

# French Liberty, British Slavery

by James Gillray

James Gillray (1756–1815) was one of the first modern British political cartoonists. During the French Revolution, Gillray produced comics opposing the revolution. The following British political cartoon was created in December 1792, at the height of renewed hostilities during the French Revolution. During the summer of 1792, France's constitutional monarchy (a government ruled by a king or queen under the agreement of a constitutional set of laws)—was removed and replaced with the French Republic (a government with representatives elected by the people). The cartoon compares a man from France and a man from Great Britain, as they describe the impact their governments have on their well being. Note that the author's spelling of certain words ("vat" for "what", "ve" for "we") is meant to mock French accents.

## Primary Source:

French Liberty:

"O, **Sacre Dieu!** vat blessing be de Libertie [Liberty].

**Vive le Assemble Nationale!** no more Tax! no more Slavery! all Free Citizen! ha hah! by God, how ve live! ve swim in de *Milk & Honey!*

British Slavery:

"Ah this cursed **Ministry!** they'll ruin us with their damn'd Taxes! why **Zounds!** they're making Slaves of us all, & Starving us to Death!"

## Glossary:

**Sacre Dieu!**: an expression of surprise, literally translated as "Holy God!"

**Vive le Assemble Nationale:** "Long live the National Assembly" the French Parliament during the Revolution.

**Milk & Honey:** abundance and plenty

**Ministry:** British Government

**Zounds:** an expression of anger



**Citation:** James Gillray, *French Liberty, British Slavery*, 1792, hand colored etching on paper, 25 cm. x 35 cm., London, The British Museum.