

Editorial Foreword

BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN PREINDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES. Because government and business contend for influence in such multiple and indirect ways, ones especially hidden and little institutionalized before the nineteenth century, their contention is much referred to but not often systematically analyzed. The range of those interactions is suggested by the two essays published in this issue, where Karen Leonard cautiously argues that the Mughal empire collapsed in part because it was deserted by native banking firms, and Dorothy Solinger shows the People's Republic of China able to gain control of merchant activity only by establishing the better communication, uniform weights and measures, and constant prices that eliminated most of the merchants' traditional advantages. Each essay casts new light on an important and much studied case; and each does so by using controlled comparison to give the problem fresh definition, Leonard noting the contrast of Mughal weakness with the stronger bureaucracy of China, Solinger starting from an analysis of the opportunities in medieval Europe for 'corrupt' business practices. Such studies in turn open new avenues of comparison and complement previous research. Students of Europe's old regimes will find much that is provocatively familiar in Leonard's description of states and aristocracies deeply in debt and of tax farmers who come to restrict state policy; those now studying the spread of a worldwide system of markets will find a welcome example in the Indian firms' ready cooperation with and subsequent defeat by the East India Company; and students of India will recognize the suggestive extension of Habib's study of usury (*CSSH*, 6:4) and of Spodek's analysis of a related migration to regional centers by Indian merchants (16:4) in the period before British dominance. Similarly, Solinger's article continues and supplements earlier ones on marketing systems in peasant societies (Forman and Riegelhaupt, 12:2) and on corruption in developing nations (Scott, 11:3) as well as Skocpol's comments on the Chinese revolution (18:2), Skinner's on the open nature of Chinese peasant communities (13:3) and Marsh's on the venality of office in earlier periods of Chinese history (4:4).

CONTINUITY IN WORKING-CLASS CONCERNS. Among students of modern history, there is a persistent tendency to assume that comparison should be transnational; yet the essays in this section, comparative in conception and enriched by juxtaposition, are carefully restricted. They discuss a single nation (although comparisons with Germany or Great Britain would be possible), stay within the first half of the nineteenth century (although

comparison with earlier guilds and corporations and with later corporatist thought could easily follow), and treat a single group—workers (although similar points might be made about peasants or professional groups; see for example Hunt's discussion of local politics in the French revolution, *CSSH*, 18:3). The advantages of such concentration are great; the effect of these brief essays is cumulative, their interrelationship based on similar questions asked about related phenomena studied at close hand. William Sewell shows that the sense of corporate bonds familiar in early socialist writers also expressed concrete experience, a vital French tradition, and a practical means of seeking redress. William Reddy expands from a single walkout by textile workers to an analysis of how old conceptions of production applied to new conditions. And Cynthia Truant finds in the symbols and myths of *compagnonnage* a related conceptual system. Together, these excursions into workingclass culture illumine from the inside the strike behavior analyzed by Shorter and Tilly (13:1), and reinforce the significance of Rimlinger's emphasis on the importance of custom among British and of respectability among German miners (2:3), while challenging his view that traditionalism must be overcome if protest movements are to be effective. Their findings, however, fit well with Michael Hanagan's review of two recent studies of subsequent workers' movements in France.

GENERATIONAL PATTERNS: ELITE FAMILIES IN LATIN AMERICA. The social and political dominance achieved by powerful families in many Latin American nations during the nineteenth century is well recognized, but the strategies by which such families expanded their influence from landed estates to urban centers are more elusive than the results achieved. Here, Diana Balmori and Robert Oppenheimer begin with delimited groups of the socially prominent in Argentina and Chile and work backward through a kind of cohort analysis to uncover strikingly similar patterns of adaptation in each generation. Linda Lewin begins, on the other hand, from an analysis of kinship and family patterns firmly rooted in anthropology yet describes a parallel evolution in Brazil. Of interest methodologically as well as for their contributions to Latin American studies, these articles also add to earlier discussions of the special circumstances in lands of new settlement (see Katzmann, *CSSH*, 17:3), of how family structures can adapt to land-holding opportunities (Gibbon and Curtin, 20:3; Plakans, 17:1), and of the ways in which members of the professions, especially lawyers, make use of family ties (Nash, on Philadelphia, 7:2; Morrison, on India, 14:1).