
IN MEMORIAM

Prof. Dr. Dobrivoje Tošković (1927-2021)

It has happened ...and shattered our expectations. We always believed that he would outlive us all: upright, well-groomed, active, always ready to discuss, even to write a new book or take part in a scientific gathering, with a narrative that would always sound clear and inspiring. Suddenly, there is a void, created by the departure into eternity of the great urban planner, spatial planner and architect-designer, Dobrivoje Tošković, professor, doctor of sciences, and a full member of the Academy of Engineering Sciences of Serbia. Born in the Serbian village of Draginac in 1927, he graduated from the University of Belgrade at the Faculty of Architecture, where he received his master's and doctoral degrees. He also studied in the Netherlands. He was lucky to learn Serbian with the famous Serbian poet Desanka Maksimović, so that until the end of his professional life he was clear and understandable to everyone in his written studies, plans, books, etc. And he was also enthusiastic and clear about the territories where he worked. Working in Tanzania, in charge of the Ruvuma Regional Plan, 8 general urban plans and numerous village plans, he experienced Tanzanian President Nyerere sending a private plane to pick him up. He worked on the urbanization of Libya and taught at the University of Helsinki, and in Iraq (Mosul). In Serbia, he was mainly engaged as a professor at the University of Belgrade at the Faculty of Geography (Department of Spatial Planning), and at the Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia. Of particular importance was his involvement in numerous urban plans for several cities in Serbia (Šabac, Valjevo, Čuprija, Užice, and others).

The crown of his professional career was his work in Calcutta (today Kolkata), the largest city in India. Working for the large Serbian company "Ivan Milutinović", which had been engaged in draining Salt Lake near Calcutta in 1965/66, he was invited to participate in the international competition for the new town named Salt Lake City on the drained lake, on the outskirts of this huge agglomeration. After he won, he had the great opportunity to lead the development of the urban plan for this new town with 200,000 inhabitants, which is today called Bidhannagar, and to later work on projects and monitor the construction until everything was built. Prof. Tošković's plan was carried out in quite the opposite way to plans for similar new towns/cities by world greats such as Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer and Consantinos Doxyadis. Today, the world's most famous architects, such as Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, classify Bidhannagar side by side with Chandigarh in India, Brasília in Brazil, and Rawalpindi in Pakistan, but they recognize it is completely different, more humane and of better quality in terms of the concept, based on the idea of a garden city. In an interview for The Economic Times, Prof. Tošković said: "Some of the main problems I faced at the start of my work were related to the socio-cultural context, how to plan a new town in a completely flat area, and how to avoid monotony in that area. I found that Indian people preferred to live in a house rather than in a high-rise building, but at the same time they liked grouping".

Thanks to this great undertaking, Prof. Tošković was awarded



the highest recognitions and charters in India. In addition to the plans, Prof. Tošković published a series of important books, articles and other texts that richly illuminate his urban ideology.

I was lucky to have worked closely with Prof. Tošković for over 30 years, and known him as a professional and academic of high professional integrity, but also as a man of the highest human qualities and steady principles. Never in conflict with his surroundings, he was appreciated and loved among his colleagues, students and everyone else who knew him. We sadly say goodbye to our Toshke, as was affectionately known.

Borislav Stojkov