

# Editorial Foreword

THE PROGRESS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE. A whiggish view of political history as the march of progress toward representative democracy has long ceased to be acceptable, but we remain inclined to write the history of social science in terms of the winners, of those whose methods and ideas have been sufficiently built upon to make them respectable ancestors. Much is lost in such an approach (including an overwhelming argument for humility). When Angus McLaren turns to study phrenology (using methods like those employed in his work on popular attitudes toward birthcontrol in the nineteenth century, *CSSH*, 18:2), he uncovers not so much quackery as philosophic materialism, belief in science, and competing visions of social order. It is a world of thought similar to that of eighteenth-century medicine (see Mitchell 21:1) and clearly in the stream that produced social science. McLaren's analysis relates formal theory to common attitudes and social structure. In doing so it moves along lines Karl Mannheim believed essential to a science of society. And although Richard Ashcraft begins from social theory rather than social history (see his article on Marx and Weber's view of liberalism, 14:2), his convincing reassessment of Mannheim's best-known work puts the relationship of ideas to social structure at the methodological center and strips the resulting relativism of the bleak terror often ascribed to it. Ellen Ross and Rayna Rapp thus extend an intellectual tradition while expressing a modern consciousness in their assertion that sexuality, too, is social—specific to time and place and social order. Their discussion of the ways in which this is so continues Rogers's discussion (20:1) while, like all their predecessors, they build from contemporary concerns to shed new light on other societies.

MISSIONARY MESSAGES. Religion and colonialism are two of the topics most frequently treated in these pages and ones that especially invite that intersection of history and anthropology so often advocated (see Hammel and Cohn, 22:2); yet, the authors of these four articles are right to note that missionaries themselves have received far less attention than have "native" religious movements (e.g., Turner, 8:2; Lantenari, 16:4; De Craemer, Vansina, and Fox, 18:4). Thomas Beidelman shows English Protestants of the Church Missionary Society to have been eccentric representatives of their home culture whose values kept them at odds with two worlds, and Judith Shapiro (who helped make this section possible) describes a Catholic effort to find a radically different solution to the problems that follow from the cultural content of organized religion (and to the problems of authority discussed by Levine, 20:4). The issues are also ideological (Shapiro cites Mannheim), and Peter Rigby focuses on that, using a Marxist framework to analyze the relation of ideology to social structure (in a manner similar to Kahn on Indonesia, 20:1)

as a means of explaining the pastoral Maasai's resistance to Christianity. Finally Edward Schieffelin succinctly uses ideological consonance to explain the cultural power of Christianity in a region of Papuan New Guinea where the adaptation to an imported faith, except for its explosive newness, is like the revitalization movements of established religions (Sanford, 16:4; Sharot, 22:3). In this issue of *CSSH* the relationship of ideas, social structure, and method appears to be the subject and the substance of social science.