

PREFACE

Zsolt Szirmai who founded the Documentation Office for East European Law in 1953 and occupied the chair of East European Law in the University of Leiden since its establishment in 1961 would have reached his seventieth birthday and retirement age on the 25th of July, 1973. In order to mark this occasion Professor Donald Barry of Lehigh University launched the idea of a symposium to which a relatively small number of scholars would be invited from among the wide circle of friends of Professor Szirmai. An organizing committee was formed consisting of Professor Barry, Professor Dominik Lasok (University of Exeter) and the undersigned. As the central theme of the conference the committee adopted Professor Barry's suggestion of "Codification in the Communist World". The committee further decided, in order to keep the number of papers and the format of the discussion within manageable proportions, to restrict the number of participants to about fifteen persons, all of them with long-standing relations with Professor Szirmai and his Office. Participation was almost evenly divided between the United States and Europe. At the American end Professor Barry took charge of the organization and the collection of papers.

When Professor Szirmai died on the 24th of February, 1973, the organizing committee and indeed everybody concerned felt that the conference should go on, the more so since we knew of the deceased's interest in, and enthusiasm for, our plans.

Draft papers were circulated amongst the participants well in advance of the meeting and a rapporteur was appointed for each paper.

The symposium took place in Leiden from 15-17 August, 1973, in the "Gravensteen", a former castle of the counts of Holland which now houses a part of the Leiden law faculty. The proceedings were opened by the Rector Magnificus of Leiden University, Professor A. E. Cohen, in the presence of Mrs. Szirmai and other members of the Szirmai family. Professor Leon Lipson and Dr. Bernard Rudden spoke in memory of the person in whose honour the symposium had been organized.

During the three days of the meeting the chair was taken alternately by the three members of the organizing committee. Mr. E. H. de Jong of the Documentation Office for East European Law served as secretary. The symposium was closed on Friday the 17th of August, 1973, by Dean Haardt of the Leiden Law Faculty.

This volume consists of the final version of papers presented by the

participants, following the comments of the rapporteurs and the discussion during the symposium.

May it be a fitting tribute to the memory of the man in whose honour we met.

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