CITIES' RENAISSANCE

By MARTIN WAGNER and WALTER GROPIUS

"Before anything can be made, it must first be imagined."—De Stendhal.

OUR cities are deathly sick! Ask any mayor and he will show you how their fever curve rose as their bodies were broken in the last stage of their mechanization, when automobiles and trucks shattered them until they sank into that state we now call the "disease of decentralization" caused by the flight from the city; he will tell you something about the vicious circle of decreasing land and building values, increasing taxation, emigrating taxpayers, still lower real estate values, still higher taxes, spreading unemployment and sprawling blight; he will tell you that in the end he was forced to call upon the New Deal doctor to cure this chronic ill health by injecting millions of dollars in federal grants. But could money, be it depression-money or war-boom money, prove a remedy for our "sick" cities when their sickness would have been diagnosed by a real doctor of cities as a natural process of metamorphosis—of exchanging their horse and buggy shape for that of the Oil Age?

Indeed, there is some confusion in our minds. Many think they can foster science and technique to the point of releasing billions of machines but still keep our social, economic and cultural life of the horse and buggy period unchanged. Time, however, knows nothing of a standstill or a moratorium; life and energy and capital all follow their one-way lane from birth to death, steadily shaping new forms of life and matter. In this respect life is inexorable and, on its way from spring to fall, from decade to decade, and from century to century forms an immeasurable

variety of shapes which man cannot freeze, except in the art objects of museums. Perhaps it is due to a certain lack, or fault, in our system of education, and especially in our teaching of history, that we cannot perceive how much faster history is being made in our times than in former eras. If we would study history from its dynamic angle it is possible that we would be less conservative about exchanging old forms of life for new ones and less sentimental about that great process of change now going on in our old cities; maybe we would point to our slums and blighted areas as a sign of hope that a shameful period of housing and city building was dying away—provided we *knew how* to build better homes and towns to live in and were resolved to apply this knowledge without compromise.

But do we know how to shape the towns of our Oil Age? It is a pity that so few town-planners—to say nothing of their town-fathers—have so far drawn the right inferences from the people's "flight from the city." Many of our town-planners and mayors still believe that it can be stopped by some petty means of "rehabilitation." They do not realize that nothing can stop this flight until the people have got what the Oil Age has in store for them and what has already taken definite form in the longings and cravings of their souls.

In revolutionary periods like ours in which fundamentals are at stake, and when our accustomed habits of thought are shattered every day by new accomplishments in science and technique, we should not blind ourselves to those imponderables which caused people to flee from the cities as soon as our technicians gave them the means of doing so. The cities they fled from were not their cities, but the cities of land speculators who squeezed the people together on a narrow spot. These speculators did not see the great discrepancy between the people's desire and demand and their own short-sighted fulfillment until the flight from the city became so apparent that they could but follow the people in their move down the river and up the valley. But even then they did

not grasp the decisive urge among the people to get out of narrowness and suffocation and back to nature. No wonder that this first exodus of the people which formed haphazardly growing suburbs did not establish an adequate town pattern. For now even these suburbs are doomed to fall into the same state of blight as has devasted the central areas of our big cities.

We ought to draw from the failure of our towns to adjust the living space of the people to their profound desires the conclusion that in our time only the most *ideal* shape of a city has any real value. To preserve capital investments in the future from premature obsolescence our towns can do nothing better than call upon the most far-sighted and progressive-minded planners and builders to shape the city of tomorrow.

2.

Now, when real estate boards, city councils, state and federal agencies, and the people at large have started to worry about the decay and the subsequent revamping of our old cities, we should not overlook again the intrinsic urge of the 20th Century for freedom in space and time. Whether we are preparing blueprints for the rehabilitation of old cities or for building a new form of community life, we must see to it that we avail ourselves of the most progressive implements of space-widening and time-shortening transportation, and even anticipate their future technological developments and improvements; more than that: we shall have to integrate their different purposes and efficiencies to one well-functioning system of transportation.

There are now people who believe that the unification of our 1300-odd railway companies—if put under one progressive management, with a generous assistance toward their redemption from the financial plight they are in—may again turn the tide in favor of a new centralizing effect upon our city development. They who believe this do not stop to consider that technological developments follow a one-way lane and never repeat themselves.

Our present railroad system is already vanquished by the transportation methods of the Oil and Gas Age and it is difficult to imagine that methods invented in the Coal Age will ever rise again; for the newer means of mass-transportation, the automobiles, trucks, and planes, have not yet reached a state of technological maturity. It is true that our railroads, too, have a chance to further technological development, but accepting this chance means that they would have to give up their present form of combined freight and passenger traffic and build up for both separated systems of specialized rail transportation.

The "jump from the rail" in freight traffic could not be checked once the trucks succeeded in transporting commodities from "door-to-door" at the rate of 15 miles per hour, while the railroads reached an average speed of only 5 miles an hour. And if automobiles and trucks could have their own right of way, as the railroads have, unhampered by our horse-and-buggy street system, their door-to-door speed would be even greater. Freeing the rails of passenger traffic, relocating and modernizing the switching yards, and many more such needed improvements, could contribute much to a revival of our railroad freight traffic. As for the passenger traffic of our railroads, there is still an unfulfilled demand for a speedy, comfortable, and reliable inter-city traffic which does not fatigue the travelers as much as the self-chauffeuring automobile traffic, and which is not so dependent on the vicissitudes of wind and weather as is plane traffic. When and if the railroads should decide to fill this gap in our traffic demand they may find that it is not enough to speed up their passenger trains by 20 or 30 per cent when planes and automobiles are increasing their speed by 100 and 200 per cent; then they might avail themselves of the idea of Dr. Kruckenberg who, about 1929, tried out his lightweight, propeller-driven "lightning" carriers, suspended on a single rail. Such lightning cars could be darted off every five minutes, say, from New York to Boston, and could carry some 60 passengers over this stretch in less than two hours

instead of the present five. This carrier system which could easily be combined with a newly created super-highway net for automobiles would, indeed, widen the people's living space and allow them to pursue their special business between two city centers in the shortest possible time. It would even permit a Bostonian to drive to New York to see the opera, as he now drives from his suburban residence to the theaters of Boston.

But such bold improvements in our railroad system would still be powerless to produce a new centripetal effect in the growth of our present-day cities. The human urge for wider living-space and the industrial demand for wider working-space coincide with the requirements of all our modern means of transportation for further dispersion of our settlements rather than for their concentration. Let us not close our eyes to the fact that the decentralizing tendency in our city development was, and is, only a transition state, *nolens volens,* fostered by the automobile traffic so long as this new kind of mass-transportation could not yet get its own town pattern. What the trucks and automobiles have already ushered in, the planes will accelerate, namely: the transforming of our incoherent big city masses into de-concentrated, well planned, and well organized small city-cells scattered along the new super-highways with a new right of way for automotive traffic and grouped around their mother nuclei, our revamped cities.

In composing the new town-pattern for the Oil Age we must remember that our new means of transportation are only one determinant of the future shape of our cities. We may improve those space-widening and time-shortening seven-league boots of the people as much as present facilities permit and future inventions will allow, but human beings have their own legs to move on and it is their stride which determines and measures their space and time conception, and which pegs out their local living space. Organic architecture and town-planning have to reckon with the human scale, the "foot," in the shaping of any space structure.

For it is called upon to determine the size not only of the home and the lot on which to build it, but also of all the superimposed community units which form a street vicinity, and of the many street vicinities which form the city-cell, the lowest self-contained unit of a town. All these different-sized space structures must be "within the reach" of the human being's space feeling as derived from the scale of his body, his mind, and his soul. A planner violating the human scale will injure the well designed organism of the human body as well as those compound organisms which we call family, neighborhood, community. If he does violate it—as he did in building up those huge life-disrupting dwelling-barracks and mammoth factories of our old cities—nature reacts with degeneration of life, causing confusion and crime spreading through all the spheres of human activities, even into administration. Inflated administration is the logical consequence of inorganic town-building. Democracy can hardly take root in a congested metropolis where it must degenerate into a political power machine, turning the once honored "town meeting" of the people into a mere farce.

Modern-minded town-builders will turn their back on any unnatural principle of community shaping. They should start to build up self-contained town-cells or "townships," comprising not many more than, say, 5000 souls, in which the people live within walking distance of their working places, shops, schools, churches, and community center, and in which their mayor is still within human reach of the whole citizenry. It should not be necessary to use our modern seven-league-boots to drive from our home to the grocery or to the work-bench, but to bridge longer distances in shorter time for shopping in the city-center or for the enjoyment of city entertainments that cannot move out into these new country-towns. In our "home town" we want to use our legs in a free stride, and we do not want our promenading endangered by automobiles crossing our path; therefore we, too, must have our right of way in the form of footpaths which never cross a traffic lane;

else we would build towns primarily for our slave machines rather than for their masters of flesh and blood.

3.

There may be city-builders who would warn us against applying such revolutionary ideas to the shaping of town patterns. They would point to the "organically" developed cities which in spite of their incoherent conglomeration of single city quarters are of high economic and social importance in modern city life. Usually they point to the fact that people will prefer to live within the reach of more than one kind of job, and that balanced employment of all groups in a community—young, old, male, female, skilled, unskilled—calls for a mixture of different types of industry and employment such as is found only in that conglomeration of city quarters now existing in our big cities. "Don't build 'one-firm' towns, the social evils of which are long since recognized!"—they will say.

To those city-builders who are so awed by a ten-million-people monster that they do not dare to recognize what has created that caricature of human life, one should point out that our big cities are anything rather than a uniform organism. In their last analysis they consist of some dozens of smaller and smallest towns just of the sort we have in mind when we speak of "city-cells," except that we think of well shaped and well organized cells instead of those accidental, half-crippled organisms. Many such cells in our old cities lead their singular and peculiar lives and have little or no social or economic contact with each other; their different social and professional classes do not know each other nor see each other; they are strangers to each other as the people of Middletown are strangers to those of Youngtown, and thus they could just as well dwell in Newtown as in Oldtown.

But those who plead for a balanced employment touch upon a more serious problem in the shaping of new town-patterns. We should certainly not revive the "one-industry" towns with all their

social and economic dependences on the will, and on the fate, of one employer. But our proposed new town-cells, or "townships," built along the new traffic feeders around their bigger mother cities, do not come into the category of one-industry towns but will have several industries from which to choose jobs and their inhabitants would have the right of choosing the city domicile wherever they like. We know that the Oil Age has made the city folk more or less nomadic, even to such a degree that big cities have changed their whole population in about 15 years. City builders have to reckon with this fact and provide means to make such changes as little troublesome and detrimental as possible.

How? First, by trying to house the people in dwelling quarters they can enjoy, and to and from which they can move without entailing that loss of precious "imponderables" they must suffer when they root themselves in or unroot themselves from our old cities. Moving around from "township" to "township" could and should become a psychic enrichment instead of a loss. Well planned, well built, and well administered neighborhood units, as these new "townships" should be, would radiate an "at home" feeling such as no dwelling quarter of our present day cities can offer. And second, we, certainly, would not intend to chain our people to "one-industry" towns. It is true, we would not be able to offer them, within walking distance, a variety of some hundred different industrial enterprises but, instead, perhaps only four or five. This does not mean, however, that sons and daughters could not find jobs in neighboring "townships" or even in the center of the mother-city, when commuting by bus and automobile via speedy highways has become a pleasure trip rather than a weary nuisance, and when the 20-minute radius of our daily commuting from home to work has widened out the labor market by clearing up traffic conditions instead of narrowing it. And if the main supporter of the family loses his job for any reason—because his factory ceasing to flourish has to shut down—the blow to him and

to his fellow workers may be a hard one but our new "townships" are better prepared to endure such a blow than the big city. The problems of a monster city during a period of depression or of technological development are of such magnitude that the mayor has to take them as a phenomenon over which he is powerless. Whereas in our smaller "townships" mayors will be within immediate reach of the initiative of all the voters, and this initiative by the people and for the people has repeatedly performed miracles in time of distress—at least more miracles than can come from far away authorities.

Our "township" mayors will be better prepared to prevent distress. They will have an agricultural belt around their "township," a "space of nourishment," which could absorb at least a small part of the unemployed labor in times of industrial crisis; and vice versa, during an industrial boom, some of the unemployed agricultural workers could be employed in the factories. What occurs in time of booms and crisis in a grand style—the migration from farms to factories and from factories to farms—should in our new country-towns be wisely anticipated on a smaller scale. Besides this cushioning effect, the well zoned and permanently assured space of nourishment, with its farms and truck gardens, has the primary purpose of speeding up and cheapening the exchange of food between the farmers and townsmen. The farmers will not only get their well deserved prices for food but will be supplied with all the facilities and amenities which modern towns need to raise the level of civilization. Such a close collaboration between farmer and townsman would also cause an economical utilization of the waste which a town engenders. Our "townships" would bring back waste-water and garbage to the fields of our farms and truck gardens.

Still other and more important possibilities exist for the adjustment of our settlements to the technological changes of our time and to the changes in the working places entailed by them. In the past we have given little thought to the fact that the work-

ing places generate the income of the people, and with it the rent people can afford to pay for their homes. Our privately steered housing policy has never borne any direct relation to the opening up or closing down of the income-engendering working places. Even our public housing authorities have disregarded the interdependence of working place and home when they built brand-new barracks in slum areas from which the factories had long since moved away. It would be fatal to repeat such a housing policy in the post-war period. We must combine, instead, housing and factory provision. In fact our whole housing policy ought to pivot on the working places that industry and commerce will be able to open up to the people.

In a city-cell of 5000 people there would be opportunity for the employment of about 2000, 1500 of whom may be allotted to prime-income producing factories and shops and the rest to derived-income engendering occupations such as commerce, traffic, services, etc. Here we want to consider the housing provision of the former group only. Having learned from the war-boom that big factories are as unsound as are big cities or mammoth administrations or anything else which grows beyond the human scale, we would not like to see big factories concentrated in our new "townships." The future seems to point toward the deconcentrating "farming-out" principle of factory building rather than to concentrated monster structures which arose in some war-boom regions of this country. Bigness is no substitute for greatness, nor for efficiency and economy. There are no reasons which should induce us—except in the case of some steel and chemical industries—to concentrate factory space on one spot, at a time when Mr. Henry Ford is celebrating the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of his farming-out principle. Production branches related to each other can well be scattered over a series of neighboring "townships" without losing their technical and economic efficiency.

But we should like to go even a step farther and accept the

second war-boom lesson that factories reach the peak of their technical efficiency and the low point of their operating and capital cost when they are run in two or three shifts instead of one. Therefore we suggest for our new town-cell factories of a smaller size but with a larger turnover by application of the two-shift system, leaving a third shift for further possible extension of their production capacity. Under this system the workers employed in such progressively built and administered factories would be classified in three groups: (1) the steadily employed or first shift workers, (2) the less steadily employed second shift workers, and (3) the peak-load shift employees who would be drawn upon during boom times only. According to this rather schematically outlined classification of our labor forces we would have in our "townships" three distinct kinds of homes and houses: (1) dwelling units built for continuous occupancy, (2) demountable dwelling units which can be removed from their lots and brought to other "townships" where labor demand may be expected to increase, and (3) improved trailer dwellings for migratory workers who supply the short-time labor demand. The latter category of dwelling facilities would always number less than one third of all the dwelling units because there should always be a certain stock of labor forces to be drawn upon from our farm belts, from other neighboring "townships" and from farther regions who would find lodgings in rooms to be let in dwelling units of the community. Such a housing policy closely related to the income-engendering working places may provide that flexibility in housing and factory management called for by our technological age.

4.

"Why build new townships in the open country"—one may ask—"when there are square miles of old towns awaiting their rejuvenescence?" This question necessitates several answers. A town doctor who has some experience in surgical town operations would not recommend immediate cuts into the body of our old

cities without having had his patient prepared for such a trenchant operation. In attacking his task of city invigoration he will have to observe a certain order of precedence and procedure. He will have to draw up, first of all, a blueprint for the renewed city, and will then have to produce the tools—the legal, financial, and material tools—to make such a blueprint a reality. Then he will have to prepare the "ground" on which to begin his rejuvenating operation. He cannot, for instance, destroy those still fruitful enterprises which lay "the golden eggs" for his whole undertaking. He can only replant those enterprises which are already overtaken by the law of diminishing returns and are fast approaching suffocation. In doing all this he will realize that it would be futile to knock down outworn city-cells and to build up new prosperous ones on the same spot. In most cases he could not do this because the prime income-engendering factories of the Oil Age demand more spacious structures. Factories as well as dwelling quarters appertaining which are not to be overcome by premature obsolescence will have to move out into newly prepared "townships" where they can be built up under better living conditions. Otherwise our municipalities will never get rid of the masses of unemployed people who threaten their budgets to the point of paralysing all their other public obligations.

When city builders first have to prepare the "grounds," they have to assemble ample land for a sweeping rehabilitation of our old cities. This land assemblage in the hands of the community—the only agency fitted for this task—will be a slow process. It took cities like Stockholm and Berlin several decades to assemble 50 and 65 per cent, respectively, of their total city area for the many purposes of their far-reaching building policy. Envisaging this task in its full legal and financial scope we may well conceive that there are many prejudices and shortsighted business principles to be erased from the mind of many a city-father before the rehabilitation process of our cities can come into full swing. It was always easier to invade the "open" country, the virgin ground of

the outskirts of the city, than to rejuvenate the old city-structures themselves.

True, our realtors have had some experience in city rehabilitation. They have rebuilt the center of our cities twice or even thrice in one century; but then it was mere spot or lot rehabilitation, not even block rehabilitation, and by no means a rehabilitation procedure "by the square mile" such as we now must undertake. As long as our cities were growing from some 50,000 to metropolises of some million people it was relatively easy to concentrate the purchasing power of the citizens in their business center; and as long as our realtors were allowed to increase the coverage of the lots and the height of the buildings, repeatedly tackled rehabilitations were even a lucrative business for them. But such favorable conditions for their speculations have long since passed away. Our cities are no longer growing as fast as they did in their youthful years of reckless promotion; decentralization of purchasing power has set in; our skyscrapers have become symbols of light-robbers, traffic-compressors, and space-squeezers; people begin to hate being poured daily into stone masses where they are being deprived of real life and happiness. But also from the business point of view have our realtors begun to realize that their old receipts for spot and lot rehabilitation no longer work; they will have to acknowledge also that even block rehabilitation, this somewhat hastily conceived program of our public housing authorities, has failed to reach its real goal—the decisive, sweeping and least expensive invigoration of our cities. By now they must know that the mere replacement of "rows of unsanitary hutches by rows of sanitary barracks" does not solve the problem. Now they know that the cuts must go deeper down to the very arteries of the city body, that is, to its transportation system, its terminals, its streets, its highways, and all other feeders which have grown obsolete, technologically and financially, during the past three decades of our Oil Age.

Some town-fathers may point to their "basic" achievements in

rebuilding just such a city feeder net and say, for instance, "Look at our new non-stop routes on both sides of Manhattan Island.... Is not that a first step to the solution of all of our city-body problems?" Yes, it is certainly a first step, but can we afford to increase indefinitely the cost of our city structures without asking ourselves what the people gain by it? Here are some rough figures for comparison: a superhighway built on virgin ground in this country costs about 50 cents a square foot, but the West Side Improvement in Manhattan costs 750 cents a square foot, or 15 times as much, and a square foot of a new subway costs at least 10,000 cents. It cannot be denied that traffic capacity and traffic intensity are different on all these feeders, but they are not that much different, and in the case of the latter two examples they are not so much more effective in their income-producing power as to justify a 15 and a 200 times greater capital investment.

With $16,000 per family, New York has already reached a peak of capital investment for its whole structural city body (including buildings, streets, public utilities and facilities) which can hardly be increased. Can we pile upon such an existing capital investment—not yet written off from the private and public ledgers—the same or even a greater amount for rehabilitation, and expect that the New Yorkers will be able to pay the interest, amortization and all the additional operating costs on such an inflated capital investment without being forced to loot the hinterland and the smaller cities even more than has been done in the past? Private builders and contractors found that they could not reap advantage from doing so and therefore lot and block rehabilitation ceased to be a profitable business for them. Certainly, their hour has struck and city rehabilitation has become a task for the community and beyond that a task for the whole nation. But we should not deceive ourselves by assuming that our public authorities can go full speed ahead in rebuilding our cities and neglect sound economy in their building policy. It would be a disastrous undertaking to pour "new wine into old bottles" with-

out having previously considered whether the new wine would not run out. The era of public enterprise calls for as sound a method of public bookkeeping as has been used for centuries in private business affairs. Our mayors, too, should be responsible for setting up a balance sheet and an income statement for the whole enterprise which we call a city and not only for that part of it that is comprised in their municipal budget for the mere municipal levels of administration. One thing seems to be certain, that after this war there will be no excuse for waste of capital, or of material and manpower, when so much of it will have gone the way of mere destruction. Therefore we shall have to plan and to build very thriftily and do it conscious of the fact that obsolescence is not only the great foe of private enterprise but still more that of its compound structure: the city.

5.

How should our old cities be rebuilt economically and yet be guarded from premature obsolescence? We do not know any answer to this question other than this: to entrust the task to city builders of broad vision, prudence and thoughtfulness. The most ideal scheme based on the most real facts is scarcely good enough for that gigantic task which our communities will have to face in the decades to come. Whatever way our cities go, so will go our country. Daniel Burnham, our patriarch of city-planning, once said: "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency."

One of the first steps to be taken is the enactment of a town-building law applicable to the three main levels of administration: the federal, the state and the local, which would ensure the town-builders the appropriate legal tools for a sweeping rehabilitation

work. One section of this new town-building-law would have to deal with the "Metropolitan Reconstruction Finance Corporation," the M. R. F. C., and its superimposed mother and father corporations which would act on a state- and nation-wide level of rehabilitation. This M.R.F.C. and its parent corporations ought to be the public planning and building authority empowered with those specific rights and powers now in the hands of countless single communities which often hamper—or even sabotage—judicious rehabilitation. The M.R.F.C., for instance, would have to have special "development rights" over all undeveloped land outside the city limits and the "redevelopment rights" over all developed land within the city boundaries. These development rights would not mean that all private property would have to be handed over by one stroke to the M.R.F.C., but that all private property would be subjected to the restriction that no development could take place without the consent of the M.R.F.C. It would also mean that this public authority would have the right to preemption over all property starting from the moment that plans for its development or redevelopment are set up and sanctioned by the competent authority.[1]

Since its power necessitates capital, our M.R.F.C. would have to have, furthermore, its own financial resources for carrying through its gigantic task. If we stop one moment to ponder on the root of all the evils of city obsolescence in our technological age we will be led at once to the main financial source from which this capital resource is to be derived, namely: the amortization quota of all taxable and non-taxable city structures. In the past no one took care of the proper amortization of privately or publicly owned property, although everyone knows that man-made capital goods enter upon the first phase of obsolescence the very day of their completion. In order to protect the stock- and bond-

1. See Great Britain. Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population Report. London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1940. (Montague Barlow, Chairman of Commission.)

holders of corporations by preserving invested capital our commercial code, it is true, provides minute regulations for the setting aside of amortization and depreciation quotas; but nothing has been done in this respect for the public corporation: for town, city, state, and nation. Their share-holders, the citizens at large, were in the hands of private property holders who could—as they liked—preserve or consume their real estate property, though it was not built for self-consumption but, as is the case of rental property, for the indispensable necessities of the tenants and of the whole community. We should therefore enact a nation-wide town-building law prescribing compulsory amortization and depreciation for all building structures and let their quotas be adminstered by our M.R.F.C. Such a regulation would not mean the compulsory expropriation of private property; on the contrary, it would mean conservation of private property, and the owners would be duly credited with the annual quotas but would be entitled to spend them only for the renewal and rebuilding of city structures. Thus an apartment house owner could never again eat up his property or make his "killing" in Oldtown and move away with his capital to Newtown.

With this money in its hands, the M.R.F.C. could tackle and guide the rehabilitation of our old cities along the sound way of perennial renewal according to the specific needs of the city and in accordance with ever changing technological developments. In order to hinder "inbreeding" in city expansion and city renewal the *State* Reconstruction Finance Corporation and its superimposed federal corporation would have to be equipped with an adequate percentage of the incoming amortization and depreciation quotas of the local corporations for the special purpose of balancing the richer against the poorer and the flourishing against the dying communities. Such a revolving fund in the hands of an uncorrupted public authority would be a great stimulus to the renewal of our cities.

Moreover, we should not think that "cash" is the sole means

of achieving this end. If this were so, our bankers with billions of dollars for new investments at their disposal would have been able to do a grand rehabilitation job of their own. That they did not may be attributed to the fact that the time of possible center-city rehabilitation by private persons has passed, and that only the collective approach can take the hurdles put up by the city's congesting conglomeration of buildings.

The first presumption for the financing of any center-city rehabilitation is the design of a master-plan solving the seemingly insoluble problem of leading back to the center of the city even more purchasing power than it has lost since, during the decentralization process, so many people moved out. Is that possible? Of course it is, if this task can be tackled collectively by broad-minded planners, bankers, and business men who are not afraid of "square-mile" rehabilitation. Let us assume that such a team has started to act, having at its disposal the legal tools needed; what would this team do first? It would first have to clear out all the dead weight of little enterprises which take away space, living only on the rotting and dying process of the city-centers. Business zoning, in the past often handled by politicians as a means of getting votes, would have to be revised and handled as a means of creating and concentrating purchasing power in specially defined and restricted zones, just large enough to allow sound competition and balanced prices but not so large as to cause customer dispersal and increased overhead cost spent for high-pressure salesmanship. The size of the sales turnover will depend on the building of a new net of feeder roads leading from the outskirts and from neighborhood "townships" right into the center of the city after sufficient land for such a street system has been redeemed. That then will enable people to ride comfortably and fast from the outskirts to buy in the city-center without loss of time. There will have to be an organization of the city-center, which will allow the customers to do their shopping with the least amount of moving about. The principle of deconcentrating

specialized business branches, foreshadowed in our banking quarters, wholesale quarters, entertainment quarters, etc., will have to be employed in a controlled form according to a plan for proper distribution. For our future city-centers will be frequented mainly for specialized shopping and specialized entertainments, such as suburban towns and "townships" will never be able to offer. Imaginative business men will see to it that this specialized shopping be further developed by new attractive ideas of more than ephemeral character. Our chambers of commerce, for instance, will extend their activity far beyond the mere pooling of private interests to the broader field of community interests. For example, they will build up permanent exhibition centers (as some European cities have done with great success) in which great achievements of industry, handicraft, and art might be exhibited collectively and where historic and cultural performances rooting in the region and in the country may develop. These and other collective activities would not only channel back lost purchasing power to the city-center but also attract new customers—provided we were daring enough to rebuild our cities "by the square mile" and make their center a cultural focus of beauty instead of a drab, commercial meeting place which, having too little attractiveness, must wither away.

6.

Here is where the great artist planner and builder of visions must step in. He must conceive and work out a great score for the orchestra of specialists in financing, legislation, building, and business to be condensed to a master-plan for the city. It has to be a real master-plan, comparable with the highest that art has ever created in the field of town-building.

To the people the artist planner could say: "You have the right and the means at hand of living again in your 'green valley,' in city-cells of human scale which we may call 'townships' and which are scattered over the whole town-country along the best

roads for transportation you can think of. You, the people, can live there within walking distance of brand new factories. Within the reach of your daily walk through ample open space you will find all that you need for modern community life: you will find nurseries and schools for your children, shops for your wife, and places of decent entertainment for your whole neighborhood. In these new city-cells you would not be a mere number but a personality among personalities, led by a mayor you know and whom you yourself may control. Your town-meeting would again be a real town-meeting of the citizens as it used to be when the small New England towns impressed a similar pattern of community life on a new country some 200 odd years ago.

"Beyond this local living space for you, your family, and your neighbors and friends you can freely move to and from any other city-cell of your town-country, and you will be able to do it in your own car and in half the time needed to take you in crowded mass-transportation vehicles from your home to your working place. You will no longer encounter grade crossings and stop-and-go signals because your car now has its own right of way all over the country as your legs have their own right of way in your own 'Green Valley Community.' It is not a little town in which you live—it is a large town, and it is only because this large town is so organically and orderly built that you can not see the 'bigness' which made you once so lonesome in the stony city.

"Now, look this way please: this was once one of those old railroad tracks on which traffic dried up. We rebuilt it and used it for a speedy feeder from your green valley to the center of all you can dream of and a center of what a great—not a 'big'—city ought to harbor. You see there the the government center of the town-country, of your town-country. As you see, all the various departments of state and municipal government are functionally placed around the 'People's Forum' from whence your officials receive their mandate by the people and for the people. And see how the taller buildings are framed by festoons of smaller dwel-

ling houses built for the officials of your government in order to let them live as near to their 'bench' as you do to yours in your distant neighborhood. They, too, will save their time for more efficient work for you instead of being exhausted by dreary drives to and from their offices. They, too, have their children's play areas, and their schools and shops within walking distance of their homes placed in a 'green valley' which we rediscovered when we cleared away from that region the traces of those wrongs committed against a once beautiful landscape.

"Now, look at the new city center of your region. True, we did not build the stores and offices as 'business cathedrals.' Their new order and rhythm now properly mirror the worldly character of their determination. Though cheerful and dignified their shapes differ ever so much from the austere expression of the cultural buildings of 'The People's Forum' and of its counterpart—opposite—'The People's Temple' with its buildings for worship and art. We found our business people in accord with the mighty shake-up of building masses in our center region. For we carried it not only in order to make room for smoother traffic conditions, but we raised also the spiritual order of our town life by assigning clearly defined and well related areas to those cultural and recreational activities by which the people from in and out of town will always be attracted because they create joy and happiness.

"And strangely enough, it was just this new order that brought new wealth to our business men, too. When we had cleared up their district and rebuilt their stores and shops, according to the same principles applied in your little home town, giving the machine the machine's right of way and the human being the human right of way, our business men suddenly saw people streaming into the center-city and flocking by the thousands every hour to the stores. Yes, they flocked around because they now had time to; they did not need to hasten or to fight their way through the streets and shops as they did in their old center-city. Just as

you, in the factories of your little town over there, are working in two and three shifts, our salesmen here are also working in two and three shifts. The 'rush hours' which made shopping so hasty and disagreeable have almost disappeared. Our shops now have fewer customers per hour but more per day, so they can serve us with more attention. Time is not money so much as it used to be. Look at those people over there sitting on that quiet garden terrace before the Smith & Jones department store, drinking their coffee and basking in the spring sun. They got back enough time to be happy human beings—even while on a shopping tour. Shopping has now become an attractive pleasure in this city; we built the stores with two opposite entrances, on one side for the automobile customers and on the other for the pedestrian customers. Now time is not only measured by so many miles per hour but by its quality; stimulating impressions bring happiness; and indeed, people here receive such impressions and—have not even to pay for them!"

"How could that happen?" you ask. "Simply this way: the artist, that mighty philanthropist, has presented the people with sources of stimulation once and for all . . . just as that unknown building master of the Parthenon did when he created the ever so memorable hours of joy and happiness of the Athenian people and all their millions of guests. The secret of the cities' renaissance is *art* and *order,* nothing else. Art and order create real and lasting wealth—as trash and disorder are the greatest spendthrifts any country can produce."