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**The summary of doctoral thesis:
„Architect Romuald Miller – live and works”**

Key words: Romuald Miller, Emilia Hiżowa, Kazimierz Mieszkis, train stations, Railmen’s Trade Union houses, national historicism, expressionism with stylistic–decorative elements, modernism, modernistic functionalism, SARP

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Romuald Miller was among the representatives of what is known as the first generation of Polish architects–modernists.

One of five siblings, he was born on January 9, 1882 to a railroad family in the city of Łódź. In 1899 he graduated from the Łódź College of Crafts and commenced studies at the Institute of Civil Engineering in St. Petersburg, which he completed in 1908 with a gold medal.

He was already involved in political activity while still attending the craft school. This he continued during his studies as a member of the St. Petersburg cell of the PPS Polish Socialist Party and also collaborated with the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party (the Esers).

Upon completing his studies, he returned to his hometown and was initially employed as an assistant to the Łódź municipal architect (1909–1912). After this, his next job was as an assistant to the governorate engineer in Piotrków (1912–1914). He also had a private professional practice in parallel. He moved to Warsaw after the conclusion of World War I and, in 1918, took up employment with the Ministry of Public Works. In 1919 he started work at the Roads Department of the Warsaw Railroad Directorate as deputy to the Manager of the Architectural Section—Bronisław Brochowicz–Rogoyski. After Brochowicz–Rogoyski’s death in 1921, he took over the position of manager, which he held until 1924. At the same time—ca. 1922–1924—he collaborated with architect Kazimierz Mieszkis, mainly working on designs for the army. Over the years 1924–1939 he had a private practice, mainly doing design work for the ZZK Railmen’s Trade Union, collaborating with them on a permanent basis and acting as their technical advisor.

Miller was also actively involved in social–organizational and political activity. He was a cofounder and first elected president of the SARP Association of Polish Architects. He held this position over the years 1934–1937 as well as in 1945. He was active in the professional life of the architectural community and sat on competition juries multiple times. He was also coeditor of *Architektura i Budownictwo* [Architecture and Building Construction] and *Komunikat SARP* [SARP Bulletin], where he often published his articles on the creative work of architects and their professional matters. Near the end of his lifetime, Miller once again became active in politics. Over the years 1937–1939 he was a cofounder of the Democratic Club, which was later transformed into the SD Alliance of Democrats. He was also a freemason, Worshipful Master of the Honorable Lodge Łukasiński in 1937, and Grand Seal Bearer of the Grand Lodge over the years 1933–1934.

During World War II he was engaged in underground political activity, congregating a group of left–leaning democrats from the intelligentsia. Near the end of the war, the PSD Party of Polish Democrats, which he headed, supported the PKWN Polish Committee of National Liberation. He lost a son during the Warsaw Uprising and was himself wounded.

Upon the conclusion of the war, Miller became a member of the KRN State National Council where he served as vice–president. He was also involve in the activities of the revived SD Alliance of Democrats and was again elected a president of SARP. At the same time, he was active in the reconstruction of the country. He worked at the BOS Office for the Rebuilding of the Capital and collaborated with the Ministry of Transportation.

Romuald Miller died of lung cancer at a sanatorium in Otwock on July 29, 1945. He was posthumously awarded the Cross of Grunwald, 2nd Class. He was laid to rest at the Old Powązki Cemetery in the Honor Row.

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The architectural work of Miller is characterized by significant variety in terms of topics and typology as well as a multiplicity of architectural currents to which his designs may be assigned. Three theoretical designs date from his student years. One is known only thanks to brief notes contained in correspondence with the school authorities—a design for a house for a painter. His graduation work was an orthodox church with qualities characteristic of what is known as the Ruthenian style. The third was a design for an early–modern city hall in a large provincial town with references to classical architecture. There are three designs that are undoubtedly his work from his first period of professional activity preceding the outbreak of World War I—a church and rectory in Widzew (Łódź District) and the Siemens building as well as a theater in Piotrków, which most probably had qualities of national historicism as

well as of early modernism. Miller developed successive designs after World War I. In 1918, a member of a larger design team in the Ministry of Public Works, he worked on adapting the Alexandro–Mariinsky Institute for the Upbringing of Girls (formerly the Noble Institute) to serve as the temporary seat of the *Sejm* [Parliament] of the Republic of Poland. He mainly devoted the years 1919–1924 to designs for the reconstruction of railroad facilities, including the train stations in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Pruszków, Żyrardów, Radziwiłłów, Teresin/Szymanów, and Modlin. Their style was that of national historicism. Designs developed almost in parallel over the years 1922–1924 together with K. Mieszkis were of the same current: facilities on the grounds of the DCWA Army Experimental Training Center in Rembertów—the Officers’ Hotel and what are known as the officers’ colony and the noncommissioned officers’ colony—houses of the Postal Savings Bank Cooperative Housing Association for what is known as the Lubeckiego Colony in Warsaw as well as multifamily housing for employees of the sugar refinery in Mała Wieś. Together with Mieszkis, Miller also developed a competition design for the National Museum in Warsaw. It made reference to the stylistic canon and order forms of classical architecture.

Around the mid–1920s, Miller’s work quickly started to evolve stylistically. Classical compositions and details with historical forms increasingly gave way to modernist functionality and a new, increasingly terse aesthetic. This is already visible in the design for the train station in Gdynia from around 1921–22, where the building plan is strictly subordinated to functional needs while the mass, in spite of direct references for historical Polish architecture, was dominated by massive gables of laconic form. The same was true for the first building for the ZZK designed in 1924 and completed in 1928. The building had a very functional layout and the architect provided it with classical orders and “national” detail in the façade. He applied a modern expressionist style, known as the “crystal style,” for the interior.

The creative work of Miller entered a completely new phase in the second half of the 1920s. It is from this period that designs with completely new architecture originate—strict functionality, flat roofs, and finish generally consisting of gray cement brick allowing the shaping of interesting expressionist designer forms of detail. It is to this current that the designs for ZZK house designs in Łazy (1926) and Lwów (Lviv) (1928–1930), the craft school in Pabianice (1926–27), the Children’s Disease Clinic in Warsaw (ca. 1929), and the State Telephone and Telegraph Manufacturing Plant in Warsaw (ca. 1929) can be assigned.

A successive change in the creative work of Miller was defined by the economic situation. The crisis of the end of the 1920s resulted in significant restrictions on the budgets

available to investors as well as a quest by designers for alternatives to traditional architecture and building, especially housing. The design developed for the Inexpensive Own Home exhibition in Warsaw's Bielany is from this period. Awarded the title "Mister Public," it was a design for a small single-family house with a novel timber structural solution. The design was subsequently built thirty times in the nearby Związkowiec [Trade Unionist] Housing Estate that originates from this period. Also among the "inexpensive" designs is the house for the ZZK in Warsaw's Nowe Bródno (ca. 1933) and, developed in line with the ideas of extreme modernism prior to the crisis, the conceptual design for the railmen's housing colony in Pełcowizna in Warsaw (1927).

Around the mid-1930s, in step with the improvement in the economic situation, Miller again began designing buildings of a much higher standard where in place of expressionistic décor he began applying various finish materials such as ceramic or stone cladding and plasterwork, enclosing his functional plans in cuboid volumes with harmonious proportions. This period of his creativity is the origin of such designs as that for the ZZK house in Skarżysko Kamienna (1934), masonry villas for the Związkowiec Housing Estate (1937), and houses for commissioned and noncommissioned officers in Chrozów (1937). The year 1935 saw the design of a monumental building, something very rare in the work of Miller. It was developed for the competition for the courthouse on Leszno Street in Warsaw. Its architecture was characteristic of what is known as the "1937 style." His last design for the reconstruction of the PZUW General Mutual Insurance Association building was made during the German occupation. In spite of the fact that work was interrupted by the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, descriptions of the design, known from opinions and photographs of its remnants, indicate that this last work by Miller may also be classed in the current of mature modernism of the end of the 1930s.

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In collecting materials and conducting analyses and studies on the design work of Romuald Miller in the broad context of the architectural landscape of the era, it may be noted that the timeline for the development of his rich, stylistically varied architectural creativity as well as the course of his professional career seems to be typical of numerous other representatives of the community of Warsaw architects of his generation in many respects. It is this finding that has compelled the author of the dissertation to put forward and attempt to prove the accuracy of the proposition that in many aspects, the evolution of the creative stance of Romuald Miller as well as the means of architectural expression applied by him ran a course that was also characteristic of other Polish architects of his generation.

In order to more closely present, define, and compare the evolution of the creative stance and means of architectural expression characteristic of the creative work of representatives of the generation of Romuald Miller, upon consideration, for the purposes of the analyses conducted in this work, ten architects were selected from the group: Antoni Dygat (1886–1949), Romuald Gutt (1888–1974), Konstanty Jakimowicz (1879–1960), Marian Lalewicz (1876–1944), Zdzisław Mączyński (1878–1961), Edgar Norwerth (1884–1950), Oskar Sosnowski (1880–1939), Rudolf Świerczyński (1883–1944), Czesław Przybylski (1880–1936), and Tadeusz Tołwiński (1887–1951). They were all born during the period around the birth date of Romuald Miller—i.e. in the years 1876–1890. They all had their professional practices during the twenty-year interwar period in the cradle of Polish modernism—the Warsaw community—when they were all active as designers at least up to the mid-1930s. As creators of architecture, like Miller, they made themselves a place in the awareness of society. This is borne out by the publishing of their works in the professional press and literature from the era as well as their activities in other fields of public activity—they were authors of publications, members of the editorial boards of architectural journals, and were involved in associations and politics, college-level organizational work and teaching, but primarily they had significant achievements in the design and construction of major buildings, mainly public buildings. Moreover, Czesław Przybylski and Konstanty Jakimowicz, like Miller, were the authors of train stations.

All of them, born in various parts of Poland or abroad, received their professional training at various European universities, both technical and artistic. This was characteristic of architects of the first generation of Polish modernists. The sum of experience and knowledge gained as well as practice in architectural studios undoubtedly had an impact on the creativity and stance of the post-1918 Polish architectural community. It also found its reflection in both the teaching program and methods used in architectural instruction at the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology as established in 1915 with the participation of this generation.

The first period of creativity of the discussed group of architects, which ended with the outbreak of World War I, was when they were launching their professional careers. Almost all designers considered in this work, including Romuald Miller, had in their dossiers completed buildings, or at least their designs, showcasing both architecture characteristic of late historicism and what is known as early modernism, striving to simplify and reinterpret architectural forms and motifs considered to be “indigenous” (the manor house style, national

style, and what is known as neo-vernacular) or characteristic of Polish architecture during its various stylistic periods—e.g. classicism or Romanesque.

Like Romuald Miller, the architects discussed here joined in the process of rebuilding the country at the start of the twenty-year interwar period, with its initial hectic years of independence and a just barely stabilizing geopolitical situation. Working in Warsaw, which had reinstated itself as the capital city, they often had the opportunity to design grand, representative building, including government headquarters, ministries, banks, and important social institutions. They generally did this clinging to forms and principles rooted in the classical tradition. However, the current that made a particularly strong impression on Polish architecture of the first years of the twenty-year interwar period was the familiar stream of national historicism applied in designs for schools, train stations, and residential buildings.

The breakthrough in the creative work of architects counted today among the first generation of Polish modernists occurred in the year 1926. It was also the year of the launching an “offensive” in the activity of architects from the group of what is considered the second generation of modernists, including Szymon Syrkus (1893–1964), Józef Szanajca (1902–1939), and Bohdan Lachert (1900–1987). Today, that year is deemed to be the year of the modernist breakthrough in Polish architecture. However, the joining of Miller and many others of his generation of the current of new, modernistic architecture should also be coupled with other events occurring at home. Following the euphoria of the first years after regaining independence and the stabilization of the country’s borders, economic problems began to make themselves increasingly felt, with the hyperinflation of 1923 in the forefront, but also unrest on the national political scene. The year 1926 saw a major turn in Polish politics, sealed by the May Coup. The worldwide economic crisis at the turn of the 1920s and 30s that, in light of the need to radically cut construction costs, undoubtedly played a role in spreading the rational and purist ideas of modernism, especially in residential architecture. Arguably, all these events inclined Miller, like many other architects of his generation, to wake up to the fact that there may be a different, perhaps better, most certainly more interesting, more modern, and more rational architecture to be discovered beyond that of the Polish manor house. For this reason, starting with the end of the 1920s, they also began to introduce into their designs elements promoted by “young” modernism with greater daring, especially in the area of function, form, and structural engineering.

In the 1930s, Miller, like many other architects from his generation, slowly gave ground to younger colleagues who thirsted for success. Those among them who, like Miller, had uninterruptedly been designing already had a name and high position on the market. Their

experience and significant professional achievements predisposed them to major, prestigious commissions while guaranteeing investors the achieving of expected results. Thus, the fruits of their creative work during this period mainly included public building, including churches, and sometimes, albeit more rarely, tenement houses and luxury apartments and villas. An analysis of the work of Miller from this period, like that of other designers of his generation, indicates certain design and actual building features common to their modernist buildings that rather clearly differentiated themselves from the architecture created in parallel by the younger generation of Polish modernists. Primarily, they generally remained faithful to a modern style that took into account the traditions of classical architecture (e.g., academic constructivism), which they had developed in the 1920s. Many more modest buildings sprang up at the meeting point of the classical tradition with contemporary functional and aesthetic needs. There, designers combined ordered, generally symmetrical masses with compositional elements and finish characteristic of modernist architecture, such as horizontal bands of windows and a wide gamut of varied finish materials and textures ranging from gray brick and clinker tiles to stone facing.

Starting with around 1933, in line with an improvement in the economic situation and the gradual improvement in living standards, the expectations of investors began to change. Thus, architects could stop designing under the dictates of pro-social savings programs that necessitated simplicity, replicability, and standardization. They could begin to reintroduce into their essentially functionalistic designs features such as comfort and quality. Miller, like other representatives of his generation, most often continued to insert the perfect solutions of his functional plans into simple, geometric masses. However, with increasing frequency these aspired to abstract sculptured or painted creations that were additionally finished using painstakingly selected high-quality materials of varied textures and colors. These were functional and comfortable buildings that were practical in use: “boxes” with noble proportions, erected using carefully selected finish materials that were perfect for including their architecture in the stream of the modern architecture of the second half of the 1930s. It was then that questions of a new, modern aesthetic and comfort began to supersede ideas of the reconstruction of society.

The above analyses of the creative work of Miller in the context of the architectural achievements of other selected architects from the first generation of modernists seems to confirm the theses posed at the beginning of this work: The evolution of the creative stance of Romuald Miller and the means of architectural expression he used, ran a course that was characteristically similar to that of other Polish architects of his generation in many of its

aspects. This dissertation endeavors to prove that that was the case in the examined first four decades of the 20th century in terms of seeking of new forms of communication and means of architectural expression through successive phases and various streams of Polish architecture as well as the unceasing striving of the architects of this generation towards modernity in architecture through experimentation in the fields of function, form, and structural engineering together with an undertaking by them of efforts at the equal treatment of human existential and aesthetic needs. To a greater or lesser extent, all of them followed a creative path characteristic of their generation: from historicism and early modernism, through moderate modernism deeply rooted in the classical tradition that at times was simplified down to the principles and forms of academic constructivism, across various shades of national historicism, expressionism with stylistic–decorative elements and modernistic functionalism, to conclude with the mature modern architecture of the end of the 1930s that today is termed the “1937 style.” It is undoubtedly the profound rationalism of the architects–modernists of the first generation, which in part was the effect of their own personal life experiences, that spoke to them of the necessity of seeking beauty as an element that is vital to the user and recipient of architecture. Thus, in presenting the stance of an architect–modernist they did not neglect artistic matters.

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