

THE EXPLODING METROPOLIS,
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WHAT is happening in our urban centers and their suburban peripheries? The editors of *Fortune* tell us that middle income families (presumably \$5,000-\$9,000) are being pushed out of the cities and becoming owners, not renters, in the suburbs. Their incomes, which make them ineligible for low-income public housing, are too low for many private housing projects and the luxury apartments.

The city is becoming populated by older and retired persons, young married or childless couples, the unmarried, the artist and the Bohemian. These seem to appreciate the ease with which physical and cultural needs may be satisfied and the opportunity to select congenial friends, coupled with privacy. Cities also may be developing into the abodes of the very rich and very poor.

Suburbia, in turn, has its emigrants. A low level of public services, rapidly rising taxes and lack of common interests among suburban neighbors are robbing many of their hopes.

In the chapter captioned significantly, "The Enduring Slums," we are told that rural and racial family immigrants huddle in groups in the city, nibble away at better housing, cause neighborhoods to deteriorate and force evacuation of higher income groups. Slum clearance for rehabilitation, business, or cultural purposes only results in the slums becoming an encircling fringe. Public housing itself deteriorates rapidly into a slum since low incomes make for overcrowding.

If the city is to continue as a core of activities, and if the flying outward and decaying inward tendencies are to be checked, more middle-income housing must be built. This will have to include easy access to open space, provide shopping facility, and depart from the current institutional pattern. Because many cities are already debt-ridden, it is affirmed that the federal, state and county governments must subsidize such housing through loans to private investors. In other words, because the return on middle income housing is not sufficient to interest investors, the entire tax-paying citizenry must supply the deficiency. The editors make the amazing admission that such housing in time will "trickle down" to lower income groups.

Aside from mentioning that Suburbia is repeating the errors of city growth; that it is a "leap-frog" development over the spaces of most resistance; and that speculative builders precede or follow an exodus; we are given no cause for the exploding of the metropolis. What were the errors made by the city? Why do developments seem to leap erratically? Speculative builders may deserve some onus, but why is none placed on the speculative landowner? No intimation is given as to the reason for vacant land in the city though its existence is admitted—and no information is forthcoming about the soaring land prices or the increasing tax burden on builders and building owners.