

# Introduction

It is no accident that writers who have never challenged the established order have made little or no attempt to understand the workings of Australian capitalism as a totality. But neither has the Left articulated a clear and coherent vision. There have been strong historical reasons why socialists have failed to develop a continuing and coherent critique. These include the anti-intellectualism characteristic of our society which has pervaded even the Left, and the atrophy of intellectual work over the many years of stalinist domination of the socialist movement.

The purpose of this book is to initiate the project of mapping the foundations of our society. This would necessarily encompass the many levels of Australian life. The aim of such a project, as it is with all authentic knowledge, is human emancipation.

The contributors to this book have not attempted to superimpose solutions on to the present, believing as they do that through demystifying the workings and structure of our society the possibilities of transcendence will be revealed. Although they hold diverse views and perceptions, all are united in their desire for socialist revolution. The provisional and exploratory nature of the undertaking must also be stressed. The mapping of the foundations of our society is nowhere near complete. For practical reasons, we were unable to include chapters on areas such as mass communications and the oppression of women. Nevertheless, we believe that the present work constitutes a good beginning towards a comprehensive socialist critique of Australian capitalism.

The book will be truly successful only when it becomes obsolete. We look forward to the appearance of still more

satisfactory publications. The strengths of this work derive from the mutual exchanges of the contributors. Barbara Einhorn, Aldona Playford, Geoff Sharp and Diane Wieneke were also very helpful. The manuscript was expertly typed by Bronwyn Newbold and Joy Smith. Finally, we should like to thank John Hooker and Bob Sessions of Penguin Books.

JOHN PLAYFORD  
DOUGLAS KIRSNER