That France failed to provide all the support the leaders of the United Irishmen required in 1798 is, with hindsight, unsurprising, since Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821) was less interested in the liberty of Ireland than in the aggrandizement of France. The rise of Napoleon and the terrifying march of his rapacious armies across Europe was to deprive many individuals and states of their right to self-determination. Defeated by the Russian winter in 1812 before he was more decisively defeated by allied forces under the command of the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon came to symbolize, for many, the archoppressor of liberty. And yet, within France itself, his reform of the legal system and mechanisms of government would in no small way enshrine the original principles of the French Revolution in the nation's constitution. When the Orleanist monarchy was overthrown in France in 1848, the leaders of the revolution had no qualms about seeing the republican flag that had so terrified Napoleon's conquests as a "symbol of equality, of liberty, and of fraternity," but most of all as a "symbol of order." The need for the pursuit of liberty to be in accord with the rule of law and not in conflict with it was again restated, over seventy years after Jefferson had sought the right order of words to express the relationship between individual freedom and public responsibility.

GLYNIS RIDLEY

LIBERTY LEADING THE PEOPLE (1830)

Painting by Eugène Delacroix

During the 1820s, Delacroix sought to establish and then consolidate his career by producing large-scale paintings on literary and contemporary subjects to be shown at the biennial salons. This trend continued when, following the July Revolution, he painted *Liberty Leading the People*.

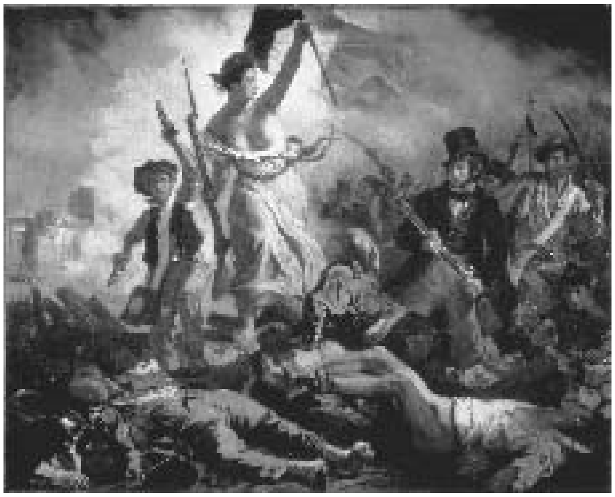
On July 25, 1830, Charles X signed four proclamations with the intention of crushing liberal opposition and securing an ultraconservative government. These measures, which included the abolition of the freedom of the press, the dissolution of an unfavorable National Assembly, and a new electoral system that favored the aristocracy, were greeted with scorn and anger, and in three days (July 27–29, 1830), the so-called Trois Glorieuses, a coalition of the middle classes and workers, swept him from power and forced his abdication on August 2, 1830. In his place, the constitutional monarch Louis-Philippe, the Duc d'Orléans, was installed.

Although he took no part in the uprising, Delacroix quickly produced a tribute to the heroes of the barricades: *Liberty Leading the People* (also known as *Liberty on the Barricades*). On October 12, 1830, he wrote to his brother Charles, "I have undertaken a modern subject, a barricade, and if I have not fought for my country, at least I will paint for her." He worked on the canvas from October until early December, eventually signing two of the spars of wood at the right with his name and the date of 1830.

Delacroix showed his *Liberty* at the salon of 1831 with about thirty-five other drawn and painted commemorations of the Trois Glorieuses and the burials that followed. In the Salon's catalog it appeared as *28 July: Liberty Leading the People*, indicating that the action took place during the day of fiercest fighting around the Hotel de Ville. However, the painting was not the action of a partisan of the Revolution; Delacroix wrote to his nephew Charles Verinac, "A simple stroller like myself ran the same risk of stopping a bullet as did the improvised heroes who marched on the enemy with pieces of iron lashed to broom sticks," a comment by which he clearly disassociated himself from the participants. Alexandre Dumas recalled meeting Delacroix and saw that he was much alarmed by the sight of the unruly, working-class mob. But, as Dumas recounted, memories of his Bonapartist upbringing were stirred by the sight of the tricolor fluttering from Notre Dame, and enthusiasm soon took the place of fear.

Liberty was visually striking, capturing the excitement and energy of the event, and was a potent symbol of the struggle for freedom. Silhouetted against a backdrop of cannon smoke, the personification of Liberty is a combination of the real and the ideal, the palpable and the ephemeral. On her head she wears the red cap of liberty, as popularized during the first French Revolution and derived from the ancient Roman Phrygian cap, the emblem of freed slaves. Bare breasted and holding the tricolor in one hand and an infantry musket in the other, she appears as half goddess and half woman of the people. Delacroix's knowledge of classical art shaped her appearance and she is based partially on the Venus de Milo and on ancient personifications of Victory, though now lacking wings. Such sculptural references did not prevent Liberty from also becoming apparition-like, and she is perhaps the last ecstatic vision of the dying man at her feet. Many stories and poems about the bravery of women emerged in the aftermath of the revolution, and Auguste Le Barbier described Liberty as "a strong woman with powerful breasts." Numerous other visual sources have been proposed for Liberty, such as Le Barbier the Elder's painting of Jeanne Hachette (1778) and Pierre-Narcisse Guérin's mythological paintings *Aurore and Céphale* (1810), and *Iris and Morpheus* (1811). However, Delacroix's figure of Liberty was primarily the product of his own imagination and, as preliminary drawings show, built on the example of his *Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (1826).

Liberty is accompanied by figures from all classes of society: a bereted street urchin brandishing a pair of pistols, a white-shirted, saber-wielding factory worker, and a blue-shirted day laborer from the country who is on his knees. The top-hatted figure has been variously identified as a student, Delacroix himself (which it certainly is not), Delacroix's friend Fréderic Villot, and Etienne Arago, an ardent Republican and director of the Vaudeville Theater with whom Delacroix seems to have had little or no contact. It seems unlikely that this figure is meant to be a known individual, and probably represents an artisan or chief of a workshop rather than someone of the middle classes. The main figures surge forward victorious over the corpses of a Royal Guardsman and a Carbinier. For the dead figures in the



(Ferdinand Victor) Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*. Reprinted courtesy of the Bridgeman Art Library.

foreground Delacroix took his cue from Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819) and Antoine-Jean Gros's two great works of Napoleonic propaganda, *The Plague House at Jaffa* (1804) and *The Battle of Eylau* (1808). The action is set on the right bank of the River Seine, probably close to the Hotel de Ville, but no precise topography is suggested and Delacroix invented the view of the towers of Notre Dame since no such vista was possible in 1830.

Some critics were unnerved by the sight of the rebellious rabble that Delacroix had depicted, and complained that Liberty was too ugly and common to portray such a lofty ideal, disturbed by the seeming contradiction of a realistic allegorical personification. Others found no such difficulties and concluded that Delacroix was employing artistic license and had created a new idiom: a simultaneous history painting and allegory that had universal significance because he had avoided references to specific locations and actions.

Delacroix saw the arrival of the July Monarchy as a return of the opportunity to paint substantial historical works, subjects that the Bourbon government had denied him. But *Liberty* was not simply a deliberate and perhaps cynical attempt to ingratiate himself with the new regime, and Delacroix invested it with a spirited optimism and belief in the righteous self-determination of the French. However, *Liberty*'s content was too inflammatory for Louis-Philippe and the painting was not purchased by the royal household. Instead, it was bought by the Ministry of the Interior for the modest fee of three thousand francs and Delacroix was awarded the Legion of Honor. The painting entered the Luxembourg Gallery immediately but was displayed only until 1832 and then put into storage for fear of it either inspiring further insurrection or becoming a permanent and divisive reminder of defeat for supporters of the Bourbons. It was again briefly displayed following the 1848 Revolution and entered the Louvre in 1874.

During the last 120 years, Delacroix's *Liberty* has become intermingled with personifications of the French Republic and ultimately the work has come to embody the authority of the French state. From 1979 until 1994, it was placed on the back of the hundred-franc note, and since 1982 Liberty's head has appeared on postage stamps.

SIMON LEE

See also **Delacroix, Eugène**

Work

Liberty Leading the People, 1830. Oil on canvas, 259 cm × 325 cm, Louvre, Paris.

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LICHTENBERG, GEORG CHRISTOPH 1742–1799

German physicist and satirical writer

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, the hunchbacked physicist from Göttingen, was a complex character who cannot easily be subsumed under Enlightenment values, even though he never faltered in his allegiance to reason. His writings are multifarious, ranging from poems to scientific articles, but they are all part of a single confession. He attempted to write a history of his mind as well as his wretched body, his "own natural history," with a "sincerity which, in some, may cause a kind of sympathetic embarrassment." J. P. Stern has called Lichtenberg's thought a "doctrine of scattered occasions," and this characterization befits Lichtenberg's life as well. Some time between 1768 and 1771, according to his diary, we find him studying Isaac