

For a "Housing Messiah," Architect Thomas is singularly indifferent. Christ, the original Messiah, was exceedingly tender toward the lowest of the poor. Thomas admits that his plans do not take them into account, for he coldly and frankly says: "You can't do anything for the poor devils at the bottom of the heap and there is no use trying."

Dr. Gregg, however, started this housing spasm to help "the poor devils at the bottom." Thomas has turned the spasm into a movement to provide better housing accommodations for those he calls "the middle working class." He is said to have built model tenements in New York City for the Rockefeller Foundation.

Nobody has mentioned the heavy taxes levied on buildings and building materials, and advised their abolition. The Cleveland newspaper editors know the truth about it, but are silent. One demands heavier taxes on intangible personal property, which, of course, would add to the housing troubles of all except the very rich. In short, the Cleveland newspapers take their *cue* on taxation from the land owners and speculators. This is what renders their housing spasms such awful humbugs.

U. S. S. R.

AN American, a large part of whose life and thought had been given to the study of American and European governments, has recently returned from an extended visit to Russia. Having justly earned a reputation as a man of liberal views his path was made easy and he was permitted to see what was going on with little interference. His conclusions have therefore a special value. He returns as one who having gazed upon a great experiment in the working is chiefly concerned that the public at large shall understand what is really happening.

From his report the following reflections are deduced. As Max Hirsch pointed out long ago the initial steps for the establishment of Communism involved the total negation of Democracy. There is no more pretense of Democracy in Russia today than there is in Italy under Mussolini. About one million class-conscious Communists control about nine million proletarians and, between them, they dominate one hundred and fifty millions of peasants of a mental development too primitive to be able to comprehend their relation to so large an entity as Russia.

The million communists, who are the effective government, are mostly honest fanatics. Even the highest officials receive no more than one hundred and twenty dollars a month, live in poor quarters and work long hours. Graft and opposition to the government are the only capital crimes. The utmost freedom of speech and action prevails in regard to every subject except the policy of the government. On this topic, if a man does not approve he had better keep silence. Not even a trial may be given in cases where persons are seriously suspected of communications with the enemy.

The rumors of subsidies paid to carry on propaganda abroad seem to have some substantiation in spite of the difficulty of believing that so poor a country can spend money for what looks like a pure abstraction, but we are dealing with the motive power of a new idea, which in its early stages at least partakes of the generative power which carried Mohammedanism to such lengths of conquest. The Soviets are working in India and China and Japan, and as a result the "Yellow Peril" may come to assume a totally new significance. The very crudeness of the Communist idea makes it easy for primitive peoples to grasp and wherever these are vast masses of propertyless people there is inflammable material.

Then there is the rising generation of young Russia to be counted with. Joseph Conrad foresaw that on account of the lack of education in Russia the effect of a war prolonged for any length of time and resulting in the destruction of the upper grades of the army would result in the practical deliquescence of the mass, because there were no middle class educated people to take their places as there were among all other civilized peoples. The Soviet managers were of course aware of this and when they came into power recognized the need for education if anything was to prove permanent under the new regime. Of course it had to be a slow, unperfect process. Czarists could not be used and most of the educated class, while they may have been disaffected to Imperialism, when compelled to make a choice between that and Communism showed themselves reactionary, so far as it was safe to do so. Even if they kept their views to themselves, they could hardly be trusted with the education of youth. And not only had schools to be organized where there were none before but a whole teaching staff had to be developed.

By this time they have largely succeeded in evolving it, though with much travail and many absurdities. In these public schools the dominant subject taught is Communism. Whatever intolerance our educational institutions have shown toward economic reform seems like enlightened liberality when compared with the rigid drilling in Communist tenets which the Russian school child receives.

What will the outcome be? Will the attempt to put the human mind in a strait-jacket have the same result there as elsewhere. Perhaps that out of it physical conflict may arise seems only too likely. A Europe burdened with crushing debts, broken up into small peoples divided by customs barriers with the great mass of people living lives of penury and hardship, will be an easy mark for a powerful nation preaching solidarity of the workers and a Communist basis.

Clearly the situation is such that it behooves the Nations to consider whether they must not, if they want to see Civilization survive, try the experiment of doing Justice to their disinherited. The only answer to Communism

is Justice and Justice demands that the right of mankind to the Earth be recognized.

The peasants do not like the Communists. If the peasants did not fear that the Czarist restoration meant that their lands would be confiscated and turned over to their former masters the Communist rule would be unsafe today. But they know that however fair may be the promises of autocracy in distress, when once in the saddle its innate instinct forces it into tyranny and economic absolutism. And so Communism lowers over Europe because Europe holds no minds among its statesmen capable of making clear that free trade and free access to land can solve the problem which the leaders of the world cannot understand.

The Phenomena of Foundations

TWO Midas' are known to us from ancient literature—one was the gentleman who was born with ass' ears and was unable to keep his affliction to himself, and the other, the man, who, most nearly of all the ancients, resembled the modern "go-getter," for when offered any boon which he might ask from the gods, he could think of nothing better than that "all that he touched might turn into gold." When the gift began to work so efficiently that his food and drink became chunks of the precious metal, he vainly tried to call off his bargain and so starved from a surfeit of his heart's desire.

Something of the kind is occurring in our modern days. Unjust social institutions are serving as canals to turn rivers of wealth, properly belonging to society as a whole, into the coffers of people who do not earn it, who do not need it and who do not know what to do with it. Many of these people are Christians who have been taught that they will be called upon for an account of their stewardship. Others are merely kindly people who wish to find some way "to get out from under." Others belong to that numerous tribe who think that in some way their surplus fortunes may be utilized to defer if not to conquer that menacing oblivion which threatens and ultimately engulfs us all.

Whatever may be their motives the fact is that the number of such persons is steadily growing and the legion of post-war millionaires will probably furnish the greatest horde of benevolent despots that the world has yet seen. When we say benevolent despots, we mean men who strive to influence the people of the world which survives them, by directing that the money which they leave behind, shall be used in certain prescribed fashions for the public good. A newspaper publisher who had amassed a great fortune in selling groceries and in speculation left a stupendous sum to an art museum in which he had never shown any interest and of which he had only the sketchiest kind of knowledge. Another man reported to be still living, opined that the best use to which his millions

could be devoted was the establishment of orphanages, though all intelligent men now believe that children should not be reared in institutions but in families so far as it may be possible to find eligible families that will adopt them.

Other wealthy people more enlightened leave millions to be expended by committees for such purposes as such committees may select, merely that their money be used for the general welfare of humanity. These are the more usual types of the so-called foundations.

In the main these bodies are managed by people of excellent motives. Perhaps most frequently their aim is to improve the public health, to save children doomed to early extinction because of physical defects, to render operatives more efficient, to ascertain the best way to combat fatal diseases, to prevent war, famine and pestilence. The net outcome of the success of these undertakings must almost inevitably be to increase the population of the earth, so that competition must inevitably become keener for a chance to earn a living, among those who have no rights in the earth. Another part of the work of these great foundations is to discover how to produce the maximum of result with the minimum of labor.

Nominally high wages has greatly stimulated research in the same direction and already the spectre of unemployment is beginning to raise its horrid head, not so much because there is less work to be done but because what work there is to be done, can be performed with so much less labor. And labor is becoming more intensified and concentrated.

The net result therefore of the work of the Foundations is to save human life without making life easier for those who through their ancestors' fault did not acquire a foothold on the earth by purchase, "when the buying was good."

Had nature sought to demonstrate that the ill-gotten gains of special privilege could not be turned into benefactions merely by being devoted to superficially human uses, no better demonstration could be found. The net result of their efforts will be to hasten the coming of the ultimate clash which inevitably proceeds from the denial of human rights and the disinheritance of the masses.

IN a recent review of some books published by the Vanguard Press and commenting on "What is the Single Tax" by Louis F. Post, the New York *Herald-Tribune* says:

"The selection of Louis F. Post to present the essence of the Single Tax could not have been improved upon. For more than half his life an able exponent of Henry George's economic theories, he is eminently fitted to interpret them in popular form. His exposition of this 'rational method of bringing the present social order into conformity with natural social laws' is compact and comprehensive."