

# The French Revolution

# CLASSES / RELATIONS AT THE START OF THE REVOLUTION

- The King and his Administration
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Estate: the Aristocracy
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> Estate: the Clergy
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate: 98% of the population
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- The 3<sup>rd</sup> estate is split:
  - Lower class
  - Middle class: business owners, bankers
  - Strays from the clergy and the aristocracy
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- *Note that this structure itself, which appears with the recall of the Estates General, is a relic of the medieval period...*

- A King-Aristocracy power bloc is in charge
- They control land, money, food, the courts, and they have the “monopoly on force”
- To keep the aristos loyal, the king has to grant them favors, for example tax breaks, preference in the judicial system... (! *Consider corporations!*)
- But the state is massively in debt... so... *who's in control in that relation?* (European banks).

# PRESSURES ON THE POPULACE

- Unequal taxation
- Economy: the crown is tragically in debt, especially from the American Revolution... so more taxes...
- Poor harvests and consequent famine
- Eventually, Swiss and German mercenaries in Paris (we'd call these "*security forces*")

# (contemporary parallels)

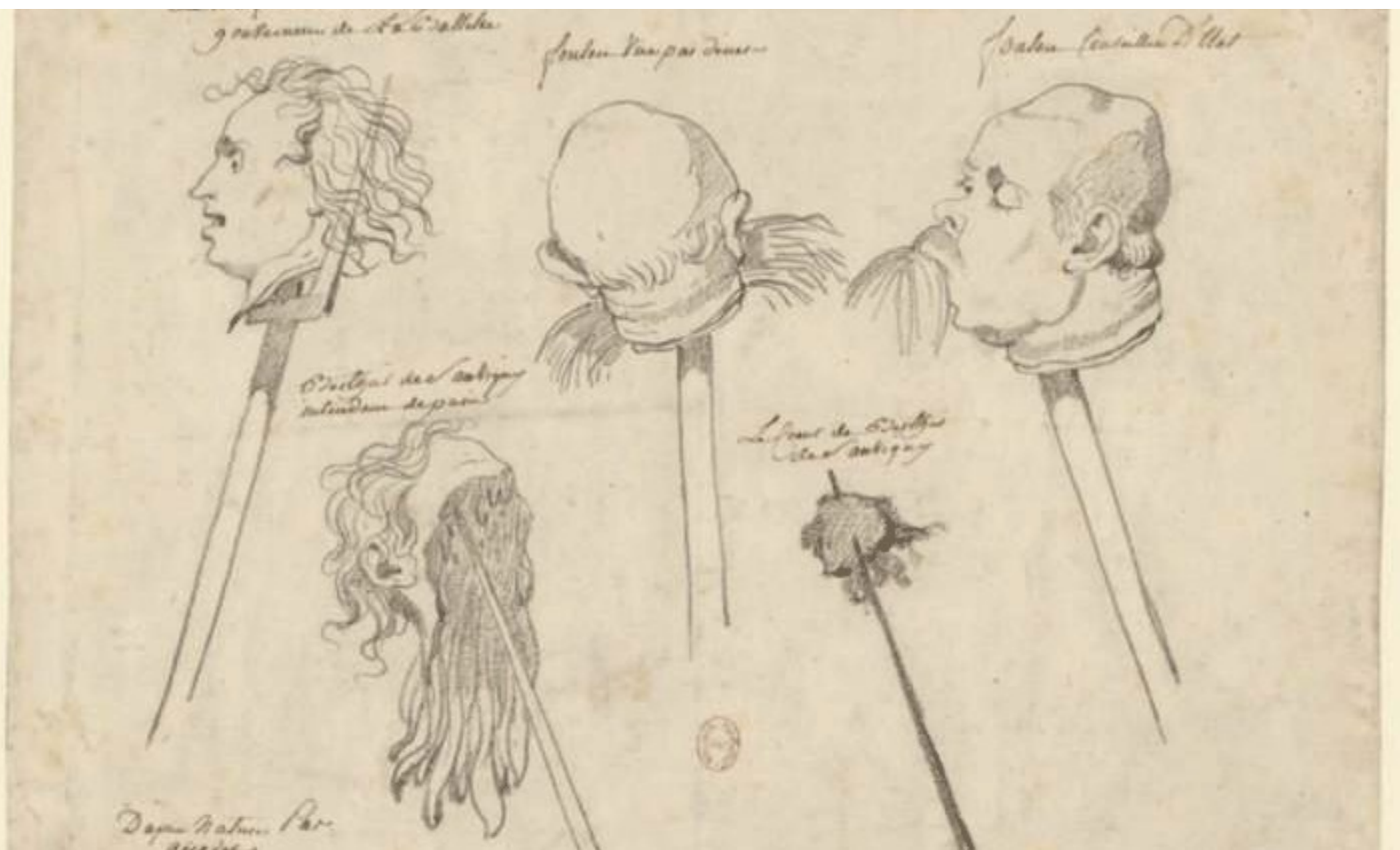
- Indebtedness in Ireland, Spain, Greece, etc etc
- Banks trump local governments
- “Austerity Measures” – removal of “social safety net”... privatization of public services
- Bank – Govt – Corporation... power bloc(s)... with privileging of corporations (private ownership)
- Riots in reply

# COUNTERPRESSURES ON THE RULING CLASSES

- Assemblies. Look how many:
- Estates General ☾ National Assembly ☾  
Legislative Assembly ☾ Insurrectionary  
Commune ☾ Committee on Public Safety ☾  
Directory ☾ (military dictatorship)
- Street Riots
- Uprisings in the countryside... pillaging of castles, chateaus, manors
- Killing of aristos

# A COMPLEX OF MANY REVOLUTIONS

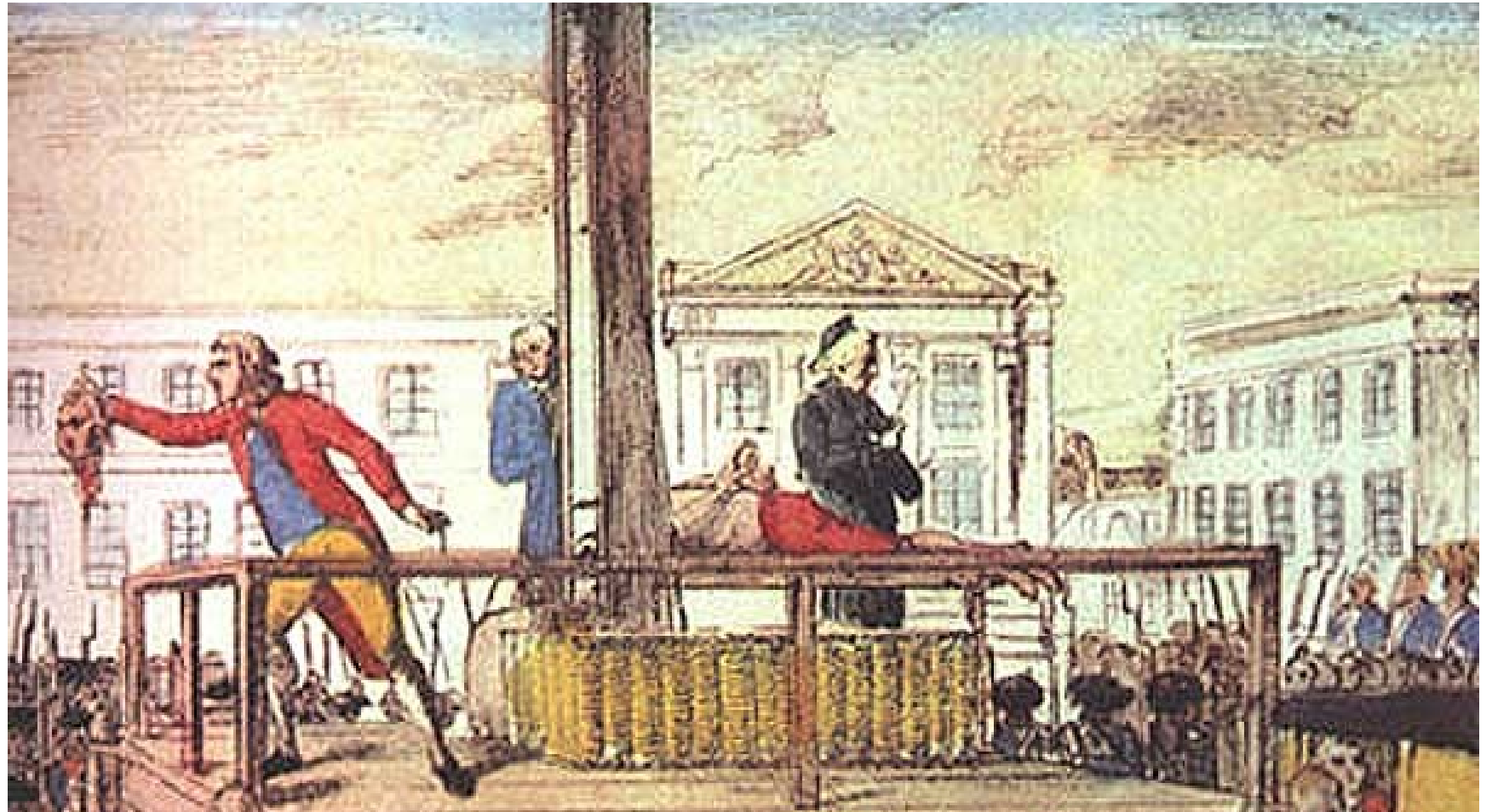
- Revolution 1: American Revolution (France vs Britain)... (and remember here: French and Indian War, Pontiac's Rebellion, street riots, large military revolution... Shay's Rebellion, Whiskey Rebellion...)
- Revolution 2: 1<sup>st</sup> part of the French Revolution, culminating in the establishment of a constitutional monarchy (finished exactly 224 years ago today)... abolition of feudalism, judicial reform (judges to be elected), church stripped of privileges
- Revolution 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the French Revolution: ☾ the insurrectionary commune... (ACTUALLY many levels here: Revolution 3.1: country vs. city... Revolution 3.2: Women's March... Revolution 3.3: Jacobins eventually take over... fragmentation within the revolutionaries... Revolution 3.4: The Reign of Terror)...
- \*\*: change of calendar, 10 day week, outlawing of religion, vote for all, public schools, a festival week once a month
- Revolution 4: HAITI!
- Revolution 5 (counter-revolution)? Period of the directorate... breadth of vote reduced...
- Revolution 6: military coup by Napoleon...

















# Delacroix – Liberty (1830)

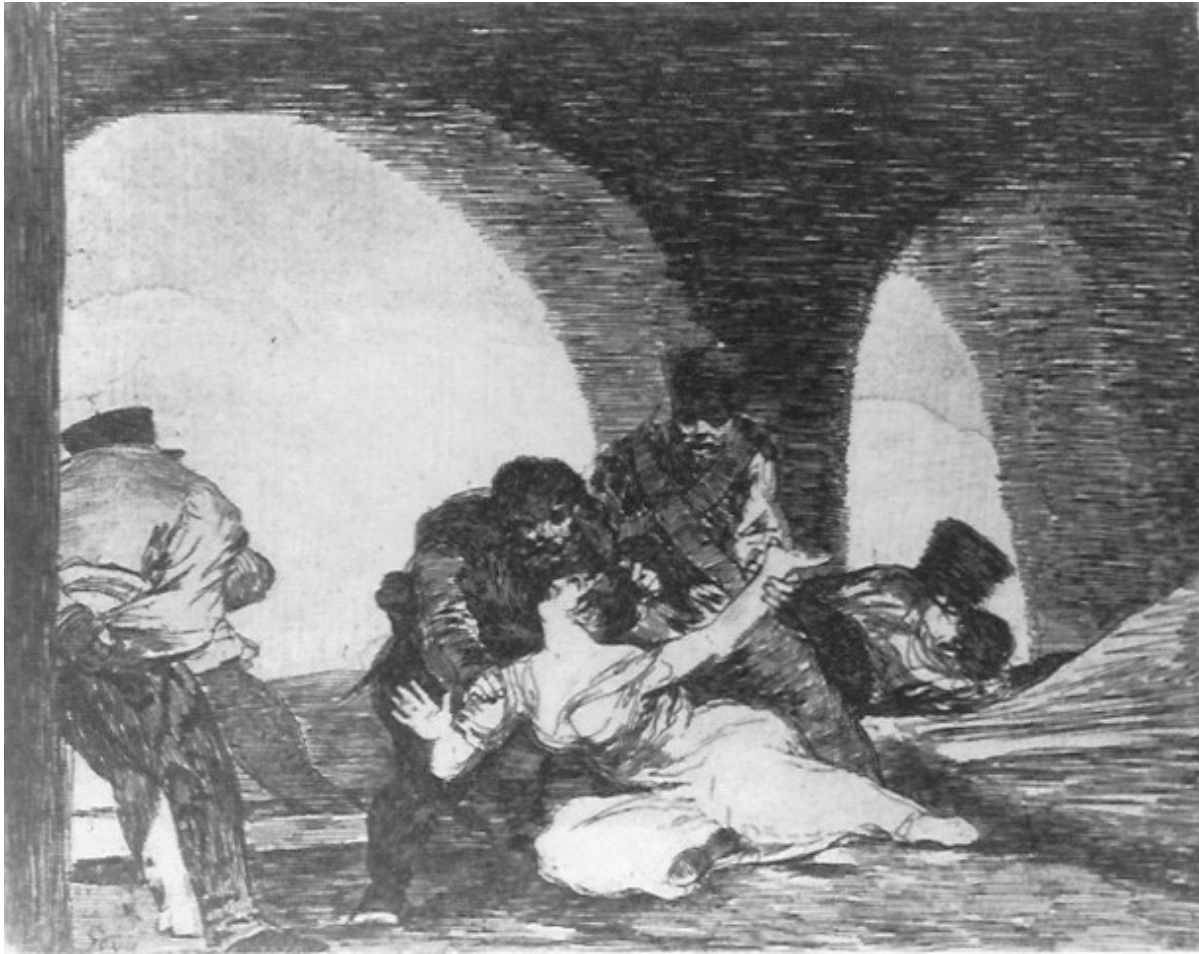


Now compare all that to Francisco Goya's rendering of the French Army, from the perspective of Spanish partisans. Goya: *3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1808*





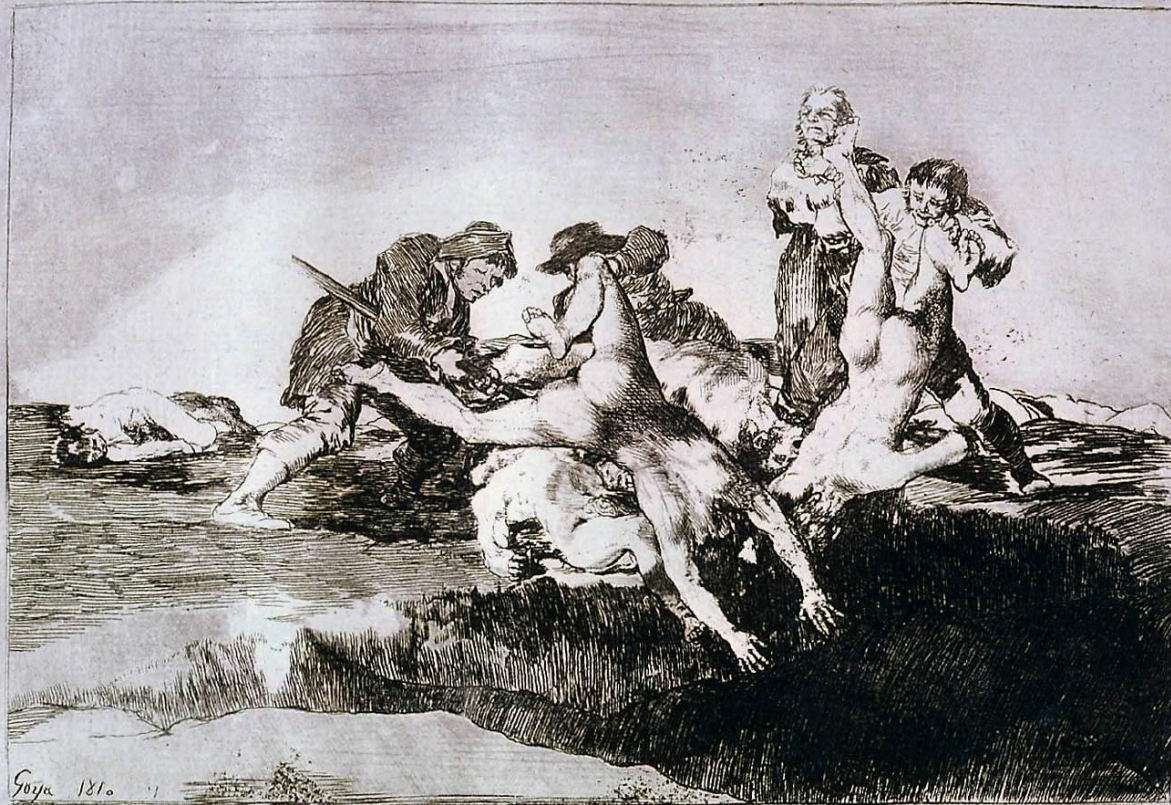
# Goya's "Disasters of War" series







27a



Goya 1810



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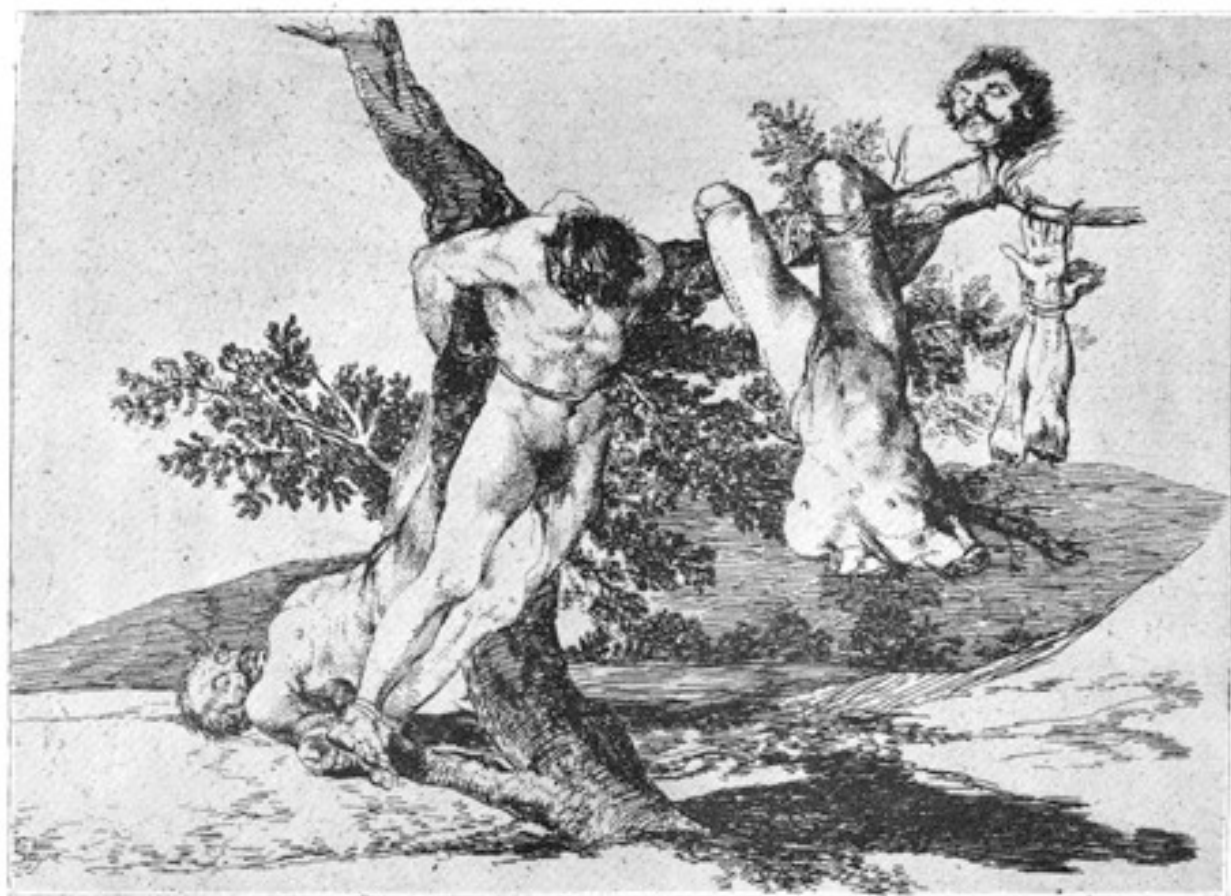


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*Esto es peor.*



*¿Qué hai que hacer mas?*



*Grande hazaña! Con muertos!*

# Control of the Imagination...

- Islam / ISIS
- Western control of media / attack on journalists
- U.S. etc *controls on journalists*
- Depiction of ISIS / Al Qaeda as “terrorists”
- Use of images of beheadings, on both sides
- Suppression of images of dead soldiers, of dead “collateral damage”...
- \*\*\* *controlling WHAT IS THE ISSUE... What are the questions ... for example “Should We be bombing Syria and Iraq” ....*
- (Who’s “we”?)
- Or... *“Isn’t ISIS a real, crazy threat?” (VS: What’s the overall picture in the region... where do all these groups and conflicts stem from... who arms who? How are religions and other ideologies employed in this region or with regard to this region?...)*