Why were the approaches of Marshal Philippe Pétain and Charles de Gaulle to the German invasion of 1940 so different when they both wanted to protect the honor of France*?*

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Marshal Philippe Pétain and General Charles de Gaulle, both veterans of the Great War who deeply loved their country, had diametrically opposed reactions to the Nazi defeat of France in June 1940. Pétain, who was already well-known as "the Victor of Verdun" in the Great War, took a pragmatic and provincial approach as the leader of the Vichy government. Working with the Nazis, he focused internally and tried to restore France's morals which he thought had been corrupted. A relative unknown, de Gaulle was expansive and international. He leveraged his communication skills to rally idealistically against the Nazis from exile overseas. He encouraged the French Resistance and bet on the Allies to prevail while emphasizing France's role in the world. The leaders' approaches and strategies varied so much because of their radically different visions for France: Pétain thought France would thrive if it embodied more conservative values and focused inward, while de Gaulle saw a republican France as part of the post-war international order.

Background

France declared war on Germany after the Nazis invaded Poland on September 3, 1939, but Germany did not invade France until May 10, 1940. Within six weeks, as Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, put it, "France fell prostrate under the German hammer."[1] The initial humiliation of the Battle of France immediately caused a split in French leadership between those who wanted to collaborate with the Nazis versus those who wanted to resist. Paul Reynaud, who had recently become French Prime Minister on March 21, 1940, opposed appeasing Hitler and had invited both Pétain and de Gaulle into his cabinet.[2]

Pétain and de Gaulle emerged as the figures representing France's binary choice after the Battle of France: to surrender or keep fighting. Both men were aiming to protect France's honor. Pétain, already 84 years old at the time, was far better known than de Gaulle given Pétain's status as a hero at the end of World War I. When Pétain joined Reynaud's cabinet during the Battle of France, French newspapers wrote of "the incomparable prestige of his [Pétain's] name, the counsels of his limitless experience, the flame of his extraordinarily lucid mind."[3] He was beloved and revered for his role in protecting France in WWI. In contrast, de Gaulle was a 49-year-old lower-rank general who had served with distinction during WWI and had tried to escape as a prisoner of war but was virtually unknown to the French people. More junior to

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[1] Winston Churchill, "Broadcast on the Soviet-German War," speech, June 22, 1941, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/churchill-broadcast-on-the-soviet-german-war-june-1941.

[2] "Paul Reynaud," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Reynaud.

[3] Richard Griffiths, *Petain: A Biography of Marshal Philippe Petain of Vichy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1972), 226.

Pétain, he was promoted from Commander to Brigadier General in May 1940.[4] De Gaulle had been a protégé of Pétain after WWI, but they had a falling out that culminated in 1938.[5] After the falling out between the two, Pétain described de Gaulle as "proud, ungrateful and embittered."[6]

The men had different backgrounds which influenced their outlooks on how to handle the glaring challenges France was facing in the wake of being defeated by the Nazis. As history professor Jacques Szaluta described in his article, "The Correspondence between Maréchal and Madame Pétain, 1913 to 1949: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation," Pétain was born into a conservative Catholic peasant family, and his mother died when he was a baby leaving him with a father who remarried and rejected him.[7] As reported by Szaluta, both proponents and opponents of Pétain considered him "aloof, cold, reserved, cautious and secretive" as well as a pessimist.[8] Pétain's background likely influenced him to be inwardly focused and reliant on what he knew, rural France, rather than rely on international allies. Pétain had not volunteered to serve in French colonies and, unlike other prominent WWI generals, had not served overseas.[9] Pétain did not have international experience. In contrast, de Gaulle, who had lived in the Middle East between the two world wars, seemed inclined to see the world in global, not provincial, terms.[10] De Gaulle's family was upper-middle-class, and he lived in Paris as a child which gave him a more expansive view as opposed to Pétain's impoverished and more rural upbringing.

Pétain argued for accepting defeat to preserve some level of French autonomy, whereas de Gaulle argued for resistance. De Gaulle made several trips to London during the Battle of France which underscores his awareness that this was a global, not just a French, conflict. As Terry Reardon points out in his article, "Lion of Britain, Cross of Lorraine: Churchill and de Gaulle," de Gaulle was a proponent of an "indissoluble union" with Great Britain as the British Parliament had proposed on June 16, 1940.[11] On the other hand, Pétain blamed Britain for some of France's challenges, suggested Britain would soon be defeated by the Nazis, and reportedly thought such a union with Britain would be "fusion with a corpse."[12] Their opposing perspectives drove the two leaders to take very different actions at the end of the Battle of France.

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[4] "Britain recognizes General Charles de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French," History.com, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/britain-recognizes-general-charles-de-gaulle-as-the-leader-of-the-free-french.

[5] John L. Hess, "Petain Found the de Gaulle of 1920's to Be a Proud and Touchy Ghostwriter," *New York Times*, February 6, 1972, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/1972/02/06/archives/petain-found-the-de-gaulle-of-1920s-to-be-a-proud-and-touchy.html.

[6] Griffiths, *Petain: A Biography*, 231.

[7] Jacques Szaluta, "The Correspondence between Maréchal and Madame Pétain, 1913 to 1949: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation," *American Imago* 47, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 172-173, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26303910?seq=1.

[8] Ibid, 174.

[9] Ibid, 174.

[10] Julian Jackson, *de Gaulle* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 64.

[11] Terry Reardon, "Lion of Britain, Cross of Lorraine: Churchill and de Gaulle," International Churchill Society, last modified April 2008, accessed May 23, 2021, https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-138/lion-of-britain-cross-of-lorraine-churchill-and-de-gaulle/.; "British Offer of Anglo-French Union, June 16, 1940," ibiblio.org, accessed May 23, 2021, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1940/1940-06-16d.html.

[12] Reardon, "Lion of Britain," International Churchill Society.

Surrender

Pétain believed that the best option to restore French pride would be to collaborate with the Germans and focus inward while de Gaulle wanted to continue to fight against them. On June 13, 1940, as options were being considered, Pétain stated that he refused "to leave home soil" to continue to fight and he insisted "we must wait for the French revival by remaining on the spot."[13] Pétain was resolute that there was no other choice for France who had been overpowered by the German military. His opinion was becoming the dominant one within the country. As it became clear that an armistice with Germany was inevitable, Reynaud resigned on June 16, 1940, and de Gaulle fled the country. Pétain led the armistice negotiations with Germany to keep part of France a sovereign state with its own government headquartered in Vichy, while the Nazis would occupy the other part of France (approximately half). France was utterly humiliated; Germany took two million French prisoners of war and controlled half of the country.[14] However, without the armistice, Germany would have taken over the whole country. From Pétain's perspective, the appearance of self-governance was a way to maintain some pride and honor instead of total occupation like in the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium who chose to keep fighting but eventually were utterly destroyed as well. Pétain was made head of the new Vichy government (named for its location in Vichy, France), which replaced the Third Republic and was designed to operate independently from German control. Rejecting that France had a role in the global struggle, Pétain was more on the defensive, striving for some degree of French autonomy, while accepting that the Nazis would be a major force in France given the military defeat and their occupation of about half of France. Pétain was focused inwardly rather than on France's role on the global scale. In contrast, de Gaulle focused on France's honor and duty to engage in this global war against the Nazis and for total freedom. He left France for England on June 17th, 1940 when it was clear that Pétain would surrender and negotiate an armistice. De Gaulle lived in exile during the war since he was sentenced to death by the Vichy military if he returned given his anti-Vichy rhetoric.

Differing outlooks in first speeches

After the Battle of France, Pétain and de Gaulle gave speeches that encapsulated their opposed perspectives. Pétain took a more defeatist and insular view while de Gaulle famously invoked resistance and shared a broader world view. Pétain's radio address on June 17, 1940 confirmed the collapse of the previous government and his ascension as the leader of a new French government. His speech was inwardly focused on France as he admitted defeat, surrendered, and announced: "I make to France the gift of my person, to attenuate her suffering."[15] He presented himself as a savior for France. He just focused on the sober military defeat for France without putting it in the context of a bigger war. He advocated for a passive approach stating, "Let all Frenchmen group themselves around the Government over which I preside during these harsh trials, and let them silence their anguish and listen only to their faith in the destiny of la Patrie [the fatherland]."[16] He called for surrender and compliance, not action. On the following day, June 18, 1940, in London, de Gaulle had persuaded Churchill and the BBC to allow him to give

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[13] Griffiths, *Petain: A Biography*, 236.

[14] Lorraine Boissoneault, "Was Vichy France a Puppet Government or a Willing Nazi Collaborator?," *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 9, 2017, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/vichy-government-france-world-war-ii-willingly-collaborated-nazis-180967160/.

[15] Griffiths, *Petain: A Biography*, 240.

[16] Ibid, 240.

a speech on the British radio to the French people. His address directly rejected Pétain's perspective and offered a more hopeful, global viewpoint with rationale. He highlighted the power of France's empire, and France's role in a global war rather than just focusing on the Battle of France as Pétain did. De Gaulle showed he was an internationalist. He emphasized the alliance between France and Great Britain and even the United States, stating: "For, remember this, France does not stand alone. She is not isolated. Behind her is a vast empire, and she can make common cause with the British empire, which commands the seas and is continuing the struggle. Like England, she can draw unreservedly on the immense industrial resources of the United States."[17] He anticipated that this would become a world war and that freedom could prevail, stating, "This war is not limited to our unfortunate country. The outcome of the struggle has not been decided by the Battle of France. This is a world war...there still exists in the world everything we need to crush our enemies some day."[18] His speech was a practical call to act and fight, not an emotional or political pitch, commenting, "I call on all engineers and skilled workmen from the armaments factories...to get in touch with me."[19] Historian and biographer Julian Jackson asserted the importance of this initial speech: "All de Gaulle's future action — what he would later call his 'legitimacy' — derived from that moment."[20] At the time, very few people listened to de Gaulle, but the speech became famous later because it has retrospectively been used to mark the beginning of the French Resistance.

"War of Words" June 1940

Pétain and de Gaulle continued to go back and forth with their speeches in a "war of words" during the first month after the Battle of France, revealing stark differences in their inward and outward focuses. While Pétain had power as head of the Vichy government, de Gaulle did not have an official position of power. However, as Lawrence Kritzman stated in his article, "A Certain Idea of de Gaulle," de Gaulle used "language as a military tactic" to try to restore France's dignity and urge resistance.[21] In exile in England, he used "radio as a weapon" to get his message out, eventually getting Churchill and the BBC to give him five minutes a day, no small feat for someone without a political position of power.[22] De Gaulle built his power through his strong communication skills and showed a commitment to his words.[23] On June 19, 1940, de Gaulle reiterated his message to continue to fight stating, "It is the bounden duty of all Frenchmen who still bear arms to continue the struggle."[24] He expressed his conviction to resist, which met with opposition from the Vichy government and Nazis. The Nazis tried to jam the airwaves and threatened to punish listeners with prison, work camps, or death.[25] Their opposition of de Gaulle actually drew attention to him. In the wake of radio criticisms from de Gaulle and Churchill for the armistice, on June 22, 1940 Pétain struck back stating in a radio address: "Our flag remains without stain...We know our country will remain intact as long as her children go on

[17] Charles de Gaulle, "The Flame of French Resistance" (speech, BBC Broadcast, 1940) in *The Guardian*.
[18] de Gaulle, "The Flame."
[19] Ibid.
[20] Julian Jackson, *De Gaulle* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 128.
[21] Lawrence D. Kritzman, "A Certain Idea of de Gaulle," *Yale French Studies*, no. 111 (2007): 159, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20479377?seq=1.
[22] Olivier Wieviorka, *The French Resistance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 9-10.
[23] Kritzman, "A Certain,".
[24] Charles de Gaulle, "The Duty of Resistance," speech presented in London, June 19, 1940, Ibiblio, accessed May 22, 2021, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1940/1940-06-19b.html.
[25] Wieviorka, *The French*, 11.

loving France."[26] Pétain continued to focus only on his country and citizens remaining passive. On the other hand, de Gaulle continued to call for action and asserted in a June 22, 1940 radio broadcast that "'powerful forces of resistance [were] rising up to save France's honor.'"[27] On June 25, 1940, Pétain pushed back again, declaring his refusal to "'shed the blood of the French to prolong the dream of some Frenchmen badly informed about the conditions of the struggle… [I will] not place my hopes and my person outside the soil of France.'"[28] Again, Pétain shows his focus is solely on France, not the larger world struggle, and he does not name de Gaulle but alludes instead to "some Frenchman badly informed." De Gaulle responded to Pétain on June 26, 1940 highlighting Pétain's narrow view: "You dismissed as absurd any further resistance in the Empire. You regarded as contemptible the efforts now being made—and the far greater efforts still to be made—by our Allies of the British Empire. You refused in advance to draw upon the vast resources of America."[29] De Gaulle highlighted what Pétain refused to do and went on to paint the picture of how he saw the war would proceed, "Throughout her Empire, throughout the world, here, in England, her [France's] sons are gathering and forming organized forces. The day will come when our arms, forged anew in distant lands, but sharpened to a keen edge, will join with those of our Allies and, perhaps, of other countries which have not yet rallied to the cause of freedom, and we shall return triumphant to our native land."[30] De Gaulle's vision of victory for France and freedom relied on an international approach.

Pétain's first move: blame moral decay

Pétain blamed the previous (Third Republic) government's policies, lack of military preparedness, and a decline in morality for France's defeat in the Battle of France, and he focused on restoring it. In a September 1940 statement to the French people (republished in the April 1941 article, "Marshal Pétain and the 'New Order"), Pétain asserted he was building his government "on the ruins of the monstrous and flabby State which collapsed under the weight of its weaknesses and mistakes far more than under the blows of the enemy."[31] The "monstrous and flabby State" he referred to was the previous French government. According to historian Robert Paxton, Pétain reportedly conveyed to US Ambassador Bullitt in 1940 that "unpatriotic school teachers had been responsible for French defeat...He put immense effort and care into his role as a moral tutor to the French people."[32] Given his perceptions of the previous government's role in driving moral decay, Pétain's key agenda for the Vichy government was to restore morality through a National Revolution program. The program focused on rural life, the family unit, and Catholicism rather than cities with their capitalism and foreign influences which Pétain opposed.[33] According to historian Gladys Kammerer's 1943 article "The Political Theory of

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[26] Henri Phillipe Pétain, "Our Flag Remains Without Stain," address presented at BBC Radio, Bordeaux, June 22, 1940, Ibiblio.
[27] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 133.
[28] Ibid, 133.
[29] Charles de Gaulle, "Reply to Marshal Pétain," speech presented in London, England, June 26, 1940, Ibiblio, accessed May 22, 2021, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1940/1940-06-26b.html.
[30] de Gaulle, "Reply to Marshal," speech, Ibiblio.
[31] "Marshal Pétain and the 'New Order,'" *Foreign Affairs* 19, no. 3 (April 1941): 671, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20029099?seq=1.
[32] Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 37.
[33] Tony McNeill, "The Vichy Régime 1940-42," Lectures in French Studies, last modified November 3, 1998, accessed May 23, 2021, https://eserve.org.uk/tmc/occupied/vichy.htm.

Vichy," the program called for a rejection of industrialism and instead a "return to the soil."[34] The Vichy government created "Principles of the Community" as a substitute for the Declaration of Rights of 1789 from the French Revolution.[35] Pétain's focus was on restoring his brand of morality and order within France.

De Gaulle's first move: get the colonies on board

De Gaulle was convinced the conflict would become a world war, and he wanted to position France, and himself, for victory by reaching out to others beyond France. Unlike Pétain, who had almost full power over the Vichy government, de Gaulle had no power. At first, the French colonies sided with Pétain and the Vichy government, but de Gaulle pursued them to get them to join his resistance efforts. De Gaulle wrote to General Charles Noguès, the French North Africa leader, on June 19, 1940.[36] By reaching out, it shows he immediately understood how critical it was to get the colonies involved in the war on his side, even though Noguès chose to follow Pétain.[37] New Hebrides (French territory in the Pacific) was the first to declare allegiance to de Gaulle on July 22, 1940.[38] Soon after, the governor of Chad indicated that he was considering joining de Gaulle as well, and de Gaulle knew how critical it was to have his support. De Gaulle sent emissaries and got the governor's allegiance, as well as that of Cameroon and the Congo by August 1940.[39] At the end of August 1940, de Gaulle went off to "rally the French colonies of West Africa" because he needed the support of Dakar.[40] While his efforts failed, it showed he recognized it was critical to join forces across nations.[41] In October 1940, de Gaulle issued a manifesto in Brazzaville declaring "'the organism in Vichy...unconstitutional'" and calling all colonies to join him.[42] Soon after, de Gaulle sent his troops to Gabon, the only country in Equatorial Africa that still supported Pétain, and they surrendered.[43] In 1943, he relocated from London to Algiers, where he served as the head of the French Committee of National Liberation.[44] Of course, de Gaulle had to be overseas because he had been sentenced to death by the Vichy government if he returned, but his actions show that this was an international struggle for him. He fought in North Africa alongside French colonists at times during the war and coordinated resistance efforts from afar. Historian Bertram Gordon summarized in his article, "The Formation of de Gaulle's Political Philosophy: Legacies of the Belle Epoque," "De Gaulle stands out in French history for his… attempts to give France and her empire an independent role in world affairs."[45] Not only did he reach out to the colonies, but also to world leaders to position France on the world stage.

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[34] Gladys Kammerer, "The Political Theory of Vichy," *The Journal of Politics* 5, no. 4 (November 1943): 427, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2125296?seq=1.
[35] Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 149.
[36] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 129.
[37] Ibid, 134.
[38] Ibid, 145.
[39] Ibid, 146.
[40] Ibid, 146.
[41] Ibid, 149.
[42] Ibid, 154.
[43] Ibid, 155.
[44] Dorothy M. Pickles, "Charles de Gaulle," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-de-Gaulle-president-of-France.
[45] Bertram M. Gordon, "The Formation of de Gaulle's Political Philosophy: Legacies of the Belle Epoque," *Historical Reflections* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 79, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41298959?seq=1.

Pétain's rejection of foreign leaders

Unlike de Gaulle, Pétain rejected foreign influence and leaders, staying focused solely inwardly on France. Pétain blamed foreign influences in part for France's misfortune. As he told a French magazine in September 1940: "Liberalism, capitalism, and collectivism are foreign products imported into France. France, restored to herself, rejects them quite naturally. She understands today that she was misled in trying to transplant to her own soil institutions and methods which were not at all meant for her sun and her climate."[46] He used the "soil" imagery from his peasant roots as he blamed internationalism for France's troubles. As historian Paul Vacher reported in "The 'National Revolution' in France" in March 1942, under the Vichy regime, foreign newspapers were censored, and "the listening to foreign stations on the radio, which had been forbidden only in public, has now become prohibited also in the home."[47] There was no room for foreign influence in the Vichy government. Pétain directly rejected foreign offers to help. For example, in November 1942, President Roosevelt wrote to Pétain to let him know that American troops would arrive in North Africa to fight the Nazis and Italians. He asked for cooperation from France in the mutual fight to protect freedom.[48] Pétain emphatically rejected American help, writing back to Roosevelt, "In our misfortune I had, when requesting the armistice, protected our empire and it is you who, acting in the name of a country to which so many memories and ties bind us, have taken such a cruel initiative. France and her honor are at stake. We are attacked; we shall defend ourselves; this is the order I am giving."[49] Calling the Americans' offer to help "cruel," Pétain again aligned with the Nazis rather than accept the offer to join the Americans to fight to free France.

De Gaulle's connection with foreign leaders

In sharp contrast, de Gaulle tried to cultivate relationships with foreign leaders to form allies for France. It was not always easy for de Gaulle as he had no real power. The Americans and Soviets did not like de Gaulle, viewing him as arrogant, without real power, and instead recognized the Vichy government. Great Britain could not decide what to do with him in the first couple of weeks after the Battle of France, but on June 28, 1940, Churchill finally recognized "General de Gaulle as leader of all the Free French wherever they might be."[50] The phrase "wherever they might be" defined France as more than just the country and more of a key player on the world's stage in keeping with de Gaulle's goals. After a British fleet sunk a French ship in Mers-el-Kebir and Oran in North Africa, de Gaulle gave a speech on July 8th, 1940, highlighting France and Great Britain's strong connection: "Come what may, even if for a time one of them is bowed under the yoke of the common foe, our two peoples—our two great peoples—are still linked together. Either they will both succumb, or they will triumph side by side."[51] This "link" of "our two great peoples" despite adversity was reminiscent of the "indissoluble union" proposed by

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[46] "Marshal Pétain," 673.
[47] Paul Vaucher, "The 'National Revolution' in France," *Political Science Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (March 1942): 10, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2143506?seq=1.
[48] Letter by Franklin Roosevelt, "Franklin Roosevelt Administration: Message to Marshal Henri Petain," November 8, 1942, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/president-roosevelt-message-to-marshal-henri-petain-november-1942.
[49] Letter by Philippe Petain, "Petain's Reply to Roosevelt's Letter," November 1942, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/petain-s-reply-to-roosevelt-s-letter-november-1942.
[50] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 134.
[51] Charles de Gaulle, "After Oran," speech presented in London, England, July 8, 1940, ibiblio.org, accessed May 23, 2021, http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1940/1940-07-08a.html.

Great Britain in June 1940 and supported by de Gaulle.[52] De Gaulle pointed to the prominent role he believed France had in protecting freedom in the world on March 1, 1941, stating: "'There is a pact of twenty centuries between the grandeur of France and the liberty of the world.'"[53] He saw the war as a bigger struggle and France as part of that global fight. In another example of reaching out to other foreign leaders, in June 1941 he met with the ruler of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin. De Gaulle only got a meaningless treaty out of the meeting, but seeking the meeting shows how dedicated he was to participating in global politics.[54] He also went to Casablanca from January 14th to 24th, 1943 to meet with Roosevelt and Churchill. This move was bold because de Gaulle was not actually that important to the Allies efforts, but he acted as if he belonged.[55]

Pétain's authoritarian government

Pétain's government was authoritarian, conservative, nationalist, and anti-Semitic. In her November 1943 article, "The Political Theory of Vichy," historian Gladys Kammerer described Pétain as "paternalistic" and wrote that he "commanded his Frenchmen to…obey him."[56] Kammerer noted that Pétain envisioned "an organized France, where the discipline of the subjects responds to the authority of the leaders… The new regime will be a social hierarchy. It will no longer rest upon the false idea of the natural equality of man… Work and talent alone will become the foundation of the French hierarchy."[57] Again, this illustrates Pétain's inwardly-focused perspective. Pétain's Vichy government replaced the slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" with "Work, Family, Fatherland" showing the shift in the values they promoted to be more nationalistic.[58] In a short address to the French people on May 15th, 1941 regarding a meeting he had with Hitler, Pétain stated, "For you, the French people, it is simply a question of following me without mental reservation along the path of honor and national interest."[59] This statement was another clear example of his authoritarian and national approach. Pétain's Vichy government blamed Jews, among other groups, for France's defeat and decline.[60] As historian Robert Gildea wrote, during the Vichy regime, "Freemasons, communists, and Jews, alleged to have dominated the Third Republic and stabbed France in the back, were pilloried as 'anti-France', purged and persecuted."[61] There were over 75,000 Jews deported under the Vichy government and less than 2,000 survivors.[62] Historian Robert Paxton explained, "Vichy xenophobia was more cultural and national than racial."[63] Vichy deportations were focused on

[52] "British Offer," ibiblio.org.
[53] Gordon, "The Formation," 63.
[54] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 350-353.
[55] Meredith Hindley, "Allied Leaders at Casablanca: The Story Behind a Famous WWII Photo Shoot," *Time*, January 16, 2018, accessed May 23, 2021, https://time.com/5101354/churchill-fdr-casablanca-photo/.
[56] Kammerer, "The Political," 416.
[57] Ibid, 416.
[58] Julia Pascal, "Vichy's Shame," *The Guardian*, May 11, 2002, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/11/france.weekend7.
[59] Marshal Petain, "Marshal Petain's Speech to the French People in Vichy," speech, May 15, 1941, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/marshal-petain-s-speech-to-the-french-people-in-vichy-may-1941.
[60] Boissoneault, "Was Vichy,".
[61] Robert Gildea, "Resist or Collaborate?," aeon, last modified May 22, 2017, accessed May 23, 2021, https://aeon.co/essays/put-yourself-in-vichy-france-do-you-resist-or-collaborate.
[62] Paul Webster, "The Vichy Policy on Jewish Deportation," BBC, last modified February 17, 2011, accessed May 23, 2021, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/jewish_deportation_01.shtml.
[63] Paxton, *Vichy France*, 174-175.

foreign Jews in particular in line with Pétain's nationalistic focus. Again, de Gaulle's approach to leadership differed significantly from Pétain's.

De Gaulle's Resistance as republican and anti-authoritarian

De Gaulle presented the French Resistance movement as an alternative to the authoritarian Vichy government and one which encompassed, rather than rejected, Republican values. De Gaulle opposed totalitarianism and promoted freedom. In a November 1941 speech in England, de Gaulle "affirmed that Britain and France were jointly engaged in a 'battle for liberty and the development of the individual', and that both opposed regimes which 'only recognized the right to a national or racial collectivity.'"[64] His words underscored the key French Republican value of liberty. De Gaulle supported the Republican ideology of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" whereas Vichy had turned its back on those values which had been a part of France for hundreds of years. Unlike Pétain, de Gaulle did not engage in anti-semitism.[65] De Gaulle focused on the broader, global picture of fighting totalitarianism. He encouraged resistance in France which started as small symbolic acts then grew into acts like sharing information about Germans with Allies or helping Jews (especially children) escape internment camps.[66] De Gaulle's Resistance organization morphed over time. The first iteration, Free France, took part in some military attacks with mixed success. In September 1941, de Gaulle created the French National Committee which was a Free French government.[67] In 1942, Free France gained momentum and changed its name to Fighting French Forces.[68] Jean Moulin worked with de Gaulle to try to bring the different Resistance groups within France under de Gaulle's leadership. It worked to some extent and, in May 1943, Moulin formed the National Council of the Resistance which included various Resistance groups.[69] De Gaulle was persistent in mobilizing resistance and supporting republican values such as liberty. Despite his persistence, resistance efforts were small and scattered as most citizens stayed out of it. However, de Gaulle was much more effective at creating a widely believed resistance myth than an actual widespread resistance.

End of the war and post-war

In the end, the Allies won the war and de Gaulle's vision prevailed. De Gaulle succeeded in elevating himself and France on the global stage. He was present when France the Allies liberated and when Germany surrendered to the Allies on May 8, 1945, even though he did not have much direct impact on the war's outcome. In de Gaulle's radio broadcast that day, he announced, "The war has been won. This is victory. It is the victory of the United Nations and that of France."[70] In truth, France had very little to do with securing the victory, but de Gaulle remained true to elevating France. He did thank France's "gallant Allies" as well.[71] The Allies

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[64] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 192.
[65] Ibid, 187.
[66] Gildea, "Resist or Collaborate?," aeon.
[67] "Free French," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, [Page #], https://www.britannica.com/topic/Free-French
[68] "Free French".
[69] Ibid.
[70] Charles de Gaulle, "V-E Day Broadcast to the French People," speech, May 8, 1945, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/charles-de-gaulle-s-v-e-day-broadcast-to-the-french-people-may-1945.
[71] de Gaulle, "V-E Day Broadcast," speech, Jewish Virtual Library.

gave France the right to occupy Germany and to have a seat on the United Nations Security Council which were wins for de Gaulle.[72]

In July 1945, Pétain was tried, convicted, and given the death penalty, but de Gaulle commuted it given his service to France in WWI and his age. As Dov Jacobs wrote in his article, "A Narrative of Justice and the (Re)Writing of History: Lessons Learned from World War II French Trials," Pétain's trial served a critical political purpose, "Pétain represented the [Vichy] regime and its systemic illegality. In this sense, Pétain was in a way just an excuse to point out that Vichy was an illegitimate government and that De Gaulle represented the 'true' France that fought on."[73] Indeed, de Gaulle led the Provisional Government of the French Republic from 1944 to 1946 and served as President of France from 1959 to 1969.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, de Gaulle and Pétain shared a deep love for France and a desire to protect its honor during WWII. Their outlooks and approaches were opposed, and, while both emerged as prominent political leaders as a result of the crisis of the war, only De Gaulle prevailed. Pétain's approach was more insular. He accepted defeat, focused on addressing what he saw as France's moral decay, collaborated with the Nazis, and remained solely focused on France, not the global fight for freedom. De Gaulle went from unknown to national hero and eventually to France's presidency for a decade. He derived power from his words, his conviction in France's honor, and his internationalist approach. When Paris was liberated in August 1944, de Gaulle reportedly told a colleague during the celebration, "...the Republic has never ceased to exist. I was the Republic."[74] He never wavered in his representation of France. Much like today's leaders, Pétain and de Gaulle fought through a "war of words" with the radio as their platform whereas today's leaders use television, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Pétain's language of "return to soil," his nationalist focus, and anti-Semitic policies are similar to Trump's "make America great again" motto, insular view, and anti-immigrant policies. Both Pétain and Trump incorporated blaming the "other" in their messages. Trump, like de Gaulle, rose to political power on the back of the media, rather than based on any political experience. The BBC gave de Gaulle his microphone while Fox News and Twitter gave Trump his, though the two leaders used them to promote very different messages. Both Trump and de Gaulle knew the words to use to create powerful narratives and inspire an audience. As citizens, we must be careful in who and what we believe despite their compelling words. We need to ask more questions and think critically, not just go along with what we are told or the easy answer. For instance, country-first messages can be compelling for many, but fail to recognize how interconnected the world is today. Like de Gaulle, we should look beyond our borders because the world is even more global now than it was in WWII, and our liberty depends on one other.

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[72] Jackson, *de Gaulle*, 354.

[73] Dov Jacobs, "A Narrative of Justice and the (Re)Writing of History: Lessons Learned from World War II French Trials," in *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials*, by Kevin Jon Heller and Gerry J. Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), [Page #], accessed May 23, 2021, https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199671144.001.0001/acprof-9780199671144-chapter-6.

[74] Curtis Cate, "Charles de Gaulle: The Last Romantic," *The Atlantic*, November 1960, [Page #], accessed May 23, 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1960/11/charles-de-gaulle-the-last-romantic/306916/.

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