

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT ASSOCIATION

'Political Realities'

by M. Oakeshott

from Letters to the Editor, *TLS*, October 12 1962, p793

Oakeshott's reply to Crossman

Sir,-The odd muddle of resentment, misquotation and calculated misrepresentation which your contributor, in his well-known passion for justice, passed off as a review of my book calls for no reply. One can only suppose that he was not feeling very well. But perhaps you will allow me to defend myself in respect of my colleagues in the profession? If your contributor had read the last essay in the book with even intermittent attention he would have noticed that I said nothing about the intellectual interests of "politics" dons save to applaud them; my theme was the question, What should the *undergraduate* study of politics comprise? This is a question we frequently explore together, and naturally we do not always agree with one another. I expressed some thought of my own and gave a reasoned account of my objections to some other current views. Your contributor's suggestion that the only way to study politics is to lift the lid and look at the "works" is a view of the matter with which we are familiar, but I think everyone who has anything to do with teaching "politics" has long ago rejected it.

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