

that on the fundamental issue of grace and nature there is still some unresolved contradiction latent in his thought. The Elberfeld lecture, more detailed and dense than those of Aberdeen, is not rendered easier by the translation, which, while evidently exceedingly painstaking, sometimes makes very difficult reading.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS

**THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DOCTRINES OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPE.** By Michael Oakeshott. (Cambridge University Press; 10s. 6d.)

Just as the theologian needs Denzinger, so the serious citizen needs such a book as the present one, a collection of authentic texts to illustrate the great political philosophies at work in Europe to-day. And with all the more reason because facts are smudged and ideas hurled about with the utmost untidiness in the journals; even the student cannot keep abreast of the books on our social and political issues. Not in stray passages, but in considerable and complete quotations, here are five distinct ways of conceiving the fundamental character of society, and, by implication, the nature and earthly destiny of man: Representative Democracy, Catholicism, Communism, Fascism, and National Socialism.

The first, which covers but also stands for something both deeper and more enduring than Liberalism, possesses no classical document. It is not so much a coherent system as a traditional sense of the rights of the individual. This tradition, so far as Liberalism is concerned, is one of struggle against absolute monarchy and seems for the present without appropriate doctrinal weapons to combat other and contemporary forms of anti-Liberalism. Yet it is far from dead and still commands the following of the French and English speaking peoples. And how cool and sober John Stuart Mill is after the louder rhetoric of other schools—like going into the Reform Club from the Marble Arch.

'The social and political doctrine of Catholicism is included, in the first place, because of its inherent merits. As a doctrine it is closer-knit and more systematic than any of the other current doctrines. Its strength lies in its coherence and its rigidity. In virtue of the one it is an example from which modern social and political thought has much to learn; in virtue of the other it appears in the modern world, to some extent, as a stranger, and the criticism Catholicism offers of other doctrines

is less convincing than its statement of its own.' Mr. Oakshott is thinking of *Divini Redemptoris*. 'It is, also, the repository of an element of profound importance in the European tradition; it is the only contemporary representative of a genuine Natural Law theory, and it is evidence that this theory is not yet dead. If this doctrine is a stranger in the modern world, it is certainly not an exotic doctrine: authoritarian without the capriciousness of the other authoritarian doctrines, it reminds us of an inheritance we have neglected.' Substantial passages are given from the encyclicals and letters of Leo XIII and Pius XI, notably from *Immortale Dei*, *Libertas*, *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno*, and *Mit brennender Sorge*, together with parts of the new Constitution of Ireland, in which country and in Portugal prevail the only peacefully established regimes profoundly influenced by Catholic doctrine.

Most of the authoritative literature of Communism repeats the writings of Marx and Engels. 'It is a doctrine,' says the editor, 'which has received innumerable restatements, but has shown remarkably little power to grow.' He has included the greater part of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and chapters from Lenin's *State and Revolution*, in which are incorporated long quotations from Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. And to illustrate the workings of the doctrine he gives extracts from the 1936 Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Professor Barker notes that the operation of the doctrine of Italian Fascism preceded its enunciation, which did not officially appear until 1932, when Signor Mussolini wrote *La Dottrina del Fascismo* for the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. This is given in full, together with passages from the statutes of the present regime in Italy.

Few of the authoritative documents of National Socialism have hitherto been translated into English. Here will be found extracts from the programme of the Party and from recent legislation on labour, Citizenship, and *Blut und Boden*; an account of some of the cardinal points of *Mein Kampf*; and translations of passages from Rosenberg.

Mr. Oakshott permits himself very little commentary, but his book which brings together the texts of these five great dynamic doctrines serves an urgent purpose. Its interest is more than academic; study-groups would do well to adopt it; and indeed it is to be commended to all who would know accurately the nature of the contending political forces of the world.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.