

Modernism and Politics in the Architecture of
Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-1965

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother Snjezana Babic
and my aunt Zeljana Jokic.
I miss you every day.

University of Washington

Abstract

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The architectural history of Socialist Yugoslavia raises more questions than it answers. The introduction of modernism in communist architecture of the second half of the twentieth century seems contradictory and this thesis focuses on research of the historical and political background of this occurrence. Modernism can be traced to the years of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the early twentieth century, and this thesis further examines its key players, their intellectual and educational background, and the main buildings from the period. Focusing on postwar implementation of modernism in the architecture of Yugoslavia, this thesis investigates its connection with the politics of the time period as well as the influences of the prewar modernist expressions. Considering the crucial role of politics in the examination of modernism in Yugoslavian architecture during the Cold War era, this thesis further investigates relations between Yugoslavian government and officials, and the Eastern Bloc. The ramifications of the events of 1948 and the end of amicable relationship with the Soviet Union and its leader Stalin made a significant mark on Yugoslavian politics and consequently on its architecture.

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Preface ~

My grandparents were children of war heroes. Of partisans and communists. My childhood was colored by their stories of war, of battles, of Tito. For me, those stories resembled fairytales. To a child growing up in post-1990s war Bosnia the entire story of Yugoslavia remained a fairytale of a world less troubled, less hurt and hurtful.

When I started studying the architecture of Yugoslavia, in my mind I developed a simplified story of a country and its politicians who deliberately selected modernism as their country's architectural expression due to its characteristic of internationality, neutrality, and lack of connection to history. I saw this process as a deliberate one, as a process where architectural history of each Yugoslavian republic was determined to stay hidden, all in favor of creating a unified country, a country without any history other than the revolutionary one, the one acquired in World War II.

The questions I hoped to answer in this thesis are the ones in regards of how the relationship between modernist architecture and socialist politics could be explained in the case of Yugoslavia; particularly during a time when the most prominent socialist state, the Soviet Union, was pursuing a very different direction in architecture. Why was modernism as an aesthetic expression so close to Yugoslavian communists, and was the neutrality associated with it the main reason for its selection? Was it the neutrality of 'scientific management' that was so appealing, or was it the navigation towards the future and away from the past? What happened in the dreadful politics of postwar Europe that enabled the country to survive the clash with Stalin, and how did these events influence the architecture, how did they shape the face of Yugoslav cities and towns?

Today, I am telling a story of my country, of my grandparents through my own lens, through architecture.

Maja Babic

June 5, 2013

Seattle

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The help and support of my family and friends, those across the ocean and those nearby, made this a thrilling experience. Constant encouragement and the virtual presence of my dad and sister made this a unique journey.

Thank you all.

We are not starting from scratch – we are continuing with our work.

Mate Bajlon, 1946¹

INTRODUCTION

The architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia is a broad subject, and as one explores it, it only suggests more issues and brings further questions that often remain unanswered. This architecture cannot be easily understood and summarized since the politics and the economy of the time, the history, and above all, the intricacies of the country create a complex picture for scholarly inquiry. This complexity is yet another reflection of Yugoslavian history and as such it offers an additional perspective on the country and its people, a perspective penetrating into their lives with an undeniable depth. The issue of Yugoslavian architecture cannot be disconnected from the politics and economy of the country. A tumultuous past and equally troubled recent history have affected its existence throughout this time and as such have been key factors in the creation of everyday lives through the country's architecture.

¹ Quoted in Vladimir Kulic, Maroje Mrduljas, and Wolfgang Thaler, *Modernism in Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia*, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2012) p. 217. Mate Bajlon was a Yugoslavian architect and architecture professor. (1903-1995)

The region of former Yugoslavia has seemingly always been a site of bloody wars, as it is a territory where the rise and fall of many nations took place over the past centuries.² The countries that formed the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia³ have long histories, sometimes united on the same path, sometimes divided, but always conditioned by and dependent upon each other. These countries have had periods of amicable and fruitful relations as well as those of disastrous wars and severe antagonisms. The region of the Balkans, of former Yugoslavia, has been a staging ground for different religions and rulers, as well as various conquests of great empires. The past has left its mark, and that mark is persistent to this day.

The creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was not so unusual at the time it was first formed. As many others had done in the late 19th century, such as Italy and Germany,⁴ it was born on the remains of great empires and in the search of its nationhood. The country's leaders found themselves in a rather unfavorable position – creating a new political entity while not

² This region whose history has been the battleground for a number of wars dates back to Neolithic times, has been settled by Illyrian tribes, Romans and Slavs, and had been part of Illyria, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, and the autonomous kingdoms of the Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins. The most significant conquerors of the pre-Yugoslavian countries were the Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians. Not to diminish the previous history and its significance, for this thesis the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires have had more influential roles and will be addressed in greater detail. Periods of rule of the Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians do not apply to all Yugoslavian republics equally. Bosnia and Herzegovina was under the Ottoman rule in the 1463-1878 period, and under the Austro-Hungarian reign from 1878 until the beginning of the WWI, Serbia was occupied by Ottoman Empire from the late 14th century until the early 19th century, but with a rather dramatic relations with the Ottomans, often resulting in local wars. Macedonia was under the rule of the Bulgarian empire in the 14th century, and later was a part of the Kingdom of Serbia and under Ottoman rule. Slovenia and Croatia were never under the Ottoman reign, but were affiliated parts of the Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian Empires that were attacked in the 16th and 17th centuries Ottoman wars, but never parts of the Ottoman Empire as Bosnia or Serbia. The Croatian coast was often threatened by the Venetians who controlled most of the Dalmatian coast in the 15th century until the end of the 18th century; Montenegro had a certain level of autonomy from the Ottomans in the 16th century, but refused to fully accept Ottoman rule resulting in rebellions and the Ottoman defeat in the late 17th century. Montenegro was briefly influenced by Venetians and Austro-Hungarians and in 1878 was recognized as independent. In L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961)

³ The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is referred to as the 'SFRY' of 'Yugoslavia.' Yugoslavia was known as the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia in the 1943-45 period; as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1963; and since 1963 as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The country is most commonly referred to by its last full name or 'Yugoslavia'.

⁴ Italy was unified in 1861 and Germany in 1871.

having a proper model to follow. Initially Yugoslavia was conceived as a monarchy and was the first attempt to create a South Slavic union in the region. In part due to its political conservatism, it had mixed results. The pre-existing nationalities refused a complete and unquestioned assimilation into the 'higher Yugoslavian nationhood' and as such their differences caused constant instabilities. Nevertheless, internal divisions were not the cause of the dissolution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.



Figure 1: Map of Socialist Yugoslavia, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

Socialist Yugoslavia was founded on the remains of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the aftermath of WWII. The leaders of the new Yugoslavia had a wide range of issues to resolve, such as, how to build the country, how to establish its position between the East and West and how to define its political identity. Further questions were how to bolster the country in relation to its former war allies without succumbing to their power, and how were Yugoslavs to remain

unified as a nation under such conditions. Forming a new nation⁵ with the existence of different histories and varying desires within the new country was bound to create the basis for future problems. The dilemma of internal unification arose in the first years of Yugoslavia's existence and remained an issue until its demise. The fundamental questions for this historical puzzle are: What were the Yugoslavian leaders seeking as the resolution to such internal problems? What was the fate of the country united under such 'unnatural' preconditions? What were the roles these preconditions would have in Yugoslavia's future?

Although one can argue that the architecture of a period does not participate in the formation of a country, in the case of Yugoslavia in the 20th century, architecture played a significant background role, one with the undeniable importance in establishing the public life of the new nation. It also played an important part in shaping the everyday lives of its citizens and in creating a public realm, as well as, in Socialist Yugoslavia, making a significant contribution to the representation of the country to foreign allies and adversaries. This propagandistic role was undeniable as well as its connection to the politics of the time making such relations a crucial basis for this research. The architecture and politics of Socialist Yugoslavia formed an understated but fruitful relationship, making Yugoslavian architecture a significant cultural force in the foreign presentation of the country.

This thesis will argue that the architectural trends in Socialist Yugoslavia cannot be separated from the political ideals of the period. The country's political direction was vivid in

⁵ The nationalities present were Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims by nationality (since 1968). There was a compromise due to the lack of a Bosnian/Bosniak nation. Yugoslavia differentiated between 'nations' and 'nationalities;' nations being native peoples specifically named in the Yugoslavian Constitution mentioned above, while the status of nationalities resembled those of minorities.

most aspects of life and as such penetrated architecture profoundly. But how can this relationship between modernist architecture and socialist politics be explained, particularly during a time when the most prominent socialist state, the Soviet Union, was pursuing a very different direction in architecture? Why was modernism as an aesthetic expression so close to Yugoslavian communists, and was the 'newness' associated with it by default the main reason for its selection? Was it the 'scientific management' that was so appealing, or the navigation towards the future and away from the past? Was this selection voluntary or involuntary, and did it come from long deliberations or was it simply implemented by the socialist architects who had been educated in modernist practices?

In addressing the questions mentioned above, this thesis will study the slow and sometimes circuitous journey to modernism in Yugoslavian architecture – a journey that was closely tied to the constantly changing political situation as well as the complex geopolitical position of the nation. In carrying out this research the analysis of the origins and justifications of Socialist Yugoslavia's selection of modernism will be divided in both political and geographical terms as well as in relation to the intellectual background and education of Yugoslavian architects. The thesis will discuss the internal and foreign politics and its effects on the architecture of the country. Furthermore, the significance of the selection of modernism will be closely examined through two major issues in the post-World War II period – the unification of nations and the importance of 'newness' of modernism in countries with different economic, political, and religious backgrounds.

In examining the relationship between architecture and politics in Socialist Yugoslavia, it will be seen that the newfound country firmly supported an anti-historical approach in its

architecture due to its internal and foreign politics in the years after 1948. Anti-historicism was a significant political concern and it was closely tied to political activities and plans. At the same time the role of modernist architectural education and activities of contemporaries must be taken into account. A number of pre-war architects joined the ranks of the military during the war, and after its end participated in the government opening the doors for the significant influence of the architectural profession in the decision making process. Nikola Dobrovic, possibly the 'first Yugoslavian architect' was educated in Prague, later took part in the Yugoslavian partisans and national liberation movement, and after the war obtained the position of the Belgrade's chief architect. One of his contemporaries was Juraj Neidhardt,⁶ the Croatian architect who worked mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina,⁷ studied under Peter Behrens and worked as an intern in Le Corbusier's Paris studio. One can argue with certainty that such influences were crucial in the creation of postwar Yugoslavian architecture.



Figure 2: Burning of the Sarajevo City Hall, Courtesy of Jim Marshall

⁶ Neidhardt and Dobrovic are not the only examples of modernist-educated architects of postwar Yugoslavia. Others will be addressed in the following chapters.

⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be referred to as only Bosnia.

Now over twenty years since the tragic demise of the Yugoslavian Federation, scholars have produced a considerable body of research on the destruction of the country and its repercussions, but research on Socialist Yugoslavia has been mostly connected to the ongoing tragedies of its peoples and countries, such as with wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. The history of Socialist Yugoslavia remains secondary to the disastrous history of the post-Yugoslavian period, and even more so the architecture of the time.

One can argue that the architecture of the period has been neglected for variety of reasons. Some include the lack of accessibility to the country during the communist period, as well as the lack of clear 'belonging' to either Eastern or Western spheres of interest. Aleksandar Stipcevic (1990) suggests that one reason for the lack of the pre-1990s research is the lack of a federal institute covering the entire country and the consequent dispersal of information and data throughout the country. Another reason mentioned by Stipcevic was that though they were linked, the republics and provinces had such different histories, that it was rather difficult to determine the overall condition of the country. The research situation in Yugoslavia was rather specific, with certain levels of freedom, since both foreign and local researchers were present. At the same time, the political and economic turmoil in Yugoslavia created obvious restrictions on such endeavors. In the later years of Yugoslavian history, the access to research material for foreigners and academics critical of the official politics was granted with greater freedom, but the first years of the Yugoslav state were conditioned by the politics of self-preservation and self-definition and as such they enforced a higher level of restraint for non-partisan expression.

In contrast with this situation, the architecture of the pre-Yugoslavian period has been thoroughly researched. In part, this is due to the fact that this material is both architecturally and

historically specific, covering the period of the Ottomans and the Austro-Hungarians. The architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia has not met such a fate. One can argue that the reason for this is that Yugoslavian modernism was to a certain extent uneventful and not as dramatic in comparison to the developments in Eastern Bloc countries. Compared to Socialist Realism in the architecture of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavian modernism seemed to have exhibited more humane features. At the same time, it failed to offer drastically different ideas that might attract scholarly attention. This thesis argues that Yugoslavian modernism was not in search for innovations in its aesthetic expression, but it was in search of a political manifestation through architecture resulting in the expression of the political and architectural reality of Yugoslavia.

Scholarship on Yugoslavian history, politics, religion, and economy can be found in a variety of sources. Literature on the architecture of Yugoslavia published prior to its disintegration in 1992 is available in local and foreign languages. Research on the architecture of the region by Western scholars largely addresses work built prior to World War II and even more often the projects constructed much earlier. This includes research into the architecture of the Ottoman period, found in the works of Machiel Kiel on Ottoman architecture in the Balkans (1990), Maximilian Hartmuth on Ottoman architectural heritage in the Balkans (2010), Makas and Conelly on the aftermath of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires (2010), and scholarship on the avant-garde in the region in early 20th century (Irina Subotic). In addition, some information on architecture can be found in various political or economic studies. One distinct aspect of the research on Yugoslavia is that studies on architecture after the 1990s wars mainly address the issues of reconstruction and historic preservation, with most of these works discussing architecture in relation to its political and religious connotations.

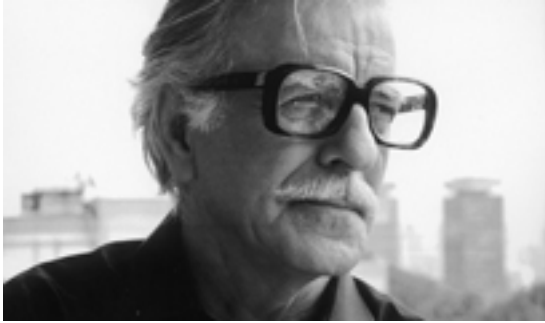


Figure 3: Ivan Straus, Courtesy of www.sarajevogreendesign.com

Despite the presence of this broader scholarship, the specific topic of this research, the architecture of Yugoslavia and its relation to politics, remains largely unexamined. Although some publications are available, other than several canonical works by Ivan Straus, Dusan Grabrijan and Juraj Neidhardt, and Joze Plecnik that provide a general examination of the architecture of the period, there is a lack of thorough research and critical review of the material. The most important recent contributions can be found in articles published in architectural journals by scholars such as, Vladimir Kulic, Nevenka Stankovic, and Ante Kadic, and as such they are merely a starting point for this thesis study. In addition, there are a few books that do focus exclusively on Yugoslavian architecture, such as Ivan Straus' canonical *Arhitektura Jugoslavije 1945-1991 (The Architecture of Yugoslavia, 1945-1991)*, which offers a catalogued selection of the most significant examples of Yugoslavian architecture, but does not provide any sort of theoretical or critical background. Another work, *Arhitektura Bosne i put u savremeno (The Architecture of Bosnia and the Voyage to Modern)* by Juraj Neidhardt and Dusan Grabrijan was seen as revolutionary at the time of its publication in 1957 and even now, in addressing the issues of historical heritage in the Yugoslavian Bosnia. However, this book does not offer a broader perspective on Yugoslavian architecture, even though it discusses the architecture of Bosnia and its heritage in depth and provides a theoretical framework worth exploring. Other works that discuss only some of the republics are Amir Pasic's *Islamic Architecture in Bosnia*

(1994), Joze Plecnik's *Architecture and the city* (1983) on Slovenia, Nedžad Kurto's *Sarajevo 1462-1992* (1997), and Ljiljana Blagojević's *Modernism in Serbia* (2003). These books can be used as a source of information on the history of a single republic's architecture.

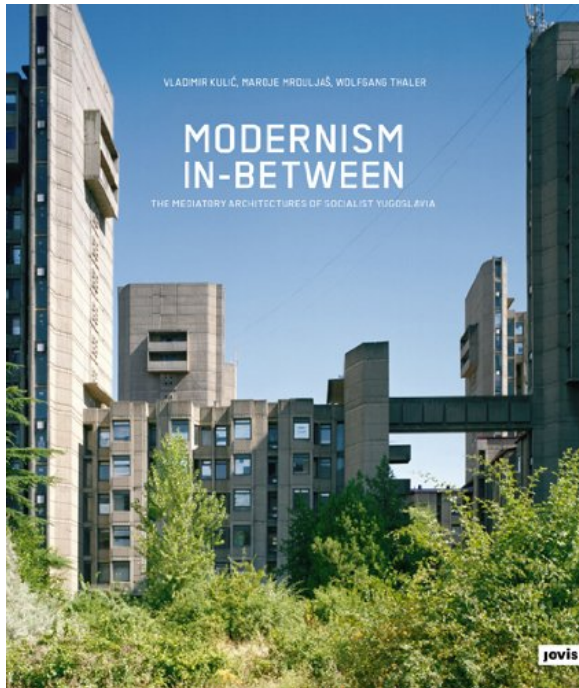


Figure 4: *Modernism In-Between*, Courtesy of www.amazon.com

Two recently published books, *Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism* (2012), edited by Maroje Mrduljas and Vladimir Kulic, and Wolfgang Thaler, Mrduljas and Kulic's *Modernism in Between: The Mediatory Architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia* (2012), are a valuable contribution to the existing scholarship and crucial for this thesis study. They provide significant information, critical review, and are, most importantly, works written from a post-

Yugoslavian perspective and by 'post-Yugoslavians' and thus lacking the direct influence of the socialist regime. Although not all articles in *Unfinished Modernizations* have managed to avoid espousing a political agenda, both books offer a valuable perspective on long ignored issues. Kulic and Mrduljas themselves fail to succumb to common forms of postwar anti-Yugoslavian propaganda, such as, declaring all manifestations of the previous system as flawed and repressive, in offering a significant investigation into the core of Yugoslavian architecture and politics from a 21st century perspective.



Figure 5: *Unfinished Modernizations*, Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler

Both books are addressing issues that will be discussed in this thesis. *Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism* was part of the exhibition that opened in Maribor, Slovenia in February of 2012 and toured the countries of former Yugoslavia. It focuses on 'unfinished modernizations' arguably associated with the 'unfinished' project of Socialist Yugoslavia. The book is divided in five sections: *Spaces of Representation* discusses Yugoslavian ideology, memorials, and unfinished modernisms and modernizations; *Spaces of Global Exchange* addresses fairs and fairgrounds as well as the ramifications of non-alignment in architecture and the construction industry; *Politics of Urban Space* focuses on cities of New Belgrade, the reconstruction of Skopje after the earthquake of 1963, and the socialist cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, and smaller Slovenian cities; *Design of Spatial Practices* questions the issues of housing in Yugoslavian cities, such as Split and Belgrade, and the concept of affordable housing units; and *Yugoslavian Architectural Space* is a collection of random essays on subjects, such as Plecnik, modernism in pre-WWII, and Neidhardt and Weissmann. The book's editors Maroje Mrduljas and Vladimir Kulic, as Croatian and Serbian architectural historians,

collaborated with various architects and historians from the former Yugoslavian republics to provide a unique perspective on the Yugoslavian architectural reality.

Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia, written by Mrduljas and Kulic, illustrated with Wolfgang Thaler's photographs of Yugoslavian cities and architecture is a somewhat different approach to the issue of Yugoslavian socialist architecture. The book addresses the issue of the 'in-between-ness' of the country throughout history and in the Yugoslavian present, and the repercussions of such a fate. The country, always in-between the East and West, capitalism and communism, and progress and backwardness, produced an architecture that illustrated the reality of Yugoslavia. Kulic and Mrduljas divide the book into six chapters, with the *History of Betweenness* emphasizing Yugoslavian architecture and the incorporation of European trends in the early 20th century; *Between Worlds* discussing the transition from Soviet influence to Western world, and Third World countries and the effects on architecture and construction; *Between Identities* focusing on different architectural histories of each Yugoslavian republic; and *Between Continuity and Tabula Rasa* addressing the construction and reconstruction of Yugoslavian cities and their influences. Lastly, *Between Individual and Collective* speaks of the housing and collective living in the former Yugoslavia, and *Between Past and Future* serves as a closing chapter, offering a short summary of Yugoslavian history and a 'look ahead.' The book provides a comprehensive history of the Yugoslavian socialist architecture while exploring its republics' histories and different paths to modernism.

The research into historical and political topics of this thesis will mostly derive from a vast body of literature, but in the case of architecture it will combine the existing scholarship

with interviews with historians and architects of the period, as well as additional archival research on urban plans, designs, and projects. The existing interpretations of the Socialist Yugoslavian architecture tend to characterize modernism and its precursor in Socialist Realism through a political focus. This scholarship argues that both were intended to offer the representation of the country to its enemies and allies, and at the same time, especially in the case of modernist tendencies, to unite the different nations creating Yugoslavia and to negate the religious and political histories of the republics. While this may be partially true, one can argue that the situation was not as uniform as has been argued in past research. Architects from the period, as well as some of the historians, rarely agree with such narrow definitions of architecture. They identify the processes as being much more open, although acknowledging the impact of the political conditions. This thesis will not only consult the existing literature to obtain information, it will focus on the political background of the times and the conditions under which architects designed and presented their works.

This thesis will focus on the political and social condition that established Yugoslavian architecture in the 1945-1965 period, with primary focus on the political influences on architecture. As part of this discussion, this research will examine aspects of heritage in the Yugoslavian republics and their fate during the formative years of Yugoslavian history. In so doing, it will take into account the professed anti-historicism in Yugoslavian architecture and its consequences. One of the questions this thesis aims to answer is the issue of national identity in Yugoslavian unification and its role in architectural activities. Modernism as the defined aesthetic of the country's architecture will be studied in relation to politics as well as in opposition to the undeniable historical references of the country. This research will also address

the introduction of modernist tendencies during the pre-Yugoslavian period and its significance for the future direction of architecture. It will also discuss the developments in politics and architecture in the wake of Tito-Stalin's split, and will address the political and economic relations with the Third World and Western countries. Most importantly, it will aim to answer the following questions: Why did Yugoslavs choose modernism as an aesthetic, and even a political expression, for the newfound and politically burdened country, and did this end in success or was it a failure? How was it expressed in the interwar modernist architecture? How natural was this development, and can the selection of Socialist Realism be considered a short interruption? What were the effects and consequences of combining such different political and architectural histories in one country?

In previous scholarship the premise was that there was a profound political, and thus architectural differentiation between Socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc and that this divergence inevitably influenced the architecture of the period. But how drastic were those differences? Was the dissimilarity mainly found in the state-sponsored architecture, which was the architecture presented to the outside world? How profoundly different was the architecture of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the years of Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia?

This thesis will explore the history of the region as well as the politics that influenced it and its relationships to architecture. It will initially focus on introducing the main factors in establishing modernism, and in so doing it will make an effort to deduce the political occurrences that have influenced the events that have taken place. The unbreakable bond between architecture and politics in Yugoslavia will be examined through research on the pre-WWII period and the establishment of modernism and its main actors. The following discussion

will attempt to focus in-depth on the political events that took place in the first three years after the establishment of Socialist Yugoslavia and its relationship with the Soviet Union and its leader Stalin. The amicable relations lasted only briefly, but the influence that they imposed on the country remains the only disruption in the Yugoslavian journey to modernism. The political dispute between Soviet and Yugoslavian leadership created foundations for future political developments, such as, the turn toward the West followed by the development of non-alignment. These events will be the final points of investigation in the examination of Yugoslav modernism from the Socialist period and the relationship between politics and architecture in the country.

This thesis will be divided into seven sections. The initial ones will deal with the introduction to modernism in Yugoslavia. They will explore the history and politics of the region, as well as the architectural trends and main actors. "The Journey to Modernism" sets the time framework for the thesis, elaborating on the development of modernism through its various forms, while introducing the architectural tendencies of each time period and their various political frameworks and events. The second section, "Between the Two World Wars," addresses in greater depth the introduction of modernism to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, its architects and their intellectual and educational backgrounds, creating a foundation for the further development of modernism and establishing the basis for the following parts of the thesis and their political consequences.

The third section, "Tito, Stalin and Yugoslavian Postwar Politics" sets the stage for one of the most crucial events in Yugoslavian history. It examines the relationship between the two communist leaders, Tito and Stalin, each working to establish their authority; the first for a

dominant position in the world of European communism, and the second for the independence of his communist country. Their turbulent relationship profoundly shaped the majority of decisions made in the first three years of the newfound Yugoslavia and Stalin's ideals for the creation of the Soviet Union served as the pattern for creation of the Yugoslavian politics and economy. The fourth section, "Socialist Realism and its Architectural Expression in Yugoslavia" investigates the brief influence of Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia under Stalin's political and architectural instructions. The positive relations did not last for long. In 1948 Stalin and Tito parted ways and set an utterly different direction for Yugoslavian communism, soon turning into its milder form – Titoism.

As examined in section five, "The Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslavia and the West," the country turned to newfound western allies and symbolically turned its back on Eastern Europe and Stalin. Section six, entitled "Modernism and Yugoslavian Socialism," examines the continuing Yugoslavian journey to modernism after the short experimentation with Socialist Realism as Yugoslavian architects resumed their work from the interwar period. It studies the post-1948 period, its architects and their most important buildings, while further exploring the political connotations of the turn toward the West and the relationship between architects, architecture, and government. The final section, "Yugoslavia and the Third World Politics," researches Yugoslavian politics and its turn to Third World countries and the Non-Alignment Movement, and the influences of such events on architecture, the economy, and the international relations of Yugoslavia.

This thesis examines the architecture of a Yugoslavia that was first created in the aftermath of the First World War as a new union, a union that was to join all South Slavs in one

country and free them from previous 'enslavement' that had taken place for centuries before WWI. The monarchy, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was indeed the first country to unite the South Slavs. Despite the argument that it had failed in its numerous promises, the monarchy managed to complete one – its people did not wish it to dissolve. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia dissolved due to the Second World War, but the desire to create a country for all South Slavs remained. After a disastrous war, the country reunited, but this time under a different premise, and under a different political leadership. Now a communist country, Yugoslavia united six South Slavic republics and manufactured an almost complete Balkan union, only failing to incorporate Bulgaria. The country followed the path of reconstruction and uncertainty while searching for modernity, and in that process, modernizing a highly rural country, mostly torn by war, and undeveloped due to past historical circumstances.

The architecture of the country followed the direction established by the politics and economy of the country, but in time a certain historical continuity was present in the growing country and its emerging architecture. The years between the world wars were the years of introduction of modern architecture in the region. Architects mostly educated in western countries, often interning in the studios of the modernist masters before returning to the native country, brought the spirit of modernism to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and subsequently developed a conservative modernist aesthetic in architecture, employing the old and new, historical and International. The architecture of the country cannot be defined as uniform, as each republic's differences were insurmountable in the creation of a national identity, however the Yugoslavs never really sought to define a "national identity." One can argue that the

apparent national identity was actually the lack of it – defined only in the uniqueness of the architectures of each republic, all united in its search for modernity.

1. THE JOURNEY TO MODERNISM



Figure 6: Momcilo Belobrk, Villa in Kacanski Street, Belgrade, 1933, Courtesy of www.skyscrapercity.org

The elaborate political history of the former Yugoslavia is suitably matched with the complexity of the development of its architecture. One cannot define Yugoslavian architecture easily, and considering the existing research it is clear that the political, economic, and historical intricacies of the country have profoundly affected the discussion on architecture. The indeterminate status of the architecture of Yugoslavia is to a certain extent a cliché, but nevertheless a rather accurate one. The alliance with the communist East, the capitalist West and the Third World – and all of the related political shifts – created a constant struggle for Yugoslavian architects. As

a result, the search for truth in the architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia was tied to the histories of its constituting republics, to the fragile internal relations, to the influence of the Soviets, the Americans, and the Third World.

Modernism did not suddenly appear in the Yugoslavian republics in the years after the Second World War. The much lengthier architectural history of these formative republics – like that of most European nations – witnessed the appearance of modernist tendencies in architecture in the period between the world wars. The modernism of the interwar period was characterized by a certain level of conventionalism instigated by the monarch, employing conservatism in rule and in architecture. This conservatism could be identified through its negation of avant-garde movements and its identification of the country as a monarchy. The country did not have the economic power to fully modernize and the interwar period did not last long enough to produce a significant amount of modernist architecture, but it did largely set the stage for the future development of modernism during the post-WW II era. In architecture, the interwar period brought “a powerful but uneven wave of modernization”⁸ with major cities significantly developing, and Zagreb and Belgrade doubling their population.⁹ The modernization can be identified as forcefully taking place in larger cities of the monarchy, but rural areas and smaller towns failed to follow the trend and contributed to the failure of modernization in the country.

This thesis will address Yugoslavian modernism in a twofold manner. It will examine it in relation to the politics of the time as well as the modernist aesthetic and its key players, the

⁸ Vladimir Kulic, Maroje Mrduljas, and Wolfgang Thaler, *Modernism in Between: The Mediator Architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia*, (Berlin: Jovis Verlag GmbH, 2012) p. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

architects. How did politics influence architecture? It is unquestionable that the representation of the country was extremely significant to Yugoslavian communists, but was the role of the country's architecture so crucial? And did the architecture manage to fulfill such an important position? While it is irrefutable that Yugoslavian modernism existed, one can argue that it was rather uneventful, and largely an imitation of European trends of the time.

The modernist aesthetic was instrumental in relation to another important segment of postwar Yugoslavian architectural policy – the battle against history. In a country comprised of six different republics with long histories, and more importantly, significantly different histories, anti-historicism was needed for its part in the unification of the country. In this sense, modernism was inevitable, as it represented all that was new and created free of the influences of the exalted rules of the Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians of the past centuries. It represented what Yugoslavia hoped to be – a perfectly functional brand new organism, unburdened by the political compromises of the past.

The architectural histories of the countries that formed Yugoslavia had taken varying paths that were distinctly colored by their political pasts. By the time of the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the differences have proven to be insurmountable, but in its first years the Communist Party of Yugoslavia¹⁰ and its leader Tito perceived these disparities as the basis for the creation of the new country's architecture – united in difference. What emerged as a major problem in creating an architecture that was meant to represent a nation, all while neglecting the past, was the fact that the distinctions between what can be described as the 'national style' of each constituting republic were so profound that they were ignored.

¹⁰ Referred to in full name or CPY.



Figure 7: Gabriel Gruber, Gruber's Palace, Ljubljana, 1773-81, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

Yugoslavian history was brief and dramatic and as a result the individual histories of its republics were even more vivid. The stories of Slovenia and Croatia that at first glance bear certain resemblances had significant differences in their development of modernist architecture in the period between the wars. Serbian architecture represented the struggle and battle of its people and politicians to loosen the grip of the Ottomans and Hungarians by employing romanticized Byzantine influences and a strong Romanesque imprint.¹¹ The history of Montenegro shows architecture created under such strong external influences that the first school of architecture in its capital Podgorica¹² was not opened until the early 21st century.¹³ The stories of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina depict architectural histories so colored

¹¹ Peter Krecic, *Architecture in Former Yugoslavia: From the Avant-garde to the Postmodern*, in eds. Dubravka Djuric and Misko Suvakovic, "Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991," (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 332-376, p. 346.

¹² Podgorica was named 'Titograd' during the 1945-1991 period.

¹³ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 77.

by the relations with the Greeks and Serbs and the Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians that the architecture rarely shows the genuine styles of the countries, but instead it offers unique hybrids. Despite these differences, historical periods can be identified in all of the republics. It is also rather clear that the complex political occurrences influenced them in different ways and created architecture unique to its republic. All of these historical events and episodes were to be united in a new country, the new Yugoslavia, which was on the path of liberating itself from the historical and economic occupation.



Figure 8: Helmer and Fellner, Croatian National Theater, Zagreb, 1895, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

The past could not have been so easily disregarded, as it forged different relationships in different Yugoslavian republics setting them on uneven journeys in the newfound country. Croatia and Slovenia, as the most western republics, were long under Austro-Hungarian rule and followed the architectural trends that emanated from Vienna. In part this is due to the fact

that the architects were educated in Vienna and in Berlin,¹⁴ and as such these influences were an important factor in the creation of their respective national architectures. Bosnia and Serbia, as less developed republics had a different story to tell. Serbia, situated between the Western world it long yearned for and the backward eastern Ottomans, nevertheless managed to develop a significant body of modernist works in the domain of housing. Some of the most remarkable works can be found to this day in Belgrade.¹⁵ The situation in Bosnia was different. Being part of the Ottoman Empire for over 450 years, and only a short period of time under the Austro-Hungarians,¹⁶ it did not have a long enough period of Western influence, and its modernist attempts in the period between the wars were somewhat modest and often in the domain of residential architecture.¹⁷ Nevertheless, modernists did leave their mark on the architecture of the interwar period, paving the way for future developments in the postwar socialist country.

As it was often the case in Eastern Bloc countries, the architecture of communist Yugoslavia seemed to have been so politically influenced that it strongly represented the beliefs of its politicians and primarily the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Tito. As it turns out, this was not the case. The architecture had its own life, shaped by its architects, their personal histories and education. The fact that the country's leadership was quite detached from the design process made the task of architects significantly easier and provided the opportunity to

¹⁴ Slovenians Joze Plecnik and Ivan Vurnik studied in Vienna with Otto Wagner and Karl Mosyng respectively, and Croat Drago Ibler studied with Hans Poelzig in Berlin.

¹⁵ Milan Zlokovic's works in Belgrade, dated early and mid-1930s (e.g.)

¹⁶ Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed to Austro-Hungarian Empire by international agreement after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 and its rule ended with the beginning of the WWI in 1918.

¹⁷ Brothers Muhamed and Reuf Kadic are considered as representatives of the modernist movement in the architecture of Bosnia. After studying in Prague, in 1939 they opened their architecture studio in Sarajevo.

create their own direction. The architecture of Yugoslavia failed to produce a distinct expression unlike in the cases of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary. The government never “prescribed a certain style of art,”¹⁸ but the architects of the postwar period did leave their personal mark.

Modernist architecture in Yugoslavia was not burdened by the intense socialist political connotations of the period. The architecture seemed to be formed by the happenings and trends of the years prior to WWII. Indeed, one can argue that the modernist aesthetic in architecture was first and foremost the result of the architects and artists of the interwar period and particularly their education. In addition, their political and intellectual background, taking part in the liberation of the country as members of partisan groups, enabled them to play such a significant part in the creation of the aesthetic identity of communist Yugoslavia. The only exception to this trend seems to be a short period between 1945 and 1948, the period of intense political alliance between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.



Figure 9: Jozef Plečnik, Courtesy of www.ljubljana.si

Modernism in Yugoslavian architecture was inevitable and as such it was defined by the education and intellectual backgrounds of its key players. Architects such as Jozef Plečnik, Drago Ibler, Milan Zlokovic, and the Kadic brothers were educated in newly-formed European modernist

¹⁸ Robert Burghard and Gal Kirn, *Yugoslavian Partisan Memorials: The Aesthetic Form of the Revolution as a Form of Unfinished Modernism*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, “Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism”, (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 86-98, p. 89.

schools. After returning to their country they actively took part in the creation of the architectural expression of the interwar period. The modernist movement already firmly established in Europe was influencing the modernizing country. The economy, politics, and history shaped the development of modernism and directed its path in different ways that were customary in other European countries, but nevertheless modernism of the interwar period established the basis for Yugoslavian socialist modernism. Politics took part in this trajectory, as Socialist Realism was influential for a short period of three postwar years. Despite the lack of works from this time, those years primarily changed the path of modernism in the Yugoslavian countries by delaying it.

2. BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS



Figure 10: Map of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Courtesy of www.arhivyu.gov.rs

The nation of Yugoslavia took its initial form as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes¹⁹ in the aftermath of the First World War. It was founded in 1918 by the Serbian Karadjordjevic dynasty under King Petar I, with the desire to unify all South Slavs in one country, and under one leadership. The idea encountered difficulties with certain “untenable, even impossible, connections and clashes.”²⁰ Regardless of the audacious idea that “despite their religious and linguistic differences, (South Slavs) were essentially the same people, one ‘race’ with three

¹⁹ The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941) was under the rule of the Serbian dynasty of Karadjordjevic as well as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918-1929).

²⁰ Misko Suvakovic, *Impossible Histories*, in eds. Dubravka Djuric and Misko Suvakovic, “Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991,” (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2003), pp. 2-36, p. 3.

'tribes,'"²¹ the country lacked an apparent national or religious unifying element. It turned out that the "in-between-ness" of Yugoslavia was the crucial unifying factor in relation to its foreign politics. The constituting republics may or may not have been keen on taking part in the newfound Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but in the aftermath of centuries under the foreign rule of great empires, the Yugoslavian republics chose to be in a union of similar states.



Figure 11: Milan Zlokovic University Clinic for Children, Belgrade, 1933, Courtesy of www.seecult.org

The architecture of the country and its republics clearly conveys the complex formulation of its statehood. It depicts its issues in a manner that allows a keen observer to follow the path of 'Yugoslavia's' on the facades of its capitals and cities. Kulic, Mrduljas, and Thaler argue that the "quest for Yugoslav identity made an imprint on architecture, but without ever reaching a

²¹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 25.

clear conclusion,"²² and always in a struggle between unwillingly creating the national Yugoslav identity, and discovering and establishing a particular identity of a constituting republic.

In being ruled by the Karadjordjevic dynasty, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was heavily influenced by the culture of a dominating traditionalist monarchy. "The avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes, and post-avant-gardes were invariably somewhere out on the edge, [...], indeed forgotten"²³ and "modernities and over-due romanticized concepts"²⁴ created a patriarchal, national, bourgeois culture.²⁵ Modern art, architecture, and culture defined the inter-war period in Yugoslavian public life, and modernism meant a "speedy and progressive transformation of rural, ethnic societies into national, bourgeois societies, from the world of rural farming to urban industries."²⁶ Modernism was intended to integrate the Kingdom with its international contemporaries and define the transition of a rural country into a modern, industrial one. The politics and economy of the period proved the Karadjordjevics wrong.

The Serbian dynastic leadership met a variety of opponents across the country. The country was "plagued by nationalist strife, uneven economic development, poverty, and class conflicts"²⁷ and the plans of its short-lived Kingdom failed. The country remained dominantly rural, and in the cultural sphere, "leftist social-realism and right-wing capitalist realism emerged in reaction to modernist international culture"²⁸ and strongly opposed the modernization as it was planned and envisioned by the king. The country's monarchic structure "was an indicator of

²² Ibid., p. 25.

²³ Suvakovic, p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁷ Vladimir Kulic, PhD Dissertation *Land of In-Between: Modern architecture and the state in socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-65*, University of Texas at Austin, 2009, p. 4.

²⁸ Suvakovic, p. 8.

social and political conservatism”²⁹ and provoked leftist social realism advocated by the Communist Party. The Party engaged in a critique of bourgeois society in the early years of the Kingdom and attacked the “apolitical quality of modernist art and its aestheticism”³⁰ at that time associated with bourgeois society, while the capitalist right advocated the introduction of folklore elements in art and architecture, promoting them as ‘genuine’ and ‘national’ as opposed to an international modernist aesthetic. The result was “‘integral Yugoslavhood’ [...] a specific visual language using modern rational forms with stylized, mythical symbols, primarily taken from South Slavic mythologies.”³¹

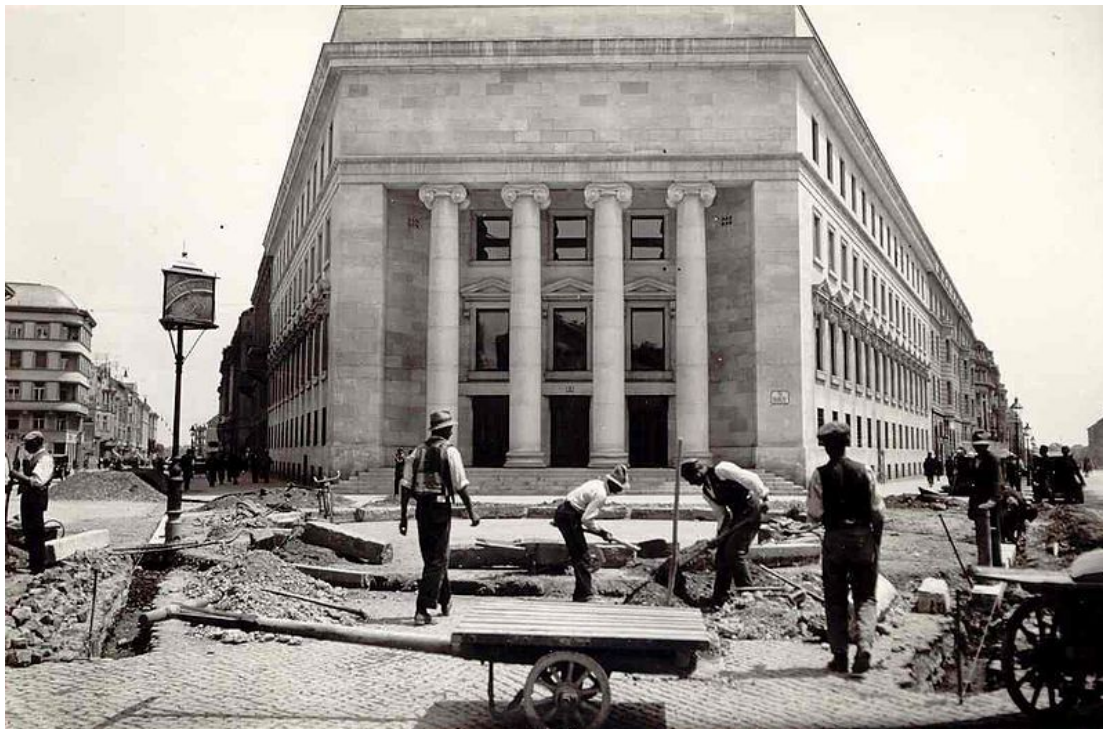


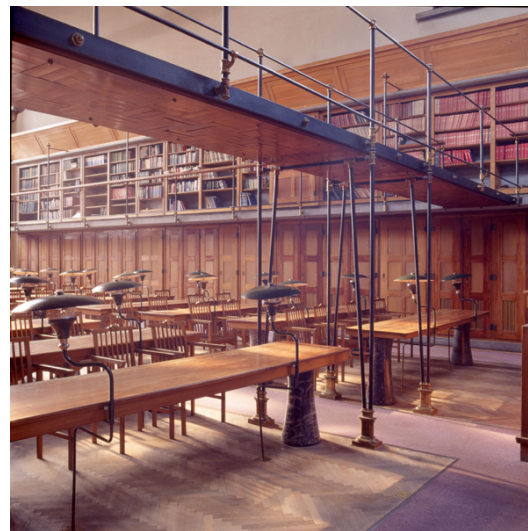
Figure 12: Viktor Kovačić, Stock Exchange Building, Zagreb, 1923-27, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

²⁹ Dejan Jovic, *Yugoslavia as Project and Experiment*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, “Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism”, (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 14-22, p. 14.

³⁰ Suvakovic, p. 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The Ottoman conquests in 14th and 15th centuries, the Austro-Hungarian dominance in northern Croatia, the impact of the Venetian Republic along the Adriatic coast, and Byzantine influences in Serbia and Montenegro³² created the unique circumstances under which the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was initially formed and brought “major architectural traditions into proximity [in a manner] that is rarely found elsewhere.”³³ In the early 20th century the future Yugoslavian states were for the first time “looking in the same direction, towards Central Europe,”³⁴ and the orientation of the politics of the country did strongly influence the cultural developments of the period. In the first two decades of the 20th century, the first generation of modern architects began introducing “the lessons of the Wagnerschule,”³⁵ bringing a new architectural aesthetic to the South Slavic states with their representatives Joze Plecnik in Slovenia and Viktor Kovacic in Croatia.³⁶



Figures 13, 14: Joze Plecnik, National and University Library, Ljubljana, 1930-32, Courtesy of www.theeuropeanlibrary.org; Exterior, Interior

³² Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 23.

³³ Ibid., p. 23.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

Regardless of the failure of Karadjordjevic's politics, the interwar period was significant as the architecture of the Kingdom brought a "powerful but uneven wave of modernization"³⁷ that primarily focused on larger cities. Croatia, Slovenia, and central Serbia experienced a second wave, although the southern states of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro experienced the first encounter with this modernization process. Cities grew; requiring more architects, and architecture schools opened their doors in Zagreb and Ljubljana.³⁸ Vienna remained the primary architectural destination of professionals, however Paris, Prague, and Berlin grew in importance for Yugoslavian architects.³⁹ This new generation of architects traveled and was educated in the studios of the pioneers of modernism⁴⁰ bringing new ideas and technologies to the country, and as a result the Modern Movement arrived in the Balkans.



Figure 15: Ivan Vurnik, *The Municipal Savings Bank building, Ljubljana, 1921*, Courtesy of www.flickr.com

In Zagreb, Drago Ibler was the main figure of functionalist architecture, while in Serbia "emergent modernists in Belgrade organized in 1928 into the Group of Architects of the Modern Movement"⁴¹ and rather successfully explored functionalism with Milan

³⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁸ Department of Architecture at the Technical University in Belgrade opened in 1897

³⁹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 25.

⁴⁰ A number of architects, primarily from Croatia and Slovenia, studied and worked with Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens, and Le Corbusier (See Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler)

⁴¹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 26.

Zlokovic as the chief protagonist. The work of Slovenian modernists advanced in two directions, Joze Plecnik's school of "free reinterpretations of classicism reshaped the city [Ljubljana]," while Ivan Vurnik took part in the functionalist expression after shortly exploring "Slovenian identity through folk motifs."⁴²



Figure 16: Milan Zlokovic, Zlokovic House, Belgrade, 1927-28, Courtesy of www.seecult.org

Milan Zlokovic's 'Zlokovic House' in Belgrade, constructed in the period between 1927 and 1928, is widely known as "the first modern house in Belgrade"⁴³ and a house that can be regarded as "the first architectural realization in interwar Serbia,"⁴⁴ the achievement of a new period in architecture. Ljiljana Blagojevic argues his work to be "new and dissociated from its connection to the past, yet it was related by radical and free transformation to the conception of

⁴² Ibid., p. 26.

⁴³ Ljiljana Blagojevic, *Modernism in Serbia: The Elusive Margins of Belgrade Architecture 1919-1941*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003), p. 27.

⁴⁴ Blagojevic, p. 27.

the past as being usable for the present."⁴⁵ Drago Ibler's 'Wellisch house' in Zagreb, built in 1930-31 is considered an "anthological work of modernist Croatian interwar architecture"⁴⁶ representing an example of modern residential living units in the Croatian capital.



Figure 17: Muhamed and Reuf Kadic, Building of the Pension Fund, Sarajevo, 1940, Courtesy of www.a4a.info

Brothers Muhamed and Reuf Kadic, educated in Prague, designed the Building of Pension Institute in Sarajevo in 1940, exhibiting "reduced forms geometrically 'clean' surfaces and volumes"⁴⁷ while introducing colors to 'achromatic' surfaces of modernist interwar Sarajevo. Interwar Ljubljana, the city of Joze Plecnik, whose "free interpretations of classicism reshaped the city

throughout a series of projects ranging from small-scale urban interventions to monumental buildings"⁴⁸ was a city of contrast where Plecnik's exploration of classicism intertwined with Vurnik's functionalism in early 1930s.⁴⁹ One of the most intriguing buildings from the period, city's landmark, Neboticnik,⁵⁰ was designed by Vladimir Subic in 1931, an architect educated in

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 195.

⁴⁶ Gradski zavod za zastitu spomenika kulture i prirode, Galerija nepokretnih kulturnih dobara grada Zagreba, www.zagreb.hr, Accessed on May 11, 2013. Translation by author.

⁴⁷ Ivan Straus, *Muhamed Kadic, 100 godina rođenja*, www.a4a.info, Accessed on May 11, 2013. Translation by author.

⁴⁸ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 26.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

⁵⁰ Neboticnik (Eng. skyscraper)

Vienna and Prague, one of those not favored after the war due to his opposition to the communist regime. Subic's Neboticnik was at its time the highest building in Europe at the height of 70 meters, and was designed in neoclassical and avant-garde style. The building depicts the differences in design styles of Slovenian architects of the time and the intertwining of modernist and neoclassical ideas.

The fact that the 'main' cities of the Kingdom were more adapted to modernism than the remainder of the country, speaks clearly to the differences of the states. The schools in capitals other than Ljubljana and Zagreb opened after WWII, if not much later, and although some local architects did explore the modernist aesthetic and took part in the modernist movement, such as Kadic brothers in Sarajevo, architects from Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia mostly worked in the capitals of Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The example of the Kingdom's capital tells a vivid story of the differences in the desires of politicians and people, and the goals set by the newfound government even in the capital. Belgrade was to be reconstructed after WWI, and the Slovenes, Croats, and forward-looking Serbs expected the capital to be modern. In contrast with this view, functionaries saw an opportunity to fill gaps in the historical city fabric, and commissioners and contractors sought to express a Serbian character through "romantic, decorative elements borrowed from Serbian medieval architecture."⁵¹

The architects of the interwar period were educated in Europe, traveled extensively, and held high status in the Kingdom. Nevertheless, a majority of them were "active in left-leaning

⁵¹ Krecic, p. 346.

organizations.”⁵² They actively took part in the coming war in a manner that proved to be crucial in the postwar period. Their participation in the Communist Party and the war allowed them extraordinary levels of freedom in their work and enabled them to further introduce modernism to then Socialist Yugoslavia. Yet each of the constituting republics of Yugoslavia followed a distinct path that later proved to create difficulties in the creation of a unique political, economic, and architectural character. At the same time, this disparateness was what created the unique qualities of Yugoslavian architecture during much of the 50 years of communist rule.



Figure 18: Nikola Dobrovic, Hotel Lopud, near Dubrovnik, 1934, Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler

The introduction to modernism of the interwar time period in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was at a slow pace, but taking into consideration the politics of the era and troubling history of

⁵² Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 26.

the Balkans and the monarchial states, the pace at which the introduction of the movement took place seems reasonable. Modernist architects educated in the cities of Western Europe brought the understanding of the movement to Yugoslavia, but made an attempt to adjust it to their roots and their history. The cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Belgrade show the intersection of historical styles and new, modernist interpretations of traditional elements. Ljubljana, the most western city of the Kingdom exhibited the genius of Joze Plecnik and his contemporaries, showing Slovenian architectural reality in an original manner.

The war in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia started on April 6, 1941 and, as in the rest of Europe, this put a stop on all developments in architecture.

3. TITO, STALIN, AND YUGOSLAVIAN POSTWAR POLITICS



Figure 19: Map of the Eastern Bloc and Soviet influence zone, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

It is not possible to address the architecture of the communist period of Yugoslavia without an exploration of the intricate relations between the Yugoslavian Socialist government and Soviet communists in the first years of post-WWII Europe. This complex political situation profoundly shaped both internal and foreign affairs of the new Yugoslavian state and as such infiltrated all segments of public and private life. Tito and Stalin's turbulent relationship influenced the majority of decisions made in the first three years of the newfound Yugoslavia. Initially, Stalin's ideals for the transformation of the

Soviet Union served as a pattern for the creation of Yugoslavian politics, economy, and the state. The amicable relations did not last long. In 1948 Stalin and Tito parted ways in a rather dramatic fashion. These events established a completely different direction for Yugoslavian politics, yet again shaping all segments of life.

Considering that the relationship with the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries influenced the politics and economy of the first postwar years in Yugoslavia, its impact on art

and architecture was inevitable. Socialist Realism was a significant cultural movement in the Soviet Union and a majority of Eastern Bloc countries, and at the same time it had a major impact on Yugoslavian architecture. The Stalinist way of constructing an urban environment conveyed an image of communist grandiosity and this approach was to some extent copied in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavian desire to show loyalty to the Soviets was present in its architectural expression, but the differences in the countries' size and economic power resulted in a more modest version of Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia with only few examples. Given this direction in architecture only took place for three short years, only a handful of buildings were designed, and one of them constructed.

One factor that is important to address regarding the constructive period of Tito-Stalin relations, is the role of architecture in the presentation of the nation – a discussion that touches upon the complex story of the new political center of New Belgrade. Designed by Yugoslavs to be constructed on an empty marshland site outside the existing city fabric, it was intended to relate to the Yugoslavian peoples, as well as foreign enemies and allies. The new city was designed to show the power of Socialist Yugoslavia, and at the same time it was to represent the unification of the country and its founding republics. Yugoslavia was supposed to be a country of equal nations, and New Belgrade was crucial as the new capital, created from nothing and for its entire people.

Needless to say, things changed drastically after 1948. Following Tito's refusal to make Yugoslavia subordinate to the Soviet Union, the positive rapport ended and brought the country to the brink of a severe economic and political crisis. Good relations with the Eastern Bloc abruptly ended, the support of a powerful 'big brother' ceased to exist, and as a result

Yugoslavia was left to find new supporters. In the following years, those allies arose in the form of Western and Third World countries.

It was inevitable for such radical changes to affect architecture and urban planning. The plan to create New Belgrade as the new capital was put on hold, priorities shifted, and Socialist Realism was permanently abandoned in favor of modernism. This shift in aesthetic expression and its development in the new Yugoslavian architecture is a subject of great importance. The role modernism played in Yugoslavia was complex, but one can argue that it mostly served as a way of distinguishing itself from the Eastern Bloc, and showing loyalty to Western allies. At the same time, it was a valuable part of the anti-historic approach that attempted to create a unified architectural expression for Socialist Yugoslavia.

Tito and Stalin's relationship has been explored and researched since the initial years of post-WWII Europe. Their relationship was significant for researchers and historians of both East and West, with a vast amount of accessible literature. The story of their admiration and cooperation turned into a conflict that could have even been the start of a war. To this day, this account remains perplexing to researchers, especially in the new post-communist era and in the post-Yugoslav wars years. The countries have opened the doors and some, though not all, of its documents to foreign researchers so that stories obscured by the propaganda writing of the communist period have finally emerged. To comprehend the difficulties of the material written during the communist regimes, one must try to understand the complications researchers encountered in those days, even in cases when they had the opportunity to work directly with the material. Indeed, the authors of the books on the Tito-Stalin conflict from the communist

era were close to the party and party leaders, and as such it is rather difficult not to question the validity of their arguments.



Figure 20: Postwar rally, Belgrade, Courtesy of www.novitalas.com

The first three years after the war, while Europe began its recovery from the war, the Yugoslavian leaders attempted to establish themselves as the greatest ally of the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia was in the process of rebuilding a destroyed country, while at the same time struggling to assert its

authority within its republics. After dealing with Nazis, Fascists, and internal threats such as Chetniks⁵³ and Ustashes⁵⁴, Yugoslavia was in the process of creating its own, brand new country. Tito and the Communist Party⁵⁵ leaders saw the Soviets and Stalin as role models. Yugoslavia was to be devised and created in the same way as the 'greatest country of communism,' an effort that was wholly supported by the Soviet Union, which had already been established as the leading communist nation of Eastern Europe. So, how did this relationship end and what had happened to bring about such events?

⁵³ The Chetnik movement was a Serb nationalist and monarchist paramilitary organization.

⁵⁴ Ustashes were a Croatian Revolutionary Movement that was a fascist and terrorist organization before and during WWII.

⁵⁵ Communist Party of Yugoslavia – referred to in full name or only as Party.



Figure 21: Map of Great Yugoslavia and Balkan Federation, Courtesy of www.commonst.wikimedia.org

Historians state two different, yet related reasons for the end of good relations between Tito and Stalin – the first being the idea of Yugoslavian resistance to Soviet hegemony,⁵⁶ which has been accepted by the public and a majority of historians since 1948. The documents that have become accessible in recent years provide a second and different insight into these events. They “indicate that the main reason for the conflict was Stalin’s dismay when Tito continued to pursue an expansionist foreign policy agenda”⁵⁷ and

proceeded with plans to include the People’s Republic of Albania⁵⁸ in the Yugoslavian Federation, and subsequently to create a Balkan Federation with Bulgaria. At the time the ideological rift was stated as the main cause for the end of the Soviet and Yugoslavian alliance. The Cominform⁵⁹ resolution accused the Yugoslavian Party of “deviating from the Marxist-

⁵⁶ Jeronim Perovic, *A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence*, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Spring 2007, pp. 32-63, p. 34.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁸ Referred to in full name or only as Albania.

⁵⁹ Cominform – Communist Information Bureau; short for Bureau of Information of the Communist and Workers’ Parties; official forum of the international communist movement; founded in September 1947 and dominated by the Soviet Union.

Leninist line,⁶⁰ abandoning the ideology common to both countries and rejecting Stalin and the Soviets as leaders.



Figure 22: 'Vjesnik' newspaper, 1941 - expressing allegiance with the Soviet Union, Courtesy of www.uokg.de

This shift was hard to comprehend, as during WWII and especially after the end of the war, Yugoslavia strongly allied itself with the USSR. Basing its politics on the doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin,⁶¹ in 1944 the future Yugoslavs defined themselves as Communists.⁶² As

opposed to the process that took place in the Soviet Union, the Communist Party established itself in the “dreary villages and small towns [and] succeeded in converting mountain peasants and shepherds”⁶³ into loyal communists, asserting their authority through the promise of a more prosperous future for all. Partisans, who were leaders of the resistance movement in the occupied country, fought for ‘brotherhood and unity’⁶⁴ and largely managed to free the country on their own merit, with the

⁶⁰ Perovic, p. 35.

⁶¹ Ernst Halperin, *The Triumphant Heretic: Tito's Struggle Against Stalin*, (London, GB: Heinemann, 1958), p. 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁴ “Brotherhood and Unity” was a slogan designating the official policy of inter-ethnic relations in Yugoslavia.

Soviet troops freeing Belgrade and northern parts of the country at approximately the same time.⁶⁵ The unfolding of these events proved crucial in the period after the 1948 split.

At the end of the war, a devastated⁶⁶ country sought its way to the future, pursuing the difficult task of creating a new nation, and establishing its position in the dramatic political and economic world of the post-WWII era. Already having adopted the communist ideology during the wartime period, the newfound Yugoslavia was looking for its place in a rapidly changing Europe in relation to its sensitive position between East and West. Positioning itself as "Moscow's most loyal ally"⁶⁷ Yugoslavian leaders were determined to follow the path of the Soviets and adhered to its "model in establishing its economic planning organs, judicial system, state bureaucracy, health care and educational systems, and cultural and educational spheres."⁶⁸ At the same time they took into consideration the particular circumstances of Yugoslavia in regards to collectivization, education and culture,⁶⁹ the size and geography of the country, and the sensitive national issue of the country's founding republics. Amicable relations characterized the first years after the war, with immense Soviet economic and ideological support for Yugoslavian leaders. This attitude was pervasive, reinforcing the idea of Yugoslavia as the second country to the Soviet Union in the world of Eastern European communism. The

⁶⁵ Jozo Tomasevic, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration*, Volume 2 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001)

⁶⁶ Data shows that the region of former Yugoslavia lost 13% of its population in WWII – 1.700.000 people were killed – www.secondworldwar.co.uk (Accessed on June 1, 2012)

⁶⁷ Perovic, p. 32.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

role of the Soviets in the process of creation of the new country was significant and the Yugoslavs were firm supporters of Soviet foreign politics until 1948.⁷⁰

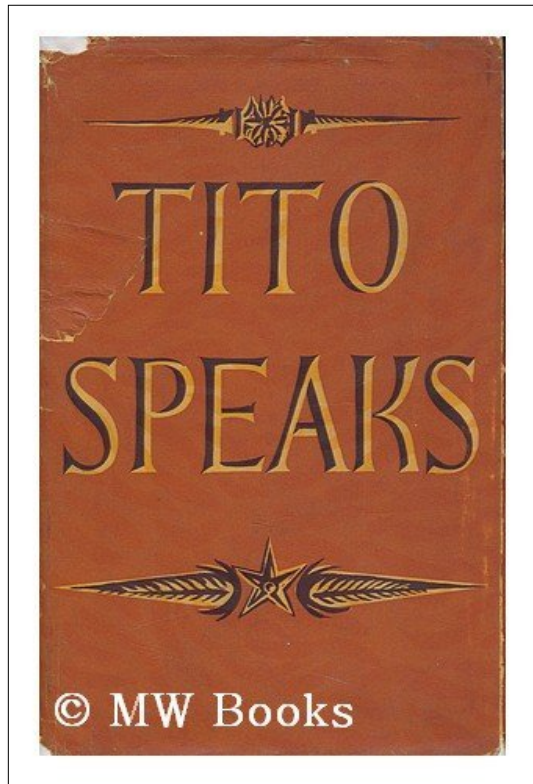


Figure 23: Cover of 'Tito Speaks' by Vladimir Dedijer, Courtesy of www.amazon.com

When looking at this time period more carefully, it is readily apparent that the situation was not as friendly as proclaimed shortly after the war. Vladimir Dedijer's *Tito Speaks* provides information on Tito's attitude toward Soviet politics and states that there were "elements of disagreement between us as far back as 1941."⁷¹ Interestingly, such conflicts were not mentioned in the first postwar years, but nevertheless, in 1953 Tito acknowledged the Soviet "tendency to direct our whole uprising [...] best suited (for) the interests of the Soviet Union [...] and its Greater-

Russia policy."⁷² Stated like this, it seems that the situation was not as positive as either government indicated. For Yugoslavia, the need for a powerful ally was more important than resolving the challenges of the friendship. For the Soviet Union the geographical and historical location of Yugoslavia seemed too important during the wartime and immediately after the war to be jeopardized by a too forceful spread of Soviet political power. Yugoslavia "served as a

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

⁷¹ Vladimir Dedijer, *Tito Speaks, His Self-portrait and Struggle with Stalin*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953), p. 264.

⁷² Ibid., p. 264.

model for the other East European states in their internal development,"⁷³ and the Soviets could not allow themselves to endanger the fragile postwar relations.

Regardless of the official rhetoric, it seems that the "strained relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union actually dated from the war and had simply accelerated in the postwar period."⁷⁴ At first, the amiable relations seemed to be so strong that the "expulsion of Yugoslavia from the socialist camp caught not only Western diplomats and observers by surprise."⁷⁵ The adoration of Soviet politics and its leaders within Yugoslavia was so strong that even the "praise for Stalin which continued to flow from the Yugoslav leaders' lips"⁷⁶ only showed the persistent bonds between the ideologically similar countries and parties.

The reason for the Tito-Stalin clash seemed related to the issue of Soviet hegemony, and the emerging Yugoslav aspirations toward Albania and the creation of the Balkan Federation with Bulgaria. American *charge d'affaires* in Yugoslavia at the time, R. Borden Reams argues that it was doubtful that any ideological conflict "caused the seeming quarrel between the USSR and Yugoslavia."⁷⁷ He credits "the Soviets' refusal to support Tito in his five-year plan and their irritation with his 'personal ambitions to lead own sphere in southeast Europe'"⁷⁸ as the likely reasons for the end of what had appeared to be friendly and supportive relations.

⁷³ Perovic, p. 40.

⁷⁴ Lorraine M. Less, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 50.

⁷⁵ Perovic, p. 39.

⁷⁶ William Zimmerman, "Yugoslav Strategies of Survival 1948-1980", in *War and Society in East Central Europe, Vol X, At The Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich, (New York: Social Science Monographs, Brooklyn College Press, 1982), pp. 11-29, p. 16.

⁷⁷ Less, p. 49.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

The key objective of Tito's aspirations in the Balkans was to establish a regional hegemony. His goals were evident "as early as mid-1943, when the idea of forming a united headquarters of the partisan movements of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece ultimately failed"⁷⁹ due to Tito's refusal to structure the organization based on equal voices.⁸⁰ A variety of sources address the progression of the Tito-Stalin split, and Jeronim Perovic argues that the resolution of "long-standing ethnic and territorial issues"⁸¹ was the main goal of the Yugoslav leaders. Such goals, in regards to the issue of the large ethnic Albanian minority in Kosovo, were to be completed through unification with Albania.⁸² A similar issue with Macedonia, a "historically contested region divided among Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece,"⁸³ was to be partially sorted through the creation of the Balkan Federation with Bulgaria.

After the end of WWII, the only neighboring communist country for Albania was Yugoslavia, and the country virtually served as a Yugoslavian satellite. For strategic reasons, soon after the end of the war, Yugoslavia took steps to absorb the country into the Yugoslavian Federation. In July 1946 a Treaty⁸⁴ was signed that almost completely integrated Albania "into the Yugoslav economic system."⁸⁵ Soviet interest in the issue was apparently non-existent in a political sense, however Moscow frequently warned Belgrade not to "hasten unification"⁸⁶ due

⁷⁹ Perovic, p. 42.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 43.

⁸² Kosovar Albanians were the only ethnic group in Yugoslavia that persistently refused to cooperate with the Popular Liberation Front during the WWII; some members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia expressed the desire for unification of Albania with Kosovo, reportedly unnerving Tito. See Ibid., p. 43.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁴ Yugoslav-Albanian Treaty on Friendship and Mutual Assistance. See Ibid., p. 43-44.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

to the possible Western objections or military interventions in Albania.⁸⁷ Soon after, the Soviet leaders took more direct approach to Albania, inviting its leaders to Moscow, and in a short period of time isolating the two Balkan countries.



Figure 24: Georgi Dimitrov, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

At the same time, Yugoslavia created strong bonds with Bulgaria, and Tito hoped to annex the country as the seventh republic.⁸⁸ Bulgarian and Yugoslavian plans seemed to be leading to a Balkan federation, and while Stalin showed expectations for it to consist of only Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania,⁸⁹ Bulgarian leader Georgi Dimitrov expressed the hope that "sooner or later [...] the People's Democracies of Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary,

and Greece"⁹⁰ would decide to join the federation or confederation. Needless to say, this was not the development in Eastern and Southeastern European politics Stalin sought to support.

The idea of the grater Balkan Federation was temporarily put on hold after Stalin's summoning the Bulgarians to Moscow following this controversial statement, however the desire for unification of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia as the initial form of the Federation continued to exist. After sustaining "severe criticism"⁹¹ on the matter of signing the Yugoslav-Bulgarian Treaty on Friendship and Mutual Assistance in August 1947, Moscow accused the parties of

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸⁸ Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), p. 174.

⁸⁹ Halperin, p. 62.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 62.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 52.

showing “serious differences between Moscow and (both) governments,”⁹² while arguing that Yugoslavian and Bulgarian assistance to Greek Communists in the Greek Civil War may “risk a confrontation with the Western powers”⁹³ which Moscow sought to avoid.

The Soviets repeatedly requested that all decisions regarding the unification of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia be approved by Moscow, and even though Stalin previously promised Yugoslavian government “that it could absorb Albania, he now declared that could occur only after the creation of the federation.”⁹⁴ Even though he supported the idea of unification, even with a major role assigned to Bulgaria,⁹⁵ Stalin’s aim was to subordinate both countries in this process⁹⁶ and to subjugate Yugoslavia “as the central point of south-eastern Europe.”⁹⁷ The Bulgarians did not object to the requests of Moscow, but after giving their initial consent to Soviet’s requests,⁹⁸ the Yugoslavs withdrew from negotiations with the Bulgarians, claiming the time was not suitable and arguing against the possible economic and political burden of the federation.⁹⁹ For the following years, Yugoslavia continued to pursue the annexation of Albania, but after the events in spring of 1948, the leadership put this political initiative on hold due to an anticipated conflict with the USSR.¹⁰⁰

In the spring of 1948 the confrontation of the former allies seemed certain. Tito did not plan on giving up Yugoslavian sovereignty to the USSR, whose continuous desire to act as

⁹² Ibid., p. 52.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 54.

⁹⁴ Less, p. 50.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹⁶ Ramet, p. 175.

⁹⁷ Dedijer, p. 266.

⁹⁸ Perovic, p. 55.

⁹⁹ Dedijer, p. 337.

¹⁰⁰ Ramet, p. 175.

supreme communist authority created constant tensions in the political relations between Moscow and Belgrade. After numerous minor conflicts related to foreign politics, the confrontation erupted after the interruption of Bulgarian-Yugoslavian negotiations and Tito's refusal to obey Stalin's requests. Paradoxically, neither Stalin nor Tito really wanted to engage in this conflict. Stalin saw the loss of Yugoslavia as an ally to be the loss of a "model for Communists in the satellite States,"¹⁰¹ as well as a valuable economic ally in creating a "sealed-off economic area in the East European countries [...] turn(ing) the Soviet Union into a vast market, absorbing the entire production of Eastern Europe."¹⁰² Tito's position was rather more difficult, but in the end he was "essentially confronted with choosing the lesser of two evils: to surrender or to resist Stalin."¹⁰³

In a heated exchange of letters, the Soviets accused the Yugoslavian Communist Party of "denigrating Soviet socialism" and not being "democratic enough," while also accusing several high-ranking officials of the CPY of being "dubious Marxists"¹⁰⁴ not worthy of participating in the communist government. In his response, Tito denied all accusations and noted that loving the land of socialism does not mean loving "his own country any less."¹⁰⁵ The exchange of letters continued until June 19 1948 when Tito refused to attend the June 28 Cominform session in Bucharest, Romania which was to mainly address the Yugoslavian-Soviet issue. It was at this time that the world learned "with astonishment about the first schism within

¹⁰¹ Halperin, p. 67.

¹⁰² Dedijer, p. 276.

¹⁰³ Perovic, p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ Lampe, John R., *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

¹⁰⁵ Ramet, p. 177.

the Communist bloc.”¹⁰⁶ During the session, unattended by the representatives of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, the *Resolution of the Cominform* was adopted and Yugoslavia was expelled from the forum. The resolution accused Yugoslavia and the CPY of being on the path of capitalism, exhibiting “anti-Soviet attitude (and) refusing to discuss the situation at the Cominform meeting.”¹⁰⁷ The Cominform Resolution was seen by the Western leaders as a failed attempt by Stalin to be acknowledged as a global communist authority¹⁰⁸ and was a starting point for Yugoslavia in parting ways with the Eastern Bloc and establishing a new path for the politics and economy of the following years.

The role of architecture in this period cannot be neglected even though it certainly played a secondary role. The representation of Yugoslavia to western world was an import issue for Yugoslavian government, but the matter of proving its allegiance to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc held more importance. The politics of the time period heavily colored the architecture of the immediate postwar period yet the political and economic repercussions of these events prevented the issue from being further explored.

¹⁰⁶ Perovic, p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ Ramet, p. 178.

¹⁰⁸ Less, p. 43.

4. SOCIALIST REALISM AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION IN YUGOSLAVIA



Figure 25: Branko Petricic, House of Trade Unions, Belgrade, 1947-55, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

Coming to power in 1945 the Yugoslavian government had a difficult task, the task to create the country on the ruins of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and on the ruins of the past war. The task was not a very simple one, as between 2 and 4 million people were homeless, major cities were destroyed, and Yugoslavia was in the aftermath of a "metaphorical and physical break."¹⁰⁹ In the wake of WWII, it seemed that Yugoslavia would be divided in its loyalty to both worlds, both the East and the West. The country was rebuilt on a "combination of domestic enthusiasm and voluntary work on one hand, and foreign financial support on the other,"¹¹⁰ but soon it became clear that Socialist Yugoslavia would follow the direction of the Soviet Union, a fellow land of communism that Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia held in the highest regard.

¹⁰⁹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 27.

¹¹⁰ Jovic, p. 20.

The immediate years after WWII Yugoslavian culture embarked on a period of Socialist Realism, understood as an “antimodernist, prevailing view of art and culture.”¹¹¹ It was implemented under the Soviet political influence and domination characteristic of the first postwar years. The nascent modernism of the interwar period was considered bourgeois and of international character, depicting a “decadence, aestheticism, or an artistic formalism incompatible with progressive and revolutionary views of society, culture, and art.”¹¹² The Revolution did not approve of the decadent modernist ideas, the freedom in architectural expression, and the possible lack of control. The days of modernism were over before they had even properly begun.

In relation to architecture, the Soviets employed Socialist Realism as the only approved, and for that matter allowed, expression in the built environment, and Yugoslavians planned to obey that rule. The declaration of Socialist Realism as the only architectural expression was not well received by the majority of Yugoslavian architects, and given the fact that not even the Soviets had completely defined Socialist Realism in architecture, its implementation in the country enjoyed a rather dubious success. Politically speaking, however, the Socialist Realism was quite significant in Yugoslavian postwar history as well as influencing the architecture and culture of the subsequent period.

Socialist Realism, or Stalinism in architecture, in the Soviet Union was “abolished two and a half years after Stalin’s death,”¹¹³ unlike the opposite situation in the 1930s, which had

¹¹¹ Suvakovic, p. 10.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹³ Danilo Udovicki-Selb, “Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin’s Revolution from Above, 1928–1938,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 86, No. 4, (December 2009), pp. 467-495, p. 467.

been a “much longer and more complex undertaking.”¹¹⁴ The enforcing of Socialist Realism in the Soviet Union was strongly opposed by the public and architects who had already been exploring a modernist aesthetic and the issue was questioned on many levels. The implementation of Socialist Realism basically meant creating architecture without diversity and under the strict preferences of the political party and its leaders.¹¹⁵ By the end of the 1930s architecture was under the control of politicians and designed according to their taste. The intention did not seem to be the implementation of any particular style as much as to “replace spontaneous architectural expression with effective control.”¹¹⁶

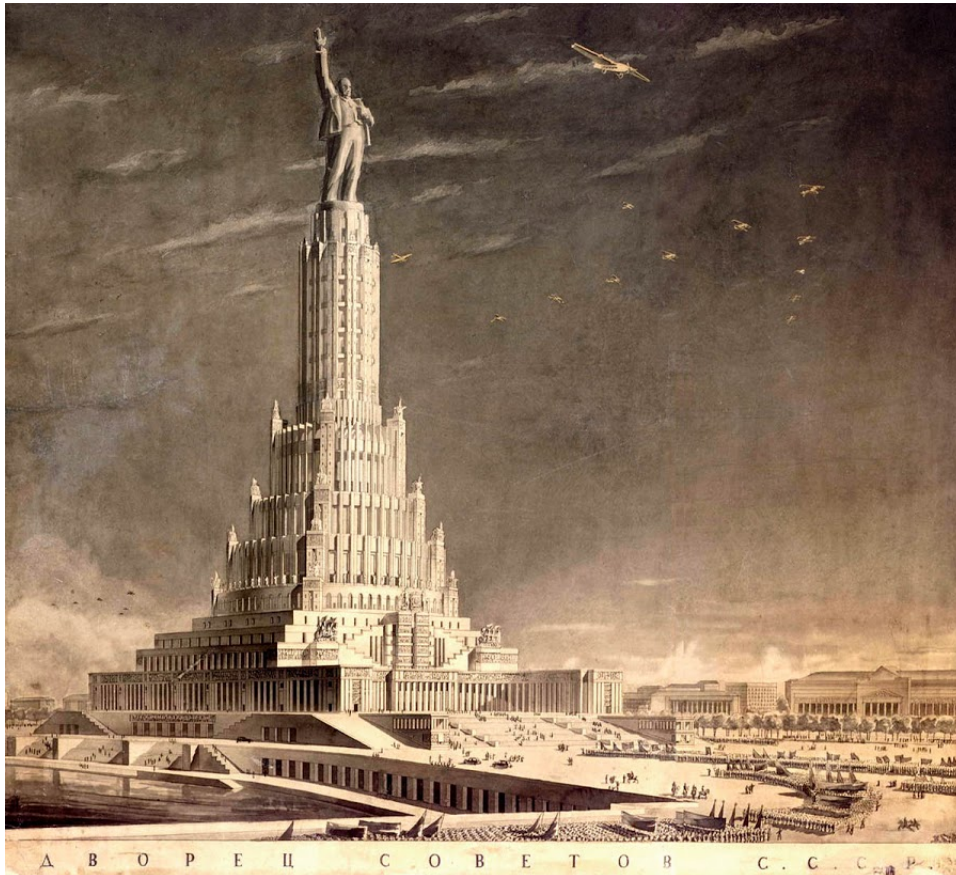


Figure 26: Iofan, Shchuko, Gelfreich, *Palace of the Soviets*, 1933, drawing, Courtesy of www.abook.org

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 467.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 467.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 467.

In the late 1920s the Soviet government advocated the revival of “the old forms of ‘national’ architecture”¹¹⁷ to further strengthen the national factor in the presentation of the country to the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, the control over people and the architectural profession in this case seemed to assume far greater importance. Architects pleaded to the party to support “innovative modernist architects”¹¹⁸ in their battle against Lazar Kaganovic, Stalin’s appointee for the reconstruction of Moscow, a man so fond of “gaudily classicized architecture”¹¹⁹ despite the fact that it was hardly believable in the early 1930s that revolutionary architecture could be anything but modern and free of historicism. The pleas of the public and of architects were in vain since the personal desires of dignitaries and high members of the Communist Party created the architecture of the period. The result was the lack of a unique ‘national’ style. Political opportunists created the architecture and in the mid- to late 1930s examples of American corporate architecture, a favorite of Stalin’s, were as influential as the classical buildings favored by Kaganovic.¹²⁰ Ironically, all of this work was built in the name of modernity.

One can argue that the Soviets did not oppose modernity, but in the realm of architecture, the definition of modernity was somewhat unclear. Classicism was perceived as the valid counterpart to the entrenched Byzantine style, and it was argued that it “could effectively symbolize the aspirations of the proletariat, owing to its direct link to ancient Greece and its democratic ideals.”¹²¹ By the mid-1930s “political [...] reaction succeeded in interrupting the last

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 470.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 472.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 472.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 476.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 477.

buildings”¹²² designed by the modernists of the previous decade and prevented the completion of their construction. The Soviets focused the ‘antimodernist’ reaction of the 1930s on the lack of technical capacities and materials needed for the construction of modernist buildings,¹²³ and claimed that Soviet Russia was not ready for modernism at that point.



Figure 27: Shchuko and Gelfreich, Lenin Library, Moscow, 1929-41, Courtesy of www.jstor.org

The term ‘Socialist Realism’ was created at the First Congress of All-Soviet Writers in 1934¹²⁴ and it proclaimed an unbreakable connection between all forms of art and the Revolution. The issue with architecture was not as simple as with other forms of art due to the complexity of the design and construction process itself, but also due to the remaining modernists in architecture schools. Double standards

often applied, as art and architecture was presented to two audiences, both foreign and local – with the local defining itself as more conservative, and the foreign, expecting “modern art to come from Russia.”¹²⁵ The example of the Palace of the Soviets clearly depicts the struggle to identify Socialist Realism in architecture. The Palace design shows Boris Iofan’s ability to please

¹²² Jean-Louis Cohen, *Preface* to ed. Richard Pare, “The Lost Vanguard: Russian Modernist Architecture, 1922-1932”, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2007) p. 9.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Udovicki-Selb, p. 477.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

Stalin and satisfy his fascination with the American skyscraper, but also to continue developing an architectural expression, primarily modernist, resulting in a building that had as its goal “to outrun America, not to reject it.”¹²⁶



Figure 28: Boris Iofan, Barviha Sanatorium, Barvikha village, 1934, Courtesy of www.jstor.org

The Palace of the Soviets was never constructed unlike Iofan’s Barviha sanatorium, a completely modernist building, designed in the “best Bauhaus tradition.”¹²⁷ The Soviets allowed for the ‘hidden,’ not overly exposed buildings, to be modernist, pleasing the architect. However, “historicist and folkloric tendencies”¹²⁸ were considered innately Soviet, while modernism was foreign, and thus counter-revolutionary. This is the program of Socialist Realism that the Party tried to implement in postwar Yugoslavia.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 483.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 487.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 492.

In the wake of WWII Yugoslavia took up the task of industrializing and modernizing the country. Despite the efforts of the Karadjordjevićs during the interwar period the country was primarily rural and drastically underdeveloped. In addition, due to the disastrous war it was largely in ruins. The essential model to be followed to create a modern industrial country was Stalin's Soviet Union, and Yugoslavian leaders used the example "as a guiding light to its own radical modernization."¹²⁹ The economy became centralized, and the country was completely restructured "following the Soviet models in almost everything, from the constitution to cultural policy."¹³⁰ The Communist Party and its leaders took over the means of production and nationalized all private sectors of the economy. The Five-Year Plan promised the modernization of the country in a short period of time, but the country proved to be overly rural for such ambitions. In the end, the destruction of the war had proven to be too much of a challenge for the predicted process of modernization.

Following the doctrine of the Soviet Union, Socialist Realism took its place in Yugoslavia as the "dominant doctrine of cultural production."¹³¹ Art and architecture were to follow the rules of glorification of the revolution in its expression, and artists and architects were expected to fulfill their patriotic duty by cooperating with this demand. As in the Soviet Union, it proved not to be that simple. In the postwar context, Yugoslavian architects, most of whom were prewar modernists, acquired "prominent positions"¹³² due to their already established socialist orientation and their participation in the liberation during the war. Influential architects of the

¹²⁹ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 5.

¹³⁰ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 33.

¹³¹ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 5.

¹³² Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 34.

period were also influential communists and failed to be “persuaded to convert to the conservative Soviet aesthetic without some arm-twisting.”¹³³ This resulted in an apparent division of work, similar to the circumstances in the Soviet Union. The lack of clear definition of Socialist Realism complicated an already difficult situation. What role models were to be followed if the ‘first country of communism’ failed to define them itself? How was the Revolution to be glorified if the Soviet Russia failed to provide a conclusive answer to that question after almost 30 years?

In the immediate aftermath of the war the Yugoslavian Communist Party took up the challenge of “radically alter(ing) the meaning of the built environment”¹³⁴ and making its presence appropriate to the demands of a revolutionary society. This task proved to be impossible. Buildings could not be as easily replaced, as works of art and literature and in addition taking on such a task in a war-torn country seemed illogical. The only possible solution was the appropriation of the existing built environment and its symbols, an approach that contradicted the “dominant rhetoric of a ‘new beginning’.”¹³⁵ The statements of power were exercised in three forms; the display of Communist iconography in public spaces making them the “elaborate poster-boards of political propaganda;”¹³⁶ the design and construction of government buildings in the capitals of the founding republics hoping to encourage new, “composite identity of the new Yugoslavia, as opposed to the unitary Yugoslav identity;”¹³⁷ and finally the representation of the cult of Josip Broz Tito. These three forms came closest to the

¹³³ Ibid., p. 34.

¹³⁴ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 74.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 76.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 77.

revolutionary character of Socialist Realism and as such they took part in the architecture and public life of the immediate postwar period in both the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia.

The competition for New Belgrade, the new capital of postwar Yugoslavia, visibly depicts the confusion that followed Socialist Realism in Yugoslavian architecture. The communists designed New Belgrade to be constructed on the empty marshes outside the historic urban fabric and it was supposed to represent all of the ideals Socialist Yugoslavia hoped to fulfill. It was to be the capital of all Yugoslavs, it was to be the center of federal communists and the party, to glorify the Revolution, and it was to show the strength of the country to its allies and enemies. New Belgrade did not meet those lofty goals.



Figure 29: Construction of Gazela bridge on river Sava, 1966, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

The planning of New Belgrade is almost entirely associated with the post-1945 socialist Yugoslavia, and the idea of creating a new administrative capital, a symbol of power and unity of a newfound country. The Yugoslavian mixture of nationalities and ethnic groups required a strong bond, a unifying factor that would artificially create

a sense of identity and belonging to the nation, and the new capital, unrelated to any of the past histories, was to play such a role. The site chosen for the future city was located on the left

bank of the river Sava, west of Kalemegdan, the old Belgrade fortress, and is currently linked to 'old' Belgrade by 5 bridges. The site was considered to be the perfect place, a *tabula rasa* – an empty swamp, without any history. It served for centuries as a “no-man’s land between the borders of two empires, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian.”¹³⁸ Lacking urban infrastructure, it served as the *cordon sanitaire*¹³⁹ observing and controlling the no-connection-zone between the Orient (Belgrade) and the West, Zemun.¹⁴⁰

The *tabula rasa* claim, like most such claims, was not quite true. In the period between two world wars the Staro Sajmiste¹⁴¹ compound was constructed on the location for the Belgrade Fair in 1937¹⁴², as well as the Novo naselje¹⁴³ settlement. The initial plans for the westward expansion of Belgrade were drawn in 1923, but the lack of funds put them on hold. The swamp had to be drained, and at that moment it was impossible due to the lack of manpower and insufficient technical knowledge. In 1924 Bezanija Airport was constructed, and Rogozerski factory was built. In 1934 the first plan to connect Belgrade and Zemun was shaped, with Zemun becoming a Belgrade municipality and losing its status as an independent city. In 1938 Staro Sajmiste was constructed, and in the same year the municipality of Belgrade signed a contract with two Danish companies to build the new neighborhood on the west bank of the river Sava. Due to the outbreak of WWII in 1940 the plans were stopped.

¹³⁸ Ljiljana Blagojevic, *New Belgrade: Capital of No-city's Land*, http://artefact.mi2.hr/a04/lang_en/theory_blagojevic_en.htm Accessed December 5, 2011.

¹³⁹ Blagojevic, *New Belgrade: Capital of No-city's Land*

¹⁴⁰ Zemun (Eng. Semlin) – then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

¹⁴¹ Staro Sajmiste (Eng. Old Fairground)

¹⁴² Semlin Judenlager in Serbian public memory, *History of the Semlin Camp, Before 1941*, <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/semelin/en/semelin-camp.php> Accessed December 4, 2011.

¹⁴³ *Bitka za Beograd*, Politika newspaper, p. 11, April 11, 2008



Figure 30: Nikola Dobrovic, *New Belgrade plan, 1947*, Courtesy of "Modernism In-Between"

In 1945 after the end of the war, New Belgrade was planned as "carrying a potent symbolic function of being conceived as a new capital of the new Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia."¹⁴⁴ Aside from creating a new capital, the construction of New Belgrade represented the "intervention in historical time,"¹⁴⁵ a creation that was designed to also set the new capital apart from (the old) Belgrade—which had previously served as the capital of the former Yugoslavian Kingdom from which the socialist leaders hoped to distance themselves. The initial purpose of New Belgrade was to serve as a symbol of the non-ethnic-nationalistic

¹⁴⁴ Blagojevic, *New Belgrade: Capital of No-city's Land, The Capital Concept*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

character of Yugoslavian society,¹⁴⁶ and the unification of all participating nationalities. The success of such a plan was questionable from the start, given the dominance of the Serbian-based capital city, which created tensions in other socialist republics, particularly Croatia and Slovenia.

From the start of the planning and construction of New Belgrade a significant number of prominent architects of the time were involved. The first plan, called *Sketch for the regulation of Belgrade in the left bank of the river Sava* was produced in 1946 by Nikola Dobrovic, a pioneer modernist architect,¹⁴⁷ who left a considerable mark on many Yugoslavian cities.¹⁴⁸ Dobrovic proposed a radial plan with over twenty administrative buildings—the main center point being

the railway station serving as place where “all lines converge (and) was decisively set as a reference datum of no particular societal hierarchy.”¹⁴⁹

Among the buildings Dobrovic planned the most significant place was given to the buildings of the Presidency of

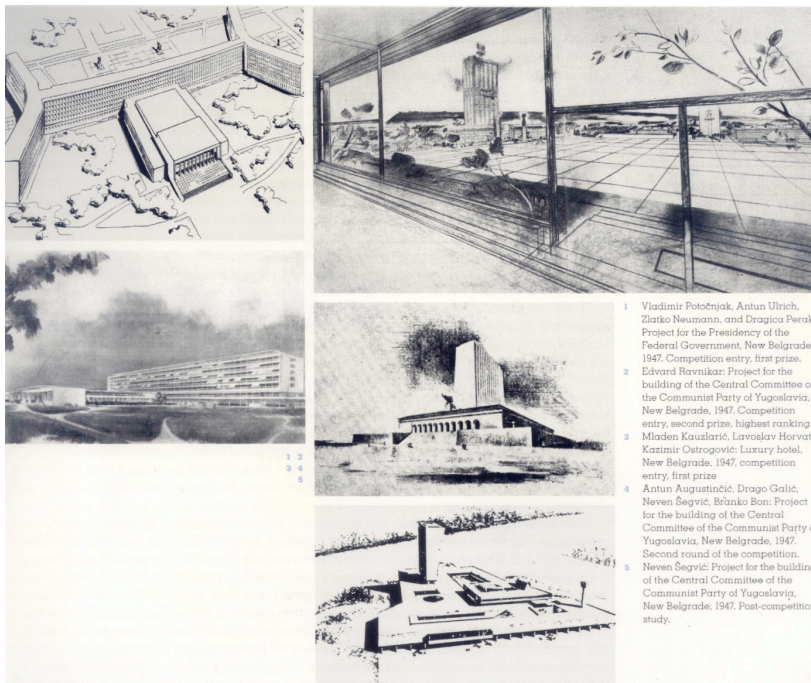


Figure 31: Neuman, Potocnjak, et al., *Designs for buildings of New Belgrade, 1947*, Courtesy of “Modernism In-Between”

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Herscher, *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 33.

¹⁴⁹ Blagojevic, *New Belgrade: Capital of No-city's Land, The Modern Concept*

the Government, and the Communist Party Headquarters thereby making the principal task of New Belgrade as the creation of a center of politics and power.

Even though the initial layout of New Belgrade that Nikola Dobrovic created in 1946 was the basis for urban and architecture competitions held in 1947, architects were requested to provide further urban development proposals along with the designs for the buildings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Presidency of Government. The results of the competition were unanimous in rejecting Dobrovic's radial plan, and architects and planners adopted the "functional organization of an orthogonal urban structure with two main state and party buildings as the center pieces of the urban composition."¹⁵⁰ The competition program requested that the Communist Party building (designed by Mihajlo Jankovic in the mid 1960s) dominate in height and monumentality in the "plastic urban composition of New Belgrade."¹⁵¹ The building of the Presidency of Government—designed by Potocnjak, Neumann, Urlich, and Perak from Zagreb, and completed in 1961 by Mihajlo Jankovic—required the highest level of functionality and lacked the monumentality and national and international significance of the structure. Milorad Macura, one of the awarded architects for the Presidency building design, called it a "pure, exact architecture,"¹⁵² describing the design as rational, and the building as organizationally highly functional.¹⁵³ Both buildings show the first shifts from historical styles towards contemporary socialist architecture aimed to

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ *Uslovi konkursa za zgradu Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Jugoslavije* [eng. The Competition Requirements for the Building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia], (Belgrade: Tehnika, 1946), no. 11-12, p. 339.

¹⁵² Milorad Macura, *Problematika naše arhitekture u svetlu konkursa za zgradu Pretsedništva vlade FNRJ* [Problematics of Our Architecture in the Light of the Competition for the Building of the Presidency of Government of FPRY], (Zagreb: Arhitektura, 1947), no. 3, p. 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 10.

represent the identity of the nation as well as to reflect specificities of the Yugoslav political and ideological project – a self-managing socialism.

In addition to the two most important buildings in New Belgrade – the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the building of the Presidency of the Federal Government—the national competition also invited proposals for a luxury hotel.¹⁵⁴ The Hotel and the Presidency building, as less “symbolically charged [...] passed under the aesthetic radar of the regime, resulting in designs that could be described as modernist, tempered in the case of the Presidency by the austere classicizing facades.”¹⁵⁵ The Central Committee building proved to be the most difficult in its attempt to meet the desires of the nascent Socialist Realism, and the modernist ambitions and education of the participating architects. The submitted proposals failed to meet the requests of ‘revolutionary architecture’ and Tito himself “summoned the country’s top architects to demand that they embrace ‘the eternal beauty of Greek columns’.”¹⁵⁶ This situation speaks of the inability of the Yugoslavs to incorporate the Soviet requests and the architectural heritage of their own country. The second round of the competition failed and architects, led by architectural critic Andre Mohorovicic,¹⁵⁷ once again argued that there could be “no room for historical elements in contemporary architecture.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 35.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁵⁷ Andre Mohorovicic (1913-2002) – Croatian architect, historian, and architecture professor. Studied in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Prague, Vienna, and Florence. Mohorovicic was a member of Yugoslavian and Croatian Academy of Sciences. His most influential work remains *Theory of Architecture* (1975).

¹⁵⁸ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 35.



Figure 32: Lavoslav Horvat, Hotel Yugoslavia, New Belgrade, 1947 (constructed in 1960s), Courtesy of www.skyscrapercity.com

On June 28, 1948 Yugoslavia broke relations with the Soviet Union and consequently the short-lived reign of Socialist Realism gave way to the development of prewar modernist architecture.

However, "there is no doubt that the doctrine would have been fully imposed had Yugoslavia stayed any longer in the Soviet bloc."¹⁵⁹ The construction and designs for New Belgrade took different turn, and the country drastically changed its direction in architecture, partly in changing its attitude toward the West and East, and partly abandoning the interference in architectural policies on behalf of the government, giving more power to architects and urban planners.

However, "there is no doubt that the doctrine would have been



Figure 33: Branko Petricic, House of Trade Unions, Belgrade, 1947-55, Courtesy of www.skyscrapercity.com

The only building constructed in the Socialist Realism style remains the House of Trade Unions building, politically insignificant, designed by Branko Petricic and constructed in the 1947-55 period.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

5. THE TITO-STALIN SPLIT, YUGOSLAVIA AND THE WEST

After the break between Tito and Stalin in June 1948, the political situation in the country dramatically changed. Even though still firmly on the path of socialism,¹⁶⁰ Tito and Yugoslavian leaders now dealt with great risks – the prospect of Soviet military intervention, the internal move against Tito,¹⁶¹ and the highly unfavorable economic position of the country. The issue of military intervention was discussed in both Eastern and Western scholarship in the years after the 1948 split. Hungarian emigrant to the United States, former commander of Hungarian infantry, Bela Kiraly “insisted that Soviet Union was actively preparing to invade Yugoslavia [...] but aborted these plans after the forceful US intervention against North Korea in June 1950.”¹⁶² After the opening of the archives in the 1990s it was made clear “that Kiraly’s assertions were fallacious.”¹⁶³ The documents, revealed after the fall of communism and opening of the borders, still do not provide sufficient information on why Stalin never attacked Yugoslavia. Some information acquired from the report sent by Stalin to Czechoslovakian leader Klement Gottwald suggest that “Stalin’s primary aim was not to topple Tito but to isolate Yugoslavia,”¹⁶⁴ while the American diplomat Reams argued that the “Soviet attack seemed unlikely, since Yugoslavia’s ability to mount a guerrilla campaign made an invasion too costly.”¹⁶⁵ The issue of internal move against Tito was a somewhat lesser threat, but was considered viable since “up to

¹⁶⁰ Less, p. 54.

¹⁶¹ Perovic, p. 58-59.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁶⁵ Less, p. 59.

20 percent of party members sided with Stalin rather than Tito after the split."¹⁶⁶ The following years were the years of repercussion in Yugoslavia with 'purification' of the Party from those loyal to Stalin and those still looking toward the East for leadership. The data suggest that approximately 8,400 real and imagined 'Cominformists' were arrested¹⁶⁷ and sent to prison on Goli Otok.¹⁶⁸

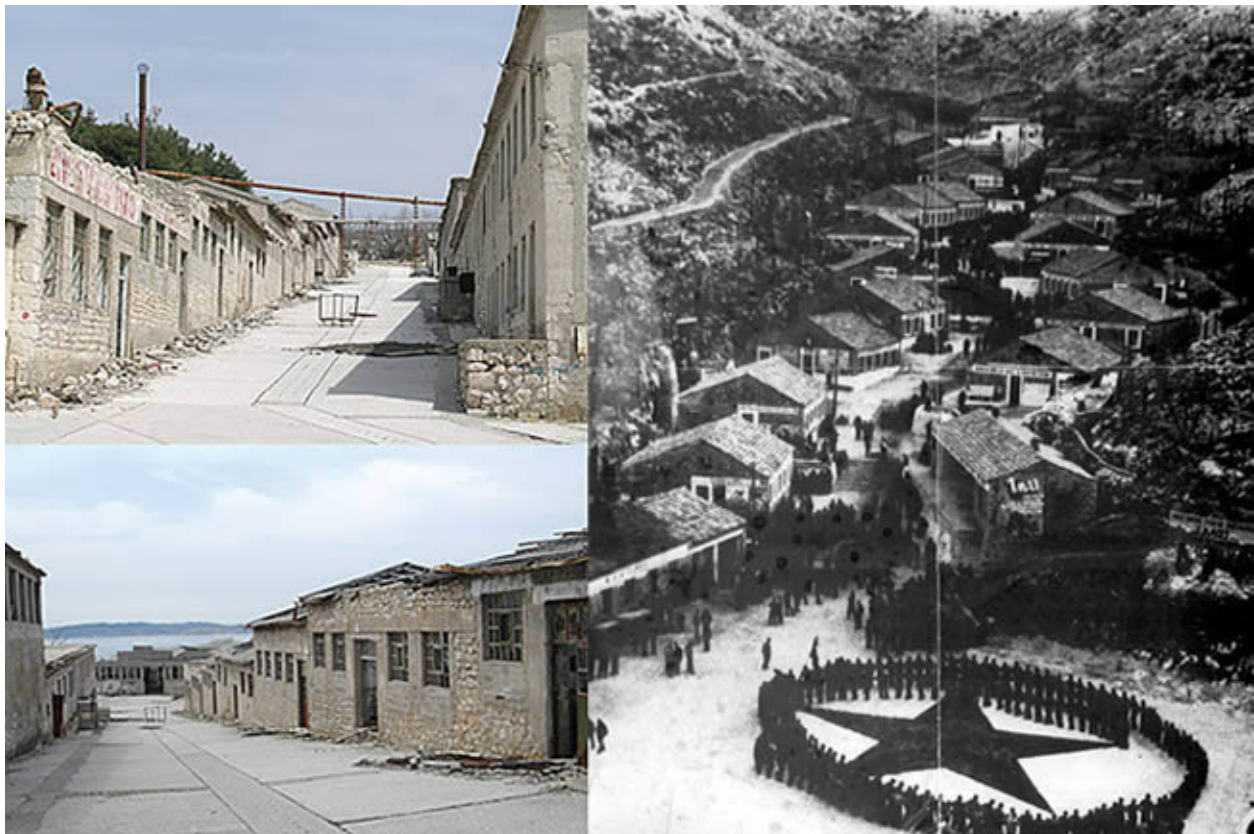


Figure 34: Goli Otok prison, Courtesy of www.wikipedia.org

The economic issue proved to be the most significant one in terms of the future of the country. As the Soviet invasion never happened, and systems for dealing with opponents of the

¹⁶⁶ Perovic, p. 59.

¹⁶⁷ Zimmerman, p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ Goli Otok – an island in the Adriatic Sea off the Croatian coastline, near the cities of Zadar and Rijeka; Goli Otok is barren and uninhabited and during the 20th century it hosted a high-security prison and labor camp for male prisoners, mostly of political character in the first decade of its existence. Dedijer estimates 32,000 prisoners were held captive in prison during its 40-year run.

regime were in place and functioning, the issue of economical survival of the country was the most urgent problem. Even though some Yugoslavian politicians argued in the first years after the split that Soviets sought "mastery over economic life and development"¹⁶⁹ in the country as well as in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, intensive trade took place between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union from the early days after the end of the war, and it was based on a series of trade agreements, similar to those between countries in Western Europe.¹⁷⁰ Dedijer notes that even then some Yugoslavian politicians questioned the "giving (Soviets) essential items, which our country could have sold without any difficulty on foreign markets."¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the significance of Soviet-Yugoslav treaties in the postwar period and their impact on the development of an economy in a war-torn country looking for ways to recreate its economic platform and to (re)construct the country.

There are a number of significant reasons for Yugoslavia's survival of Stalin's break with Tito, and William Zimmerman lists them as follows.¹⁷² The first is the structure of the post-WWII world. Yugoslavia benefited from the fact that the postwar world was highly divided and this "allowed the Yugoslavs to quite quickly benefit from Anglo-American interest in encouraging Yugoslav independence."¹⁷³ The second point addresses the issue of the 'blockade' imposed on Yugoslavia by the Soviets. The fact that the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc closed its physical and trading borders to Yugoslavia, only enabled the Yugoslavs to "substitute trade with one

¹⁶⁹ Dedijer, p. 276.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 276.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 276.

¹⁷² Zimmerman, p. 14-16.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 14.

state for trade with another”¹⁷⁴ and opened trading paths with the West. The third issue is one that cannot be understated – the simple matter of the “asymmetry in the values at stake.”¹⁷⁵ For the Yugoslavs, their nationhood was at stake, while for Soviets the “dispute was of far less significance,”¹⁷⁶ and Zimmerman argues that this difference in importance would most likely favor the Yugoslavs. The fourth factor relates to the question of leadership. Recently emerging from war, an important consideration in ‘defying Stalin’ would be the fact that Yugoslavs managed to win the battles against the Germans, Italians, Chetniks, and Ustashas. Zimmerman argues that Tito and Party leaders “were endowed with hubris or revolutionary élan, born of a seizure of power, which had almost no limits.”¹⁷⁷ The fifth reason why Yugoslavia was able to sustain the difficulties imposed by the Tito-Stalin split was the nature of Communist power in the country. Yugoslavian communists came to power in similar way as the communists in the Soviet Union. The main difference was that Yugoslav communists mainly relied on the peasants and “the fundamental transformation of Yugoslav society and the building of local political institutions were already well launched by the end of World War II.”¹⁷⁸ In contrast with this situation, the Soviets “seized central political power and proceeded subsequently to transform the society and institutionalize the revolution outside the major urban areas.”¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the similarities of the two systems are what Zimmerman argues as the main reason that Yugoslavian leaders were able to sustain the political and economic attacks of the Soviets. The

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 16.

efforts of Soviet agents to mobilize the opposition against Tito proved futile, and it seemed that "a little Soviet Union would not easily become a satellite of the real one."¹⁸⁰

The consequences of the Tito-Stalin split were felt in the entire Eastern Bloc. Stalin "strengthened Moscow's grip over the rest of the socialist camp,"¹⁸¹ and conducted further purges in communist parties, while expelling a number of high-ranking Communists, now accused of being Titoists. The situation for Yugoslavia turned to worse with Albania "turning completely away from Belgrade"¹⁸² and turning towards Moscow. Bulgarian leaders became one of the harshest critics of Tito and his government,¹⁸³ while Hungary openly supported Stalin's "view of the affair"¹⁸⁴ even before the Cominform resolution. The Yugoslavs found themselves alone in the world of Eastern European communism.

The Western perspective on the matter has been rather well elaborated in Lorraine M. Less' book *Keeping Tito Afloat*. Long before the split Tito "appeared to the United States to be the most loyal ally"¹⁸⁵ of Stalin and for a period of time in the spring of 1948, Western diplomats were not confident that the situation was unraveling. The break came as a surprise for Western administrations and opened a list of new economic and political propositions. In the first years after the war, in matters of trade, the United States had the same attitude towards Yugoslavia as they did towards the countries of the Eastern Bloc. In January 1948 the United States prohibited

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁸¹ Perovic, p. 61.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸⁴ Halperin, p. 77.

¹⁸⁵ Less, p. 43.

the export of critical commodities to those countries, causing a substantial drop in trade between the two worlds.¹⁸⁶

American diplomats strongly advised Tito to abandon the Trieste issue¹⁸⁷ and the “continuing strife”¹⁸⁸ in Greece. In January 1948 American diplomats reported the lack of support by Soviets for Tito’s five-year plan and opposition to “the development of a self-sufficient industrial system in Yugoslavia”¹⁸⁹ noting the first breaks in otherwise constructive relations. American ambassador Cavendish W. Cannon¹⁹⁰ stated that Soviets were insisting on Yugoslavian production to focus on the needs of the Eastern Bloc, but never reiterated, “that these strains between the Soviets and Yugoslavia (would) benefit the West.”¹⁹¹

In the first days after the break, American diplomat R. Borden Reams predicted that Yugoslavian leaders, now in a difficult economic and political position, would soon request the help of the United States and urged the government to issue “a general statement reaffirming its determination to protect the territorial integrity of small nations.”¹⁹² While the American government strongly encouraged and supported the activities in Yugoslavia, the situation required a vigilant response. First, Tito’s Yugoslavia was still a communist country, and second, the internal politics of United States required cautious behavior toward a communist country. The question was how to help a country “resting on the basis of Soviet organization principles

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁸⁷ Yugoslavia claimed the right on the city of Trieste based on the wartime partisan control of the city for the entirety of 40 days and a number of Yugoslav nationals living in the city. The issue was settled in 1947.

¹⁸⁸ Less, p. 45.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁹⁰ Cavendish W. Cannon was the American ambassador to Yugoslavia from July 14, 1947 to October 19, 1949.

¹⁹¹ Less, p. 46.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 52.

and for the most part on Soviet ideology,¹⁹³ and how to create the future politics toward Eastern European communist countries if they chose to follow Yugoslavian footsteps.

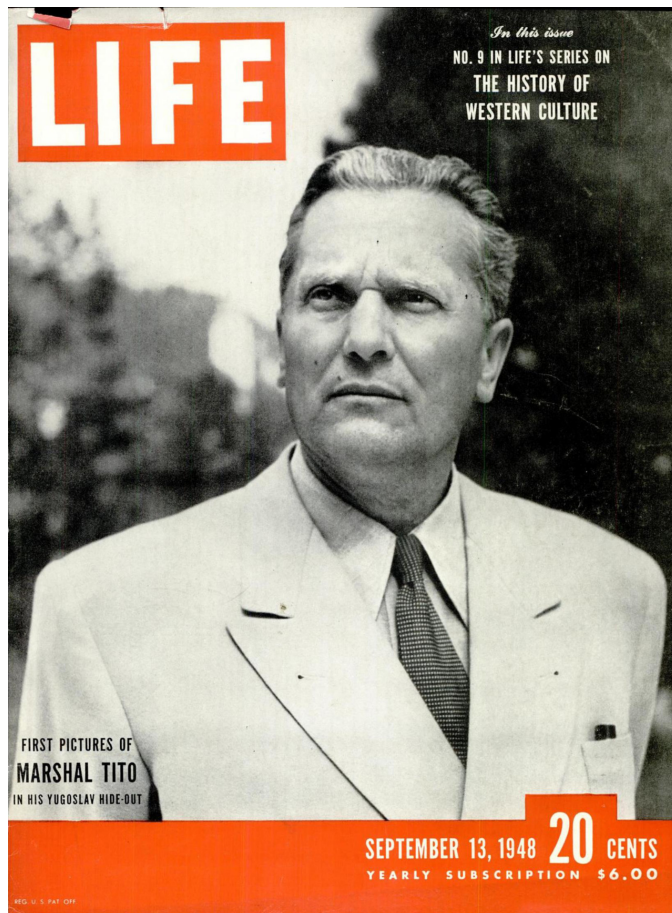


Figure 35: Tito on the cover of the 'Life' magazine, September 1948, Courtesy of www.tumblr.com

The relationship between Tito and the United States remained a complicated one. Tito was a communist leader, often referred to as “the dictator of a police state.”¹⁹⁴ The problem remained complex – with the concern of the United States in helping Tito and at the same time not jeopardizing the country’s anti-communist politics, while also not endangering Tito’s position in the region by turning him into an American ally. The fear that the split was not permanent, but only short-lived also remained for a period of time. In

response to this situation, Tito assured the American representatives that none of the goods received from the United States would find their way to the Soviet market. In December 1948, Tito announced to the Yugoslavian people that he would “divert strategic raw materials to the

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

West in return for increased trade"¹⁹⁵ marking the significant improvement of political as well as economic relations.

The relations with the Western world improved through time, and even though Tito and the Yugoslavian government and country remained communist until its dissolution in the early 1990s, the relations with Moscow and Soviet Union were never as politically successful as they were in the first three years after the war. While sustaining cordial trade relations with the West, in the following years Yugoslavian leaders turned to the countries of the Third World, taking part in creation of the nonalignment movement.¹⁹⁶ Difficult internal politics required different solutions in the post-1948 era and the politics of nonalignment was the only one that seemed acceptable to all factions of the Party.¹⁹⁷ Historians argue that the nonalignment "must be judged as an enormous success... for the Yugoslav state and Tito's immense international stature."¹⁹⁸

One can suggest that the greatest success of Yugoslavian foreign politics was making both its allies and enemies content. Zimmerman argues that the Yugoslavian post-1948 politics can be defined through the relations with the Third World countries, the official communist and pro-Soviet ideological attitude, and ties to the Western economies.¹⁹⁹ In the following years the main problems for the Yugoslavian leadership turned out to be internal, in their constituting republics, often settling what turned out to be irreconcilable differences.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁹⁶ Zimmerman, p. 26.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

As in previous instances, the ramifications of political issues significantly influenced the architecture of the country. Political insecurities put a stop to further exploration of Socialist Realism, and the economic insecurity of missing Soviet support and transition toward Western markets changed the construction industry and architecture as well. Now, looking toward both East and West, though in a different manner, the country was on its way to produce architecture for two distinct audiences, a communist one of the 'first country of socialism,' and one of a new ally, the Western world.

6. MODERNISM AND YUGOSLAVIAN SOCIALISM

According to historians and scholars, the turning point in Yugoslavian architecture and art was the immediate period after 1948 and the break between Tito and Stalin. The country changed direction in regards to politics and this transformation did not go unnoticed in the world of art and architecture. Socialist Realism quickly disappeared leaving room for the development of the International style previously explored in the period between the two world wars. After being characterized as "expression of bourgeois decadence"²⁰⁰ in the previous years, the modernist expression in art and culture experienced a rebirth in the 1950s due to the "ascendance of post-revolutionary bureaucracy... with [a] modicum of social liberalization and overtures to the West."²⁰¹ The politics and economy changed causing architecture to follow and as a result "important building operations were used to legitimize the social order."²⁰²

Historians track the demise of Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia to Miroslav Krleža's²⁰³ speech at the Third Congress of Writers of Yugoslavia where he "assailed the very foundations of Socialist Realism in the harshest possible terms"²⁰⁴ while two years before Neven Segvic²⁰⁵ criticized the "principles of Socialist Realism"²⁰⁶ in relation to the architectural profession.

²⁰⁰ Suvakovic, p. 10.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰² Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, "Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism", (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), p. 35.

²⁰³ Miroslav Krleža (1893-1981) – writer; by many considered one of the greatest Croatian and Yugoslavian author of the 20th century. Krleža was a member of the Communist Party in the 1930s, and a firm supporter of Yugoslavian politics. As one of the great Yugoslavian writers, Krleža's influence in literature and politics was significant.

²⁰⁴ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 187.

²⁰⁵ Neven Segvic (1917-1992) – Croatian architect and a professor at the University of Zagreb's Faculty of Architecture. Segvic was a prolific designer as well as architecture historian and writer. Segvic was a founder and editor-in-chief of the *Arhitektura* magazine.

²⁰⁶ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 187.

Socialist Realism never took the place in Yugoslavian architecture that it had in other Eastern Bloc countries, such as in Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. Its failure was somewhat obscured by the more significant political consequences of the Tito-Stalin break. The transition from Socialist Realism to modernism can be seen in the shifts in editorial policies of the influential *Arhitektura* magazine.²⁰⁷ By 1951 the end of Socialist Realism in architecture was a “*fait accompli*, which was not yet the case in visual arts and literature,”²⁰⁸ and *Arhitektura* showed that architecture in Yugoslavia “officially defected to the West”²⁰⁹ even though architects continued to work in a socialist framework that “defined its prevalent typologies, patterns of financing, [and] professional organization.”²¹⁰ The situation can be seen as similar to the political sphere, where even though Yugoslavia cut the ties with the Soviet Union it remained a communist country still showing its allegiance to the ‘first land of communism.’

In the first years after the break, Yugoslavian internal politics changed and the country embarked on a mission of showing its strength to its new allies, as well as to former ones that were now adversaries. The country embarked upon a process of decentralization through a “system of self-management.”²¹¹ At first, this process was merely cosmetic and in the post-1948 world it legitimized the separation from the Soviet Union. In the following decades it turned out to be a shift in the politics of internal management, further distancing the country from the Soviet way of governing, while giving people certain kinds of freedom and affecting the everyday lives of its citizens.

²⁰⁷ *Arhitektura*, the Yugoslavian magazine for architecture, urbanism, and arts was published from 1947 to 1951.

²⁰⁸ Kulic, PhD Dissertation, p. 190.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²¹¹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 28.

It was inevitable for such shifts in politics and economy to influence art and architecture. In 1948 the architectural profession was restructured from the previously highly centralized system to a more liberated one with the freedom to self-organize.²¹² These changes included being in charge of the highly regarded professional criteria in design and construction. "Commercial pressures generally had little aesthetic impact on the production,"²¹³ which resulted in high quality structures as well as inefficiencies in production. The state abandoned its control over the architectural profession and architects were left in charge of the design process. The country embarked on a mission of defining the Socialist Yugoslavian society, and on their part architects attempted to link "traditional national heritage and modern architecture."²¹⁴



Figure 36: Ivan Vitic, Apartment building in Laganjina street, Zagreb, 1957-62, Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler

The basic needs after the war, such as the construction of factories, institutes, hospitals, and schools, were met and the "power elite figured that it was time to open up to the world and participate in the international exchange of

²¹² Ibid., p. 28.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 29.

²¹⁴ Kulic and Mrduljas, p. 36.

goods.”²¹⁵ In the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split and the resulting liberation of architecture, the profession opened even further to the West. Exhibitions honoring works of modernist masters took place in republics’ capitals²¹⁶ and architects and architecture students often traveled to Western countries. The consequences were the further exploration of modernist architectural principles and their advancement relative to prewar ideas. One of the most important inspirations for Yugoslavian architects was Le Corbusier’s Unite d’Habitation, and by the end of 1950s “virtually every major city had at least one recognizable Corbusian structure,”²¹⁷ with leading examples in Belgrade and Zagreb.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is important to notice that due to interruption of its formative years by the war and the short period of Socialist Realism, modernism in Yugoslavia still lagged behind the international trends that had developed at a faster pace.



Figure 37: Smidhen, Magas, and Horvat, Museum of the Revolution, 1963, Courtesy of www.muzej.ba

²¹⁵ Krecic, p. 354.

²¹⁶ Retrospective of Le Corbusier’s work organized by Boston Institute of Contemporary Art was on display in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Split, Skopje, and Ljubljana in period between December 1952 and May 1953 (see Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler)

²¹⁷ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 36.

²¹⁸ Krecic, p. 355.

By the end of the decade, and in sharp contrast with the previous trends, “simple white volumes and glass boxes of the International style became the style of choice for the buildings of state administration and institutions”²¹⁹ further emphasizing the break with the ‘gloomy’ days of Soviet influenced designs. Buildings exhibited the acceptance of western architectural trends, not so innocently depicting the political reality of the period. The more conservative officials challenged modernist tendencies,²²⁰ but as the government abandoned control over architectural production, these complaints remained unanswered.



Figure 38: Rikard Marasovic, Children's Health Center, Kravica, 1961, Courtesy of Wolfgang Thaler

²¹⁹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 37.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

One of the reasons modernism remained unchallenged in the fifties and sixties was its representational quality.²²¹ The politics of the time period were complex and the position of Yugoslavia remained precarious and undefined for the first decade. Architecture was able to play a significant role in the representation of the country to its allies as well as to its enemies. Sleek lines, ribbon windows, residential buildings inspired by Le Corbusier's works, and glass office buildings clearly positioned Yugoslavia in the architectural arena of postwar Europe, which was clearly western. Although the importance of its architectural affiliation with Western modernism "ultimately disappeared,"²²² the devotion to modernist aesthetic of Yugoslavian architects remained.



Figure 39: Vjenceslav Richter, Yugoslavian Pavilion at the EXPO 1958, Courtesy of Vladimir Kulic

²²¹ Ibid., p. 37.

²²² Vladimir Kulic, *Architecture and Ideology in Socialist Yugoslavia*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, "Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism", (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 36-64, p. 37.

One great example of the subtle embrace of modernism by Yugoslav architects is the Yugoslavian pavilion for EXPO '58, considered to be a unique work of architecture. This work propelled its architect's career on a path towards Europe and presented Yugoslavia in a new light, distancing it from its image as a backward country. The Yugoslavian architect Vjenceslav Richter designed the pavilion after a national competition and the building turned out to be one of the most popular of the EXPO.²²³ The importance of the building can be seen in a twofold manner, through its representation of the country for the foreign visitors and press, and through its modernist design, still favored by the architects and intellectual elite.

Despite the fact that the Yugoslavian pavilion for the Brussels' EXPO was torn down, it has still been "vigorously researched and written about"²²⁴ as one of the most significant buildings of the period. The central political statement of the Yugoslavian government was to present the country as "constructing a 'humane' decentralized socialism"²²⁵ even if the message was 'lost' in the pavilion. The building itself sent a clear architectural message – the days of Socialist Realism were over. The result of the Stalin-Tito confrontation of the 1948 resulted in the pavilion embodying "Yugoslavia's new and reformed version of socialism,"²²⁶ and an architectural acceptance of high modernism.²²⁷ Since the early 1950s the art and architecture of Yugoslavia were perceived in the West as "symptoms of Tito's break with Russia,"²²⁸ but what

²²³ Vladimir Kulic, "An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism: Yugoslavia at EXPO '58," *Journal of Contemporary History*, pp. 161-184, p. 162.

²²⁴ Darja Radovic Mahecic, Fenomen medjunarodnih izlozbi i Richtertova inzenjerska umjetnost, Review of the 'Jasna Galjer, "EXPO 58 i jugoslavenski paviljon Vjenceslava Richtera"', KVARTAL VI – 3/4 – 2009, pp. 65-65, p. 65, Translation by author.

²²⁵ Kulic, "An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism: Yugoslavia at EXPO '58," p. 163.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

the pavilion and the exhibition failed to channel were the more direct political messages of the Yugoslavian government, remaining mostly neglected in the building's interior, and as a result making the exhibition 'unfocused'.²²⁹

Richter's design was unique at the time in Yugoslavia. Highly praised in the country as an architect as well as a sculptor, Richter defined architecture as "authentic expression of contemporary living contributing to its quality."²³⁰ The design lacked iconography and historical influences, though contributing to the image Yugoslavia hoped to achieve in the world by "declaring [its] commitment to democracy and independence from the Eastern Bloc."²³¹ The building, envisioned with a 70-meter tall tower, was supposed to symbolize "a man's unstoppable tendency for prosperity."²³² For Richter, a man who saw his artistic activities as "a political commitment and considered socialism as a precondition for general transformation of our images of the world"²³³ it represented the socialism of Yugoslavia. Did Richter's building manage to reach its goal and to channel the message envisioned by the Yugoslavian government? In regards to the representation of the country and its commitment to high modernism and inclination towards the West, the answer is yes. On the other hand it did not seem to exhibit the internal political directions of the country within the pavilion.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

²³⁰ Jasna Galjer, quoted in Romina Peritz, *Rare realization of Croatian architecture in the world*, www.vjesnik.hr, Accessed on May 9, 2012. Translation by author.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Kulic, "An Avant-Garde Architecture," p. 169.



Figure 40: Potocnjak, Neumann, Urlich, and Perak, Presidency of Government, New Belgrade, 1961

The shift in architecture can be traced through the example of New Belgrade. As previously mentioned, great plans for the construction of a 'new capital of a new communist country' were abandoned after the break with Stalin. The plans changed, and the construction was for a time period put on hold. The designs changed and were adjusted to the new political and economic situation.

Kulic, Mrduljas, and Thaler identify the redesign and continuation of construction of the former Presidency building, now serving a smaller government body of Federal Executive Council, as the "most succinct statement of the political reorientation"²³⁴ of the country. Classical elements of the building were removed from the old design and the building showed influences of Niemeyer's Brasilia,²³⁵ exhibiting light, elegant, and transparent structure.²³⁶ The building was completed in 1961 for the First Conference of the Non-Alignment Movement,

²³⁴ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 37.

²³⁵ Belgrade architect Mihajlo Jankovic (1911-1976) was hired to redesign the building after the death of its original architect Vladimir Potocnjak. Jankovic was known as modernist and was influenced by Oscar Niemeyer and his design for Brasilia. (See Ibid.)

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

presenting the power of Yugoslavian construction and architecture to the Third World and new allies.²³⁷

Even after the death of Stalin, the political dimension of Yugoslavian-Soviet relations never regained their previous status, and Yugoslavia focused its foreign politics toward the West and the Third World. The modernism of the 1950s continued on the path that was started in the interwar period, but never maintained the trajectory of modernism in the West, always lagging behind. Architects cannot be blamed for this delay, as the politics and geography of the region could not have produced a different story in the architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia. The modernism of the country maintained its own path, now less intertwined with politics and focusing more on the economy and the Third World.

²³⁷ Dubravka Sekulic, *Constructing Non-Aligned Modernity: The Case of Energoprojekt*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, "Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism," (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 124-133, p. 128.

7. YUGOSLAVIA AND THE THIRD WORLD

In the post-1948 world, Yugoslavian foreign policy took a drastic turn. The formerly positive relations with the Eastern Bloc ended, yet the Yugoslavians maintained the rhetoric of keeping Soviet communists in the highest regard on the path toward a communist world. The country took a different direction in international politics, through a policy of non-alignment and avoidance of the Cold War.



Figure 41: Non-Aligned Movement founders, Nasser, Tito, Nehru, 1961, Courtesy of www.politikapluc.com

In 1961 in Belgrade, the Non-Aligned Movement was inaugurated, “raising Yugoslavia to an international status disproportionate to its size.”²³⁸ This new initiative shaped the economy in various ways, and the architectural

production of the country began to focus on the Third World. In spite of this, the aesthetic expression of Yugoslavian architecture was not so much influenced as the country's construction industry. Indeed, construction companies were working in Third World countries, and “enjoying privileged access to the huge Third World market.”²³⁹ The economy of the country was

²³⁸ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 44.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

profoundly affected by these new opportunities. Investments in construction companies rose, and architects and construction workers travelled to work in the countries of the Third World.

Dr. Ali Mazrui argues that no other event in the second half of the 20th century “had a greater impact on relations between small countries and Big Powers.”²⁴⁰ The shifting influences and the focus on foreign relations beyond the Soviet Union fostered new developments in the internal politics of Yugoslavia as well as in its economy. The Non-Aligned Movement has been understood by scholars like Mazrui as a movement for “moderation in East-West relations,”²⁴¹ whose focus gradually shifted toward “transforming the basis of North-South relations.”²⁴² The reasons for taking part in the movement are various and profoundly different for each of its participants, but historians define Tito’s rationale as being the occurrences of 1948 and the related threat of the Soviet Union. The situation changed as Stalin’s influence weakened in the years after his death and with a shift in the foreign politics of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. Nevertheless, Tito’s reluctance to “embrace the West on the rebound”²⁴³ and his interest in the Non-Aligned Movement grew and subsequently deeply influenced foreign politics of the country, turning it toward the Third World as opposed to the Cold War blocs of East and West.

The beginnings of the Non-Aligned Movement can be traced back to the late 1950s,²⁴⁴ which coincides with the time in Yugoslavian history when the country took a more significant

²⁴⁰ Ali Mazrui, in *Foreword* to Peter Willets “The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance”, (New York: Nichols Publishing Co., 1978), p. xiii

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. xiii

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. xiii

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. xiv

²⁴⁴ Peter Willets “The Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance”, (New York: Nichols Publishing Co., 1978), p. 2.

turn to the West, yet managed to maintain the somewhat amiable relations with the Soviet Union. After the first years of the post-1948 split when the country recuperated from the vacuum of Eastern European communism, in 1955 Tito and Khrushchev eased long-standing tensions, and the relations were repaired, but were never in the condition of the immediate postwar years. In the eyes of Yugoslavian politicians, and especially Tito, "the best long-term hope for Yugoslavia's security [was] in easing the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union."²⁴⁵ The Non-Aligned Movement whole-heartedly supported that position. Still, the threat remained and the Yugoslavian leadership "felt seriously threatened by the Soviet invasion of Hungary (in 1956),"²⁴⁶ and wanted to further strengthen its position in world politics. The Yugoslavian leadership expressed a concern with the lack of influence of 'small countries' on world politics and was opposed to "the present situation (as) normal and positive as many smaller states are so to speak blindly following the policies of one or the other big power."²⁴⁷

Non-alignment was not defined as a "coherent set of ideas"²⁴⁸ before the Belgrade Conference in 1961 when the non-aligned states "came together and articulated their common interests and similarity of outlook [...] originating from the increasingly close co-operation between Tito, Nasser, and Nehru since 1956."²⁴⁹ From December 1, 1955 to February 5, 1956 Tito spent time in India and Egypt and "while the three did not undertake any formal commitments to each other that would justify describing them as bloc, they did cement a close

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴⁷ Edvard Kardelj, "Yugoslavia in International Relations and in the Non-Aligned Movement", (Belgrade: STP Socialist Thought and Practice, 1979), p. 17.

²⁴⁸ Willets, p. 3.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

personal relationship.”²⁵⁰ In the initial period of the movement, it may have seemed that it advocated neutrality in international relations, but non-alignment was neither the ideology of neutrality, nor even the ideology of non-interference in Cold War issues. Kardelj argued that the non-interference was more the consequence of the initial policy of opposing the “tendencies to divide the world into military and political blocs,”²⁵¹ and he defines as the profound substance of the policy the “common resistance to the system of economic and political relations among nations that had taken shape in the imperialist era and that was based in colonialism (...).”²⁵²

Neutrality in the foreign politics of non-aligned countries was not implied by its creators, and non-alignment can be defined as being concerned with “the role of states in international system”²⁵³ as opposed to the roles of individuals in society. Kardelj outlines the policy of non-alignment not as the movement’s substance, but as “more the reflection of its historical origins than of its socio-historical role.”²⁵⁴

The country changed and as its foreign politics shifted, the influences and occurrences in the realm of architecture changed as well. The drastic shift in the position of Yugoslavia in the global political establishment was apparent in the wake of the Skopje earthquake. On July 26, 1963, a devastating earthquake, resulting in over 1,000 dead and over 150,000 homeless, crushed the entire city.²⁵⁵ Within days, the international community took part in helping the injured and those left on the streets of a shattered city. Help came from Mexico, Czechoslovakia, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁵¹ Kardelj, p. 131.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 131.

²⁵³ Willets, p. 29.

²⁵⁴ Kardelj, p. 107.

²⁵⁵ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 44.

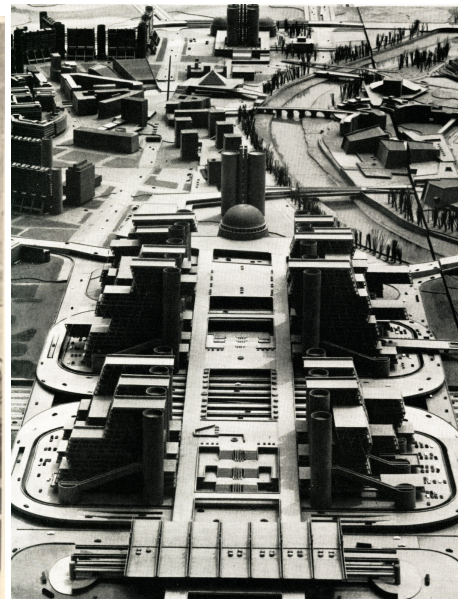


Figure 42: Skopje Earthquake, 1963, Courtesy of www.skyscrapercity.com

By 1965 the United Nations organized a competition for the new plan of Skopje, including equal numbers of local and foreign teams with Kenzo Tange as the winner. The project of the Skopje Master Plan was the trial project of the post-disaster reconstruction for the UN, and the city “became an international architectural exhibition of sorts, with multiple large-scale structures donated by various countries from both sides of the Iron Curtain.”²⁵⁶ Overnight, a small Yugoslavian city became “a symbol of international fellowship (...) transcending national

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

prejudices and barriers of ideology.”²⁵⁷ Even though the plan remained uncompleted, the city of Skopje became “a ‘collage-city’ of unfinished plans and fragments of various interesting ideas, with an exceptionally modern architectural culture.”²⁵⁸ The international plan to rebuilt Skopje remained as one of the United Nations’ symbols of successful projects and “international solidarity.”²⁵⁹



Figures 43, 44: Kenzo Tange and his team in front of the Skopje city center model; Skopje City Center Model, 1965, Courtesy of www.tumblr.com

The planning of the new city of Skopje “came to transcend the Cold War divisions”²⁶⁰ sealing the position of Yugoslavia in the world of non-alignment. Economically, the country explored the connections of the non-aligned world and “enjoyed privileged access to the huge market of Third World countries. Many of them were recently decolonized and sought rapid

²⁵⁷ Divna Pencic, Biljana Spirikoska, and Jasna Stefanovska, *Skopje Urban Transformations: Constructing the Built Environment in Different Socio-political Contexts*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, “Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism,” (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 200-218, p. 210.

²⁵⁸ Kulic and Mrduljas, p. 200.

²⁵⁹ Ines Tolic, *Japan Looks West: The Reconstruction of Skopje in the Light of Global Ambitions and Local Needs*, in eds. Vladimir Kulic and Maroje Mrduljas, “Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism,” (Zagreb: UHA/CCA, 2012), pp. 218-232, p. 221.

²⁶⁰ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 45.

modernization”²⁶¹ opening ways for Yugoslavian construction companies and architecture offices to share the know-how acquired during the postwar modernization of the country. Due to the country’s own modernization and urbanization “Yugoslavia developed a strong construction industry”²⁶² and through participation in the Non-Aligned Movement it opened the market of the Third World for Yugoslavian companies and with “the decolonized countries of Africa became unexpected allies in the process of trying to articulate how to be modern by one’s own rule.”²⁶³ The introduction to the new and developing market brought the needed capital injection to the country and by 1964 “credit and bank arrangements between Yugoslavia and newly decolonized countries were reaching 360 million dollars (...) or 17-18% of Yugoslav international trade.”²⁶⁴

Socialist Yugoslavia was thus no longer just an unspoken ally of the Eastern Bloc, or a ‘silent’ partner of the United States in the world of Eastern European communism. The country had found its position in the politics of postwar Europe. The level of international help and presence in Yugoslavia showed that the days of the country’s isolation in the world, as well as its singular participation in the Eastern Bloc, had come to an end. The country managed to maintain the relations with both extremes of the political spectrum.

²⁶¹ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 47.

²⁶² Kulic and Mrduljas, p. 124.

²⁶³ Sekulic, p. 125.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 126.

CONCLUSIONS

The complex reality of Yugoslavian architecture during the Socialist period is too difficult to be reduced to a simple answer. The intricacies of the country and its politics, the difficulties of its past and its present all created an environment that was problematic to navigate, yet too important to be neglected. The internal politics of the time period, the troubles of the economy and foreign relations, the modernization of a war torn country, all created a highly contested context where the identity-defining process took place, and all else had to follow.

The situation in architecture was even less simple, as during the interwar period the historically burdened region, after centuries of foreign occupation was on the path to create a country independent of historical afflictions. That could not have been said for the architecture of Yugoslavia. The architectural history of its founding republics was rich and long and as such was not to be disregarded. But what did this mean for the newfound country? What was this to signify for its identity, for the creation of its future? Architecture and politics remained intertwined for the duration of the existence of the country, and as such, architecture cannot be seen as an independently existing element.

The unusual combination of the political endeavors of Yugoslavia and its politically active, modernist architects created an architecture that was somewhat uncommon in the communist world. Aesthetically, the architecture did not meet the high, utopian ideals set forth by the communist leadership of Eastern Europe, however, decades after the demise of the country, it seems that its architecture was a fitting one – unpretentious, yet searching for a modern identity. Although the architecture of Yugoslavia did play a significant role in the

political representation of the nation, after thorough research it is quite apparent that it was not a deliberate product of its politics.

The premises for the relationship between politics and architecture this thesis began with seem quite general, but through a historical examination of this bond, more precise answers were found in the midst of seemingly endless contradictions. The politics of one country, particularly a mid-20th century country, formed in the wake of WWII, cannot be separated from its architecture. In the politics of a communist country, that relationship is even more important. Defining oneself remained the goal in the first decades of Socialist Yugoslavia's history, and the process affected all segments of life. Significantly, the process of defining oneself could not be deemed as equal in all communist countries, even though this might seem so in a superficial overlook. The history of Yugoslavia offered different patterns in creation of the country and this thesis examined those patterns in architecture.

The architectural history of Yugoslavia can be seen in a twofold manner – discussing the architecture of the country in its entirety, and discussing the issue of architecture in each republic in regards to the forming of a 'national identity.' The history of architecture in the country proved to be as important as the politics of the time. Various influences throughout history, such as the different pasts of each republic, made the architectural reality of Socialist Yugoslavia unique, and unwittingly created a national identity through its differences.

This thesis did not thoroughly address the histories of each republic, but it did briefly address different geographical and historical backgrounds of each republic prior to the Yugoslavian period. The different affiliations of each country and varying influences proved to be valuable in the creation of a unique mixture of architectural influences in the newfound

country, and as such it helped create different architectural realities. It can be argued that this has been the reason why a unified architecture was never attempted in Yugoslavia. The difficulties in the creation of a country founded on different political, historical and religious backgrounds restrained the Yugoslavian government and politicians in the effort to create a unique architecture across the country. The founding republics were to be granted independence in matters of architecture as the country fought more difficult, and more important, battles in regards to the preservation of the union and its federal politics.

The architecture of each republic contributed to the architecture of Yugoslavia – a unique mixture of differences, but differences that followed the natural progression of European architecture, though according to a different time frame. Modernist architecture was not deliberately selected by the Yugoslavian government to represent the country. It was an organic development of the interwar architectural trends developed in the country, and the brief interruption of Socialist Realism was an exception. Modernism was initiated in Yugoslavia during its early foundation as an independent country. Architects of the Kingdom were educated in Vienna, Prague, and Berlin, and often worked in the studios of established modernists. It was inevitable for such influences to be employed after they returned to Yugoslavia. Plecnik, Ibler, Zlokovic, and others were true modernists, but modernists in their own unique expression. Plecnik's works in interwar Ljubljana exhibit the originality of his talent and architectural mind. Plecnik educated others through his work, such as Ravnikar, though not to follow the image of his architectural expression, but rather to question his ideas. This interwar modernism was a conservative one, and as such it followed the politics of the monarchy. Avant-

garde tendencies were suppressed and at that point modernism was even criticized by the communist party as being bourgeois and neglecting peoples' needs.

World War II ended all architectural development and four years of destruction took place. The monarchy crumbled and the country was destroyed and devastated, with a death toll of over one million people. At the end of the war, it was time for a rebirth, for construction and reconstruction, and it was time for modernization. This time politics did not maintain its marginal influence on architecture. Politicians and the government had to respond to a broader political entity and its leadership—the Soviet Union of Stalin. In the wake of WWII, Yugoslavia was on the brink of a self-defining process, it was on the path of modernization.

Foreign and internal politics played a significant role and as such they impacted architecture in different ways, making subtle, yet inescapable marks. A communist country, Yugoslavia was to follow the direction established by Stalin in the Soviet Union in the decades of Socialist Realism. Prewar modernists and postwar communists did not see Socialist Realism as the architectural expression of their newfound country. The short period of Socialist Realism turned out to be an uneventful one. The country failed to follow in the footsteps of the Soviet Union. It did not have the financial possibilities of the Soviets, the vastness of their geography, or the decades spent on establishing an artistic and cultural direction. With all the issues encountered in implementing Socialist Realism in Yugoslavia, one of the main problems was its lack of definition. After decades of attempting to define Socialist Realism, the Soviets failed to offer a clear cultural program to be followed. What was Socialist Realism? How was it to be employed in the newfound Yugoslavia? Kulic and Mrduljas argue that in the Soviet Union "Stalinism indefinitely postponed the final attainment of utopia (and) architects were expected

to summarize all the 'progressive' traditions of architectural history rather than to invent anything new."²⁶⁵ Soviet architects focused Socialist Realism on the exploration of historical styles, often directed by the whims of Stalin and his emissaries, in defining the revolution as "an ending."²⁶⁶

Yugoslavian architects did not find any continuity between Socialist Realism and interwar modernism. Socialist Realism was perceived as something unnatural and forced, and architects reluctantly designed under the instructions of the government. The Socialist leadership in Yugoslavia, unlike in Soviet Union, failed to take on the role of an "official 'gatekeeper'"²⁶⁷ and the architectural trend of Socialist Realism was expediently abandoned in 1948, after Tito and Stalin's conflict.

The reality in architecture changed swiftly. Socialist Realism resulted in only one building in Belgrade, the building of the House of Trade Unions. The plan to create New Belgrade, the capital of new Yugoslavia exhibiting communist power to the world, was quickly abandoned in favor of housing units. Modernist architects argued that "like every other epoch in history, socialism should strive to develop its own style,"²⁶⁸ but that style could not negate all previous architectural developments and history, and should be able to develop further from them.

In the wake of Tito and Stalin's dispute, politicians in Yugoslavia abandoned any substantial attempts to exert control over the architecture in the country, and architecture seemed to continue where it had stopped in 1941. Modernists of the interwar period, most of

²⁶⁵ Kulic, Mrduljas, Thaler, p. 216.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

them loyal communists and war heroes, were on the journey of meeting the future that had already arrived in European architecture. Yugoslavian architecture of the first two decades of the postwar period remains 'uneventful,' but the architecture of communist Yugoslavia was a faithful representation of the country and its achievements. Modernized heavy industry enabled architects to use advanced materials in their designs, though Yugoslavian architecture never followed the path of a "space-age futurism."²⁶⁹ The country never took part in the space race between the Soviet Union and United States, nor did it have the chance. Kulic and Mrduljas argue that utopian architecture was never explored in Yugoslavia due to the fact that "the architectural profession was too busy with the very real project of modernization to waste the time with utopian considerations."²⁷⁰ The architecture of Yugoslavia reflected the reality of the country, and even though it may be argued that Yugoslavian modernism was uneventful, it was inevitably truthful.

Nevertheless, socialist politics were not completely removed from the architecture of the postwar era. It may have not forcefully employed the ideas or ideals of the Party, but the Yugoslavian government did use the country's architecture as the way of expressing its allegiances. Soon after the abrupt end of close relations with the Soviet Union, modernist developments were used to express allegiances with the West. This new ally and its modernism in architecture could not have been more distant from an undefined Socialist Realism. Yugoslavian cities and architects met the implied expectations of westerners as well as its government in exhibiting this new architectural expression. However, Yugoslavian building

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 217.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

politics remained complicated. A more conservative architecture was exhibited to the Eastern Bloc countries, even after 1948, since the Yugoslavian dedication to communism never changed and the Soviet Union remained the apparent political 'role-model.' At the same time, international exhibitions, such as EXPO 1958, showed truly modernist designs, alluding to the affiliations of Yugoslavian architects, and even politicians, with the West.

Although politically significant, the years of non-alignment did not influence modernist tendencies of Yugoslavian architects. The newfound alliances with the Third World countries brought the economic power and stability to the country, seemingly setting it free both from the East and West. Yugoslavia took part in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement in the early 1960s, subsequently utilizing the Yugoslavian know-how in regards to the search of modernization, and created strong bonds with the vast Third World, both politically and economically. The architecture of the country was not as influenced by this in its aesthetic expression as it had been in its economy enforcing the country through construction industry employed in those countries.

In the years after the war, the basic needs, such as the construction of factories, hospitals, and schools were met and the country's power elite made a conscious decision to take part in the international exchange of intellectual and material goods. In the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split and the resulting liberation of architecture, the profession opened even further to the West. Exhibitions honoring works of modernist masters took place in republics' capitals and architects and architecture students often traveled to Western countries. The consequences of these events were the further exploration of modernist architectural principles and their relative advancement in regards to prewar ideas. Arguably, the reason for this relative

advancement can be seen in the interruption in formative years of Socialist Yugoslavia's architecture by the war and the short period of Socialist Realism. Undeniably, modernism in Yugoslavia still lagged behind the international trends that had developed at a different, faster pace.

In regards to internal politics it can be argued that architecture followed similar patterns in all republics in regards to design, and this can be attributed to the fact that even though sorts of regional modernisms were explored and exhibited, architects often worked in different republics, accommodating modernist principles to local traditions, but still exhibiting modernist rules and interpretations.

Amongst others, this thesis attempted to answer the following questions: Why did architects and government turn to modernism? Was it its neutrality, the lack of reference to history and historical trends cluttering the internal politics of the country? This thesis argues that it was so, and that combined with the fact that modernism was at this point innately Yugoslavian in comparison to Socialist Realism – it is important to mention that modernist neutrality of the early years of the movement was whole-heartedly accepted and exhibited in the country. Modernist expressions in Yugoslavia were not of the later stages of the movement as in Western Europe, but modernist expressions shown were the ones adopted in the country in pre-WWII years.

The adoption of modernism in the architecture of Socialist Yugoslavia was not a permanent one. In 1965 the country experienced a recession, effecting architectural progress and designs. In addition, modernism as an architectural expression related to politics began to lose its effect. The Yugoslavian position in the world at that point did not require a strictly

modernist, neutral expression to affiliate the country with the West and distance itself from the East. The neutrality needed for the internal political unification of the forming republics loosened, and in the late 1960s certain governmental freedoms were granted to each republic. Architecturally, designs began to explore postmodernism soon after this period, and modernism of first decades of Socialist Yugoslavia slowly ceased to exist.

This thesis argued that architecture genuinely depicted the country's political condition. Yes, Yugoslavian modernism in architecture may be characterized as uneventful and never reaching the stages of western European modernist expression, but it was a frank representation of Yugoslavia. In regards to architects, their backgrounds and education played a crucial role in establishing modernism and denying Socialist Realism in postwar years, but the influence of the country's politics cannot be negated. Politicians and the communist party did allow more than significant freedoms in architectural design, especially in comparison to other communist countries, but politics still created the boundaries only in which architecture was allowed further development.

In reflecting on this research from our present position, the politics of Yugoslavia did not remain as simple as it may seem here. The country's internal problems turned out to be a more problematic issue in the following years than its foreign politics.

In the 1990s the political demise of Yugoslavia was followed by a series of brutal civil wars. The issues so carefully attended to in creating the country proved to be too difficult to handle after five decades of communist rule. The country fell into a seemingly endless cycle of

political and ethnic violence and architecture soon followed. Now, the 'return' to the past was inevitable in creating a new identity, one distant from Yugoslavia. The founding republics were in the search of their identities, and turned to the past ones, the obliterated ones, and the anti-communist ones. What has happened in the former Yugoslavia after the end of these more recent wars?

As in 1943 when Socialist Yugoslavia was formed, and in 1945 when the war ended, the post-Yugoslavian countries started to build and re-build their identities on the ruins of the past. While some countries, like Slovenia and Macedonia did not experience widespread destruction, others like Bosnia and large parts of Croatia were severely destroyed. The countries rebuilt based on something new, their new independence. The countries that were torn apart, especially Bosnia and eastern parts of Croatia, continued the silent wars they had lead for years. Religion took another role. The atheist years of communist society were to be erased, churches and mosques that were destroyed were rebuilt and in some cases built where they never stood. And what about architecture? Architecture truly became the tool of politicians. In the manner so close to Stalin and Kaganovic, buildings have been erected to favor the empowered and wealthy. Mosques around Sarajevo have been designed to resemble the ones in Malaysia or Saudi Arabia in cases when those countries funded them, and stadiums have been built in Croatia from the funds directed for housing or expectant mothers. Now, politicians are truly showing what it means to meddle in architecture. The postwar reconstruction has taken place, but even twenty years after the war, the reconstruction, unlike the destruction that was so indiscriminate, is now politically colored, favoring those in power.

Although Yugoslavia has ceased to exist, the problems originated during the time of its initial formation as the Kingdom and then as the socialist republic remain ever-present culturally and politically. The issues of post-WWII Yugoslavia now seem so distant, yet the lifeless country continues to glimmer over the region. The search for architectural identities of the post-Yugoslavian republics resembles to a certain level to the postwar employment of modernism in proving allegiances to the Western Europe and Eastern Bloc, but modernist expression in Yugoslavian architecture that played a significant role in the postwar years has not yet been matched in the newfound Balkans countries. A contemporary search for architectural identities seems to be missing a valid component modernism provided in the second half of the twentieth century.

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