

RUSSIA, ENGLAND AND SWEDISH PARTY POLITICS, 1762-1766: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN GREAT POWER DIPLOMACY AND DOMESTIC POLITICS DURING SWEDEN'S AGE OF LIBERTY. By *Michael F. Metcalf*. Stockholm and Totowa, N.J.: Almqvist & Wiksell International and Rowman and Littlefield, 1977. x, 278 pp. \$35.00.

This book is a Stockholm University dissertation by a young American scholar who learned well the craft of diplomatic history from leading Swedish masters. Metcalf chooses a major problem of eighteenth-century Swedish politics—the collapse of the nearly thirty-year dominance of the Hat Party—and illuminates the relationship of this change to pressures exerted by England, Russia, Prussia, Denmark, and France. Metcalf shows an impressive command of sources, which include materials from the archives of Paris, The Hague, Copenhagen, Merseburg, London, Belfast, Moscow, and Leningrad, in addition to extensive Swedish materials. He was especially fortunate to gain access to the Soviet foreign affairs archives; this was a rare opportunity, even though he was not allowed to examine the complete file for the period in question.

Swedish party politics in the “Era of Liberty” is a fascinating subject that enjoys a large literature in Swedish. Yet, apart from the well-known work of Michael Roberts, few monographic studies have appeared in English. Hence, Metcalf is not merely contributing to a debate among specialists but also affording non-Swedish speakers a closer look at the workings of a political system that served as an important model for the growth of European parliamentary government.

Metcalf's focus is on the efforts of others, principally England and Russia, to influence that system. England's objectives were limited to increased commerce and a mutual defense treaty, the idea being to break Sweden's ties to France. Russia pursued the much more ambitious aim of altering the Swedish constitution and then drawing the reformed polity into a comprehensive alliance of northern powers—Nikita Panin's “Northern System.” Metcalf sees the *riksdag* of 1765–66 as a major test of Panin's system, since the achievement of Russian aims in Stockholm required the close cooperation of England, Denmark, and Prussia. The study demonstrates that the system functioned well in this instance, even if divergent interests of the various governments ultimately frustrated Panin's hopes for a broad alliance of northern courts.

Methodologically, Metcalf runs into difficulty. He sets out to measure the effect of foreign influence by comparing flows of foreign money with the actions of Swedish parties or decisions of the *riksdag*. Yet the monetary contributions and their timing seem to have been much less a barometer of foreign influence than a measure of the commitment of foreign courts to certain policies or changes. Moreover, since money is so central to the discussion, it is irritating to find it variously represented in a half-dozen currencies, without a set of equivalencies by which to compare amounts.

Still, within the limits of traditional diplomatic history, Metcalf gives a thorough and masterful exposition, and demonstrates that these methods, when applied with rigor and talent, can lead to many interesting discoveries and corrections of present knowledge. His study, therefore, represents an important contribution to the diplomatic history of the eighteenth century.

DAVID L. RANSEL

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

BERING'S VOYAGES: WHITHER AND WHY. By *Raymond H. Fisher*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977. xiv, 217 pp. Maps. \$17.95.

Bering's voyages hold a special fascination, as does Fisher's book, despite occasional repetitiveness. With the minuteness which often distinguishes medievalists, Fisher