

BOOK REVIEWS

The American Revolution and "A Candid World." Edited by LAWRENCE S. KAPLAN. (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1977. Pp. xiv, 170. Preface, introduction, footnotes, index. \$10.50.)

This thin volume of seven essays on early United States diplomacy consists of papers read at a bicentennial conference at Kent State University in May 1976. All are cogently argued and in normal academic style, free, fortunately, from the pseudo-eighteenth-century embellishments that have been employed by many authors during these bicentennial years. In prefacing the book, the editor, Professor Kaplan, comments that those who declared independence expected "a candid world" to approve the revolutionary cause.

Both the essays by Carl B. Cone, on George III, and by Alan S. Brown, on the three official British conciliation missions, explain developments in terms of recognized principles of the British system. As is so often the case in British constitutional history, an important question of ultimate power remains unresolved. One cannot be certain whether George III was really in control when the decisions that pertained to the American crisis were made. Professor Cone grapples with the question but does not arrive at an unqualified answer. Brown's essay points out that the British political structure — basically the Namier pattern — so inhibited activities of the Lord North conciliators, the Howe brothers, and the Carlisle mission that all were doomed from the start. No compromises they might have negotiated would have been acceptable in Britain.

The ideological motivation behind early American diplomacy is discussed in several essays. Although Bernard Bailyn's interpretations are accepted by all, James H. Hutson thoroughly repudiates Felix Gilbert's *To the Farewell Address* and argues that the Founding Fathers always understood that they were working within the framework of balance-of-power diplomacy. Ideological sympathy with France and with Britain first became widespread in 1793, and led to a diplomacy directed toward goals beyond mere survival. Several of the conference papers comment on the role of the Plan of Treaties, or model treaty, of September 17, 1776. William C. Stinchcombe argues convincingly that it was patterned after late seventeenth-cen-

ture Dutch principles, and that at least for its leading sponsor, John Adams, it was intended for the moral improvement of international affairs, a goal to be achieved by establishing trade relations in place of military ties. Gregg L. Lint's essay makes the strongest statement that American diplomacy was distinctive. He says that we began our diplomatic practice by using the law of nations in a manner anticipating post-1815 internationalism. Because the Founding Fathers were farsighted enough to recognize, during the war, that national survival would ultimately depend on international recognition of neutral rights, they chose a law-of-nations style of diplomacy.

David Griffith contributes an essay on Catherine the Great explaining why the American Revolution did not offend her autocratic instincts. Attracted by statements of the English political opposition, she saw the Revolution as an inevitable tragedy that had to be played out because the leadership of Pitt had been repudiated and such ideas as Bolingbroke's had been ignored.

Professor Kaplan's essay on emerging isolationist policy summarizes diplomacy from the French treaties to 1801, rather than discusses popular arguments in favor of isolation. It is an excellent condensation. One may see the key step in America's withdrawal as occurring with the collapse of a Jeffersonian delusion. Jeffersonians had held on to the belief that both the French alliance and neutrality could be preserved. But French pressure following Jay's Treaty forced them to admit that they were not willing to press for fulfillment of the obligations made to France in 1778.

It is fortunate that these addresses have been preserved in print.

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George Stevenson (1718-1783): Conservative as Revolutionary. By ROLAND M. BAUMANN. Cumberland County Historical Society Publications, Vol. 10, No. 1. (Carlisle: The Society and the Hamilton Library Association, 1978. Pp. x, 64. Preface, appendixes, illustrations, notes, essay on sources. \$2.00. Available through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

This is a work of love, for the writing of even a brief biography of an obscure historical figure, moreover one mainly of local interest, is difficult. It involves on the part of the author a sense of curiosity,