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Marie Jahoda

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The psychology of social issues

Employment and unemployment

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The psychology of social issues

This series is concerned with the application of social psychology to issues of contemporary social importance. It is inspired by the belief that academic social psychology has for too long operated at a level of theory and research that has effectively denied its most interesting ideas and results to the general reader, and it aims specifically to remedy this. Books included in the series will be short, non-technical, and accessibly written. They will survey the relevant research in social psychology and other disciplines, and authors will also be encouraged to develop their own ideas – excitingly where possible and controversially where necessary.

Publisher's note. Henri Tajfel was the founding editor of this series, and its chief inspiration. He died while this book was still in production, but his direct or indirect influence will be felt and reflected in all forthcoming titles.

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MARIE JAHODA

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This book is only to a small extent based on my own empirical work; it relies heavily on that of other social psychologists, much more numerous than could be named in the following pages, with whom I share a lifelong preoccupation with the social and psychological issues in employment and unemployment. I am deeply indebted to this invisible community of people – even those with whom I disagree – whose unceasing efforts to enlarge knowledge about one of the crucial problems of our times deserve a more prominent place in the debate about work and its future than has been accorded them so far.

One reason for this relative neglect of the contributions social psychologists have made to the understanding of the world in which we live is the inaccessibility to a wider audience of their technical reports. I am grateful to Henri Tajfel and Jeremy Mynott, who as editor and publisher, respectively, conceived the idea for this series of publications, for having invited me to participate in this effort to make the work of social psychologists more widely known.

In writing this book I have freely drawn on my previous publications, often verbatim, without burdening the text with the corresponding references. If this is legitimate where I alone am concerned, it disguises the contributions that others have made to my knowledge and views. I want to thank particularly Howard Rush with whom I have previously worked and published on matters dealt with in these pages. He has read a draft of each chapter in this book and his comments and criticisms have invariably helped me to greater clarity.

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Keymer
September 1981

M.J.