

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, September 7, 1794, from Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Paris Sepr. 7. 1794

Dear Sir

I have been here rather more than a month and so much engaged with the duties which devolved on me immediately that I have not yet been able send a single private letter to America. It happened that I took my station a few days after Robertspierre had left his in the Convention, by means of the guiliten, so that every thing was in commotion, as was natural upon such an event, but it was the agitation of universal joy occasioned by a deliverance from a terrible oppression & which had pervaded every part of the Republic. After encountering some serious difficulties growing out of the existing state of things, I was presented to the Convention and recognized in the manner the enclosed paper will shew you. May incidents have since turned up to shew the pleasure with which the organized departments and the people generally have received a mission immediately from our republick to theirs, and I have every reason to believe that it will not only remove any previous existing solicitude, but tend to encrease permanently the harmony between the two countries.

After Robertspiere's exit there seemed to be an end of divisions and altercations for sometime in

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the convention. Even those of his own party were most probably happy in the event, for in the progress of his power—a connection with him had already been of little service, and it was to be apprehended that it would prove of less hereafter. It was not only necessary to be devoted to him, but to be unpopular with the community also. The list of his oppressions and the acts of cruelty committed by means of his influence, in the convention & in consequence the revolutionary tribunal, would amaze you. He was believed by the people at large to be the foe to kings, nobles, Priests &c the friend of republican govt. regardless of mercy & in fact devoted to their cause. Under this impression he perpetrated acts, which without perceiving the cause, had gradually spread a gloom over the whole republick. But as soon as they saw him in opposition to the convention, the cause was known, his atrocities were understood, and the people abandoned him with demonstrations of joy rarely seen.

But it seemed improbable he shod. have been abt to carry every thing in the committee of p. safety & by means of it in the Convention &c, with out more associates that St. Just & Canthon who were executed with him or rather this was the opinion of others, for I can readily conceive that a man may gain an influence in society powerful enough to controul every one & every thing; as soon therefore as the preternatural calm subsided, which the liberation from had universally created, a spirit of enquiry began to shew itsel as to other accomplices. It terminated in the denunciation of Barrere, Collot,d'Herbois, & some others. The convention gave

a hearing to the charges rejected them, & pass'd a censure upon the author as seeking to disturb the publick repose. Thus, therefore that business rests, and I declare to you that I not only think hereafter they will be more free from parties of the turbulent kind heretofore known, but if they shod. not that I am persuaded their revolution rests perfectly secure in the unanimity & affections of the people. Greater proofs of patriotism and personal sacrifice were never seen in any country than are daily shewn in this, and in acts of heroism, they have thrown a shade over the antient and modern world. The spirit of the

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combination is absolutely broken. In the neighbourhood of Charleroy a decisive action was fought in July between Jourden & Cob: & in which the former gained the victory with the loss of abt 15000 men, & at the expense to the latter of abt 10000 slain on the field. This has eventually drawn the troops of the combined powers to Mastrcht and the neighbourhood of the Rhine, & of course out of all their possessions not only in France (including Conde & Valenciennes) but likewise their proper territory in the low countries. This thought they ae abt to hazard another great action but they do tit with hazard for they fight despirited troops agnst those who are flushed with victory, superior numbers & resolved to conquer, & sure in case of misfortune of immediate succour . If France succeeds and which I am led to believe from every thing I can hear & very dispassionately, the combination in the ordinary course of war

will be at an end, and the several powers composing it entirely at the mercy of France, except the Islands in her neighbourhood whose safety will depend altogether on the superiority at sea, if preserved there. Tis said that these powers (the Islanders excepted & who probably prompted the others with a view of taking advantage in case of success) sounded this govt. last winter upon the subject of peace, but without effect: that on the contrary they were treated with the utmost contempt, and I have reason to believe they will never treat with them under the govts at present existing in each, to press the war till no force shews itself against them, & in case the people shod. rise in any one & organize themselves, treat such organiz'd body as the only legitimate govt. & aid it in crushing the antient one. If France succeeds in the battle contemplated this will soon be the state of things: indeed it must be so immediately after.

That Mr. Jay shod. easily obtain the object of his errand in Engld. will be readily inferred. The successful battles of France have plead our cause with great effect in the councils of that humane cabinet. He will however arrogate to himself much merit for address in negotiation and the concession of the court will be a theme for high panegyric to many in

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our country. They will deem it a proof of that sincere attachment to us which has always been shewn in that quarter.

The spirit of liberty begins to shew itself in the other regions. Geneva has undergone revolution; the people have taken the govt. into their hands, apprehended the aristocrats, executed seven of the most wicked.. And in Poland under the direction of [Kosciuszko] Who acted with us in America, a formidable hand has been raised against Prussia & Russia.

I have hopes that our trade, by mere negotiation will be plac'd on a very safe & good footing shortly: and that France will rescind the decree respecting the seizure of our vessels laden with provisions &c as heretofore. Indeed I think she will go back to the ground of the commercial treaty. I have hinted the good effect such a measure wou'd. have in America, without positively requesting it to be done.

I rely upon yrself & Mr. Jones in planning many little tho' very important matters for me, abt. my farm. Such as fixing the plan for my house orchards & the like. It will not be very long before we join you. We are all well. Mrs. M. is with her child a pupil to a professor in the French language. They desire to be affectionately remembered to yrself & family taking it for granted you have Mr. R & both yr daughters with you. I am dear sir yr. affectionate friend & servant

Jas. Monroe

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