CHURCHILL DE GAULLE

EXHIBITION BOOKLET

EXHIBITION
MUSEE DE L’ARMEE - HOTEL DES INVALIDES
10 APRIL - 26 JULY 2015
FACING DISASTER:
THE MUNICH AGREEMENT,
SIGNED 30 SEPTEMBER 1938

“We have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat.”
Winston Churchill, speech in the House of Commons, 5 October 1938

“We are drinking the chalice to the dregs.”
Charles de Gaulle, letter to his wife, 1 October 1938

In 1938, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle did not know each other. Their notoriety, for which they were responsible, was not in proportion with one another. However, they shared a very close vision of the rising dangers of the Thirties, as well as the strategic and diplomatic shortcomings of their respective countries. But the politician “in the wilderness” and the military theorist ignored by the military hierarchy were isolated and in the minority in the face of public opinion which was convinced that the Maginot line and the concessions granted to the dictators would prevent a new war. Both therefore react very strongly following the signing of the Munich accords, a simple of this policy of renunciation and cowardice.
DISCOVERING
WINSTON CHURCHILL
AND CHARLES DE GAULLE

“She shone for me like the Evening Star.
I loved her dearly - but at a distance.”
Winston Churchill, My Early Life, about his mother

“My father, a thoughtful, cultured and traditional man
was imbued with a sense of the dignity of France.”
Charles de Gaulle, Mémoires de guerre

Almost a generation separated the “little native of Lille in Paris”, born in 1890 to a small bourgeois and Catholic family, and the descendent of the 1st Duke of Marlborough, who was born in 1874 in the sumptuous Blenheim Palace. The child of a family bound together by the values of Catholicism and patriotism, Charles de Gaulle grew up in Paris, “in the shadow of the Invalides” and its military glory, and received a very classical education in various religious institutions. Meanwhile, Winston Churchill, who went from one boarding school to another, suffered from a lack of affection, between a frivolous mother and a father who was brilliant politician with fleeting glory, who was disinterested in his son as much as the latter venerated him.
1900 - 1940: BALANCING A POLITICAL AND MILITARY CAREER

“But swords are not the only weapons in the world. Something may be done with a pen.”
Winston Churchill, My Early Life

“When I entered the army, it was one of the greatest things in the world.”
Charles de Gaulle, War memoirs

Churchill’s victory in the 1900 elections marked the beginning of his long political career where he would occupy some of the most important government posts in Britain before 1929, the beginning of his wilderness years. He was not recalled until 1939, to take up (again) the post of First Lord of the Admiralty. In the 1920s and 1930s, de Gaulle led the life of an officer, on the ground in Poland, in the French Army of the Rhine and in the Levant, and also in the most prestigious military institutions. His publications as a military theorist were many and opposed conventional wisdom.

/ Invitation to the Fez graduation party at Saint-Cyr military academy on 12 July 1911, personally addressed to Charles de Gaulle. © Adrien Leguay, musée du Souvenir des Ecoles de saint-Cyr Coëtquidan
In 1914, Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty. Traumatised by the disaster of the Dardanelles which led to his resignation in 1915, he developed an interest in painting and this slowly became a passion which helped him to treat the depression which afflicted him and which he called the *black dog*. He voluntarily chose to serve in Flanders, donning an officer’s uniform and discovering the trenches. De Gaulle was a lieutenant in the 33rd Infantry Regiment of Arras when he had his baptism of fire in the course of the Battle of Dinant in Belgium, on 15 August 1914. He was wounded for a third time at the Battle of Verdun in 1916, leading to his being taken prisoner by the Germans until the end of the war.
THE WAR OF WAVES:
PROPAGANDA AND
COUNTER PROPAGANDA

“I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.”
Winston Churchill, 13 May 1940

“Whatever happens, the flame of the French resistance must not and shall not die.”
Charles de Gaulle, 18 June 1940

Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill both knew that they could mobilise their talents as writers to issue instructions to unite their people, another quality which they had in common. In this war, which was also a war of waves, their extraordinarily brilliant use of radio ensured their popularity and their renown. While radio was the dominant medium, other means, such as leaflets, newspapers, brochures and newsreels were utilized in the intense propaganda and counter-propaganda efforts which demonstrated that this was a total war. Public opinion in occupied France, a major goal in advance of a future landing, was at the heart of this struggle, and this was symbolized by the clash between “Radio Londres” and Radio Paris.

/Winston Churchill holding a “Tommy Gun” during his inspection of coastal defences near Hartlepool, 31 July 1940. © Mirrorpix / Bridgeman Images

/General de Gaulle photographed by Howard Coster (1885-1959) in June 1940. © Fondation Charles de Gaulle / Howard Coster
The links formed between Churchill and de Gaulle in the summer of 1940 were quickly put to the test by national interests. General de Gaulle, who felt himself too weak to compromise, regularly opposed British policy, especially on the question of territories administered by France in the Middle East.

The bilateral relationship between de Gaulle and Churchill was further upset by the entry of the United States into the war in December 1941. For Churchill, the Anglo-American alliance was vital, and moreover, President Roosevelt showed himself to be particularly hostile towards de Gaulle. The result was a series of crises over the difficult questions of relations with Vichy, of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, of North Africa, and finally, of the administration of France after liberation.

*Said in French by Churchill himself.*
On July 26, 1945, Churchill lost the general election. Six months later, de Gaulle, in opposition to the “party system”, resigned from GPRF (Provisional Government of French Republic). The years that followed were an opportunity for them to write their war memoirs: the first volume of Churchill’s *The Second World War* was published in 1948 and the first of de Gaulle’s *War Memoirs* appeared in 1954. Reference accounts of the conflict, these works also revealed the political mood of the moment: the two authors downplayed the seriousness of their quarrels during the war, and even passed over some events in silence, knowing that their political careers were not over. Churchill was again appointed Prime Minister in 1951 and de Gaulle returned to power in 1958. During the Cold War, Churchill received, not the Nobel Peace Prize which he wanted, but the prize in Literature. The work of de Gaulle was added to the prestigious La Pléiade collection in 2000.
LEADERS DURING THE COLD WAR

Churchill’s return to power in 1951, and de Gaulle’s in 1958, meant that they were faced with an international context marked by hostility between two blocs, conflicts of decolonisation and the beginning of European integration. Having coined the term “iron curtain” in 1946, Churchill devoted his time as Prime Minister until 1955 to the tightening of the alliance with the United States and reopened dialogue with the USSR. General de Gaulle, who equipped France with nuclear weapons, wanted to lead a balanced policy with respect to the two superpowers and European integration based around France and Germany.
The establishment the Order of the Liberation in November 1940 in Brazzaville was a sovereign act as much as a desire to honour the bravest of the small cohort of the Free French who chose to continue the fight. The closure of the Order when General left office in January 1946, demonstrated his commitment to reserve it for compagnons who took the exceptional path. Its reopening for Winston Churchill, on the symbolic date of 18 June 1958, was accompanied by a quote in the typically Gaullist style: “A great leader will always be revered by history”. It was testimony to the esteem he had for the former Prime Minister.
TO GO FURTHER ...

Visit the **Charles de Gaulle Historial**, multimedia area devoted to the political career of Charles de Gaulle (entrance from the Cour d’Honneur, level -1)

And the **Two World Wars collections**, starting from 1871 to 1945, from the escalation into the Great War, the inter-war period and the build-up of political tensions and hegemonic ambitions which led to the Second World War (entrance on the 1st floor, Cour d’Honneur staircase)

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

GUIDED TOURS

**Young people**

Family guided tours on **22 April and 17 June from 2pm to 3.30pm. - From age 9 upwards**

Visits for schools, youth clubs and associations

Unguided groups or guided tours with museum guides - **Maximum number of people: 25**

*Booking essential jeunes@musee-armee.fr*

**Adults : benedicte@cultuval.fr**

CONFERENCES

13 April     **De Gaulle, Churchill and the media**
15 April     **De Gaulle, Churchill and North Africa**
4 May        **De Gaulle, Churchill and 11 November 1944: the challenges of commemoration**
11 May       **Sculpting Churchill, sculpting de Gaulle**

*Booking essential: histoire@musee-armee.fr - museum auditorium, 1.45 - 3pm*

CONCERTS

21 April     **Anthony Marwood, violin - La Garde Républicaine symphony orchestra**
12 May       **Joseph Moog, piano - La Garde Républicaine string orchestra**
29 May       **Musicians from Radio France philharmonic orchestra**
4 June       **La Musique de l’air orchestra**
9 June       **Paris Sciences et Lettres symphony orchestra and choir**
23 June      **Andrew Dewar, organ - Romain Leleu, trumpet - Choir of the Cathédrale américaine de Paris**
25 June      **Daniel Hope, violin - La Garde Républicaine symphony orchestra**

*Information and booking: culture@musee-armee.fr or (+33)1 44 42 32 72*

CINEMA

The sessions will be led by **Patrick Brion**, film historian.

4 June (7.30pm)  **The life and death of colonel Blimp**
5 June (7.30pm)  **Young Winston**
6 June (5pm)     **Into the storm**
7 June (5pm)     **The eagle has landed**
8 June (7.30pm)  **The day of the jackal**

*Booking essential online or (+33)1 44 42 35 07 - museum auditorium*
EXHIBITION
CURATORS
Vincent Giraudier - lead Curator of the Historial Charles de Gaulle, Musée de l’Armée
Carine Lachèvre - assistant Curator of the Historial Charles de Gaulle, Musée de l’Armée

EXHIBITION DESIGN
Nicolas Groult and Sylvain Roca, set design
Graphica, graphic design
Ponctuelle, lighting

PUBLICATION
EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
La Martinière publishing
190x255mm, 288 pages, 28 €
Sold at the museum bookshop

BOOKSHOP AND GIFT SHOP
Exhibition catalogues, posters, and a selection of books and products specific to the exhibition on sale.

INFORMATIONS
ADMISSION PRICES
8,50 € exhibition
12 € permanent collection + exhibition
Free for under 18

OPENING TIMES
Exhibition from 10 April to 26 July
Open every day (except 1 May) from 10am to 6pm, and on Tuesday evenings until 9pm (except 14 July). Open until midnight on 16 May for the European museum night.

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churchill-degaulle.com
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