

x *Preface and Acknowledgements*

**This book,
therefore, rests on
curiously uneven
foundations. In
addition to the
wide and**

**miscellaneous
reading of a good
many years,
supplemented by
what reading was
necessary to give
lecture courses on
twentieth-century**

**history to the
graduate students
of the New School
for Social Research,
I have drawn on
the accumulated
knowledge,
memories and**

**opinions of
someone who has
lived through the
Short Twentieth
Century, as what
the social
anthropologists call
a 'participant**

**observer', or simply
as an open-eyed
traveller, or what
my ancestors
would have called a
kibbitzer, in quite a
lot of countries.
The historical value**

**of such experiences
does not depend on
being present on
great historic
occasions, or having
known or even met
prominent
history-makers or**

**statesmen. As a
matter of fact, my
experience as an
occasional journalist
enquiring into this
or that country,
chiefly in Latin
America, has been**

**that interviews with
presidents or other
decision-makers are
usually
unrewarding, for
the obvious reason
that most of what
such people say is**

**for the public
record. The people
from whom
illumination comes
are those who can,
or want to, speak
freely, preferably if
they have no**

**responsibility for
great affairs.
Nevertheless,
though necessarily
partial and
misleading, to have
known people and
places has helped**

**me enormously. It
may be no more
than the sight of the
same city at an
interval of thirty
years – Valencia or
Palermo – which
alone brings home**

**the speed and scale
of social
transformation in
the third quarter of
the present century.
It may be simply a
memory of
something said in**

conversations long ago and stored away, sometimes for no clear reason, for future use. If the historian can make some sense of this century it is in large

**part because of
watching and
listening. I hope I
have communicated
to readers something
of what I have
learned through
doing so.**

**The book also,
and necessarily,
rests on the
information drawn
from colleagues,
students, and
anyone else whom
I buttonholed**

**while I was working
on it. In some
cases the debt is
systematic. The
chapter on the
sciences was
submitted to my
friends Alan**

**Mackay FRS, who
is not only a
crystallographer but
an encyclopedist,
and John Maddox.
Some of what I have
written about
economic**

**development was
read by my
colleague at the
New School, Lance
Taylor, formerly of
MIT, and much
more was based on
reading the papers,**

**listening to the
discussions and
generally keeping
my ears open
during the
conferences
organized on
various**

**macro-economic
problems at the
World Institute for
Development Econ-
omic Research of
the UN University
(UN U/ W IDER)
in Helsinki when it**

**was transformed
into a major
international centre
of research and
discussion under
the direction of Dr
Lal Jayawardena.
In general, the**

**summers I was able
to spend at that
admirable
institution as a
McDonnell Douglas
visiting scholar
were invaluable to
me, not least**

through its