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## A GREAT ARCHITECT

*(This interesting article, which appeared in the "Sunday Times", is herewith reproduced by courtesy of the Editor.)*

Youth is the age of certainty. For most of us age is apt to bring doubts. We begin to think that there may be something in the other fellow's ideas. No more than a glimmer, perhaps, but something.

Not so for the genial septuagenarian Le Corbusier. Yearly he grows more assertive and self-confident, and, unlike most elderly pontificators, who are apt to get short shrift from the young, Le Corbusier's admirers got younger and more numerous. For them he is "the incomparable Corb." And because he is the most didactic architect alive, and seems to know all the answers — and all the epithets — they have made him their symbol of revolt against what they consider fuddy-duddy architecture.

But few reputations grow by words alone, and Le Corbusier's achievements have been considerable. He contributed a major part towards the final plans for the United Nations headquarters in New York, yet wasn't involved in the final building, reputedly because he was intractable. He has designed, at Marseilles and Nantes, mammoth blocks of his "Unité" flats, which are, for thousands of architectural students, blueprints of an urban "utopia" (his own words) and, for others, the supreme housing follies of our

time. With two English architects, Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, he has designed a brand new capital city, Chandigarh, for East Punjab. At Ronchamp, in Eastern France, he has designed the strangest post-war chapel in Europe — to some, a holy use of mundane concrete, sheer blasphemy to others.

Scarcely more than fifty of his reputed 1,500 projects have been built, yet he has never been busier than now, and never had so wide an influence.

Le Corbusier was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, a Swiss watch-making centre, in 1887, and forsook his name of Charles Edouard Jeanneret for that of Le Corbusier when he began his professional career. He has been artist, publisher, editor, writer, pamphleteer, propagandist, but his world-fame rests securely on the fact that he is the most controversial architect and theorist since Palladio.

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