FOREWORD

This book originates from two main sources: from my experience in the Netherlands Central Planning Bureau and from my participation in discussions about the wider aspects of economic policy; discussions often centred in or around the Netherlands Labour Party. It is an attempt at a systematic treatment of the main lines, rather than of details. As such it is an amplification of the two small volumes, published earlier, on quantitative policy. It also deals with qualitative policy but, as a necessary consequence of the state of research in this field, in a much more primitive way than in the case of quantitative policy.

I hope it may be of some use for universities as well as for some of the planning experts in governments. The whole approach has been kept very simple; even the simple algebra used in the examples need not be read by those who do not like it, although they will then, of course, miss some of the points.

The book does try to bring within the sphere of scientific discussion some of the controversies which are, nowadays, often dealt with by slogans; it is the firm belief of the author that contributions can be made and must be made by objective analysis, even in the world's most important contemporary controversy. He certainly does not claim to have contributed much already; still he hopes to have stimulated the application of the idea. Two points seem to be outstanding here: first, that there are not only two alternative systems for the economic organization of society, but many shades; and secondly, that our choice between them is, in essence, a choice on the grounds of efficiency: only a few really fundamental human