

Justice SOCIALISM
yale 1951

PREFACE TO SECOND GERMAN EDITION

want to repeat here what I have already said in the first edition of this book, at the end of the last chapter.¹

I know only too well how hopeless it seems to convince impassioned supporters of the Socialistic Idea by logical demonstration that their views are preposterous and absurd. I know too well that they do not want to hear, to see, or above all to think, and that they are open to no argument. But new generations grow up with clear eyes and open minds. And they will approach things from a disinterested, unprejudiced standpoint, they will weigh and examine, will think and act with forethought. It is for them that this book is written.

Several generations of economic policy which was nearly liberal have enormously increased the wealth of the world. Capitalism has raised the standard of life among the masses to a level which our ancestors could not have imagined. Interventionism and efforts to introduce Socialism have been working now for some decades to shatter the foundations of the world economic system. We stand on the brink of a precipice which threatens to engulf our civilization. Whether civilized humanity will perish for ever or whether the catastrophe will be averted at the eleventh hour and the only possible way of salvation retraced — by which we mean the rebuilding of a society based on the unreserved recognition of private property in the means of production — is a question which concerns the generation destined to act in the coming decades, for it is the ideas behind their actions that will decide it.

VIENNA, January 1932

¹ p. 507 et seq. of this edition.

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Essays (1889), p. 30.