



29 May 1968

De Gaulle's disappearance

1968

Another calm & prosperous
year for France?



De Gaulle in 1968

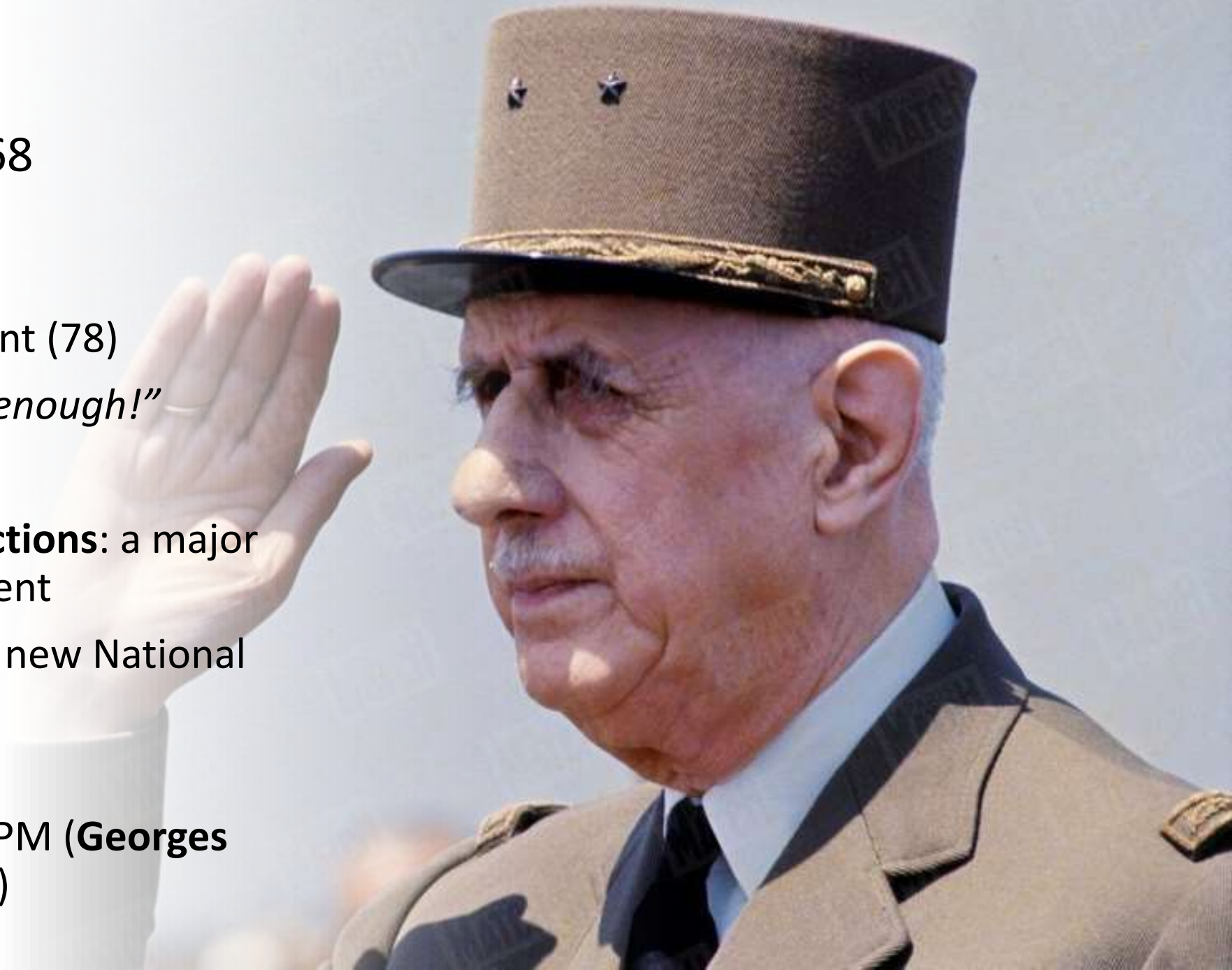
An aging president (78)

"Ten years, that is enough!"

1967 parliamentary elections: a major disappointment

A 2-seat majority in the new National Assembly

Signs of tensions with PM (**Georges Pompidou**)





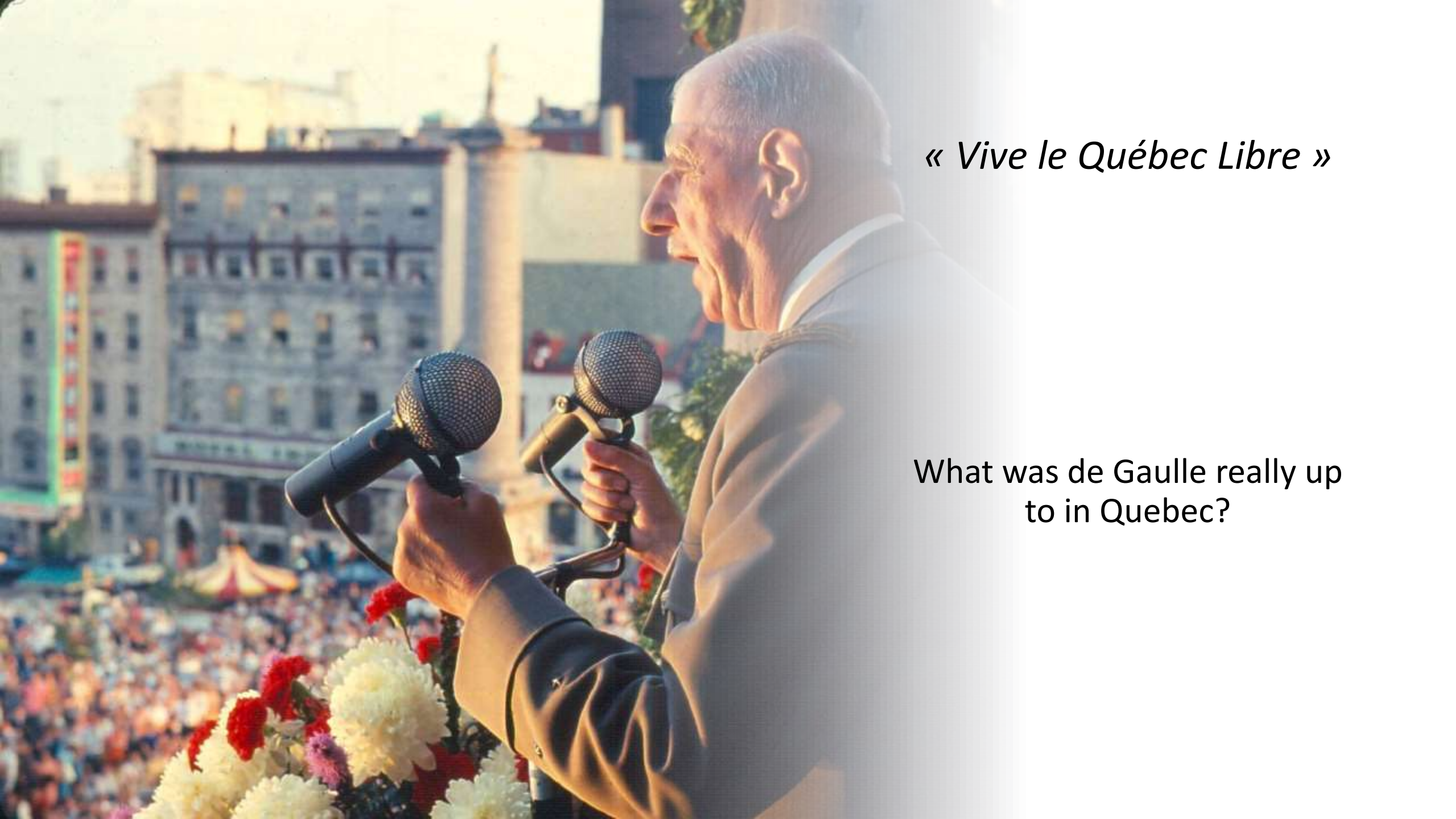
An increasingly
**controversial foreign
policy**

France-U.S.: a tense
relationship

1966 decision to withdraw
France from NATO's
integrated military command

1967 visit to Quebec





« Vive le Québec Libre »

What was de Gaulle really up to in Quebec?



De Gaulle back in power
(1958)

A living legend in France



A TOUS LES FRANÇAIS

*La France a perdu une bataille!
Mais la France n'a pas perdu la guerre!*

Des gouvernants de rencontre ont pu capituler, cédant à la panique, oubliant l'honneur, livrant le pays à la servitude. Cependant, rien n'est perdu!

Rien n'est perdu, parce que cette guerre est une guerre mondiale. Dans l'univers libre, des forces immenses n'ont pas encore donné. Un jour, ces forces écraseront l'ennemi. Il faut que la France, ce jour-la, soit présente à la victoire. Alors, elle retrouvera sa liberté et sa grandeur. Tel est mon but, mon seul but!

Voilà pourquoi je convie tous les Français, où qu'ils se trouvent, à s'unir à moi dans l'action, dans le sacrifice et dans l'espérance.

Notre patrie est en peril de mort.
Luttons tous pour la sauver!

VIVE LA FRANCE !

TO ALL FRENCHMEN...
LONG LIVE FRANCE!

J. de Gaulle
GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE
QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL,
4, CARLTON GARDENS,
LONDON, S.W.1.

The man who said NO to defeat in 1940

France regained her status of great power in 1945 despite the 1940 humiliating defeat

Left power in early 1946





The 1956 Suez Crisis

France and Great Britain humiliated (no longer “great powers”)



The 1956 Suez Crisis

Great Britain:

Only America can help strengthen its security, power and interests in the world

Increased cooperation with the U.S.

“The United States was the woman he [Britain] loved and France the brothel” (Foreign Office official)



The 1956 Suez Crisis

France felt excluded:
resentment towards the Anglo-Saxons

France can **never rely** on America for its security, power and interests in the world



De Gaulle's foreign policy (1958-1967)

"France must be herself, for if she ceased being herself, that is to pursue her own policies, she'll disappear. Herself, that means independent."



De Gaulle's foreign policy (1958-1967)

1. Independence
2. The "French exception"
3. A global role for France: to curb the "**American challenge**"



*“It’s probably better to have him
inside the tent pissing out than
outside the tent pissing in”*

(Lyndon Johnson)



France to become a
nuclear military power

De Gaulle accelerated France's nuclear
program initiated by previous French
governments (1946-1958)

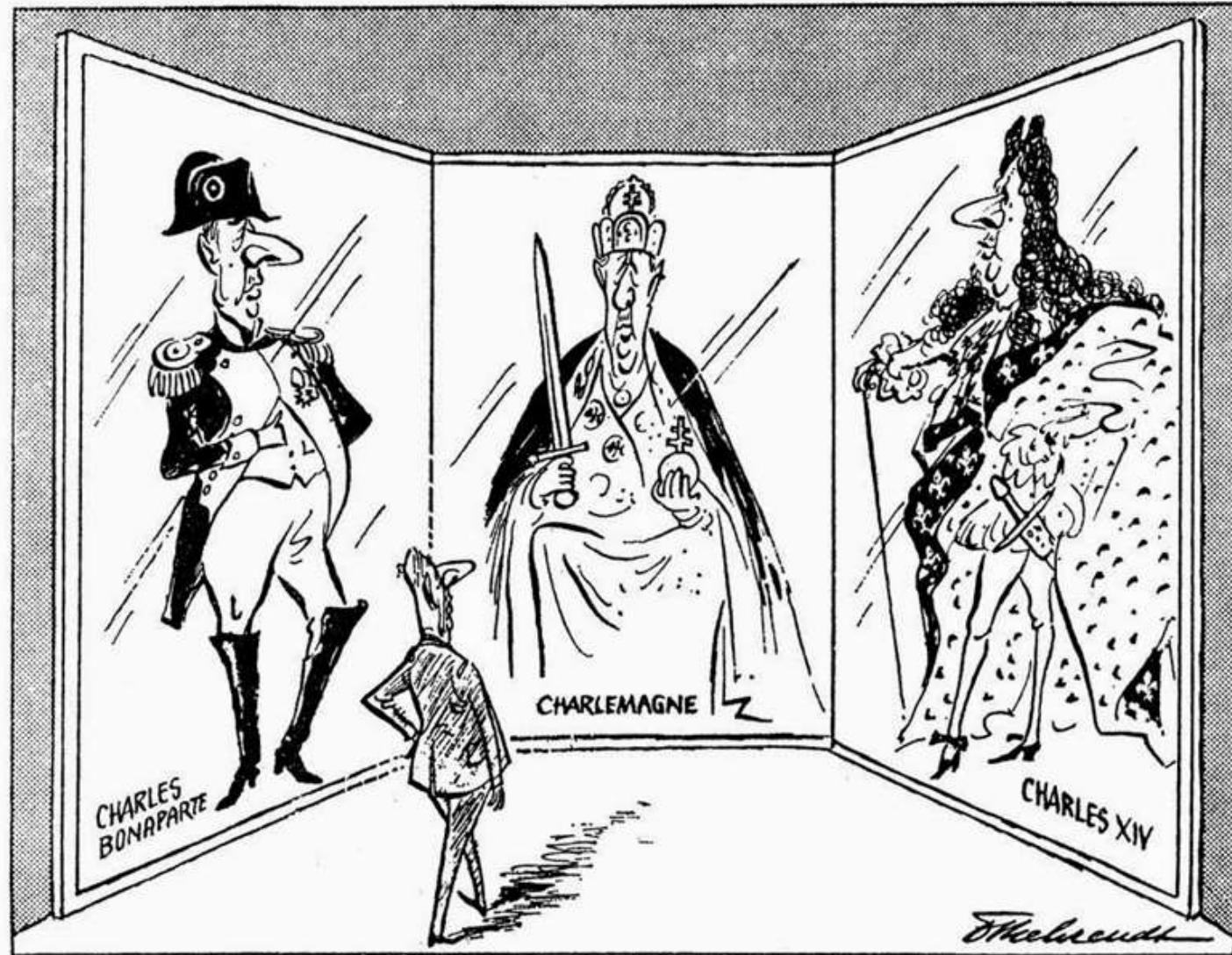
1960: first successful nuclear explosion
(Sahara desert, Algeria)



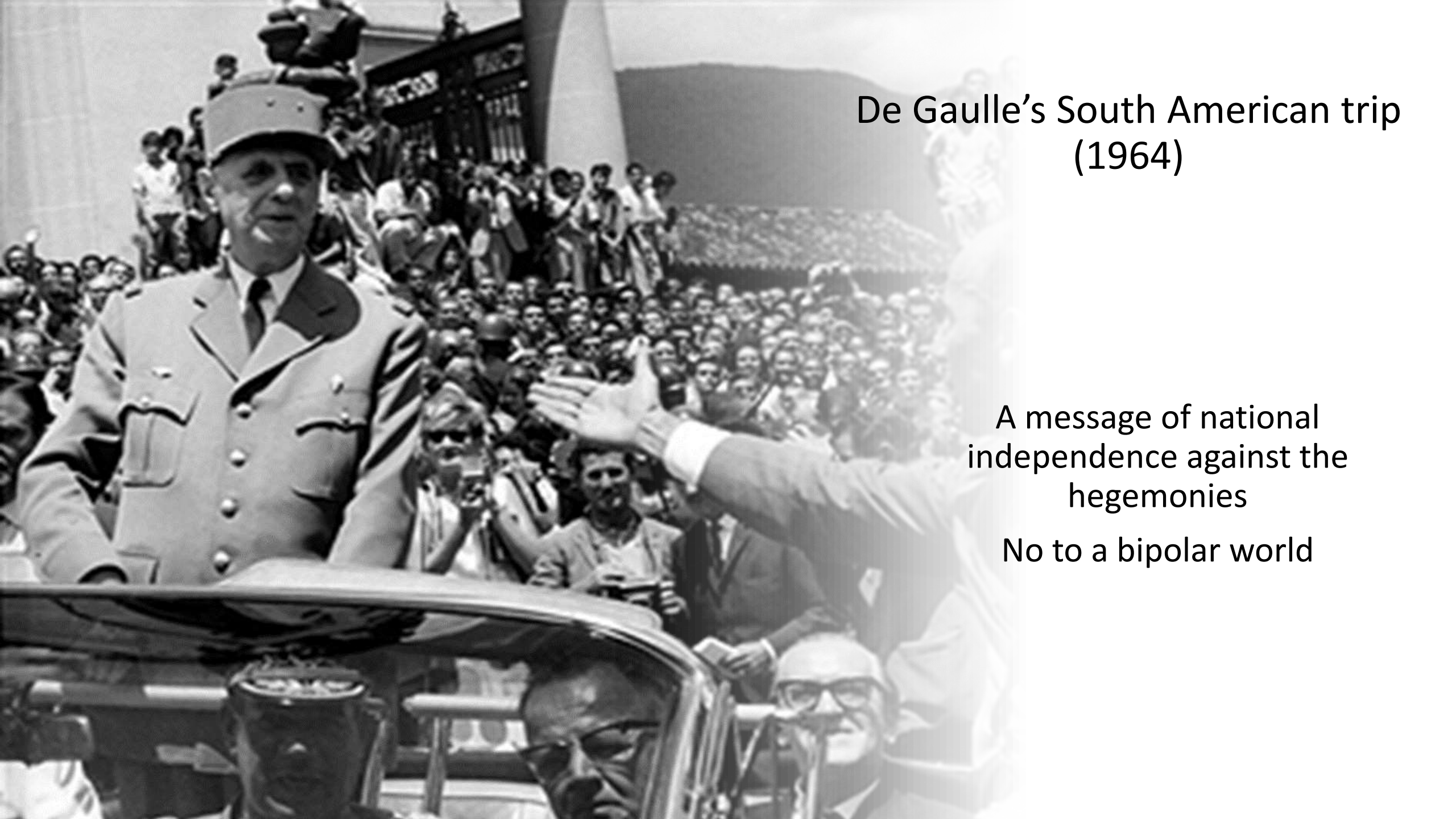
A “European Europe”
independent from the
U.S.

Europeans unwilling to jeopardize
their security (U.S. military)

Fear of France’s hegemony in
Europe



L'Europe — c'est moi!



De Gaulle's South American trip (1964)

A message of national
independence against the
hegemonies

No to a bipolar world



France recognizes
Communist China (1964)...

as the U.S. intensifies military
operations in Vietnam!



De Gaulle in Provence (August 1964)

His absence from the ceremonies
commemorating the 20th
anniversary of D-Day in Normandy



De Gaulle in Cambodia (1966)

The U.S. responsible for the
Vietnam War to be defeated

De Gaulle as champion of
oppressed peoples



NATO

France's withdrawal from
NATO's integrated military
command

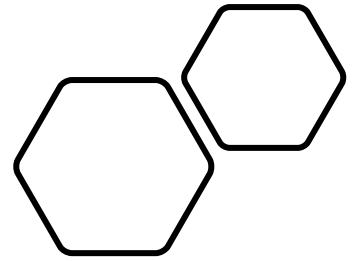
De Gaulle invited to visit **Expo 67**

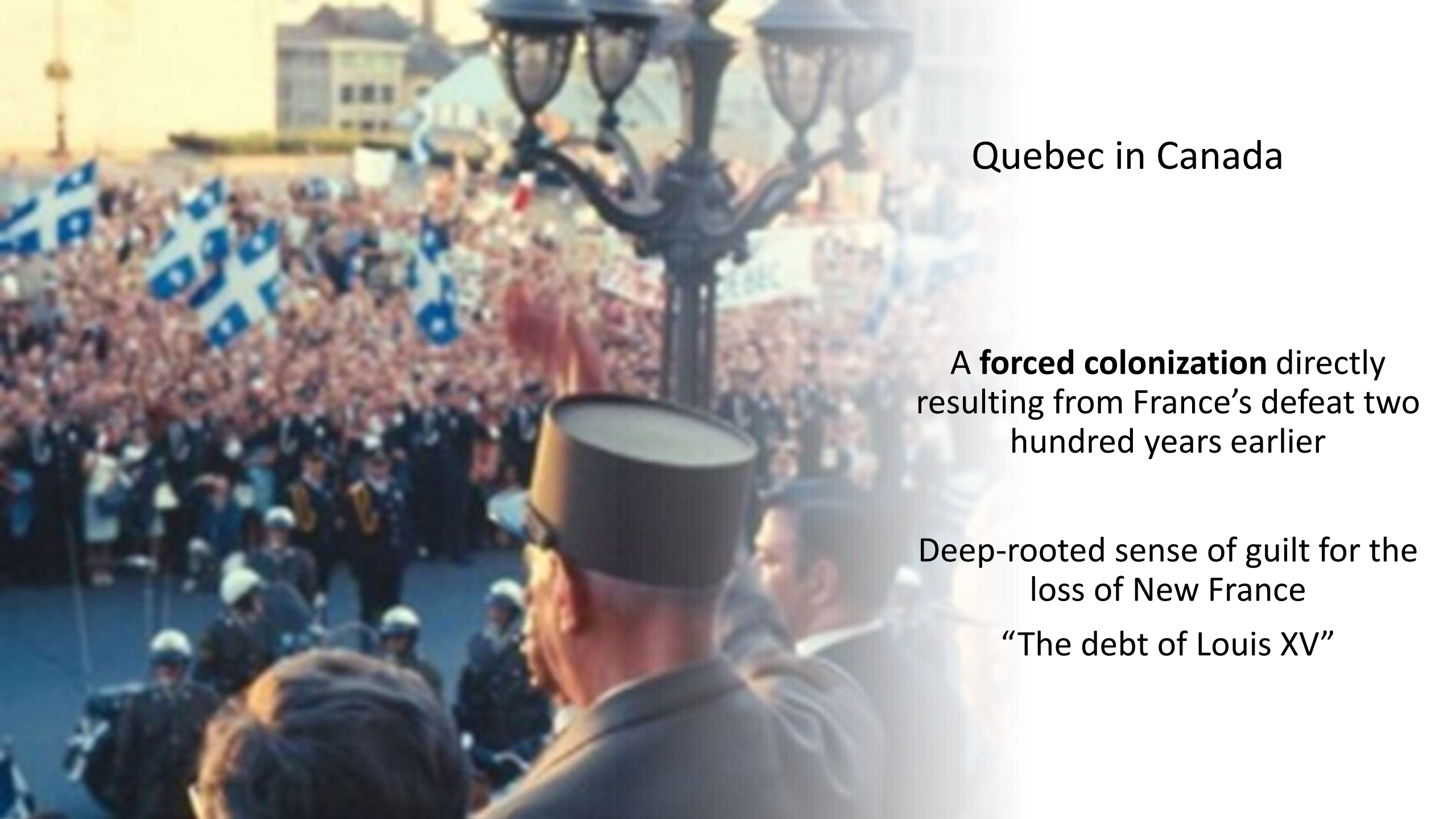
Yes to Quebec's invitation

Ottawa's invitation left unanswered









Quebec in Canada

A **forced colonization** directly resulting from France's defeat two hundred years earlier

Deep-rooted sense of guilt for the loss of New France

“The debt of Louis XV”



De Gaulle's first official visits
to Canada
(1944 & 1945)

*"I congratulate the dear and noble
Canada, so close to the heart of the
France..."*

Canadian government's steady support
of de Gaulle & Free France during the
Second World War

Sentimental attachment to the "Belle
Province" abandoned by Louis XV
(Treaty of Paris, 1763)



April 1960: de Gaulle's
third visit to Canada

A muted welcome in Quebec

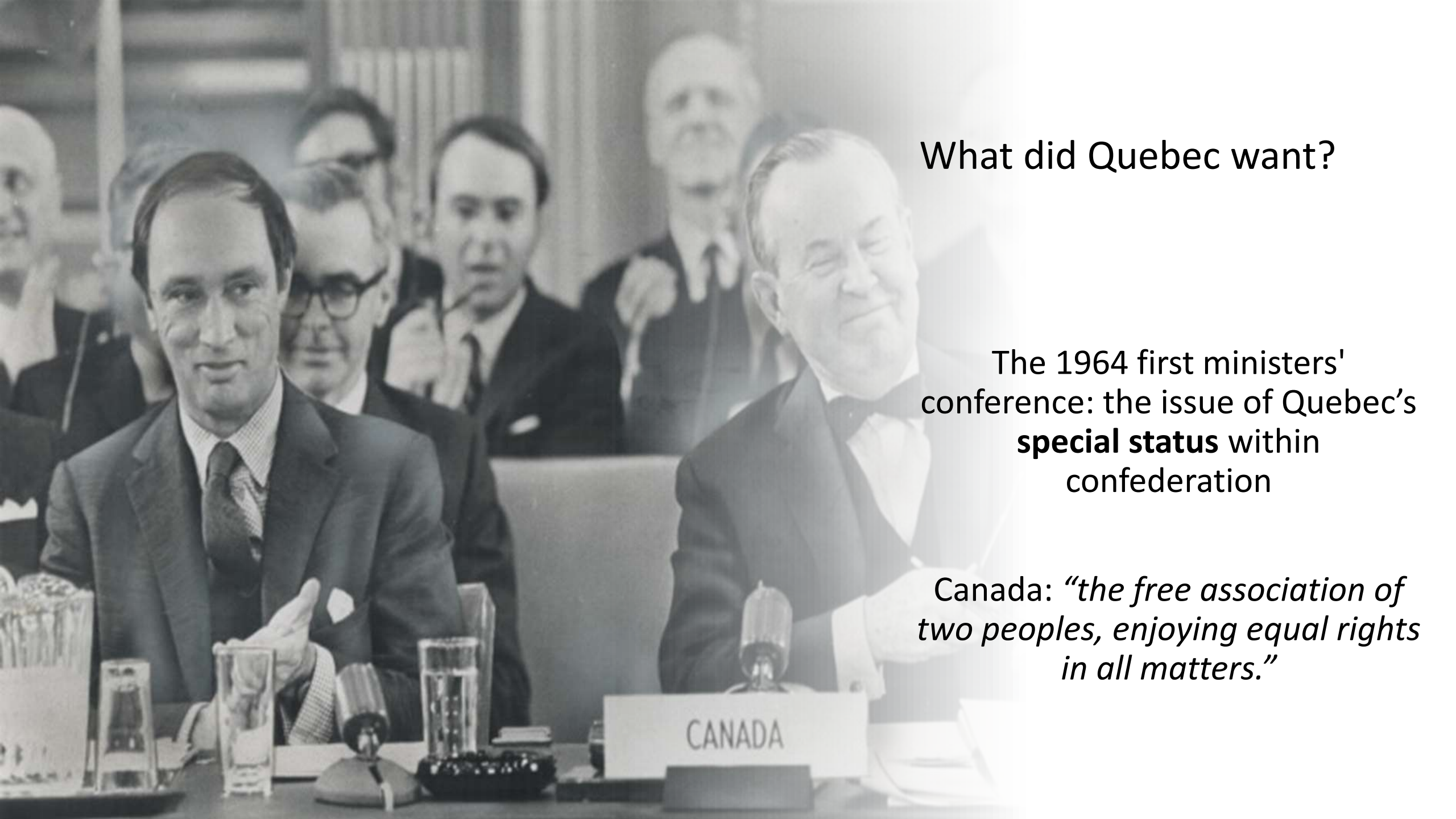


Liberal **Jean Lesage** Quebec Premier
(June 1960)

The *Quiet Revolution*: the notion of
“rattrapage” (catching up) following
the Duplessis era

“*Maitres chez nous*” (“Masters in our
own home”)

French Canadians vs. Quebecois



What did Quebec want?

The 1964 first ministers' conference: the issue of Quebec's **special status** within confederation

Canada: *“the free association of two peoples, enjoying equal rights in all matters.”*



Daniel Johnson Premier
(1966)

*“Independence if necessary, but
not necessarily independence”*



France-Quebec relations
enhanced

1961: the *délégation générale du Québec*
inaugurated by de Gaulle

De Gaulle increasingly convinced Quebec
should & would become an independent
state

1964: Lester Pearson received coldly by de
Gaulle in Paris

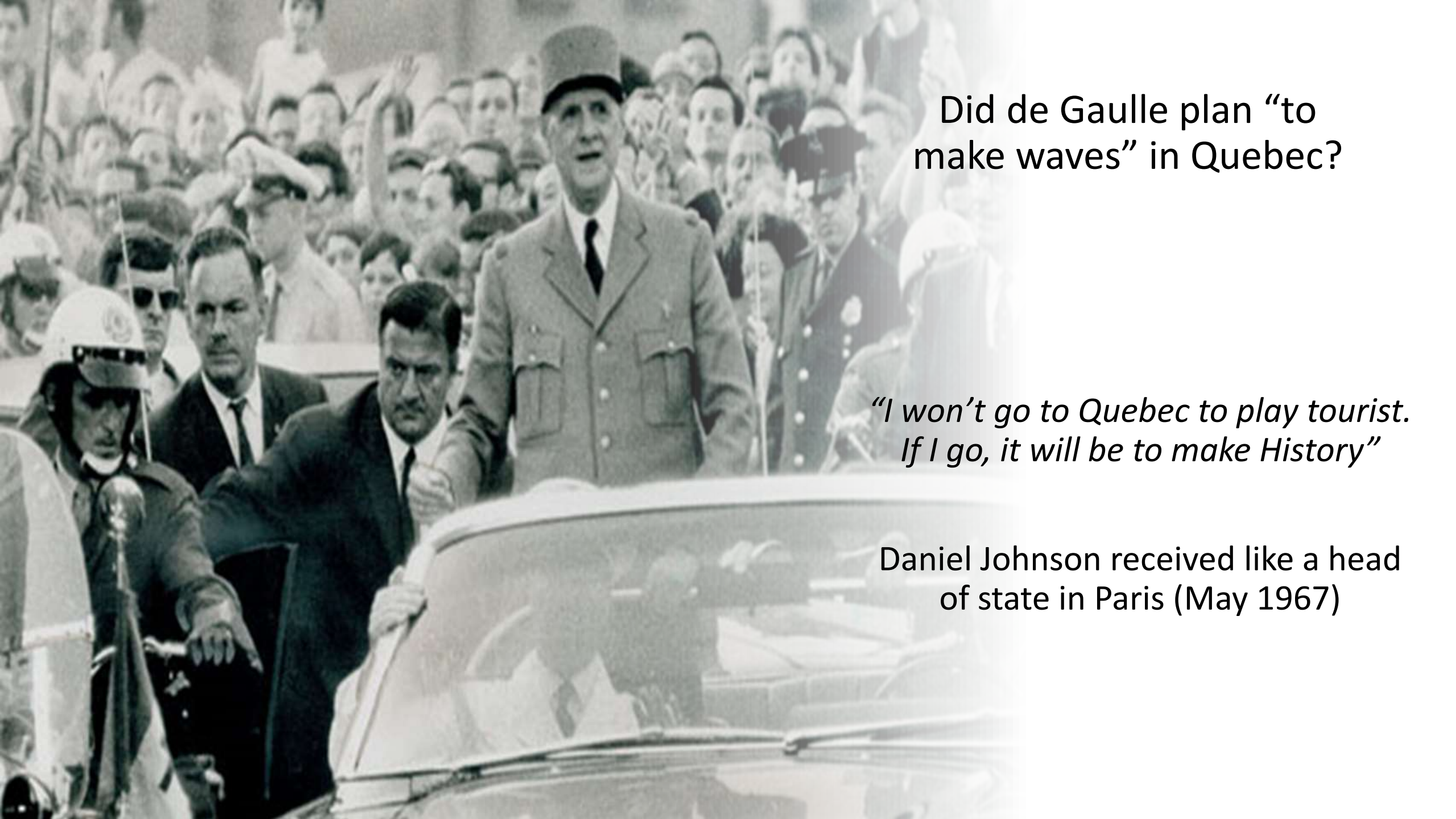
The Canadian Federal government = a mere
“fact”



Governor General Georges Vanier's official visit to France cancelled

De Gaulle: Vanier not to be received like a head of state

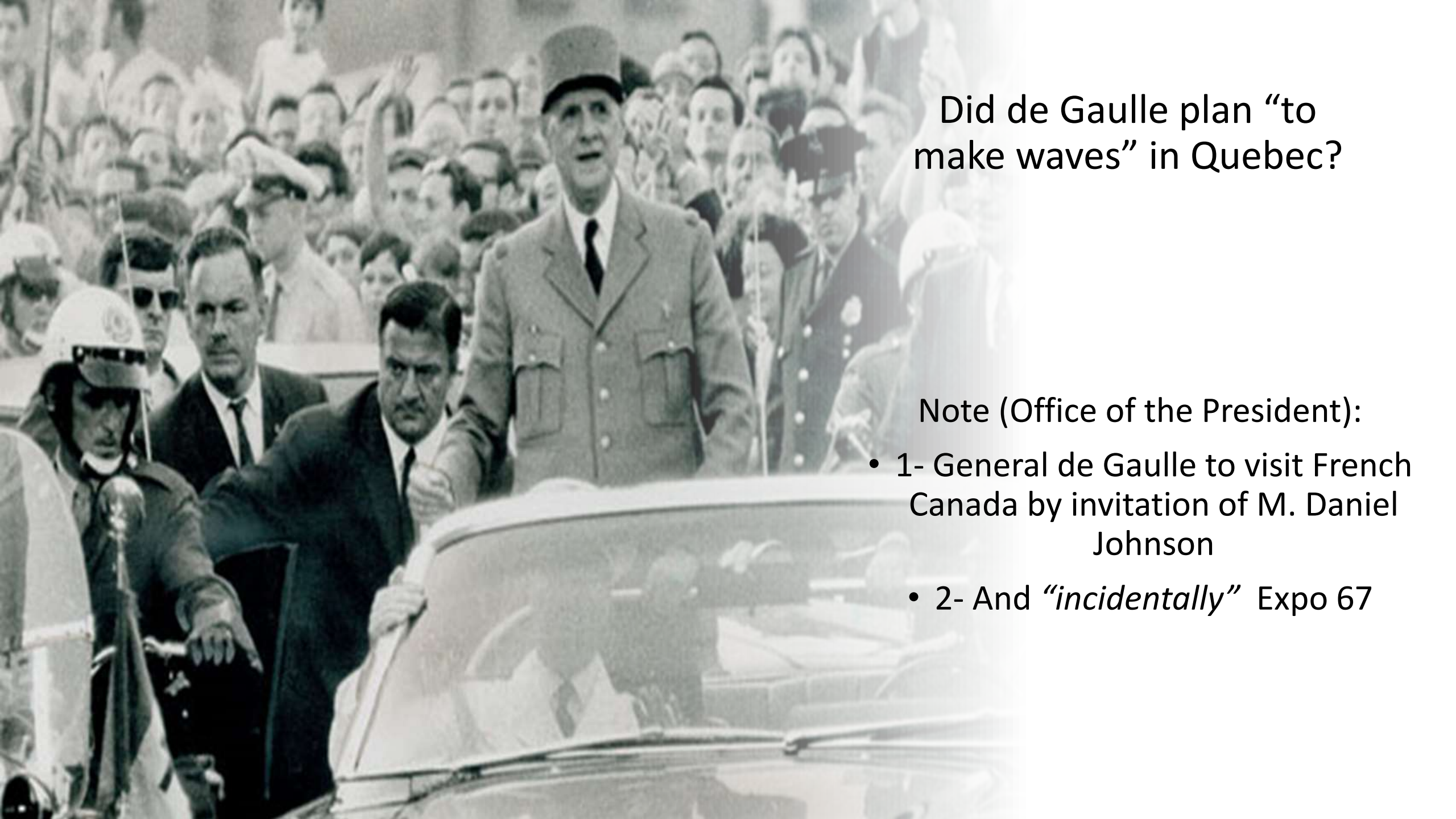
"We need not celebrate the creation of a state founded on our historic defeat, and on the assimilation of a part of the French people into a British structure. Besides, this structure has become quite precarious." (De Gaulle, early 1967)



Did de Gaulle plan “to make waves” in Quebec?

“I won’t go to Quebec to play tourist. If I go, it will be to make History”

Daniel Johnson received like a head of state in Paris (May 1967)



Did de Gaulle plan “to make waves” in Quebec?

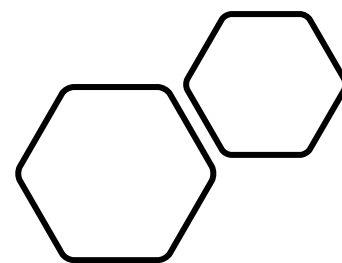
Note (Office of the President):

- 1- General de Gaulle to visit French Canada by invitation of M. Daniel Johnson
- 2- And “*incidentally*” Expo 67











24 July 1967

“Vive le Quebec Libre!” = slogan of
**Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance
Nationale**

A coincidence?

Quebec officials taken aback




Lester Pearson's response

"Certain statements [...] are unacceptable to the Canadian people and its Government."

25 July: de Gaulle cancels his visit to Ottawa and returns to France

De Gaulle criticized in France

Maurice Couve de Murville (French Foreign Affairs)



3 May 1968: the Sorbonne
occupied

First street violence

PM left the day before for Afghanistan and
Iran

10 May: barricades in Paris

13 May: Sorbonne re-occupied by students

14 May

De Gaulle leaves for Rumania
(state visit)

First strikes in France

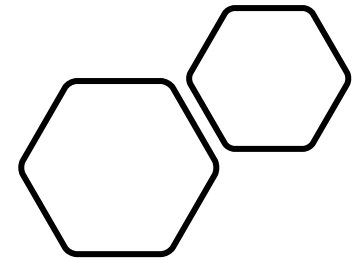
Millions on strike within days

France paralyzed



EN GRÈVE
ILLIMITÉE...






18 May

De Gaulle back in Paris (Rumanian visit
cut short)

A fuming president:

*“The anarchy (chienlit) in France must
come to an end”*





PM firmly in command (daily management of the crisis)

24 May: de Gaulle's speech to the nation

A referendum on participation (workers to be involved in the running of their factories)

Widespread disappointment



Renewed violence

Barricades erected again
Worst disturbances since 14
May

Attempt to burn down the
Paris stock exchange

RICHARD WIDMARK **HENRY FONDA**

POLICE SUR LA VILLE

TECHNICOLOR

The poster features a large portrait of Richard Widmark on the left, wearing a hat and a trench coat. Below the main title is a smaller scene showing a car chase with several vehicles on a street. The background of the poster includes a silhouette of a city skyline.











Pompidou's plan

To negotiate a deal between
trade unions and business
leaders

His objective: to satisfy the
workers' demands and separate
them from the students



The agreement rejected
by the workers

Alarming development: the unions
no longer in control

The French government losing its
grip on events

De Gaulle reportedly in a mood of
despair (28 May)



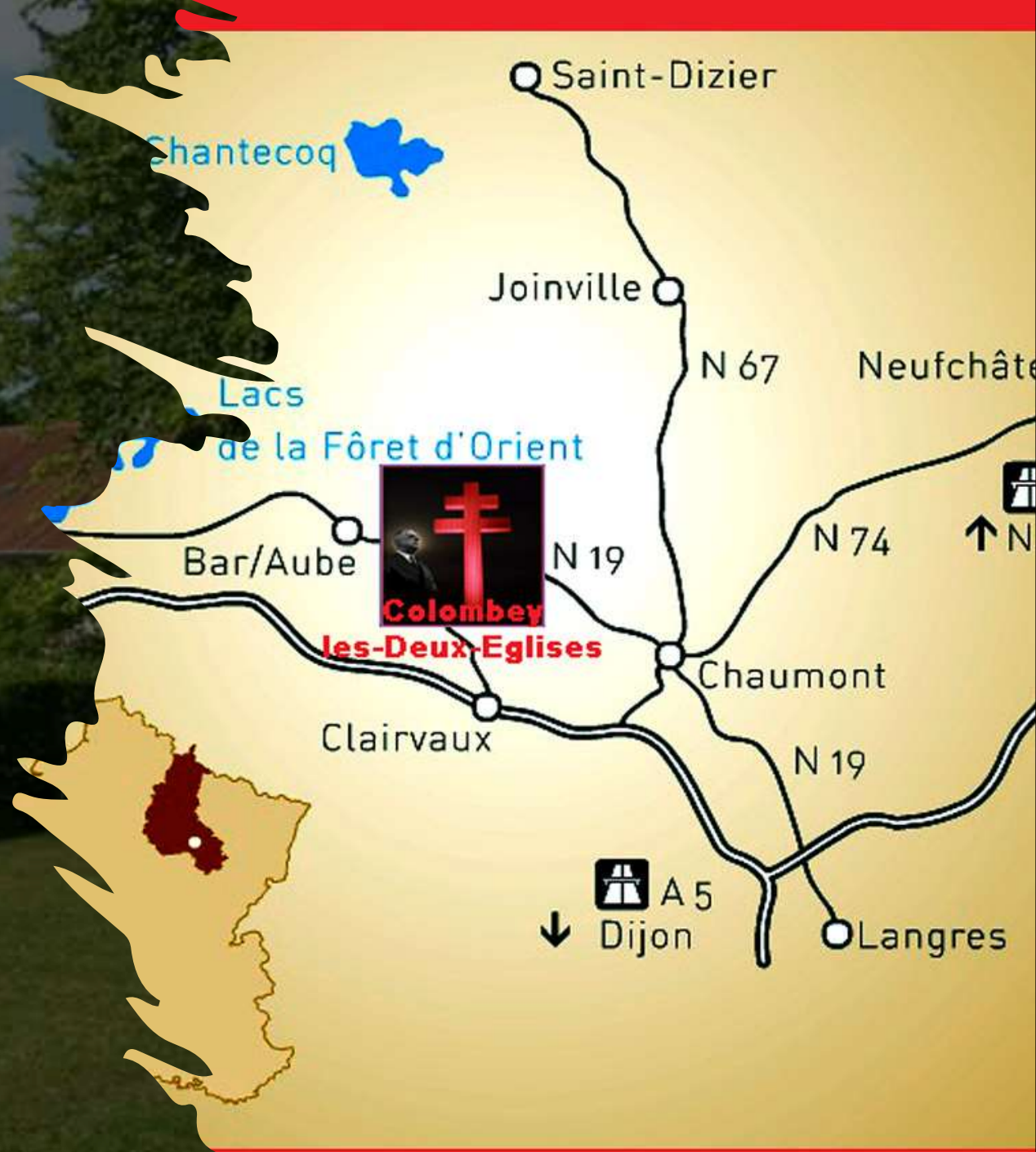
29 May

Panic amongst government circle
A huge communist demonstration
scheduled in Paris

Ministers at the Elysée Palace for
the Wednesday's Council of
Ministers

De Gaulle has vanished...

De Gaulle at Colombey?





29 May – 11am

Council of Ministers rescheduled for
the next day

11.20am: de Gaulle on the phone
with Pompidou (PM)

*“I am old, you are young, you are
the future. Au revoir, je vous
embrasse”*

De Gaulle to retire?



De Gaulle on his way to **Baden Baden** (West Germany)

Baden Baden: the seat of the French forces in West Germany

General Jacques Massu



2.40pm: de Gaulle's helicopter
landed in Baden Baden

A startled general Massu
(commander-in-chief of French forces
in Germany)

Massu had met with commander-in-
chief of Soviet troops stationed in
East Germany the previous day

De Gaulle: *"It's all over"*

General Jacques Massu



De Gaulle to give up?

Massu's claim he galvanized de
Gaulle

Was de Gaulle putting on an act to
test Massu's loyalty?

Was de Gaulle's bluffing?

4pm: de Gaulle's decision to return to
Colombey



De Gaulle in **Baden Baden**: a bluff?

The element of **surprise**: a Gaullist tactic

To assess the loyalty of the French troops stationed in West Germany (reassurance by Massu)

Creating a **vacuum of power** in Paris



30 May: de Gaulle back
at the Élysée Palace

Address to the nation (radio instead
of television)

To recall the wartime de Gaulle

He won't resign

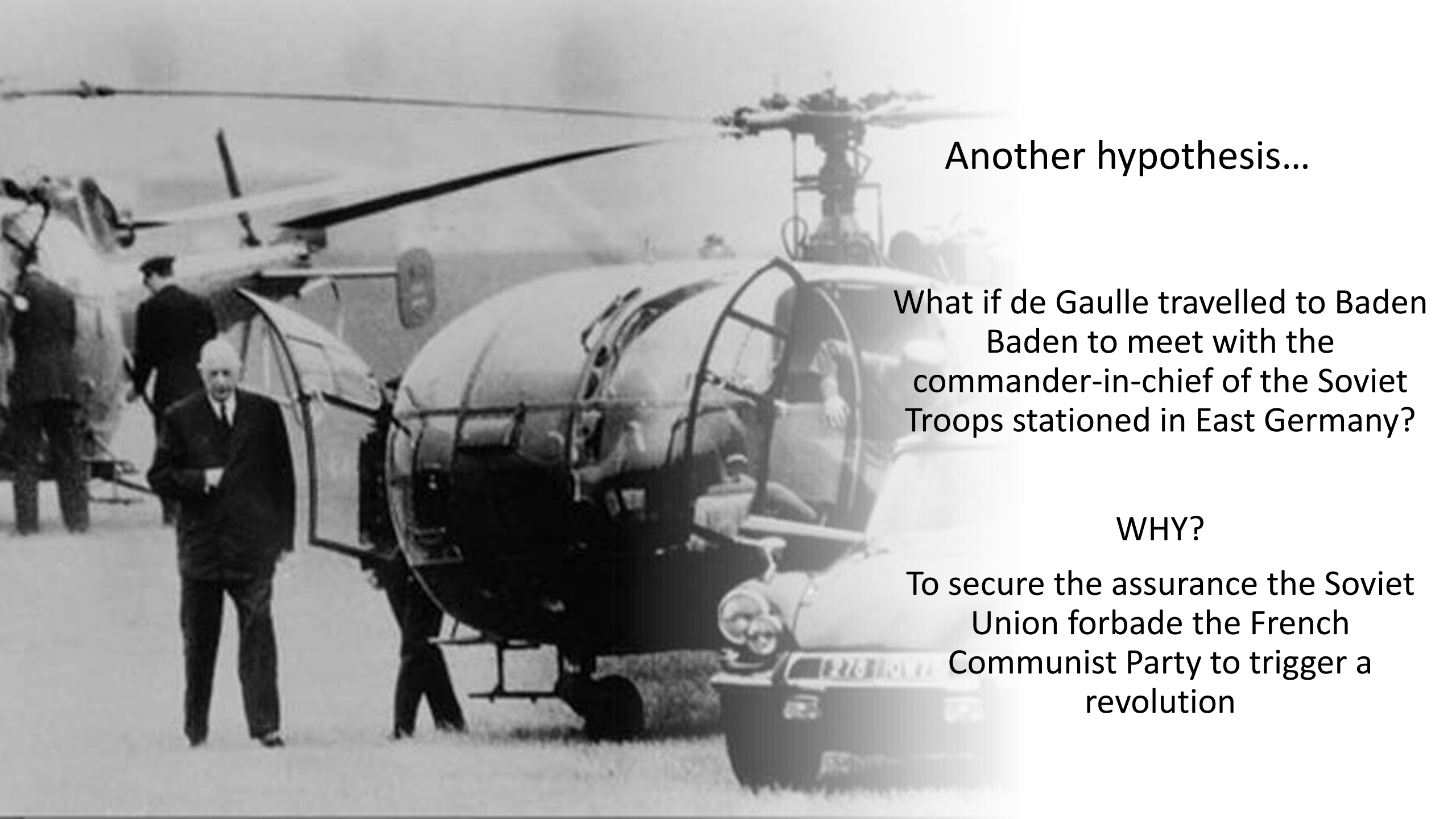
Parliament to be dissolved

The threat of a dictatorship in France
by a party "*which is a totalitarian
enterprise*" (Communist Party)



23 June: legislative elections

A triumph for de Gaulle
350 pro-Gaullist deputies elected (out
of a total of 485)



Another hypothesis...

What if de Gaulle travelled to Baden Baden to meet with the commander-in-chief of the Soviet Troops stationed in East Germany?

WHY?

To secure the assurance the Soviet Union forbade the French Communist Party to trigger a revolution

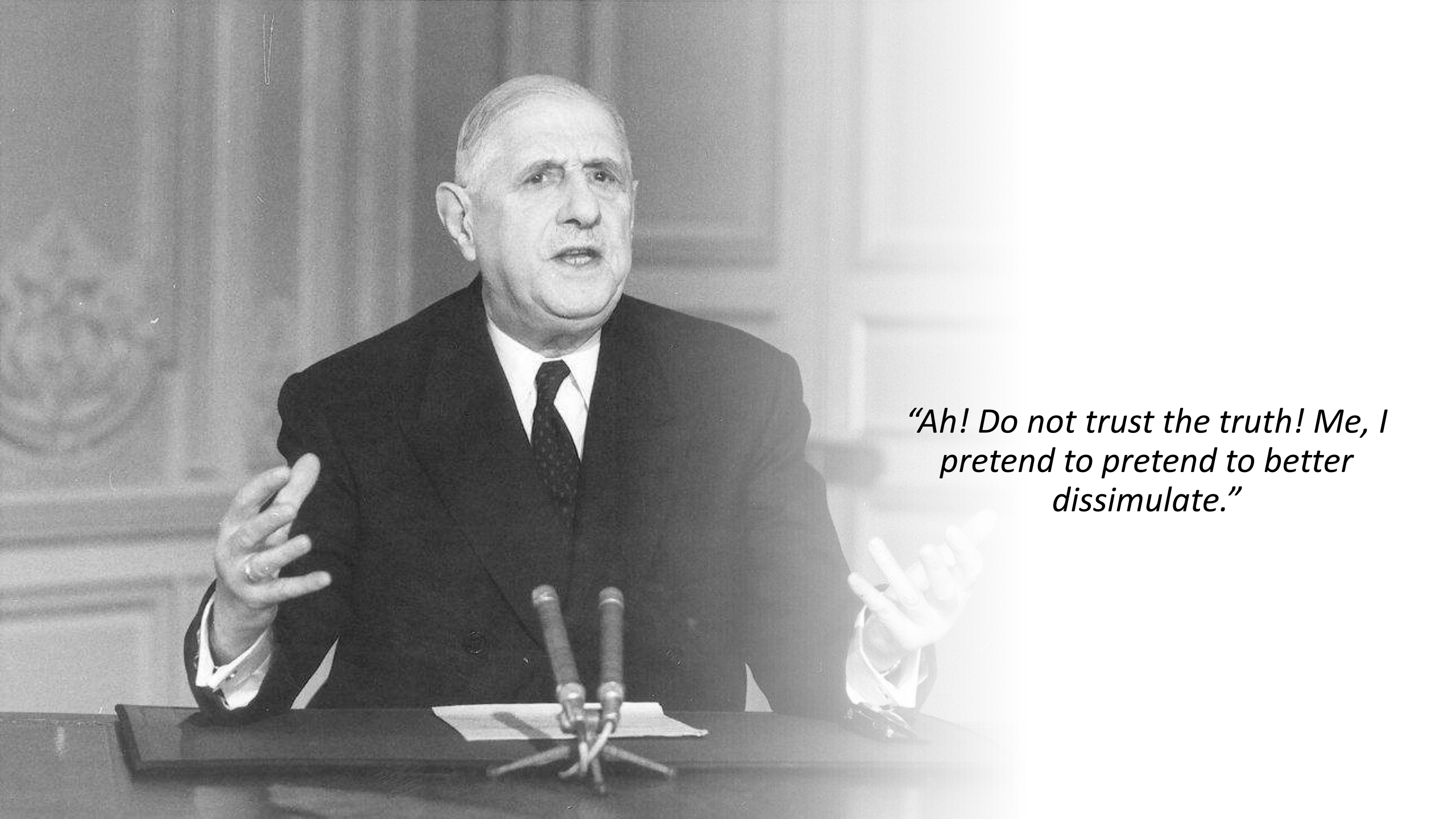


The August 1968 Prague Spring

French government: no action!

A far fetched theory

The French Communist Party in
no position to seize power in
France



“Ah! Do not trust the truth! Me, I pretend to pretend to better dissimulate.”