structure it was necessary to include elements derived from ‘craniology’ — the superiority of the tall, blond dolichocephalics to the squat, retarded brachycephalics (Lapps, Finno-Slavs and Bretons) — Social-Darwinism and bourgeois class-consciousness. Here is Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936):

The brachycephalics gained power by the Revolution, and as a result of democratic development, this power tends to be concentrated in the lower classes, those which are most brachycephalic. The Aryan ... is something quite different ...

Racism as usual reinforces, and is reinforced by, sexism. Here is Karl Vogt:

The difference between the sexes, so far as the cranial cavity is concerned, increases with the development of the race, so that the European male surpasses the female to a far greater extent than the Negro does the Negress.

So many cubic miles of drivel. But one has only to travel in a train, read a newspaper or listen to the BBC to be reminded at how little a distance below the surface these fantasies still live. The most serious weakness of Poliakov’s book is that it is pure intellectual history — all superstructure, no base. He describes the fantasies, but does not try to explain them, or explains them only in a mystifying return-to-the-womb sort of language. The history of racist ideas in Europe is here cut off from the history of the European imperialism which bred them. There is a nice Blake engraving on the dust-cover.

Ilmington, Warwicks

THOMAS HODGKIN

_The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1860-1960: a study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs_

By ANTON BLOK (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1975). 293pp. $3.95

Anton Blok’s book is an outstanding study of the origins of rural _mafia_ in a small agricultural village in the interior of western Sicily. This _mafia_ is not the Mafia as we know it but a particular stratum of the agrarian social structure of nineteenth and twentieth century Sicily. In the nineteenth century the social structure of the locale Blok studied consisted of three classes: an absentee estate-owning aristocracy, a declining peasantry and a group of armed and violent estate managers recruited from the peasantry: _mafiosi_.

Blok places this village microcosm in the historical macrocosm of changing world markets, crumbling feudalism and growing rural population. And in his excellent foreword Charles Tilly analyses the
relationship between the phenomenon of *mafia* and the process of national state-formation.

It is only in this larger context that the development of *mafia* can be understood, for *mafiosi* were violent power brokers, protected by the landed aristocracy who needed them both to control the restive peasantry and to fend off the anti-feudal policies of the encroaching state. *Mafiosi* were distinguished by their private use of violence to control order in the public arena. The peasantry was unable to resist *mafia* effectively and the state, unable to monopolize the use of physical force in the Sicilian interior, had no choice but to rely on *mafiosi* to maintain public order. Blok traces the changing configurations of power between these groups, showing us in detail the development of rural *mafiosi* from their origins in the early nineteenth century to their peak of power in the early twentieth to their present demise.

The connections Blok draws between the social structure of his small village and the larger world are dazzling, but there are shadows in his analysis. The most serious omission is detailed discussion of the changing strategies of the Italian state. Why the Bourbons in the early nineteenth century tried to undermine the power of the landed aristocracy is almost adequately explained, but we are given no explanation of why a century later the Fascists reversed this policy and chose to ally with these old landed interests. This is a serious omission since the alliance was the kiss of death for the *mafiosi* who were no longer needed by the landlords and who, without landlord protection, were vulnerable to repression by the state.

One other point of criticism: the format of the book seems to result from the difficulties of merging anthropology and history and is at times very demanding of the reader. In the first half of the book Blok introduces us to the general features of agrarian social structure and at the same time very artfully shows us this structure in time, from the thirteenth century to the present. However, in the second part, the history is told again, in more detail and from a different point of view. This particular superimposing of history on history is difficult to synthesize and the task is not made any easier by Blok’s choppy narrative in the second part of specific events involving *mafiosi*.

Still, there is no doubt the book is well worth the close reading it demands. Blok conveys a vivid panorama of the slowly changing routines and rhythms of agrarian life and the slow but dramatic crumbling of feudal structures. And the book as an extended discussion of power is superb. The theoretical discussion is excellent and the way in which Blok meshes theory with historical material produces a true illumination of the concept. The book would be worth reading for this alone. In addition, the scope of the analysis is inspiring, for anthropology should be historical, local studies should be done in a national context, and specific narrative should be
informed by theory. Blok writes successfully on all these levels of analysis, leaving us with a rare sense of satisfaction and of wholeness in the work.

University of Michigan

LYNN EDEN

Ten Years’ Military Terror in Indonesia


In the closing months of 1965 and on into the opening months of 1966, following the failure of a coup attempt on the first of October 1965, the right-wing Generals who as a result came to power in Indonesia proceeded to preside over one of the greatest organised slaughters in human history. Within the space of four months … the Suharto regime murdered up to a million Indonesian citizens.

With these words Malcolm Caldwell opens the important collection of essays he commissioned to mark the tenth anniversary of the New Order in Indonesia. He describes his objects without the niceties of academic restraint:

to draw attention to the atrocities that were committed in the seizing of power and to those which have accompanied the generals’ rule from the first massacres of 1965-66 right down to the present; to expose the ruthless and reckless exploitation of the country and its people by giant corporations of the imperialist powers and by the regime working in harness with them; to document American complicity in bringing the present rulers to power and in sustaining and supporting them since; and to proclaim our solidarity with the Indonesian people and our abiding faith in the Indonesian Revolution which sooner or later will burst forth with irresistible force…

In much of this the essays succeed admirably. They are comprehensive, up-to-date and quickly published, well balanced between description and analysis and nearly all of them are published here for the first time. Together they form an indispensable critical assessment of the Suharto regime. The first group of essays covers the politics of repression, the role of the military, political imprisonment, racism and the destruction of all civil liberties. There follow four essays on the economy which confirm that even an oil-rich regime can be highly vulnerable through the scale of corruption the military elite enjoys. Finally there are contributions on the international context — Indonesia’s changing place in US plans for South-east Asia