

Nineteen

Leon Krier was in Montreal in March 1982. While in Montreal, Mr. Krier kindly agreed to take part in a discussion with McGill architecture students. The following is the transcript of part of that discussion.

Leon Krier: We have reached a stage which is very difficult to cope with, where - virtually - education ignores the main issues of the problems we cause through the system we have established with nature. And I think that city planning and, in the end, architecture are maybe the pivotal instruments in the destruction of country and city and of our values - which have been established over a very long period of time and which have been taken for granted by the last five or six generations.

I do not only mean politicians but also intellectuals and history responsible to people - which had to do with an attitude that one always thought, 'whatever we do, if we do it together, and with majority decisions, it will be alright. It will be fine in the end even if there will be suffering in between, if some people will lose meanwhile. But in the end, the overall gain, historically, will be colossal and we can't possibly avoid going in that direction.' And now we see that, basically, majority decisions or committee decisions very often don't replace, or cannot replace, the moral responsibility of the individual. Quite the contrary. Very often majority decisions or committee decisions allow the individuals to completely give up their moral conscience and hide behind this anonymous consensus which finally is - and has shown to be - extremely destructive. And I think as an architect one is immensely involved in that process of destruction. You automatically work in a system which is furthering this total devastation of the planet. And however carefully you do your work - I mean, you may design a very beautiful house - but just the problem of designing a house in a certain system, planning system, is, in my way, extremely destructive if you do not know exactly what you're doing.

Now, I'm not trying to create moral problems with slogans to be anti-capitalist because it's not a problem of being anti-capitalist because it's not a pro-

Eighty-Three

blem of being anti-capitalist or anti-industrial or anti-anything. The real problem is that when you do something you have to be morally responsible for it. And there is no excuse. I think the problem of capitalism is certainly one but it's not the main problem because whatever system you claim to change capitalism or get rid of capitalism has never achieved that. Quite the contrary. It has very much been instrumental in radicalizing these tendencies towards pontification of purely accounting values rather than moral values. Purely numerical values. And I don't know whether industrialization is a sign, a cause, or an effect of the moral decadence of the European and then the rest of the world. So sad.

So one doesn't really know how it was possible suddenly to give up moral concerns and principles which transcended, really, epochs and cultures; which had nothing to do with being Christian or Jewish or Greek. But there was an essential concern which was always the same, I think, in our philosophy, in our theology. There was the same concern with the moral responsibility of the individual. And suddenly, for that to be given up - I haven't found out yet what caused it and I don't think anybody really has.

This very great problem nobody can solve, even individually, because the education you get is completely against this taking of responsibility. And also the modern conception of history is really that the individual doesn't, is not able to, do anything against history; that history is a big machine and it runs in one direction which we can't change and if you go outside that machine you just make yourself a bit ridiculous.

I think the fundamental problem came with the change in conception of the universe. From the Renaissance onward there was a very strong tendency to consider the universe as a machine; a very complex machine which we didn't understand yet entirely. But potentially there was a possibility for human intelligence to understand the machine in all its complexity, in all of its parts, and at a certain moment to intervene in the working of the parts and also in the overall construction of that machine. That was sustained, I mean, basically, by Descartes and by Newton

but was also, I think, very much at the basis of thinkers like Hegel, maybe, and Marx.

Another philosophy which I find terribly important was that of one of the last great universal thinkers, I think, Leibnitz. Leibnitz was a mathematician. He's most famous for his development of calculus. He was very important in many matters. He was basically also a theologian and a philosopher and he criticized very strongly that mechanical concept of nature. He said however close or however far you look at nature you always see about the same amount of complexity; but the further you penetrate that complexity it will always reveal new complexity of the same



order and of the same vastness. Even if you build the hugest machine, if you look at the infinitely small, you will just see a surface, an outside of something which is infinitely more small. Each part of the machine is yet again an infinitely complex machine. Whereas Descartes, and what became known as rational thinking, said that if you blow up half of this machine very big and you project it on the wall, you will suddenly see a huge member which is part of that machine and you can touch it and you can say that is the member of that machine and there is nothing else to it but its own characteristics. I think that, morally, it creates a very different attitude and a much greater modesty towards nature which is that there is

something we don't know: why we're here. Nobody knows. You can sit together five million intelligent people and they will not find out why we're here. This is something fundamentally mysterious and unexplained.

And so this arrogance of the scientists - I do not mean now the very great scientists but the people who go for science as an industrial means to develop the planet and resources - this incredibly cold-blooded arrogance that whatever you do will be for the best of us all no matter how many people you massacre meanwhile. And I think, also, architects have very much that attitude. They are educated that they are able to function within a certain legislation - not to question it at all. They learn certain things - what you can do and what you can't do - and then they are let loose in the world. The result is what you see was built in the last thirty years in Europe. It's just as well it would not be there. And if it was not there, nobody would miss it. However, if other things disappeared, a lot of people would miss it, and that is why there is this incredible discontent and awareness now growing against destruction.

Fundamentally, whatever is being done outside in the world is not necessarily real because reality is something which is more than just something to touch. It must have quality and in that we can only look at nature and how it reveals itself in its abstract concepts and in its order.

I think, therefore, it's very important to understand the basic problems of philosophy because they haven't changed in the last thousand years. I think you should never read books about philosophy, but always the people themselves because it is much easier to read Aristotle or Plato - the greater thinkers, even Jesus Christ. People who write about them complicate the issues usually and put too many arguments. So I think it's very important to sit back and think for a while. They are the highest examples of human intelligence and awareness we have. I wouldn't go to school for that. You should just read it and if you have difficulties, you have to think about it. It's very easy to do that. If you really work at it, it will be as if you go to the toilet - you activate the chain and it

feels like a shower going through your head and just the main things remain.

I think it's very good for architects to think. It creates a modesty which is very important and which will also reveal that we are at a very low level of culture and also of artistic sensibility, of awareness of what beauty is. Beauty, today, is purely taught as historical category. It's removed from its instrumental value. After all, these people who wrote about beauty knew that people are apt not only to understand what beauty is, but - at an age where the awareness of beauty vanishes - are able to recapture and re-understand what beauty is and how they can also make it. I think the discourse is very universal and you shouldn't expect, if you read these people, that by tomorrow you know.

And I think in our lifetime there won't be any great architects. It's not possible. There will be no great painters. Because great artists can only come after a time when the awareness, the intelligence of basic categories is so natural that by the time you are fifteen years you really know how to make great art. It's so natural that you don't even question it. Then there may be people who come and just with a stroke of a brush make genial things which will be remembered for another thousand years.

But now a single individual will not be able to do that because we have no art ourselves. One can say, of course, there are a lot of artists who produce art and they put sculptures everywhere. They make big buildings therefore one can say there is art and architecture. Because there are artists and architects, they do not necessarily produce art and architecture. Today people automatically conclude, because there are so many artists and architects who have even diplomas and the greatest achievements as far as institutional evaluation goes, that we are in a great artistic epoch. But I think it's quite the contrary. If you really see a great work that just moves you overwhelmingly, you may conclude perhaps that there is a great artist behind it. That does not mean that that great artist may just have had a stroke of luck, you know.

Today, I think, is a desperate period. My work, I find, is extremely primitive as far as artistic values go. I'm not thirty-five. It took me about fifteen years to learn, myself, what is architecture at all - even the names of things. If I had to describe all the profiles in a column, I couldn't describe it like I describe a meal although I have now been occupying myself with these problems for the last fifteen years. You see this incredible problem of intelligence which also prevents, then, artistic maturity to arrive.

The machine which now, of course, is put in place of art has very little value. One can measure that with the example of nineteenth century art which was consumed and forgotten and even hated, but which was fine art and which was extremely highly developed, I think. There was a great number of extremely talented people who worked, who really profited from thousands of years of artistic tradition. They had this advantage to still know what art was and to be trained, even technically, in such a fine way that when they were about twenty-five, they completely dominated all the mechanical and spiritual problems which confront an artist in his life-time. They were resolved by the age of about twenty or twenty-five and then you could mature as an artist.

I think a Mozart, nowadays, or a Chopin is just completely inconceivable. Mozart today would be purely occupied to probably re-invent, I don't know, the basic laws of harmony or something like that. Maybe then, if he had the chance to live for eighty years, he would write one little fantasy which would reach the genius he had achieved by the time he was five.

So the world is not that great nowadays. That does not mean that you cannot enjoy it fantastically. We have to see very carefully what it is possible,



as an individual, to do - not to get involved in projects, in great hopes, which by the time you are forty, you are disgusted by.

Panel: You teach or are attached to the A.A. in London.

Krier: I was.

Panel: How do you find a position as an educator if your conviction is so strongly against mass education?

Krier: I really learned a lot myself when I was teaching but I don't think that it

had any result, as far as education goes, for my students. Quite the contrary. My best students reacted very strongly against any kind of rational teaching. The brightest became really crazy artists. It's very strange. If you want to put things right or put things in place, you disappoint such huge expectations - which are both social and professional.

Most people become architects or artists because it has a certain social value. I'm sure that ninety per cent of people become architects because their mother, their father, their grandmother said, 'become an architect because he is both an artist and in a social position where you earn enough money bla, bla, bla and you will be considered like a priest.' Now, in the last thirty years, the profession of architecture has changed in Europe from a very high prestige to just the bottom of any status at all. That if you say for instance, now in England, that you're an architect... I never say I'm an architect if people ask me because people feel very aggressive against architects.

I was at school in Stuttgart for a few months. The only thing I found out was that everything I was taught was exactly the contrary of what architecture is and was, truthfully and fundamentally. Really, what you are taught is that you will not be able to do this and that and therefore you have to be content to do just this manner of unpleasant things. My brother had to go through school. He's much older and he had to do his diplomas to satisfy the family and so on. But by the time I came into the machine, we were all aware enough that that teaching was completely useless and also counterproductive, and therefore I was able to leave school in the first year. I just told my parents I simply can't go because I would not have been able to do the exams. I couldn't function in that system.

I looked for a master. I wanted to learn something because by the time you are twenty you are fed up, you want to know what is right and what is wrong. And I was then very much still enthused by LeCorbusier and Leger and all that kind of stuff because it felt very revolutionary, still. I was looking for somebody who could teach me and then I thought James Stirling was the only one who had done something which I found really important or had some quality. But when I went there I found that he had no security. He was jumping from one flower to the other and that, virtually, with every project he changed his belief. He was designing according to very superficial categories of industrial aspect rather than of industrial production, so, in that sense, he was still an artist - but without any vision of life. Just then he had been commissioned to design, I think it was,

eight hundred or a thousand housing units and he didn't know what to do. There were about five guys in the office who tried for six months to design shapes and nobody knew what it really was; whether they were court houses, yards, gardens, or what even the image was or should be. So it was completely looking in the darkness for fame. He had another good publication and that's, really, when I got extremely critical and also got in a terrible crisis. I told him if somebody so childish, who has no theory, gets such a big job - and he's the best man I could imagine - what are the other big offices doing? How do they confront the real problems?

Then you come to the conclusion that this industrial system only creates phantom values and phantom pressures. You always have to finish a certain thing for a certain time. A student, every three months, has to do one project. Now, with the artistic and technical ability we have, it is extremely difficult because with every project we have to learn virtually everything. Whether it is at the scale of designing a door or a city. I always found to really do something properly, the deadline is always too short. And now I've decided, because I have some comfort, that I can work to the moment I've finished. Even if I've won or lost the competition, I have to rework it no matter how much time. I have now been working on a competition I got a small prize for two years ago and it is not yet finished. Virtually everything you draw you have to learn. It's very nice if you have time but you can't work on pressure. I don't think you produce quality because judgement is so obliterated. That judgement, if you don't learn it by the time you are fifteen years old, you have to learn it just through...

I found out a very good system. If you are doing a project or a drawing or anything, it's very good to hang it on the wall to look at it, just always have it there. And then when there is something which is not right, it will irritate you very shortly. And then you will work on it until it won't irritate you. That's the dumb way towards beauty. The moment nothing will irritate you, you will probably have quite a beautiful product because only a beautiful product will leave you completely peaceful, I think.

Judgement is something, I think, you can only regain by being very relaxed and also very open-minded. Don't think about what Leger or what LeCorbusier is doing, just look at what the thing is worth. Material things, technical things become extremely important for judgement. And I found out that in school this is completely impossible if you get people who come from the most different places; from America, from Iran, from this and that, with very different

moral backgrounds. It is completely unbelievable, unthinkable that you can teach them anything within a year or within two years.

That was also the value of pre-industrial educating - of education, I would say, because I don't think there is industrial education. It just doesn't exist. It's called so, but the results are not every educative. But the relationship of the master and the pupil was a relationship of extreme care and also of love, of tenderness, and of great concern. Not only for the pupil towards the master but also from the master to the pupil. A direct human concern.

I had that chance because my brother was much older. So we had a great emotional relationship for a very long time, and which lasts on and on, because he had to go through hell, virtually, himself - or through the first ring of hell. I always could avoid. I always had a greater comfort after because he had to go through this very terrible experience. And so we had a very nice relationship and I think that is the relationship a pupil has to have with a master. It must be extremely of great concern and, therefore, one of the great principles of the medieval guilds, of those *artisanal* systems of education, was that a master must never have more employees than he can educate. That is about three or four at one time and that is already a maximum. All the rest is diffusion.

My brother has now two hundred and fifty students in Italy. Some professors have a thousand students. It is completely meaningless and the outcome is tragic. And, usually, selection is much harsher than even the most elitist aristocratic societies because it is



much more brutal. That equality which we have is not so much equal opportunity for everybody, but equal opportunity for everyone to fail and only the toughest survive. And then one says, 'Oh yes, he had the same chance at the beginning' and therefore, if they fail, we just treat them like human rot.

Whereas, I think, a society which is aware of colossal differences will be much more sensitive to these differences and have more respect to what people can do. Now all of that leads towards conclusions which I haven't resolved and which can't possibly be resolved. But this we have to think very strongly about and not be so sure we have the best system which has ever been invented. That doesn't mean that you can't enjoy life colossally.

Panel: There must be parts of the world where industrialization hasn't had any effect at all. For instance, in Nepal. Do you find here a continuity of an older society that is undisturbed and is satisfied?

Krier: The things which escaped industrialization, they have escaped only for the moment. That is the tragic dimension to it. Not any of the highest cultures in Europe, or also in China or in other parts of the world, were able to confront this industrialization. But even why Europeans or North Americans, why even the dumbest of them, always feel superior, that they are the top of the world and behave as if they were... Why there is no other culture which infuses us with so much respect that we would want to imitate it, and why we don't want suddenly in Central Europe to have Nepalese temples, and why, in Nepal, petrol stations and factories begin to grow and will finally blast the place very quickly, very soon...

Industrialization is that kind of invasion of life which was not expected and because nobody expected the attack from this side or that side, nobody reacted against it.

In 1954 in France, somebody signed a treaty which led France towards that development of nuclear energy which is now the most colossal and monumental investment in history - when compared, the cathedrals or any of the great pyramids are nothing. Now, a French thinker, Michel Bosquet, who is very concerned, tried to find out who was responsible for this. So he went from one contract to the other, backwards, to find out who made the first signature which made the machine develop. And he found out that the first contract was signed by the then prime minister, Pierre Mendès-France. Mendès-France, in France, was the only politician who had never been involved in Mafia or any kind of terrible political machinations. He resigned over Dien Bien Phu. He said, 'We can't do that,' and he resigned and said, 'I'm unable to take that responsibility.' And so, he was the greatest moral character in French politics; and he signed this treaty which led to total disaster and I'm sure that it's completely out of control.

In 1954, when you were told about

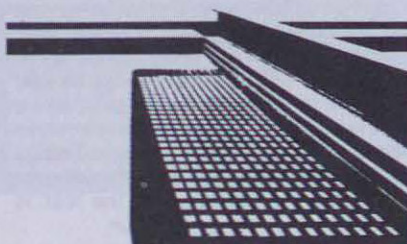
nuclear energy, scientists and technicians said this is a great thing of the future. I saw propaganda films of the English nuclear authorities saying, in a heroic voice, that in 1960 we will have developed so many stations, in 1970 so many, and in 1980 electricity will be free. And on those reports, which were signed by the greatest scientists and technicians of the time, political decisions were taken just because they believed the scientists. Now they know they were wrong and there are some scientists who begin to realize and who begin to criticize what they did themselves. But that is really to say that in 1954 nobody was capable to be critical of the nuclear program because nobody knew what it was.

In 1935, nobody in Germany could be critical of the motorway because nobody knew what it was, what it meant. In 1820, nobody could be against the railways because nobody knew what it would mean, that it would blow all the cities in Europe apart. Industrialization is always that thing which comes towards you and that you don't know what it is. And yet you are incapable to take the moral responsibility because you don't know what it is, what it will be.

I mean, if the British Parliament would have been told in 1830 - or whenever they took their decisions to let this big industry develop as far as public transport goes - what it would mean over a very long period of time, that in a hundred years it will have changed completely the nature of English cities and that it would be a system which initially was profitable but in the end would demand incredible public funding and sacrifice, probably people would have said, 'maybe we have to devise now the system. Maybe we should just reduce trains to luxuries, to develop train lines towards spas so people can have healthier lives and drink good water.' So if you want to be a good industrialist, you have to think of something which has not been there and nobody expects. It's very easy because you just have to think in a certain way and then you will win.

I mean, the man who invented Muzak - this music which goes on and on and on and has no structure, no beginning, no end, no high, no bottom, no middle, no section, nothing; it's just complete confusion of music - he discovered something which is now so present that nobody even notices it. It's in hotels, it's in houses, it's everywhere. And yet it is nothing. It has no structure. And, industrially, it was the best thing to promote. These things which have no limit, which are completely expandable, which can be spread out everywhere without anybody noticing - that is the nature, the fundamental structure of our time.

Then you find that there are very great familiarities between motorways and Muzak. Or Muzak and ketchup. Or television and curtain wall. Because they have no beginning and no end. They have no shape, they have no form. They are just something which comes off the production line and which you just cut sometimes. Nobody can say whether the Seagram Building should be two hundred and fifty metres high or whether it should be three kilometres high. It could just as well be. And who is the master who says where to cut that kind of building to make it digital? In fact, if you look at the buildings of Mies van der Rohe, you could take any house which is one storey high, you could just raise it and build it to three hundred



metres. It wouldn't change anything at all to the structure.

And yet this is fundamentally, completely contradictory to any laws of nature, which has a principle which Leibnitz called 'individuation', which is that each object is an individual. It can only exist once and it can only be there once and when it is there it will never come back. Just like we are unique but there is something universal to us that we are all the same topologically. The principle of industry is that it takes something and reproduces it identically. That's what Huxley called cloning; individuals which are taken from the same genetic material and instead of producing one child you produce five hundred. They are completely identical. And if I would go out of the room, I would come in and I may be somebody different. That's cloning. The difference is indistinguishable. And that is completely against nature. That is the greatest scandal ever done in nature, that you reproduce something identical. That you make a mold and then you cast it. That is really denying all the laws of nature. And yet that is the very principle which is at the foundation of industrial production. It's that you produce objects that you can't distinguish, which are identical to each other, and

because they are identical to each other, they have no identity. They have only been called Mach II or Ford Capri, but you can't distinguish one Ford Capri from another in terms of the production. And that is what I think is fundamentally against nature and also what will take colossal revenge on what we are doing because we created a world which is not real, which is completely abstract.

Panel: How do you, as closely as you can, define industrialization? The term means many things to many people. Certainly, a long time ago, before the industrial world, people were reproducing things, they were making a lot of stones to build with.

Krier: You can define it as the development of a means of production independent of an immediate need. If that develops towards a complete independence it also develops a completely autonomous system of production and it creates work which is extremely unpleasant. It's a universalization of toiling.

I think Hannah Arendt is very important. She distinguished three categories of work: body work, manual work, and intellectual work. Artistic work is that form of production which allows an ideal combination of manual and intellectual. The physical exercise is extremely pleasant and yet, you produce objects which have a lasting value, objects of use which outlast a generation and which have a kind of permanence.

Now, artisanal work, craftwork, was that manual work which was also highly pleasant - and I know it because my father is a tailor, and the only problems he had were with the government, who were just destroying his firm through overtaxation and so on. But I still experienced a place where there were about ten people working in very great human conditions which were extremely pleasant, which showed, by the way, that these people were very good friends in the way they were talking. It's a very quiet way of production. So, craftsmanship is a form of production where you make necessary objects of use with pleasure.

Hannah Arendt makes the fundamental difference between objects of use and objects of consumption. Objects of consumption are those you consume immediately like an apple or anything the metabolism needs for immediate survival and reconstruction. Objects of use are those with which you build the human world. They are artificial objects but which create a world which is human. She said that human beings are basically alien to nature. They can't live in nature. They have to build their own objects. We are not like cats.

Now, craftwork is that work which is extremely pleasant but which is also very comfortable. You don't have great problems of creativity because it is work, really, for private use. It has no great public status. Whereas art is really public. It creates values which are public values which everybody admires because they reach a higher degree of awareness of our condition, I think, and also of beauty, of solidity.

Whereas toiling, she says, is purely body work, where pleasure, virtually, doesn't come into account, like primitive forms of agriculture. Sheer physical work like digging out graves.

Industrialization is that condition where unpleasant work becomes the universal condition of all human production. But even now, in the condition of industrialization, artists subject themselves, without being asked, to that industrial alienation. Then you have artists who do these most alienating works of art - what are called 'works of art' - in which you see that the man can't have had pleasure, because it's so abstract and something so minimal, as far as intellectual investment goes, that it couldn't have been done with pleasure. And yet, she says - not only her, she does an analysis of other occidental thinkers - that a work of art can only exist if it has been done with pleasure, because pleasure and beauty are extremely linked. There can be no beauty which is not conceived somewhere in pleasure. Sometimes it takes pain, but even pain can be very close to pleasure. But it's completely different from industrial work where you go everyday to a place where you know they are going to tear your guts and your brains out. And if you go through that for thirty years, you are not a human being anymore. You have never developed the capacities which you have been given by nature.

Industrialization is that stage where this unpleasantness becomes the universal condition - although it's unnecessary. All the excuses which one brings up with demographic explosion are not true because European society has not grown demographically in the last thirty years. It has reached an absolute top. So there would be the possibility of now installing structures which would create objects which would have a greater permanence. Yet the contrary is being done. Objects of use are more and more being taken over by industry and becoming objects of consumption. So you do not only consume pears and bread but you consume now entire cities.

If you go to places like St. Louis, you see that that city is being completely consumed. It doesn't exist anymore. It is complete ruin. You can drive for hours and hours diagonally and criss-

cross the city and it is just an eternal wasteland like Detroit, like the Bronx in New York and so on. Yet, twenty miles from there, one is building a completely new city. But in twenty years that place will also be a place of total devastation.

And that is a tragic dimension because now an average single generation has to do work which can only be done by several generations. That is why it becomes extremely superficial or unpleasant and why it also becomes unbearable for the next generation to see; because if something is done with shoddiness, it can't have permanence. You can make the most solid structure,



it will not be permanent if it has not beauty because nobody will be interested to keep it.

Now, one of the tragic situations is that you can have today the most beautiful object and because of the moral incapacity of people to judge, they don't even see anymore what is beautiful. You can tear down the most beautiful buildings and replace them by the greatest nonsense, as far as art and aesthetics go. You have criteria of urgency or necessity... that is where, really, people have lost their senses. Where they have become blinded and unable to smell or really judge what is pleasant.

Panel: What did the public think of your Luxembourg counter-proposal? How did it go?

Krier: It was great because Culot had organized a fantastic publicity campaign. Luxembourg is a very small place - 300,000 inhabitants - but it is very complex. It has about six daily papers. Can you imagine? Just 300,000 people. It's a country which has cities, which has a beautiful landscape, which has mountains, and which has plains. It has everything. It's like a miniature world. And so, when you do something, you immediately reach everybody. You can organize a press conference and the whole of the press is there. And because they really love writing about things, you give them a text and they just change the commas. So they filled the papers for a few weeks.

It was a fantastic occasion. It was a great reward for my toiling because there was no one who disagreed. 'It's the right thing. What should one do? How can you proceed? What's the next step?' I said, 'I just offer you a solution. What to do about it, I don't know. I'm not a politician. I'm not a developer. I just offer you instruments.'

I occasionally go back every two years to do a few lectures and I think it creates an awareness that not everything is right, now, but that there are disasters which are each and anybody's responsibility and that maybe one can bring a crisis to a boiling point where they ask who can resolve it. And so, I would offer my services to do that.

I think most people agreed because I just confirmed what they were saying. The only thing I tried to do was prove that people were right in their feelings, however stupid their argument. They said, 'Taillibert, it's inhuman.' It's not an argument which has value because then three other specialists say, 'No, it's the only thing which is now human. It's progressive. It's liberty. It's creativity. It's everything.' So I just tried to prove, with what they had, why they were right to say this is wrong, because they didn't know how to articulate it. By comparing to the existing situation which is beautiful and which they are losing. But if that situation is beautiful, it's not because it's natural to have a beautiful environment, but because there have been so many generations who cared for and who were extremely sensitive and intelligent and also made the greatest effort to build up this environment. Now, if we take that for granted, it's to our own disadvantage because if we don't respect it, it will have disappeared in two generations and then there will be nothing left. And then it's even worse than starting from scratch because we are so alienated and so far away from any good sense that, I think, it's something which is completely without issue, without possible positive outcome.

The populist approach is also a very dangerous one because if you take people's judgement as the supreme judgement... If an architect is a good architect, or if a town planner is a good town planner, there is no need for people to protest because he does his job well and people respect him and he will earn a lot of money and he will be remembered. That has been done with all the great architects and artists and they are venerated like gods, almost. But if you are a bad artist and you pretend to be a good one, you can make a lot of money but you will be punished by a bad conscience and by disrespect and by a lack of comfort in the society. We are still, now, at the moment where people realize that something has gone

wrong, but they are not yet capable to judge what should be done.

We sent to all politicians a book explaining all the elements of the analysis and of the project. What could be done. And it's extremely simple to do because it could be done by political decisions which don't involve disappointing anybody. No expropriations. Nothing. It doesn't hurt anybody.

Town planning and architecture is something which creates values. If you use that human labor to build something beautiful and something solid, it will be a value. It will be a real value which has not existed before. It will be a new value and that value will have a certain permanence if it is beautiful, solid and comfortable. All the good classical objectives. If you don't do that, it will have none of these qualities and you will lose values. But that will take time for people to realize. Or even if they don't realize, it will be too bad.

But now the situation has become so ridiculous that people disbelieve architects and in Europe there's a huge demand for participation. People say, 'Because architects are so bad, we want to participate,' and they form committees and they want to have a say. And so, an architect, who wants to do anything nowadays in a European city, has to present his project to big committees and even the butcher has a say. The same say. They can say, 'No I don't like this,' or 'I want my car park here.' That's total Babel. It's complete confusion.

It's impossible to think in a committee. If we were to think here about something, we would have to go back, each of us, and think and then maybe we could come out with something intelligent, and present it. A committee cannot possibly do something which is intelligent and yet these participation rounds claim that they are going to create a better environment.

If engineers were unable to build airplanes that fly, committees would not be able to resolve the problem. Committees will say engineers are wrong because they build airplanes which fall down or which can't fly, and then there would be a demand for participation. But there is no demand because engineers build airplanes which fly. So if architects make houses which are real houses, there wouldn't be any need for participation. And, after all, we look back on a few thousand years of architectural culture, of the highest achievements of art and architecture. So someone should be able to do something but...

Panel: One thing you might explain, because there may be a misconception

about it, is how do you spend your time?

Krier: I had to leave teaching because of my health. It made me very ill and I got very bad headaches. The doctor said whenever you get that sort of thing there's something wrong with your work. When I told him I was teaching, he told me to just give up teaching. I told him that it was the only thing I earned my money from. He said give up teaching or have ulcers, so I gave that up.

I had a lot of projects for authorities in Germany, and in France, too, which earned a bit of money. Because I do things myself, alone, I don't have any problems with people. I don't have discussions. I just do things until they're right and all by myself. It's very easy because an individual can do most of the things which are required nowadays from a planner. Just by doing it peacefully. It's interesting because you can earn a lot of money which otherwise is lost in big office problems and teamwork. It is a colossal *gaspiillage*, teamwork, because you waste so much energy in just bringing human differences together or ironing them out, that they're counterproductive. It's enough if I do a project every two years which earns me some money so I can live. Usually I work on it for six months so I can live for two years. It's very pleasant. But before that, I usually put the conditions so that my work will be accepted for what it is.

Usually you find enough people who are in authority - and usually it's administrators and politicians - who have great awareness of the catastrophe we are in. They don't have any illusions because they have nothing to excuse themselves for. They don't have terrible drawings they did twenty years ago that they had to burn. So they know exactly when art is just useless, or when architecture is bad, because they see with very cold eyes. So these people are very often quite rational and they go along, if you really argue something very rationally. There are many projects where I demonstrated to the local senate or the authority of a new town that they were fundamentally wrong and that my project was right. So they had to agree. They had to pay me. And yet they say, 'We are sorry. You are right. We will pay you but we can't build your stuff although you are right. We know you are right.'

I had one very big project in France for a school and I needed a budget which would have been about double to build it decently. If you wanted to build the materials I presented, it would have been two hundred percent more expensive. Which is not very much because, after all, Taillibert, his budgets go over two thousand times. But if you want to

do something reasonable, it's very difficult to ally the great amount of the people because people understand it and therefore they say, 'Oh, but we can't have this.' If you mystify the problem, you say this must be so expensive because of this and that and inflation... If you don't have the truth you will unify people behind you. Just by lying. But I don't want to get involved with these problems because I won't survive just healthwise.

I found out that a very good combination of working is writing and drawing because I usually get very angry when I do a project and then I can write very well after. Culot commissioned me to do a series of books and I concentrated and I haven't done any drawings in two years. I got so frustrated because writing - the sort of writing which I want to do - is already something more abstract than drawing because drawing may be an abstract thing - it's two dimensional - but it's very much related to the real world. Whereas philosophy is the highest degree of abstraction and universality and if you don't have a colossal gifted mind for that it leads you to terrible frustration. And I just had to learn for two years how to write. And I found out that the combination of drawing and writing is a good combination.

Panel: What sort of books are they?

Krier: They're called *The Six Books of Reconstruction* which also try to link the idea of reconstruction to philosophy and science and to situate architecture in a very broad moral landscape. I found out that the work I did ten years ago was still very abstract because what I drew I was learning. I could only draw things which I had understood; so, I couldn't draw a cornice because I didn't know how it was built and what it was there for. I didn't know what a modillion meant or where an ovolo motif came from and what it really signified. So, now, my projects have become more and more real and to do these books I will rework old projects. They won't be changed but I will just add the things which have been missing and maybe sometimes even explain why this has been done so.

The books are extremely simple. They're like school books and they explain how the system works from the smallest part to the larger. It's rational. Rationalism really came about in the eighteenth, nineteenth century when the world was already falling that much apart that some people thought the only way to keep it together was to gather knowledge in some form, so that it's possible to learn not from direct empirical experience, but just by taking books. With books you are able to recapture all this knowledge. But it is already a great simplification of the moral and sensuous world of feeling...