

IN MEMORIAM MÁTÉ MAJOR



Over eighty years, of them nearly sixty spent in efficient, creative activity, merit respect in themselves, but special deference and appreciation befits Máté Major, fighting in the forefront of professional and political struggles during these decades.

Born in Baja, August 5, 1904 — this common biographic datum means very strong bonds for him. He did never part with the scenery of his early life, rather, with the passage of time, this chain grew ever stronger as described in his reminiscences.

Neither did he part with “Alma Mater”, the Technical University he graduated from as an architect in 1927, and — appointed professor in 1949 — he had been working inintermittently till now — even after his retirement in 1976.

In the meanwhile, a lot of things happened both in this country and in the lives of those who did not contemplate problems of the Hungarian society, its strong fights for transformation from outside.

In the period before the liberation, in addition to being active as an architect, he joined young intellectuals of his profession — Socialist Artists — not reconciled with the social injustice of the ancient regime, and daring to speak up against the policy leading the country to ruin.

With the liberation, the well-known far-swung career took start, where appreciation and trust of leaders in this country made him a professor at the Technical University, Budapest, and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1949 he was among the first to be awarded the Kossuth prize for his activity.

Enumeration of his subsequent leading positions (e.g. secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, chairman of the Union of Hungarian Architects) and of his honours (among them, recently the Herder prize) would outgrow the frames of this brief commemoration.

His architectural creations and publications up to 1974 being found in *Periodica Polytechnica*, Arch. No. 2. Vol. 18 (1974) devoted to his 70th anniversary, in the following his most important publications in the past decade will be listed.

For our team of co-workers for several decades at the Department — later Institute — under his leadership, his work has been exemplary and opening new vistas first of all by elaborating new, up-to-date methods of, and a new approach to lecturing on the theory of architecture and the universal history of architecture, as well as by the wide-range organization of research. We have been impressed by his quiet, plain manner, in sharp opposition to his consequent pugnacity in principal matters. His theoretical directions are still followed by the team of instructors and researchers grown up around him, and are reflected in the multiplicity of publications of all the co-workers of the Institute of History and Theory of Architecture organized by him in 1971. I feel this is the most a professor is able to achieve during his active life.

At his 80th anniversary, we, his former students, later assistants and co-workers, congratulating him with respect, wished him still many years of valuable creative work in vigour and health. We were the more depressed by his unforeseen decease. So this volume, meant as a birthday commemoration, has become a farewell to him. But his memory will be kept, and his example followed by future generations of architects.

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