

### EDITORIAL

The peasant was, according to Turgenev, "the sphinx of all the Russias." How much more is known about the peasants of the developing countries by those who rule them and those who set out to help them? Governments, social scientists, planners, claim to understand and to articulate their interests, but very often in development studies it is assumed that "development" is something the elite does to the peasants. The elite, urban bias of academic work has quite clear causes, to do with the greater intellectual accessibility of the ruling groups. The peasants are more inscrutable: as Professor F. G. Bailey writes.

".... the alien social scientist cannot so easily understand what the human majority of the developing nations - the mass, the non-elite - are thinking, or why they are thinking it; they are strange, remote, annoyingly diverse, unpredictable, a mystery even to their own elite, apathetic, afraid to take risks, improvident, parochial in their outlook, superstitious - and so on, through a string of adjectives which range from the patronizing to the contemptuous." (The Peasant View of the Bad Life)

Some of the myths and simplifications which have grown up as a result are examined in this issue of the Bulletin, especially in the review article Back to Grass Roots. The problems of studying rural development are considered in the other article of this section by Raymond Apthorpe. We revert to "aggregism" in a heuristic form, in Clive Bell's description of his computerized "development game", while at the end Dr. Hans Singer returns us to the question of development activities on the ground, with his review of Professor Albert Hirschman's Development Projects Observed. We are happy also to publish Lord Balogh's reply to the views of Harry Johnson and Enoch Powell published in our symposium on development aid in the October issue of the Bulletin.