

# America can't have housing

Edited by Carol Aronovici

Author

Aronovici, Carol, 1881-1957

Date

1934

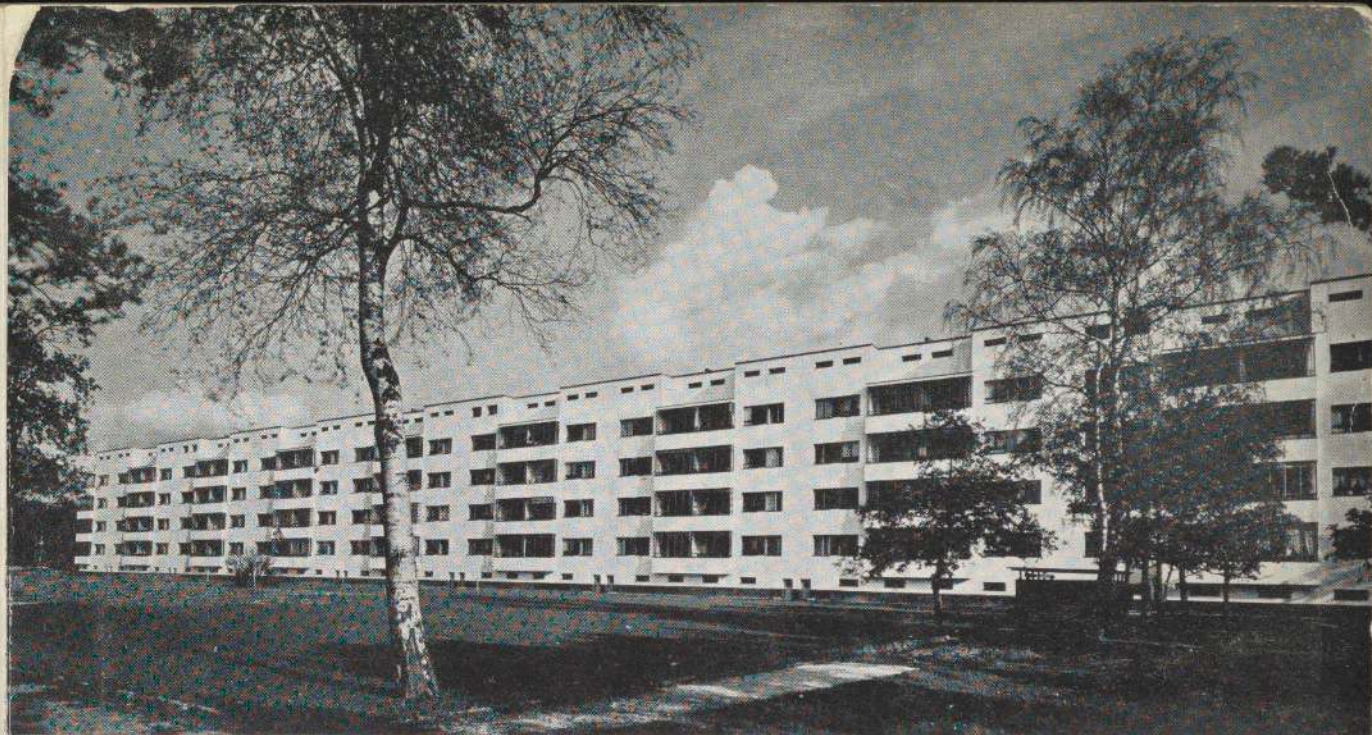
Publisher

Pub. for the Committee on the Housing  
exhibition by The Museum of Modern Art

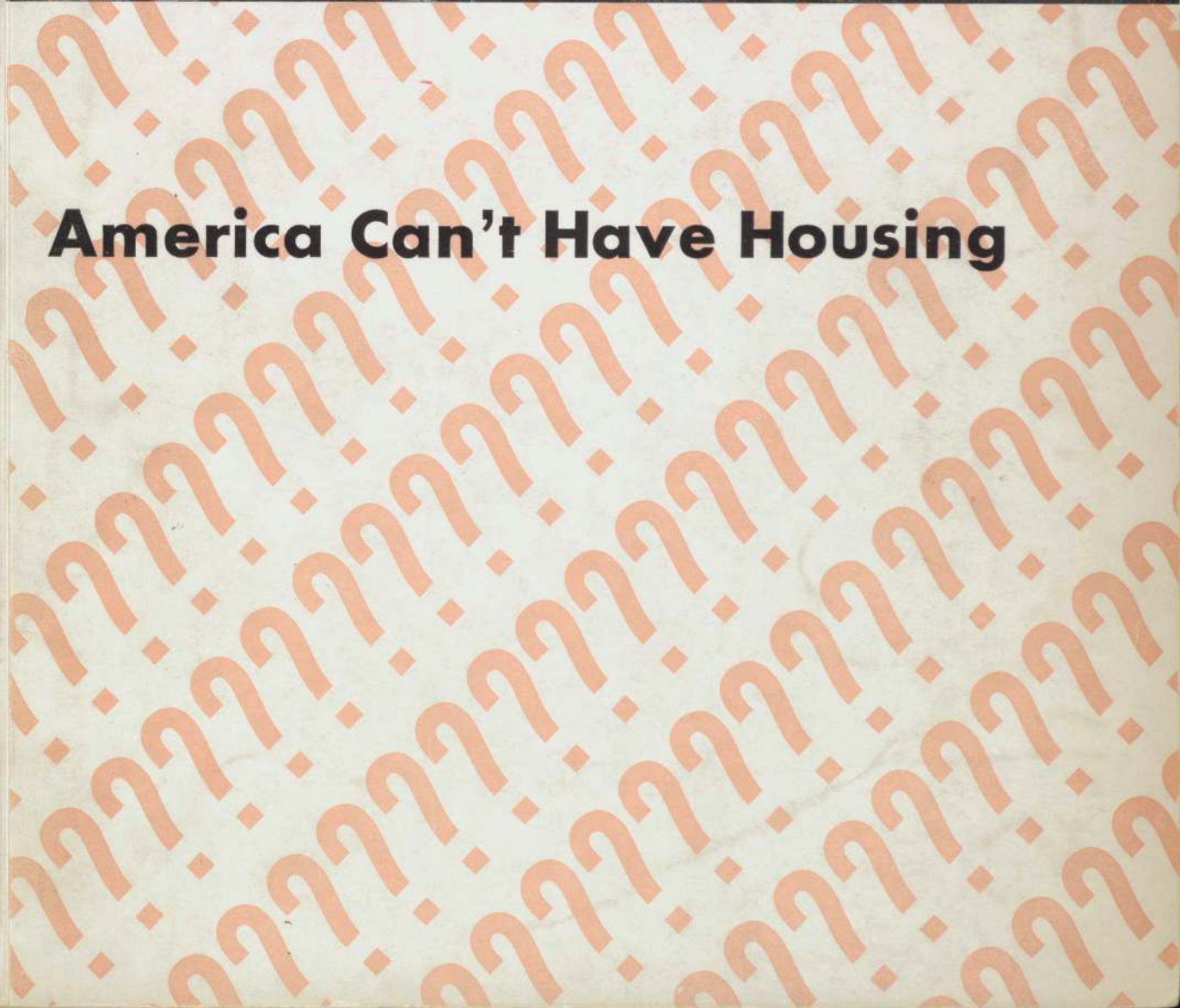
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# **America Can't Have Housing**



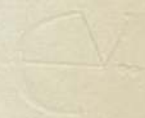
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# **America Can't Have Housing**

Edited by Carol Aronovici

Published for the Committee on the Housing Exhibition by the  
Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York



Cover Illustration:

Siemensstadt Housing Development, Berlin. Walter Gropius, Architect

From *Modern Housing*, by Catherine Bauer, Houghton Mifflin, 1934

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The Housing Exhibition of the City of New York, on display at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, from October 16 to November 7, 1934, was organized under the joint auspices of:

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## **Acknowledgements**

For the organization of the Exhibition the Committee wishes to thank the following:

- Mr. G. Lyman Paine, Jr., Technical Director of the Exhibition.
- Mr. I. Woodmer-Silverman, for the design of the installation.
- Mr. Walker Evans, for assistance with the selection and display of photographs.
- Yorkville Advance, for the contribution of the full-scale reproduction of an Old Law Tenement flat.
- Mr. Philip Johnson, Chairman of the Department of Architecture of the Museum of Modern Art, for planning the modern low-cost apartment.
- R. H. Macy & Co., for the loan of furnishings for the modern low-cost apartment.
- Park Commissioner Robert Moses, for his generous cooperation.

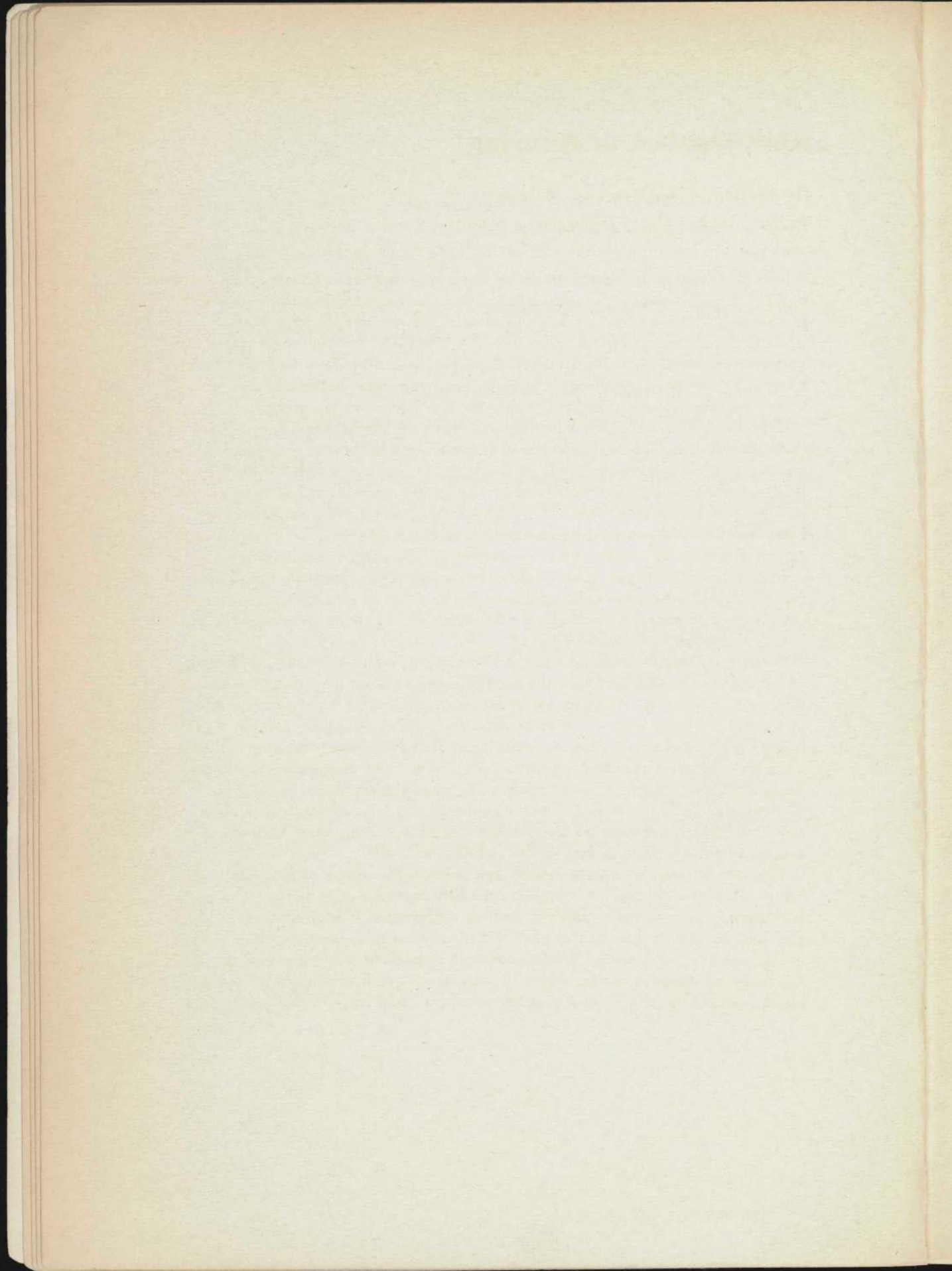
## **Foreword**

The purpose of the Housing Exhibition which the Museum of Modern Art has placed on display is to arouse public interest and foster a better understanding of the housing problem.

This book is not intended primarily as a guide to the material on exhibition. It is rather a statement of the far-reaching and varied social, financial, technological, administrative, legislative and political factors which have led to the present situation. It discusses the radical changes which must be made in our social philosophy and public policy in order to improve the housing condition of the masses of the American people.

It is the belief of the Exhibition Committee that this book will help to clarify the facts presented in the exhibition and will advance the solution of the housing problem.

Carol Aronovici.



# The Problem of Housing

By Sir Raymond Unwin

*Director of the Greater London Regional Plan*

The New York City Housing Exhibit is to be welcomed. America can show houses for well-to-do people unrivalled in their accommodation and equipment. In the past, however, such a large proportion of the people have looked forward to becoming well-to-do some day that dwellings for their use meantime have been too much assumed to be temporary, and they have been neglected. Indeed, the decayed dwellings originally built for some better-to-do occupant have very largely been relied upon to serve the lower income groups.

Conditions have changed, however, and the problem of providing adequate and suitable dwellings for the lower income sections of the population has become pressing here as it has been for many years in the larger cities of the lands which have an older civilization. There the conviction has been forced into general acceptance, that the health of the community and its social stability must be alike endangered so long as considerable sections of the people cannot attain to a certain minimum standard of housing accommodation.

Experience shows that in all civilized countries there are to be found multitudes of families who are quite unable to pay in price or rent for such minimum standards of accommodation, sufficient to recompense private enterprise for providing the much needed dwellings.

We are, therefore, all faced with this housing problem because the provision of a minimum standard of housing for the lower paid sections of the people at rents which they can afford to pay must be accepted as a community responsibility and a public service. A minimum standard of education for all, a pure water supply, and many other community needs have already been so accepted. This acceptance is the first important step: once the responsibility is fairly recognized, the difficult housing problem is greatly simplified. It becomes one of determining the best and most economical way of carrying out a definite task; one which presents no insuperable difficulties, being well within the resources of the community and of the building industry.

The administrative aspects hardly fall within the scope of an exhibition; but exhibits may do much to elucidate the best methods of housing. The problem there is to so adopt a material shell or shelter that it may conduce to good and healthy family life on the part of the very complex and sensitive human animal who is the housed. *While economic considerations must tend to keep the standard aimed at as reasonable in costs as will fulfil the purpose; economic considerations equally dictate that the standard shall be effective for the pur-*

*pose.* To fall short of this would be to waste the whole effort and expenditure.

There have been communities founded on different units; our community is founded on the single family unit; so long as that is so, the essential of all housing must be to provide homes, not mere shelters, for all our family units who are not in a position to command the supply of these for themselves.

The good old word home is itself no mean definition of what the minimum standard must be, how it must be planned and equipped, and how the units must be grouped in relation to each other. If the question be asked in each case, does this provide a dwelling which may become to some family a real home with all that the word implies? The answer will not be far from a fair assessment of the value of the project. Exhibitions of the various types of dwelling should do much to forward general knowledge of the subject, to bring into prominence the points that need study.

The housing problem is itself a part only of the larger problem of making our cities and indeed our countryside better places for men to work in and to live in. They must both be solved, keeping firmly in mind that the best life for all is the purpose which most greatly matters.

## A National Programme for Housing in the United States

By Robert D. Kohn

*Former Director of the Housing Division, P. W. A.*

Among workers for better housing, opinions vary greatly as to details of procedure; but we agree for the time being on a number of objectives which would constitute a national programme for housing. Such a programme would give direction to our scattered efforts and provide a test by which to judge the merits of any particular scheme. Sir Raymond Unwin reports that the National Housing Committee of England adopted as its leading principle that providing "housing accommodations, not below a minimum standard, for every family in the United Kingdom at a rent within the family capacity to pay should be accepted as a public responsibility and a national service. Fit and proper housing is a national essential, in the absence of which our existing social legislation must prove unfruitful. As long as overcrowding and slums exist, the doctor is attempting a cure without being able to touch the root of the disease; the teacher has the full force of environment against him; the social reformer is fighting a battle in which he cannot hope for decisive victory." Are we prepared now to adopt a similar ideal and go on record to that effect? How can we do otherwise?

We may as well recognize that much constructive educational work, public and private, will have to be done before such principles receive more than lip service from the great majority. Nowhere has *laissez-faire* failed more dismally than in the field of shelter for the lower-income groups. A national housing policy will not make much progress with us until it is generally conceded that housing for these groups never has been and never will be produced for *profit*. Moreover, we must get general acceptance for the idea that housing is a nationwide problem. It must no longer be considered as solely a big-city problem. We know that there is more hopelessly degraded housing in cities of fifteen thousand inhabitants and even small villages than in the metropolitan areas. With the stoppage of emigration from Europe there are no longer new populations willing to start in here by living in the cast-off housing which makes our slums. Hence there are louder and ever louder cries from the owners of these for some one to buy them out, and protesting against help for those who would build elsewhere and take away their few remaining customers. Moreover, to meet the shifts of workers consequent on the movement of industry to the new power centers, we must study and plan the new and better housing along regional lines. We must develop at least an outline of a national housing policy

for our country—national in its conception and its guiding principles, but local in its inception, application and control.

At the very beginning of our educational work we must be frank enough to acknowledge that there is no finality about the standards set up for any housing scheme. Our housing problems are infinitely more difficult than those of any of the European nations owing to the much greater variety in the size and the varying economic, social and racial characteristics of the families to be accommodated. No one is now qualified to tell us with precision what we should do in any particular city or how it should be done. At best, each of our experiments must be educational. They must be planned by local technicians as a result of the most careful preliminary surveys of needs and potentialities; a study that must be made by people of the locality itself, people who are thoroughly familiar with local conditions and who are sufficiently socially-minded to follow through the whole constructive process from the inception to and through continuous management. We can not repeat too often that the responsibility for all of this must be assumed locally. It can not be carried out successfully from outside—certainly not from a federal centralized bureau in Washington. Advice and financial help can and should be provided at the outset from such a source, but upon the community itself the responsibility must be placed and it must know of and acknowledge that responsibility. Only by the adoption of this procedure can we acquire as indispensable aids for housing the resourcefulness, the initiative and the technical skill of the best qualified individuals of the different communities. In the other direction—the direction of centralization—lies nothing but second-rate bureaucratic monotony, the commonplace and the loss of the educational value of the process to those who participate in it.

In the formulation of a national housing policy for our country the inclusion of many points is to be considered, but for the moment we can limit ourselves to three principles. These are, first, the creation of a favorable public opinion of the essential public utility nature of low-cost housing; second, a shift in our thinking on the "rights of property" when it comes to degraded, long since obsolescent buildings, and third, that the building of better housing to replace slums, or building elsewhere as a substitute for slums, is like building new and better schools, it is the quality of their use which makes them worth while, not the mere building of them.

We have considered better housing heretofore in a sentimental way. The general public considered it as one of the meritorious but not very practical things favored by social workers to be experimented with if some one would donate the money. On the whole nothing really could be done about it. Just after the war one of the leaders of the so-called "Housing Movement" (mainly occupied in enforcing restrictive legislation) claimed at a public hearing that there was no need for state "interference" with the ordinary and ade-

quate production of good housing by private initiative. When he was challenged with "but where is there any good housing for all of those who live in the slums?" he answered, "Oh, but these are poor people who can't afford anything better."

That was a perfect illustration of a state of mind which is still to be overcome. Public opinion in our country must accept as a national programme at least as advanced a viewpoint as that voiced by Lord Balfour, Lord Amulree, Sir Theodore Chambers and others in the British report already quoted. It must be awakened to a realization that decent shelter for every family is at least as essential to the growth of an electorate capable of progressive self-government as are reading and writing. Only let us hope that our public housing will serve more effectively to this end than has public education.

In the second place we must have a new national viewpoint regarding the value of land and a new basis for the valuation of obsolete construction. In the latter field we have never applied one of our boasted American practices. Foreigners were wont to praise our manufacturers for their willingness to scrap their old or even their comparatively new machinery the minute one came along with a more efficient piece of equipment. But although in our bookkeeping we write off annually 2 or 2½% depreciation on structures (and the Government allows that loss in figuring income tax) any owner can claim full reproduction cost in condemnation procedure even for a disgusting tenement house that would have been vacated long since as uninhabitable had city officials the courage to enforce the law. "Where will the poor people live if we drive them out of this?" they say, without realizing that the constructive solution of that problem is right up to them and to us. Can we ever hope to get to the point which England has reached? There when a district is declared officially to be a slum all property can be taken at its land value appraised only for its use for low-cost housing purposes. All the "improvements" are ignored, only salvage value, if any, being paid for the buildings. We must go a long way to revise our national viewpoint regarding ownership rights as against community rights in land. When taken for community housing purposes its value to the owner must be limited to a capitalization of its earning power for that use. Also at this time can we not induce cities to hold on to land acquired cheaply through tax defaults, through housing projects or otherwise; renting the land even for long terms where necessary for income purposes, but holding on to the fee. It can then be controlled in the public interest in any replanning for new uses when its present use, whether housing, industry or business, is no longer suitable.

Thirdly, we must get nation-wide recognition for the idea that we can not raise the standard of living nor build up a worth while community spirit with the aid of better housing, unless we develop the new art of socialized management. For it will be an art. The task of such management will be to work out methods whereby the better family accommodation may become a medium



through which the improvement of the family life itself is brought about. It will be its function to establish a new inter-family relationship within the community so as to bring out the value of the interdependence created by the neighborhood living. While here, too, we have much to learn from our British housing friends, we will have to work out something distinctive for ourselves to meet the problem of our mixed racial, social and economic groups. We can, then, begin to build up a national housing policy based on three fundamental ideas. 1. That decent shelter must be provided for all the people, not as a charity but as an essential service; that this can not be left until it becomes attractive to private capital or speculative enterprise; that its inception and management must be local and its design in the hands of specially trained technicians. 2. That the State must be able to regain the control of the land needed for housing on a realistic basis, and that it must prohibit the use or force the destruction of obsolescent structures whose "crowd value" should not inure to the benefit of individuals. 3. That we must create an intelligent social control of our new low-cost housing so that we may make the most of the opportunity to learn how to build a community of the spirit as well as one of brick and stone.

## The Social Imperatives in Housing

By Lewis Mumford

*Author of Sticks and Stones and Technics and Civilization*

What is modern housing? Modern housing is a collective effort to create habitable domestic environments within the framework of integrated communities. Such housing demands not merely an improvement of the physical structures and the communal patterns: *it demands such social and economic changes as will make it available to every income group.* In the larger processes of reconstruction, housing, sustained by public authorities and supported by public funds, is a means for overcoming gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth, for producing more vital kinds of wealth, for restoring the balance between city and country and for aiding in the rational planning of industries, cities, and regions.

The provision of sound physical shelter is only a limited aspect of an adequate program for modern housing. For the maximum advantage in physical structures cannot be achieved without control over the economic and architectural pattern of the community. Just as one cannot by throwing bricks in a heap produce a house, so one cannot by permitting random private interests to control the loan of money and the use of land produce a stable and satisfactory modern community. A modern house by itself, no matter how well designed, no matter how completely standardized and cheapened, does not constitute an example of modern housing; nor would the raw provision of such houses for every household in the country constitute an adequate fulfillment of a modern housing program.

In back of the housing movement stand two traditions. The first is the negative tradition that grew out of the sins of paleotechnic industry. It began with a recognition of the fact that filth and darkness and human overcrowding, which characterized the new industrial barracks of the nineteenth century, created dangerous sanitary and social conditions for the whole community. Most of the attempts to improve the housing of the workers—from the sanitary regulations and the model tenements of the 1850's onward—have been due to the philanthropic efforts of the possessing classes. All of them have been within the framework of modern capitalism.

The older reformers were faced with an insoluble problem: given the existing economic structure, how to create a domestic environment that met current standards of decency, health, and amenity. This problem was insoluble for two reasons. One of them was that, thanks to the advance of the arts and sciences, the standards of housing were theoretically rising much faster than hous-

ing reform was progressing; the best efforts of one generation had difficulty in attaining in its time the standards of the generation that *preceded* it. The other reason was that the housing problem, as it gradually defined itself, was insoluble in terms of free enterprise, private land speculation, and production for profit: for these institutions, unmodified by more social interests, produced the very slums, semi-slums, and super-slums that the housing reformer sought to escape.

Our communities present a true picture of the economic institutions that produce them. They are chaotic because capitalism is chaotic; they are socially misplanned and economically disorganized because capitalism is misplanned and disorganized; they do not sustain human values because capitalism puts pecuniary values first and centers attention mainly on operations that tend to foster such values. If our communities display in their structure mainly the predatory and parasitic aspects of modern society, it is because our civilization as a whole has not yet been organized economically so as to produce what one may call, with the biologist, a flourishing symbiosis, that is, a cooperative life grouping.

In short, to improve the housing of the workers while preserving intact the institutions that infallibly produced slum housing was impossible. All that could be done, at best, was to produce demonstration samples—Saltaire, Essen, Bourneville, to mention only the earliest—which partly showed what might be achieved on a larger scale if the entire economic basis were radically altered.

Meanwhile an important fact had escaped notice, namely, that the housing of the "more fortunate" classes when appraised by standards of what was desirable and technically attainable, was almost as low as that of the underpaid and "underprivileged" workers. This fact even escaped the attention of a revolutionary critic like Friedrich Engels when he wrote about the housing problem. For Engels put forth the motion that after a socialist revolution the work classes would solve their housing problem by moving into vacated quarters of the bourgeoisie. But the truth is that the best that the upper classes have achieved in housing is, in general, not good enough to be either preserved or copied; their isolated suburbs and country retreats lack the social and educational institutes necessary for effective living in communities; while their urban quarters often fail to meet elementary hygienic standards of sunlight and air. Plainly, our entire domestic environment must be reorganized for cooperative living. In this reorganization the community pattern is as important as the individual house; and one conditions the other.

To produce a completely human environment—in contrast to making patchwork improvement in physical shelter—is the objective of modern housing. Such an environment is necessary if we are to fulfill our own lives and carry on the complicated structure of our civilization. Our society cannot be run by brutes, dullards, and neurotics; it can be carried on only by healthy and well-

balanced and alert people, capable of expressing themselves effectively through their work, their arts, their communal and family relationships: people who are in a state of active and sympathetic intercourse with their immediate neighbors, their fellow workers, and with the larger world around them. Our contemporary urban and rural environments are for the greater part so disordered and out of balance that they do not tend to produce such people or give them sustenance. Against all that conscious education can do, the more fundamental unconscious education of our backgrounds, our daily activities, our casual sights and responses work toward the production and the apathetic acceptance of chaos.

Our problem is to create a new order in the environment at large that will encourage and carry further those germinal impulses toward order that are latent in various parts of our social heritage. Unless we build communities that enable us to function as complete human beings at higher social and cultural levels than we at present usually reach, capitalism in its decay will drag us down into a lower stage of social integration, already visible, in which "community" will be bludgeoned into us by the policeman, the soldier, and the gangster—those agents expressive of capitalism's cyclic economic maladjustment, in which periodic depressions alternate with states of manic suicidal activity.

The positive tradition in housing grows out of a recognition of these facts. Beginning originally with the eutopian writings of More and Andreae modern housing concerns itself not alone with the physical forms necessary for a durable and attractive community life, but with the necessary economic and political institutions that will sustain them. Implicitly or explicitly every generation possesses such a eutopia, or guiding plan of collective life; and this eutopia often separates out into a definable picture during periods of rapid social change, when strain is set up between old habits and new desires and possibilities. Lack of technical maturity, lack of rational methods of administration and control confined these eutopias in the past to literary exercises. In the seventeenth century, however, the imaginative projection of new societies was at last brought within sight of the necessary technical means, as in the settlement of New England; and in the nineteenth century the work of Fourier and Owen laid the basis for Ebenezer Howard's proposal (1898) for a large scale redistribution of population, for the resettlement of industries and cities, and for the systematic design of a new type of city which would be a balanced environment, both with respect to social and economic institutions, and to the relations of town and countryside.

Unlike many earlier eutopian proposals, Howard's Garden City, as he unfortunately called it, was actually brought into existence in Letchworth half a dozen years after his book on the subject was published. The example, and even more, the program of the garden city movement, had a powerful influence upon European housing, particularly after the war: it set new standards of

open spaces, of amenity, of site planning, of workers' housing. In attempting to make these standards available for lower income groups hitherto housed in crowded tenements and dark hovels, it became plain that no effective work could be done as long as capitalist canons of enterprise were respected. In so far as the first steps have been taken toward good workers' housing in Europe, it has only been by disregarding the principles of private capitalism in favor of State Capitalism or—as in the case of Vienna before Fascism—of State Socialism.

But because of lack of more fundamental changes in policy the countries in Europe that have instituted public housing policies have only made the barest beginnings, and the communities they have created are adequate chiefly from the standpoint of physical shelter. Before modern housing can be made general enough to effect the whole pattern of life in our civilization a far more radical departure than government loans and government subsidies for the lower paid workers must be made: nothing less than a revolutionary shift in the distribution of income and wealth and a readjustment of the entire productive mechanism so as to ensure the production of vital goods in their order of importance. Along with this must go the collective ownership and control of land, such as made possible the beautiful development of the Nidda Valley at Frankfurt-am-Main, before the Nazi reactionaries came into power. Such community building is the practical corollary of the planned production and the more vital interests of the neo-technic economy.

Where is the impetus for such housing to come from? It cannot be found in capitalistic methods of production, nor among the classes whose interest in housing is subordinate to their interest in maintaining the present structure of capitalism. The disgraceful inertia of the present Government in Washington should be proof enough of this fact. As soon as the banks, insurance companies, and real estate speculators proclaimed that their structure of values would be threatened by government aided housing developments, the Government unscrupulously sabotaged its own very modest program, and hastily concocted a fake program designed to maintain and increase existing values by prolonging the present shortage.

No: community housing will not be handed down from above. It can only come through a creative desire on the part of the workers to transform not merely their status and their industrial functions but their entire environment and their standards of consumption. Such a desire will be expressed through direct pressure from organized economic groups: workers' trade union groups and consumers' cooperatives—provided that these groups recognize the radical social implications of housing and are not content to wait for the final collapse of capitalism before formulating their demands and acquiring the necessary experience in building and administration. Such initiatives as that of Full-Fashioned Hosiery Workers in Philadelphia, if intelligently focussed and ex-

tended, will do far more for community housing than the efforts of disattached reformers attempting to extract from capitalism something that can be achieved only by transforming the whole framework of our economic order.

Make no mistake about it: a concentrated demand for housing on the part of the classes that are now badly housed and economically insecure, is a means of exerting a pressure that will help transform the existing structure of society. From the standpoint of the possessing classes this is the "threat" of modern housing, because it is a threat to the parasitic and predatory interests that are now fulfilled through capitalist standards and institutions. From the standpoint of the symbiotic society we are working towards, from the standpoint of that basic communism which is latent in the emerging economic order, this "threat" constitutes the genuine promise of modern housing.

## **Housing: Paper Plans, or a Workers' Movement**

By Catherine Bauer

*Executive Secretary, Labor Housing Conference, Philadelphia*

The foot-pounds of energy used up on talking, writing and designing "low-cost housing" during the past few years in this country would probably, in a simpler society, have served to carve an entire city out of the wilderness. A whole World's Fair could be constructed out of paper covered with irrefutable proof that "housing" is both necessary, logical and desirable.

The country has been blanketed with surveys. A series of laws all purporting to be housing measures has been enacted. A few Housing Authorities have been set up. The Administration has made all kinds of promises. President Roosevelt, in his message to Congress outlining a three-fold program for resource planning, economic security and housing, said that "we are working toward the ultimate objective of making it possible for American families to live as Americans should."

But where are the houses? Why are 80% of the building workers still totally unemployed? Not only do the old slums remain, more crowded than ever, but there seems to be nothing but the present complete stagnation of the real estate business to prevent the erection of expensive new slums and incipient "blighted districts" just like the old ones.

True the Housing Division has somewhat grudgingly assisted in the construction of a handful of community developments by limited dividend companies. There are certain allotments for "slum-clearance," and it is a mere drop in the bucket of demonstrated need: what has happened to the housing movement?

### *"Disinterested" Housing Has Failed*

The facts of the case are that until very recently, in spite of speeches and surveys and the enthusiasm of various architects, planners, economists and social workers, there has really been nothing which could properly be called a "housing movement" in this country. Indeed, many of those who promoted the idea of government-aided low-cost community housing most ardently and from a purely technical standpoint most intelligently have often stood in the way of such a movement.

A great many technicians and reformers have acted as if housing were a matter which could (and should) be "solved" in terms of physical science alone, by a handful of trained specialists hired by the Government. If only, it was felt,

the Washington authorities could be made to *understand* the technique of modern housing, nothing more would be needed.

By indirect implication and by direct denial, they have carefully treated the problem as a non-political issue—a matter of logic on which all well-informed persons must necessarily find themselves on the same side. With ingenious argument and cajolery they have spent their energies trying to prove to bankers, real estate men, industrialists, municipal and federal officials—the eminent and influential “key men” in short—that housing equals progress, and that a productive housing movement would be an immediate boon to one and all.

Probably in the long run and from a purely “scientific” point of view, strikes and revolutions work out to the ultimate good of everyone concerned. Perhaps likewise it could be proven that even the carriage manufacturers benefited in final analysis from the growth of the automobile industry. Again, it would undoubtedly be in the general interest if the building trades could be revived, slum crimes and slum diseases and slum eye-sores removed, and our cities made really modern, workable and pleasant.

But no one expects the bosses to initiate and carry through strikes, nor the manufacturers of an obsolete commodity to be the ideal promoter for the industry which put him out of business. No more should one expect whole-hearted co-operation and enlightened leadership (or even passive acquiescence) in housing matters from those agencies and individuals whose immediate interests are necessarily tied up with the old methods of doing things.

### *Housing is a Major Operation—or Nothing*

The old methods of providing shelter for people of average income or less are today so thoroughly unworkable and obsolete that any positive attempt to solve the housing problem can only be achieved by drastic measures. No back-door or half-way measures will do the job any more.

Modern housing means complete new communities planned entirely from the point of view of fullest *usefulness* and long time amenity—instead of chaotic subdivision and the erection of dwellings designed only to bring quick speculative profits. It means that rentals must be geared to the capacity to pay and not to the “market.” It means that a decent dwelling is not a reward withheld for the successful, but a fundamental right to which every citizen is entitled, the provision of which becomes a responsibility of government. Almost every intelligent technician or social worker would agree with these premises. Many government officials have stated them publicly. But so far they have not even begun to be put into practice.

Why not? Simply because the motive power of “disinterested” private citizens and ambitious technicians is not strong enough to bring about any such fundamental changes in our productive economy.



Let us face the facts clearly and recognize that bitter and organized opposition is not only unavoidable but perfectly natural. In the course of a real housing movement the whole flimsy structure of speculative real estate "values" will necessarily be punctured. This will doubtless necessitate drastic changes in systems of municipal taxation. The right of property-owners to make profits out of sub-standard dwellings will exist no longer. Interest rates must be cut. Real wages of the worker who is at present under-paid must be raised to enable him to live in a decent dwelling—whether directly by cash or indirectly by some form of subsidy to come out of taxes.

Where can the motive power needed to put such measures into practice be found? It cannot come from disinterested public-spirited citizens, most certainly, nor yet from some little group of experts sitting in a Washington office. But it will come—and it is coming—from those who are the most directly and vitally *interested*, families who need better houses to live in and workers who need work building those houses.

#### *Labor Takes the Lead*

The fight for effective housing measures is essentially a consumers' struggle. But the only large body of organized consumers today is organized labor. The trade unions must take the lead in making the demand for better housing effective.

Organized labor is preparing to take the initiative in housing matters and to see that the promises of the Administration are fulfilled. A great many workers have come to realize that higher wages, however successfully fought for, are meaningless unless they can pay for a decent place to live; that shorter working hours bring no advantage unless adequate facilities for leisure activities are available. The feudal conditions in many mill villages have forced thousands of workers' families to recognize housing as a problem affecting every aspect of their social and economic existence. Neither a minimum wage nor collective bargaining can be enforced in a company-owned town.

Everywhere workers and their families are beginning to demand housing which is compatible with this country's vast resources of land, materials, technical training and knowledge. They want dwellings whose rentals represent the real value of labor and materials, and not the exploitive cost of speculative land-sweating and financing, and of high-pressure sucker salesmanship. They still remember the terrible exploitation which came with the post-war housing shortage, and they do not propose to live through it again.

There is one government-aided housing development now nearing completion which is the result of the initiative of a group of workers—the Carl Mackley Houses in Philadelphia, put up with a Federal loan by the American Federation of Full-Fashioned Hosiery Workers. Although the actual set-up for this

project represents rather a special case which not many other unions could or should copy, this single concrete example of housing by and for workers has served as a remarkable stimulus to other trade union groups.

The Labor Housing Conference was established some five months ago by the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor at its annual Convention, in collaboration with various workers' representatives from New Jersey. It is now affiliated with active local and State-wide labor groups in six eastern States, and is supported entirely by the unions. Several local Labor Housing Committees are conducting surveys on their own initiative and preparing to formulate a concrete set of demands. The United Textile Workers of America have asked the assistance of the Conference in attacking the problem of company housing. The American Federation of Labor will give serious consideration at its coming Convention to the national program presented by the Labor Housing Conference.

What sort of program does Labor want?

First of all, that the Federal Government should attack the housing problem boldly from the front, as a long-time measure which must eventually rebuild most of America—not merely as a temporary means of providing employment in an emergency. They know that the old agencies must be discarded and they recognized the National Housing Act as an empty hoax from the start.

Housing measures must be closely allied with social insurance and minimum wages in order to insure complete security in the tenure of a decent modern dwelling to every American family. And finally, Labor believes that there can be only one reliable means of insuring that public utility housing be carried out in the real interests of workers and consumers. Namely, that bona fide workers' and consumers' representatives must be delegated real power and responsibility in every department of the housing operation, from surveys and policies straight through to administration. Trade union and other groups of people who need better housing should be considered responsible public bodies capable of acting as trustees of Federal funds. American workers do not want hand-outs, whether from bosses, philanthropists, technicians or the government. They want houses designed to fit the real needs of real groups of people who have had some hand in their production.

The rapid growth of this movement will serve, incidentally, to weed out those individuals who are seriously interested in improving the American living environment from those who were merely fascinated by paper plans. A unified demand from workers and consumers will make housing a major public issue—a political issue in the broadest sense, if they make it their business to understand their needs, the country's resources and the best means of using the resources to satisfy those needs, they can get what they want.

## **The Housing Situation in the United States**

By Edith Elmer Wood

*Author of Recent Trends in American Housing*

The housing situation in the United States today holds great possibilities, but few certainties of progress. Doors long locked and barred have been opened and disclose inspiring vistas of the Promised Land. But they are distant vistas, and all sorts of cruel ogres and fiery dragons hold the valleys through which we must pass.

For the first time we have the Federal Government alive to the existence and menace of slums, offering its aid to wipe them out—or, perhaps one should say, offering to wipe out a slumlet here and there to show how it can be done. For the first time we have a legislative, administrative, technical and financial mechanism set up for doing this, though it has yet to prove its adequacy in concrete accomplishments, and though there is still no assurance that it is going to be permanent. In form it is an emergency and therefore temporary mechanism. If the powerful private enterprise group have their way, it will never be anything else.

Under our old system of 100% private enterprise, the most prosperous third of our population, nearly 10,000,000 families live in comfortable modern homes. Their percentage of home ownership is high and because they are potential home owners, those who are tenants can bargain with the landlord on equal terms. Here we see private enterprise functioning at its best.

The next 10,000,000 families cannot build, buy or rent a new home. They can sometimes acquire a bargain-counter old home. They are more desirable tenants than the lowest economic third and can out-bid them in rent. They therefore have their pick of the older, shabbier, partly modern houses which the more prosperous families have discarded. They are a hard-working, reliable group and could be supplied with modern housing on a limited-dividend or co-operative basis, without subsidy, if capital were available on favorable terms.

This is the group for whom the New York State Housing Law and California Veterans' Act have functioned successfully, the group for whom the limited-dividend housing was designed which was authorized under the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the National Recovery Act. Knickerbocker Village is the solitary R. F. C. project. Under the Housing Division established by the P. W. A., the Alta Vista project has been completed in Virginia. Euclid, Ohio, Juniata Park, Philadelphia, Boulevard Gardens and Hillside in New York are under construction. Contracts have been signed for projects in St. Louis and Raleigh. Two or three others have been approved, but have never reached the

contract stage, and something like 400 applications have been turned down, mostly because the proponents had no idea what it was all about.

Meanwhile the lowest economic third of the population occupy obsolete, inadequate, neglected shelter, damaging in varying degree to health and to self respect. Of these nine to ten million families, roughly half occupy farm and rural homes and half are city dwellers. It is in experiments for the benefit of the urban part of this section that the P. W. A. has decided to concentrate its efforts and the 127,500,000 remaining to the Housing Division. Every project must involve slum clearance. Rents must be kept within the reach of families in this group. Families with larger income must be kept out. Land acquisition and building will be carried on either by the Federal Emergency Housing Corporation or by the new Public Housing Authorities. In either case, developments will remain in public ownership and management. As in the case of all sewers, school houses and other public projects financed by P. W. A., there will be a free grant of 30% of the cost of labor and materials, and the rest will be a loan at 4% to be repaid out of rents. Just how low the resulting rents will be awaits proof.

Let us not under-rate what has been accomplished. A year ago the Housing Division had just been established and was deciding on its policies. There was no such thing as a Public Housing Authority in the United States and no legislation authorizing the creation of such an agency. There is now enabling legislation in ten states. Local Authorities have been set up in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Toledo, Youngstown, Schenectady, New York City, Columbia, S. C., and Detroit. The New Jersey Housing Authority is operating on a statewide basis. Milwaukee and Los Angeles are acting under home rule. Various other housing authorities are about to be appointed. The Federal Emergency Housing Corporation has been created and set in motion.

As to actual slum clearance projects, sites involving negotiations with hundreds of owners have been acquired for clearance in Atlanta and in Cleveland. In the latter city a favorable court decision has been rendered as to such acquisition being for a public purpose. Options are being secured in Milwaukee, Indianapolis and New York. Appraisals are under way in Detroit, Louisville, Cincinnati, Montgomery and Washington. Other cities have submitted projects for consideration. Many more are making preliminary surveys.

Meanwhile Congress has passed the so-called National Housing Act, which many good housing reformers are "viewing with alarm." The alarm seems to this observer uncalled for. It is a challenge—perhaps a final challenge—to private enterprise. It says, in effect, here is everything you asked for in the way of government co-operation. Here also are the reports from 64 Real Property Inventories in all sorts of cities all over the country. They show what needs to be done. Go ahead and do it. Attaboy! . . . And the more private enterprise does, the better off we shall be. The only thing we need to ask of private

enterprise is that it shall abstain from strewing our path with dynamite sticks when we start work on that part of the job which it will decline to touch—the part which holds no possibility of pecuniary profit.

The first 59 cities which were started under the Real Property Inventory have 2.34% of their residential structures listed as unfit for use. They had to be very bad indeed to get into that class. The next worst class needing major or structural repairs accounted for 16%. A little over a third are in good condition and approximately half need minor repairs. The inventories by no means tell the whole story of bad housing. They make no count of dark rooms, overcrowded lots, basement and cellar dwellings, or fire risks. But they are valuable as far as they go. The percentage of dwelling units without running water and without gas or electric lights is less in most cities than the percentage in bad repair, but the percentage without bath-tubs and without private indoor water closets is substantially greater, spilling over, therefore, into the minor repairs class.

One need not be a prophet or the son of a prophet to foresee that the demand for loans for repairs and modernization will come from that enormous minor repair class. Class 3 dwellings are not a product of the depression, but of systematic neglect over twenty, thirty or forty years. The sums necessary to put them in order would necessitate rentals beyond the neighborhood capacity to pay.

In any wisely planned national housing program, class 3 dwellings will be slated for ultimate demolition by Public Housing Authorities. If the cities under the Real Property Inventory are a fair sample of American urban conditions, as seems probable, that would mean, adding class 4 and some interspersed class 2 houses which would have to come down for the sake of the layout, new urban building for something like 4,000,000 low-income families. This would be in addition to whatever may be done for farm and other rural families and quite apart from the new housing for the top economic third which will undoubtedly be built by private enterprise when the accumulated shortage has sufficiently made itself felt.

No single formula or single agency can be used for so vast an undertaking. There is need for a permanent policy of national assistance in finance, in planning, co-ordinating, standard-setting and statistics gathering. Probably the mission of the Federal Emergency Housing Corporation should be regarded as transitional rather than permanent. When competent local housing authorities have acquired experience, it would seem logical for them to carry on the work of construction as well as the subsequent management.

We shall not know until some of the clearance projects are completed and the houses occupied by tenants, how far short the present financial set-up is of reaching all self-supporting groups. We do know, however, that it will not reach all the way and it is not too soon to discuss possible ways of reaching far-

ther. The subsidy should not be increased except as a last resort. But there is no reason why lower interest rates and longer amortization periods should not be accorded. If the Government borrows at 3% it can lend at 3%. It does not need to make a profit. The useful life of a well-cared-for fire-proof building is certainly nearer 50 years than 35,\* which is the maximum amortization period now allowed. There are large deposits of Postal Savings on which the Government pays only 2% interest. Part might well be invested in housing at or near that rate. If we get unemployment reserves and other forms of social insurance in the near future, other large funds will be available for such appropriate investment.

The program cannot be permanently limited to slum clearance and re-housing by public authorities. Limited dividend and co-operative companies must be brought back in the picture and aided in their financing in return for accepting supervision and regulation. Just as private enterprise may well be left in complete control of the market for the top economic third, so limited dividend and co-operative companies should be encouraged to function for the middle third. The housing of the lowest economic third must become and remain a public function.

\*Note. A recent communication from Secretary Ickes to Mayor LaGuardia indicated a 45 year amortization ruling.

## England's Achievement in Housing

By Harry Chapman

*Organizing Secretary, International Federation of Housing and Town Planning\**

Public interest in housing reform in Great Britain dates back nearly a hundred years to the time when Edwin Chadwick, the sanitary reformer, was writing his reports and Dickens was writing his novels. Despite the work of these two great men and the many others who followed, no very great progress was made until after the War. Various acts were passed permitting local authorities to condemn and pull down insanitary houses, build new houses for the working classes and lend money to societies or to intending purchasers of houses, and in various other ways to promote the reform of housing. Philanthropic individuals (notably an American named George Peabody) and various societies did much good work, public utility societies sprang up and industrialists like Cadbury and Lever carried out housing schemes for their workers. Some local authorities made a good beginning in dealing with the problem, notably in the large towns. Nevertheless when the war came there was already a housing shortage. Building activity had always fluctuated. For some years an insufficient number of houses had been built to provide for an increasing population and to replace houses that were worn out. Then came the almost complete stoppage in building during the war years.

At the end of the war the country faced a serious housing shortage, estimated at various figures up to 1,000,000. In addition there was the necessity for building about 100,000 houses per year to provide for replacements and normal growth in the number of families. There was a shortage of materials and fittings and many of the works for providing these had not re-started. Labor shortage was also a serious problem and many of the skilled craftsmen available had not practiced their craft for some years.

A position such as this undoubtedly needed to be met by a long term program based on continuity of policy. Something like 2,500,000 houses had to be supplied at the cheapest possible prices over a period of fifteen years. Most of the houses have been supplied, but without continuity of policy and not always with due regard to economy.

### *The Addison Scheme*

Rent restriction on existing houses under a certain value had been imposed during the War, and a report prepared under the chairmanship of the late Sir Tudor Walters had set up definite standards to which new houses ought to conform. The job was to build the houses and the first policy to be tried was that

\*The International Federation of Housing and Town Planning maintains headquarters at 25 Bedford Road, London, England.

provided for under the 1919 Act. In the main the responsibility for producing these houses was entrusted to the local authorities. Practically no difficulties were encountered in finding the capital; the larger towns floated loans on the market, while the smaller authorities were able to obtain loans from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, a public body that obtains capital for such authorities and avoids the necessity of their raising money separately. The vexing question of subsidies was solved by the government shouldering the greater part of the loss entailed by building at a time when all values were inflated. A local authority had only to contribute the product of a rate (municipal tax) of 1 shilling in the pound on the annual value of all property in the administrative area. (This annual value is based largely on annual rents, less an allowance for repairs, and is fairly stable.) Public utility societies became eligible for loans up to 75% of approved value for 50 years, with subsidies equal to 40% of the interest and sinking fund charges on the loan. The country was divided into regions with a commissioner for each charged with the duty of encouraging local authorities and supervising their plans, estimates and contracts and a central department was created for organizing the supply of building materials.

This was essentially a scheme to meet a great national emergency. Everybody was crying out for the houses that had been promised by the politicians and many people considered that acute strain in social relations would result if no evidence were given of a serious intention to build. House building, even at a great financial sacrifice, was therefore regarded as the price of social peace. It may seem that the national government was taking an undue share of the financial burden; the answer given to this was that the War was one of the chief reasons for the shortage and as the whole nation had borne the burden of the War it was unfair that the burden of providing houses should fall heaviest where the housing shortage was most acute. It was also felt that as all classes had taken part in the War no narrow income limit should be drawn in deciding who should occupy the houses. Some of the local authorities did make distinctions, but even with the subsidy, rents were often at such a high level that few of the very poor could afford them and for the most part houses were occupied by reasonably paid workmen and "black coated" workers.

As was to be expected, in view of their financial responsibility, the central authorities exercised constant supervision. Schemes had to be submitted with considerable details regarding sites, lay-out, house plans, specifications, contracts, etc. Despite the existence of regional commissioners there was much delay and a considerable amount of circumlocution. Regionalism had been talked of in academic fashion for some years and it must of necessity develop in future to keep pace with modern requirements; but such emergency conditions provide no suitable atmosphere for a wise and judicious devolution of central administration or for the growth of a regional spirit. After about two years' work the regional commissioners were dispensed with. The Department of Building



Materials was also very much criticized and that also did not last long. It would perhaps be unfair to speak harshly of the work of this department, for it never attempted to organize the whole of the production of supplies for a national emergency in the same way as a Ministry of Munitions. Supplies were lacking everywhere, rings had been in existence for a long time and the Department, acting very much as a go-between, did very little good.

The scheme was complemented by new legislation to facilitate the acquisition of land by local authorities, which provided that failing agreement on price, the question was referred to the judgment of an official arbitrator. This legislation worked well and is still in operation.

Subsidies given to local authorities, most of whom built houses to let, led to a demand from speculative builders for an opportunity to meet the public demand. An Additional Powers Act was passed in 1919 by which builders producing a house that met certain specifications received a subsidy of from £130 to £160, according to size. Owing to the rise in costs this subsidy was later increased to £230 to £260. No stipulations were made as to how the houses were to be disposed of; for the most part they were sold by the builder to would-be occupiers.

It was only to be expected from the nature of such schemes that prices would rise sharply. Local authorities had not sufficient incentive to ensure economy, as their liability was limited, while the Government was unable to exercise the constant direct supervision necessary. Many contractors had lacked experience for some time and workmen who had been in the army were similarly handicapped. Nevertheless the cry for houses increased. In a world of rising prices all of those engaged in the building industry, contractors, workmen and manufacturers of materials, found an increasing demand for their service and consequently increasing remuneration. At the end of two years it was announced that no more new schemes would be passed for subsidies under the 1919 Acts. In 1929 when the last authorized house was built the total produced under these Acts was 213,821, of which 170,000 were built by local authorities and 43,731 by private enterprise.

#### *The Chamberlain Scheme*

The demand for public assistance for housing still continued and in 1923 Mr. Chamberlain was responsible for an Act that provided for subsidies to local authorities of £6 per annum per house for twenty years. Among the chief virtues of this Act were limitation of responsibility of the government and incentive given to the local authority to economize; any loss over and above the government subsidy had to be met out of local taxes. Moreover, such a scheme involved much less control from the center and much less inspection of projects with accompanying plans, specifications, estimates, tenders, etc. The subsidy

could be used by local authorities to build and own houses or could be passed on to public utility societies and private builders. There was nothing to prevent authorities adding to the subsidy but for the most part the practice adopted was to hand over a lump sum equal to the subsidy (£75) to private builders for each approved house completed.

By this time prices had slumped considerably and house purchase was getting within the reach of a wider public, particularly as housing standards had gone down somewhat in the interest of economy. In 1926 the £6 was reduced to £4 for all new schemes and in 1928 it was announced that no subsidies would be granted on new schemes under this Act. When all the houses sanctioned had been completed they numbered over 438,000, of which nearly 363,000 had been provided by private enterprise.

### *The Wheatley Scheme*

The 1923 Act was mainly intended to encourage building houses for sale. In 1924, the Labor Government having come into office, the late Mr. John Wheatley was responsible for an Act intended to encourage the building of 2,500,000 houses in fifteen years. This gave local authorities subsidies of £9 per house per year for forty years, with an increase to £12.10 in agricultural parishes. It was stipulated that the houses must be to let at the prevailing rents in the locality for houses coming under the Rent Restriction Acts (roughly 40% increase on pre-war rates), unless this would involve the authority in a loss of more than £4.10 per house per year. Selling these houses at a profit was made virtually impossible by the regulations. Slum clearance was to be assisted by the government, which was to bear half the annual loss. The scheme had the advantages of encouraging building for a poorer class than hitherto, limiting central responsibility and providing incentives to the local authority to keep down rents and observe economy. A provision was made that government contributions should be subject to revision, and in 1926 the Conservative Government decided that the subsidy should be reduced from £9 to £7.10 (£11 agricultural) for all future schemes, while the £4.10 contribution by the local authority was reduced to £3.15. The sanctioning of further houses for subsidy was brought to an end in 1932, apart from a few schemes where commitments had already been entered into. Over 494,000 houses have been built under the scheme, of which less than 14,000 have been built by private enterprise and the remainder by local authorities.

### *The Greenwood Scheme*

In 1930 the housing shortage was clearly much less acute and it became obvious that the two most important tasks were to build for the poorer classes for

whom even the subsidized houses were too dear and to do something to remove the reproach of the slums. Mr. Arthur Greenwood was responsible for an act passed in that year in which three types of slum conditions are visualized, i.e., there are clearance areas where conditions require a complete clearance, improvement areas where only some of the houses need demolishing, and places where individual houses need attention. In the first, local authorities are empowered to issue a clearance order requiring the owners to demolish. If the order is sanctioned by the Ministry after a local inquiry and the owner fails to act, the authority may demolish and recover the cost from him, after which the site may be used in accordance with the building by-laws and the town planning scheme, if one has been prepared. If the local authority prefer it they may operate by powers of purchasing the area instead of making a clearance order. Failing agreement about price the authority may apply to the Minister for power of compulsory purchase, in which case a public inquiry must be held. Compensation is paid on site value only, with allowances for any cost of removals or loss of trade.

In improvement areas, i.e., where complete clearance is unnecessary, the local authority must define the area on a map and pass a resolution signifying their intentions and then advertise these steps in a local newspaper. The Minister must be satisfied that the work can be done in reasonable time and he may require the re-housing to be done within a specified time. In some parts houses will need only repairing, others will be too bad to be saved. Where too many houses are closely packed together it may be necessary to demolish some to let in light and air. The local authority must arrange for this to be done and for purchasing (by private treaty or compulsory powers) where necessary. *By-laws must be enforced to prevent slum conditions occurring again.*

Individual insanitary houses can be dealt with without necessarily being in an improvement area. If the house is capable of being repaired at reasonable cost the authority may serve notice on the owner, with right to appeal at the County Court. Where the owner fails to comply with the order, the authority may act at his expense and may purchase the land at site value.

*It should be noted that in no case, whether it be a clearance area, an improvement area or an individual house, is any compensation payable for houses that are only fit to be demolished, or is any extra payment made because the authority works under compulsory powers. The site must be paid for.*

#### *Subsidies and Rents under the Greenwood Act*

Previous legislation had provided for local authorities and the Government each to take equal shares in the loss or slum clearance but owing to the urgent housing shortage very little had been done. Under the 1930 Act the govern-

ment definitely took responsibility for much the larger part of the loss. Government subsidies are granted on a per capita grant for each displaced person (adult or child) for whom new accommodation is provided. This grant is £2.5.0 per person per year for 40 years in towns and £2.10.0 in agricultural parishes. In Scotland the figures are £2.10.0 and £2.15.0. Local authorities must contribute £3.15.0 per year per house. Where it is necessary to build tenements of more than three stories on a cleared area or where the land of an approved scheme is more than £4,000 per acre the Government grant is increased to £3.10.0 per person.

Limited dividend societies are eligible for these government subsidies, the capital value of which is estimated at £195. Smaller subsidies, £5 per house for forty years, are available for small houses for aged persons. County councils may build or may take over responsibility for £1 per year out of the £3.15.0 per year of the rural district. The subsidies are to be used for the relief of rents, which may be differential.

This Act has not had time yet to get into full swing. So far (September 1934) it has resulted in 21,500 houses being built to replace slums; practically all have been provided by local authorities. A large number of schemes are in hand and in November 1933 it was announced that programs of local authorities foreshadowed the demolition of 200,000 insanitary houses within the next five years.

An interesting experiment in differential rents is being tried at Leeds. It has been found that by no means all the persons housed by the council, even those taken from the slums, are really in need of a rent subsidy. The subsidy received from the Government is therefore being applied not to the house, regardless of its tenant's means, but to the families in need of it. The top rent charged is an economic one, i.e., a rent based on cost without subsidy. Starting from this point the total subsidy received is divided to provide weekly allowances on economic rents in accordance with the family income, the smaller the income, the larger the allowance. It is claimed that is the soundest way of using the subsidy and many authorities are watching the experiment carefully.

#### *The Hilton Young Act.*

In 1933 Sir Hilton Young was responsible for an Act that initiated yet another scheme. Earlier legislation (1925) had empowered local authorities to guarantee to building societies the repayment of advances made by them to their members for acquiring houses of not more than £1,500 value, in so far as these advances were larger than provided for in the societies' rules. This meant that societies could raise the proportion of loan from 70% to 90%. Very little use has been made of this, but builders do very often make their own arrangements to enable purchasers to borrow 90%. The 1933 Act empowered the Min-

ister to contribute not more than one-half of any loss sustained by a local authority under any future guarantee of this additional 20%, provided that the advance had been given (presumably to speculative builders) for the purpose of building or acquiring houses to let to working class tenants. No regulations have been made as to rentals. It is difficult to obtain information as to what use has been made of this Act; but from the nature of things it does not seem likely to be put to any great use. The function of a building society is to act as a combined savings and loan association for its different members, by far the greater part of the advances granted having always been in respect of houses that are being purchased by their occupants. By making use of the 1933 Act to any considerable extent the societies would revolutionize their functions and change their nature completely, for they would become large scale investors in speculative building enterprises. There is no sign that any society will take this step.

### *House Ownership*

In addition to the operations of building societies which, as in America, have increased since the war, local authorities have been empowered to grant up to 90% of valuation to prospective purchasers of houses. These powers were first given by the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act of 1899 and have since been amplified. As the Act is a permissive one and not all of the authorities have adopted it, the practice throughout the country has not been uniform. Some authorities have used the powers extensively, obtaining their capital either on the open market or, in the case of smaller authorities, from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, while others have preferred to leave the matter to building societies, which are usually a trifle dearer. It will be interesting to watch the future of building societies, for with their swollen resources they will have the choice of (a) trying to retain and enlarge the great increase in the proportion of occupants who own their own homes, (b) themselves becoming general property owners, or (c) working for a continual reduction of both deposits and loans. Between 1913 and 1933 the total assets of building societies increased from £65,000,000 to £477,000,000; in 1913 the advances granted on mortgage during the year amounted to £9,000,000, while during 1933 they amounted to over £98,000,000. In addition to this local authorities since the War have advanced about £79,000,000 to approximately 161,000 persons who are purchasing their own houses, i.e., less than the societies advanced in one year.

The total number of houses built in England and Wales since the War is about 2,400,000, of which about a half have been provided by unsubsidized private enterprise. Of the latter about 200,000 are of the larger type that could hardly be described as workmen's houses. A further 180,000 have been built in Scotland. Unassisted private enterprise did very little in the early years, but the

numbers gradually mounted and for some years now unassisted private enterprise has been the biggest factor in house building. Figures showing yearly progress of assisted and unassisted building up to September 30, 1933 (complete 1934 figures not available) are given below; the unsubsidized houses have almost all been built by private enterprise. At present the central government subsidies granted under the 1919 Acts are costing about £7,000,000, the Chamberlain subsidies £2,500,000, the Wheatley subsidies £4,000,000 and the Greenwood subsidies £250,000, all per year; the latter will increase.

### HOUSE CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLAND 1919 to 1933

Year ended 30th September	Subsidized Houses				Unsubsidized Houses	Total
	Addison Scheme 1919 Acts.	Chamberlain Scheme 1923 Act	Wheatley Scheme 1924 Act	Greenwood Scheme 1930 Act		
1919	—	—	—	—	30,000	210,237
1920	6,127	—	—	—		
1921	67,945	—	—	—		
1922	106,165	—	—	—		
1923	24,998	991	—	—	52,749	78,738
1924	5,525	30,934	—	—	73,032	109,491
1925	1,492	78,409	12,385	—	66,735	159,026
1926	975	84,431	46,489	—	65,689	197,584
1927	527	115,073	97,316	—	60,313	273,229
1928	30	47,969	53,792	—	64,624	166,415
1929	18	80,240	53,516	—	71,083	204,867
1930	14	—	51,310	—	110,375	161,699
1931	—	—	61,615	420	132,909	194,944
1932	—	—	62,530	5,146	132,886	200,562
1933	—	—	44,131	6,302	167,880	218,313

It is generally agreed that the most urgent needs now are (a) to push on with the slum clearance schemes that have been prepared, and (b) to do far more than has been done in the past to provide houses for the large class of people who can only afford a rent of 10 shillings a week or less. Local authorities still have the duty to build houses for the working classes where needed and some will continue to do so but subsidies are no longer available. The problem they have to face is not merely that of the slums. Contrary to a belief widely held, slum conditions in England are no worse than in other highly industrialized countries. There are quite a number of countries with worse slums and in very few has so much been done to deal with the matter. Travellers are led astray by the fact that nearly all bad housing in England is quite easily visible because

most of the dwellings are small cottages, whereas on the continent the traveller is rarely able to see the slums that exist behind the high facades of the completely built up blocks. The problem to be dealt with is, therefore, one of a large scale replanning and improvement of the hundreds of square miles of dingy, drab cottages. It is a question that cannot be dissociated from town and regional planning.

Recently there have been demands from several quarters for the appointment of a national housing board or some sort of national authority with extensive powers. One of the proposals was made by an unofficial body that originated through the work of the British Steelwork Association and Imperial Chemical Industries Limited. This body published an interesting report but, as their main proposal amounts to the solution of the rehousing problem by the construction of ten-story tenement buildings (using steel in the construction), there is not much likelihood of its being adopted, for tenements are unpopular. None of these schemes for dealing with the matter by national bodies is likely to be received with favor and none of them is receiving the backing of the local or central authorities. In England the local authorities have functioned with fairly considerable success. *There is none of the distrust of municipal government that is to be found in America, for there has never been any real shortage of public-spirited and disinterested persons to carry on the work. It cannot be expected that these local authorities would willingly hand over their functions to an ad hoc body to deal with a question so intimately concerned with local administration as housing.*

Much has been written about changes in policy and the methods that have been employed in dealing with the housing acts but when all is said and done the fact is that policies have changed in accordance with changing circumstances and it would have been too much to expect that after the turmoil of war a clear-cut, well-defined and continuous policy would be carried out. It is a pity that this is so but it is a fact. It remains to be seen now whether in calmer times a continuous policy will be established for rehousing the poorer paid workers and completing the work of abolishing the slums.

## Post-War Housing in Germany

By Walter Curt Behrendt

*Author of Der Sieg des neuen Baustils*

*Translated from German*

Up to the time of the war Germany was very backward in the development of the small dwelling as compared with other industrial countries. The first and most urgent task remained unsolved, that is, the task resulting from the transition of an agrarian country into an industrial one through the industrial development of the cities and a shifting of population caused by the latter. Thus arose the need for creating an appropriate form of dwelling for the new stratum of the population which now forms the broad basis of the industrial structure. The great masses streaming into the rapidly growing cities were crowded without scruple into miserable, worthless mass lodgings which were an insult to all hygienic principles and to technical progress.

Germany, the country which attracted the eyes of the whole world by its model social legislation, had to put up with the doubtful reputation of being the classical country of the tenement house. And Germany has paid dearly for these inadequate housing conditions by serious damage to its national health and by a growing discontent of the workers with these conditions.

The development of small dwelling construction in Germany shows that the housing problem is largely a political one. In Germany, as in other countries, there was before the war no lack of intelligent and far-seeing men who realized the defects of the prevailing method of housing production and who showed the way for their removal. They did not succeed in carrying out their proposals because they demanded at the same time a transformation of the existing economic system and certain changes in the management of public institutions; demands which were bound to fail in view of the privileged power of private interests.

It needed the energizing effects of a war and a political revolution to make the times ripe for the demanded reforms and to provide the sociological background for their execution. Only then was the political influence of the industrial working classes strengthened to such a degree that they could obtain the realization of their well-justified claims, entirely too long unsatisfied, to a dwelling which should be healthy, technically perfect, and economically attainable.

None of the numerous measures taken by the housing welfare communities of the state in the post-War period have been of such a decisive and far-reaching importance as the change in production methods of the housing industry itself, which was carried out under the growing pressure of the housing shortage. At that time the production of small dwellings proved to be impossible on



a private basis. The essential economic problem of the construction of small dwelling units—the disagreement between the commercial principle of rentability and the social demand for reasonable rents, that is, for rents reasonably proportionate to the tenants' income—had become so difficult that it could be solved only by the appropriation of state funds. Public building loans raised by a special tax imposed on house owners were granted exclusively to communities and to non-commercial building organizations, which in this way have become the real supporters of the construction of small dwellings. As a result small house construction was brought almost entirely under public control—its location, type, plan, and equipment.

Owing to this enforced change in the building industry a safe foundation was laid for a definite housing policy. Through public control it became possible to influence the distribution of the new dwellings in a systematic way, in accordance with the needs of the people and with regard to existing public services and means of communication. Public control offered, furthermore, a reliable lever for relieving the congestion of slums and to clear the way for a systematic decentralization of the great cities. According to the regulations of the authorities public loans are to be applied first of all to the construction of small dwellings in the suburbs and outskirts of the cities. As for the kind of dwelling, the one or two story house with a garden is given preference over the multi-storied house.

With the building industry finally established on such a changed basis, the architect also, for the first time, found the way clear to turn his attention to the practical, technical and architectural problems of small dwelling construction. Until now the architect has been more or less the hired man of private interests and their basic principle had been to figure out by tricky methods how to cover the greatest proportion of the land with buildings. But now it has become the architects' business under the stimulus of actual necessity to develop a new elementary form for the small dwelling with the aid of all the means of modern technical science.

His work started with the development of new methods which would make land accessible. Such development runs from the individual plot management of the old tenement house system to a new allotment plan which calls for connecting in one homogeneous plan not only entire blocks but of entire city districts. It leads away from the thickly crowded tenement house district to the free spaces of the large scale development. After many systematic attempts to lower cost and to get more ground space, the so-called "strip building method" was adopted on account of its many advantages. By this method the blocks are distributed in long rows running from north to south irrespective of the direction of communicating streets so that the greatest amount of sunshine is assured for all apartments. This plan does away with courts and differentiation of front and back facades. Architecturally as well as for dwelling purposes both

facades are thus of equal value and every apartment of a block enjoys the same advantages of view and sunshine.

The second and no less important task for the architect was the development of plans for the small dwelling within the limits of the living standards appropriate to the economic background and the social concepts of these new classes of society. As a result of numerous experiments many types of small dwelling units have been worked out on the basis of a methodically developed science of planning, which assures healthy and comfortable living and simplifies housework through the distribution and equipment of the rooms. In this way the two main requirements for the small dwelling unit are met from a technical viewpoint. The usable space of a small dwelling erected with public building loans must not be more than 32 to 45 square meters (approximately 320 to 450 square feet), according to official regulations. Such limitation of space is offset in various ways by freeing the apartment from former demands on floor space through the provision of a central heating and hot water supply plant, central baths and laundries, common garden courts and playgrounds for children.

The result of this building activity imbued with social spirit is amazing in every respect. The backwardness of Germany in small house construction has been more than made up and indeed has been changed into an advanced position if one may draw conclusions from the eagerness of foreigners to study German housing and their cordial expressions of approval. The small house with a garden, the most ideal form of a small dwelling before the war almost unknown in Germany, has been adopted everywhere. The spacious connected house developments built everywhere on the outskirts of the cities make a pleasant transition from the city to the open landscape. The old tenement house is entirely stamped out and has disappeared completely from German cities. The new "tenement" house, limited to three stories in height, has nothing in common with the old tenement but the name; the small dwelling is an organic unit, a living cell, from which a healthy and well formed city can be developed. The dwellings, arranged in long rows and united under one roof, are assembled block-wise in large groups that constitute architectural units in the city plan as a whole. Always recurring in uniform types, these dwelling groups become part of systematically arranged city districts, to which the strong rhythm and the varied formations of building masses give vivid and attractive effects. Uniformity prevails in these living districts in regard to the living requirements as well as to the architectural forms of the apartment houses. The living standards of the classes for whom these apartments are designed do not allow much scope for individual preferences. This sociological fact finds its obvious expression in the architectural physiognomy of the new city districts. Their uniformity is compulsory since it is inherent in the nature of the task. Such compulsion is the less to be feared, however, because in the suburban developments the vegetation, the green of the gardens and the trees is an enlivening element.

Also the less pronounced density of buildings offers to the tenant a delightful and cheering feeling of comfort and the adequacy of the apartment itself assures a healthy living standard even on the limited space of his minimum existence.

The construction of small housing units has become during the last decade the favored field of experimentation of all progressive forces. On Germany's building plots the new principles of our times have been tested, approved and carried out. In the meantime experiments with new forms and designs, artistic conceptions daringly foreshadowing the future society are being brought to light.

## Minimum Dwellings and Tall Buildings

By Walter Gropius

Architect, Founder of the Bauhaus School

Translated from German

The problem of the minimum dwelling is the search for the minimum amount of space, air, light, warmth and elbow room required by human beings in order to carry on the normal activities of life without being cramped; in short a search for a *minimum vivendi* instead of a *modus non moriendi*. Under good conditions of light and air human beings, biologically speaking, need only a very small space to live in.

The first requirement for a minimum dwelling: *enlarge the windows, make the room smaller*. Many people today erroneously think that the cure for the housing problem is in larger rooms and larger apartments. But light, sun, air and warmth are not only more important but also cheaper to provide than space.

The second requirement for a minimum dwelling should be: *a private room no matter how small for each person*. Every one should have the right to privacy. By fulfilling these requirements we reach a sensible minimum: a standard dwelling.

The same requirements hold good for housing in general as for the single apartment. All zoning laws must aim at achieving light and air by limiting congested housing.

For sufficient air each dwelling must have cross-ventilation and double exposure; in other words the apartment house must be only one apartment deep. Sufficient lighting and equal exposure to the sun for all dwellings means open planning in rows or strips of apartments and a sufficient open space between these strips. Interior courts and narrow streets which take away light and air are a crime.

In regard to orientation, streets running north and south provide sunshine for both east and west exposures; the only objection is that in winter the sun would not come far into the house. Streets running diagonally do not provide enough sunshine for the southwest front in the winter and too much in the summer. Streets running east and west provide an ideal southern exposure but provide no sun for the northern exposure. From the standpoint, however, of low land coverage the streets that run north and south are by far the best. On the other hand for the very small dwelling the southern exposure is superior if the service rooms—kitchen, bath and entrance—are placed on the north side.

In order to provide sufficient open space especially for children there should be grass plots as near as possible to the dwellings. It is disgraceful to let children play in the street or in dark inner courts. These grass plots must be near

the dwellings in order that every one can enjoy them without wasting too much time in transit.

The advantages of the one or two story single house, either free standing or in rows, are recognized throughout the world. It is not, however, the cure-all for the conditions in our cities. The high land values have made the single house an absurdity. Even five story tenement houses are an unsatisfactory compromise. What is then the solution? I propose after careful sociological and economic research ten to twelve story apartment houses for the thickly settled districts in our cities.

Opinions differ greatly as to the ideal type of dwelling—one family house or the big apartment house? The advantages of one or another of these two types are dependent to a large extent upon means of transportation; the city planner should strive to make means of conveyance superfluous instead of augmenting them. It is obvious that low buildings require more land: they are uneconomical in thickly populated districts, therefore they do not offer a satisfactory solution. In such districts a vertical layout of apartments is appropriate and if properly executed will lead to a perfect solution.

It is not the principle of building high buildings which we are against when we attack the obsolete tenement house, it is rather the laws which allow building such apartment houses without any insurance against speculation and consequent congestion.

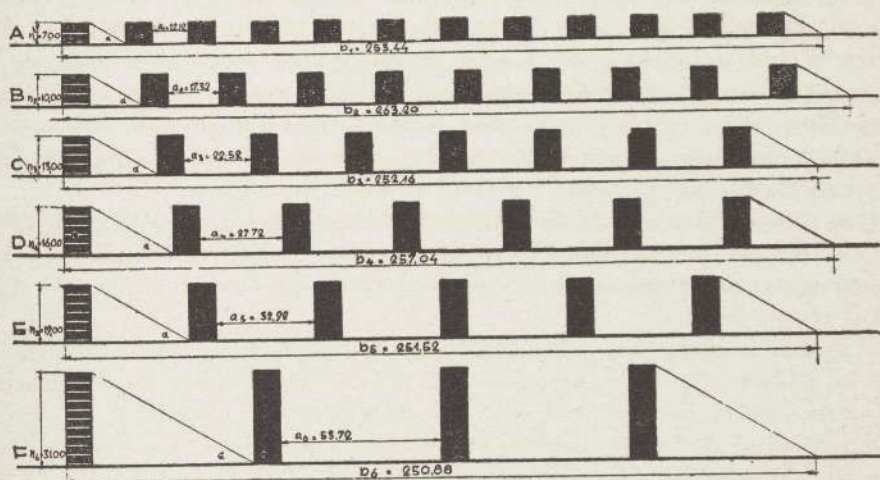
The tenement house has come into bad repute because in its old form it offers no advantages. The space between the buildings is too small, with no direct exposure to the sun and with no grass plots. If, however, we build twelve instead of five story houses—with proper zoning laws as to the number of people allowed to live on an acre of land—we would have a City of Green.

The tall apartment house gives us the possibility of building widely-spaced, airy, green cities, and we can, moreover, build them with financial profit. The chart shows the great advantage high buildings have over low ones in saving ground space.

We should insist upon new zoning laws to supersede the existing ones. The new laws should regulate the density of population by limiting the cubic contents of the buildings in their proportion to land coverage, not by limiting the height of the buildings. There should also be minimum requirements for sun exposure for all apartments. If we do build carefully planned tall apartment houses placing them at ample distances on landscaped plots, we can enjoy many advantages which not even the one family house offers. Even the tenant on the ground floor can see the sky. Instead of looking out at narrow backyards or hallways as is the case with three or four story buildings he will see a green space with trees, which could serve as a playground for his children. Thus nature penetrates the large city.

In addition, only by means of the tall apartment house is the tenement freed from tedious and time-wasting housework. Centralized mechanical equipment such as a central heating plant and hot water supply, a central laundry, elevators, refrigerators, air conditioning, communal clubrooms, facilities for sport and a kindergarten may be offered to the tenants without heavy costs.

The apartment house of the future which offers all these possibilities will not resemble in the slightest the squalid, cramped tenement house of the past. It will combine a maximum of air and light, quiet living and natural surroundings with a minimum of transportation costs and economic waste.



6 comparisons of row houses of different heights. 2-3-4-5-6-10 stories

CASE 1

Assumptions

Same land coverage

Same angle of exposure to the sun between rows ( $30^\circ$ )

Result

The number of beds grows with number of stories

CASE 2

Assumptions

Same angle of sun exposure ( $30^\circ$ )

Same number of beds

Result

The greater the number of stories the more open space possible between buildings

## Political Economy in German Housing Today

By Werner Hegemann

*City Planner, author of Amerikanische Architektur and Städtebaukunst*

The two outstanding leaders of the "Third German Reich" owe part of their popular appeal to the promises they made at an early date pertaining to housing and real estate. The late President Hindenburg, even during the War, had written: "The fatherland shall help everyone desirous of living by honest labor to win a home which is secure against usurers' exploitation and fit for sheltering German family life and for raising children healthy in body and soul."

And Adolf Hitler, whom the dying Hindenburg entrusted with carrying out his wishes for German regeneration, had already in his official "unchangeable" program of 1926 promised "a national reform of the laws governing real estate, the creation of a law permitting for public benefit the expropriation of real estate without indemnification, the abolition of ground rent and prohibition of all speculation in real estate."

These promises were in answer to a deep need; how were they fulfilled?

### *600,000 in Berlin's Pre-war Slums*

Just before the war the author of this article was prosecuted by the Prussian police because he had covered the bill boards of the German capital with posters reading: "600,000 inhabitants of Greater Berlin live in tenements at the rate of 5 to 13 people per room.\* 300,000 children have no playgrounds." The persistent placarding of these figures, accompanied by a gripping drawing of two Berlin slum children, was denounced as making for "incitement of class hatred," punishable according to law. The prosecution, however, had to be abandoned because finally the truth of the hotly debated figures could not be denied. The propaganda connected with the statistics of 600,000 Berliners in badly crowded tenements reached wide sections of the population. It especially found the support of the powerful labor unions. After the war the labor unions, Socialist and Catholic, and the different federal, state and municipal governments supported by these organizations became the real agents of housing reform.

This movement however was hindered by the agrarian interests and the return to the pre-war land policy.

### *Hindenburg and the Land Problem*

One year before the death of Germany's first president, Ebert, Germany returned to her pre-war policy of subsidizing the large agrarian estates by

\* These statistics do not count kitchens as rooms to live in.

rapidly growing tariffs at the expense of the industrial laborers of the crowded cities. This was equal to the political restoration of the Nationalist Junkers. It may be said that this restoration of the large agricultural estates of the Junkers took place in contradiction to the ideas of Prussia's most Nationalistic historian and most Junker-friendly statesman, von Treitschke. When, before the War, he was facing the fact that yearly about 200,000 Germans had to settle in America, Treitschke declared: "Germany is by no means overpopulated, especially not her northeastern parts." Treitschke believed that by subdividing her large agrarian estates Germany could be made to accommodate a population of almost one hundred million. The replanning of the nation for such a redistribution of landed property, a national rehousing policy and the abandonment of the ghastly tenements built under Bismarck and the two Wilhelms, would have been a paramount duty for a German statesman.

Only subdivision into small farms and the sacrificing labor of individual owners with fairly large families could bring a return of real productivity. This meant return to the more intensive farming methods and denser population prevailing at the time of first settlement (before the year 1400) and before the "noblemen" had driven away the small farmers and had enslaved the comparatively few hands required for more extensive farming.

In Germany no democratic leader has ever been strong enough effectively to oppose the aristocracy. After the death of the pseudo-Socialist Ebert and after Hindenburg's election to the presidency the large landowners reiterated their old objections to a Field Marshal's trying to preside over them without himself owning an inch of land. They had been accustomed for almost a thousand years to be ruled only by big landowners. Knowing well how to hold their own, they prevailed upon the less close-fisted barons of heavy industry, the producers of iron and coal, who in important matters were wont to submit to the Junkers as their traditional and social superiors to buy and donate to President Hindenburg the large agrarian estate of Neudeck. From now on Hindenburg, who had never taken an interest in politics, economics or other non-military matters, suddenly turned into an ardent sympathizer of agrarian interests. He therefore angrily dismissed Chancellors Bruening and Schleicher who thought it impossible to delay longer a somewhat less anti-social agrarian policy. Bruening and Schleicher had favored small settlements and the subdivision of at least those big estates which could not by any conceivable elevation of protective tariffs ever be made productive and which depended for their economic salvation upon large and continuous subsidies. These gifts are paid out of taxes collected from industrial laborers in crowded cities who are forced to pay high taxes, high prices for their bread and in addition are badly housed, while being prevented from returning to the open country of their fathers, from which they were driven by the Junkers.



### *Fascist Housing and Mass Employment*

Millions of Germans had actually trusted Hitler when in his "unchangeable program" he promised "the expropriation of real estate without indemnification and the abolition of ground rent." But now the dangerously reactionary ideas of Prussian pre-war economics are victorious.

Recently, when Hitler held his fourth party congress, the American newspapers faithfully reported (Sept. 5, 1934) the claims of superior achievement put forward on this solemn occasion by the Nazi officials eager to vindicate their destruction of democratic ideals and self-governing institutions. In the field of housing their contention was:

"Twice as many homes have been constructed during the first six months of 1934 as during the first six months of 1933. The total of the building materials produced in Germany rose by 1,000,000,000 marks in 1933 and statistics for the first half of 1934 show another increase of 50 per cent."

Even if Hitler's housing statistics are correct, they may only mean (1) that during the first six months (1933) of his government, building activities were practically dead, partly because (2) the Hitler government, strongly favorable to manufacturers and vested interests, permitted the price of building materials to rise. We know that the Nazi government spent 500 million marks (200 million dollars) for rehabilitation, i.e., for transforming large apartments and large suburban one-family houses into small apartments and small tenements. With such large subsidies some recovery in building activities and in prices of building materials is quite possible.

American pessimists may be shocked by the similarity between practical results in Germany and America. Hitler's original promises foreshadowed great land distribution and housing activities. The fulfilment brought little more than some rehabilitation. Also in America reformers expected great housing activities to result from the New Deal and the outcome was merely some loans for rehabilitation.

It would be wrong to believe that Hitler's advertising of a recovery in prices for building materials could signify a revival of the vast German home building activities conducted by his predecessors. Although the preceding liberal-Socialist-Catholic governments (1919 to 1931) carried out no comprehensive state planning and did little rational redistribution of Germany's population, they indisputably enjoyed international and especially American credit and caused the building of 2,510,000 urban dwellings, only about 300,000 of which were rehabilitations. And since 1929 the pre-Hitler governments had discontinued the expensive tenement house building (price \$2,500 per one-family dwelling) and had efficiently encouraged the more rational construction of subsistence farms (price \$900 per dwelling).

Real improvement of housing is possible only in times of a general rise in

employment and in wages. Employment and wage statistics are almost the equivalent of housing statistics. If the latter are lacking or unreliable, the former will tell the story. Nothing but the most miserable and incidentally most expensive kind of housing can be provided from the dole given the unemployed. The great ambition of Fascist or non-Fascist governments is to make the unemployed disappear either (1) by creating work for them or (2) (if new work cannot be made available) by distributing the available work amongst a larger number of workers or (3) by placing those who are entitled to the dole upon the lists of those who are not entitled to it. These three methods have been conscientiously followed by the Third Reich. All industries which produce war materials were given work. Many of them work overtime. Germany has in 1933 and 1934 doubled her imports of raw materials required for armaments. According to official statistics (Institut für Konjunktur-Forschung) the number of those privately employed during the first Hitler year in Germany has risen from 12 millions at the end of 1932 to 13.3 millions at the end of 1933. The industrial workers' hours of work have been increased by an average of 6 per cent. The total sum paid for wages has risen by 3 per cent. The housing problem is being solved by the construction of the roughest kind of barracks, while munitions are absorbing great masses of the population and vast amounts of the resources of the nation.

Even for those who are maintained in regular work, Hitler's general lowering of wages must necessarily find expression in their housing. Not all of them can benefit from the satisfactory dwellings provided by the previous liberal-Socialist-Catholic governments. Hitler has done much in encouraging new marriages. They require new homes. But it may take twelve years before the sad effects on popular housing resulting from the present policy will be clearly seen.

## What Now?

### Experience in post-War cooperative housing in Switzerland

*Translated from German*

By Hans Bernoulli

*Architect and City Planner*

#### *Unpleasant Conditions*

In Switzerland before the War the provision of dwellings for the great masses was left to the builders and speculators; they provided mostly two and three room apartments in tenement houses, each containing six, eight or twelve apartments. The tenement house was chosen as the most desirable type of building on account of its conveniences and because of the safety of the investment. The administration of one house with ten apartments was found to be simpler than that of ten one-family houses; the same was true of the maintenance, the construction and financing. Moreover the tenement house proved a convenient and popular capital investment.

On the whole the building of these tenement houses was done without a coordinated plan. They were built on vacant lots between existing houses in all sections of the suburbs. They were placed without any relation to each other because of the accidental possession of building sites. The building conditions were chaotic and uneconomical—the consequence of the real estate conditions. The suburbs of Swiss towns are split up into thousands of private lots on each of which the proprietor has the right to build. Except for a few regulations and restrictions all tenement house building was left to speculative accident. Therefore tenement houses contained all the low-cost dwellings; the industrial worker had no possibility of purchasing his own small house.

The War placed the building of small apartments on an entirely new basis. The government, after a war currency inflation tried a series of experiments of price regulation and deflation which especially affected the building industry

To the builder a general lowering of prices meant a grave danger: if it cost him today \$100,000 to erect a building and his competitor is able to construct the same building tomorrow for \$80,000 the builder must take a loss of \$20,000. But since it was expected that prices would drop not only from 100 to 80 but from 100 to 50, the building industry was entirely paralyzed.

The builder as well as the private individual could be induced to build only upon assurance that these losses which were caused by the lowering of prices would be covered. This was actually undertaken by the government. For the

general lowering of prices the government took steps to compensate the builder with subsidies. These subsidies had to cover the reduction in prices. Actually, 30% of the building costs in the first year, 20% in the second year and 10% in the third year, according to the progress of lowering prices, was paid from public funds to all persons who desired to build. The anticipated loss was covered at the start.

### *Luck in Misfortune*

The authorities had to pay from that time on subsidies for every building project. They were unexpectedly forced, therefore, to consider every project more critically than before, since in case of bankruptcy the government would have to take over the buildings. They were thus able to enforce standards higher than the existing legal regulations: large connecting open spaces which guarantee proper sunshine and ventilation, the building of small one-family houses in rows, which was possible before the War only in the rarest instances.

Cooperative housing projects could now be developed; for with subsidies the difficult problem of covering the second mortgage was easily solved. Another favorable circumstance was that the cities were interested in meeting the need for housing as quickly as possible. They, therefore, placed city owned land at the builders' disposal. Cooperative housing gradually superseded building on single split up lots. Attractive and economical residential districts were built. The best architects competed with each other in the task of planning this type of dwelling.

### *Separation of Building and Land*

It was a question of honor with many city administrations not to turn over to private ownership public property which had previously been carefully saved. Therefore, most of the larger tracts which were built up in the post-War period remained the property of the state or the city. A person eager to build—no matter whether a private individual, a builder or a housing cooperative society—did not buy the ground but leased it and built on the leased area. The leases ran from forty to fifty years and provided for a possible extension.

Building on leased ground offered to the new cooperative societies the great advantage that they did not have to spend their modest capital for the purchase of the land but could use their resources for building. Furthermore, many municipal administrations offered to their tenants the advantage of a lease which only gradually reached the full amount. For instance, the lease in the first year might be 20 cents per square meter, in the second year 30 cents and in the third year 40 cents. And only in the fourth year did the

lease reach the rate provided for at the time of the contract. The building of housing developments on leased ground was, therefore, especially favored by housing cooperative societies.

### *The Abundant Bill of Fare*

The organization of the building industry of the post-War period, however, was not at all uniform despite the conditions previously mentioned. In almost every municipality a different form of organization was applied. This great variety in local method of housing finance is especially interesting to the foreigner. The home population takes it for granted.

If we compare the newly erected buildings with regard to ownership of land, construction and management we find the following varieties:

1. Under the chaotic building of the pre-War period private individual builders built tenement houses on private plots which were sold to private individuals and were rented then by them.
2. Cooperative building societies, on the other hand, wishing to assure their associates the greatest possible independence, undertook only the purchase of the land, the erection and the financing of the one-family houses on a cooperative basis: land and building passed after completion into the ownership of the single associate.
3. Cooperative dwelling organizations on cooperatively owned land purchased the land, put up the buildings and retained the entire project under cooperative ownership. The organization rented the apartments to the individual associates without being able to cancel the lease.
4. Cooperative organizations leasing state land seized the great opportunity of building on leased areas and managed the project as one cooperative unit.
5. On state-owned land buildings were erected inexpensively and economically in the cooperative way. After the completion of the buildings the single houses on the public land passed into private ownership and private management.
6. Municipal dwellings were built by the community on public land and were rented by the community itself to individuals—as a rule, to officials. The management of the buildings was also in the hands of the municipality.

### *The Present Situation*

With the ceasing of the subsidies the liberty of action of the builder has again been restored. On the whole, the practice of the pre-War period has come back. Yet we are not on the same low level as in 1914.

Many architects, who were active in the building of large connecting dwellings, have appeared since then as builders and have undertaken the building of small apartments on their own account. The public has recognized in

cooperative housing a method by which it is able to enforce its own wishes. Despite great difficulties—sometimes even without subsidies and without state guarantee—the building of new groups of houses has been accomplished. Seeing the beautiful architectural results of the post-War period, the municipalities have awakened to the fact that in housing *laissez-faire* policy must not be permitted. Housing is a duty of community.

*Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's*

Should the land be owned by the state, cooperative building societies or by private individuals? In the hands of many private individuals land ownership becomes a claim to the right of unrestricted building; cooperative societies have somewhat more responsibility—but is not the cooperative society by nature only a temporary group of individuals? It seems to me that the land on which the extension of a city is to be built belongs to the city.

Should the building of low-cost housing be undertaken by individuals, cooperative societies, or by the state? Nobody can claim that the unwieldy state can build most cheaply. Nor after the experiences of the pre-War period can one expect that the individual building of the single lot owner would be more successful. The organization of building societies with an architect at the head who is conscious of his responsibility is the best way to serve the interests of individuals in large groups.

Should the ownership and management of the building be in the hands of the state, of a cooperative society or of private individuals? But living is surely a private matter par excellence. This is evident from the simple fact that one's own house is always best cared for.

So we come to the conclusion that the best plan is

Public land ownership

Cooperative construction of the buildings

Individual ownership and possession

## Reflections on Modern Architecture

By Alberto Sartoris

*Architect, Author of Gli Elementi Dell' Architettura Funzionale*

*Translated from Italian*

In the troubled atmosphere of modern life architecture constitutes one of the dominating influences which determine the character of a new culture. The creative abilities of the "new" architect are called upon every day to furnish the corrective data needed for the development and progress of a rational art.

There is no problem that needs more the cooperation of all young forces in the world than that of unification. This unification we are far from having reached; but the economic and political maturity of modern times will perhaps give us the lever that will overcome resistance, lifting in a rapid ascent the new artistic, intellectual and constructive structure.

Summing up the principles which since 1920 have directed my efforts and those of the pioneers of modern architecture, I will say that I never thought that the mechanical era was going to jeopardize architecture and art, because I have always believed that there is a strong affinity between the beautiful and the useful. Aesthetics is a fundamentally human function (and here I agree with LeCorbusier); it is more powerful than anything progress could invent—the fact that we want to create better things than before, more beautiful and less expensive, shows an urge toward purely aesthetic perfection, to which both craftsmanship and materials inevitably yield themselves. But this does not mean that architecture should depart from the strict requirements of functionalism. Indeed, it is perhaps only from the useful that we can find the way to beauty, through the function and purpose of structure.

Functional architecture is not necessarily just a primer to guide us in building for comfort and hygiene, but a masterful art conceived through an intensive quest for proportions, and able to furnish greater possibilities for the building up of masses in a continuous series.

The conception of modern architecture permits the union of architecture with economy. The need for a more efficient technology is the consequence of our present social order. True efficiency is reached through rationalization and standardization which act upon working methods both in the field of architecture and the building industry. This is one of the main reasons in favor of a modern architecture which is so well adapted to mass construction of minimum-rent dwellings. Assuming the necessity for a normal and methodical industrialization of building—as for example; prefabrication of parts, a complete revision of all the essential elements of the dwelling, the creation of new models that vary from country to country, with the correct definition of their

manifold purpose—modern architecture answers the purpose. The goal of these standards will be fully reached by promoting the employment of the available plastic and technical data but with an effective architectural interpretation.

In the low-cost construction which we want to study more particularly, there is no reason to fear that the standardization of the elements of the building would be in opposition to an advanced social concept of housing, which yields to community management more and more of the functions which used to be centered in the family. The logical reduction of the size of the dwelling and the system of grouping them together in large units is a consequence of the decentralization of the family. This phenomenon cannot be considered simply as a passing crisis. It requires the methodical development of a new architectural program for the standardized and normalized dwelling as a unit in a system.

In the case of mass building the employment of a skeleton system (steel or reinforced concrete) gives us building methods absolutely undreamed before which have become the basis of all modern construction. Thus the building acquires an immense freedom because the plan is entirely independent of the framework of the building and bearing walls are practically abolished. The invention and employment of new and light-weight materials for filling in between the structural supports are a logical consequence of this new technic.

To standardize, industrialize and normalize the essential elements of building does not mean to adopt fixed spans of ten or fifteen feet and story heights of nine, ten or twelve feet throughout. It means to establish elements that can be coupled, repeated, superimposed, alternated with the maximum freedom, thus permitting an infinite number of applications leading to the most varied results. Similarly it does not mean that apartment house buildings should take the shape of skyscrapers, because it has been shown that building above the eleventh floor becomes more expensive and therefore less efficient.\* Only up to the eleventh floor is found a progressive decrease in building costs.

Considering that in over-populated and badly planned communities mortality rises as high as fifty per thousand and that the average human life is fifty years if lived in clean surroundings and only thirty if lived in dark and unsanitary atmosphere, one is compelled to realize the importance of a modern architecture which solves the problem of orientation and reduces the handicaps from which people would otherwise suffer. Today more than ever, the application to architecture of modern theories with respect to light, heat, insulation, sanitation and ventilation is indispensable for a sound social economy. Large scale building in terms of modern architecture is a problem of first importance and its solution will contribute greatly towards the solution of the housing problem. In the field of low-cost dwellings the large building

\* Editor's note: This is not necessarily true of all countries or all types of construction.



of many stories represents the most satisfactory solution. Its use presupposes that the density of the population should not depend upon the height of the building, but upon the ratio between the cubical volume and the area of the lot. Functional architecture is inseparable from the modern problem of low-cost, low-rental housing. In spite of all difficulties of tradition, technique and present day city planning methods, modern architecture is moving toward a definite and clear goal.

## **The Basis for a Legislative Program for Public Housing**

By Charles S. Ascher

*Secretary, Public Administration Clearing House, Chicago*

The justification for direct federal construction of public low-cost housing was the need for speed. Men in the building trades were to be given employment even before local housing agencies could be organized and their staffs and members equipped to act in this new field. It is unprofitable to debate whether, if energies had been directed to building up strong local bodies at the beginning, as much might not have been accomplished. The justification for direct federal action is still speed—no longer merely to provide jobs, but to have some new structure to show, some embodiment of the ideals of the housing movement, on the strength of which to elicit the sustained interest of public officials, legislators and citizens. If the Housing Division of Public Works Administration can get projects under way this winter in fifteen or twenty cities, it will accomplish something essential for the development of a permanent program of public housing in this country.

It is equally clear, however, that no such permanent program can be predicated upon direct federal construction alone. The experience of other countries in housing, and of this country in other comparable fields, shows that the proper role of the central government is not construction and operation. It is leadership, if you will; the setting of standards, the carrying on of the needed studies, on which such standards are to be based, and the provision or facilitation of credit.

This analysis is not based upon hoary arguments about states' rights. My attempt is rather to consider the allocation of the functions of government in terms of the agency best equipped to carry out each phase of a housing program. Thus, if the provision of credit at low cost be essential, the flow of that credit can be better controlled federally, and better geared by federal financial agencies to the economic needs of the nation. Moreover, if money at low interest be considered one of the most effective forms of subsidy, that subsidy should be provided by the taxpayers best able to afford it. Students of public finance are coming to agree that the general property tax is breaking down as an adequate support for ordinary operations of local government; income and inheritance taxes can best be administered federally. Experience in many fields has already shown that the federal provision of credit (or funds, as by grants-in-aid) gives vast opportunities for federal control of standards.

The first vital legislative program is then federal. We need desperately a unified federal administration of housing credit. Merely to list the agencies

now authorized to operate in the field shows the opportunities for confusion: RFC, HOLC, FHA, PWA, the Subsistence Homesteads Division of the Department of the Interior, The Federal Reserve system, FCA, TVA,—and now a new endeavor to retire submarginal agricultural lands and rehabilitate their occupants, involving FERA, the Surplus Relief Corporation and the Department of Agriculture.

The so-called National Housing Act gives the Federal Housing Administrator power to undertake studies looking toward the development of a *comprehensive housing program* and a *sound credit system*: "Sec. 209. The Administrator shall cause to be made such statistical surveys and legal and economic studies as he shall deem useful to guide the development of housing and the creation of a sound mortgage in the United States, and shall publish from time to time the results of such surveys and studies." It is too early to tell whether the atmosphere generated by his initial specific activities will be congenial to such studies and whether it will lead to an effective correlation of federal government housing activity.

As to the complementary problems of state and local legislation, I am sure only that no universal formula will fit the amazingly various traditions, habit patterns, constitutions and administrative organizations of the several states and their hundreds of municipalities. The problem of housing, conceived in the terms represented by this exhibition, affects all the activities of the family not concerned with bread-winning. There is scarcely a department of the modern municipality with which a public housing administration will not have dealings: health, recreation, welfare, education, libraries, police, parks, public works. It is natural, therefore, to picture a direct municipal housing department taking its place beside the others. We may even posit such a scheme of things as an ultimate ideal and rejoice that there may be a few American cities (such as Milwaukee) ready to work under it.

The public administrator will join with the housing enthusiast in seeking to minimize the number of separate boards and independent agencies operating in the same territory. And yet there may be pressing considerations why such a program will be altogether inappropriate at this time in many states and communities. There are many important items which the housing enthusiast must take into consideration: state constitutional limitations on the power of a city to issue bonds; the lack of power in cities to issue special revenue bonds and the unwillingness of the legislature to grant such powers to cities, for reasons having nothing to do with housing; the fact that the political boundaries of a city so fail to fit the living community that a housing program must be undertaken on a broader basis; the fact that disorganization of local government is leading to the organization of newer functions of government on a regional basis, portending perhaps a realignment of public activities in the area.

It is too early to tell whether the enabling acts for the creation of public

housing agencies recently adopted in nine states will be effective in operation. Federal officials profess already to have found difficulty in dealing with authorities created under them; although these difficulties should not prove insurmountable if there is a genuine will to devolve power and responsibility on the local bodies.

One thing is certain, however. State enabling acts should be broad enough to enable the local agency to stand on its own feet, to carry out the complex operations of land acquisition, construction, and management, whatever the source of its funds. Nothing is more dangerous than to predicate a long-term program of action upon adventitious circumstances which seem to rule the moment—some of them having no more guarantee of permanence than a mere departmental ruling. It is entirely possible, for instance, that with the support of federal insurance permitted by Section 207 of the National Housing Act, private funds may be attracted to the low-cost housing field.

The experience of European countries with great cooperative building associations and with public utility societies may lead us to explore these possibilities further. The development of a cooperative spirit in this country, the promotion of consumer consciousness and organization are of course not legislative problems; but it will be found that few of the states have adequate laws for carrying on housing activities in this form. Existing statutes have been framed to meet different types of problems—the marketing or distribution of farm products chiefly—and need extensive reworking if they are to be useful for housing.

If we recognize that a housing program is intimately bound up with a program for orderly community development, we must be prepared to back our housing program with much more powerful legislative tools for community planning. Despite cheerful statistics about the number of communities that have municipal or regional planning agencies, too few of their plans have any teeth in them. Only a handful of states have laws which make it possible in any effective way to protect the integrity of the city plan. Most of the thousand zoning ordinances in this country were framed in days when cities looked forward to doubled populations and before adequate scientific analysis of the land-use needs of urban communities had become available. As a result, when we ask federal officials to impose standards of economic and social soundness for the projects to which they are to extend credit, even if the officials agree with us in principle, we are hard put to it to find for them in many cities any adequate data upon which standards might reasonably be based.

Antiquated building codes have long been railed against by architects, builders, manufacturers of the newer building materials, and those anxious to see lower rentals in decent, new construction. One of the most promising suggestions for fundamental change, however, is that the codes (in large cities at least) should specify certain standards of strength of materials, fire resistance,

insulation, etc., and leave to an expert commission the determination of what materials and methods qualify under these standards.

The so-called construction industry is at best a disorganized set of specialized agencies and at worst a vicious civil war among groups whose efforts should be supplementary. Certainly firm bounds must be set against some well-known competitive practices of contractors and builders as well as against irrational regulations and traditions of building trades labor.

If prematurely plotted subdivisions are ever to be useful again; if plots which have fallen in for tax delinquency are not to be made permanently sterile by chronically defective titles because of our laws governing the sale of tax titles; if cities are to be free to use surplus public lands for housing; if the cooperative efforts of neighboring landowners to pool their properties are not to be hamstrung by a non-cooperative minority—we shall need legislative programs on a broad front, leading to the amendment of obscure and technical clauses in city charters, of sections of finance and tax laws, which at first sight may seem remote from the purposes of housing.

But this is merely another indication of the complexity of the problems we deal with under the inadequate name of "housing". It means, too, that we shall probably not find any single, neat legislative formula which we can promulgate as a model, and for the adoption of which we can storm the country. But then, neither have the architects or site-planners produced such a model in their field. Both sets of problems are equally technical and will equally call for the best efforts of many minds. The experts in public administration and legislative drafting have a real role to play in furthering the cause of public housing.

# The National Real Property Inventory

By Robinson Newcomb

*Technical Director, Real Property Inventory*

It has been many years since banks loaned on the basis of hunch and knowledge of character. The habit of requiring a financial statement before making large loans has been growing, and of late the habit of looking into the position of the whole industry of the firm applying for loans as well as the balance sheet of the particular firm itself is being recognized as a growing necessity.

The construction industry and real estate business have not even approached the point of asking for financial statements. Nobody knew during the 20's what the balance sheet of building or of land was.

In the city of Cleveland six times as many lots were put on the market in one year as the normal growth of the population could absorb. In other cities the situation was even worse. Lots were put on the market because people were buying them, and people were buying them because they were being put on the market, and because other people were buying them. Nobody thought to ask whether there was really a need for what was being bought and sold.

In many cities there was a large housing shortage in 1920. No one knew how large it was. Without inquiring into the amount of new construction needed, money was advanced for almost any project proposed. Within five or six years in many cities the shortage had been met, but no one was aware of the fact. The construction industry was geared at full speed and continued to operate as long as people continued to invest. As a result the real estate industry collapsed early and construction was one of the first major industries to go under. New construction, even after the recent crash, is still based on hunches rather than facts. People who were enthusiastic in the twenties are gloomy in the thirties. The facts did not entirely justify enthusiasm in the twenties, nor do they justify the gloom of the thirties.

If housing is to operate with a balance sheet rather than on hunches it is necessary to know the current supply and demand for real property, and it is necessary to know this in detail. A large oversupply of office buildings in a particular section of town does not mean that there is an oversupply of residential properties in another part of the town, or even an oversupply of office buildings in parts of the town not yet fully developed. In order to know what the supply is we need to know for each section of the town what the number of units of each type and in each price range may be, what services they afford and from what economic resources they may expect to be absorbed.

This means that we need to know, for instance, how many single family units valued at \$5,000, rentable at \$50 a month, equipped with all conveniences, may

be found in each portion of the town, how many three-room apartments and how many five-room apartments, how many two-family houses equipped and unequipped are held for \$50 or \$40. We need to know how many of these properties are in good condition and suitable for occupancy, how many need minor repairs, how many need major repairs, and how many should be torn down.

A complete picture of the supply of the property is not even half of the story. We need to know the demand for the property and that demand is two-fold, effective demand, i.e., a demand with purchasing power to back it up, and social demand, i.e., families needing housing but lacking the income with which to pay for it. The effective demand is evidenced by the number of families receiving incomes and this demand may be gauged by learning the number paying various rents in each part of the town. The second demand is measured by the number of families, including the number of doubled-up families, and the amount of crowding. If there are more families than units, there is obviously a greater need for desirable housing than there is income with which to pay a reasonable return on the investment in such housing. Under the profit system the methods for taking care of the social demand are quite different from the methods for taking care of the effective demand and both types must therefore be known.

But even a complete knowledge of the demand for property at any given time does not tell what the long time demand may be. We need to know the trend in the supply of properties and the trend in the number of families and family incomes. If the number of families in the city or in a particular area is declining, a shortage of property at any given moment may not mean that new houses should be built. Speaking in terms of investment it may be more economical to permit crowding for a year or two instead of building new properties for which there will be but little use in the future.

The Real Property Inventory\* is designed to furnish basic statistical facts upon which mortgage interests, contractors, building mechanics as well as architects or city planners, and all the other groups interested in housing might base building programs. If the rent which can be secured will not pay a proper return on the properties, some new method for providing these properties must be found. The method will depend on the political, social and economical conditions prevailing. It may be outside the profit system, or it may be a reduction in construction costs or a combination of the two. In accordance with the facts shown, the building industry would be able to plan its program more intelligently than would be the case if they had no idea of the extent of the shortage or oversupply. Architects could estimate employment probabilities and plan buildings in accordance with long-time trends. City planners would know whether 10" or 4" water mains would be required or none at all, if new school buildings or

\*The Federal Government has carried out Real Property Inventories in 63 cities. New York, Philadelphia and other large cities not included in the original 63 cities have also made such strides with Government aid.

more recreation facilities would be needed within a given period of time. Thus a reasonably accurate city development could be laid out and a balance sheet for the building industry secured.

To illustrate, an experimental study was once made of the probable housing requirements of a large city. That study indicated that 75,000 residential units would be needed during the decade. By the merest chance, The Dodge Corporation and building permit records indicate that almost exactly that number were built but they were built in a five year period. For the next five years there was very little activity. The data at hand now indicate a need for at least 10,000 new residential units but few are being built. Builders, merchants, bankers, real estate men, planners, architects—no one paid much heed to the facts as to requirements in 1922 and were consequently caught in 1926. They are today paying a little more attention to the facts.

In the Spring of 1933 banks and insurance companies were seriously considering dumping their mortgages in the city alluded to above in an effort to salvage something. Receivers for closed banks were certain that they might as well take what they could get. Going banks knew that if millions of dollars of property and mortgages were dumped on the market, there would be no market left. If dumping was to be done, they were wondering if perhaps they should not dump first. It looked as though home owners and mortgage owners alike were going to be wiped out.

But while these matters were being discussed behind closed doors the first inventory of real property was quietly being undertaken. Every property and every family in the metropolitan area was recorded. The announcement of the results stopped the preparations for liquidation almost overnight. Apartment house vacancies turned out to be only half that generally supposed. In many parts of town there were more families than residential quarters. The city had not lost 20% of its population as commonly believed. It had actually gained in population since 1930. Instead of a constantly decreasing demand for property it looked as if the first return of employment would result in a housing shortage and the mortgage losses of the banks had not begun to equal losses sustained in many other investment fields. Acknowledgment of the facts prevented hysterical action.

The results of the first inventory proved so useful in practice as well as in theory that the Federal Government undertook demonstration inventories in each state during the first part of 1934. Encouraged by this, many cities not included in the Federal list undertook inventories of their own. New York City made the most comprehensive one of all, making detailed examination and report for each type of commercial and industrial property, as well as all residential properties. The concept of a balance sheet for housing is consequently spreading and the findings of real property inventories should serve as a guide to planned action. As Mr. Thomas Holden has pointed out in the *Architectural*



Record, half of the cities covered have more families than dwelling units, while only a third have more dwelling units than families. This without taking account of dwellings now occupied but unfit for such occupancy. The housing program of the Federal Government or of local agencies should be quite different in the first group of cities than in the second. Certain cities have a serious shortage now. Others will reach such a state soon. Programs can be mapped out now that facts are available as a guide.

Aside from the shortage of housing revealed by the inventories, the most significant fact disclosed is the unbelievably low standard of American housing. In cities in which median rents were under \$15 over a third of the units had no water closets; nearly half have neither tubs nor showers, and a sixth were without running water. Cities whose median rent (or its equivalent) was \$18 to \$21 were cities in which a fifth of the family quarters were without water closet facilities.

The correlation between poor housing and low rents in these figures is very close. The families without proper facilities in most cases are families unable to pay the rent or purchase price now charged for decent dwellings. The inventory indicates that our present housing methods have failed. More efficient construction techniques as well as other equally radical changes in the methods providing for these needs, such as financial setup, cost of money, amortization period, etc., are obviously necessary.

The inventories have indicated as much about details in housing needs as they have about the general conditions. They show, for instance, in tract 90 of Manhattan, that in apartments renting for over \$30 vacancies in units without mechanical refrigeration are twice as great as vacancies in units with mechanical refrigeration; vacancies in \$50 apartments less than those in \$30 apartments, and those in \$75 apartments less than those in \$50 units. There is obviously a direct relationship between special services and percent of occupancy. This, of course, has no relation to low rental housing where rental resources determine the choice of the dwelling.

Though keeping properties in repair pays in the long run, it pays only if the neighborhood is kept up. The inventory reveals that even in the better areas, decay is spreading. In the area bounded by Central Park, 70th Street, the Hudson and 125th Street in Manhattan, over a third of the buildings need minor repairs and 5% need major repairs. Some of the most crowded conditions to be found in Manhattan are near Central Park. Unless group action is undertaken, unless neighborhoods are treated as a unit, and owners can be brought to act together, the Inventory points to the possibility that the history of the Lower East Side will be repeated with variations in other parts of Manhattan.

Plans for action in this and other areas must be made before it is too late. The Inventory is designed to make such planning possible.

## The New Housing Problem in the Large City

By Henry Wright

*Associate Architect of Sunnyside, L. I., and Radburn, N. J.*

In the rapidly changing nature of city life, affecting in its turn family habits and family make-up, the last decade greatly extended the gap between the individual's ideal of a "home" and his ability to secure satisfactory conveniences at a reasonable cost. The greater percent of our population cannot now afford proper housing; so that society as a whole must assume the responsibility for opening new channels which will make possible decent and pleasant shelter for the people whom we expect to continue to carry on the life of our cities. The problem is by no means confined to the lowest income groups.

In the rapidly growing cities of the past few decades the search for better homes resulted in a general exodus from the center to the periphery of the urban unit. The speculative builder took advantage of the first manifestations of this suburban migration, and gave it further impetus. Though this commercial activity profited its advocates, the public in general gained little benefit, unless we consider bankrupt cities an asset. This rapidly increasing ring of suburbs demanded new services and drained the population which had been paying for the already existing services in the central area. Regardless of the ultimate fate of the large city, one of the outstanding problems for the present generation must be to try to salvage its assets and prevent a recurrence of the damages resulting from speculative building.

In most cities there are many areas between the business centers and the suburbs which though seldom recognized are potentially useful and desirable for housing. Frequently they have been the result of inadequate development or have been overlooked in the rush to the suburbs. A bold policy of city rehabilitation might develop these blighted areas for residential use, more attractive and far more convenient than most of the recent subdivisions in the outer fringe of our cities. To seek out such areas and attack their special problems so as to recapture and develop them should be a matter of common interest to the citizens searching for convenient living quarters and to city officials attempting to maintain good services. It is only through a bold and successful effort to rehabilitate such areas that the financial structure of our cities can be reestablished or even maintained.

The study for the Queens Astoria area carried out by a group of architects and city planners (Carol Aronovici, Henry Churchill, William A. Lescaze, Albert Meyer and Henry Wright) must be regarded as a typical, as well as a specific example of a method of attack on this important problem. It is significant that we find a district entirely adequate in size and most appropriate in

location for progress in rehabilitation and community building, centrally located in New York. It may be said that most of the 200,000 new houses and small multi-family dwellings, and no small part of the 300,000 new tenements which were built in Greater New York from 1920-1930, have been located in the outer districts along subway lines in areas 7 to 12 miles from the center of Manhattan. But fortunately between the 3 and 7 mile circles there still exist considerable areas of open or partially developed land. This is especially true of the Queens sector, because of the delayed opening of adequate transit connections over Queensborough Bridge. Because of the creation of new transit facilities the most active new industrial growth of New York has taken place in this area but the momentum of far-flung real estate speculation has overlooked the increasing value of this area for residential purposes.

The 488 acres embraced in this study is the only great open area lying wholly within the 3 mile radius of Grand Central Station, which is easily reached with rapid transit. The problem presented by such an area is one very different from that encountered in developing new outlying suburban sites. In the first place, the area has a smattering of buildings and improvements which entails not only more exacting planning and larger amounts of initial capital to round them up and consolidate them, but requires decidedly more imagination to see in the dreary mess left by haphazard development, the possibilities of order and attractiveness. The suburban developer has sought the easier way of utilizing previously unspoiled land, because he could not appreciate how soon the beauties of nature subjected to exploitation disappeared or how it may be possible to restore the attractiveness of an area where natural beauty has been partially destroyed.

Although there is some extra cost for land and improvements in such older areas, as this Queens sector, these are easily offset by greater convenience of location. Rehabilitation requires handling on a larger scale as well as utilizing somewhat different types of dwellings from those in the farther suburbs. Many of the costs of a new suburban area are evaded or postponed so as to render it apparently possible to build detached houses on large lots. The interior area has already faced and absorbed some of these costs. To meet their moderate increase of land price, representing actual and inevitable city costs, there must be a somewhat more closely woven housing pattern. This in turn reduces its marketability as individual units and calls for a type of house less adaptable to exploitation, though actually more desirable and especially more economical for the family of small means. For many such families, renting is more reasonable than owning. Rent in its turn can be made relatively more acceptable in contrast to owning since housing for those of small means becomes a matter of public concern and is taken care of by limited dividend or other reliable business or municipal agencies whose main objective is to serve their great need rather than to make large profits from its exploitation.

The community is the normal unit for living and the character of that life determines the character of a people. Even in so-called "better" economic periods only a small part of the entire population has been properly housed by individualistic methods. Some way of providing proper shelter for the larger part of our population must be devised and such areas as that suggested in this study can be advantageously utilized. It will require broad planning methods and bold public action to create communities on a scale and of a character to be effective. Cities must face this problem whether or not the prompting may come in the interest of unemployment relief or the more lasting realization that no city can long survive a cancerous growth almost at the heart of the vital organism.

## **The Management Problem in Public Housing**

By Abraham Goldfeld

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Public housing constitutes overt recognition by the government of the fact that private capital has not proved equal to the job of providing decent shelter for a very large portion of the American population. Through public housing, government assumes the responsibility of providing adequate shelter for those who cannot afford to pay rentals as required by present business method, at the same time avoiding as far as possible interfering with the established system of profit in private enterprise.

Inherent in the terms of such enterprise are certain difficulties that do not confront the operator of a purely commercial venture, on the one hand, or the management of a housing program under a socialist government on the other. The present discussion is intended not so much to solve as to delineate some of these problems more clearly than they are commonly stated.

Foremost, both chronologically and in order of magnitude, is the question of the selection of tenants. By definition public housing exists for those individuals and families who cannot afford to pay a business rent—for those, that is, who cannot pay what it costs to provide comfortable and sanitary living quarters under private ownership. To permit any others to receive the advantages of governmental subsidies and low operating costs would at the same time deprive that number of intended beneficiaries of their due and conflict with the premises of the plan by creating competition with the owners of private developments.

It is easy to realize that without rigid checks the publicly owned houses would soon be filled with families who could afford more expensive accommodations but who would make every effort to take advantage of any opportunity to reduce their rental budget. American municipal government being what it is, the pressure from political personages for the admission of unqualified "friends" is likely to be all but irresistible. In a word, unless the utmost precautions are taken, those for whom the buildings are designed will be the last to stand the chance of occupying them.

Such are the major impediments to the very first step in putting a public housing project into operation. Obviously, they will have to be taken into account in all planning. Because of their evident seriousness, is cynical indifference the most sensible attitude to take? Shall all hope be abandoned of solving the problem justly, and consequently of achieving the prime social purpose of public housing?

Not necessarily. Courageous management, well fortified by social philosophy

and self-respecting professional competence, can attack the problem with healthy assurance. This kind of management is admittedly rare, but it is not, even today, completely non-existent, and it can be developed.

In taking the next logical step in the working out of the larger social purposes of public housing, the need for such management is equally apparent. A ready-made pragmatic justification for paternalism in housing is at hand in the established fact that the slums cost society more in simple terms of cash outlay than they save their owners and tenants combined. The responsible groups that mould public opinion in America are slowly becoming aware of the high correlation between the subhuman living conditions in the slums and juvenile delinquency, disease, crime, and all other forms of social disorganization. The State, therefore, by eradicating the slums hopes to achieve not only the humane end of sheltering its low paid wage earners in decency, but also the mercenary end of saving its taxpayers a considerable fraction of the present cost of such social services as hospitalization, police and fire protection.

It is to be hoped, of course, that the State will not depend upon police power to accomplish its ultimate benevolent ends. There are better ways. Few students of housing would deny that large scale developments can and properly should provide for the many community needs that are at present tended badly or not at all. Provision of facilities for recreation and the wholesome use of leisure time ought certainly be made in every public housing development. But where are the managers capable of understanding the implications of a housing program in this sense? Where are the men or women technically competent to handle the routine work of building management and who are at the same time imbued with social spirit enough to see their job as something far transcending mere building superintendence?

They are not available, certainly, in the field of commercial apartment management. They will for the most part have to be specially recruited and specially trained. Only in this way can the full potential benefits of a public housing program both to the tenants and to society at large be realized.

No matter how rapidly public housing may be accepted as a legitimate function of the state, it will be at least a generation before its benefits can be made available to any considerable number of slum dwellers. Meanwhile, what of the possibilities of making the influence of each development felt for some distance around it? Shall the recreational and educational facilities, for example, be open for use by the neighbors not actually living in the houses? It will be the management's job to keep each development from being a little island of comparative decency amid the surrounding squalor and to make it count for something for the whole community. Otherwise the occupants of the development itself are likely to come to feel themselves inmates of an institution rather than free citizens; their neighbors outside will build up resentment against the special privilege seemingly embodied in the houses. Thus

in the end no one will benefit spiritually and only a few materially. Here again it is plain that management of no common variety is needed to do the job in the only way that will make the effort worth while.

Consider next the question of the financial relations of tenant and landlord in a public housing development. In cases of rent delinquency, will the city follow the practice of private landlords, dispossessing regardless of the causes of failure to pay? Or does the basic purpose of public housing imply a totally different attitude toward this problem? Probably public ownership will take cognizance of such factors in rent delinquency as unemployment and family emergencies. If so, the responsibility for knowing the facts in each case and for making an equitable adjustment will devolve upon the manager. It will not be a job to be done casually between telephone calls or organized on the basis of simple routine.

A different problem, and probably simpler of solution, will be the elimination of petty graft. It is an American habit of long standing to look upon the city as a legitimate field for "chiseling", and we may be sure that in a public housing development the tenants, employees, and small-job contractors will not overlook the new opportunity. To build up a body of opinion and an entire public attitude uncompromisingly opposed to the practice will be the task of the management.

What makes these problems of special importance to public housing in America is the fact that we have as yet no large scale first hand experience in low-cost housing of any kind, and absolutely no experience, large or small in public housing. Fortunately we do have a small body of experience in private experiments to draw upon. A few model housing developments of various kinds have been in existence long enough in America to have amassed some knowledge of the difficulties involved. At present no detailed comparisons are available as to the relative success of different methods.

One problem of basic policy will have to be solved: namely, what form of organization the management will take. Two choices seem apparent: our cities might turn over the completed building to a non-profit-making social agency to manage, or they might create a new non-political department of experts and technicians to do the job. There are obvious dangers in both procedures but to dismiss either as not worth trying is to lose an opportunity for experiment of great potential value.

Obviously a mere shift in ownership of large scale housing is not enough to solve the slum problem. In addition there must be management involving intelligence, tact, expert knowledge, social vision, and a high type of personal ability and integrity. The success of public housing in America ultimately depends upon the individuals who are to be the connecting link between tenant and government.

## **The Outlook for Low-Cost Housing in America**

By Carol Aronovici

*Director of the Housing Research Bureau of New York City*

Sabotage on the part of property-owning and mortgage-holding interests has nearly wrecked the modest program for low-cost housing which the United States Government projected as a minor part of the national reconstruction program.

It is quite clear that the government was not prepared to meet either the immediate needs for housing or the pressure that the vested interests brought to bear against large housing enterprises with government funds. The real difficulty in the development of the national program lies, however, in the lack of harmony between the complex social and economic forces of the present day and the essential requirements of low-cost housing.

Of all consumer goods housing is the most lasting, the slowest to advance in the technique of construction, the last to adapt itself to changes in family make-up. The automobile changes with every season in outer form if not in mechanical perfection. Industry is engaged in a continuous junking of its mechanical devices in order to keep up with the progress of invention, either in the perfection of goods or in the saving in labor and materials. Housing alone is still out of step with the technique of the age.

Our national expenditure for shelter is twice as great as our expenditure for automobiles, nearly as great as our expenditure for food and more than twice the amount expended for clothing; yet each season has its automobile, each decade its industrial technology, but never each generation its house.

One of the paradoxes of the building industry is that while the man-hour productivity in every major industry such as automobiles, rubber tires and blast furnaces has increased in the course of the last generation from a hundred to four hundred percent; in the building industry, particularly in the dwelling house building trades man-hour productivity has remained practically stationary. At the same time wages, the cost of building materials and of the so-called non-creative promotion services have been increasing in totals and in rate per unit of construction.

It is generally conceded by statisticians that the national wealth of the country is around four hundred billion dollars, one sixth of which is in dwellings. This vast portion of our national wealth, while it is the most certain as a revenue producer, represents the highest cost of consumer goods production per unit of investment and carries the largest burden of taxation of any of the consumer goods resources of the country. It supplies from 85 to 88 percent of the resources of our municipal governments in addition to county and state taxes and



income taxes. This tax burden rises to 15 to 20 percent of the rent paid by tenants. This tax burden becomes particularly exacting upon the rent payer where the owners hold land at speculative prices and the municipalities join hands with the owners in accepting the economic hopes of the owner as a basis for land assessments. The higher the burden of taxation on land in obsolescent areas the greater the burden upon the renter, who in the end must carry taxes upon lands which are no longer suited for his use and upon buildings which are maintained at a low standard of decency.

Much has been said about the land tax as the most reasonable means of creating a balance between private investment and public interest in the use of land. From the point of view of adequate community planning, however, and from the point of view of low-cost housing, I doubt whether this land tax, which the renters must meet, has been wholly beneficial. Heavy land taxes would not be conducive to a low percentage of land coverage, which would be necessary to avoid crowding buildings into the present deadly block plan and to make space for light, air and playgrounds. The present system of taxation on dwellings, as well as the various land tax methods which have been proposed and partly tried out, has failed to do more than encourage development of land in order to produce the needed revenue to meet taxation. It has not and will not of itself create a condition of free land use in harmony with the best interest of home building on a scale and along standards of land use consistent with modern times.

#### *Consumer Resources*

The period following 1922 with its high cost of labor and materials and its speculative land values witnessed a stupendous development in real estate enterprise. Apartment houses grew larger and costlier, investment per unit of habitation doubled and rents increased proportionately. To beat speculative land values buildings in the centers of our cities grew taller and outlying areas were developed for which there could not possibly be enough population in two generations. In the outlying districts of our cities, under pressure of political influence, public utilities were extended at fabulous cost to the tax payers into regions not needed for housing and not ready for development. At the same time large tracts of undeveloped or blighted areas in the centers of our cities remained untouched—parasites upon the social life of the community.

The economic crisis of 1930 brought in its wake the realization that we had just finished a ghastly real estate spree. The building industry was dead, the investment in real estate was beset with ruinous carrying charges, while credit for housing purposes, despite a growing shortage, was nowhere to be had. It was at such a time that the National Reconstruction Administration brought housing into the fore-front of its recovery program. The government was at last to take a hand in reviving the defunct building industry, provide employ-

ment and create decent houses for the millions who had no share in the lavish investments which characterized the Coolidge and the Hoover eras. Land-owners, builders, architects and housing reformers rushed to Washington to get their share of the government's millions. Few, however, succeeded in securing government funds. Banks, savings institutions, mortgage companies, insurance companies, owners of large real estate who were experienced in the art of lobbying, soon raised the issue of "government in business." Cries of Communism, Socialism, and the milder-isms were soon broadcast by every means at the disposal of organized propaganda agencies. From that time on we were dragged through a period of setting up legislative and administrative machinery for housing, only to find that each device in turn did not work and needed to be replaced by other devices no more effective.

I do not mean that nothing at all has been accomplished. Dr. Edith Elmer Wood points out in this book that some construction is going on and more is contemplated. However, the sum total of all of the government's present activities and the projects still to be carried out represent so insignificant a contribution to the solution of the housing problem that they may be said to be negligible. They are very few in number and they cannot reach the masses that most need housing.

Out of the activities of the federal government has grown a realization that there is little in the way of a broad national program which could serve as a guide to both government and private investor in the building of low-cost homes. The recently completed property inventories of the federal government show a great need for repairs and a real shortage of housing. This inventory fails, however, to reveal the amount of housing ready for the junk heap, how much overbuilding of unmarketable housing exists and the relation between vacancies in costly dwellings and in low-cost housing. These facts, if available, would furnish a more accurate and practical basis for a low-cost housing program.

No housing program intended to provide low-cost, low-rental housing is possible without taking strict account of the rent paying resources of the tenants. The Brookings Institute of Washington, D. C., in its recent publication, *America's Capacity to Consume* gives the following distribution of incomes up to \$2,500 per year:

Earnings (in dollars)	In Each Class	Number (in thousands) Cumulative (From lower to higher Earnings)	In Each Class	Percentage of Total Cumulative (From lower to higher Earnings)
Under 500 .....	5,241	5,241	12.77	12.77
500 to 1,000 .....	12,800	18,041	31.19	43.96
1,000 to 1,500 .....	10,000	28,041	24.36	68.32
1,500 to 2,000 .....	6,200	34,241	15.11	83.43
2,000 to 2,500 .....	2,820	37,061	6.87	90.30

This table shows that 90% of the workers in the United States receive less than \$2,500.00 per year and that 44% receive less than \$1,000.00 per year. Here is the real basis for a low-cost housing program.

The effort towards the recovery of the building industry and real estate finance through the recently enacted National Housing Act may result in some rehabilitation of old buildings and some savings of investments. It will not, however, bring a solution of the housing problem for those who live in sub-standard houses. This task will only be achieved by new systems of building and finance economy which would harmonize with the rent paying resources of lower income families.

Because of the high cost and low productivity of labor, because of the increasing cost of materials encouraged by the New Deal, and heavy tax burdens, low-cost housing is at present impossible. Money must be made available at a rate of interest and amortization low enough to meet the difference between the cost of building and the rental resources of those who must be housed. The federal program for housing finance has failed to consider this balance between cost and rents. Low-cost housing is a national issue which requires a change in established business methods and a new attitude on the part of the government on the question of *finance economy* versus *social economy*.

#### *Slum Clearance and the Drift of Population*

When it was found last year that new construction of housing on open lands was challenged by the financial and property-owning interests of the country, slum clearance was put forward by the Administration as the immediate solution of the housing problem. This meant absorbing lands now barely producing their carrying charges and paying out public funds for obsolete buildings which should have been demolished a generation ago as a menace to public health and decency. It also meant the salvaging of slipping land values in the slums. Slum clearance had all the "advantages" of conserving individual investment. In addition slum clearance was to the advantage of the real estate business since it did not add to the sum total of existing housing accommodations for the lower income families. As in most of our city planning it was assumed that housing is of necessity a local problem and should be solved locally. The facts are quite different. Thousands of families have already left the Lower East Side of New York, not only because they could get better and cheaper homes elsewhere, but because the whole trend of population is away from congested centers. This situation prevails in most of our larger cities where population has been moving towards the peripheries of the municipalities and where industry has been driven to outlying areas by high taxes and high land values.

Little attention was paid to the fact that any absorption of slum areas carries with it all of the present market values of land and buildings plus the cost of

the new housing. Nor was consideration given to the fact that slum clearance means a time-consuming process of litigation, demolition and disorder during which provision must be made for the families living in the buildings—provisions that should be made prior to the demolition of the buildings. Unless such provisions are made a housing shortage will result that would eventuate in higher rents and lower standards. New York, Cleveland, and other large cities need to rid themselves of slums: it is hardly just, however, to expect the poorer of the population to carry the largest burden of slum clearance. Slums are, of course, social liabilities, but since their existence is due to the neglect and indifference of our cities in checking slum development, the community as a whole should bear the cost. Every city in the country has ample space in which to rehouse most of the slum dwellers in localities better suited for their needs and at a lower cost than is involved in slum clearance. It is there that low-cost housing should be built. Europe has shown the way, can we not afford to follow its example?

Many of our slums are merely the hand-me-downs of past generations and the areas which they occupy are often better suited for uses other than low-cost housing. These slum areas if cleared and replanned would solve many other problems such as value depreciation, transit congestion, etc. This is certainly true of Lower Manhattan, New York, where the slum area in the very shadow of the world's greatest financial district affords an opportunity for reconstruction along broad lines—a section where the workers in the financial district could be decently and conveniently housed.

Even the property owners are apprehensive regarding the effort to produce low-cost housing on the Lower East Side of New York. This is clearly expressed in a memorandum by Mr. A. Pearson Hoover, First Vice-President of G. Richard Davis Company, Inc., of New York, which was read before the Apartment House Group of the Real Estate Board of New York.

“Low-cost housing presupposes low-cost land. That would seem to be axiomatic. It would seem to be a basic principle. Now the assessed valuation of property in the Lower East Side for the year 1931 averaged \$13.60 per square foot. Consequently, the price of land alone makes the construction of housing for those in the lower income bracket of doubtful economic development. Upon land costing \$13.00 per square foot, a six-story dwelling, with automatic elevators, with interest at 4% and amortization 2% brings the room rentals per month to around \$14.50. Using a twelve-story structure, brings the average room rent per month to about \$12.85. This is with partial tax exemption, with a fifty percent coverage for six stories, and forty percent coverage for twelve stories.

“The difficulty we get into in regard to low-cost housing is that we confuse slum clearance with low-cost housing. They are two separate and distinct problems. They have been made one, not from economic considerations, but simply

from a standpoint of social reform. If we take property in the Lower East Side section and, through a Federal subsidy, undertake to provide housing accommodations for between \$6.00 and \$8.00 per room a month, we are simply going contrary to economic principles and the result will be a demoralizing of existing real estate value through the area contiguous and adjacent to the subsidized development. Such could not occur and consequently you are further deteriorating a section which you are desirous of building up from the standpoint of economic value."

With the above statement of the business aspect of New York's slum clearance we all agree. The sooner we separate the problem of slum clearance from the problem of the housing needs of the masses, the sooner we shall find ourselves on the way to a national housing program.

*Summary:*

The sub-standard condition of lower rental housing affects eight to ten million families, most of which in all other respects are living normal lives and serving society as efficient producers and as self-respecting citizens.

The tenement laws, the inspection systems, the charitable and welfare services of earlier days are no longer sufficient to raise the standard of the homes of those who need better accommodations and cannot purchase them in the open market.

Our whole method of housing finance is incompatible with low-cost housing and our tax system merely adds to the burden created by the so-called "sound economic principles" of finance. Our archaic methods of construction and the whole organization of the building industry will have to be completely overhauled and placed on a new technological basis more in harmony with other industrial standards of production and production costs. Our building and planning laws, so dear to the suppliers of building materials and the land owners, will have to be revamped to meet the needs of low-cost housing. And last but not least the architect will have to be re-educated, if out of the "art" of concealing, disguising and tattooing modern utilitarianism he is to find his way back to the service of building homes and communities of homes in which human beings may share in the advantages of living as civilized beings in an advanced civilization.

## **Outline of the Exhibition of Slum Clearance and Low-cost Housing of the City of New York**

By G. Lyman Paine, Jr.

*Technical Director of the Exhibition*

The story of the Exhibition is told in pictures. For clarity the pictures are arranged in a sequence showing (1) the conditions under which millions of people now live in New York, (2) the obstacles that stand in the way of changes in these conditions, (3) the advantages to the community of good housing and the results achieved in this field in foreign countries.

The following is the sequence of the exhibits as arranged at the Museum of Modern Art.

1. *The significance of slum clearance and low-cost housing to the city of New York.* New York City is as populous and as wealthy as many an entire state and country; the existence of slums and blighted areas reflects our failure as builders of communities.

2. *The making of slums and blighted areas.* The spread of slums and blighted areas destroys both money values and human values.

3. *A study of two neighborhoods.* Two slum clearance study areas showing the low-rent levels which new public housing must meet.

4. *Slums cause economic waste.* Police and fire control, hospitalization and criminal rehabilitation are indirect burdens on the city budget; slums tax this part of the budget most heavily.

5. *Steps in the growth of a slum.* Slum growth is due to bad community planning and lack of government housing regulations.

6. *Rotten buildings and physical conditions.* Bad housing conditions and their effect upon the lives of the people.

7. *The evolution of the tenement.* Today's tenement house evolved from a prize-winning design in 1879. 67,000 of these obsolete outlawed tenements are still in use.

8. *Crowded land and crowded people.* Land sweating and rent sweating cause disease, crime, reduced vitality and low civic responsibility.

9. *Crowding unnecessary.* England limits land use to 12 families per acre. No city in the United States, if properly planned, needs to tolerate congestion of dwellings.

10. *Why doesn't the American worker live here?* A panorama of what European countries have achieved by public enterprise in re-housing their workers. Is the slum, the flop-house and the hobo jungle the best we can do?

11. *Low wages of huge groups a controlling factor.* The total income of 42% of the families in the United States equalled in 1929 the incomes of one-tenth of one per cent of the families which received the largest annual income.

12. *Shall we do anything about it?* Unless we raise wages or lower rents, American families must continue to live in slums. Building costs, land costs and money costs must be reduced if we are to have good housing for the masses. Rents must not be lowered by reducing wages in the building industry.

13. *Why are present rents too high for 10,000,000 families?* If we are to re-house low-paid workers, governments must make up the difference between what they need and what they can afford.

14. *High rents due to taxes and high interest rates.* The high cost of money is the major cause of high rents and is the main reason why private initiative has not supplied good low-cost housing. Limited dividend corporations and cooperative ventures in this country have been only partially successful. Grants of money, low interest and large scale construction are mainly responsible for the success of European low-cost housing.

15. *High rents due to obsolete building codes and customs.* Our building codes are antiquated, complex, wastefully exacting and without uniformity. Piece-meal construction, bad site planning, archaic methods of handling utilities add to the rent burden.

16. *High rents due to inefficiency in the building industry.* The building industry is utterly disorganized. The efficiency rate has not changed in a generation while some other industries have increased in efficiency 400 per cent in the same period of time. The cure lies in mass planning, mass production and a new technique of building.

17. *High rents due to high cost of land.* Every dollar added to the land cost is an additional burden on rent. We are rapidly approaching a stationary population of about 10,000,000 in New York City. The supply of land is ample for decent housing for all the people. Crowding is unnecessary.

18. *Land value and income.* Present market values of land are far beyond the capacity of the people to pay for its use.

19. *Land values and speculation.* Population is no longer increasing as rapidly as in the last generation and is tending to become stationary. Speculative values will never be realized. It would take New York nearly a thousand years at its present rate of growth to fill up the land as permitted by over-optimistic zoning laws. When we pay speculative prices for land we are asked to pay now for all profits which it is hoped a millennium may bring.

20. *Land use gives true land value.* Land values become real only as the people's resources and land needs are real. There is no shortage of land if it is properly planned.

21. *The rugged individual vs. society.* Control of land and control of credit are linked together. Credit must be harmonized with real, rather than speculative, wishful values.

22. *Problems of land assembly.* To re-plan and re-build housing facilities requires land in large tracts. The assembling of these areas is extremely difficult at present. A few men by "hold-up" prices can make impossible almost any housing scheme. What is "just compensation" for land and buildings? The English assume that the value of land is the capitalization of the income to be derived from its use in a way that is *socially desirable*.

23. *It requires courage.* It is socially imperative to have low-cost housing; it means housing for millions in a new environment permitting a good and complete life instead of a slum existence.

24. *We can solve the problem.* The city is a machine intended to function in the interest of normal living, efficient labor and creative leisure. If human needs change, the machine must be changed; otherwise slum districts, blighted cities and blighted lives must result. Courage, determination and money used as freely as we use them for warfare will build up the home, rehabilitate the lives of millions of families and build a stronger nation.

25. *The old-law tenement flat.* (This exhibit is a full-size reproduction of a three-room flat from an old-law tenement.) These buildings were declared below standard 33 years ago, yet there are 67,000 of them still standing, each one packed with flats like this.

26. *New conditions demand new actions.* We have new leisure, new standards. As working hours have been reduced, time for recreation has increased. These new standards of health, comfort, convenience and privacy must bring better homes. Large scale construction along modern lines of site and neighborhood planning will bring this about.

27. *The promise of a new life.* These communities offer promise of a new life. Sun and air, space and trees, health, sport, and community amenities will play the major rôle in constructive planning.

28. *Realizations abroad.* In Europe state and municipal governments and cooperative societies have spent twenty million dollars rebuilding large areas of their cities for re-housing their workers.

29. *One German city did this.* Frankfurt-am-Main, a single German city, planned and built (between 1925 and 1930) housing for one-eleventh of the population.

30. *Steps taken in U. S. A.* This country boasts no large scale housing com-



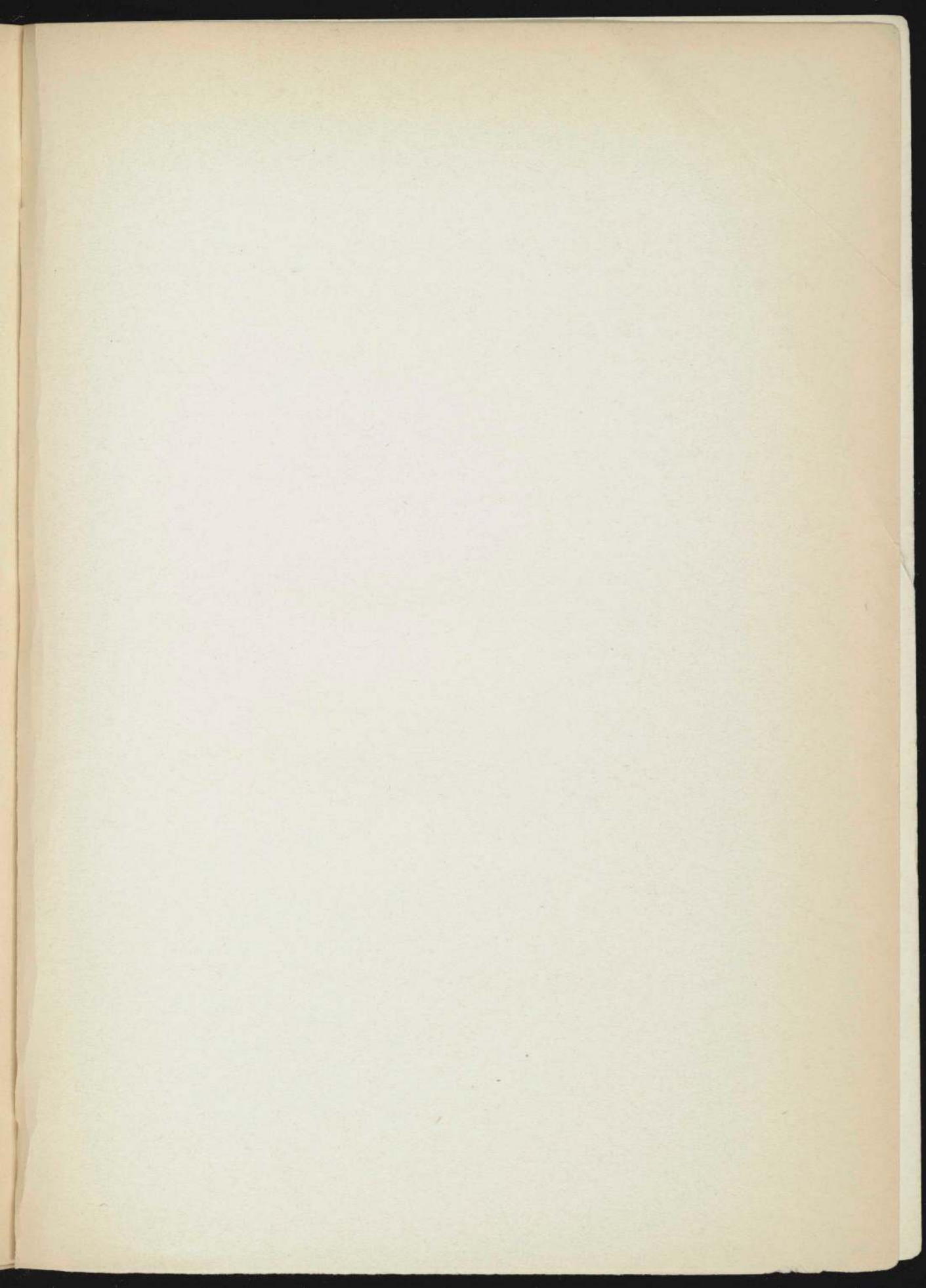
parable to the European examples. Our housing developments are few and far between.

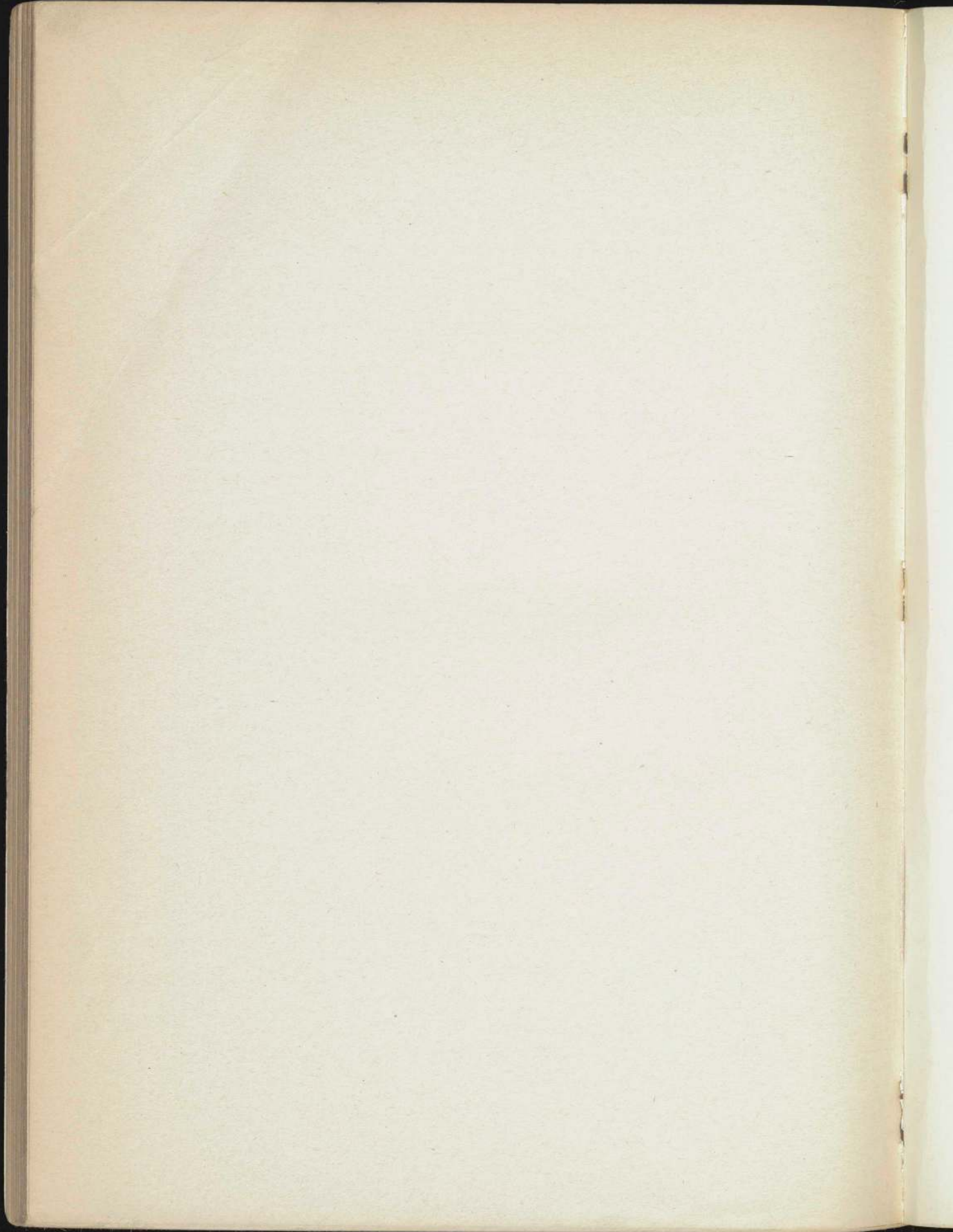
#### *Additional Exhibits*

Drawings, photographs and models showing the work of the New York City Housing Authority. The Authority was created to clear slums and build low-cost housing in the city. The first project is being built with federal funds in the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn, costing \$10,000,000 to house about 7,500 people. The first step.

Three actual rooms set up to contrast an apartment in a modern house with the cramped filthy flats of the old-law tenements. The furnishings are simple low-cost products now on the market.

The remainder of the Exhibition consists of photographs, drawings and models of further housing developments, projects submitted to the Public Works Administration, schemes for the rehabilitation of existing blocks, projects for subsistence homesteads, and a collection of the statistical survey material upon which the Exhibition is based.





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