

fragments here collected in a slim volume will find a wide reading public. He wrote with such skill that even these four fragments will convey to the discerning reader the fact that the movements of peoples, religions and empires in Asia have exercised a determining influence on European history.

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The Government of India and Reform Policies towards Politics and the Constitution 1916-1921. By P.G. Robb. Oxford University Press (London Oriental series: Volume 32), Oxford, 1976. 379 pp. U.K. price: £10.50.

IN the history of Modern India, 1917-1919 has long been recognized as a watershed. The Montagu Declaration, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report and the 1919 Government of India Act marked the profound reappraisal of British policy whereby a goal – ‘the progressive realization of responsible government’ – was accepted, and from that time on what was at issue, in essence, was the timing of constitutional advance rather than the ultimate objective. What had not been clear, until we had Dr Robb’s book, was the exact nature of this change of policy and the way in which it was brought about. Partly this stemmed from the contrasting characters of the two leading actors involved: Montagu, the brilliant and articulate Jewish Secretary of State for India, ‘unreliable’ in conservative eyes, whose *Indian Diary* published by his widow after his death, seemed to confirm his leading role in pushing through the reforms; and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, safe, methodical, averse to the histrionic gesture, too easily typed at the time and by historians as the conservative foil in an improbable partnership. ‘Montagu-Chelmsford’ – the very order of the names has always suggested a relative importance of roles.

This will no longer do. Not only does Dr Robb remind us that many of the changes introduced were under consideration before Montagu took office and show the extent to which they stemmed from thinking within the Government of India rather than in the home government, but he also gives a new and thoroughly persuasive picture of Chelmsford. He was cautious certainly, but not conservative. Moved, as Dr Robb points out ‘by the force of events, and logic of changing situations, increasing needs, burgeoning demands. . .his was the liberalism of the pragmatist not the doctrinaire’. With this went an insistence upon consultation, particularly with his Executive Council, as a means of decision making. The contrast with his predecessors was striking. Thoroughly effective in the committee room, there was something in his personality or temperament that made him much less successful at a distance. There is a certain paradox in that while he helped transform India into a ‘political’ society Chelmsford singularly lacked the public skills of a politician himself. While he recognized that there must be a fundamental change in British government in India he has been remembered not for this but for Dyer’s shooting of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators in

Amritsar. Dr Robb shows why this has been so, and why the traditional view is thoroughly unjust.

In the last two decades historians of modern India have concentrated on detailed studies of Indian nationalist politics, and the study of government and its policies in the British period has been thoroughly unfashionable. One welcomes Dr Robb's disregard for fashion, as nationalist politics cannot be fully understood in isolation from government policy and practice. To his study he has brought a formidable knowledge of the public records and private papers and an admirable capacity to write clearly about complex issues. The one fault is not the author's, but the publishers': the references and notes are at the end of the book. Surely at least those which comment on or amplify the text could have gone at the foot of the appropriate pages.

In the genesis of the reforms and in writing the Montagu-Chelmsford Report a leading part was played by William Marris, the most eminent New Zealand member of the Indian Civil Service. It is a happy coincidence that this admirable study of those events should have been written by one of Marris's fellow countrymen.

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The Shapes of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History. By Peter Munz. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1977. xi, 382 pp. US price: \$16.00.

PROFESSOR MUNZ has set out to provide us neither with a coherent speculative philosophy of history, nor a detached account of the philosophical implications of the historian's enterprise. Rather, he has sought to establish and describe the relationship between speculative philosophy of history and history: 'speculative philosophies of history are both important and necessary,' he writes, 'because they alone can establish the connection between the separate, detailed studies historians specialise in.' This thesis is pursued with urgency and vigour in the book because Munz has set himself to perform two rescues before he reaches the last page: history is to be rescued from the hands of academic specialists and speculative philosophies of history are to be snatched from 'the dissecting tools of analytic philosophers.' In the latter enterprise particularly, Munz follows close on the heels of Hayden White, whose work he praises.

The basis theme can be stated thus: history is the science of change over time, so that the best form of historical writing is narrative. But since historians generally deal with short periods, they tend to lose sight of the long-term trends (and thus of history itself), and unless these disparate studies are linked in the construction of a narrative of change they are not part of history. But historians cannot articulate the relationship among the individual studies unless they appeal to a philosophy of history. The difference between