The Arena of Capital

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MICHAEL DUNFORD
and DIANE PERRONS

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Preface and Acknowledgements

We started to work on the ideas and arguments which are now presented in this book in 1976, at a time when an interest in Marxism and the way in which Marxist concepts could be used to analyse a variety of scientific and political questions was growing in Britain. As the years have passed, the nature and content of our work, and of the book itself, have changed almost continually, and sometimes quite radically, as a consequence not only of our own intellectual development, but also of debates and arguments within Marxism and within geography.

An earlier version of Part I was presented at the Anglo-French Symposium on Science and Ideology in Geography held at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in April 1979, while the arguments set out in Chapter 12 were first developed in a paper written with Mike Geddes which was published in 1981 in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. In developing our ideas we have also benefited greatly from participation in the activities of the Conference of Socialist Economists, which has provided a forum in which many of the theories and concepts which lie behind this study were communicated and discussed.

But in the present text, debates about theory and differing interpretations of events are not discussed in any detail: without reviewing or criticising perspectives with which we are not in full agreement, we often adopt particular positions; and without commenting on debates and controversies which have occurred, we frequently seek to integrate arguments which are sometimes seen as standing in opposition to one another. The reason for our not referring explicitly to debates that have played an important role in forming our ideas lies, however, not in any wish to devalue them, but simply in our desire to avoid too many deviations from our main goal, which is to present an analytical reconstruction of the

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process of uneven development and of the evolution of the geography of contemporary Britain.

In pursuing this goal we have been helped by many people. Our debts to writers who are in most cases personally unknown to us, but on whose work we have drawn, are acknowledged in the notes and references at the end of the book. We would, however, like to take this opportunity to thank Sue Adams, Fran Cook, Alison Mudd, Brian Short, James Thompson, Helen Warner, Mike Geddes and Bob Radford, all but the last two of whom work, or worked in one capacity or another, at the University of Sussex, and who have helped us either by typing and almost endlessly retyping the manuscript, or by commenting carefully and very helpfully on draft chapters or on the presentation of material. Our thanks are also due to Susan Rowland, not only for drawing or reproducing the diagrams included in the text but also for her assistance with questions as to how the information concerned could be represented most effectively, while Derek Gregory gave us considerable encouragement and support in addition to his comments on an earlier draft which were of great help in revising the manuscript for publication.

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