CHILDREN OF THE DESERT, by Phyl and Noel Wallace. Nelson, 64 pp, $2.95.

THIS BEAUTIFUL and moving book portrays the daily lives of the Pitjantjatara children living in the inhospitable region of the Musgrave Ranges. In a series of enchanting photographs, and a brief but equally vivid text, it captures the personalities of these children of the desert.

There is Wanungy, who at seven is an excellent bushwoman, revelling in the dry, prickly, inhospitable country that is her world; friendly little Winmati, the four-year-old, quite happy to leave his family and spend a whole trouble-free day with his friends the Wallaces; Wintjin the singer, delighted to teach the Pitjantjatara songs to his new friends, and thinking it "huge fun to hear someone trying to pronounce the words and reproduce the complicated tunes and rhythm patterns"; Kalatari who at three "was carrying her sister Rosemary on her back wherever she went and tending her like a small mother"; Litja the brave, who despite his fears, made a drawing of the dreaded Marnu, the evil spirit; and many others, engaging and lovable, like children the world over.

The book is the work of Phyl and Noel Wallace, a husband and wife team who first visited Central Australia in 1956, and in 1966 decided to work full time among the Pitjantjatara.

Though they are in contact with mission and welfare settlements, and numbers of the children go to school, the Pitjantjatara still lead nomadic lives, wresting a precarious existence from the desert. It is thus a vanishing culture which is the background to the Wallace's book, but it is a culture which has developed the most valuable human qualities—resourcefulness, courage, endurance, social responsibility, artistic ability and many others, and it is one of the great virtues of the book that it brings home to us so vividly the human attributes of these remote and little known people.

The first impact of the book is made by the photographs. They are confined almost entirely to the children, and some of the portraits are quite breath-taking in their beauty and vivacity. Many of the group scenes are in colour, with the vast spectacle of the desert as a background. The attractive format (13" x 10") permits the reproduction of some superb panoramic shots.

However, the book is much more than a collection of attractive photographs. These are accompanied by a text deceptively brief and consisting chiefly of sketches of individual children, though some sections such as Kalu (school) and Maku (witchetty grubs) deal with group situations. Phyl Wallace has used this simple framework to make us aware of the most significant aspects of the life of the people. Many of the sketches show that "the hunt for food is a constant and desperate necessity", so that "even the youngest child digs for food". Some show how the children acquire traditional skills as in the fascinating section "Kulata", where a group of boys show the Wallaces how spears are made; some sections reveal the admixture of cultures taking place—the rifle side by side with the hunting spear: the plastic bucket alongside the digging dish; the ancient car or truck drawn up beside the camp. There is a memorable section on "Cave With Drawings" in which an
old man of the tribe shows the Wallaces how the drawings were done; and there are sections dealing with corroborees and walkabout. Incidentally, the Wallaces explode the commonly held belief that walkabout is simply a restless meaningless movement from one place to another, and emphasise that there is “always some serious tribal or inter-tribal reason for the journey — “perhaps a meeting of relations for some vital ceremony or ritual that will benefit or affect them all”.

One of the most delightful features of the book is the reproduction of the children’s drawings. Drawing in the sand comes naturally to desert children, and the change-over to drawing on paper or blackboard is easily made. They revel in the bright pastels, and display acute powers of observation in reproduction details of scenes or events. Thus Mulayangu, after a visit to a shearing shed, reproduced every detail of the scene in his drawing, from the man sweeping the floor to the counter shaft, gear boxes and driving arms to the shearing heads.

Probably the most valuable section of the book is that dealing with education. Phyl Wallace indicates the main difficulty in the opening sentences: “Roaming the dusty vastness of the desert is no preparation for settling down into a formal school situation. The desert children enter a strange new world when they step into a schoolroom, and at first its restrictions must be agonising to them. There is so little in our school activities that relates to their traditional background”.

She illustrates this in relation to number: “Springing from a culture that has no need for mathematics, the children find our number system difficult to comprehend. They never hoard any objects that need to be counted, so they have managed comfortably with words for one, two and three, and from them they build, with repetition, four and five —after that the word “tjuta” following a noun suffices to pluralise”. Is it any wonder that the children have difficulty with mathematics?

Language is a little easier, because the Musgrave Park Settlement, followed the example of Eurabella Mission in training teachers in the Pitjantjatara language, so that for the first three years children are taught in the vernacular; but even so there is still an abysmal gap between the children’s traditional way of life and the white man’s school.

This is charmingly illustrated in the story of Mutata, the truant, too long to reproduce here, but one of the highlights of the book. Despite the best efforts of his father, who, though without any education himself, recognised its necessity for his children, Mutata refused to stay at school, until one morning he turned up when “a particularly intriguing mess of handwork, paper tearing and pasting was in progress”, and Mutata joined in with zest. “Later on he discovered we were doing some rather dull things on the blackboard with chalk — so departed for the rocks.”

However, Mutata had discovered that some interesting things do go on at school, and after that he often dropped in when the school bell rang. Phyl Wallace concludes “... it is possible that if school can be related to the special background of these special children, if it can be made interesting, attractive and unrestrictive enough, the Mutatas of the tribe will finally want to bring themselves to school every day”.

The authors do not pose any questions about the future of the desert children, but readers of the
book will find them inescapable. Though much of their traditional life still remains, these children are already living between two worlds. What is to be their future, as the old life vanishes? Fringe dwellers on the outskirts of towns and settlements?

It is unthinkable that such precious human material should be wasted in this way. But what can be done to prevent it? To help the people adapt to a rapidly changing world? How can Governments be forced to adopt enlightened policies on these vital issues? What can we do to preserve the dignity and self-reliance of these people? These are some of the questions provoked by this stimulating book.

GLORIA LAIRD

ABORIGINAL HABITAT AND ECONOMY, a thesis by Roger Lawrence.

Was the environment of the Australian Aboriginal basically responsible for the nature of the economy at the time of European contact? Did environment stimulate the Aboriginal to a high degree of inventiveness? To what extent was Aboriginal life, economic and cultural, modified by outside influences? Readers seeking answers to these and allied questions will find in Roger Lawrence's Aboriginal Habitat and Economy a well-documented collection of facts. Agreement with conclusions drawn, however, will vary considerably.

Mr. Lawrence's bibliography is in itself a useful reference list. In it he lists over 300 sources from which he has drawn material — 19 of them records of European impressions of Aborigines prior to 1800; the rest records, collated material and results of organised research to as late as 1966. From this historically wide range the author has described environment (topography, climate, vegetation, animal life) and economy (food and food-gathering, shelter, population fluctuations). He does this with a view to elucidating the problems of the role of environment in the promoting of various forms of economic and cultural life. At the end of each chapter are detailed tables under such headings as: food type, equipment and technique employed, nature of activity (individual, joint or communal) source of information, area, tribes in area. In general the areas studied are Central Australia (arid environment), Murray-Darling (rich aquatic), South-East coast (choice of marine and land food), and Cape York (environment open to influence from North). Explanatory maps and diagrams are clear and informative.

There will be little qualification of praise for Mr. Lawrence in his collection and collation of material. With conclusions reached there will be less unanimity of opinion.

In the book full credit is given to the Aboriginal for close observation. For instance, the Aboriginal observed accurately the movements of ducks and so could net them on the wing; he observed accurately their instinctive responses and so whirled bark to simulate the flight of a hawk. Similarly in inland Australia he observed the seasonal fluctuations of river levels, and on the coast the daily tidal fluctuations. This knowledge he utilised in movable brush fences, stone fence weirs with alignment of walls and pockets corresponding to the longshore movements of the fish of the area.

So too credit is given the Aboriginal for "his decisions as to which method and equipment could most profitably be used" (p. 239).
Less credit is given him for adaptation and modification of equipment or hunting methods "its importance was not great" (p. 237). Indeed, Mr. Lawrence goes so far as to say:

"the major differences in Aboriginal culture appear to have been due mainly to cultural contact with more advanced technologies and the subsequent diffusion of these traits through part of Australia" (p. 237).

Mr. Lawrence supports this conclusion by the distribution of such economic features as netting techniques and the use of harpoons, outrigger canoes, fish hooks, etc.

So too with food. Here again Mr. Lawrence places great emphasis on technical change brought from Northern cultures into Australia.

"the greatest effect the habitat had on the diet of the aboriginal was that it provided a range of possible food sources within which the economic system operated... However, other factors were perhaps of equal or greater importance" (p. 223).

Illustrating the food range Mr. Lawrence points out that the primary animal diet of tribes living in the mountain country of Central Australia was kangaroos, wallabies, emus; in spinifex country lizards, rats, mice, possums; in the Port Jackson area fish. Illustrating the role of the advanced technique brought from the North into Australia, he cites the methods of one tribe in hunting the dugong which enabled them "to capitalise on the potential of their environment to a far greater extent than did the tribes to the south whose technology was less developed."

The following extracts are indicative of Mr. Lawrence's viewpoint:

"the material culture shows no close relationship with the environment" (p. 98).

"The role of the environment was not such that it stimulated local invention of any radical nature, nor did it promote any great change in the nature of the economy. The Aborigines came to Australia with a hunting and gathering economy and through the duration of their stay it remained so" (p. 239).

"The most significant differences resulted from cultural borrowing rather than from invention prompted by environmental stimuli" (p. 193).

Nevertheless despite contentious conclusions, this careful marshalling of facts makes the book a valuable addition to the library of any student of the Aborigines.

Jean Bailey

BLACK POWER, by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton.
Jonathan Cape, 198 pp, $5.15.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X, with the assistance of Alex Haley.
Penguin, 512 pp, $1.45.

WHITE AUSTRALIA, isolated, intolerant and smug in its solutions to racial conflict (give the immigration policy another name but discriminate anyway), would be barely interested in the views of American black militants. Whatever interest has developed from the reading of a few emotional news stories and one or two reasoned articles (notably by James Baldwin in The Australian) a reading of Black Power by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton and The Autobiography of Malcolm X would probably confirm the worst nightmares for those who believe that the darker a man's skin the less human he is. Both these books spell out clearly that the days when a black American was forced or condi-
tioned to accept any white man as his superior are over.

If the reactions of racists are predictable what then of humanists, liberal thinkers, revolutionaries? Unfortunately there is much evidence here and, more particularly, in America that the essence of black militancy is misunderstood or ignored while the admitted vagaries of the movement come in for close scrutiny. Those who caution black militants to take care, to use only legal, peaceful, non-violent means, those who, with good intentions, rush south or north to organise the oppressed and those who talk of class solutions, particularly of the white working class as friend and ally may feel that such books make uncomfortable reading but given a little objectivity such readers may learn even as they are upset.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, written with the assistance of Alex Haley is not always satisfactory and yet is one of those rare moving documents that reaffirm the ability of down trodden human beings to rise up and be men. It seems clear from Haley's informative preface that much as he grew to admire and respect Malcolm X he could not identify with him and because the book was written while Malcolm X was changing and maturing and remained unfinished when he was shot down the latter sections leave too many unanswered questions. The political development of Malcolm X is the most unsuccessful portrayal but why he became a militant is very clear.

The next time someone regrets the "inverted racialism" of some black militants thrust this book into his hands. One quarter of the life experience of Malcolm X, his father's death, the prejudices of school days, his youth as junkie, pusher, hustler, robber, his years in jail and one quarter of the realisation that those who killed his father, hounded his mother, stifled his ambitions, contained him, distorted him and incarcerated him were all white men should provide enough understanding of the fact that hatred of white men (the devils of Elijah Muhammad's misnamed "Black Muslims") was a logical step towards self respect.

The dangers in this view are obvious but if development takes place these dangers may be averted. Malcolm X developed and came to criticise Elijah Muhammad's theories, but he never denied the achievements of the "Black Muslims" which have often been spectacular and human. Dope addicts kicked the habit, men develop pride in themselves and their history. They acted. Their faces turned out to the world of anti-colonial struggle.

The religious dogmas of Elijah Muhammad and more particularly of Malcolm X responding to his visit to Mecca after his break with the "Black Muslims" may seem childish, even ridiculous but if their basis is less than sound the same must be said for the Christian orientations of much of Europe's revolutionary history.

Towards the end of his life Malcolm X was "too militant" for some and "too moderate" for others as he sought to build militant organisation. At least the revolutionary readers may ponder the truth that in this sphere of politics there is no discrimination.

His aim, hardly started at the time of his death, was to force recognition of Black America as opposed to integration on white terms, to piecemeal reforms, to containment. He saw the need to build a society where all are recognised as human. He thus rejected his former total hatred of whites and saw not the reactions in society but society itself and yet he never forgot, and neither should we, that "the burden to defend any passion should
never be put upon the black man because it is the white man collectively who has shown that he is hostile towards integration and towards intermarriage and towards these other strides towards oneness.”

By comparison the life experience of Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton is that of a privileged new generation. As young intellectual activists they develop out of a period of action by men like Malcolm X, they tell a similar story but from a different angle in a new developing situation.

It is clear to them that action for black liberation in America is in a world setting of peoples demanding an end to oppression. They consider the various efforts towards liberation, those within the established political parties, the efforts to mobilise black voters where they constitute a majority, the efforts to overcome the centuries old trend that if you “wash up, clean up, get an education” the white society will accept you.

They reject the goal of assimilation into “middle-class America” because the class society of America is anti-humanist and perpetuates racism. They seek a society of “free people” not “free enterprise”. To them “black power” is self identity and self determination. They deny that it is a racist concept since racism seeks to subject people and “black power” seeks “full participation in the decision making processes affecting the lives of black people, and recognition of the virtues in themselves as black people.”

They do not deny that the white working class may be an ally but experience teaches them that while organised white workers aspire to the values of present day American society they will contribute to the continuation of racism. They do not encourage violence but they accept that it may come. They recognise that elements of black racism may persist but they act against this trend while saying persuasively that white racism may not expect any guarantees from them. For those white men who profess a belief in the rights of all men they spell out a role that is “educative, organisational and supportive”. They ask for massive white organisation against white racism for the preaching of the non-violent creed to the violent whites. They demand that white civil rights workers organise the poor whites in the south so that they are not hostile to black demands but hostile to those who keep black and poor white in their inferior positions. They welcome the support of white aid so long as it is free of paternalism.

Understanding the rules of American society they reject them and argue that a necessary condition for new rules and new forms is the creation of consciousness “to achieve dignity, to achieve their share of power, indeed to become their own men and women—in this time and in this land—by whatever means necessary.”

Thus incomplete ideas of Malcolm X are worked over and developed and the message comes through clearly that nothing short of freedom will now succeed in buying off oppressed people anywhere.

MAVIS ROBERTSON

KIKI: Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, by Albert Maori Kiki.
Cheshire, 187 pp, $3.50.

THE DUST JACKET tells us “This remarkable book is the first autobiography, in fact the first important book ever to come out of New Guinea.” This itself is an indictment on Australian control, but the book also lifts the coconut curtain draped
around this last monument to colonialism. We not only see it we also feel it as we enter Maori Kiki's life experience.

This book is very readable. The reader in fact feels he is listening to a good storyteller. There are small patches, especially in the closing phases, when the wording stiffens and Kiki's voice disappears. This coincides with areas of political sensitivity and is no doubt traceable to the fact that Albert Maori Kiki is also secretary of Niugini's major political party — the Pangu Pati. ('Niugini' is the name for Papua and New Guinea recently adopted by the Pangu Pati.)

Perhaps the three outstanding sections of the book are Kiki's description of his early childhood, his partly completed tribal initiation, and his student days in Fiji. Kiki's political position however adds interest of a different sort to other parts of his book. We have to read between the lines in these parts, fill in the gaps, sense the moral dilemmas this man has faced.

The literary and political aspects strike a very difficult co-existence in the seventh chapter — "The Buku Affair" — the longest in the book. The logic of Kiki's development would make us suspect this chapter contains its climax. If this is so it remains hidden and Kiki only later relaxes to recount a series of dramatic incidents which perhaps partly follow in its wake. The only two reviews so far sighted — George Farwell's SMH 28.12.68 and Percy Chatterton's Pacific Islands Monthly, Dec. 1968 — both ignore this chapter.

This "affair" achieved headlines in March 1962 when members of the Hahalis Welfare Society on Buku Island in protest at lack of Government spending refused to pay the 'head tax' imposed on all Niuginians. When four hundred extra policemen were flown in to reinforce the one hundred and fifty held at bay by the Hahalis people, Kiki went along as part of a medical team. The two leaders of the Society, Francis Hagai and John Teosin, were arrested and placed in Kiki's tent.

"So now the crowd was without a leader and nobody spoke. They sat there silently in the rain from ten o'clock in the morning to about five o'clock in the afternoon. Then the women were sent away and told to bring food for the men and the men were handcuffed in long lines of about thirty and were put up in a number of sheds. John Teosin and Francis Hagai were made to squat next to my bed. . ."

Why were these two men placed in Kiki's tent? What passed between them? No doubt Maori Kiki's earlier experiences with the administration created a bond which later incidents strengthened.

We see Kiki and his wife Elizabeth ordered out of the European club in Sohano where they had been invited by the producer to view a film that featured Elizabeth prominently. The executive of the club included the local District Officer, the Co-op Officer and the District Education Officer.

We see Kiki back in Port Moresby, still a public servant, glaring across the desk at the District Commissioner, refusing to retract critical statements made in the local press and advising the D.C. to speak properly or be prepared to receive a chair on his head.

Albert Maori Kiki had journeyed a long way from the densely forested hills of the Upper Purori, but there he returned after his defeat in the 1968 House of Assembly elections. In his mother's village he found his maternal uncle Haure still alive. "He put his hand on my forehead, he placed it on the very spot where he
had tied the shell band many years ago when I was to be initiated during the Koreave festival. Only one's maternal uncle can use this gesture which symbolises the transfer of power from the old generation to the young one. . .”

Perhaps Kiki's initiation was completed now — in a new way. Those who read his book will look forward to its sequel.


JUST AS LENIN observed in 1915 that “Absolutely everybody is in favor of peace in general including Kitchener, Joffre, Hindenburg and Nicholas the Bloody”, so we find today that everybody is in favor of industrial democracy. The term has been emasculated by many people to such an extent that it is less an objective still to be attained than an achievement which must be preserved.

Fortunately, in developing a strategy of advance towards socialism, a significant section of the European Left has taken a new interest in industrial democracy and workers' control. Many socialists now argue that the demand for workers' control should be the central strategic axis, to which all other reforms and demands must be related. Writing in The Socialist Register 1964, the Belgian marxist Ernest Mandel saw workers' control as the first step towards workers' management of a socialised economy and towards industrial democracy. The demand for it, he continued, would give the essentially defensive strategy of the trade union movement (against wage restraint, and for freedom of bargaining) the necessary militant and positive character without which the working class would be fighting a losing battle against the technocrats and the controllers of neo-capitalism.

Two of the main architects of the new movement for industrial democracy in Britain have been former miner Ken Coates and Tony Topham, both of whom are university lecturers in industrial relations. In the first book under review they have brought together an excellent selection of readings on the subject going back to the turn of the century. Some of the best pieces of polemical scholarship are to be found in the section on the contemporary debate that has been going on since the “New Left” rediscovered the idea of workers' control several years ago. One of the most impressive is Royden Harrison's beautiful demolition job on Professor Hugh Clegg, the Wilson Government's favorite expert on industrial relations, in which it is shown that social ownership is indispensable to industrial democracy, not irrelevant as Clegg and other Fabians have argued. Coates and Topham, however, are perhaps excessively severe on some critics of the tradition of workers' control, particular the Webbs, as Royden Harrison has argued in his review of the book in the Oct.-Dec. 1968 issue of the Political Quarterly.

The second book under review contains some impressive studies of conditions in specific industries, and a paper on student power by Terry Lacey, one of the leading spirits among the “red guard” of the Young Liberals. There is also a lengthy and very useful contribution from Michael Barrett Brown who lucidly explains that the concentration of economic power is firmly established in property rights.
The key decisions in advanced neo-capitalist societies today are made by a small group of controllers whose power is removed from popular control. As Coates and Topham put it in their Introduction to *Industrial Democracy in Great Britain*:

“In every significant sense, the term ‘wage-slavery’ has lost none of its meaning in Britain, however considerable the improvement in living standards might have been. Slavery is not synonymous with poverty, but expresses a relationship between people, in which one will is subordinated to another. Domination may have found polite and decorous descriptions under which to lurk in the past years, but if anything the gulf between controllers and controlled has widened rather than closed: the concentration of scale, technique and power in modern industry has tightened the elite into a more exclusive, more elevated grouping at the same time that it has unleashed new possibilities for manipulation of the increasingly disenfranchised mass.”

Yet these developments have stimulated not only opposition, but also counter-policies, including explicit demands for workers’ control. Indeed, the pressure for industrial democracy within the trade unions themselves may well be the most significant growth point in the British Labor movement.

Unfortunately, similar developments have not yet taken place in Australia. The idea of workers’ control has not been of prime concern to the local Left for almost half a century. It once exercised a powerful influence on Australian socialists, just after the First World War, and the interest was reflected in the 1921 Socialisation Objective of the ALP. However, it was not long before the emphasis on workers’ control was changed and there developed a vacuum. The subject was avoided not only by reformist trade union bureaucrats but also by Communist Party militants, although recently the Left has vaguely begun to realise that not only students or radical priests should be interested in “participatory democracy”. And it is to be hoped that local Communists will avoid the kind of attack on the New Left put forward recently by Bert Ramelson, CUGB industrial spokesman, in which he referred to the “well intentioned” and “glib talk” about workers’ control coming from socialists who have lost faith in the political road to socialism and who “retreat to the old and long-forsaken syndicalist and guild socialist ideas of the militants of half a century ago.” (*Marxism Today*, October 1968).

Of course, there is “glib talk” in some quarters and the enormous magnitude of the problems involved in implementing workers’ control must not be underestimated. The British New Left, however, has shown in the two books under review that it can come up with highly technical and sophisticated proposals. It will be many years before we produce work of comparable quality. The only consolation is that the idea of workers’ control in Australia appears to have a good chance of being rescued from limbo.

**John Playford**

**WHAT IS HISTORY, by E. H. Carr. Pelican Paperback, 156 p.p. 65 cents.**

THE EMINENT Soviet scholar and historian Professor N. I. Konrad in a recent work says: “These are extraordinary times. They are unquestionably one of the crucial turning points in world history. The future will probably show that they are even the most important of all that mankind has lived through so far. It is only
natural that, at times like these, as at all other major turns in history, thinkers ponder on the substance of history."

This is what Professor E. H. Carr does in this collection of six lectures he delivered at the University of Cambridge.

In his view the present social revolution is only just beginning. "But it is advancing at a staggering pace to keep abreast of the staggering technological advances of the last generation."

More than ever before marxists need to study this revolution to keep up to date with the staggering amount of new data. The theory of history assists one to see the changes in correct perspective, to summarise past experience and to visualise the future.

Professor Carr employs the scientific method of thinking which is becoming more and more recognised for its universality and the book is worth reading alone, as a study of the method of dialectical and historical materialism. In addition, he considers many of the problems with which mankind today is grappling: the individual's relation to society; the interconnection of history, science and morality; as well as history as progress and the expansion of education and reason.

It is full of food for thought and despite its weighty content, it is written in a wholly stimulating, simple, often humorous and readable style.

Professor Carr deals with the relationship between the historian and his facts.

He says "The facts speak only when the historian calls on them; it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor and in what order or context."

He is critical of those historians who maintain that an "ultimate history" can be written by the accumulation of facts. He opposes the sceptics who say that since all historical judgments involve persons and points of view, one is as good as another and there is no 'objective' historical truth. Instead he regards the historian and his interpretation of the facts as necessary to one another.

History cannot be correctly interpreted if individuals are seen as distinct from their times and their class position in society. "Society and the individual are inseparable, they are necessary and complementary to each other; not opposites."

The historian, himself, is influenced by society. There are signs that suggest even in the western world where individualism has been the ideology of social change since the Renaissance, that this period of history has reached its end. This affects the historian. "It is not merely the events that are in flux. The historian himself is in flux." The historians of a declining society, hitherto optimistic of history's purpose and progress, turn to the view that there is no general pattern in history at all.

He summarises: "The facts of history are indeed facts about individuals but not about the actions of individuals performed in isolation and not about the motives, real or imaginary, from which individuals suppose themselves to have acted."

He describes the admittance of history into the scientific sphere since Darwin's era. "It is recognised that scientists make discoveries and acquire fresh knowledge, not by establishing precise and comprehensive laws, but by enunciating hypotheses which open the way for fresh enquiry."

He therefore sees a close affinity between the methods of science and history believing both to have the "modest hope of advancing progres-
sively from one fragmentary hypothesis to another, isolating their facts through the medium of their interpretations and testing their interpretations by the facts.”

Such a view is very close to the marxist theory of knowledge, which emphasises the need to see socialist theory, not as a set of fixed laws and dogma, but as a guide to action which tests all theory by practice.

He denies the view of theologians that history is the result of divine purpose and adopts a materialist position. “Personally I find it hard to reconcile the integrity of history with belief in some super-historical force on which its meaning and significance depend.”

Historians, Carr believes, should not be required to pass moral judgments on the private lives or public actions of individuals, since judicial and moral standards are constantly changing.

However, interpretation of historical facts presupposes moral or value judgments and comparison, in the case of past institutions, events and policies. What is ‘progressive’ generally, may in some cases be the cause of suffering for some, since inequalities are an integral part of the historical struggle.

The moral stand of the historian affects his outlook. “The serious historian is the one who recognises the historically conditioned character of all values, not the one who claims for his own values an objectivity beyond history.”

He deals with history as “a study of causes” and rejects distortions which emphasise, unduly, determinism and chance. “The fact is that human actions are both free and determined according to the point of view from which one considers them.”

Historians committed to a declining society deny that history is progress, but Professor Carr avers that history is progress through the transmission of acquired skills from one generation to the next.

Man does not set himself a definite end but generally strives for greater freedom, for a progressive development of human potentialities, with each succeeding period giving rise to what the content of history should be.

The modern age is the most historically minded of all ages, with man’s earlier efforts to understand his environment extended to include his attempts at greater understanding of himself.

Professor Carr sees the possibilities of man being able to order his social life, at present lagging behind the technical and scientific revolution, for this revolution gives rise to a progressive increase in the numbers of those who learn to think, to use their reason.

What is History? contains much more than this. It has probably already been read by many, but for those who haven’t read it, it is a useful addition to understanding history and the modern world.

Jim Moss