

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

differs from orthodox economics, placing some strain on the non-economist. But such complexities can be overlooked where necessary and, otherwise, offer compensating insights.

This carefully revised sixth edition comes at a particularly challenging time. Neoliberal capitalism is in the throes of an unprecedented crisis, which has revealed not only the limitations of 'liberalised' finance but, more significantly, has thrown the global neoliberal project onto the defensive for the first time, although it appears remarkably resilient. Yet, it is now possible for the mainstream to question openly the coherence and sustainability of neoliberalism, and even the desirability of capitalism itself. These emerging debates, and the simultaneous if painfully slow growth of radical social movements and organisations, have been supported by the creeping realisation that capitalism has fundamentally destabilised the planet's environment and that it poses an immediate threat to the survival of countless species, including our own.

Marx's *Capital* is not a book about the environment nor is it about neoliberalism, although it includes a brief section on the former and an updated chapter on the current crisis. Its aims are narrower and, at the same time, more abstract and ambitious: it reviews and explains the key elements of the most sustained, consistent and uncompromising critique of capitalism *as a system*, which was originally developed by Karl Marx. As capitalism struggles to contain its most recent crisis, Marx's writings have increased in immediacy and relevance, and they have shot up in popularity. They now rank highly in several bestseller lists, and rival editions can be found even in mainstream bookshops, though Marx's works are also widely available on the web and can be freely downloaded.

We hope that you will make use of them. Marx's *Capital* has never sought to replace the real thing; instead, it aims to facilitate your reading of Marx's economic writings by providing a structured overview of their main themes and conclusions. We