

2018

# Revolution is American until It Isn't: A Study of American Reactions to the French Revolution 1789 and the Russian Revolutionary Period of 1917

Jonathan Dunning  
*Murray State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/steeplechase>

 Part of the [Diplomatic History Commons](#), [European History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](#).

## Recommended Citation

Dunning, Jonathan (2018) "Revolution is American until It Isn't: A Study of American Reactions to the French Revolution 1789 and the Russian Revolutionary Period of 1917," *Steeplechase: An ORCA Student Journal*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/steeplechase/vol2/iss1/6>

This Graduate Research is brought to you for free and open access by the The Office of Research and Creative Activity at Murray State's Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Steeplechase: An ORCA Student Journal by an authorized editor of Murray State's Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu](mailto:msu.digitalcommons@murraystate.edu).

## Revolution is American until It Isn't

Since the founding of the United States, Americans have celebrated ideas such as liberty and democracy. Early Republic Americans supported the flourishing of these ideas in France during the French Revolution in 1789. Likewise, World War I era Americans celebrated what they saw as the rise of democracy in the February Revolution of 1917 in Russia. However, while Americans supported the dissemination of democratic and liberal ideas in these countries, American society became less supportive of these revolutions as civil violence was introduced into the French Revolution through the September Massacre in 1792 and an opposing political ideology emerged in the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 in Russia. American support for these movements declined as they stopped seeing themselves in these revolutions. Moreover, American reactions to these revolutions also caused hysteria to occur throughout American society. Early Republic Americans came to fear the influence of Jacobinism within America while World War I era Americans felt Bolshevik agents had infiltrated the United States and plotted to overthrow America's democratic and capitalist system. Despite being over 100 years apart, American reactions to both of these revolutions were in many ways the same.

Historians have written in depth on American reactions to both of these revolutions. Published in 1966, Bernard Fay's *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America* offered a detailed comparison of French and American reactions to each other's revolutions.<sup>1</sup> In 2009, Rachel Hope Cleves published *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery* in which she showed how Early Republic Americans came to fear Jacobin ideology

---

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, translated by Ramon Guthrie, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), 3, 62, 164, 252, 352.

in the 1790s. She also demonstrated that Americans during this period feared that Jacobins might infiltrate American society and overthrow the newfound country.<sup>2</sup> In looking at American reactions to Russia, Christopher Lasch depicted American feelings of both excitement and betrayal during the course of Russia's revolutionary period in his 1962 work titled *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*.<sup>3</sup> Robert K. Murray's *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, published in 1955, still remains the most informative writing on the anti-Bolshevik hysteria that emerged in American society during the First Red Scare following the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>4</sup> While each of these works has proved to be important to the historiographies of American reactions to the French Revolution and Russian Revolutionary period respectively, these historiographies are lacking works that compare and contrast how Americans have reacted to different revolutions at different points in history. By comparing American responses to the French Revolution and the Russian Revolutionary period, analysis can be developed that demonstrates that American reactions to foreign revolutions throughout time have shared common characteristics and this evidence can help historians better understand how Americans have seen themselves in the revolutions of other countries.

In 1789, the United States was a new country. It had gained its independence from monarchy by defeating Britain in the American Revolution in 1783, and by 1789, the thirteen former colonies that made up America became a national republic with the signing of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> However, during this time, the United States

---

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59-63.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (United States: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 28-29, 57-58.

<sup>4</sup> Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), ix-x.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: The Story of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6-7; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33-34.

remained weak. It held a population of only four million people who mostly lived along the Atlantic coast.<sup>6</sup> Still, the people of the young country celebrated the ideas they fought for in the revolution such as democracy, liberty, and equality. They cherished the freedom and political power that they gained along with their independence from Britain.<sup>7</sup>

In 1789, the French people experienced a revolution of their own. Under the reign of Louis XVI, the French nobility held significant influence throughout the country. Moreover, the nobility used its privilege to avoid paying taxes.<sup>8</sup> However, the emergence of capitalism throughout France and the expansion of French trade globally led to the formation of a revolutionary bourgeoisie class.<sup>9</sup> The majority of the members of this revolutionary class possessed a familiarity with Enlightenment thinkers and the ideology of equality and liberty.<sup>10</sup> France also had a peasant class that struggled under the weight of taxes and feudal dues.<sup>11</sup> When a financial disaster struck the French monarchy in 1788 due to rising French debt, Louis XVI called for a meeting of the Estates General in order to find a solution to this problem.<sup>12</sup> The Estates General met on May 4, 1789, but the meeting soon turned bitter as the nobility refused to give up their tax privileges. Their stubbornness frustrated the

---

<sup>6</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill Jensen, "The American People and the American Revolution," *The Journal of American History*, no. 1 (June 1970) 5-35, accessed April 4, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1900547>, 35. Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> R.R. Palmer, Joel Colton, Lloyd Kramer, *A History of the Modern World*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), 351.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Soboul, "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World," in Gary Kates, editor. *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Routledge, 1998) 19; Timothy Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution* (United States: Belknap Press, 2015), 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 32-33.

<sup>11</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 23-25, Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 353.

<sup>12</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 356.

Third Estate.<sup>13</sup> On June 17, the Third Estate voted to declare itself the sovereign National Assembly. As the National Assembly, it declared all old taxes illegal.<sup>14</sup> Louis XVI refused to recognize the National Assembly though and instead stood by the demands of the nobility. The members of the National Assembly defied the king, however, when he asked that they exit the meeting hall. Instead, they committed further revolutionary acts by granting themselves parliamentary immunity.<sup>15</sup>

The king responded to the revolutionary National Assembly by having 18,000 troops sent to Paris.<sup>16</sup> People throughout Paris began to fear an attack on the National Assembly and their neighborhoods. Looking to defend themselves, Parisians tried to acquire arms.<sup>17</sup> When they attempted to get weapons from the Bastille, violence broke out between the Parisians and the soldiers stationed at the fortress.<sup>18</sup> However, the Parisians took the Bastille successfully, causing Louis XVI to cave to the Third Estate and recognize the National Assembly as the new municipal government.<sup>19</sup> With its newfound power, on August 4, the National Assembly ended the tax privileges of the nobility and abolished feudalism within France. It also laid out the principles of France's governance in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. This document established freedom of religion, due process, democratic sovereignty of the people, and liberty for the people of France.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the Declaration and its message spread through Europe and the United States through pamphlets, books, and leaflets.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 42, 46-47.

<sup>14</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 48.

<sup>15</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 49.

<sup>16</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 357.

<sup>17</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 54-55.

<sup>18</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 359.

<sup>19</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 359.

<sup>20</sup> "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen," *The Avalon Project*, Yale Law School Archives, accessed April 12, 2017, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/rightsof.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp); Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 361.

<sup>21</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 361.

Since the American Revolution, Americans thought fondly of France and appreciated France's support in helping defeat the British.<sup>22</sup> When the French Revolution occurred in 1789, Americans responded positively to it. In the revolution's earliest stages, Federalists and Anti-federalists both celebrated what appeared to be the dissemination of liberty and American revolutionary concepts within France.<sup>23</sup> United States President George Washington wrote that "the revolution which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature that the mind can hardly realize the fact."<sup>24</sup> He further stated that the results of the French Revolution resulted from the "fruits" of American independence.<sup>25</sup> Alexander Hamilton believed it would be good if the French gained their freedom from monarchy and supported the French people's push for liberty.<sup>26</sup> John Adams held hopes that the French Revolution would advance the causes of "liberty, equity, and humanity" not just in France but across the globe as well.<sup>27</sup>

None of the founding fathers may have been as excited about the French Revolution as Thomas Jefferson, however. He had been in France at the start of the revolution.<sup>28</sup> Only witnessing a few riots, he believed that the revolution occurred

---

<sup>22</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 174.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert L. Lycan, *Alexander Hamilton and American Foreign Policy: A Design for Greatness* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 132; Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 174-175.

<sup>24</sup> George Washington to Gouverneur Morris, October 13, 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 6, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-04-02-0125>.

<sup>25</sup> George Washington to Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay Graham, January 9, 1790, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 6, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-04-02-0363>.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander Hamilton to Marquis de Lafayette, October 6, 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 6, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-05-02-0202>; Lycan, *Alexander Hamilton and American Foreign Policy*, 134.

<sup>27</sup> John Adams to Francois Adriaan Van der Kemp, March 27, 1790, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-0887>.

<sup>28</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800* (Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 58-61.

without great difficulty.<sup>29</sup> Even after being in Paris during the storming of the Bastille, Jefferson lamented the bloodshed but celebrated that France might now be on its way to establishing a constitution.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, he believed that the American Revolution influenced the French to start their own revolution. Jefferson also saw freedom and liberty around the world as connected to France's fight for liberty. He felt that if France's revolution failed, then monarchy's grip on the world would tighten and that even America might revert backwards from its newly established republic.<sup>31</sup> In that regard, he felt that the lasting power of America's revolution and liberty now depended on the success of the French Revolution. As can be seen by the writings of America's founding fathers, they also supported the French Revolution. They each saw France's revolution as connected to the American Revolution and the ideas they fought for during that conflict.

The newspapers of the Early Republic also celebrated the French Revolution. Newspapers across the United States began double coverage of French news following the start of the revolution. Almost every paper in America praised France's revolution and new government, as they saw the French Revolution as a product of and connected to America's revolutionary ideas.<sup>32</sup> The *Gazette of the United States* wrote that "contempt" for the rights of people caused the corruption of government and praised the National Assembly for creating the Declaration of the Rights of Man to honor and protect people's rights.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, the *State Gazette of North Carolina* declared that the French Revolution came as a result of "the blessing of American freedom" spreading across Europe due to the "glorious

---

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, May 9, 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-15-02-0112>.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Jefferson to Lord Wycombe, July 25, 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-15-02-0293>; Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, July 25, 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-15-02-0291>.

<sup>31</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 179-181.

<sup>32</sup> Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 272.

<sup>33</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, October 21, 1789.

political light” of Americans.<sup>34</sup> The *Pennsylvania Packet* proclaimed that “the French have really done wonders” in their revolution.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the *Hartford Courant* claimed that “there are few things in the conduct of the French assembly which a lover of liberty and the rights of man would object to.”<sup>36</sup> The tone these newspapers took described the French Revolution in highly patriotic terms to Americans and gave Americans more reasons to cheer for the liberation of the French people.

The French’s placement of a written constitution into law in 1791 further validated the idea to the Americans that the French were implementing American ideals throughout France.<sup>37</sup> Washington claimed that the American citizenry wished the best for France following the establishment of the French constitution.<sup>38</sup> He further declared that France’s adoption of a constitution not only benefitted France, but also the entire world.<sup>39</sup> In James Madison’s “Resolution on the French Constitution,” Madison stated that he believed that almost everyone in the House of Representatives found pleasure in the results of the French Revolution. He also thought that “a proper address from the United States to the French nation would be more natural and more acceptable, than from any other country” as America’s words would better foster “the spirit of freedom” throughout France.<sup>40</sup> Madison saw America as the revolutionary leader of the world and believed that American revolutionary principles now guided France. Outside of the founding fathers, France’s implementation of a constitution excited Americans across the Early

---

<sup>34</sup> *State Gazette of North Carolina*, November 19, 1789.

<sup>35</sup> *Pennsylvania Packet*, October 8, 1789.

<sup>36</sup> *Hartford Courant*, September 27, 1790.

<sup>37</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 174-175.

<sup>38</sup> George Washington to Armand, September 5, 1791, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-08-02-0346>.

<sup>39</sup> Louis Martin Sears, *George Washington and the French Revolution* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1960), 108.

<sup>40</sup> James Madison, “Resolution on the French Constitution, March 10, 1792,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-14-02-0224>.



Republic as well. The constitution allowed Americans to see themselves in the French cause as they believed the French constitution pushed France closer to becoming a republic.<sup>41</sup>

The American press also celebrated France's constitution. Philadelphia's *Independent Gazetteer* printed the 1791 constitution in full in October 15, 1791 issue with "Liberty to all men speaking, writing, and printing their thoughts, and of exercising the religious worship to which they are attached" emphasized in giant capital letters.<sup>42</sup> This display demonstrated a recognition of the freedom of speech and religion that America placed into its own Bill of Rights.<sup>43</sup> The *State Gazette of North Carolina* wrote that France's new constitution promoted peace and the *National Gazette* praised the French constitution, claiming that the king's approval of it brought an end at last to France's revolution. It also shamed and criticized the French nobility who opposed the constitution as being selfish.<sup>44</sup> The *Gazette of the United States* declared that following France's establishment of the constitution, the French eliminated any legal or religious threats to their natural rights.<sup>45</sup> Clearly the American press supported the French constitution of 1791, and it was these praiseful words that informed the America's sentiment towards France.

In contrast to the Early Republic, World War I era Americans in 1917 lived in a vastly different country than the 1790s. Through Manifest Destiny, the country now expanded across the continent.<sup>46</sup> This expansion along with high rates of immigration caused the American population to raise from four million in 1789 to over one hundred and three million in 1917.<sup>47</sup> The country was no longer weak, but

---

<sup>41</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 174-175.

<sup>42</sup> *Independent Gazetteer*, October 15, 1791.

<sup>43</sup> US Constitution, amend. 1

<sup>44</sup> *State Gazette of North Carolina*, October 5, 1792; *National Gazette*, January 23, 1792.

<sup>45</sup> *Gazette of the United States*, October 12, 1791.

<sup>46</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 263-266.

<sup>47</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 33-34; US Census Bureau, *Historical National Population Estimates*, accessed April 12, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/popclockest.txt>; John Higham, "Nativism and

rather it developed into a territory holding global power.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the United States had undergone significant industrialization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>49</sup> Despite its changes, however, the country still celebrated American values, but had an expanded view of these values beyond the individual rights and self-liberty that Early Republic Americans cherished. By the twentieth century, Americans believed in “Americanism.”<sup>50</sup> Under this ideological nationalism, Americans felt that free enterprise, evangelical Protestantism, and patriarchy represented American values best and that capitalism and democracy made America a society of freedom and opportunity for all.<sup>51</sup>

Unlike Early Republic Americans and their feelings of comradeship for France, World War I era Americans felt diametrically opposed to the Tsarist regime in Russia. They saw Russia as being underdeveloped and backwards to their own standards.<sup>52</sup> This viewpoint stemmed from Americans’ struggle to understand whether Russia held status as a Western country or a primitive Eastern nation.<sup>53</sup> Not only did Americans think of Russia as being backwards, but they hated the Tsarist regime for the violence it carried out through assassinations, pogroms, and expropriations as well as the regime’s suppression of liberty. George Kennan, America’s top Russian expert, formed the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom in the early 1890s in order to garner American support for Russia’s fight for freedom and victims of the Tsar’s violence.<sup>54</sup> Kennan claimed that the Society

---

the New Immigrants,” in Leon Fink, editor. *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (United States: Wadsworth Learning, 2001) 273-274.

<sup>48</sup> Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 299.

<sup>49</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> Erica J. Ryan, *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare* (Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2015) 5, 40.

<sup>51</sup> *Red War on the Family*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*, 2-3.

<sup>53</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals*, 3, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals*, 8.

stood as “an expression of sympathy of freedom-loving Americans with the struggles for political freedom in Russia.”<sup>55</sup>

As World War I began in 1914, Russia sided with Britain and France in the Triple Entente against German and Austro-Hungary in the Central Powers. The Triple Entente planned for Russia to attack the Central Powers from the East while Britain and France moved against these countries from the West hoping to overwhelm the Central Powers with a two front war.<sup>56</sup> Russia struggled to fight, however, as it lacked the proper resources necessary for training and stocking its military adequately. Russians on the home front suffered as well as they dealt with shortages of food and fuel. Moreover, by 1916, the Russian military suffered numerous defeats to German forces, allowing Germany to occupy a significant portion of Russia.<sup>57</sup> These conditions caused the Russian people to view the war negatively as the “Tsar’s War.”<sup>58</sup>

Disillusionment with the war eventually led to a revolution, and by March 15, 1917, Russia’s monarchy had been overthrown by the Russian people.<sup>59</sup> Subsequent to the revolution, Russian politicians established a Provisional Government in Petrograd to govern the country. The Provisional Government came as a shift from the monarchical rule of the Tsar, as it supported free speech and promised to allow the Russian people to eventually establish their own form of government through democratic elections.<sup>60</sup> Yet, another governing body called the Petrograd Soviet also gained power in the wake of the Tsar. Marxist socialists such

---

<sup>55</sup> George Kennan, quoted in Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (United States: McGraw-Hill, 1972) 9.

<sup>56</sup> Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson’s Siberian Intervention* (California: Presidio Press, 1977), 11; William Kelleher Storey, *The First World War: A Concise Global History* (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 29-33.

<sup>57</sup> Abraham Ascher, *Russia: A Short History*, rev. ed. (One World, 2009), 155-156; Maddox, *Unknown War*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 156; Maddox, *Unknown War*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 44-45; Ascher, *Russia*, 159-160.

<sup>60</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 160.

as Mensheviks and Bolsheviks made up this group.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the Petrograd Soviet challenged the rule of the Provisional Government, as the Petrograd Soviet possessed domestic authority throughout Russia as it held influence in Russia's military and working class. The Provisional Government often could not govern without cooperating with the Petrograd Soviet.<sup>62</sup> A dual power relationship formed between these separate governing bodies, however, as the socialists within the Petrograd Soviet did not know how to govern a country and for that had to depend on the experienced politicians within the Provisional Government.<sup>63</sup>

Yet, the United States developed its foreign policy on the Provisional Government without recognizing the hindrance the dual power relationship placed upon it.<sup>64</sup> David R. Francis, the US ambassador to Russia, became excited over the fall of the Tsar. He felt that the Russians wanted freedom, and that the Provisional Government would help them achieve it through its democratic policies.<sup>65</sup> Francis immediately began to push for America to be the first country to recognize the Provisional Government without observing conditions throughout Russia further.<sup>66</sup> Robert Lansing, the United States Secretary of State, also claimed that American recognition of the Provisional Government would "strengthen the new democratic government in Russia."<sup>67</sup> President Woodrow Wilson obliged Francis and Lansing,

---

<sup>61</sup> George F. Kennan, *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920: Russia Leaves the War* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), 10-11; Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 30-31, 46; Ascher, *Russia*, 160-161; Maddox, *Unknown War*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 10-11; Ascher, *Russia*, 160-161.

<sup>63</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 10-11.

<sup>64</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 11-12.

<sup>65</sup> Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in the Twentieth Century* (United States: Random House, 2004), 9; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 16.

<sup>66</sup> Kennan, *Soviet-American Relations*, 17.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, March 19, 1917, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 41, *January 24-April 6, 1917*, eds. Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983) 426; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 14.

and on March 22, 1917, the United States became the first country to recognize the Provisional Government.<sup>68</sup>

The American government's recognition helped build a positive perception of Russia across the United States, as the press celebrated the news of Russia's new democratic principles to the American people.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the media across the country cheered the collapse of the Tsar. The *Boston Post* claimed that the forces of democracy would now spread throughout Russia.<sup>70</sup> Even before America joined the war against the Germans, the *Washington Post* claimed the collapse of the Tsar in Russia held great significance for the American people. If the revolution continued to be successful the newspaper claimed, then the Russian people would remove any German influence within their country and that Russia would become a much stronger opponent against Germany.<sup>71</sup> Other publications such as the *New York Times* celebrated the revolution as the beginning of Russian freedom while the *Wichita Daily Eagle* declared the result of the revolution as "triumphant democracy."<sup>72</sup> The American press for the most part expressed an optimistic tone about the fall of Russia's Tsarist regime.

The American people became excited by the Tsar's abdication. To the American public, the removal of Nicholas II from power also removed any fear of pro-German influences on Russia's fight against the Central Powers. Additionally, the revolution took away the violent "Russian Menace" that the Tsar represented, and the Americans now believed that the Russians would be a stronger fighting force.<sup>73</sup> Just as Early Republic Americans had celebrated the rise of democratic values through the French Revolution, the same occurred for World War I

---

<sup>68</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 14-15.

<sup>69</sup> *New York Times*, March 23, 1917; *San Bernardino County Sun*, March 23, 1917; *Tennessean*, March 23, 1917.

<sup>70</sup> *Boston Post*, March 18, 1917.

<sup>71</sup> *Washington Post*, March 16, 1917.

<sup>72</sup> *New York Times*, March 17, 1917; *Wichita Daily Eagle*, March 17, 1917.

<sup>73</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals*, 28.

Americans with the Russian Revolution. The fall of the Tsarist regime and the rise of the democratic Provisional Government also allowed the American people to more easily support America's entry into the war, because without the Tsar on the side of the Allies, the war could now become one of democracy versus autocracy.<sup>74</sup> As the United States entered World War I, Wilson capitalized on the collapse of the Tsar to indeed make the war a battle between democratic and autocratic governments. In his address to Congress on April 2, 1917 asking to end American neutrality in the war, Wilson celebrated the democratic values he saw within the Provisional Government. He called the establishment of the Provisional Government "wonderful and heartening" and he stated that Russia had always been "democratic at heart."<sup>75</sup>

Just as the Early Republic's press celebrated the French Revolution, the American press in World War I also celebrated the rise of what it saw to be a democratic power in the Provisional Government. Following Wilson's address, the press nationwide praised Russia's democratic ambitions and some even linked these to the United States. The *Asheville Citizen-Times* celebrated that "the American giant, who has never known any chains" extended "the hand of welcome recognition to his Russian brother."<sup>76</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* claimed that Russia's "bloodless revolution" brought the world closer to achieving global peace and stated that "democracy with the Russians is quite as much a matter of life as of faith."<sup>77</sup> Additionally, the *St. Louis Dispatch* wrote that "the news comes from Russia that Mr. Wilson's words were an inspiration to thousands who rallied to the standard of revolution" and that "the President had put a textbook of democracy in

---

<sup>74</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals*, 28-29.

<sup>75</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "An Address to a Joint Session of Congress," April 2, 1917, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 41, eds. Link, 524.

<sup>76</sup> *Asheville Citizen-Times*, April 4, 1917.

<sup>77</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 1917.

the hands of the oppressed throughout the world.”<sup>78</sup> The newspaper also declared that the Russian Revolution increased “freedom’s debt to America.”<sup>79</sup> Wilson’s recognition of Russia as a democratic ally of the United States helped to establish Russia as a free country in the minds of Americans. His speech and the press coverage surrounding Russia excited many Americans, as they saw themselves reflected in Russia’s new government and the bond between the democratic powers in Russia and America as a national victory.<sup>80</sup>

However, despite the celebratory tones of both Americans in the Early Republic and the World War I era, occasions in the revolutions of both France and Russia caused American support for both revolutions to decline. By the end of 1792 and beginning of 1793, events transpired in France that would make some Americans in the Early Republic feel as if they had too quickly celebrated the democratic and American values they saw in the French Revolution.<sup>81</sup> As stipulated by the French constitution, in September 1791, the National Assembly disbanded and a new governing body called the Legislative Assembly rose in its place. Moreover, a revolutionary group known as the Jacobins made up the majority of the members of this new legislature.<sup>82</sup> On April 20, 1792, members of the Legislative Assembly on Louis XVI’s request declared war against Austria as the revolutionaries feared that Austria might interfere in the revolution.<sup>83</sup>

The war, however, did not go well for France in the following months.<sup>84</sup> Fearing foreign invasion, revolutionaries broke into prisons across Paris from September 2 to 6 and killed any prisoner they suspected of being a

---

<sup>78</sup> *St. Louis Dispatch*, April 4, 1917.

<sup>79</sup> *St. Louis Dispatch*, April 4, 1917.

<sup>80</sup> Peter G. Filene, *American Views of Soviet Russia, 1917-1965* (Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1968), 1-2.

<sup>81</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 60-61.

<sup>82</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 370.

<sup>83</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 166-167, 170-171.

<sup>84</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 373.

counterrevolutionary that might aid the invader's cause. The death toll during these days rose to over a thousand.<sup>85</sup> Following the massacres, a governing body known as the National Convention assumed power on September 20 and overthrew the king by declaring France a republic.<sup>86</sup> Then, in December 1792, the National Convention put Louis XVI on trial after evidence came to light of the king's collaboration with counterrevolutionaries.<sup>87</sup> He was found guilty, and on January 21, 1793, the National Convention executed Louis XVI.<sup>88</sup> His execution, combined with France's wars and the September massacres, turned the French Revolution incredibly violent.

As news of this violence reached the United States in 1792, it caused division in American society as some turned against the French Revolution while others remained supportive.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, ideological differences caused this split. Those who revoked their support believed that an innate immorality in human behavior made the violence of the revolution in France influential to their fellow citizens. However, those who still supported the revolution believed that the bloodshed in France was a small sacrifice for achieving democracy.<sup>90</sup> As French refugees and newspapers told of the September massacres and the execution of Louis XVI, turmoil over the French Revolution began to emerge throughout the Early Republic.<sup>91</sup>

Americans who found the violence in France abhorrent were mostly Federalists and conservatives who also came to be known as anti-Jacobins.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, as the revolutionaries in France became increasingly more at odds with

---

<sup>85</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 210-214.

<sup>86</sup> Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 374.

<sup>87</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 235; Palmer, *A History of the Modern World*, 375.

<sup>88</sup> Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, 241.

<sup>89</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 59.

<sup>90</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 59-60, 74.

<sup>91</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 62-63.

<sup>92</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 60.



Christianity and religion in general, Protestant ministers in America started to turn against the French Revolution.<sup>93</sup> After supporting the French Revolution for years as a battle for the rights of men, following 1792, the anti-Jacobins in America began redefining the movement in France as lawless violence and anarchy.<sup>94</sup> They feared the chaos they saw in France could spread to the United States and devolve American society into atheism and bloodshed.<sup>95</sup> They stopped seeing the French Revolution as an extension of American values. On the opposite side of this issue in American society stood the Democratic-Republicans, who supported the French revolutionary effort despite the violence.<sup>96</sup> When France entered war against Prussia and Austria in April 1792, the Democratic-Republicans cheered for France to win. Throughout the winter of 1792 to 1793, they held parades and festivals to celebrate French military victories. The Democratic-Republicans also applauded France becoming a republic in September 1792, as they felt France officially joined America in opposing monarchy. They showed their support for France during this time by wearing French tri-colored cockades and singing French revolutionary songs.<sup>97</sup> In 1793, Democratic-Republicans even began to form democratic clubs to imitate the Jacobins in France, and they used these clubs to spread information about the democratic struggle of the French Revolution.<sup>98</sup>

Moreover, the violence of the French Revolution did not bother Democratic-Republicans. They saw the bloodshed and brutality of the September Massacres and the Terror as regretful but also necessary to reaching the aims of the revolutionary cause.<sup>99</sup> The *National Gazette* claimed that men in France had to be both soldier and citizen at once in order to protect the liberty of the country from

---

<sup>93</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 199.

<sup>94</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 73.

<sup>95</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 178; Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 68.

<sup>96</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 60-61.

<sup>97</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 175.

<sup>98</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 64-65.

<sup>99</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 75.

enemies both outside and within the country.<sup>100</sup> Thomas Jefferson, the leader of the Democratic-Republicans, still cared about the success of the French Revolution.<sup>101</sup> When discussing the violence of the French Revolution, he mourned the loss of life but claimed sacrifices needed to be made in the struggle in order to bring about “the liberty of the whole Earth.”<sup>102</sup> His words depicted the thoughts of many of his fellow Democratic-Republicans on the French Revolution. To them, they still identified American values with the French Revolution.

As anti-Jacobins came to oppose the French Revolution, however, they began to disassociate American democratic values and freedom with the values and freedom of the French Revolution.<sup>103</sup> The *Gazette of the United States* claimed the execution of the Louis XVI showed that “the tree of liberty” had been disgraced.<sup>104</sup> Alexander Hamilton wrote that the violence of the September Massacre demonstrated that the French Revolution in no way resembled the same dignity and humanity as did the American Revolution.<sup>105</sup> In the realm of religion, Protestant clergy throughout the Early Republic began preaching that America was a land of God while France became the land of the Antichrist and the enemies of Christianity.<sup>106</sup> Unlike the Democratic-Republicans, Federalists and conservatives did not see American ideals in the revolution in France. Moreover, they believed the success of the French Revolution could destroy liberty within the United States as opposed to aiding it.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> *National Gazette*, October 24, 1792.

<sup>101</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 75.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Jefferson to William Short, January 3, 1793, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-25-02-0016>.

<sup>103</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 78.

<sup>104</sup> *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, April 6, 1793; *Gazette of the United States*, April 4, 1793.

<sup>105</sup> Alexander Hamilton to ----, May 18, 1793, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-14-02-0312>.

<sup>106</sup> Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 417.

<sup>107</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 60-61.

As support for the French Revolution from Early Republic Americans declined as they became divided on the issue, during World War I, American excitement for Russia's revolution also deteriorated. While Americans had praised the rise of the Provisional Government, a second revolution within Russia began to develop.<sup>108</sup> Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin returned to Russia from Switzerland once he heard of the Tsar's collapse.<sup>109</sup> Lenin arrived in Petrograd on April 9, 1917 and following this he gave the "April Theses" speech.<sup>110</sup> Throughout the "April Theses," Lenin called for a proletariat coup of the Provisional Government, an end to the war, and national collectivization of all Russian land.<sup>111</sup> As an already war-weary Russian military continued to suffer losses under the Provisional Government, the government's authority within Russia started to erode.<sup>112</sup> By September 1917, the Bolsheviks managed to gain the majority in the Petrograd Soviet and Lenin urged the Bolsheviks to stage a coup as soon as they found an opportunity.<sup>113</sup> The Bolsheviks found their moment, and on November 7, 1917, they overthrew the Provisional Government.<sup>114</sup> Soon afterwards, the Bolsheviks established one-party rule across Russia. They did this by creating the Bolshevik Council of People's Commissars as Russia's governing body, making Lenin the leader of the country.<sup>115</sup> Lenin now aimed to establish a successful proletariat

---

<sup>108</sup> Fitzgerald, *Russian Revolution*, 50.

<sup>109</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 182-183; Morgan, *Reds*, 10-11.

<sup>110</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 183; Fitzgerald, *Russian Revolution*, 50-51.

<sup>111</sup> Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "April Theses," in *Lenin's Collected Works*, vol. 24, trans. Isaacs Bernard (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), accessed April 11, 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm>, 19-26.

<sup>112</sup> Storey, *The First World War*, 118; Maddox, *Unknown War*, 16, Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 23-24.

<sup>113</sup> Fitzgerald, *Russian Revolution*, 61-62.

<sup>114</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 166-167; Fitzgerald, *Russian Revolution*, 64.

<sup>115</sup> Fitzgerald, *Russian Revolution*, 65.

governing force within Russia and lead workers across the world in proletariats revolution.<sup>116</sup>

In America, the press received information about the Bolshevik coup before the government.<sup>117</sup> Throughout the country, newspapers highlighted the un-American characteristics and goals of the Bolsheviks. The *New York Times* claimed that an illegal organization known as the Bolsheviks gained control of Russia's government buildings and that the success of the group's revolution would be disastrous for the Allies in Europe. Moreover, the paper stated that the Bolsheviks planned to reestablish absolutism and the reign of a state church throughout Russia.<sup>118</sup> The *Chicago Tribune* mockingly wrote that the Bolsheviks wanted countries to abolish capitalism and "live happily ever after in a Socialist paradise."<sup>119</sup> The *Wichita Daily Eagle* claimed that the Bolsheviks represented "disloyalty" and "German subserviency."<sup>120</sup> Likewise, the *Oregon Daily Journal* also accused the Bolsheviks of being German agents.<sup>121</sup>

Whereas the violence of the French Revolution in 1792 divided American society, the majority of Americans in 1917 despised the Bolshevik coup. The stories in the press horrified and surprised Americans. The United States government had optimistically portrayed the Provisional Government as a growing democracy, not an unstable governing body.<sup>122</sup> The Bolsheviks had remained unknown to the American people, but following the coup they now represented a group that held the capability of destroying a democratic government. Throughout American

---

<sup>116</sup> Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, "Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies October 25 (November 7), 1917" in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 26, trans. Sdobnikov, 239-240.

<sup>117</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 77.

<sup>118</sup> *New York Times*, November 8, 1917; *New York Times*, November 9, 1917; *New York Times*, November 10, 1917.

<sup>119</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, November 9, 1917.

<sup>120</sup> *Wichita Daily Eagle*, November 8, 1917.

<sup>121</sup> *Oregon Daily Journal* November 10, 1917.

<sup>122</sup> Wilson, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress," 524; Lasch, *American Liberals*, 57.

society, the Bolsheviks became labeled as “anarchists,” as well as “agitators, fanatics, and pacifists.”<sup>123</sup> The United States government did not get official word of the Bolshevik coup until November 10, leaving government officials not knowing how to respond.<sup>124</sup> Ironically, unlike with the Provisional Government, Francis wrote to Lansing to tell him to encourage Wilson to not recognize the new Russian government.<sup>125</sup> Wilson gave his first public reaction to the Bolshevik coup on November 12, calling the Bolsheviks ill-informed and stupid for not seemingly realizing how their revolution threatened the Allied war effort against Germany.<sup>126</sup> Then, in March 1918, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, a peace agreement with Germany that pulled Russia out of the war.<sup>127</sup> This treaty turned Americans against the Bolsheviks and Russia even more, as Americans thought it was disgraceful that the Russians no longer wanted to insure their own freedom and fight against autocratic Germany.<sup>128</sup> Thus, by spring 1918, the American public and the United States government not only did not see any redeeming qualities in the Bolsheviks but did not see the revolutionary period in Russia as a reflection of American values either.

While the great majority of Americans loathed the Bolshevik uprising, a small minority of the population did support it. The Socialist Party of America and the Industrial Workers of the World both praised the Bolshevik coup.<sup>129</sup> The

---

<sup>123</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals* 57-58.

<sup>124</sup> Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 77.

<sup>125</sup> David Rowland Francis to Robert Lansing, November 7, 1917, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 44, *August 21-November 10, 1917*, eds. Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl, Manfred F. Boemeke (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 532; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 77.

<sup>126</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “An Address in Buffalo to the American Federation of Labor,” in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, *November 11-January 15, 1918*, eds. Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl, Manfred F. Boemeke (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, 78.

<sup>127</sup> Ascher, *Russia*, 167.

<sup>128</sup> Lasch, *American Liberals*, 87.

<sup>129</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 19; Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (Yale University Press, 1998), 7-8.

Socialist Party was a political party based on Marxist ideology that had around 100,000 members and tried to use the political system to bring socialist reform to the government.<sup>130</sup> The Industrial Workers of the World was a syndicalist union that organized both skilled and unskilled laborers in the hopes that one day it could organize a general strike to overthrow the capitalist system and build a government based on syndicalism in which the workers ran the American government.<sup>131</sup> The group never reached over 60,000 members.<sup>132</sup> Both groups had held anti-war sentiment during the First World War as well.<sup>133</sup> Thus, when the Bolsheviks took Russia out of the war, both the Socialist Party and the IWW applauded this action.<sup>134</sup> The two organizations also saw the Bolshevik uprising as the most successful Socialist revolution in history, and members of the groups verbally sympathized and aligned themselves with the Communists.<sup>135</sup> IWW and Socialist support for the Bolsheviks though caused Americans to stop seeing these groups as individual entities. Instead, they started seeing socialists and IWW members as being Bolshevik agents.<sup>136</sup>

American reactions to both revolutions in France and Russia spawned hysteria movements throughout the Early Republic and post-World War I America. Hysteria developed in both periods as numerous Americans from each began seeing the values coming from these different revolutions as being opposite of American ideals. Moreover, both Early Republic and World War I Americans believed that certain members and groups were trying to undermine American society with the anti-American values that they saw emerging from these revolutions. World War I

---

<sup>130</sup> Julian F. Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism: New York During the Red Scare, 1914-1924* (New York: Kennikat Press, 1972), 2; Murray, *Red Scare*, 19.

<sup>131</sup> Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of the IWW and Syndicalism in the United States*. Updated Edition (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999), 1.

<sup>132</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 26-28.

<sup>133</sup> *New York Times*, April 7, 1917; Jaffe, *Crusade against Radicalism*, 2-3.

<sup>134</sup> Powers, *Not Without Honor*, 7-8; Murray, *Red Scare*, 19.

<sup>135</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 37-39.

<sup>136</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 32.

Americans believed that IWW members and socialists wanted to establish a Bolshevik government in America, while Federalists came to fear that anyone with pro-Jacobin sentiment might bring the anarchy and bloodshed of the Terror to American shores. Even after the decline in power of the Jacobins in France in 1794, anti-Jacobinism only continued to strengthen in America.<sup>137</sup> However, anti-Jacobin hysteria did not reach its apex until 1798-1799 when America became involved in a Quasi-War with France over France's continued seizure of American merchant ships.<sup>138</sup> In 1798, under the direction of the Federalists, the United States government passed the Alien and Sedition Acts. The Sedition Act made it illegal for an individual or the press to criticize the government, giving the Federalists the power to silence the pro-French Democratic-Republicans. The Alien acts allowed the government to detain and deport any alien in the United States without a trial or reason, specifically targeting anyone suspected of Jacobinism<sup>139</sup>

In 1798, two European books, *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe* by John Robison and *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* by Abbe Barruel, were republished in the United States and both alleged that the Masonic Illuminati developed a plot to use Jacobins to overthrow the Christian world. Furthermore, they claimed that the Jacobins targeted the United States in their anti-Christian crusade.<sup>140</sup> Ministers began to preach about the Illuminati conspiracy in their sermons throughout America and the press included excerpts discussing it.<sup>141</sup> No minister discussed the Jacobin plot in their sermons more than Jedidiah Morse Jr., however.<sup>142</sup> He preached in defense of

---

<sup>137</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 87.

<sup>138</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 245; Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 89.

<sup>139</sup> Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 249, 259-262.

<sup>140</sup> Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 417; Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 90-91.

<sup>141</sup> Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 417; Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 91.

<sup>142</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 91.

American society and Christianity, and produced French documents in his sermons that he claimed showed the Jacobin plot to destroy America.<sup>143</sup> George Washington even praised Morse's anti-French sermons.<sup>144</sup> However, skepticism of the content of these two books soon swept throughout American society and exposed the American reaction to them as anti-Jacobin hysteria. Yet, the hysteria managed to destroy most of the remaining support for the Jacobins or French Revolution in American society.<sup>145</sup> By the end of the 1790s, even Democratic-Republicans began accusing the Federalists of being Jacobins for the enactment of the Alien and Sedition Acts.<sup>146</sup> A society that once supported the French Revolution in 1789 and saw itself reflected in the values of France's movement ten years later had come to reject that same revolution for being too un-American.

Just like Early Republic Americans came to fear the Jacobinism, by 1919, a hysteric fear of a Bolshevik takeover of American society consumed the American public in what came to be known as the First Red Scare. Not only did the IWW and socialists become targets of this hysteria, but as socialists and IWW members participated in labor strikes throughout the country that year, labor union members became suspected of being Bolshevik agents as well. The first large outbreak of hysteria began on February 6, 1919, when over 60,000 demonstrators held a general strike in Seattle to protest for better working conditions for shipyard workers in Seattle.<sup>147</sup> The press made hysteric claims about the strike though. Days before the protest, the *Seattle Star* demanded that the demonstrators not use the

---

<sup>143</sup> <sup>143</sup> Richard J. Moss, *The Life of Jedidiah Morse: A Station of Peculiar Exposure* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 68-69; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 419.

<sup>144</sup> George Washington to Jedidiah Morse, May 26, 1799, *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/06-04-02-0069>.

<sup>145</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 92; Fay, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*, 420.

<sup>146</sup> Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America*, 93.

<sup>147</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 58-61.



general strike since they were protesting in “America, not Russia.”<sup>148</sup> Headlines in the press throughout the country claimed that Bolsheviks controlled the strike and were attempting to overthrow Seattle just as they took over Petrograd.<sup>149</sup> The public became hostile to the strike, and it ended unsuccessfully.<sup>150</sup>

On March 10, 1919, the federal government accused IWW members and socialists of working with Bolsheviks to overthrow the country, backing their claims by pointing to the fact that all three groups represented themselves with red flags.<sup>151</sup> As American radical groups such as the Socialist Party and the IWW did indeed parade under red flags during the May Day celebrations on May 1, they faced violence across the country.<sup>152</sup> Police and vigilantes beat May Day demonstrators as they suspected these radicals of being Bolshevik agents and revolutionaries. The police and mobs also raided Socialist Party headquarters in both Boston and Cleveland.<sup>153</sup> These actions demonstrated American society’s rampant and hysteric hatred for Bolshevism. The hysteria only became worse in August as two Communist parties formed in the United States, the Communist Party of America and the Communist Labor Party. Between these two Communist parties, they held 70,000 members collectively, which did not even equal “one tenth of one percent of the adult population of the country.”<sup>154</sup> These two parties did not possess the numbers to pose a threat to overthrow the federal government.

However, despite the insignificant membership of these Communist parties, the federal government targeted them anyway. The Bureau of Investigation under

---

<sup>148</sup> *Seattle Star*, February 4, 1919.

<sup>149</sup> *Warren Times Mirror*, February 7, 1919; *Albany Daily Democrat*, February 7, 1919; *New York Times*, February 7, 1919; *Oregon Daily Journal*, February 8, 1919.

<sup>150</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 63-65.

<sup>151</sup> Ann Hagedorn, *Savage Peace: Hope and Fear in America, 1919* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 147-148.

<sup>152</sup> Hagedorn, *Savage Peace*, 185-186; Murray, *Red Scare*, 74.

<sup>153</sup> *Lima News*, May 1, 1919; *New York Times*, May 2, 1919; *Decatur Herald*, May 2, 1919; Murray, *Red Scare*, 74-76.

<sup>154</sup> Hagedorn, *Savage Peace*, 346-347; Murray, *The Red Scare*, 51.

the lead of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and J. Edgar Hoover raided over twenty Communist meeting halls on January 2, 1920 across the country. They arrested over 4,000 members.<sup>155</sup> American citizens arrested in the raids that night faced anarchy charges while the Justice Department planned to deport alien members.<sup>156</sup> In all, Palmer called for the deportation of nearly 3,000 Communists.<sup>157</sup> The press claimed that Palmer's actions were necessary in order to stop a Bolshevik revolution from occurring within America and that proselytizing Bolshevism should not be protected as a First Amendment right.<sup>158</sup> However, the deportations needed to be handled through the Labor Department. Louis F. Post, the Assistant Secretary of the Labor Department, believed that Palmer acquired evidence against those arrested illegally. He refused half of Palmer's requested deportations.<sup>159</sup> This event started the decline of the First Red Scare. Still persuaded of the threat of Bolshevism in America, Palmer tried to convince America that a Bolshevik uprising was going to occur on May Day 1920.<sup>160</sup> However, when the day came and went peacefully, it made the Bolshevik threat seem almost nonexistent and widespread hysteria of Bolshevism finally came to an end throughout the country.<sup>161</sup>

Overall, American reactions to both the French Revolution of 1789 and the Revolutionary period in Russia during World War I hold interesting parallels. Both show that Americans from Early Republic and World War I era America celebrated

---

<sup>155</sup> Alexander Mitchell Palmer, *Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer on Charges Made Against Department of Justice by Louis F. Post and Others* (Washington: Government Printing Office), 50, accessed April 20, 2017, <https://archive.org/details/attorneygeneral00rulegoog>; Murray, *Red Scare*, 213.

<sup>156</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 213; *New York Times*, January 5, 1920.

<sup>157</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 221-222.

<sup>158</sup> *Washington Herald*, January 3, 1920; *Washington Post*, January 4, 1920; *New York Times*, January 5, 1920.

<sup>159</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 247-248.

<sup>160</sup> *New York Times*, April 30, 1920; Murray, *Red Scare*, 252.

<sup>161</sup> *Decatur Herald*, May 2, 1920; *New York Times*, May 2, 1920. Murray, *Red Scare*, 258.

American values such as democracy and liberty that they saw at the beginning of these revolutions. However, both groups of Americans also turned away from these movements as they introduced violence and political ideologies with which Americans disagreed. Moreover, as the violence of the Jacobins in the French Revolution and the rise of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution of 1917 caused American support for revolutionaries in France and Russia to decline, American reactions to these revolutions gave way to hysteria. Early Republic Americans feared a Jacobin conspiracy to overthrow the United States, while World War I era Americans attacked and attempted to purge suspected Bolshevik supporters. By the end, Americans had compromised the very values they celebrated at the beginning of the revolutions in France and Russia.

## **Bibliography**

### **Primary Sources**

“Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.” *The Avalon Project*. Yale Law School Archives. Accessed April 12, 2017.

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/rightsof.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp).

*Founders Online*. National Archives. Accessed April 19, 2017.

<https://founders.archives.gov/>.

John Adams papers

Alexander Hamilton papers

Thomas Jefferson papers

James Madison papers

George Washington papers

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. "April Theses." in *Lenin's Collected Works*. Vol. 24.

Translated by Isaacs Bernard. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.

Accessed April 11, 2017.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm>.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. *Lenin: Collected Works*. Vol. 26, *September 1917-*

*February 1918*. Translated by Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna.

Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.

Newspapers.com Online Database.

*New York Times* Online Database.

Palmer, A. Mitchell. *Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer on Charges Made*

*Against Department of Justice by Louis F. Post and Others*. Washington:

Government Printing Office, 1920. Accessed April 20, 2017.

<https://archive.org/details/attorneygeneral00rulegoog>.

*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Vol. 41, *January 24-April 6, 1917*. Edited by

Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl. New

Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983.

*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Vol. 44, *August 21-November 10, 1917*. Edited

by Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl,

Manfred F. Boemeke. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983.

*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Vol. 45, *November 11-January 15, 1918*. Edited

by Arthur S. Link, David W. Hirst, John E. Little, Frederick Aandahl,

Manfred F. Boemeke. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984.

US Census Bureau, *Historical National Population Estimates*, accessed April 12,

2017, <https://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/popclockest.txt>

## Secondary Sources

- Ascher, Abraham. *Russia: A Short History*, rev. ed. One World, 2009.
- Cleves, Rachel Hope. *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Antislavery*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Fay, Bernard. *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution*, rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Hagedorn, Ann. *Savage Peace: Hope and Fear in America, 1919*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
- Herring, George C. *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Higham, John. "Nativism and the New Immigrants," in Leon Fink, editor. *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. United States: Wadsworth Learning, 2001
- Jaffe, Julian F. *Crusade Against Radicalism: New York During the Red Scare, 1914-1924*. New York: Kennikat Press, 1972.
- Jensen, Merrill. "The American People and the American Revolution." *The Journal of American History*, no. 1 (June 1970) 5-35. Accessed April 4, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1900547>.
- Kennan, George F. *Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920*. Vol. 1, *Russia Leaves the War*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956.

- Lasch, Christopher. *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution*. United States: McGraw-Hill, 1972.
- Leuchtenburg, William E. *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Lycan, Gilbert L. *Alexander Hamilton and Foreign Policy: A Design for Greatness*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.
- Maddox, Robert J. *The Unknown War with Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention*. California: Presidio Press, 1977.
- Morgan, Ted. *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth-Century America*. United States: Random House, 2004.
- Moss, Richard J. *The Life of Jedidiah Morse: A Station of Peculiar Exposure*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995.
- Murray, Robert K. *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919-1920*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964.
- O'Brien, Conor Cruise. *The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800*. Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Palmer, R.R, Joel Colton, Lloyd Kramer. *A History of the Modern World*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- Patrick Renshaw. *The Wobblies: The Story of the IWW and Syndicalism in the United States*. Updated Edition. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1999
- Powers, Richard Gid. *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism*. Yale University Press, 1998.

- Ryan, Erica J. *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare*. Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2015.
- Sears, Louis Martin. *George Washington and the French Revolution*. Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1960.
- Soboul, Albert. "The French Revolution in the History of the Contemporary World," in Gary Kates, editor. *The French Revolution: Recent Debates and New Controversies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Storey, William Kelleher. *The First World War: A Concise Global History*. United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009.
- Tackett, Timothy. *The Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution*. United States: Belknap Press, 2015.
- Wood, Gordon S. *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.