

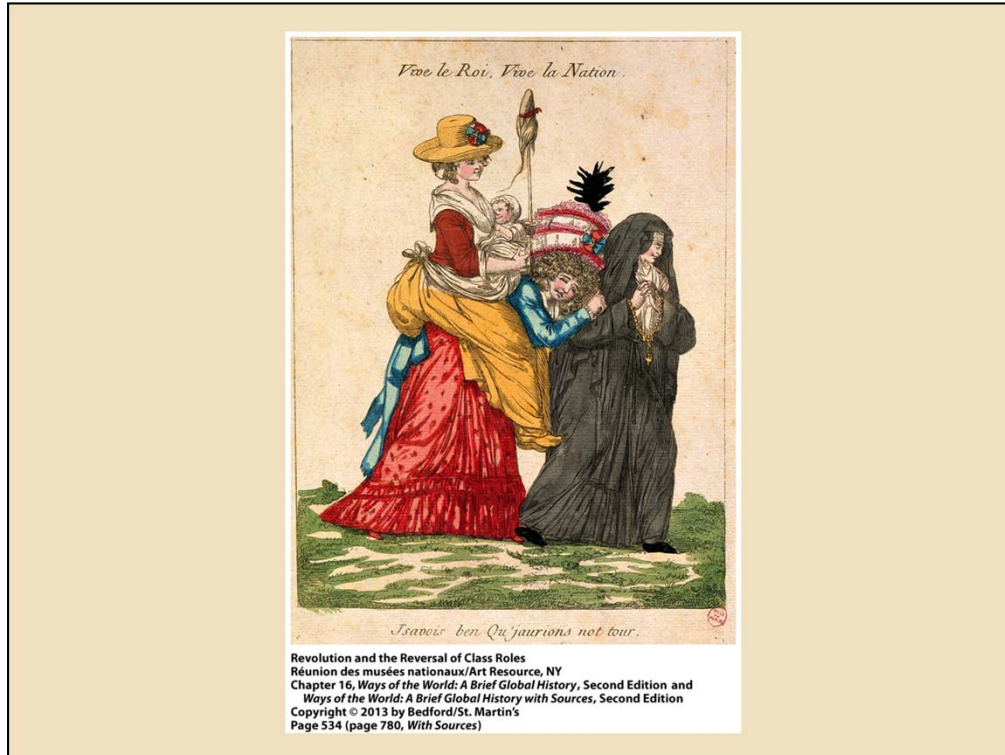
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**Ways of the World: A Brief Global
History with Sources**
Second Edition

Chapter 16

Atlantic Revolutions, Global Echoes,
1750–1914

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1. Who are the figures in this drawing supposed to represent? How do you recognize them?

To the left we have a woman representing commoners—the third estate. Her simple dress, farm hat, and the spindle of wool suggest that she stands in for farmers and workers. She is riding a woman whose elaborate hair and oversized head, together with the bow on the back of her dress, suggests that she is meant to represent the aristocracy. In front is a nun, representing the clergy, with a plain black robe, black hood, and rosary beads over her hands

2. Where is this drawing from, and what political development does it refer to?

The writing on this image tells us that the artist is French and the dress suggests that it is from the latter eighteenth century. The title reads *Vive le Roi, Vive la Nation* (Long live the king, long live the nation). The artist produced this work at a time when commoners felt comfortable attacking the nobility but did not yet challenge the monarchy. This art most likely was part of the rising political debate leading up to the French Revolution of 1789.

3. Why do you think the artist included a baby in the picture?

The peasant woman is not only engaged in the daily production that makes commoners the backbone of society; she also is responsible for the reproduction of French society. The peasant woman and her baby look remarkably healthy and attractive. The nun, on the other hand, looks grim, and the noblewoman appears miserable and sickly. Clearly, the artist saw a healthy future in the French commoners.

I. Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

- A. A “world crisis?”
- B. Uniqueness of the Atlantic revolutions
- C. The Atlantic as a “world of ideas”
- D. Democratic revolutions
- E. Global impact of the Atlantic revolutions

I. Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

A. A “world crisis?”: From the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, a series of uprisings shook states and empires from Russia to China and from Persia to West Africa. Some historians see these as part of a global crisis and place the Atlantic revolutions in this context, arguing for a thesis of “converging revolutions.”

B. Uniqueness of the Atlantic revolutions: While the Atlantic revolutions did not occur in a vacuum, there were several aspects of the North American, French, Haitian, and Spanish American revolutions that make them distinct and clearly part of an identifiable phenomenon in the Atlantic Basin. Importantly, these revolutions show how Europe, the Americas, and Africa were increasingly interconnected in the post-Columbian world.

C. The Atlantic as a “world of ideas”: The intellectual impact of the Enlightenment created a trans-Atlantic print culture, where ideas were exchanged and debated. Importantly, this culture argued that human affairs and institutions could be improved, rationalized, and perfected. John Locke (1632–1704) argued that humans should create “social contracts” between the people and the government. Central to these debates was an emphasis on liberty and equality.

D. Democratic revolutions: The Atlantic revolutions all shared a strong democratic impulse and outcome. While, with the exception of Haiti, all the revolutions promoted the interests of white men of property, they did greatly expand political participation throughout their societies.

E. Global impact of the Atlantic revolutions: While the immediate events of the Atlantic revolutions were local political acts and events, their impact was truly global, setting the terms and parameters of political debates well into the twentieth century. French revolutionary armies marched throughout Europe and into North Africa. Nationalism became the most potent political ideology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The French Revolution’s emphasis on human rights impacted the formation of

the United Nations in 1948 and dissident Chinese students in 1989.

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions

A. The North American Revolution, 1775–1787

1. Revolutionary?
2. English in England and English in America
3. New taxes and ideas from the Enlightenment
4. A revolutionary society before the revolution

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions

A. The North American Revolution, 1775–1787

1. Revolutionary?: There is legitimate debate about how revolutionary the American Revolution really was. While it did establish a democracy with an expanding electorate in the coming decades, this was merely the institutionalization of pre-existing social relationships and political patterns. There was no wholesale social transformation.

2. English in England and English in America: English settlers in the Americas identified with England and English culture but enjoyed the freedoms of life in a land with no hereditary aristocracy, no single church, and economic opportunities stemming from plentiful land (thanks to the removal of the indigenous population). While a wealthy elite dominated the high politics and higher sectors of the economy, there were various ways for poorer members of society to both make wealth and participate in the decision-making process. As such, a sense of freedom was central to their identity. As England initially ruled with a rather light hand, they developed an increased sense and practice of autonomy, even though the idea of separation from England was very uncommon in the mid-century American colonies.

3. New taxes and ideas from the Enlightenment: Things changed when England, dealing with war debts from its various imperial conflicts, raised taxes and established various tariffs to generate revenue. The Americans were equally incensed by both the new taxes and the notion that they were being unjustly imposed by the English government. They saw England as violating their popular sovereignty. Thus, tax resistance and ideas from the Enlightenment fused together in an anti-English revolt.

4. A revolutionary society before the revolution: While the revolution did lead to a process where more and more men got the vote, political power remained in the hands of the white male elite. There was no radical transformation of society.



Map 16.1 The United States after the American Revolution
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II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

B. The French Revolution, 1789–1815

1. The American connection: ideas, war debt, and taxes
2. Resentment of privilege and increasing radicalism
3. Inventing a new, rational world

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

B. The French Revolution, 1789–1815

1. The American connection: ideas and war debt: There was a direct impact of the American Revolution on the French Revolution. As thousands of French soldiers had served in the American war, many of them encountered the radical example of republicanism and wanted to reform feudal France along those lines. As France was home to many Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire, the American example spurred the imagination of many French thinkers. In a more concrete way, the French monarchy's support for the American rebels created a massive war debt. To pay off the debt, King Louis XVI called the Estates General to raise taxes, thus providing the political opening for the French to start raising their grievances with the taxes but also the entire socio-political French system.

2. Resentment of privilege and increasing radicalism: There was widespread resentment of not just the absolute power of the monarch but of the social divisions of France. The country was divided into three estates: the clergy, the nobility, and everyone else (the vast majority of the population). The first two estates enjoyed various social and economic privileges that ranged from dress to hunting rights to exemption from certain taxes. Resentment of this institutionalized social inequality first exploded in 1789 with mob violence in Paris and peasant unrest in the countryside. Over the next few years, the revolution became increasingly radical with the 1793 regicide and the ensuing mass executions run by Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety during the Terror. Eventually, the revolutionaries turned on themselves and Robespierre himself was sent to the guillotine.

3. Inventing a new, rational world: The French Revolution was a much more complete revolutionary movement than the American example. The French revolutionaries sought to create an entirely new world based on a rational ordering of things, seen in

the new calendar and a new, more uniform administrative system for the country. In many ways this was a complete application of the ideas of the Enlightenment.



Map 16.2 Napoleon's European Empire
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II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

B. The French Revolution, 1789–1815

4. Women's participation and then repression
5. Birth of the nation and the citizen
6. Napoleon's French revolutionary paradox

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

B. The French Revolution, 1789–1815

4. Women's participation and then repression: In many of revolutionary disturbances in Paris, women played a prominent role in the famous mobs that attacked the Bastille and Versailles. There are also many examples of educated women, such as Olympe de Gouges, publishing political pamphlets and forming political clubs. However, there was a male backlash that limited women's rights, banned their political clubs, and curtailed other forms of political participation. Nonetheless, the revolution served as a symbol for later generations of feminists.

5. Birth of the nation: The French Revolution gave birth to the modern concept of nationalism and citizenship. People saw themselves not as members of a village or region or the subject of a king, but as equal citizens in the larger body of the nation-state.

6. Napoleon's French revolutionary paradox: When General Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in 1799, he preserved some elements of the revolution but did away with others. Essentially, he kept the equality but got rid of the liberty, especially after he became emperor in 1804. Napoleon, a military genius, also spread the influence of the French Revolution as his armies conquered most of Europe. While he ended feudalism, proclaimed religious tolerance, and rationalized the administrative system wherever he went, his military occupation ironically led to nationalist resentment of the French presence.

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

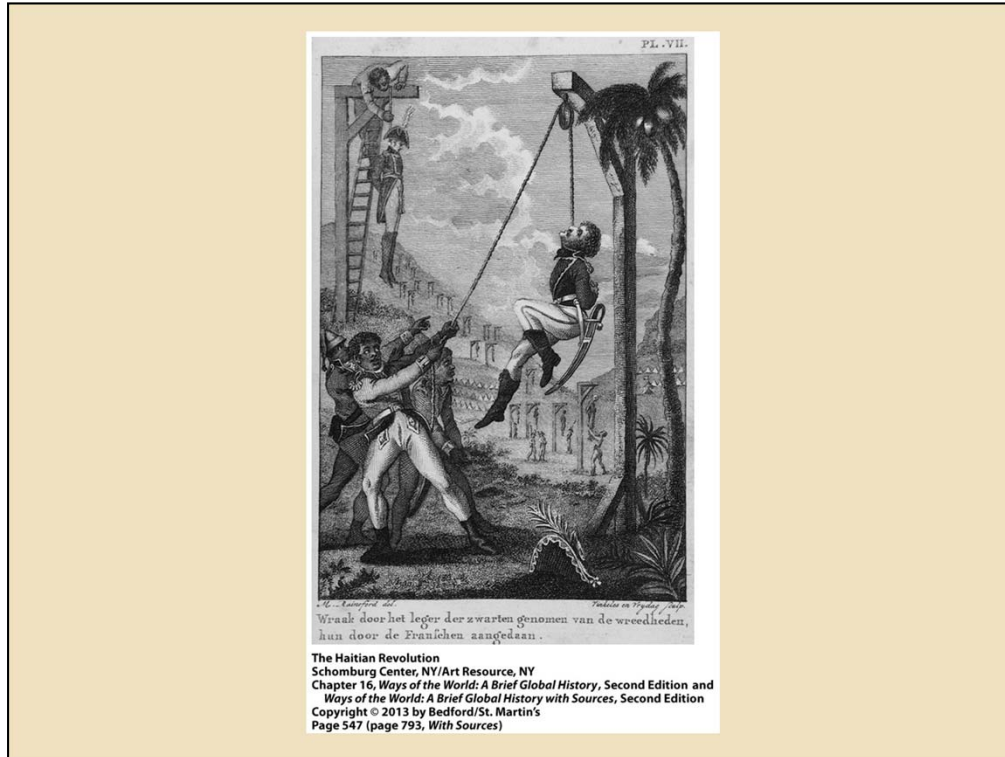
C. The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804

1. Saint Domingue, the richest colony in the world
2. African slaves, white colonists, and *gens de couleur*
3. Slave revolt, civil war, and foreign invasion
4. Toussaint Louverture
5. Haiti: a post-slavery republic
6. “Independence debt”

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

C. The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804

1. Saint Domingue, the richest colony in the world: With 8,000 slave plantations producing 40 percent of the world’s sugar and perhaps 50 percent of its coffee, this French colony was arguably the richest in the world.
2. African slaves, white colonists, and *gens de couleur*: The colony was home to 500,000 slaves from Africa, 40,000 whites divided between rich *grands blancs* and poor *petit blancs*, and 30,000 free mixed race. Each group interpreted the French Revolution in a different manner, and each group was suspicious of the others.
3. Slave revolt, civil war, and foreign invasion: As rumors spread, a massive slave revolt erupted with 1,000 plantations burned and hundreds of whites killed by vengeful slaves. As France lost control of the colony, the various groups formed armies and militias and fought for years in a series of bloody engagements. Seeking to take advantage of the situation to gain some advantage in their imperial struggles with France, Britain and Spain invaded.
4. Toussaint Louverture: He was a former slave who united various slave factions, dealt with the foreign invaders, and defeated Napoleon's forces. However, he was taken prisoner and died in a French jail.
5. Haiti: a post-slavery republic: This was a truly radical revolution as the slaves emerged victorious and established a republic in which they were the majority of citizens. Haitian leaders spoke openly of avenging the era of colonial slavery. The revolution served as a symbol of hope for other slaves in the region but as a serious warning to slave owners in the region.
6. “Independence debt”: Sadly Haiti was forced to pay a massive amount of money to France and political stability remained elusive. The war, the destruction of the plantations, and the end of significant trade with France weakened the new nation.



1. What events are depicted in this engraving?

This image shows black men hanging a large number of French soldiers, identifiable by their uniforms and colors. The victims of these executions include regular soldiers but also officers, as the head of the hanging victim in the top left corner suggests. The number of gallows leading up the hill gives this scene the appearance of a vast act of retaliation. In fact, the engraving is titled *Revenge Taken by the Black Army*.

2. What might have prompted the artist to produce this engraving?

The artist was reacting to news about the victory of Haitian slaves against their oppressors and the French troops that were supposed to quell the slave rebellion.

3. How did the artist seem to feel about the events in Haiti?

The black men pulling up the French soldier seem joyful and triumphant as they conduct the execution. The officer on the other hand looks graceful even as he is pulled up to the gallows. The officer hanging on the gallows in the top left corner looks equally noble in death. Even if the artist had sympathy for the cause of the rebelling slaves, it appears as if he identified more with the soldiers on the gallows.

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

D. Spanish American Revolutions, 1810–1825

1. Creole resentment of Spanish rule and taxes
2. Napoleon's 1808 invasion of Spain and Portugal
3. Racial, class, and ideological divisions
4. Simón Bolívar and the *Americanos*
5. Independence without social revolution or unity

II. Comparing Atlantic Revolutions in a Global Context

D. Spanish American Revolutions, 1810–1825

1. Creole resentment of Spanish rule and taxes: The native-born elite, who normally self-identified as white Spaniards or Portuguese, disliked authoritarian rule from Europe and resented taxation by the crown. However, they did not form a united force to fight for independence in the eighteenth century.
2. Napoleon's 1808 invasion of Spain and Portugal: When Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula, deposing the Spanish king and forcing the Portuguese king to flee to colonial Brazil, he created a political power vacuum that ultimately led to the colonies demanding their formal independence.
3. Racial, class, and ideological divisions: As the Creole elite were very nervous about lower-class, Indian, and slave rebellions, it was difficult for the Latin American revolutionaries to build a mass movement.
4. Simón Bolívar and the *Americanos*: He was able to create a nativist ideology that united the various class and racial groups against the Spanish (a similar phenomenon happened in Portuguese Brazil).
5. Independence without social revolution or unity: While Spanish rule was over in most of the Americas by the mid-1820s, there was no social revolution, and most of the systems of economic exploitation and social inequality remained intact. With the Creole elites dominating these new nations, there was little in the way of meaningful democracy until the twentieth century.



Map 16.3 Latin American Independence
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III. Echoes of Revolution

A. The Abolition of Slavery

1. Protestant and Quaker moralism
2. New economic structures
3. Haiti and other slave revolts
4. British leadership

III. Echoes of Revolution

A. The Abolition of Slavery

1. Protestant and Quaker moralism: Protestant and Quaker activists began the abolitionist movement out of a pious moral opposition to slavery. They publicized the evils of slavery and published memoirs by former slaves.
2. New economic structures: Industrialization and the new capitalist systems of production increasingly emphasized the use of free labor for wages set in a labor market, making the unfree labor of slavery look backwards and inefficient.
3. Haiti and other slave revolts: The example of Haiti's successful revolution inspired other rebellions in the Atlantic Basin, making the continued maintenance of plantations more difficult.
4. British leadership: Thanks to moral, religious, economic, and political opposition to slavery, the British led the way in dismantling the institution by abolishing the slave trade in 1807 and emancipating the slaves in 1834.

III. Echoes of Revolution

A. The Abolition of Slavery

5. Resistance to abolition
6. Emancipation without socio-economic changes
7. Emancipation and colonialism in Africa and the Islamic world

III. Echoes of Revolution

A. The Abolition of Slavery

5. Resistance to abolition: Resistance to abolition was widespread in the slave-trading and owning societies, none more so than the southern states of the United States. The United States stands out as the only nation that had to fight a brutal and destructive civil war, from 1861–1865, to end slavery.

6. Emancipation without socio-economic changes: With the exception of Haiti and a brief moment of radical reconstruction in the United States, there were no major social, economic, or political changes with emancipation. Land was not redistributed and African-descended freed slaves had few political rights. The United States saw the widespread use of restrictive voting laws and popular violence by whites as a way to keep a terrorized black population in check. As many former slaves refused to return to plantations for labor, large numbers of indentured servants were imported from India and China to various mines and plantations where they worked in slave-like conditions. In Russia, the emancipation of the serfs did see land redistribution but the impoverished peasants had to pay for the land, ensuring their continued poverty.

7. Emancipation and colonialism in Africa and the Islamic world: With the collapse of the slave-exporting market in West and East Africa, the price of slaves dropped, and they became more commonly used to produce crops for export. When Europeans came to colonize the continent, conquest was frequently rationalized as fighting the slave trade, a moral obligation for Europeans (despite the centuries-long history of these Europeans taking slaves from Africa). Slavery lasted in the Islamic world well into the twentieth century. Lacking a grassroots opposition to the practice, it took international pressure to end slavery.

III. Echoes of Revolution

B. Nations and Nationalism

1. The “nation” as a new idea
2. Unification and independence
3. International conflict
4. Political uses of nationalism

III. Echoes of Revolution

B. Nations and Nationalism

1. The “nation” as a new idea: The concept of individuals belonging to a nation rather than a village or a religion is relatively new in human history. It was the direct product of the ideas of the Enlightenment, the North and South American independence movements, the political examples of the United States and revolutionary France, and resentment of Napoleon’s occupation of most of Europe. Specifically, the idea of popular sovereignty (that political power rests in the hands of the people and not in the hands of kings) encouraged the thinking of the nation (a like-minded, cultural-linguistic group) as a state.

2. Unification and independence: Nationalism could work to unify disunited people in fragmented political systems such as Germany and Italy, but nationalism could also inspire groups such as the Greeks or the Poles to break away from rule by a multi-ethnic empire.

3. International conflict: Popular nationalism could push states towards increasingly violent conflict as international disputes were now arguments between nations (entire populations) and not just between kings. The bloody conflict of the First World War was a product of this phenomenon.

4. Political uses of nationalism: Nationalism required defining who was a part of a nation and who was outside of a nation. This became a political act as groups might be forced to become part of a new cultural identity (seen in the Russian Empire, when Finns and Ukrainians were forced to use Russian) or excluded and thus made vulnerable (as seen in the anti-Semitic politics of Germany). Importantly, nationalism was used to build movements to fight imperialism as

in India and China.



Map 16.4 The Nations and Empires of Europe, ca. 1880
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III. Echoes of Revolution

C. Feminist Beginnings

1. Enlightenment attacks on tradition
2. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and Seneca Falls, 1848
3. Suffrage and professional opportunities
4. Opposition
5. Trans-Atlantic and global feminisms

III. Echoes of Revolution

C. Feminist Beginnings

1. Enlightenment attacks on tradition: Modern feminism has its roots in the Enlightenment attacks on tradition and the promotion of liberty and rationality in social arrangements. It thus stemmed from the same source as the political revolutions and the secular attacks on slavery.

2. Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and Seneca Falls, 1848: Her work shows the direct inspiration of the French Revolution's attempts to rebuild social arrangements. Her work was one of the early statements of an explicit feminism. The conference at Seneca Falls, 1848, was the first organized expression of a feminist movement. Its statement drew from the American Declaration of Independence. These are examples of the direct impact of the discussions of liberty and social equality.

3. Suffrage and professional opportunities: Women's organizations formed for a variety of social issues, but the campaign to get the right to vote came to dominate by the late nineteenth century. Yet women scored many advances as they entered new professions and expanded their property rights.

4. Opposition: There was bitter reaction to various women's rights campaigns from both the left and the right. However, if socialists remained divided about the issues, conservatives almost uniformly viewed feminism as an almost alien threat.

5. Trans-Atlantic and global feminisms: The movement was strongest in

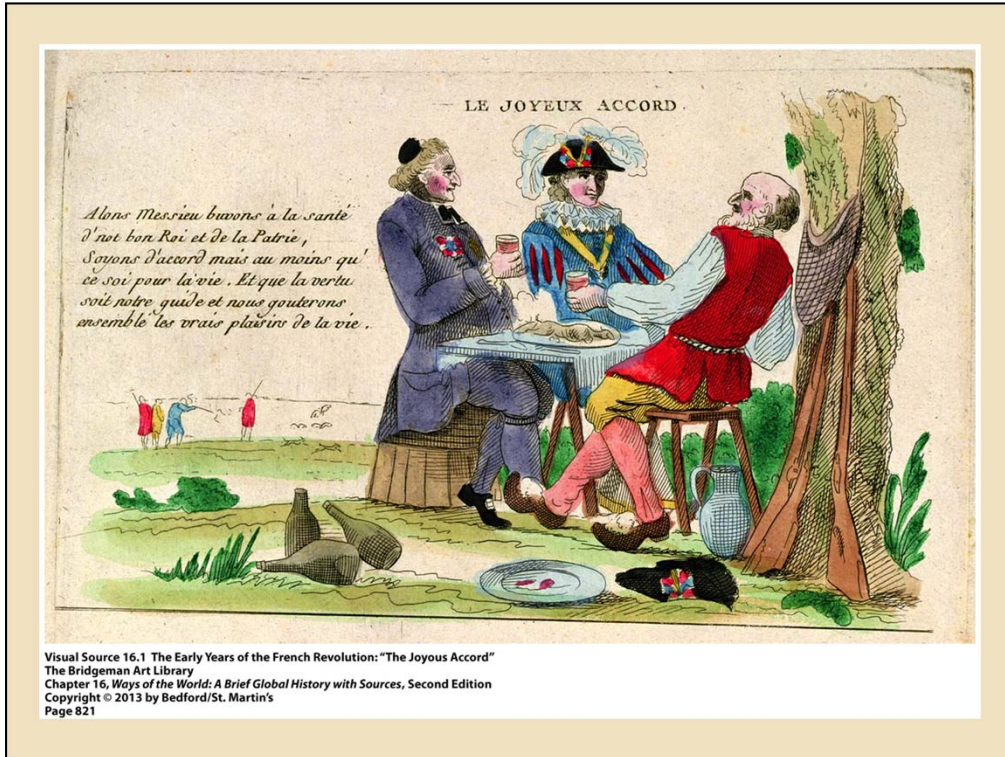
Western Europe and the United States, but various activists and intellectuals began to take on the cause around the world.

IV. Reflections: Revolutions Pro and Con

- A. Necessary? Promises? Worth the cost?**
- B. Historians disagree and debate.**
- C. Ongoing struggle to understand.**

IV. Reflections: Revolutions Pro and Con

- A. Were they necessary?** Did they promote the freedoms they promised? Were they worth the costs of blood and money?
- B. Historians still debate their origins, outcome, and influence.**
- C. Ongoing struggle to understand these revolutions and those to come in Russia, China, and elsewhere in the twentieth century.**



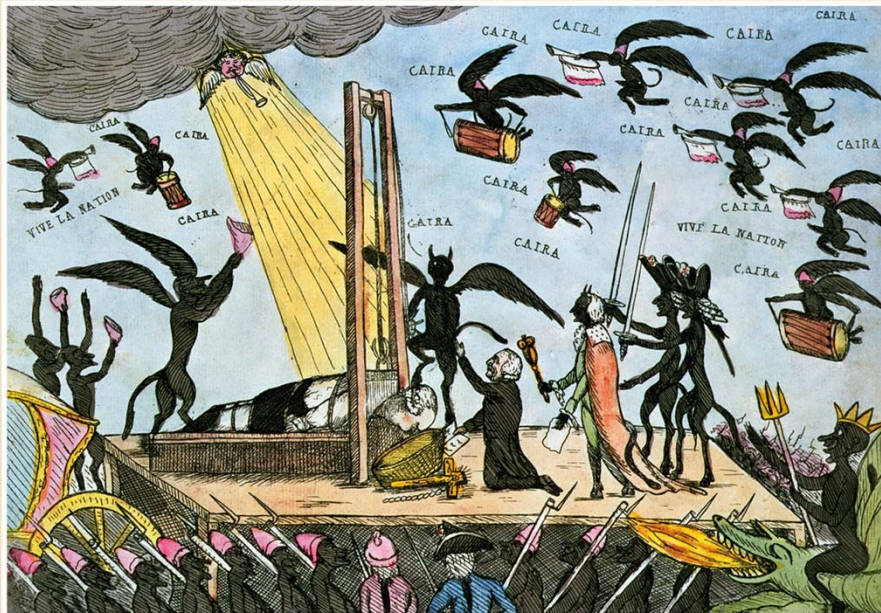
Visual Source 16.1 The Early Years of the French Revolution: "The Joyous Accord"
The Bridgeman Art Library
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Visual Source 16.2 A Reversal of Roles: The Three Estates of Revolutionary France
Musée de la ville de Paris, Musée Carnavalet, Paris/Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library
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Visual Source 16.3 Revolution and Religion: "Patience, Monsignor, your turn will come."
Musée de la Révolution française, Vizille, France, mfr 89.186
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Visual Source 16.4 An English Response to Revolution: "Hell Broke Loose or The Murder of Louis"
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