were amongst the most important sources of strength to the settlers’ efforts to maintain white rule in Rhodesia. There was also a common concern amongst the French, certain Francophone Africans and the Rhodesians
about the spread of communism in Africa, which intersected with a growing disillusion about Anglophone initiatives to counter this trend, evidenced in the abortive pan-African organisation of 1963 and the Rhodesian proposal for a grouping to combat Chinese infiltration of the African continent in 1971. Thus, the transnational points of interconnection that brought together France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia had far reaching consequences for the decolonisation of this British colony.

Furthermore, and although there has not been space within this thesis to explore this argument at any length, the impact of these transnational relations went beyond the Rhodesian setting. In the early 1960s, France’s expanding ties with the Rhodesian settler élite provided the French with access to the Federation’s 2000-mile long border with the Belgian Congo and, thus, a vital springboard from which to launch its strategies of support for the Katangese separatists in the early 1960s (Williams, 2011, p.164). As such, France’s expanding relations with Rhodesia influenced its wider Cold War strategies on the African continent. It could also be argued that, in facilitating France’s access to Katanga, the Franco-Rhodesian alliance shaped the course of events taking place in the former Belgian Congo, although this point would warrant further investigation.

Similarly, shared support for Biafra not only brought France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia closer together. It also had an impact on the Nigerian civil war, as Rhodesia’s connections with France, and later Gabon and Côte d’Ivoire, had the effect of increasing Rhodesian support for the Biafran
cause. In August 1968, after the initial French statement in favour of Biafra, Smith wrote to Debré claiming that,

le fait que la France ait montré, elle-même, sa sympathie pour la cause du Biafra a changé la situation et nous examinons, à présent, dans quelle mesure nous pouvons les aider, au mieux de nos possibilités et en fonction des difficultés pratiques d’acheminement de matériels de la Rhodésie au Biafra.¹

It is clear that Rhodesia did, in fact, increase its aid to Biafra, as is evidenced by van der Byl’s claim during a meeting with Bongo in March 1969 that Rhodesia was ‘aiding the Biafran cause’.² Furthermore, as a result of this encounter with the Gabonese President, Rhodesian support for Biafra grew even further, with the Rhodesians sending clothes, medicine and tobacco to the secessionist state, all via the intermediary of the Gabonese government.³ This, in turn, may have contributed to the defiance of the Biafran leadership and its persistent desire to maintain separation from the Nigerian Federal authorities, elongating the war and the suffering of the Biafran people. The transnational connections between France, Francophone Africa and Rhodesia can be seen, therefore, to have had transnational consequences.

Thus, as this study of Franco-Rhodesian relations has shown, the history of Rhodesian decolonisation is, in many different senses, une histoire croisée. This, in turn, adds further weight to support the calls from scholars, such as Colley (2006) and Burbank and Cooper (2010), for imperial history to be

² Van der Byl. (1969, March 14). Meeting between Bongo and Van der Byl. SC/12/TS(3)/68. Grahamstown:CL.
studied from a broader, global standpoint. Moreover, this thesis has demonstrated the particular resonance of adopting such an approach to the history of the end of empire in Africa, underlining the importance of analysing not only the trans-continental and global forces that shaped the course of African decolonisation, but also how certain actors and groups linked to one Western country crossed boundaries to influence the transition to majority rule in a different European power’s colonial empire, as well as the ways in which the alliances that permitted this process to take place both shaped, and were shaped by, transnational forces.

This thesis, therefore, has made a contribution to the development of connected, global history methodologies, underlining the need to combine the study of transnational interconnections on a micro-scale with a macro, global history perspective. Although this approach has been applied by historians of early European colonial expansion, such as Colley (2002), who combines ‘the large-scale, panoramic and global, with the small-scale, the individual and the particular’ (p.12) in her study of captives in the British Empire, and Ogborn (2008), who uses individual biographies to analyse the spread of British imperial rule across the globe between 1550 and 1800, it has rarely been employed extensively by historians of decolonisation. This thesis has demonstrated the utility of such an approach for the study of the end of European colonial rule in Africa and, thus, has hopefully paved the way for further work on the global interconnections between empires and settler societies in the period following the end of Second World War.
The connected, global history methodology employed in this thesis has also been useful in unpicking ‘the richness and complexity of the foreign policy universe’ (Hill, 2003, p.xx) and breaking the decision-making process down into its constituent parts: ‘agents’, ‘structures’ and ‘responsibility’ (Hill, 2003, pp.20-21). When it came to policy formulation in Rhodesia, France was not a monolithic entity but comprised of numerous actors, operating in different contexts, with overlapping agendas and loyalties, along with diverging interpretations of shared aims and allegiances. Although the practice of looking at the multiple components involved in making foreign policy is becoming more commonplace amongst historians, this study has demonstrated the particular benefits of employing a connected, global history approach to draw out these complexities.

Areas for future research

This study of French policies towards and perceptions of the British colony of Rhodesia has shed new light on France’s engagement with the African continent, France’s relations with the “Anglo-Saxon” powers and the history of Rhodesian decolonisation. This analysis could, however, be enhanced with reference to the various archival sources currently inaccessible to researchers, particularly the papers housed in the Série: Afrique, Sous-Série: Rhodésie-Zimbabwe (1971-1980) at the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, which might provide additional insight into France’s position towards Rhodesia in the 1970s and more information regarding the Quai’s interaction with Britain over the crisis in Rhodesia. It would also be
interesting to explore the Fonds Philippe Lettéron, which were not identified as a potential resource until relatively late on in this research project and were then unfortunately inaccessible due to their transfer to the new Archives Nationales site at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine. Consultation of the Rhodesian Army Association Archive could also give this study additional depth, particularly with regards to the military dimensions of France’s engagement with Rhodesia after UDI, whilst a more comprehensive oral history approach, where interviews are conducted with former French and British officials, could contribute to a more detailed understanding of how Anglo-French relations were affected by the Rhodesian crisis.

The existence of ties between France and Rhodesia during the colonial period, as explored in this thesis, also raises questions about France’s relations with the region following its independence as Zimbabwe in 1980. The existing literature contains some brief references to this subject. Charbonneau (2008, pp.61-2), for example, has noted the signing of a military agreement between France and Zimbabwe in 1992, whilst Compagnon (2011, pp.228-9) and Majumdar (2007, p.242) record some French political gestures towards this former British colony, in particular Chirac’s decision to receive Robert Mugabe in Paris in 2001 and Zimbabwe’s invitation to the Franco-African summit in 2003, in spite of the introduction of economic sanctions against Zimbabwe and the travel ban imposed on Mugabe by the EU, the Commonwealth and the UN. Recent research by Chafer and Cumming (2010b, p.8) has revealed how the UK was forced to accept this move in order to secure French backing of the
extension of sanctions against Zimbabwe after the summit. The French did not invite Mugabe to the 2007 Franco-African summit in Cannes, but only did so after Britain agreed not to block Mugabe’s attendance at the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon. There remains, however, no systematic analysis of Franco-Zimbabwean post-colonial relations, which would further contribute to our understanding of the significance of France’s involvement in this region of Anglophone Africa prior to its independence, as well as to our knowledge of France’s relations with non-Francophone territories on the African continent in the more recent past. Such a study might also enhance our understanding of the state of Zimbabwe today.

Finally, and looking more widely, it is vital that research into France’s relations with regions of Africa beyond the Francophone fold continues. This thesis has revealed the importance of investigating France’s relations outside of its traditional sphere of influence, both before and after the independence of Francophone Africa, and, in so doing, hopefully has contributed to opening up this new avenue for research into Franco-African relations. However, there is much more work to be done by historians in this field.

Two possible avenues for further research have emerged during the course of this study. The first is the Anglophone West African Federation of Nigeria. As has been noted above, France’s relations with this former British colony after its independence, particularly in the context of the Nigerian civil war, have been the subject of some scholarly analysis.
However, newly released archival evidence, particularly from official French archives, could be used to enhance these existing works, whilst situating this analysis within a broader context, which also considers France’s relations with this region of British Africa prior to its independence in 1960, would further enhance our understanding of France’s role in Nigeria. Also noted briefly in this thesis are the contacts between members of Foccart’s *cellule africaine* and Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of Ghana (1969-1972), which, according to Rhodesian sources, permitted France to participate in the overthrow of Nkrumah and his eventual replacement by Busia. In spite of the potential significance of this alleged episode for the history of Ghana in the post-colonial period, as well as France’s known hostility towards Nkrumah, there is no scholarly analysis of these relations, or the roots of these contacts before Ghanaian independence in 1957. These are just two aspects of France’s relations with non-Francophone Africa that warrant further exploration by scholars. It is vital to conclude, therefore, by saying that we must challenge notions of exceptionality, cross national and colonial boundaries, and escape the restrictions of a uniquely Francophone focus on Franco-African relations in order to fully comprehend France’s presence on the African continent.
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c) Reports

Annex: Ethical approval

Attached:

Letter from University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee

UPR16 Research ethics review checklist
Dear Joanna,

**Full Title of Study:** France in Anglophone Africa: French Policy and Perceptions for Decolonisation to the Postcolonial Era

**Documents reviewed:**
- Consent Form
- Invitation Letter
- Participant Information Sheet
- Recording Agreements

Further to our recent correspondence, this proposal was reviewed by The Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am pleased to tell you that the proposal was awarded a favourable ethical opinion by the committee.

Kind regards,

FHSS FREC Chair
**David Carpenter**

Members participating in the review:
- David Carpenter
- Richard Hitchcock
- Jane Winstone
## FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please complete and return the form to Research Section, Quality Management Division, Academic Registry, University House, with your thesis, prior to examination.

### Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information

<table>
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<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Joanna Warson</th>
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<td>Department:</td>
<td>SLAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Supervisor:</td>
<td>Professor Tony Chafer</td>
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<td>Start Date:</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
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### Study Mode and Route:

- [ ] Part-time
- [X] Full-time
- [ ] MPhil
- [ ] MD
- [ ] PhD
- [ ] Integrated Doctorate (New Route)
- [ ] Prof Doc (PD)

### Title of Thesis:

France in Rhodesia: French policy and perceptions throughout the era of decolonisation

### Thesis Word Count:

79,748 words

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If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

### UKRIIO Finished Research Checklist:

(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: [http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research](http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research))

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<td>b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged? YES/NO*</td>
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<td>c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship? YES/NO*</td>
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<td>d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration? YES/NO*</td>
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<td>e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements? YES/NO*</td>
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UPR 16 (2011) – August 2011
**Student Statement:**

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s).

**Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):**

11/12:28

**Signed:**  
(Student)  

**Date:** 30/09/2013

If you have *not* submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain why this is so:

**Signed:**  
(Student)  

**Date:**