

population growth with price inflation. Inflation, as twentieth century economist know well, is a very much more complicated matter than population movement. Chambers maintains, for instance, that the price inflation of Tudor England "which used to be fathered on the import of bullion to Spanish ports, is now firmly placed on the doorstep of a demographic boom," (p. 27). The "American bullion" thesis may be passé, but its alternative is by no means as obvious as Chambers suggested.

Other weaknesses should not be ignored. The impact of immigration to the colonies on English population totals is ignored. Moreover, by limiting his perspective to England, and ignoring Wales and Scotland except for a few rather trite references, Chambers takes an artificially delimited view, unfortunately too common among English scholars.<sup>2</sup> Nor has the opportunity been seized of making useful references to population studies in Ireland, while much less relevant comparisons have been made with France and Italy.

Despite these shortcomings, the lectures were well worth publishing. They are a worthy memorial to a notable historian, and provide a final insight into the mind of a scholar who remained as creative, stimulating and modern in old age as he had been earlier in his career.

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STEPHEN G. KURTZ and JAMES H. HUTSON, editors. — *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

*Essays on the American Revolution* is a celebration. It is but one of many such volumes to be published during the next few years in commemoration of the bicentennial of American Independence. Nothing less will satisfy the national honour. This particular collection was the result of ceremonials that took place in the spring of 1971 in Williamsburg where nearly 40 scholars gathered under the prompting of the Institute of Early American History and Culture to debate at length the findings presented in a half-dozen papers on various aspects of the Revolution. These papers were then sandwiched between introductory and summary statements by Bernard Bailyn and Edmund S. Morgan, "acknowledged masters of the historian's craft," (ix) and published for the edification of the ever elusive educated reader.

In reviewing this handful of miscellaneous essays one is hard put to know where to begin. One difficulty is that the collection is not representative,

<sup>2</sup> See SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL, *Research in Economic and Social History*, London: Heinemann, 1971. Though research on Welsh and Scottish history is not ignored, that on Ireland is (except for a couple of references), despite the presence of K. H. Connell on the editorial committee.

a fact the editors readily concede. As they put it, "such major themes as great men in history, economic causation, the structure of British politics, and foreign policy" are omitted as are subjects such as demography and loyalist studies, "that have attracted some of the best of the most recent historians" (xi). Nor are the disciples of the radical approach to the American past anywhere in evidence. Another problem is that there are no common themes running through the essays holding the whole thing together. The plain truth appears to be that the volume simply contains eight essays by a group of scholars who have little or nothing in common except the fact that they have something to say about the American Revolution. Every reader will therefore group the articles according to taste and at his own convenience. My categories are: "served up cold," "warmed over slightly," and "sizzling hot."

"Served up cold" is the essay by Edmund Morgan, "Conflict and Consensus in the American Revolution." It has all the excitement and freshness of the 1950's. In the past couple of decades the author discerns a division among historians of the Revolution, "a division between those who emphasize the consensus achieved by the revolting colonists and those who emphasize conflicts among them" (289). Predictably Morgan comes down on the side of consensus, but not a static consensus, rather a dynamic consensus "that invited conflicts and still invites them" (309). It was this that made for a society where a Hamilton has his Jefferson, a Hoover his Roosevelt. "If this be conservatism," Morgan concludes with a final gesture to the arid debates of the 1950's and early 60's, "it is the radicals who have made the most of it" (309).

Much heartier fare, if somewhat ordinary, are the "warmed-over slightly" offerings. Thus Bernard Bailyn in "The Central Themes of the American Revolution, An Interpretation" contends that "The outbreak of Revolution was not the result of social discontent, or of economic disturbances, or of rising misery, or of those mysterious social strains that seem to beguile the imagination of historians straining to find peculiar predispositions to upheaval" (12). Rather, insists the author, returning lovingly and rhetorically to themes he has already outlined in his previous works on the subject:

American resistance in the 1760's and 1770's was a response to acts of power deemed arbitrary, degrading, and uncontrollable — a response, in itself objectively reasonable, that was inflamed to the point of explosion by ideological currents generating fears everywhere in America that irresponsible and self-seeking adventurers — what the twentieth century would call political gangsters — had gained the power of the English government and were turning first, for reasons that were variously explained, to that Rhineland of their aggressions, the colonies (13).

Perhaps. But of course repetition does not constitute proof. And Bailyn has yet to produce a monograph showing how those ideological currents — "those shifting patterns of values, attitudes, hopes, fears, and opinions through which people perceived the world and by which they are

led to impose themselves upon it" — relate to the specific events of the period (11). In the meantime, those of us who take a more traditional view of ideology as the "complicated interplay" of ideas and "the involvements of everyday life — in politics, in business, and in the whole range of social activities," will continue to be puzzled by Bailyn's ability to see clearly that this inter-play, this dialectic — not developments in the interior lives of people's minds — accounts for the period between Independence and the end of the Washington administration and his refusal to acknowledge the validity of this perception for the decade between the Treaty of Paris and 1776 (19).

In the same "warmed-over" category is Jack P. Greene's, "An Uneasy Connection, An Analysis of the Preconditions of the American Revolution." Here is a potpourri of the bits and ends of everything Greene has written on the subject in the past plus a little of whatever can easily be borrowed from the work of Bailyn, Kramnick, Pocock, Deane and Cole, Macpherson, Koebner, and on and on. And then there is Freud, added it would appear to give flavour to the whole. But this is not the Freud of the sophisticated students of psycho-history like Erickson and Coles. No, this is the Freud of the curbstome psychologists who like Greene can say without blinking that there was always a possibility that British authorities:

might impose restraints that by striking at the colonists' autonomy as individuals would threaten their ego capacities (as defined by their ability to control themselves and manipulate their environment) and thereby call forth largescale personal anxiety, guilt, shame, and feelings of inadequacy that could only be overcome by a *manly* resistance to those restraints (60).

Or again, "The British Empire in the 1740's and 1750's thus manifested a classic crisis of authority between parents and children with all of the potential conflicts such a crisis implies" (64). At this point, of course, we have gone through the looking glass. The possibility of serious dialogue is over.

Another example in the category is the piece by Richard Maxwell Brown, "Violence and the American Revolution." An essentially straightforward summary account of the recent and growing literature on eighteenth-century American rioters, the only difficulty here is definitional. Doubtless students of comparative history will find the repeated claims of American predilection to violence in the period small potatoes. Finally, there is H. James Henderson's "The Structure of Politics in the Continental Congress." Using modern computer techniques to undertake a "massive correlation" of the voting records of the Continental Congress, Henderson has discovered what we have known all along, namely, that there existed legislative "blocs" (or "parties," a confusing enough term at any time in American history) with a strong regional complexion — the Eastern Bloc, the Middle Bloc, and the Southern Bloc. The precise relationships of the members of these so-called blocs to one another, to events, and to constituencies back home is discussed only in the broadest and most commonplace terms.

We are left then with only three articles in the "sizzling hot" class, all three exercises in social history: John Shy, "The American Revolution, The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War," Rowland Berthoff and John M. Murrin, "Feudalism, Communalism, and the Yeoman Freeholder, The American Revolution Considered as a Social Accident," and William G. McLoughlin, "The Role of Religion in the Revolution, Liberty of Conscience and Cultural Cohesion in the New Nation." The Shy piece is not traditional military history. It is instead a suggestive treatment of the ways in which British wartime strategy and the colonial response affected American society. The argument is persuasive and clearly developed; it deserves careful reading.

Less clear, but no less stimulating, is the essay by Berthoff and Murrin. The authors are also concerned with the social effects of the Revolution and the general if confused pattern of social change in the period 1725-1825. The insights here are fresh, sometimes brilliant, always challenging, and impossible to summarize, but the gist of the argument is that the Revolution "put an end to one archaic element of the eighteenth-century society, the feudal revival, and inadvertently turned away from a no less ancient communalism while beginning to exalt a third traditional figure, the virtuous yeoman freeholder, into an ideal detached from its older, more organic social and civic context" (276). The essay requires several readings.

The McLoughlin essay has nothing to do with God. In fact, the author defines religion in such a way as to exclude the Almighty altogether; religion, we are told, may be seen as a "set of fundamental assumptions, ideal, beliefs, and values about man's relationship to his neighbors, his environment, and his future, that provides the cultural cohesion for a community" (197). In sum, McLoughlin writes in the Bailyn tradition about the Revolution (and both McLoughlin and Bailyn write about the cultural and social history of the eighteenth century in the tradition of Oscar Handlin). The theme is simple: "The Revolution was to create religious liberty for Protestantism in order to provide the cultural cohesion needed for the new nation" (255). The discussion is equally simple and straightforward, if somewhat disembodied. In any event, the operative term is "voluntarism," and the analytical use of this concept is based on the ideas developed in Oscar and Mary Handlin's, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy: Massachusetts, 1774-1861* (New York, 1947).

If *Essays on the American Revolution* reveals anything in general about current writing on the American Revolution (which is doubtful), it may simply be this: that statements about the nature and causes of the Revolution are becoming more complicated and that a great deal more monographic work will have to be done before we shall be able to say whether this trend is good or bad.

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