

Churchill and deGaulle tried to keep France from giving-in to Hitler - a bond they would share for the rest of their lives. These two leaders, and Franklin Roosevelt, developed an interesting relationship during the war years.

Churchill was often warm and emotional - quick to anger, quick to forgive. FDR was a cool politician who played his cards as needed. While he was charming, he wasn't really close to anyone.

Churchill saw in de Gaulle an ally who would fight, while FDR often saw de Gaulle as irrelevant.

De Gaulle became the leader of Free France (after directing the only successful French counter attack during the Nazi blitzkrieg). He had an almost mystical fervor for his country - France's shame was his shame. He wanted to restore the honor of his country, after its leader - Philippe Pétain - surrendered to Hitler.

In that part of France not occupied by the Germans, Pétain established a pro-Nazi government in Vichy. Charles de Gaulle viewed these people as traitors. In his absence, the Vichy state condemned de Gaulle to death.

In the beginning, not many people agreed with de Gaulle that France should continue to fight. During the summer of 1940, however, he gathered a Free France army of about 4,000 men.

De Gaulle began to see himself not as a person but as a nation. He adopted the same flag - the cross of Lorraine - that Joan of Arc had used to resist England.

But de Gaulle had no territory, in France, while the Vichy government also controlled France's still-substantial empire. The Free-French leader needed just a small part of that empire to provide a launch pad for his movement.

In late August, 1940, he had some success as part of Chad rallied to the Free French. So did other parts of Africa. But ... would it be enough?

Credits:

A clip from the documentary *Allies at War* - "Hero to Villain" - in which Simon Berthon examines the relationship between Churchill, de Gaulle and FDR. The film includes excerpts from diaries, historical footage and eyewitness accounts by Curtis Roosevelt (FDR's grandson) and Claude Bouchinet Serreulles (de Gaulle's aide de camp).

Online, courtesy [BFI National Library](http://www.bfi.org.uk), London.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Charles-de-Gaulle-Leader-of-the-Free-French0>

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