

THE FOUNDERS
OF
POLITICAL ECONOMY

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TO MY WIFE

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PREFACE

THIS little book is a result of studies which I have pursued since 1910, chiefly in the British Museum. The work was interrupted by the war, and I was only able to bring it to an end after the conclusion of peace.

Unfortunately I was prevented from resuming after the war my investigations in London, so that as far as the beginnings of political economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are concerned I could not go as deeply as I should have liked into the matter. I was obliged to base the first chapter of this book in the first instance on reprints of early economic tracts which were obtainable in Warsaw.

I have no intention of giving in the following pages a complete list of all theories which have been formulated since antiquity. My aim is a more modest—or perhaps a more ambitious—one. I have been endeavouring to find among the doctrines advanced more than one hundred years ago such theories as still to-day can help us to understand economic phenomena. Such—critical, and at the same time constructive—is the scope of this book. I have tried to separate the chaff from the corn and to put in evidence theories on which modern economic science can build.

Warsaw, February 26, 1921.

Koszykowa 22.

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