

THE WORKERS' SHARE

A STUDY IN WAGES
AND POVERTY

BY

A. W. HUMPHREY

This book surveys the main conclusions of the principal investigations into wages, and of the more important enquiries into the social conditions that have taken place in the last sixty years. It reviews also the distribution of National Income over the same period. It shows—(1) that, despite some improvement, the dimensions of the poverty have not appreciably diminished in the last century; (2) that the pre-war standard of living of the wage-earners is a suitable criterion by which to measure the present standard; (3) that the book supports the view that the poverty cannot be solved within Capitalism.

THE WORKERS' SHARE

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A STUDY IN WAGES AND POVERTY

A. W. HUMPHREY

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THEREFORE when I consider and way in my mind all these commen wealthes, which now a dayes any where do florish, so god helpe me, I can conceive nothing but a certain conspiracy of riche men procuringe theire owne commodities under the name and title of the commen wealth. They invent and devise all meanes and craftes, first how to keep safely, without fear of lesing, that they have unjustly gathered together, and next how to hire and abuse the worke and laboure of the poore for as litle money as may be.

SIR THOMAS MORE, *Utopia*

PREFACE

THIS piece of work was written as part of a very much larger book, designed as a companion volume to my *Modern Case for Socialism*, which Messrs. George Allen & Unwin published in 1928. Matters beyond my control, however, have compelled me to lay aside that work for an indefinite, but certainly considerable, period, and as the portion which here appears had been finally prepared for press, and was suitable for separate publication, I decided that, in all the circumstances, it was best to let it go.

While I hope that the facts here set out will be of interest to students generally, I have throughout had more especially in mind those young men and young women who are unfamiliar with the pre-war world and who are now in increasing numbers turning to Socialism and the Labour Party. The poverty problem was not the creation of the war, and the pre-war standard of living of the masses should receive no countenance as a criterion by which to measure the standard of life to-day.

The purpose of this little book is to assist the demonstration of this truth: that to seek to solve the poverty problem within the capitalist system is but to imagine a vain thing.

The care bestowed by my wife on the reading of the manuscript was no small advantage, and for help in other ways also I am indebted to her.

A. W. HUMPHREY

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October 28, 1929

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