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America and the Balance of European Power: 1783 The Peacemakers

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Instruction on Music in the Liturgy (March 5, 1967), the Second Instruction on the Liturgy ("Tres Abhinc Annos", May 4, 1967), and the Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (May 25, 1967).

The author's mastery of his subject, as we have said, is evident in his work. His occasional insights into the pastoral implications of the liturgical reform, though sometimes hampered by the style, invite to deeper reflections. But to this reviewer, the balanced attitude and outlook of the author as manifested throughout the book, is perhaps his main contribution. The last paragraph of the book puts this in a nutshell: "No one should seek an end to necessary and fundamental rubrical or ceremonial directions—as no one should be so arrogant as to create his own liturgy. But we should welcome the freedom and flexibility built into the liturgical reform, so that the celebration in the Christian community may become a living and real thing, the sign of genuine prayer and faith." This is thinking with the Church.

JOSE MA. FUENTES, S.J.

AMERICA AND THE BALANCE OF EUROPEAN POWER: 1783

THE PEACEMAKERS: The Great Powers and American Independence, by Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965. xviii, 572 pp.

When one thinks of the American Revolution, he usually pictures counterfeit Indians dumping tea into Boston's harbor or Thomas Jefferson skillfully drafting the Declaration of Independence, or perhaps George Washington wintering with his ragged troops at Valley Forge. The drama of rebellion and war, of patriots and traitors, friendly allies and honorable foes all rise and fall on one vast historical canvas.

Such a canvas would be incomplete if it did not take into account the most crucial and concluding event of the war, the 1783 Peace Treaty of Paris. Americans have been wont to blush at the manner in which these negotiations were carried out. A cursory glance at events will show the United States peace commissioners forming a secret and separate peace with Britain prior to the general one with the allies. Hence the honest, gnawing query: Does one see here opportunist Yankees coldly stabbing their loyal French ally in the back for a few commercial privileges with the enemy? Or were the American

commissioners justified in disobeying home orders which explicitly forbade them to act without the approval of the King of France?

In opening hitherto untapped sources, Richard B. Morris did not shut his mind to the possibility that he might not find vindication for his revolutionary ancestors. Buttressing his thesis with inexhaustible research, Morris holds—what many before have held—that the United States ministers acted not only surprisingly shrewdly but, in the face of Spanish and French double-dealing, quite honorably. Then again, for the *Realpolitick* minded, the obvious question still remains: Wasn't this simply Colonial self-interest outsmarting Big Power self-interest?

Realizing imponderables such as these, the author's object has been to focus on the men that made the peace. Diplomats down to double agents dart in and out of the story with such rapidity that the reader feels compelled to pick up the loose thread of events. And no wonder; the stakes are high — nothing short of successful and acknowledged colonial rebellion in a world run by monarchic empires. The scholarship too is painstaking, as the author's five years of research and 105 pages of notes and index prove. Morris, in sum, does an admirable job in untangling the maze of interests and episodes that cross the historian's path.

Every schoolboy knows that the colonies' staunchest ally, France, joined their cause partly to seek revenge for the humiliation inflicted upon her by Britain and her colonies fifteen years before when she lost her American and Indian empires to Pitt's England. In joining the colonies, the Comte Vergennes, France's Foreign Minister, had to convince the opposition that such action would not fan revolutionary flames at home or elsewhere. Seeking rather to set the Big Power scales in balance, Bourbon France even coaxed and caught Bourbon Spain in its grand design.

Aside from Holland, the colonial allies, France and Spain, had more reason to take alarm at their new bedfellows than they imagined. Normally their Catholic religion, monarchical government, different language and territorial interests would have divided the Bourbon powers farther from the thirteen colonies than the Atlantic did the colonies from mother England. Indeed, Spain's Foreign Minister, the Conde de Floridablanca, granted more honor and attention to the playwright English agent, Richard Cumberland, than to the American envoy, John Jay, whom he kept away from the court itself as long as possible. Such snubbing was only compounded by Floridablanca's insidious plan to keep the colonies in a perpetually warring feudal relation with England lest a strong and independent United States threaten Spain's foothold on the North American continent.

France herself, under the deft, bribing hands of her American Minister, Chevalier de La Luzerne, stacked the deck against the Con-

tinental Congress's first appointed peacemaker, the crusty, puritanical Bostonian, John Adams, by persuading Congress to add four more commissioners and thereupon handcuff all five to the French King, Louis XVI. Adams' 1779 instructions had permitted him to use his "own judgement and prudence in securing" a settlement; Luzerne's 1781 bribes now swung Congress to advise Adams "ultimately to govern yourself by their [France's] advice and opinion." (Page 215.)

John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens and Thomas Jefferson (who never arrived) were soon voted as the four new commission members.

Once Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in the fall of 1781, the allies had stronger bargaining power. With the North Ministry toppled and the people yelling for peace, peace seemed imminent. Unfortunately, conflicting interests bogged the negotiators down for almost two years until Britain's Prime Minister Shelburne decided officially to make peace.

Independence, boundaries, fisheries and commerce were of major concern to the protagonists. The "independence" of the colonies was not in doubt; the mode of British acceptance was. Would she accede to the rebels' demands and recognize it before the treaty or would she insert it in the treaty's first article? Was the United States to be bound by the Mississippi as she wished, encompassing what George Roger Clark had captured in the Ohio valley? And, if so, were the colonies to have free river passage despite Spain's intransigence? Also, how much of their former fishing rights would the colonies retain off the Grand Banks and Newfoundland coast? But wouldn't this privilege breed a new sea power? Was it, finally, for the benefit of England to treat separately with the colonies in order to insure the commercial ties needed to dump manufactured goods on the new agricultural republic?

Tortured by questions such as these, seeking their national interests, and woefully realizing that peacemakers usually do not end up too happy on this earth, the belligerents set their ears to the ground, their agents scurrying, and simply hoped for the best.

In a situation when time was at a premium, the American commissioners found themselves handicapped by lengthy Atlantic communications with Congress while their colleagues had only the English Channel or the Pyrenees to cross from their Paris headquarters. It was only then that the suspicious Jay, unaware that Luzerne had forwarded the colonial cipher to Vergennes, decided not to lose time requesting and awaiting orders.

The diary of the future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court recounts the epic moment of decision with an alarmed Franklin:

"Would you deliberately break Congress' instructions?" "Unless," Jay replied, "we violate these instructions the dignity of Congress will be in the dust. I do not mean to imply that we should deviate in the least from our treaty with France." (Page 310.)

In the meantime, Vergennes' undersecretary, Reyneval, was secretly telling the British agent Fitzherbert how displeased France was towards her American ally's interest in Canada and the nearby fishing grounds. Similarly, Vergennes voiced his view to Luzerne, cautioning him that:

This way of thinking ought to be an impenetrable secret from the Americans. It would be a crime that they would never pardon. It is convenient, then, to make an outward show to convince them that we share their views, but to checkmate any steps that would put them into effect in case we are required to cooperate. (Page 326.)

Although not directly cognizant of her ally's plans of limitation for her, it is no surprise to see the generally suspicious American commissioners, including a reluctant Franklin, sign a preliminary peace with England in Paris on November 30, 1782, stipulating that it would not take effect until France and Spain had accepted the *fait accompli*. This is what happened on September 3, 1783. And, in view of Vergennes' own stratagems and the ruinous financial state his country was in, Americans can only pity the man's misguided statecraft and laud his fortuitous support. For, without the Comte de Vergennes, there would be no United States of America today.

GERARD DRUMMOND

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

THE JEW AND THE CROSS. By Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1965. 94 pp.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN. Edited by Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1967. 97 pp.

The first book is interesting in this age of ecumenism, not because it is a Jewish dialogue with Christians—the author insists he is conducting a monologue with Christians—but because it reveals the feelings of a Jewish writer who suffered the loss of dear ones in Nazi times and who here reviews the centuries-long persecution of Jews at the hands of Christians. Responsibility for these crimes is