

Peter McPhee, *Liberty or Death: The French Revolution*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016, pp. xvii + 488 (Hardback). ISBN 978-0-300-18993-3

This very remarkable book on the French Revolution of 1789 and its significance should appeal to general readers as well as scholars. The Australian author, currently professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne, has already published extensively on various aspects of the Revolution and allied topics. The present work is his crowning achievement: scholarly yet very readable, excellently produced and reasonably priced by Yale UP, well illustrated with maps, colour plates and a chronological outline, with extensive endnotes revealing his mastery of primary and secondary sources, a bibliography 'of those printed sources most useful for this book,' and a comprehensive index covering persons, places and topics.

Eighteen chapters, arranged mainly in chronological order, form the core of the book. The first three treat the immediate background, the decade before 1789. The next four focus on the year of the Revolution and its immediate aftermath. Chapters 8 to 16 usher in the 'second revolution' beginning in 1791 and continuing with further developments until 1799. The final chapter, entitled 'The Significance of the French Revolution,' concludes the work.

The book, however, is far more than a chronological survey of the history of France during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. The significance of the revolution of 1789 and its aftermath is evaluated within a global context: Europe, the Atlantic region and further afield. McPhee recounts the key revolutionary events that unfolded in Paris but also uncovers the varying experiences of French citizens outside the capital city. His conclusions illuminate both the experiences and the legacy of France's transforming period of revolution. Alongside the violence and blood-shedding, this epoch revealed a people grappling with modern concepts of popular sovereignty, human rights, religious tolerance, equality before the law, the abolition of slavery and the beginnings of gender equality.

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Travis Dumsday, ed., *The Wisdom of Youth: Essays Inspired by the Early Work of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain*, Washington DC: American Maritain Association (distributed by The Catholic University of America Press), 2016, pp. xviii + 353. ISBN: 978-0-9827119-8-9

The large majority of the book's twenty contributors — seven women and thirteen men — are from or now based in USA. Since this

work on two French citizens is published by the American Maritain Association, the arrangement seems reasonable. It is explained, too, by the close links of Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) with neighbouring Canada. Together with his French compatriot Etienne Gilson, he played a crucial role in the early life of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (PIMS) in Toronto, holding the title of professor at the institute from 1933 to 1945: therefore within the period described in the book's title as 'the early work' of the Maritains.

After the editor's Introduction, the book is divided into six parts. The first focuses on Jacques and his wife Raïssa as 'models of sanctity,' with essays on their reputations for holiness and the complementarity of their personalities. The second part entitled 'The Maritains and their Contemporaries: war, theodicy, and justice' examines the role of violence in Raïssa's poetry, the influence of Simone Weil, and that of German philosophers upon lectures delivered by Jacques Maritain in 1914.

The rest of the book focuses largely on Jacques. Thus the third part entitled 'Jacques Maritain on Intuition' contains essays on intuition in his critical realism, in his writings on Thomas Aquinas, in the critique of him by the Dominican friar Lawrence Dewan, and in his poetry. 'Jacques Maritain, Henri Bergson and Mysticism,' the title of the fourth part, looks at his appreciation of Bergson and ways in which he was influenced by Plato and Aquinas. The fifth part contains three essays entitled 'Gilson, Poincaré, Maritain and the Future of Thomism,' 'Christian Philosophy: Reconciling the temporal and the eternal' and 'Why are there Minds in the Universe?' The final part 'Thomistic Ethics and Political Theory' focuses on various writers and themes within this topic: Aristotle, the Confucian thinker Mencius, Eudaimonism, and Bonaventure.

The book concludes with short biographies of the contributors and an index covering persons and topics. There is no bibliography but the relevant literature is indicated in the extensive footnotes, which are excellent in themselves and very helpful in showing how many of the writings of the Maritains, as well as those of the other authors cited in the book, are available in English translation.

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