

Dr. Edmund Goldzamt

Let us remember Edmund Goldzamt, architect, town-planner and a distinguished scholar known particularly in eastern Europe for his work on William Morris. He was about to receive an Honorary Doctorate at the Weimar School of Architecture when, following a long illness, he died in Moscow on 3rd November 1990.

He was known in Weimar as a permanent guest lecturer and an active participant in the triennial Bauhaus Kolloquium, respected for his fundamental knowledge of the modern movement in architecture. This was the main subject of his studies, in which he saw Morris and his influence as source and heart of the matter.

In particular, his *William Morris und die sozialen Ursprünge der modernen Architektur* (*William Morris and the Social Origins of Modern Architecture* – not yet translated into English) can be acknowledged as a profound study of broad aspects of the historical background as well as the development from arts and crafts to modernism at the beginning of our century and so to the Bauhaus. Goldzamt accordingly followed his own social – and socialist – ideas which were the basis of his work.

Edmund Goldzamt was born in 1921, into a family of intellectuals, in Lublin, Poland, and responded to the early stimulation of cultural influences. When still quite young, he established friendly connections with Polish trade unionists and lectured on socio-cultural problems of the working class. The German occupation of western Poland led to tragic changes. Goldzamt's family was killed by Hitler's troops, but Edmund was able to escape the terror and began his education as an architect in Lwow in eastern Poland. Later, the war forced him into evacuation – finally, as far east as Tashkent, in Central Asia. There and, from 1943, in Moscow, Goldzamt completed his training as an architect.

During the first post-war years, he was engaged in planning for the reconstruction of Polish towns destroyed during the war and, in particular, the capital, Warsaw. Between 1952 and 1962, as lecturer and then professor at Warsaw Polytechnic, he gave lectures on the modern history of architecture and obtained his Doctor's degree. He travelled in several European countries, including England, and published his first book, *Italian Towns* (Warsaw, 1959). This was later followed by a further study, *Social Aspects of Town Planning and Housing in Italy* (Warsaw, 1968). In addition, he was active in research, practical planning and creative design. Goldzamt soon became known internationally as the author of a series of comparative studies on urban development for UNESCO.

His main task during the 'sixties was his Morris book, published in Warsaw (1967), Moscow (1973) and, in an enlarged edition, Dresden (1976). In 1971, his book *Urban Planning in Socialist Countries* was published, with editions in East and West Germany (Berlin, 1974; Stuttgart, 1975), Italy (Milan, 1977) and Spain (Barcelona, 1980).

From 1975, Goldzamt taught at the Moscow School of Architecture. In both Moscow and Warsaw, he tutored young graduates who are now lecturers themselves, devoted to the ideas of a just and better human environment which go back to William Morris. In this way, Goldzamt helped a whole generation of planners and architects to comprehend a very important message. Everyone who knew Edmund Goldzamt personally will think of him with the greatest respect and not forget such a straightforward and yet so modest and gentle a friend and colleague.