THE BACKGROUND TO
CURRENT AFFAIRS

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M.A.(N.Z.), Ph.D.(Lond.)

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written in the belief that the most helpful approach to an understanding of current affairs is to try to study them in perspective. It is an attempt to identify and explain the main historical forces operating in the contemporary world and to clarify the assumptions behind the conflicting policies of the powers — in other words, to stand back a little from the trees in order to see something of the shape of the woods.

The main problem has been lack of space. There are a number of omissions that may seem strange to some readers. The writer can only plead that the decision about what to include and what to omit was often a difficult one. It was made largely on grounds of what seemed most important to explain; even so the main difficulty has been to keep within manageable length without making the treatment too general to justify the argument presented.

I am indebted to many persons, of whom I can name only a few, for assistance and encouragement. Professor S. G. Raybould, Director of the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, the University of Leeds, has as always been most helpful. I am also indebted to members of the clerical staff of the Department for assistance with typing. I owe particular gratitude to Captain E. D. Dougherty, of the Royal Army Educational Corps, for reading and commenting upon some of the chapters in typescript, and for general encouragement. I must also thank the publishers and printers for their special pains in making possible the speedy publication that a book of this kind requires. Above all, I am immensely indebted to my wife for her patience and forbearance.

D. W. C.

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