

have a composite thing, a social creation, a cog that fits in a machine. Private property ceases to exist under such doctrines and the machine becomes the thing to worry about. This leads to the overemphasis of tools which men have created to facilitate labor. So men's energies are to be devoted to schemes to control banking, production and distribution, parental care of the young, the mental and physical growth of the young in a pattern to fit society instead of the individual, and the recreation and enjoyments of the adults. All of which is contrary to the natural law which has decreed that there are no two individuals alike, and to the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy. Some of these attempts to force mankind into a mold are called Fascism or Nazism, two ideologies which oppose Democracy and personal liberty, and another one, Communism, has the impudence to call itself Democracy. All three are insidious attacks on all that Georgeians uphold as the ideals of mankind.

So, you followers of Henry George, who have drawn your inspiration from Oscar Geiger, Joseph Dana Miller, and all the great men of the past who led men to battle for liberty and justice, arm yourselves and prepare to battle that "this world may be a better place to live in." As a battle cry what could be more appropriate than "a fair field and no favor."

Robbing Peter to Pay Paul

WITH the adoption of the new State Constitution by the voters last fall, New York became the first of the forty-eight states to undertake assisted housing.

The Legislature authorized the state to incur a debt of \$150,000,000 for loans to municipalities for the purpose of clearing slums and using the sites for the construction of housing within the means of the lowest income groups. The state is also authorized to make grants and give subsidies to the municipalities; so as to keep the rents within the means of the poorest families. All housing projects built by loans from the state must be on sites cleared of slums, and the occupants of the buildings who must move are to have the first choice in renting the new dwellings. All loans by the state are to be repaid within a period of fifty years and amortized annually. The interest and principal must be guaranteed by the municipalities.

The grants and subsidies must come out of the current budgets. In order to realize funds for this purpose, the state and municipalities are permitted to impose special taxes upon the people, the sum total to be used to meet the interest and amortization of the loans and to reduce the rents to a point which the lowest income families can afford. We are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The same pressure groups that were behind the Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill in Washington are the ones who are responsible for forcing through this legislation in New

York. The "dervish" movement is on. This is nothing new, for we have had experiences along other lines when groups undertook to get something from the government. All one has to do is shout for it. The Bryan Silver Movement of 1896—the Greenback Movement prior to that—the Prohibition Movement—the Protective Tariff—all resorted to cries and shouts without reason.

When the assisted housing movement began a few years ago, stress was laid upon the fact that millions of families were living under slum conditions, and that all the diseases that man is heir to are caused by people living in what are now euphoniously called sub-standard houses. In New York we still call them slums—a report made in Boston, however, stated there are no slum houses in Boston, but that it does have a large number of "sub-standard" dwellings. According to the definition of a slum, in Webster's dictionary, "it is a foul street of a city, especially one with a slovenly, often vicious population; a low neighborhood." The pressure groups, however, define a slum dwelling as one not provided with cross ventilation, heat and hot water from a central point and mechanical refrigeration.

There is of course no end of this sort of thing, once it gets under way. For instance, there is now pending in Congress an amendment to the Wagner Bill which will appropriate \$800,000,000, with an additional \$45,000,000 a year, for subsidies. Subsidies will come out of taxes collected by the government. It is an illustration of the "haves helping to support the have-nots" under the government pressure groups. In many instances, the taxpayers will continue to live in dwellings of a lower standard than those families who are fortunate enough to get quarters in subsidized houses.

An amazing situation has arisen in this respect—we find many newspapers who have been considered as a conservative press supporting the movement. College professors, generally, are also behind it—but we cannot expect much from college professors. They don't have to reason—they just go along with the crowd.

There is no doubt that there is much bad housing throughout the country—and there cannot be any objection in denouncing the owners who are permitted to rent them. People, however, do not live in slum houses because they like the houses. They remain there because of their poverty. If they could afford better quarters, they would gladly move. Instead of government officials undertaking to wipe out a cause, they proceed to treat a symptom. A house in itself is not a slum—it is made so either through the neglect of an owner or the slovenly habits of the occupants.

Boards of Health are continually asked by their Mayors who favor assisted housing to give them reports on the cases of tuberculosis caused by people living in the old tenements. There is no such data—tuberculosis is not a result of bad housing per se—but one of congestion—

it is spread by coming in contact with persons who have this dread disease. People congest themselves in small quarters because they have not the price to pay for larger ones.

The President, the Governor of the State of New York, the United States Housing Administrator and the Mayor of New York, are vociferous in their statements that while subsidized housing will be a heavy expense upon the taxpayers, in the last analysis it will be a saving through reduced cost of hospitals, police and fire departments, courts, jails, etc. Not one of these statements will bear analysis. For instance, so keen an observer as Robert Moses, the great park and bridge builder of New York, gave it as his opinion, some time ago in an address in New York (which was to be broadcasted, but was taken off the air at the direction of the Mayor) that even though all the slums were cleared, instead of the cost of government being reduced it would go up.

The leading exponents of subsidized housing undoubtedly also know better—but they are politicians hungry for office—their statements do appeal to certain classes in the community, particularly the poor who live in old tenements.

What is really being done in the erection of these new dwellings is the creation of glorified and ornate poor-houses. These buildings are exempted from taxation. The occupants become a preferred class of citizens, who contribute relatively little to the support of government, yet they vote and their votes count. In Cleveland, Ohio, low rent dwellings built by the Federal Government are provided, not alone with baths, heat, hot water, mechanical refrigeration, but also with garages. The new projects in New York are equipped with self-service elevators. Here, we have an illustration that there is nothing too good for the poor. They give the politicians their votes and keep them in office.

It is not the intent of this writer to criticise the poor, but to point out that while some of the poorer families will be benefited by living in dwellings at a price way below the cost of construction and maintenance, others will have to struggle along as best they can, for there is not enough money of course to subsidize all the families who cannot afford decent habitation, under the standards set up by the United States Housing Authorities. The standard of housing in most of our cities and even in the rural sections needs to be raised materially, but this can only be done through increasing the earning powers of the people.

According to the present set-up, a family whose total income in New York is more than \$1,500 a year cannot get space in one of the new projects. In other words, his earnings must not exceed five times his rent, unless there are more than three children, then, it may be six times the rent. Therefore, if the rent is \$25 a month, he may not earn more than \$1,500 a year. If, however,

the income of the family should increase as much as \$2.00 a week, he would be asked to leave the apartment. Under the circumstances, a man with a family will not ask his employer to increase his wages, for if he had to leave the subsidized dwelling, he could not get a similar one for less than twice the amount. We then have a situation of what was intended to benefit the families really going to the benefit of employers, who will continue to pay the lower wages.

While it is difficult to tell exactly what the amount of the subsidies will be, since many of the costs in Federal projects have not been made public, we know, in a general way, what the cost of construction has been. That is a contract price—but much of the work in clearing the site was by WPA labor. Likewise, the interest on the money during the course of construction is not figured in—neither are the expensive offices maintained by the United States Housing Authorities made a part of the cost.

In private enterprise, however, every penny of cost that goes into the construction of a dwelling, must be added into the rent or selling price.

An illustration of what it costs the government for an assisted house can be readily seen by the largest development so far completed, in Williamsburgh, Brooklyn, N. Y. The dwellings are of fireproof construction, four stories high, financed by the government and turned over to the local authorities. The rents, including bath, heat, hot water, mechanical refrigeration and electricity average inside of \$7.00 a month a room. The cost to government, however, is about \$19.00 a month a room. There are 1,622 families living in the project. A family living in four rooms is thus seen to be subsidized to the amount of \$48.00 a month.

We sometimes wonder whether the brain-trusts who sold the idea to the President have the slightest conception of the science of political economy. They are always shouting that the reason they cannot keep costs down is because of the high price of land, yet they cannot be induced to study the reform proposed by Henry George.

The banks are bulging with money, but they cannot take a chance on making loans on new construction when the Federal, State and Municipal Governments are competing with them, and making up the losses through taxes on the people. These housing projects are tax-free. Their exemption from taxation will throw an added burden upon those families who have invested their life's earnings in a little home for themselves. The idea of a higher standard of housing is excellent, but as it works out, only a limited number of fortunate families will enjoy them. Many families on relief are now living in the assisted houses. Here we have an illustration of subsidized families in subsidized houses. They never will try for a job. We will succeed in creating, developing and maintaining a low income class of citizens. This is the way to ruin.—THE STROLLING REPORTER.