

My project analyzed the press coverage of French President General Charles de Gaulle's 1967 state visit to Canada, paying close attention to the president's controversial statement of "*vive le Québec libre!*" This project focused on press reporting and editorializing of two leading Canadian newspapers (the *Toronto Daily Star* and *The Globe and Mail*), and two from Quebec (*Le Devoir* and *La Presse*), published between July 24 and August 7, 1967. The goal was to observe how English Canadian papers' coverage of the trip compared to that of Quebec papers. This topic expanded upon Marc-André Robert's previous enquiry into general press reactions to de Gaulle's declaration.ⁱ Based on this research, I argue that there is a detectable frustration from the Quebecois newspapers about the English Canadian reaction to the declaration, in particular. In doing so, the Quebec papers largely ignored the few, but earnest attempts, by English Canadians out of province to encourage the rest of Canada (ROC) to change its outlook on Quebec nationalism and separatism, in light of the de Gaulle controversy.

There is an evident frustration expressed by journalists of *Le Devoir* and *La Presse* regarding the ROC's reactions. These papers were interested in reporting about the mostly negative coverage of the trip from English Canadian sources. Both papers published roundups of largely anglophone outlets' coverage, featuring excerpts from multiple papers' oft negative pieces about the controversial declaration.ⁱⁱ The purpose of the roundups was evidently to showcase how opposed the Canadian press was to de Gaulle and his apparent support for Quebec separatism. Editorials and columns from both papers were then also critical of anglophone press coverage. Notable examples are works by Jacques Pigeon, Pierre O'Neil, and Jean-Marc Leger. All three discussed the English Canadian press' negative reaction, even speculating the reason for their abhorrence. Leger's column is especially enlightening as he accused the national press of conspiring against de Gaulle by creating a hostile environment toward the president prior to his arrival. The declaration then allowed these same outlets to showcase their anti-Gaullism and "francophobia."ⁱⁱⁱ

Furthermore, Quebecois sources were concerned with general public reactions from English Canadians to de Gaulle's declaration. *La Presse* asked more than once where lay the controversy in calling for a "free" Quebec.^{iv} Highlighting anglophone displeasure was not uncommon. Examples include mentions of anglophones booing the General, or the more panicked manner the ROC was reacting to the controversy compared to the Quebecois government's relatively lax reaction.^v The famed Claude Ryan wrote in *Le Devoir* that the anger expressed by English Canada was too severe, demonstrating their ignorance of Quebec nationalism.^{vi} Between reporting about the ROC's press coverage and overall anglophone reactions, the narrative from *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* was clear: the ROC was distressed over de Gaulle's words.

The problem with this narrative is that it overshadowed earnest attempts by journalists from the ROC to make sense of the ordeal, those who were not reacting so severely. Panic and shock existed, but they were not completely pervasive. *The Globe and Mail's* Bruce West and Scott Young both tackled the panic. While West expressed relief that someone had at last pulled back the curtain to stop anglophones' passiveness to growing separatism in Quebec, Young found the ROC's reaction to be excessive.^{vii} Both Young's piece, and an article in the *Toronto Daily Star*, acknowledged Quebec's grievances. The *Star* in particular warned that if the ROC continued to act in the same manner it had acted in the face of de Gaulle's declaration, it risked further alienating Quebec.^{viii} Though few examples of this sympathy are featured in the sources observed, they pose a challenge to the Quebecois papers' narrative that the ROC was near exclusively in a panic over the controversial speech.

The difference in narratives is significant as it highlights to what degree antagonism between Quebec and the ROC had already grown by 1967. Quebec was undergoing its Quiet Revolution, while English Canada became increasingly sensitive to the growth of Quebec nationalism.^{ix} The little focus by *Le Devoir* and *La Presse* on English Canadian attempts to be more sympathetic about Quebec in light of the controversy is understandable in this context. An opportunity was presented to Quebecois journalists to showcase the sensitivity of the ROC toward any allusions to a "freer" Quebec, and they took it. However, it seems a choice was made to present the ROC more negatively than perhaps warranted by paying little attention to the examples of sympathy from English Canadian journalists. Thus, that decision demonstrated some antagonism from Quebecois toward their English Canadian compatriots.

ⁱ Marc-André Robert, “‘Vive le Québec libre!’: le moralité au coeur d’une polémique. Réactions publiques entourant la visite du général de Gaulle au Québec en juillet 1967,” *Le Canada et la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* 21, no. 3 (2013): 135, 137.

ⁱⁱ “Unanimité des journaux de Toronto: étonnement,” *La Presse*, July 25, 1967; “La presse anglophone du pays réproouve à l’unanimité les propos du général,” *La Presse*, July 26, 1967; “Il est difficile de prendre le pouls du milieu anglophone,” *La Presse*, July 27, 1967; Jacques Pigeon, “Un journal de Toronto met de Gaulle sur le même pied que Gerda et invente ‘un mur de l’Atlantique,’” *La Presse*, July 28, 1967; “La presse anglophone du pays est furieuse,” *La Presse*, August 1, 1967; “‘La confédération doit aussi s’adresser au coeur...’” *La Presse*, August 2, 1967; Pierre-C. O’Neil, “Dans une réponse au général de Gaulle – Pearson: nous avons déjà dit que toute ingérence est inacceptable,” *Le Devoir*, August 2, 1967; “Réactions de la presse anglophone du Canada,” *Le Devoir*, July 26, 1967.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pigeon, “Un journal de Toronto,”; Pierre-C. O’Neil, “Ottawa, calmée, fait de Drapeau son héros/Ottawa,” *Le Devoir*, July 28, 1967; Jean-Marc Leger, “Le vieil antigauillisme de l’Amérique anglo-saxonne,” *Le Devoir*, July 29, 1967; O’Neil, “Dans une réponse au général de Gaulle.”

^{iv} Guy Cormier, “De Gaulle a été plébiscité,” *La Presse*, July 25, 1967; “Le député Denis Bousquet: ‘C’est la voix de Groulx,’” *La Presse*, July 27, 1967; Cyrille Felteau, “Pendant que les jeux se font,” *La Presse*, July 31, 1967.

^v Marcel Adam, “Le général est accueilli sur la Terre des Hommes par une foule enthousiaste,” *La Presse*, July 26, 1967; “Le gouvernement fédéral juge inacceptable le ‘Québec libre’ du général: De Gaulle s’en va,” *La Presse*, July 26, 1967; Claude Turcotte, “Les paroles du général n’ont pas provoqué de grands remous dans la Vieille Capitale,” *La Presse*, July 26, 1967; Gilles Racine, “Pierre-Elliott Trudeau se ‘marre,’” *La Presse*, August 1, 1967; Germain Tardif, “l’expo en BREF,” *La Presse*, July 28, 1967; Pierre Vennat, “Vive le Québec libre! L’homme-de-la-rue est surprise,” *La Presse*, July 26, 1967.

^{vi} Claude Ryan, “Les leçons d’une journée historique,” *Le Devoir*, July 26, 1967; Claude Ryan, “Johnson et Lesage: désaccord sur les événements récents, accords sur les grands objectifs de l’avenir,” *Le Devoir*, July 31, 1967.

^{vii} Bruce West, “On the line,” *The Globe and Mail*, July, 26, 1967; Bruce West, “Strictly Canadian,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 27, 1967; Scott Young, “Mr. Pearson’s unanswerable moves in the chess game with Le General,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 31, 1967; Scott Young, “Another view of what Charles said,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 2, 1967.

^{viii} Young, “Another view of what Charles said,”; “National unity: We see it in a new light,” *Toronto Daily Star*, July 27, 1967.

^{ix} Marcel Vaïsse, “Le discours de De Gaulle au balcon: préméditation ou improvisation?” *Idées d’Amérique* 9, Spring/Summer 2017 (2017): 2.; David Meren, *With Friends Like These: Entangled Nationalisms and the Canada-Quebec-France triangle, 1944-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 106.

The research project I proposed was an analysis of the media reporting and editorializing of French President General Charles de Gaulle's state visit to Canada in July 1967. I paid close attention to press reactions of de Gaulle's controversial declaration of "vive le Québec libre" at the end of his speech in Montreal on July 24. I selected four newspapers to analyze: two prominent English Canadian papers, *The Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Daily Star* (now *Toronto Star*), and two leading papers in Quebec, *Le Devoir* and *La Presse*. I considered articles discussing de Gaulle's trip, both regarding the Montreal speech and its aftermath, that were published between July 24 and August 7.

I proposed this project in March because I have always found de Gaulle's state trip to be an interesting controversy. However, the literature discussing the General's speech tends to focus on the diplomatic and political reactions and/or repercussions of this specific event. The result has then been that scholars have paid less attention to the public element of the controversy. Marc-André Robert and Stéphane Paquin have looked at the public reactions to the declaration, but considered the press within a more general context of public reactions. Thus, I thought it would be interesting to use primary material I have become skilled at analyzing, newspapers, and branch both myself and the literature out into a new area of enquiry.

The result of this analysis was that I found that there was a sense of frustration exhibited by the Quebecois newspapers I observed about the English Canadian reaction to the French president's trip and his controversial words, both as expressed by the general public and specifically by the press. In propagating this narrative, *Le Devoir* and *La Presse* overshadowed the few, but earnest, attempts by English Canadian journalists outside of Quebec to advocate for the rest of Canada to change its outlook on Quebec nationalism and separatism in light of the de Gaulle controversy. Although panic and shock existed in the English Canadian context after the president's speech, it was not as pervasive as these francophone papers reported. The difference in narratives is significant as it highlights to what degree antagonism between Quebec and the rest of Canada had already grown by 1967. This controversy gave the Quebecois outlets the opportunity to showcase the increasing sensitivity in English Canada about allusions to Quebec nationalism. However, it appears these journalists made a choice to present the rest of Canada more negatively than perhaps warranted by paying little attention to examples of sympathy from English Canadian journalists.

The findings of my project are potentially useful to ease our understanding of the early impacts of the Quiet Revolution. In highlighting the existing antagonism, historians have a better understanding of the state of Quebec-Canadian relations, culturally, only a few years after this "revolution" began. Furthermore, I found that the Quebecois papers' focus on English Canadian press reactions to be fascinating. Thus, I would suggest that future research consider how newspapers outside of the national scope reacted to de Gaulle's declaration (e.g. *North Bay Nugget*, *Calgary Herald*). Although excerpts of local papers were published in the sources I analyzed, it would be interesting to take a closer look at these newspapers' reactions and observe the true impact of de Gaulle's impact nationally. International press coverage would be an interesting line of enquiry as well. Reactions of the French press have been well documented by scholars, but reporting from non-French and non-Canadian papers could provide a fresh perspective on the international influence of the General's infamous trip.