

**POLITICAL ECONOMY
PAST AND PRESENT: A
Review of Leading Theories
of Economic Policy**

By Lord Robbins
Columbia, 1976
203 pp. \$12.50
L of C 76-7264
ISBN 0-231-04128-4

Lord Robbins, retired chairman of the *Financial Times*, long a professor at the London School of Economics, presents a concise overview of classical economic theories in the light of contemporary problems. He deals at length with Adam Smith, Ricardo, John Stuart Mill, and Hume; later theorists, including Keynes, get less attention. The treatment is thematic: What do these thinkers say about such basic matters as consumption, the organization of production, the stability of the economic system as a whole (tendency to glut? to inflation?), welfare and income distribution, international trade? Robbins is committed to the European liberal (free market) tradition, which he sees as having been in no way undermined by modern economic developments.

—Jon McLin

**THE PEASANTS OF
LANGUEDOC**

By Emmanuel Le Roy
Ladurie
Univ. of Ill., 1974
370 pp. \$16
L of C 74-4286
ISBN 0-252-00411-6

Twentieth-century studies of old French rural society have produced some of the finest historical reading available. Le Roy Ladurie's book first appeared in France in 1966 and justly acquired a reputation as a classic. The sharply abridged 1969 edition has since been translated into English. A "total history" of the Languedoc peasantry, it opens at the end of the 15th century and closes with the beginning of the 18th. The Languedoc story pits agricultural production, which remained mostly stagnant, against the demographic curve (the two blades of the Malthusian scissors). In the mediation between food and population, nature and culture were both so intractable that the chief mediator could only be death.

**PEASANTS INTO
FRENCHMEN: The Modernization of Rural France
1870-1914**

By Eugen Weber
Stanford, 1976, 615 pp. \$20
L of C 75-7486
ISBN 0-8047-0898-3

Weber's book covers all of rural France, from the birth of the Third Republic (1870) to the start of World War I. By the time it opens, the class that governed France had long since moved away from the policies and values of a traditional culture that Le Roy Ladurie describes as "destructive of its own economic foundations." Not so the peasants. Economic backwardness reinforced the chasm between "carnivorous" urban havens and the "herbivorous" rural territory, where,