

REVIEWS

THE PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMIC PLANNING. By W. Arthur Lewis. (Dennis Dobson and George Allen & Unwin; 7s. 6d.)

This admirable book on the principles of economic planning was prepared for the Fabian Society. It should do them a lot of good. For it is the purpose of the book to show that it is possible and desirable for the State to plan by inducement rather than by direction. It is a closely reasoned and very readable account of the case against what many people mean by planning; and in particular against the kind of bureaucratic collectivism which many people associate with the Fabian Society.

The *laissez-faire* economists used to maintain that the State should not interfere with the economic life of the nation in any way whatever. Everything, it was said, should be left to the market, to the beneficent laws of supply and demand. It is generally recognised today, however, that the State can do something to anticipate the movements of the market and mitigate the harshness of economic laws with laws of its own. In particular it can have a *policy* with regard to this industry and that, it can discourage the consumption of gin by taxation, or it can protect agriculture by import duties. This is the kind of thing Professor Lewis means when he talks about 'planning by inducement'. In Britain today the Government can, and should, seek to make it worth while for workers to move from the less essential into the more essential industries and worth while for manufacturers to penetrate the dollar market.

Professor Lewis emphasises the value of this kind of planning and the weakness of planning by direct bureaucratic control; and in particular the weakness of grandiose schemes for wholesale nationalisation. Nationalisation, he points out, does nothing to redistribute wealth as between the rich and the poor; it may penalise certain persons in a rather arbitrary manner, but inasmuch as 'fair compensation' is paid it is not a way of achieving social justice. Nor, he argues, is it of value in ensuring that an industry will be well supplied with capital and prosperous. Nor does it have any effect upon the wage relationship; it leaves the worker very much as he was except that he has less choice of employment. Its main value, he argues, is as an administrative convenience; it may be a convenient way of securing the unitary control of an industry when such is desirable. This is much the same kind of conclusion as that drawn by Mr Morrison when he says that those industries should be nationalised whose efficiency can be increased thereby; but it is very different from the idea of the average member of the Fabian Society that as many industries as possible should be

nationalised because that is the road to social justice and socialism. This book is an authoritative statement of the case against what many people understand by Fabianism; and, unlike many books on economics, it is one which is easily comprehensible to the man in the street as well as valuable to economists and to Fabians.

PAUL DERRICK

ST THOMAS AND THE WORLD STATE. By Robert M. Hutchins. (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1949; \$1.50.)

The Chancellor of the University of Chicago, holder, among many other distinctions, of the Italian *Croce di Guerra*, makes in the Aquinas Lecture for 1949 a somewhat Utopian appeal for the establishment of a World State which would render wars impossible. One can but echo with a fervent *utinam* what has been the plea of some of the greatest Christian political theorists. Works like the present, however, leave us inevitably with a feeling of something immense to be accomplished, and of disappointment that we are not shown more clearly the way to bring it about. An occasional lecturer is not expected to make necessarily any considerable new contribution to his subject, and, in fact, we find that Dr Hutchins has presented the classic texts from Aristotle and St Thomas with competence and lucidity, but that the fifty-odd pages in which he does it contain little that is not already familiar to readers of Maritain and Don Sturzo.

D.S.

THIS PERVERSE GENERATION. By Peter Michaels. (Sheed & Ward; 7s. 6d.)

Anything offensive to our insufferable complacency, any words, likely to sting our faith (if we English Catholics, as a body, can be said to have any) to action, are welcome. Peter Michaels's book is welcome. It pleases the author that communists nip perseveringly at the weak spots 'of what was once Christendom'. God has not yet abandoned us to our complacency: we may even, after all, *not* pass away peacefully in our sleep, but be jerked awake to the cold truth that we have built on phoney foundations and must build elsewhere, and otherwise, if our house is to survive. For the visible fabric has crumbled. Thank God for an imperishable Church, but without presumption! There is more to be done than bemoan the strength of the persecutors who have all but severed the human coherence of Christendom. To those who may complain of too much denunciation: Regeneration must come by destruction: the rot must be excised: the débris of our ruined pride and expediency must be carted in shame away. Peter Michaels is not, however, unconstructive; in his lively pictures of our (scarcely existent) Catholic social life, he shows up the meanness that satisfies too many against the unfailing sufficiency of God's Word and God's Church.