ONCE OVER LIGHTLY

Every once in a while we are told that the workers are getting into the act of ownership. Usually they acquire shares of stock of the company they work for (for example, all employees of Sears Roebuck are eligible to receive shares). Or an individual worker may take a flyer on a stock market tip; or some may buy shares in a mutual fund giving them a slice of a portfolio covering many companies on the New York Stock Exchange. Roel takes a look on aspects of this question and comes up with a clear distinction between common ownership and other avenues of control. (See page 3)

A valid criticism of our efforts to bring the case for socialism is that it is too much johnny-one note, always the same sour-puss judgment of what is wrong with our world. So, for a change of pace and an attempt at humor, we direct your attention to Hamme's piece which tells the story that it is "nicer to be rich". (See page 19)

The Christian Science Monitor recently did a series of articles purporting to cover the subject of "Socialism" for its readers. However, its concept of socialism is equated with the party that governs West Germany, the Labor Party of England, as well as the usual misunderstanding about the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, etc. Read our write-up on the pure lack of objectivity of the Christian Science Monitor. (See page 16)

Those of our readers who are familiar with our editorial stance know that we hold no brief for the "Great Man" theory of history. We take the occasion to reprint Engels' tribute to Marx, not to emphasize Marx's greatness, but to counter the constant barrage from all sides by his detractors. We are marxists, not paying homage to the man, but continuing in the direction his ideas lead. (See page 14)

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WESTERN SOCIALIST

JOURNAL OF WORLD SOCIALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

SPRING/SUMMER — 1979
VOLUME 46 — NUMBER 317
BOSTON, MA. 02115

COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP BY WORKERS IS NOT COMMON OWNERSHIP BY SOCIETY

OWNERSHIP: COLLECTIVE OR COMMON

"Our main objective is to alleviate unemployment," says Hal Williams, a Commerce Department representative on an interagency task force coordinating Federal aid to Youngstown. "Our task has nothing to do with who owns the plant — that's a neutral issue. If worker ownership happens to be the best way of saving jobs, fine." (Daniel Zwerdling, "Workplace Democracy: A Strategy for Survival," in the August 1978 *Progressive.*)

When workers own the business, something interesting happens to them — not good, just interesting. They become capitalists, and thereby opposed to themselves while on the job. They remain workers, and thereby opposed to themselves while running the business. What would this entail for the average working person if it ever became general? Let us see.

We might start by imagining two cases — one, of "perfect" industrial democracy, in which the workers really do own the business, and rotate with the maximum smoothness in managing its affairs in the commercial world; and the other, of "imperfect" or dirty trafficking in shares, where either some workers acquire a dominant control of the management end, or there are "outsiders" (non-workers) doing some or all of the managing, or even — heaven forbid! — a take-over by purely outside interests of management. The dirty case is really only the standard situation that arises in the day-to-day routine of capitalist investment anyhow: conflicting shareholder interests are incessantly locked in conflict inside and outside the board room, and usually some combination of them is ahead of the rest. This really can be reduced to a question of the concentration of capital, and it is not a workingman's problem, even though he may nominally own shares in the company. It is his problem *to the extent of being a capitalist himself,* and so it belongs under the heading of "clean" or "perfect" industrial democracy.

The interests of labor and management are perpetually and insolubly opposed. Mental and physical labor are to some degree always pitted