

"PROBLEMS IN THE FORM OF A CONCLUSION"

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Undeniably we are here faced with various concomitant phenomena. On the one hand, **building production taken as an element of comprehensive planning continues to reduce the usefulness of architectural ideology.** On the other hand, **economic and social contradictions**, which explode in an always more accelerated way within urban agglomerations, **seem to halt capitalist reorganization.** Faced with the rationalization of the urban order, **present-day political-economic forces demonstrate that they are not interested in finding the ways and means to carry out the task indicated by the architectural ideologies of the modern movement.**

In other words, **ineffectiveness of ideology is clear. Urban approximations and the ideologies of the plan appear as old idols**, to be sold off to collectors of antique relics.

The difficulty of the struggle for urban legislation, for the reorganization of building activity, and for urban renewal, has created the illusion that the fight for planning could in itself constitute an objective of the class struggle.

And the problem is not even that of opposing bad plans with good ones. If, however, this were done with the cunning of the lamb, so to speak, it could lead to an understanding of the factors conditioning the structures of the plan that in each case correspond with the contingent objectives of the working class.

...The change from the use of static models to the creation of dynamic models seems to be the task posed today by the necessity of capitalist development to update its programming techniques.

...Decision theory must assure the flexibility of the "systems that make decisions". It is clear that the problem is here no longer purely that of the criteria of value. The question to an advanced level of programming must respond is, "What systems of values are generally coherent and guarantee the possibility of adaptation and therefore of survival?" For Rittel it is thus the very structure of the plan that generates its system of evaluation. All opposition between plan and "value" falls away

The consequences of such phenomena, here barely touched upon, for the structure of planning and for the organization of designing, constitute a still completely open problem which must be faced today and in regard to which didactic experimentation must take a position..

Viewed in this light, what remains of the role played historically by architecture? Up to what point does architecture's immersion in these processes render it a pure economic factor? And to what extent are decisions taken in its own specific sphere reflected in larger systems? The present-day situation in architecture makes it difficult to find coherent answers to these questions.

The fact is that, **for architects, the discovery of their decline as active ideologists**, the awareness of the enormous technological possibilities available for rationalizing cities and territories, coupled with the daily spectacle of their waste, and the fact that specific design methods become outdated even before it is possible to verify their underlying hypothesis in reality, **all create an atmosphere of anxiety. And ominously present on the horizon is the worst of the evils: the decline of the architect's "professional" status and his introduction into programs where the ideological role of architecture is minimal.**

This new professional situation is already a reality in countries of advanced capitalism.

Architects, after having ideologically anticipated the iron-clad law of the plan, are now incapable of understanding historically the road travelled; and thus they rebel at the extreme consequences of the processes they helped set in motion. What is worse, they attempt pathetic "ethical" relaunchings of modern architecture, assigning to it political tasks adapted solely to temporarily placating preoccupations as abstract as they are unjustifiable.

Instead, there is a truth that must be recognized. That is, that the entire cycle of modern architecture and of the new systems of visual communication came into being, developed, and

entered into crisis as an enormous attempt -the last to be made by the great bourgeois artistic culture- to resolve on the always more outdated level of ideology, the imbalances, contradictions and retardations characteristic of the capitalist reorganization of the world market and productive development.

Order and disorder, understood in this way, no longer oppose each other. Seen in the light of their real historical significance there is no contradiction between Constructivism and the "art of protest"; between the rationalization of building production and the subjectivism of abstract expressionism or the irony of pop art, between capitalist plan and urban chaos; between the ideology of planning and the "poetry of the object."

By this standard, the fate of capitalist society is not at all extraneous to architectural design. The ideology of design is just as essential to the integration of modern capitalism in all the structures and suprastructures of human existence, as is the illusion of being able to oppose that design with instruments of a different type of designing, or of a radical "antidesign".

It is even possible that there exist many specific tasks for architecture. What is of greater interest to us here is to inquire how it is possible that up to now Marxist-inspired culture has, with a care and insistence that it could better employ elsewhere, guiltily denied or covered up a simple truth.

This truth is, that just as there cannot exist a class political economy, but only a class criticism of political economy, so too there cannot be founded a class aesthetic, art, or architecture, but only a class criticism of the aesthetic, of art, of architecture, of the city itself.

A coherent Marxist criticism of the ideology of architecture and urbanism could not but demystify the contingent and historical realities, devoid of objectivity and universality, that are hidden behind the unifying terms of art, architecture and city. It would likewise recognize the new levels attained by capitalist development, with which recognitions the class movements should be confronted.

First among the intellectual illusions to be done away with is that which, by means of the image alone, tries to anticipate the conditions of an architecture "for a liberated society". Who proposes such a slogan avoids asking himself if, its obvious utopianism aside, this objective is persuasible without a revolution of architectural language, method and structure which goes far beyond simple subjective will or the simple updating of a syntax.

Modern architecture has marked out its own fate by making itself, within an autonomous political strategy, the bearer of ideals of rationalization by which the working class is affected only in the second instance. The historical inevitability of this phenomenon can be recognized. But having been so, it is no longer possible to hide the ultimate reality which renders uselessly painful the choices of architects desperately attached to disciplinary ideologies.

"Uselessly painful" because it is useless to struggle for escape when completely enclosed and confined without an exit. >indeed the crisis of modern architecture is not the result of "tiredness" or "dissipation". **It is rather a crisis of the ideological function of architecture. The "fall" of modern art is the final testimony of bourgeois ambiguity, torn between "positive" objectives and the pitiless self-exploration of its own objective commercialization.** No "salvation" is any longer to be found within it. neither wandering restlessly in labyrinths of images so multivalent they end in muteness, nor enclosed in the stubborn silence of geometry content with its own perfection.

For this reason it's useless to propose purely architectural alternatives. The search for an alternative within the structures that condition the very character of architectural design is indeed an obvious contradiction of terms.

Reflection on architecture, inasmuch as it is a criticism of the concrete "realized" ideology of architecture itself, cannot but go beyond this and arrive at a specifically political dimension.

Only at this point -that is after having done away with any disciplinary ideology- is it permissible to take up the subject of the new roles of the technician, of the organizer of building activity, and of the planner, within the compass of the new forms of capitalist development. And thus also to consider the possible tangencies or inevitable contradictions between such a type of technical-intellectual work and the material conditions of the class struggle.

The systematic criticism of the ideologies accompanying the history of capitalist development is therefore but one chapter of such political action. Today, indeed, the principal task of ideological

criticism is to do away with impotent and ineffectual myths, which so often serve as illusions that permit the survival of anachronistic "hopes in design".