

Editorial Foreword

THE ACCOMMODATION TO CAPITALISM IN PEASANT SOCIETIES. These three articles contrast in a number of ways. Michael Taussig sensitively portrays a kind of empirical theology, a careful reconstruction of the beliefs of Colombian peasants whose attitudes toward economic exchange and capitalism fit the values of medieval scholastics and the insights of Marx. Interestingly, anthropologists have more commonly risen to this sort of understanding of cultural clash when the intruder was Christianity rather than capitalism. Marie Perinbam focuses on behavior, using the market economy of Dahomey as the beginning for a review of the general literature on the nature of economic relations in precolonial Africa. On the whole she finds the rationality of *homo oeconomicus* (continuing an analysis of markets found in her article on the trans-Sahara, 15:4, and Uzoigwe's essay on precolonial markets, 14:4). Terry Rambo picks up a durable debate: Skinner's critique (in 13:3) of Wolf's concept of open and closed peasant communities and, with some criticism of both, maintains the value of Wolf's distinction. What these analyses using cases from three continents have in common is their conviction that rural responses to capitalism (so easily dismissed as superstitious, traditional, or simply helpless) make powerful sense in terms both of coherent values and immediate reality.

SOCIAL STEREOTYPES AND POPULAR POLITICS. If modern politics must use mass communication, it does so in part through a symbolic language easier to sense than to examine. In his essay, Ali Mazrui identifies through comparison elements common to the careers and behavior of two of the contemporary world's most colorful figures, reflecting the political implications inherent in differences of class, religion, race, and sex. The political cartoon, of course, also displays the connection between social difference and politics. Continuing what has become a distinguished series of articles in CSSH (on cartoons of the Irish, 13:4; in Egypt, 13:1; in the Mexican revolution and the Germany of 1848, 9:2; of David Low, 8:1; on the theory of caricature, 11:1 and 9:4), Charles Press looks at the Georgian political print. He finds in its growing political content, its increasingly civil tone, and the professionalism of cartoonists themselves an institutionalization of criticism essential to democracy.