

BAKER BRIDGE ROAD
SO. LINCOLN, MASS.

5.5.60.

Dear Robin,

just before we have to leave for Europe we have to fill a Professor from Columbia (Fitch) with information on the life and times of Walter Gropius since he is supposed to compose a book on it for the Braziller series. We had first recommended you for this job though we know that you are writing only as a sideline, but we knew nobody whose judgement we could really trust and so we hoped that you would be kind enough to undertake it. But, we always underestimate the speed of American publishers. Braziller was miffed already that the book on Walter did not get into the first series published this year because Giedion, whom he had asked first, had been dilly-dallying too long (he is completely tied up with his big book for the Bollingen Foundation) and now he wanted something to be done in a hurry and apparently thought Australia too far away. So he suggested Prof. Fitch whom Walter knew only slightly, but who has just written a lengthy article on him for the Forum. We found it good and so he is going to do the book.

Gathering the material for it I came across something I hadn't read in a long time. Walters article for the 'Arbeitsrat fuer Kunst' in Berlin 1919. Translating it I thought of a letter exchange we had once with you when we took you up on a statement in one of your articles that the avantgarde architects wouldn't have any truck with 'beauty'. I don't remember the exact text, but you will know what I mean. The rather exuberant language of Gropius at 36 shows a definite preoccupation with 'beauty' and it was only when the public in general sneered at their products and the whole word got into disrepute that it was very nearly dropped from the professional language. It went underground, so to speak, waiting for the moment when the air would be cleared again from misunderstandings.

We are leaving for Berlin on May 15th where Walter will have to present his plan for a town of 50 000 people on the outer edge of the city. Middle income housing, partly subsidized, with schools, civic centers etc. greenbelt, lakes. Hurrah for the Berliners who apparently cannot be daunted and are tired of waiting for decisions that never materialize. They just want to go ahead anyway.

After that Athens and then Rome to check up on the office there ^{where they} ~~who~~ are doing the working drawings for the Baghdad scheme. 85 Million dollars have been set aside to start with by Kassim and the rest will have to come some time later.

On July first we shall be home again, we hope. The Central City interior job will have to be tackled. By the way, there was a devastating article on it by Edgar Kaufmann in Harper's Magazine.

'Horizon' will bring a long story on the Bauhaus, of all things. You know how it was said to be buried and dead for quite a while now, but since nothing so much better has materialized in spite of all the foam at the mouth, it is being taken out of moth balls again, dusted off and found quite acceptable even now. You have to get quite old to find out that all these effervescent opinions, all these ups and downs actually mean very little and that all that matters is the 'deed'.

We assume that Roy may stop here on his return trip in August and tell us the latest on your front.

We wish you all a happy summer!

yours

