

of civilisation a hierarchy of power is one thing, a hierarchy of merit quite another. Full expression must be given to the first in organising an International Police; and to the second in keeping that Police Force in its place and in deciding the ends for which it is to be used.

FRANK PAKENHAM.

REAL LIFE IS MEETING. By J. H. Oldham. (Christian News-Letter Books, No. 14. Sheldon Press; 1s. 6d.)

Mr. Oldham examines here 'the desperately urgent political task which is laid on us at this moment of history—the task of finding a real alternative to a totalitarian society; a society which, whether Christian or not, is at least *compatible* with the Christian understanding of life, and in which the Christian heaven is free to do its work.' I am told that others have found his treatment of things illuminating, and it is with some reluctance that I record a contrary experience. His book seems to me disjointed and his arguments hesitant of direction. He designedly spends a good deal of time on summarising other men's ideas—those of Buber and Professor Macmurray on the human person, of G. A. Morgan on Nietzsche, of Mannheim on modern social techniques; but he lacks the precision of thought and language necessary for a unified and coherent exposition. He seems to shift his position without due warning; one is often not sure whether he is considering individuals or communities, Christians or good pagans, principles meant as universal or notions suitable to the English temperament. His generalisations are vague, their applications uncritical.

Two quotations will illustrate these weaknesses. 'A reawakened sense of the common life as the sphere in which God's will must be done, the opening of our eyes to the spiritual significance of the British tradition of public service, local initiative and voluntary effort, evoking the resolve to build new social structures on foundations already given, would infuse fresh energies into the body politic and crown our resistance to tyranny with positive meaning and achievement from which the whole world would benefit' (p. 19). 'There must be certain fundamental values which will be consciously encouraged in every possible way, while behaviour of a contrary kind, such as that characteristic of the Nazis, will be discouraged and repressed.' (p. 78).

A refreshing interlude in an otherwise unsatisfactory book is a chapter contributed from outside on 'The Gospel Drama and Society.' This is by Mr. Mairet, who considers the Gospel story as a presentation, dramatically and 'in the round,' of the problems of our times as of all others, and as a power to influence the imagination as well as the conscious intellect, suggesting right thoughts, even in moments of inattention. This is an admirable little study.

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