

and hopeful stage of his career. In his contest with Great Britain Bonaparte needed the support of Europe, in particular that of Russia; and at no time did he have it so thoroughly as in the days of the Armed Neutrality. In this period Holland, Spain, and Italy were in effect vassal states of France; Austria was crushed into absolute submission; Prussia, caught between Russia and France, could not resist their united will; Paul himself had voluntarily sought an alliance with Bonaparte and carried the Northern powers with him in an effort to challenge Great Britain's position at sea. This situation, which Bonaparte had built up by skilful manipulation of the whims of the Tsar, ceased with Paul's death, never to recur in its entirety. Bonaparte was forced to enter into a temporary naval peace, and when this was broken by Great Britain in 1803, France, with the support of her immediate neighbours, resumed the contest only to learn at Trafalgar that these efforts at sea were hopeless. With the death of Paul the possibility—it was little more—of crushing Great Britain by a direct attack had passed away.

It may appear strange that this sketch of the circumstances leading to the Peace of Amiens should end at the point where the stage of successful negotiation first begins. There is some justification for it. At this moment Great Britain and France were nearer conciliation than they were at the signature of the Preliminaries of London (October, 1801) or at the definitive Peace of Amiens (March, 1802). This peace contained the seeds of its own rupture; in the negotiation of it, Bonaparte had taken advantage of Addington's weakness to press him into terms of which the nation in the end did not approve.

The conduct of the negotiation by Addington and Hawkesbury may be termed, without injustice to them, a record of incapacity. Point after point they yielded to France without exacting equivalent concessions from her. Only in September, when Pitt took a continuous interest in the negotiation, did this process cease, and Otto, recognizing at once a firmer

§ 6. Conclusion: the Peace of Amiens.