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an 'arena' of growing political and academic interest. The first three quarters of the book offer the best of the (now) many potted histories of the NHS; then, in the final two chapters, the author turns to an assessment of the NHS's achievements and failures. He concludes by setting out some of the strategic options which appear to lie ahead.

It is a merit of the book that description and analysis are closely intermeshed throughout. One does not have to wade through 150 pages of 'facts' to get to 30 pages of 'theory'. Furthermore, Klein's political analysis goes far beyond high policy and those matters which have occasioned parliamentary comment. His definition of 'politics' embraces organizational politics, central-local relations, inter- and intra- professional politics. He constructs an impressively rounded picture of a vast and diverse organization, diligently moving back and forth between Whitehall and district health authorities, doctors and COHSE, operations and ideologies.

Klein's scepticism, about solutions which maximize only one relevant value (e.g. 'equality' or 'individual choice') will presumably disappoint radical social engineers of both left and right. It would be unfair, however, to belabour him with the stereotypical criticism of pluralists — that they assume an open competition between not too disparately resourced groups who are at least agreed on the 'rules of the game'. Klein assumes nothing of the sort, indeed he takes pains to emphasize the specific historical origins and present fragility of the consensus over the nature of the NHS. He identifies a series of crucial value choices and shows how, though the health care policy arena has changed and grown, certain groups have thus far retained effective veto power over important segments of the policy process.

One area that is only vestigially discussed is the political economy of the NHS as a major purchaser, though this is a weakness that Klein shares with other authors of general texts on health care. The research here has yet to be done. Meanwhile, the specialist adviser to the Select Committee on Social Services has given us an excellent synthesis of what is known so far.

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BRITISH POLICY AND THE IRISH ADMINISTRATION 1920-22

John McColgan

George Allen and Unwin, 1983. 191pp. £10.00.

The strength of McColgan's book lies in its historical research, which must have involved an immense labour on the primary materials archived in Belfast, Dublin and London — helpfully described in his 'Source Analysis'. As a historical monograph it will be definitive. McColgan documents the 1920 reforms of Dublin Castle (synonymous, for Irish nationalists, with diehard reaction), the development of an autonomous administrative apparatus in the six counties prior to the Treaty of 1921, the implementation of the administrative aspects of the Government of Ireland Act and the Treaty, and how partition affected the Irish civil service. He confesses that the narrative is 'episodic, an eclectic navigation of political and administrative issues . . .' (p. xi) but this finds a rationale in providing support for his conclusion that Britain's political policy in 1920-22 was a success: Ireland remained within the Empire and 'Ulster' was not coerced. Part of Britain's success (the Cabinet's? Lloyd George's? the imperial state's?) is accounted for by the Confucian and Machiavellian talents of British civil servants who modified and divided Irish administration in pursuit of imperial objectives.

Although a welcome supplement to Irish historiography the book will not appeal to those who are not *au fait* with the story of Irish national liberation. The 'episodic' construction blocks an overall understanding of partition. A chronology would have been

useful, a comparison of rival theories and explanations of partition — in which the administrative dimension could have been incorporated — would have been even better.

A. J. P. Taylor thought that Lloyd George solved the Irish Question in 1921. McColgan helps us think otherwise. His book, however, is not likely to aid civil servants briefing ministers on colonial withdrawal. States have become much more complex than the imperial machinery of 1920. Membership (or otherwise) of NATO and the EEC and proposals for joint sovereignty pose different questions from those faced by the British Empire. The subtle lesson that one can extract from McColgan is that Ulster Unionism, having been suffered once, should not be suffered gladly again

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