SCHOOLING AND CAPITALISM:
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1836-1925

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Recent years saw a renewed interest in marxist and other theories of education. Drawing on some of these, the thesis examines several aspects of the history of education in South Australia in its first hundred years.

Chapter 1 discusses the advantages of a marxist approach, assesses three influential examples of its application to educational history, and outlines the basic characteristics of marxist social analysis.

Chapter 2 looks at the making of a capitalist society in South Australia. Against a background of economic development, it traces the history of major classes and their political organisation, and concludes by an overview of the education system.

Chapter 3 examines the process of providing South Australia with a government-supported education system. It outlines various hypotheses regarding the introduction of mass schooling, examines the interplay between the lives of various class sections and the definition of a 'good school', and concludes with some thoughts on the reasons for introducing the 1875 Education Act.

Chapter 4 looks at the profound transformation of school processes which occurred under the new Act. The controversial implementation of this legislation is conceptualised as a class-cultural conflict, and traced to issues such as Correct English, irregular attendance, support of dame schools, free education, and the concept of intelligence.

The following three chapters deal with attempts to solve, in the education system, several fundamental problems of contemporary capitalism—an economic crisis, a redistribution of production knowledge, disruption of customary ways of transmitting economic security from one generation to the next, and changes in juvenile employment patterns.
Chapter 5 examines attempts to forge a nexus between schooling and individual social mobility in the context of tightening class boundaries and deskilling. Chapter 6 discusses the ideology of the dependent child and its applicability to South Australia, and Chapter 7 the changing formulation and functions of technical education.

The last chapter looks in some detail at South Australia's labour movement around the turn of the century, and in particular at the setting up and early history of the ULP. It then traces, through the examination of several labour newspapers, the changing assessment of the place of schooling in labour political strategies.