NEW BELGRADE

BETWEEN UTOPIA AND PRAGMATISM

Ricerca di Radmila Simonovic

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I would like to use this opportunity to express my true gratitude to everyone who supported me during this research.

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To my parents
PREFACE
New Belgrade was conceived as a new capital city in the second half of the 20th century – on an empty field between two important regional cities - Belgrade and Zemun. Historically speaking, this empty flood plain functioned as a border and sanitary cordon, which was supervised and controlled as a “no-contact” zone between Belgrade, as the ultimate point of the Orient and the town of Zemun, a small but yet important Austro-Hungarian port on the Danube.

From the very beginning planned as a modern city, it’s one of the early realizations of a modern city in the world in general and the unique example of a modern city on a large area - not in the periphery but in the city center, between two historic cores. With its significant size and vastness (over 40 sq km and a population of about 250,000), grand boulevards and massive buildings grouped into numerically marked blocks, it’s a mixture of a modernist vision and a socialist planning, far larger than any comparable urban district in Central and Eastern European cities. Once emerged from the »conflict between the two dominant ideologies of the postwar period: the modernist, or CIAM's dogma of functional city and political, Marxist – socialist dogma, in the context of the ruling system« – today, after complete change of paradigm (changed socio-political conditions and consequent change of the concept of modernity) – is heading again towards a very dynamic and rapid construction.

However, although recognized as a place of potential new development, the lack of critical review, evaluation and long-term strategies threatens its structure to be, to a certain extent, perceived only as a physical residue of the previous system, or as its ideological monument.

The thesis aims to investigate and analyze ideological and pragmatic motivations for the construction of the new city and to explore both - the progressive qualities and the corrosive tendencies of socialist urban planning and seeks to answer why socialist planners failed in completing their own proclaimed goals. The topic is significant because there are indications that the same corrosive tendencies have survived the collapse of socialism and persist to the present day.
INDEX

1

INTRODUCTION
17 Yugoslav context
21 No-man’s land
24 On the methodology

1

BELGRADE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF SAVA RIVER
31 Historical review
33 Heritage and development 1918 - 1941
37 Heritage vs. development 1918 - 1941

2

CAPITAL CITY CONCEPT
47 The capital city concept 1945 - 1948
53 Imag(in)ing a new society through urban planning
61 Modernism and postwar socialist identity
3
MODERNISATION EMBODIED
81  From water and sand to concrete
85  1948 Unplanned destiny
89  Appropriating Le Corbusier
94  Contemporary socialist architecture

4
CITY OF HOUSING
131  Administrative vs residential city
136  Housing policy
139  Housing reality
145  Block – housing facilities by socialist standards
153  Central zone treatment

5
CONCLUSION
167  Conclusion

A
APPENDIX
173  Biography of architects

B
BIBLIOGRAPHY
185  Bibliography
Today, East European modernism and its social motivations and effects thus cannot be interpreted as directly analogous to the Western canon. What in the West was considered mainstream cultural production, in the East could have acquired a subversive overtone. On the other hand, what in the East was a straightforward product of social needs, in the West could have been misread as aesthetic dilettantism. Both sides thus frequently interpreted each other’s cultural production with considerable bias, which was largely, although not always consciously, politically motivated.
INTRODUCTION
YUGOSLAV CONTEXT

It’s been over twenty years since Yugoslavia fell apart, a country that experienced almost every significant change that shook the world in the 20th century – World War I and World War II, division to the Eastern and the Western bloc, the fall of socialism, and finally a series of traumatic internal transformations. In the course of its development, the country served as a testing field for various ideologies, thus continuing already complex history of extremely heterogeneous territory in terms of nationalities and cultures.

The country was originally formed after the World War I, on the ruins of two major empires: Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Turkey, with the intention to unite the South Slavic people into one single state for the first time in their history. Both empires left a significant mark in the entire region thus emphasizing the differences between the Balkan people that have existed throughout centuries. Despite these regional differences, the first Yugoslavia could be best described as a predominantly agricultural country with a low level of industrialization and urbanization. Up until the outbreak of WWII the country's modernization was mostly focused on the existing urban centers thus continuing the processes initiated already in the 19th century. However, this was also a period in which a strong penetration of architectural culture of the modernism occurred primarily through active participation of the architects in the region who were educated and worked in European centers. Therefore, in the 1930s some versions of modernist ideas could be recognized – predominantly in residential architecture, made for the middle class that was increasing its power and in rare but top-quality public buildings such as schools and hospitals.

The end of the WWII brought a radical change in the sociopolitical context that will make architecture one of the main factors in the process of creation of the new national identity. Before everything else, after the war, the newly formed socialist country faced numerous issues that needed to be resolved – how to rebuild the country, how to define a political and national identity and finally – how to resolve the question of a delicate geographical position between the East and the
West. Yugoslav leaders, who adopted the socialist ideology already during the war, were determined to follow the path of the Soviets and adopt their model in establishing its economic planning organs, judicial systems, state bureaucracy, health care and educational systems, and cultural and educational spheres.\(^3\) And as it happened, during a brief post-war period Yugoslavia did belong to the Eastern bloc, growing from a rural to an industrial country and building its urban proletariat system. During this brief alliance, the Yugoslav regime tried to impose socialist realism as an official style in architecture. However, this attempt had little success since three years of alliance was too short a period to »convert« local modernists mainly educated in the West, even though many of them actually were communists.\(^4\) At the end, only a small number of buildings were built in Yugoslavia that can be classified into socialist realism. After the split with Moscow, socialist realism was soon forgotten as an ugly reminder of the Stalinist past.

Since the final split with the Soviets, Yugoslavia was building its path to socialism carefully navigating between the East and the West up until 1961 when by joining the Non-Aligned Movement it finally found

\(^3\) Milos Perovic, *Iskustva proslosti* (Beograd, 2001) - p28  
\(^4\) Maroje Mrduljas: *Unfinished modernisation*, paper, Zagreb 2012
its place in the sun. In comparison to other countries of the socialist bloc in the same period, this act lead to the increase of cultural freedoms, more intensive exchange with the West, and in the context of architectural profession, modernism and functionalism were no more regarded as delicate issues.

However, despite almost synonymous use of the terms »modern« and »contemporary«, in Yugoslav architecture the issue of contemporaneity was profoundly linked to the issue of socialism. Socialism was no longer regarded as utopia, but rather as a »work in progress«, something that is happening here and now. In this way the contemporary practice and culture of socialism were set opposed to modernism, regarded as a newer tradition of the developed Western countries i.e. the recent western model that needs to be reviewed, adjusted or even improved. Although modernism inherited from the pre-war period had a solid foundation, great ambitions of the country opened some new issues – implementation of mass urbanization, the question of urban development tendency, organization of constructive processes and massive prefabrication.\(^5\) Hence, the issues were not only of aesthetic and functional nature, but they rather represented a complex relationship between ideology, technology and symbolism of the future construction.

The main players at the architectural scene worked simultaneously as designers, editors, writers and promoters of a new expression of Yugoslav architecture. In texts and designs of modernist architects this new discourses could be recognized that had a tendency of going a step further in comparison to the modernist practice. As Neven Segvic, the editor-in-chief of the »Architecture« magazine and the active architect of the period wrote:

»Our theoretic standpoint regarding the matter of architectural shaping must be based on the analysis of a contemporary socialist social system, on the analysis of the forms of its organization, analysis of the development of its material assets, of its conceptual and cognitive progress. The entirety of all those factors creates the basis for the

development of a contemporary architectural formation that must be the expression of its time«.  

Since the revolution actually went ahead of architecture, in the post-war socialist Yugoslavia architecture was indirectly deprived of its right to play its messiah role, that was given to it in the period of avanguardia of the modern movement. Architects were no longer called upon to change the world, but rather to adjust their theory and practice to the modified sociopolitical context. In reality, it included the search for character and form of »socialist architecture«. It was expected that, within the new social frame, the identity of architectural modernism should be adjusted in such way to take over the role of representing the socialist architecture.

In terms of economy, the system was based on the idea of “social ownership“ of the production assets which meant that there was no private ownership like in the West, but also there was neither a complete state ownership like in the East. The next novelty was the introduction of the workers' self-management system, which actually meant that companies were run by their employees. These self-managing enterprises in time became an active participant at the market that combined market competition and state planning. Such circumstances finally resulted in the situation where modernism and the state »became entangled in symbiotic relationship« in which they supported each other: the state used and tested modernism as a proof of its own actuality, and the modernists were able to explore new forms of architecture by enjoying significant financial support in realizing the ambitions of the political leadership. Architecture was thus given a significant role to participate in the construction of not only the physical structure of the newly formed country but also of its identity. Furthermore, architecture was expected to give its contribution to the manner in which the country was to be represented to foreign allies and opponents. This propagandistic role given to architecture was unquestionable as well as its connection to the politics of that period.

6 Neven Segvic: Creative Components in Architecture in FPRY, Arhitektura (Zagreb), 1950, No. 5-6, Sec.6-7
7 Vladimir Kulic: National, Supranationa, International, paper
NO-MAN’S LAND

The role that architecture played in the nation’s representation and shaping of socialist Yugoslavia can be best observed in the complex case of the creation of a new capital city of New Belgrade. Planned by the Yugoslavs and built on an empty terrain between the two historic centers, the new town was supposed to be the »heart« of the new country and all of its people. It was to represent, in all aspects, the entire restructuring of Yugoslavia after the WWII – government reorganization, introduction of socialism, state union and the principle of equality of all its republics.

The Bezanija field on which the new city was to be erected, was not, however, the first and obvious choice. According to Milovan Djilas' reports, the then Deputy Prime Minister, each of the capital cities of the constituent republics was considered for this role. One of the first ideas was to move the capital to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina because due to its geographic position and complex ethnic structure it resembled Yugoslavia »in miniature«. Nevertheless, this idea was soon abandoned because the city did not possess adequate infrastructure and it was difficult to access.

Belgrade, on the other hand, was symbolically linked to the pre-war monarchy and the long rule of the Serbian dynasty. But, even with its problematic legacy, Belgrade enjoyed one major advantage as a candidate for capital: the potential for expansion at a highly symbolic location. It was an empty field in the middle of a wide flood plain between Belgrade and Zemun, a place completely freed from history, a symbolically pure zone of no man’s land stretching throughout centuries between the East and the West.

Historically speaking, this empty flood plain functioned as a border and sanitary cordon, which was supervised and controlled as a »no-contact« zone between Belgrade, as the ultimate point of the Orient and the town of Zemun, that was on the opposite side, a small but yet

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8 Lampe, Yugoslavia as history, p228
9 Ljiljana Blagojevic, Functional past of the modern city, paper
important Austro-Hungarian port on the Danube. And although this border that used to separate the two cities for centuries disappeared with the union of Yugoslavia already in 1918, this field was left almost intact in the period between the wars. One of the reasons was certainly the fact that it took time to provide technical conditions for drying up the swampy terrain and making it suitable for building. In the late 1930s only the Belgrade Fair was built; however, during the WWII it served as a Nazi camp which additionally marred this zone.

How great an undertaking the construction of New Belgrade was, becomes obvious when compared to the creation of other republic centers in Yugoslavia. Zagreb in Croatia in the pre-war period was also a historic center and contained the buildings of national identity (such as the national library and theaters), so already in 1948 the construction of new modern Zagreb began far from the historic center.10 Other cities in Yugoslavia such as Skopje had their administrative center, but in the previous kingdom (monarchy) they were not recognized as the constitutive nation – and thus the Master Plan for Skopje had to be developed from the beginning. Titograd in Montenegro was a new capital, however its governmental infrastructure practically had to be built from scratch because among other things the city sustained some serious destruction during the war.

However, by its scope and significance the construction of New Belgrade surpassed all other projects of the period. The city was to represent a new Yugoslavia, to reflect the power of its internal structure and the country’s international aspirations. Due to the importance of this task architecture was also given a chance to be more ambitious than it was the case at that time, and the result was a mass mobilization of architects from all over the country.11 The members of this profession were expected to overcome the differences that existed until then in practice - division to »real« architecture, i.e. the one that is actually built, and to the bold, radical architecture of modernism mainly present at competitions that remains

11 See: Vladimir Kulic, *Land of the in-between*
unimplemented. Determination to open the door to new ideas and realizations was already seen in the first competition announcements for the first buildings to be erected in New Belgrade.

In the design and construction of New Belgrade, appropriation of modernism, regardless of its socialist name tag, was largely marked by CIAM’s concept of functional city, and primary Le Corbusier’s ideas of a city as an idealized image of a new social model. Still, always present political and ideological guidelines represented an additional, yet sometimes conflicting and sometimes supporting force.

Therefore, New Belgrade offers the most accurate examples of the conditions that were present in the Yugoslav architecture and designing of the period.

**ON THE METHODOLOGY**

My original intention was to explore urbanistic and architectural practice that shaped New Belgrade as it looks nowadays, a city quite unique but deeply contradictory, that once again is a place of very dynamic and rapid construction.

The fact that Yugoslavia no longer exists and that the republics that came out of the joint state are now searching again for their lost identities, leaves New Belgrade without any real review, evaluation and even knowledge of its history. The general tendency of moving towards liberal capitalism creates, we might say, an a priori hostile environment towards a socialist period and its legacy. And yet, at the same time, just between the buildings of the period, wide boulevards and open space of modernism, an intensive growth of a city is continued that is once again promoted as a modern one.

The beginning of this research was actually a direct attempt to reconstruct the creation of the city by studying the plans, competition and detailed designs with the intention of taking advantage of the fact that some of the authors are still alive and that some of the materials still exist (although they become more and more scattered between the republics and renamed archives). However, it turned out that this was by far more complex a task then one could have predicted,
because the state influenced architecture in several ways and many decisions were made »behind the closed door«, which directly reflected on the manner and tendencies in construction. Hence, it was inevitable to include the issues of political development, economic trends, cultural policy and their direct and indirect impact on the architectural discourse and reorganization of the profession itself.

Therefore, my methodology is very eclectic. The overall framework is set by linking architecture with the political history of the period, but the exact connections were established through a range of widely diverse methods. The articulation of the thesis is mainly chronological, although some intertwining was inevitable.

In addressing the issues mentioned above, this thesis tries to elaborate the slow and sometimes tedious journey to modernism in Yugoslav architecture – a journey that was closely tied to the constantly changing political situation and its attempt to support the country in its search for a safe spot in the complex geopolitical situation.

It soon became obvious, however, that this long period cannot be understood without first explaining the preceding one, so Chapter 1 explores the first concepts for the New Belgrade, long before it was supposed to become the »heart« of a new state. That was a period when the Bežanija field was recognized as a possible direction in which the city can be developed and in which modernist options were mentioned for the first time opposite to traditional town planning. Chapter 2 introduces the capital city concept and the meanings related to it. Special attention was paid to the analysis of competition entries for the new city because it was a period when the country was a member of the Eastern bloc and the impact of social realism could be recognized in the attempts of modern architects to adjust their designs, and in re-examination of the ruling party that played the role of a jury.

The remaining part of the study deals with the period after 1948 and the changes that occurred in architecture after the split with the Soviets. Chapter 3 discusses the conditions and difficulties that followed the construction of the new city and the political decisions that stood behind it. Likewise, main modernist buildings that served for the country’s representation are analyzed here, as well as architectural
and wider cultural influences that are hidden behind “seemingly neutral international style”. Chapter 4 finally investigates the unplanned destiny of New Belgrade when after a series of social, political and economic changes, this city suddenly became a residential one, deprived of its internal economic and cultural dynamics.

As regards the time frame it was also set in relation to the main time points of political and architectural history. The lower time point – 1918 was an obvious choice since the research included the period between the two world wars when the main penetration of modernist ideas occurred in the Yugoslav scene. The upper time point was set approximately in the late 1970s and it was determined by the final abandonment of the idea of realization of New Belgrade central zone by which the administrative city finally lost the battle with the residential city. New Belgrade, naturally, continued to develop after this period and until the country finally fell apart, numerous buildings were erected and planned modifications occurred that continued to change its character; however, they can be the topic of some future research mainly because political motivations and architectural styles belong to some other period.
BELGRADE ON THE LEFT BANK OF SAVA RIVER
1918 - 1941
HISTORICAL REVIEW

The terrain of the future New Belgrade included the flood plain and the swampy area of the Bežanija field between Zemun and Belgrade - the two towns independently formed throughout history. The analyses of historical maps of Belgrade show that in this subaqueous and sandy soil no traces of any significant building projects have been found. The first known larger structure, as seen from the 17th century maps, was a long timber bridge over the swamps, connected to the pontoon bridge on the Sava River, and built by the Turks in order to link Belgrade to the road heading west.

The following major intervention in this terrain included the construction of the Sava moat, i.e. an ancillary fortification for the side defense of the main Belgrade Fortress, linked to Zemun by a riverbank road and to Belgrade via the pontoon bridge built by the Austrians during the Baroque reconstruction of the Turkish town in the early 18th century. Bearing in mind the fact that ever since the signing of the Treaty of Belgrade in 1739 it represented the Austrian border area towards Turkey, and from the 19th century onwards – towards Serbia, the terrain of the Bežanija field was treated as a sanitary and border cordon, consisting of regularly set up control points along the banks of the Sava and the Danube. Not only did the Bežanija field and the Great War Island represent an inter-border zone of a no man's land between the two empires, but during the major military campaigns they were the strategic points from which the attacks on the city and the Belgrade Fortress used to be launched.

The most significant change in this field, which occurred upon the creation of the Kingdom of Serbia in the 19th century, was the construction of the railway in 1883 and of the railway bridge the following year, by which Central Europe and the Middle East were directly connected via Belgrade, which had a far-reaching impact on the prosperity of entire Serbia.

12 Zeljko Skalamera, Područje Novog Beograda na istorijskim planovima, (Beograd, 1973) str 37-40
The foundations for the town planning of Belgrade as a European city were set in 1867 by Emilijan Joksimovic, whose plan envisaged a radical reconstruction of the inherited urban structure and the city transformation from an Ottoman and Oriental one to a European city.\textsuperscript{13} Although his plan included only the »inner town«, according to Branko Maksimović, Joksimovic’s work »gave the first ideological foundations to Serbian urban planning«\textsuperscript{14}. However, in terms of building legislation, until 1887 Belgrade had been developing without proper building regulations. It was in 1886 that the Building Code for the Town of Belgrade was passed that referred to the so-called building area, but the town had already started developing outside the building limits.

In the historical period between the two world wars, in twenty years only, Belgrade experienced a crucial transformation – from a provincial, Balkan border town, the centre of the Serbian state, it transformed into a European capital of a new, considerably larger united Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, i.e. since 1929 - the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The adoption of the Building Code in 1931 resolved the first important issues related to the town-planning in the entire state, which signified the beginning of an organized work on the development of Belgrade as a modern, infrastructurally organized, hygienic and aesthetically developed city, and according to the chroniclers from this period, also a properly planned European city. Although the legal deadline for adopting a new Master Plan was to expire in 1934, it was not until 1937 that its preparation actually started, and the concept sketch and the draft directive of the new Master Plan were not approved until 1939 when due to the state of war in Europe the building dynamics recorded a decrease.

Therefore, in the period between the two world wars, Belgrade was developing unsystematically, without a uniform urban concept and adequate and applicable planning documentation.

\textsuperscript{13} Emilijan Joksimovic, Objasnjenje predloga za regulisanje onog dela Beograda sto lezi u sancu, Beograd, reprint 1987
\textsuperscript{14} Branko Maksimović, Conceptual Development of Serbian Urban Planning, Town Reconstruction Period until 1914 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1978), pp. 44.
HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The idea of using the terrain on the left bank of the Sava River as a potential direction in which the development of Belgrade should be headed was conceived already after the World War I, when the Sava ceased to be the border river.

In the inception stages of discussion, during the preparation of the Master Plan in the early 1920s two planning models could be observed that were based on urban planning concepts of developed European centers: *traditional design of the city* and *a garden city model*.\(^{15}\)

The original idea of urban development of a part of Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava was presented in one of the entries which was awarded the second prize at the international competition held in 1922 for the purpose of the preparation of the then Master Plan of Belgrade.\(^{16}\) This competition entry under the code *Singidunum Novissima*, which included the consideration of the terrain of today New Belgrade, was prepared by a team of authors from Vienna the members of which were architects *Rudolph Perco, Erwin Ilz* and *Erwin Bock*. As the call for competition entries was based on an unrealistic anticipation of an economic progress, the idea of the Viennese architects was more of a strategy of Belgrade representation as a metropolis rather than a rational and planned competition entry that started from the analysis of the existing conditions. Namely, it completely denied the configuration, land relief and urban identity of Belgrade, and the new matrix of streets, squares and blocks was modeled after the capitals of great European empires.


Rudolf Perco, Erwin Ilz, Erwin Bock – International competition for the Belgrade Master Plan, 1922.

George Kovalevsky - Illustrative plan for the regulation of Belgrade on the left bank of the river Sava, 1923
However, the plan also dealt with the area on the left bank of the Sava River, and a strict geometrical urban matrix of symmetrically arranged parks and freely placed structures of exhibition halls of the fair was envisaged for the claimed terrain. Contrary to the pretentious reconstruction plan of the historic part of the town, the concept of building on the island was quite simplified - it could by tentatively regarded as a modern urban structure of buildings in greenery. Modern urban planning ideas did not represent, however, the basis of this plan that completely ignored social and economic aspects of Belgrade. This part of the plan actually envisaged academically shaped urban composition in which the river island transformed into a park compensated for the lack of free green areas in the planned and densely built historic centre.

Similarly to the competition entry of the Viennese architects, the plan of the Russian architect with academic background, George Kovalevsky, represented a conservative, traditional design of the city. Both plans were based on the aesthetic ideals of their authors and on the idea that a single organized and final plan could resolve the complex issues of the town growth and development. Furthermore, Beaux Art concept of a new town on the left bank of the Sava River used to express the ambition of the ruling elite to show the progress of a young state, even though only on paper, and prove that it belonged in the developed Europe.

These strategies were, however, based on the beautification or aestheticization of the town, and resulted in the traditional design, i.e. mere appearance, and as Susan Buck-Morss put it, »they create a social utopia by changing the arrangement of buildings and streets – objects in space, while leaving social relationships intact.«

After the adoption of the Master Plan of Belgrade during the third decade, some wider expert discussions were initiated regarding its implementation and it was subject to criticism saying that the plan implementation was practically impossible in the given economic conditions. The expert community standpoint was perhaps best formulated by Jan Dubovy, a Czech architect who emigrated from Prague to Belgrade after the World War I and he got employed at the
Belgrade municipality. Dubovy wrote the following about the Master Plan:

»A major shortcoming of this plan is that all the suburban areas were not regulated at the same time... The other one is that the plan was so megalomaniacally conceived that the present town administration is unable to implement it because it requires substantial investments... A few years after it had been adopted, the plan sustained modifications of its main elements only due to financial reasons.«\(^\text{17}\)

Although the concept of Belgrade as a garden city mostly remained unrealized and it was only partially accepted and that was almost exclusively in terms of planning residential areas of family homes for upper and middle class, which were built in new locations outside the city core - Dubovy’s ideas stirred up an expert discussion between the advocates of the traditional design of the town and the followers of contemporary urban planning ideas, through which an extremely relevant issue of the further trend of growth and urban planning concept of the future metropolis was raised.

The concept of a garden city was then commented also by uncompromising modernists of the younger generation, who criticized and rejected those proposals as being contradictory to the time they lived in, and which »...lead towards slavish individualism, sterile isolation and destroy social powers.«\(^\text{18}\)

In addition to the Bežanija field, discussions were also focused on the issue of establishing an adequate urban connection between Belgrade and Zemun. Although Zemun was administratively annexed to Belgrade in 1934, despite good transportation links after the erection of the new suspension bridge (1934) and the tram line (1935) it had been developing as a separate town according to its own town plan. Even the Plan of Terrain Regulation and Design of a Settlement on the Right Side of the Zemun Bridge, submitted to the Belgrade municipality by Danish architects Hojgaard&Schultz and Kampsax A/S from Copenhagen in 1938 failed to establish a connection


\(^{18}\) Milorad Pantovic: Are the urban systems used so far negative: if yes, is there a possibility of applying a new system? (Modern Municipality, Belgrade 1937) p. 182
between the two historic centres. The plan actually envisaged a self-sufficient and isolated peripheral settlement with the combination of two types of residential living – in apartment buildings in the central zone and in family homes in greenery. However, the plan neither related nor relied either on Belgrade or on Zemun, and it also failed to take into consideration further treatment and use of the terrain between the Sava and Bežanijska Kosa (slope of Bežanija), so its realization would be yet »...another link in the conglomerate of detached city areas in Belgrade«.

As the works on reclamation and building of that part of the town were interrupted by the war, and the Master Plan from 1939 (whose authors were municipal architects Danica Tomić and George Kovalevsky) did not include the terrain of New Belgrade, the only erected structures on the terrain between Belgrade and Zemun remained those within the Belgrade Fair complex built in 1937.

**HERITAGE VS. DEVELOPMENT**

In 1930s some crucial changes occurred in urban and architectural discourse in the then Yugoslavia, which were the result of increasingly wider acceptance of the *modernist paradigm*.

As a significant shift in relation to the conservatism and traditionalism that dominated in the third decade of the 20th century, architectural and urban theory and practice of modernism were formulated under a significant influence of the European movement, above all, Le Corbusier and CIAM – *Congres Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne*. The first program document of CIAM was the *Declaration of architects* who gathered at the preparatory International Congress on Modern Architecture held in 1928. The Declaration basically urged a drift from aestheticism and academism and the necessity of understanding architecture in a wider context of socio-political and, particularly, economic conditions. Translated entirely into Serbo-Croatian and published in 1932, Yugoslav architects were quite familiar with the

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20 ibid p. 58
Declaration, and its main postulates represented the basis of their aspirations and practical work.21

**Postulate I - General economics**, that stresses the importance of interconnection between architecture and economic principles and emphasizes the necessity of introducing rationalization and standardization methods as the result of »machinism« – in Yugoslav conditions insufficiently developed construction industry, was to be understood roughly, more as a general principle.

**Postulate II - Urbanism**, in which the theory of contemporary, functional town planning was outlined – had a much greater significance. The basic postulate was that urbanism was not to be defined by aesthetic consideration but rather exclusively by functions, namely, living, work and leisure. This point included a definite principle that a master plan represented the basis for spatial organization and land development, instead of individual interests, speculations, sale and purchase, inheritance etc.

**Postulate III - Architecture and Public**, mainly focused on the necessity of public ideological work of architects on promoting the principles of new architecture.

**Postulate IV - Architecture and its relationship with the state**, abandoned academism, i.e., official national style and aesthetic and formalist methods advocated by academies, once again stressing the advantage of setting architecture on the foundations of economic reality.

Several architects from Croatia were directly involved in the work of CIAM, who, in time, formed the Yugoslav section. The first Yugoslav to join CIAM II (1929) as a delegate was architect Ernest Weissmann. Since CIAM III (1930), Zagreb architects Vladimir Antolić and Bogdan Teodorović also joined CIAM as Weissmann substitutes.

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Antolić was a regular member from 1932 to 1939, and Weissmann’s participation was ceased during the Yugoslav society can be attributed to the architects who worked in Le Corbusier’s atelier in Paris, in the atelier in Rue de Sevres – beside Weissmann and Antolić – Drago Ibler, Franc Novak, Milan Sever, Juraj Neidhart and others. In the course of preparations for CIAM V (1937), in Le Corbusier’s atelier also worked Milorad Pantović, Ksenija Grisogono and Branko Petricic, and in 1939 the associates were Edvard Ravnikar and Jovan Krunic.²²

Yugoslav modernists of interwar period had fought through public action for recognition of their ideas as well as the change of an attitude of the state for the education of architects and public procurements. In Belgrade, this process has been primarily developed through the activity of members of the Group of architects of the modern movement in the period between the 1928 and 1934, with a significant contribution from the architect Nikola Dobrovic.

To what extent the ideas of modernism had penetrated the basic principles of new Yugoslav architecture, could have been observed already in 1937, when a call for entries was issued within a general Yugoslav competition for the Regulation Plan of Novi Sad, and more importantly, with the General Competition for New Belgrade Master Plan in 1947, in already new socio-political conditions that occurred after 1945.

²² ibid.pp.29-30
Therefore, one of the most important breakthroughs of urbanism ideas of the modern movement in the period between the two world wars in Serbia started with a general Yugoslav competition for the Regulation Plan of Novi Sad in 1937. Although the results, i.e. the decision about prizes and purchases, demonstrated the reservations that the community had towards new and bold ideas and proposals, the importance of this competition lay in the fact that, in the discussions that followed, the focus shifted towards the acceptance of principles of contemporary urbanism. Nobody was awarded the first prize at that competition, nevertheless, the work of Branko Maksimović, which reflected moderate contemporary urbanism concepts, won the second prize.23

His plan represented that relatively moderate type of application of contemporary urbanism ideas without any radical urban and architectural solutions, which might have been realistic and acceptable for Serbia back then. Maksimović’s starting point was the premise that »new urbanism must establish and resolve the main issue: the issue of a healthy and cultural living for all citizens“, and that »the right to a healthy and cultural living must be proclaimed a fundamental right of every man«.24 According to him, Novi Sad was an unhealthy town that should be cured by a contemporary urban science and technique.

For this analysis more relevant and provocative was the work of Milorad Pantovic, the architect who worked in the famous atelier in Rue de Sevres in 1937, from where he sent his work. He prepared that competition entry in cooperation with his colleagues from Le Corbusier’s atelier, a Dutchman G.T.J. Kuiper, a Frenchman Jean Bossu and a Swiss Otto Clauss. The design of Pantović’s team was based on the analysis of traffic, social and economic conditions and topographic and geographic structure, with the intention to develop a plan of a functional town that aspired »towards the creation of a town that is not a geometrical one, but a town that would be suitable for a man’s living, habits and psychology.«25 That plan was not an artistic

23 Branko Maksimović: Novi Sad: today and tomorrow (Annual of Matica Srpska, 1938.) p. 130-132
24 ibid 132
25 Milorad Pantovic: Are the urban systems used so far negative: if yes, is there a possibility of applying a new system? (Modern Municipality, Belgrade 1937) p. 255
sketch based on aesthetic ideals, but it rather represented a committed attitude of a contemporary urban planner about the town development trends, based on comprehending socio-political and economic conditions, all in accordance with CIAM Declaration from 1928 and the urbanism policy promoted by this organization. The concepts of sterile isolation that were used until then, on one side, and a uniform collectivism, on the other, were now opposed by Pantović’s theoretical model of a modern town:

»A modern town must keep trying to save an individual from his intellectual, moral and psychological value being diminished, the negative manifestation of which was caused by modern life conditions. It should develop all creative urges in him, give him health, restore the sense of unity in him, on one side, and on the other side, revive a strong personality in him.«

Although he did not win any prize, and his entry was not purchased, it remained recorded that the jury commended his bold and interesting moves although they could not adopt them thanks to the lack of proper criteria regarding their strengths both in technical and economic sense. However, this design represented a milestone in the recent history of urbanism in Serbia, signifying a final breakthrough of modern ideas not only in architecture, but also in planning and designing of cities.

Thanks to the research of Ljiljana Blagojević it was not until recently that we learnt about another plan whose author was architect Dragiša Brašovan, whom the Belgrade municipality entrusted with the preparation of the Master Plan. Six weeks before the outbreak of the World War II in Yugoslavia and the bombing of Belgrade, another new idea of a radical reconstruction of the town was presented, which this time included also the terrain of New Belgrade. Brašovan presented a new vision of a great Belgrade that included building of a »large settlement on the left bank of the Sava, which will be called New Belgrade.« New Belgrade, as Brasovan called it »Sava new town –

26 ibid p. 257
27 Ljiljana Blagojevic, associate professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade. For details see New Belgrade – Contested Modernism (Textbook Publishing Company, Belgrade, 2005), pp. 48-50
City Belgrade was with a modern view of the urban concept was planned for 500,000 people as an integral part of the capital in harmony with old Belgrade. A separate railway station was planned to be built in New Belgrade in the immediate vicinity of the airport in Bežanijska. In addition to the railway station, there was an idea of a large park with a sports stadium and courts, in which a construction of a pavilion for a potential world exhibition was planned in the future. Traffic arteries were to be laid radially in New Belgrade and they would be encircled by monumental structures (churches, theatre, museums etc.). It was proposed that the Great War Island be connected with the quay and transformed into a peninsula. There was a proposal about a grandiose monument at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, and a city swimming area on the Small War Island. The crucial Brasovan’s intervention in the historic part of the town was the relocation of the railway station to a new site near Mostar and the clearance of the terrain under the railway infrastructure in some 1.2 km² which would allow Belgrade to descend to the river banks. However, the offered monumental and aestheticized static image of the town was proposed at the moment when, in real life, the world was collapsing, bombs were falling on London, and only six weeks later, on Belgrade as well. On the filled-up terrain of New Belgrade, a transit camp was erected in which the German refugees from Bessarabia were to stay temporarily on their way to Germany, and already in 1941 the Belgrade Fair was to become an infamous camp of the German occupation authority. Finally, the question that arose was – in this historic moment of the outbreak of the World War II was it actually possible to separate town planning from political circumstances? In that sense, it seems that Brasovan’s plan, no matter how hard it tried to function in some meta-level, above or outside the political and historical context, was used just for the purpose of political manipulation in the propaganda campaign of concealing the immediate threat of war. Dragiša Brašovan, however, was not included in post-war debates and planning of New Belgrade. In 1946 when

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29 ibid
Nikola Dobrović started the preparation of a plan of New Belgrade, there was not a single reference in his notes to Brašovan’s plan from 1941.30 Considering the period when it was created and the proposed concepts for the Upper and Lower Town, Brašovan’s plan of Belgrade was included, although indirectly, in political aspect and cultural policy of the Third Reich. Therefore, it becomes clear how and why this plan was literally stricken out in the post-war period, although such an action was yet another act of deliberate suppression in the name of ideology.

However, this was actually the first plan in which New Belgrade was unambiguously established as the core of a modern, huge Belgrade, as the centre and a business city of the future metropolis. This plan finally shook off all previous, one might say, romantic and pastoral ideas and strategies of New Belgrade – an island with monumental public buildings in a geometrically arranged park (Perco, Ilz and Bock, 1922), aestheticized extensions of the historic centre (Kovalevsky, 1924), a humane peripheral garden settlement (Dubovy, 1924), or an organized modern garden between Zemun and Belgrade (Pantović, 1940)31. Having based his vision on the most up-to-date principles of contemporary urbanism of the period, Brašovan indicated almost all current issues that the planners and architects of New Belgrade have been dealing with nowadays: the construction of a modern town for 500,000 people, with a centre which would become the City of the metropolis, functional and harmonious connection to the historic centre, relocation of the railway junction from the Sava amphitheatre and the railway station to »Mostar«, erection of new bridges, and planning of monumental buildings – churches, theatre and museums, encircling the new town.

30 ibid
31 ibid p.52
CAPITAL CITY CONCEPT
THE CAPITAL CITY CONCEPT

In line with the change of socio-political circumstances after the World War II, the status of Belgrade also changed - the historic town on the ridge, the capital of the former monarchy, was now to become a new, different Belgrade, the capital of a new republic.

Belgrade’s role as the capital of Yugoslavia was not self-evident and could have been a potential problem since it was symbolically associated with the prewar monarchy and the dominance of the Serbian dynasty. Further more, following the communist ascendence to the power, Yugoslavia emerged as a federation of six republics, each with its own capital and, at least in theory, a right to self-determination and secession. According to his own report, Milovan Đilas, the vice-president in the federal government, in 1945 proposed to move the capital to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina in hopes of ethnic reconciliation. Indeed, Sarajevo was in the geographical heart of the country and its diverse population was a microcosm of Yugoslav ethnicities and religions. However, Đilas’s idea was quickly rejected because the city was not adequately equipped and was difficult to access.

Even with its problematic legacy, Belgrade enjoyed one major advantage as a candidate for capital: the potential for expansion at a highly symbolic location. It was an empty field in the middle of a wide flood plain between Belgrade and Zemun, a place completely freed from history, a symbolically pure zone of no man’s land stretching throughout centuries between the East and the West.

Building a new capital of Yugoslavia in this area was, therefore, advantageous on multiple levels: as a symbolic statement of a new model of South Slavic unity, distinct from the one symbolized by the old capital and as a sign of the communist regime’s superiority over its royal predecessor which was unable to properly urbanize the area for more then 20 years. In the context of a newly-minted federation of

32 Lampe, Yugoslavia as history, 228
nation-states, the territory of future New Belgrade was displaced from its geographical location in Serbia into an »extraterritorial space that belonged to all of Yugoslavia«.  

Despite the eminently political character of the decision to build a new federal capital, it remains uncertain who exactly made it and when. This is not surprising considering the highly conspiratorial character of the party, which at the time was run behind closed doors by the small circle of its highest officials.

The whole country was devastated by the war, with almost no surviving industrial capacities, with millions of homeless people, and with major cities – including Belgrade – in ruins. From a practical standpoint, there were far greater needs to be fulfilled before accommodating the new administration. But New Belgrade was not about practicality: it was a symbol. Cast as Yugoslavia’s first socialist city, planned, orderly, and healthy, it was envisioned as the exact opposite of the capitalist city, in which serene and healthy living was only reserved for the wealthy, while the rest lived in chaotic, unhealthy, ramshackle dwellings.

As the political heart of new Yugoslavia, New Belgrade’s purpose was also to mediate the country’s international position. Yugoslavia’s privileged position in the communist world was acknowledged in the fall of 1947, when Belgrade became the seat of the Cominform, the Information Bureau of European communist parties and the first international communist forum after the dissolution of the Third International. With such ambitions for the country, it seems likely that Belgrade - and, more specifically, New Belgrade as its most modern and monumental part – would have been the prime candidate for the capital of the Balkan Federation, a local Balkan Moscow, and an important node in the international communist network.

New Belgrade thus came to embody the complete restructuring of Yugoslavia’s identity after World War II: the establishment of socialism, the liberation from foreign occupation, the reorganization of

33 Ljiljana Blagojevic, Novi Beograd – osporeni modernizam
34 See Vladimir Kulic: National, supratnational, international, paper, p.39
35 ibid
the state on the principle of ethnic equality, and the country’s new prominence on the international stage.

Plans for the left bank of the Sava existed before the war but, as shown previously, they were much more a product of the logic of urban planning, which suggested that the two closely neighboring cities should grow together, than of any sustained social, symbolic, or economic drive to development.

The first post-war proposal that signified the beginning of planning of a modern town, New Belgrade, was the Preliminary design of Land Use in Belgrade, i.e. derived from this plan – Draft Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the Sava River, created by architect Nikola Dobrović in 1946 who was, at the time, the chief architect in Belgrade. This plan was at the same time the first urban proposal for implementing an eminent ideological concept – building of a new modern town on the left bank of the Sava, the Federation capital city, its government centre and the future.

Draft Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the Sava River was, hence, developed on the basis of an actual and determined political will, but without any graphic layout, literally on tabula rasa on which the principles of a new, at the time still nameless town, could be freely defined without any inhibitions. Disregarding the references to the existing historic centers of Belgrade and Zemun, except for one point in the place of Kalemegdan in otherwise blank map, Dobrović designed an »almost self-referential matrix of the government part of the new city between the confluence and the newly designed route of the railway.« 36 However, although »intoxicated with enthusiasm about the revolution«, Dobrović did not base his concepts on ideological foundations, but actually on a modernist comprehension of the causality of development of the town and the region, and on resolving the traffic issue in Belgrade.37

37 ibid
Nikola Dobrovic, Draft Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of Sava River (1946)
According to the document Guidelines for Designing of New Belgrade from 1946\textsuperscript{38} New Belgrade was envisioned as an eminently governmental city intended to house the massive centralized bureaucracy of the new federation. Despite the intended 250,000 new inhabitants in the new city, housing was clearly secondary to governmental purposes.

Although the first design phase did not contain the exact program regarding the number of buildings, Dobrović adopted as a starting point the number of the existing ministries, around twenty buildings, and mentioned that they could be grouped into sub-units by their characteristics.\textsuperscript{39} Anticipating that several thousand people would work in this complex, regardless of the fact that a large number of them were going to live in the residential areas of New Belgrade, Dobrović envisaged that transportation and communication facilities would be under huge pressure, since a large number of people would commute from Belgrade on a daily basis in order to go to work. That was why he stressed the importance of a traffic solution that would involve the erection of a new bridge for vehicular transportation, and the introduction of modern solutions in public city transportation, such as, for example, a subway line, i.e. a surface railway, which he planned within the route of the restored chain bridge.

In terms of composition, and starting from his own proposal that the Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia should be located in Gornji grad (Upper town), Dobrović recommended that the New Belgrade »composition having full swing« should be »...composed with horizontal lines, in line with moderate city heights, adjusted to the horizontal dimension of the plain and water areas without competing with, but quite the opposite, providing a contrast to the Kalemegdan ridge and Belgrade’s skyline.«\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid
\textsuperscript{39} Federal ministries: construction; industry; information; foreign affairs; colonization; national health; national defense; justice; education; agriculture; communications; mining; transportation; social policy; trade and procurement; internal affairs; finance; and forestry.
\textsuperscript{40} Milorad Macura: The Personality of Nikola Dobrovic (Architecture and Urban Planning, Belgrade, 1967) p. 54
If we compare the Draft with the plan of George Kovalevsky from 1923, it can be observed that, although they were similar in terms of form, i.e. the solution of the urban matrix, the two plans clearly pointed out important differences in the planning approach. In 1920s the main approach was based on the strategy of growth and expansion of the historic centre of Belgrade, i.e. the *continuity* and building of a static image of the artistic vision of the town. The strategies sustained radical changes in the fifth decade of the twentieth century putting *discontinuity* into the spotlight, i.e. a total conceptual break with Belgrade’s capital features, and thus with the traditional manner of planning. Therefore, by its content the Draft represented the layout of the administrative city of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia – an ideal state, and by its form, it somewhat followed the pattern of an ideal city.

Actually, Dobrović’s Draft did not consider at all the basic issues of the new town, its population, residential zones and public city space. It merely offered an ideal layout of an administrative city that was, in fact, completely closed for the citizens. Nevertheless, with his initial original design Nikola Dobrović inspired the thinking and discussions about the concept of a new city. When he set his theory of traffic solution and prepared the *Draft Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the Sava*, Nikola Dobrović merely opened a complex series of issues about the concept of a new city. The Draft did not provide a solution, but it rather established a series of basic conceptual issues regarding the size, purpose and predominant spirit and character of New Belgrade, which would be the issue of interest to many prominent Yugoslav architects who were to tackle with it soon after, already in 1947.

Even though the objective was proclaimed that the creation of New Belgrade should be commenced, both political and expert community lacked either a clear concept or a defined strategy regarding the manner in which it should be approached not only to the planning of a new city, but a city that was to become the main administrative and central city of the newly formed Federation (FPRY/SFRY), the primary function of which was to be the seat of power of the new federal bureaucratic structure. The political ambitious was high, and it is not difficult to imagine that Belgrade was supposed to play a far more significant role then just capital of Yugoslavia. At that particular
moment the offered sketch was just a uniform design solution, too limited in scope to be able to represent the whole idea of the creation of New Belgrade as the Federation capital city. In such a situation, the issue of New Belgrade had to be set on much wider and more liberal foundations of Pan-Yugoslav political and architectural and urban discourse of the period.

**IMAG(IN)ING A NEW SOCIETY THROUGH URBAN PLANING**

It was with this exact purpose that by the end of 1946 competitions were announced for submitting design proposals/entries for New Belgrade project: **General public Yugoslav competitions** for submitting conceptual designs of buildings of the **Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia** (CK KPJ) and the **Federal Government of the FPRY**, as well as preliminary plan for the whole area between the Sava, the Danube, and Zemun. The text of the announcement of those competitions represented the first program document of the new city. Despite the lack of definition in the program itself and the vague concept of the new city proposed by the announcement, which were given to the participants as the basis for the master plan, that document clearly expressed the commitment that New Belgrade should be designed as an administrative city of the Federation, which is thought to be as one of the most significant starting points in the creation of New Belgrade.

The general description of the competition requirements, given below in whole due to their importance, clearly defined the objective, scope and frameworks of the Master Plan:

» On the terrain between the newly designed railway and the left bank of the Sava a complex of federal ministries is to be built. The urban solution of the land shall be entrusted with the design engineer. Draft regulation with the scale 1: 10 000 shall be used as an orientation for planning the entire complex. The railway line A-B, the new railway bridge over the Sava (C), the restored chain bridge for vehicular transportation (C) and the new vehicular bridge on the site of the
existing railway bridge (0). Along the Sava banks a 150m wide protection zone should be envisaged. Furthermore, a boulevard from the railway station to the building of the CPY Central Committee should be considered.

Some buildings of the federal ministries can be placed around freely, whereas the position of the CPY Central Committee building should be regarded as fixed (E). The building of the Federal Government should be situated in such manner to architecturally correspond to the CPY Central Committee building and the planned building of the National Assembly of the FPRY to be built in Kalemegdan (E). The buildings of federal ministries, around 20 of them, should stand freely in the greenery and create an architectural frame around the buildings of the CPY Central Committee and the Federal Government. In addition to this complex of buildings intended for ministries, a location for the diplomatic quarter should be envisaged with approximately 20 representative buildings, and also a hotel and business district around the railway station and also areas for residential buildings.  

The participants at both competitions also received, enclosed with the competition announcement and the information about the terrain, the plan of the city of Belgrade, the studies Reconstruction and Development of Belgrade and Belgrade Railway Issue and the Draft Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the Sava.

The imposed urgency of the project must have caused a major disruption in the planning process, as it affected the whole city and required major decisions, like the positioning of bridges, to be made in a very short time and out of a normal sequence. The quasi-military style of governance through orders and decrees was not unusual in the first postwar years and it was regularly based on highly unrealistic expectations.

42 Memo from the federal Minister of Construction Vlada Zečević to the Direction for the Construction of New Belgrade, 14 February, 1947; ASCG, Fond 50, Pretsedništvo Vlade FNRJ, Fascikla 78, Građevinarstvo, no. 78-364.
Milovan Đilas much later admitted this complete lack of realism: 43

The suddenly urgent need to build a new seat of government was a perfect example of this lack of »clear idea«. As Vladimir Kulic noticed44, it is difficult to imagine that the federal bureaucracy, no matter how bloated it may have become, could not be accommodated in the numerous existing government buildings in old Belgrade; after all, forced apartment sharing between multiple families was a norm at the time and it would have been fair if the state shared some of the burden with its population. Considering the overwhelming difficulties that the country was facing in the aftermath of the war, with minuscule surviving industrial capacities and millions of people lacking proper housing, the symbolic meaning of New Belgrade disproportionately outweighed any pragmatic need that would have justified its construction.45

The competition procedure represented an important precedent when compared to the pre-war practice. First of all, all the citizens of the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, whether they were experts or not, in addition to the state-owned consulting engineering organizations had the right to participate at competitions. Thus, 70 entries arrived during the competition for the building design of the CPY Central Committee, in which 111 experts and 36 amateurs took part, whereas 26 entries developed by 75 experts and 14 amateurs competed for the building design of the Federal Government and the

43 Đilas, Vlast i pobuna, 58.
44 See: Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between, p.144-145
45 ibid
master plan of New Belgrade. The members of the Evaluation Committee, i.e. the Consulting Expert-Technical Committee, also had the right to participate and they were expected, in the spirit of the age, to »demonstrate a high level of objectivity and impartiality, self-criticism and consciousness about their responsibility.«

The work of the Evaluation Committee was public and transparent, and the Committee had been working on the evaluation of the entries and preparation of the prize proposal about a month, after which the entries submitted for competition were displayed at the exhibition organized by the Union of Engineers’ and Technicians’ Associations of Yugoslavia, which was followed by a series of expert and popular lectures.

Concurrently with the competitions for the design of the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Federal Government of the FPRY, the Ministry of Trade and Procurement of the FPRY Government announced a Competition for the conceptual design of an exclusive hotel in New Belgrade, at which the state-owned consulting engineering organization had the right to participate.

The program of the competition for New Belgrade master plan exclusively referred to the physical designing of the terrain for federal ministries, and did not include any information required for any in-depth analysis and elaboration of the urban planning issue of the new city. Although displayed only as sketches, competition entries represented the basis of the future master plan as the primary document for the development of Great Belgrade. Dobrović’s entry was marked as a mere illustration only, i.e. as an inarticulate surplus that should be discarded. In the competition entries, this plan was drastically modified and consequently, completely dismissed. A year later, Nikola Dobrović was dismissed as well, and he was forced to retire and resign from the position of Belgrade’s chief architect and accept the position of a full-time professor at the Faculty of

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46 Ljiljana Blagojevic, New Belgrade – Contested Modernism, 2005, p. 73
Architecture in Belgrade. Furthermore, as it can be concluded from the discussions that followed after the competition was over, the most important thing in the new town planning was to set an open development scheme that can be modified and upgraded over the continuous building process, instead of a closed concept, burdened by formalism such was the option of a fan-shaped city plan.

Among the competition entries certain works stood out: the works of Zagreb architect Zdenko Strizic, alternative design of the Urban Planning Institute of Serbia, the team from Zagreb consisting of architects Vladimir Potočnjak, Zlatko Neumann, Anton Urlich, Dragica Perak and Branko Vasiljević (won the first prize at the competition for the Federal Government building of the FPRY), Vladimir Anantolić, Anton Bahovec and Božidar Tušek, and at that time the most prominent one – the design of Edvard Ravnikar et al.

It seems that the competition participants remained unimpressed by the suggestive language of the brief because hardly any proposals were submitted in which clear references to Soviet-style monumentality could be recognized. This was particularly obvious from the proposals for the master plan of the new city. Most of them were more concerned with resolving the traffic network than with creating a hierarchy of spaces to accommodate the Central Committee at its peak. Monumental »canyon streets with continual fronts, like Moscow boulevards planned under Stalin, could not be seen.« Instead, the majority opted for an ultimately modernist approach of arranging free-standing buildings in a »sea of greenery«; this was already suggested by the competition brief and shown in Dobrović’s Draft. Some entries even openly referred to Le Corbusier’s planning ideas, like the one by the Slovenian architect Edvard Ravnikar, who had worked in the rue de Sèvre studio before the war.

Organized into parallel strips, with a »capitol« on one end, the railway station on the other, and orderly rows of identical ministry buildings in between, Ravnikar’s proposal was an adaptation of the Ville Radieuse for a city of socialist administration, in which Le Corbusier’s monumentalization of capitalist business was replaced with a

48 Ljiljana Blagojevic, New Belgrade – Contested Modernism, 2005, p. 81
49 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between, p.150
Competition for the new Master Plan of New Belgrade, 1947.
a) Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade
b) Edvard Ravnikar
celebration of the state and the party. With its »capitol« organized around a monumental open square and displaced from the center of the city to one end of a broad central axis, the scheme anticipated the future iconic modernist capitals such as Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh and, even more closely, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer’s Brasilia.

It is indicative of the opinion of the profession that competition participants overwhelmingly rejected Dobrović’s radial plan from the Sketch. Particularly badly received was the architect’s own adaptation of it, submitted to the competition by the Institute of Urban Planning of Serbia, whose director he was at the time. This puzzling proposal was unique for including overt political iconography and overblown hierarchical monumentality. But it also blatantly denied the basic requirement of the competition brief by placing the Parliament at the center of the composition, in front of a gigantic round square with a five-pointed star inscribed in the paving; the Central Committee remained barely discernible on the plan.

However, after the competition was over, the issue of planning of New Belgrade still remained unresolved as the competition, which itself was based on a vague concept and strategy, did not provide the answers sought. In the report of the Consulting Expert and Technical Committee it was concluded that political and expert elite had an ambivalent attitude towards offered architectural and urban concepts:

»By laying down the criteria according to which the entries were to be evaluated, and despite the efforts to reach a joint and uniform conclusion, the Committee member, nevertheless, manifested different views regarding architectural and aesthetic moments...The Committee did not opt, a priori, for any concept or trend, but it rather suggested that the entries that were often the expression of different views towards architecture be awarded prizes and be purchased...«

(and)

50 Quoted from: Bratislav Stojanovic, Competitions for the Yugoslav Communist Party Central Committee Headquarters and the building of the Federal Government of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, (Tehnika, Belgrade, 1947) p. 70
Competition entries that deal more seriously with the urban problems of New Belgrade and represent a certain contribution, have been already suggested for prizes and purchase. Therefore, the authority announcing the competition, being in possession of these plans, will be able to study that urban planning material and to provide the Urban Planning Institute or some group of urban planners with all required suggestions for further work in order for them to develop, if possible, a new, definite, urban layout of New Belgrade. The work on urban planning of New Belgrade can be continued after the selection of designs for the buildings of the Central Committee and the Federal Government has been established, because the features of the definite layout of New Belgrade greatly depend on their positioning, shape, size.\textsuperscript{51}

The final sentence of the quotation clearly shows that the exit from the crisis that occurred after the competition for the preparation of a plan of New Belgrade was not sought in further development and elaboration of contemporary planning methodology, but in the presumption that the new city character depended on architectural designs of two dominating governmental and party structures. Đilas later remembered that the most important decisions, such as those concerning the selection of designs to be built, were made in the presence of Tito and other members of the leadership. The likely scenario was that a professional jury made a preliminary selection of entries, which Tito and other leaders would then accept or reject. Indeed, several architects confirmed Tito's personal involvement, especially in relation to the Central Committee building.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} ibid
\textsuperscript{52} E.Ravnikar, Maršal Tito našim arhitektom, 363; also: Šegvić, Stvaralačke komponente arhitekteure FNRJ, 34-35.
MODERNISM AND
POSTWAR SOCIALIST IDENTITY

In line with such attitude, the issue of new monumentality features, i.e. the search of different monumental architecture that clearly disassociated itself from and it was essentially different from totalitarian models, became one of the most significant architectural themes of the fifth decade of the twentieth century. At the international level, the necessity of putting the issue of monumentality in the context of modern architecture development was initiated in the texts of Sigfried Giedion. Whereas the beginnings of the modern movement in architecture and art were directed towards simpler issues, utilitarian buildings for low-budget housing, schools, hospitals etc., in the post-war period the architects and artists faced with a new task of reorganizing municipal life in the cities through planning and designing new city centers and monumental ensembles in which the work of planners, architects, landscape architects and artists would be completely integrated. According to Giedion, the hardest step on that path would be to invent new forms of large-scale structures and ensembles, freed from any reference to pseudo monumentality of previous historic periods thus finding a way for reclaiming monumentality.

The proposition of the competition for governmental and party buildings in New Belgrade initiated similar questions to be raised, through which the search for identity of monumental and exemplary architecture of Yugoslav socialism could be perceived. The common ground of this search was the attempt to resolve double negation with which, on one hand, international style i.e. formalism of West European model of modernism was dismissed, and on the other hand, formalist eclecticism of the Soviet model.

However, the new monumentality issue, when it comes to the beginnings of planning and designing of New Belgrade, was exclusively focused on the search of the concept of solution and treatment of individual structures for governmental and party

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53 Sigfried Giedion, The need for new monumentality, 1944
NEW BELGRADE WILL BE OUR FIRST SOCIALIST CITY. IT WILL BE THE FIRST CENTER OF PEOPLE’S GOVERNMENT IN OUR HISTORY. FOR ALL OUR PEOPLES THE FIRST AND UNIQUE ADMINISTRATIVE, CULTURAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL CENTER; CENTER OF BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY!

General Ljubo Ilić, 1946
administration. CIAM’s concept of new monumentality that involved the creation of a new and quality municipal life and the formation of new city centers, raised no interest whatsoever in the period when large-scale Yugoslav competitions for New Belgrade were organized. The entire problem of complexity of the new city was focused on the concept of an administrative city in which the issues of municipal life were completely marginalized. In such a context, the only option that the Yugoslav architects had on their hands was the exploration of monumental expression, and the thing that Giedion referred to as a spectacle, but exclusively in the architecture of individual structures. This is precisely the place where the basic deviation from the modernist model can be observed, that everybody aspired after within CIAM.

Proposals for the two administration buildings finally offered a greater stylistic variety as well as somewhat more explicit ideological content than the submitted urban plans, but again practically none of them even remotely resembled the »wedding-cake, architecture of the Palace of the Soviets«. Instead, their range lay within various versions of modernism: from functionalism and even constructivism on one end, to classicized modernism on the other. This range was largely inherited from the 1930s, when modernism started making inroads into official architecture of the state, parallel with the rise of an austere, simplified version of classicism for the same purpose, a process that unfolded in a similar fashion in many other countries.

Even though monumentality was one of the central questions of New Belgrade competitions, it was far from being the only aspect that the jury valued. Moreover, it was not necessarily associated with the classicist side of the stylistic scale, so even some radically modernist designs won awards. Such examples included proposals for the Presidency submitted by a Zagreb team (third prize, architects Haberle, Tomičić, Bertol, Poletti, Feldt) or by Belgrade’s most famous prewar modernist Milan Zloković (honorable mention). Even more strikingly modernist was an entry for the Central Committee that

54 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between, p.153
arrived from the Technical Faculty in Zagreb (architects **Boltar, Turina, Nikšić**), and earned an honorable mention. Featuring a tall glass slab and a conference hall whose roof was suspended from an outside skeleton, in its constructivist overtones it resembled Le Corbusier’s infamous proposal for the Palace of the Soviets, as if making a conscious statement of refusal to comply with the tenets of Socialist Realism.56 Around the time of the competition, team-member Vladimir Turina designed the new stadium in Zagreb, a stunning tour-de-force of constructivism that would be completed a few years later, which may indicate how radical his group’s proposal for the Central Committee was.57

On the other side of the stylistic spectrum were proposals that incorporated obviously historical references, but even these were not entirely conventional. Most illustrative in this respect are projects submitted by a group of architects and artists from Zagreb gathered around **Antun Augustincić** and **Drago Galić**. This was a truly political »dream team of Yugoslav architecture at the time«.58 Besides Augustincic and Galic, who were already firmly established with their Batina monument59, not the least thanks to Augustincic’s personal friendship with Tito, the group also included **Neven Segvić**, editor-in-chief of **Arhitektura**, himself politically highly influential, and **Branko Bon**, yet another prewar modernist from Zagreb with Communist ties and reputation of a prisoner of the Ustasha regime.60 The group won second prizes at both competitions. But if political prestige was what brought its members together, it could not make up for their lack of a common vision. Their proposals ended up as confusing conglomerates of various references and motifs,61 with multiple versions submitted to the competition, as if the group could not agree on the appropriate tone.

The team’s proposal for the Central Committee was an even more awkward combination of historicism and modernism. It featured a low,
almost vernacular-looking block with arcades and pitched roofs organized around several interior courtyards. A tall tower, rising from a second courtyard, serves as a backdrop for the sculpture, its verticality emphasized by dense unbroken pilasters. In its austerity, however, the tower looks completely disconnected from the rest of the building, as if artificially transplanted from another scheme; indeed, the jury criticized this inconsistency.\(^{62}\)

The luxury hotel, for which a parallel competition was organized, was apparently so far from the center of power that it was seen as devoid of any symbolism and was allowed to be completely functional.\(^{63}\) All the awarded entries at the hotel competition were therefore variations of a classic functionalist slab.

The Presidency of the government stood somewhere in between, obviously embodying the power of the state, but not allowed to compete with the party. This was clearly expressed in comments published after the competition and it was precisely how the juru described the winning scheme: as a »middle line« between functionalism and monumentality.\(^{64}\)

The winning proposal for the Presidency was designed by yet another team from Zagreb, whose members were Vladimir Potočnjak, Anton Ulrich, Zlatko Neumann, and Dragica Perak. The team had a remarkable modernist pedigree. Potočnjak worked for Adolf Loos in Paris and Ernst May in Frankfurt. Ulrich studied with Joseph Hoffmann at the Viennese Kunstgewerbeschule and was one of the first Yugoslavs to produce clearly functionalist designs. Neumann spent eight years working for Loos (1919-27), both in Vienna and Paris. Despite the fact that most team-members had a history of designing uncompromising functionalist buildings, their proposal for the Presidency can be best described as classicized modernism.

\(^{62}\) ibid

\(^{63}\) Reports on the competition for the new hotel generally mention the complexity of the functional program, with its »representative« qualities being referred to just in passing; see: D. Momčilović, Konkurs za zgradu reprezentativnog hotela Arhitektura I, no. 3 (October 1947): 25.

\(^{64}\) Macura, Problematika naše arhitekture u svetlosti konkursa za zgradu Pretsedništva Vlade FNRJ, 15.
Vladimir Turina, Drago Boltar, and Radovan Nikšić: Central Committee of the CPY, competition entry, honorable mention, New Belgrade, 1947.

Antun Augustinčić, Drago Galić, Neven Šegvić, and Branko Bon: Central Committee of the CPY, competition entry, second prize, third ranking, New Belgrade, 1947.

Edvard Ravnikar: Central Committee of the CPY, competition entry, second prize, first ranking, New Belgrade, 1947.

Based on an H-shaped plan—an organization that was proposed by multiple participants at the competition and recalled Le Corbusier’s *Tsentrosoyuz* in Moscow—the building also had an entrance pavilion attached at the center of the H fronted by a monumental portico. There was nothing explicitly historicist about it, but the overall symmetry, the austere colonnade of the portico, the tripartite division of the facades, and endless rows of pronounced pilasters gave the building an unmistakably classicist air. The jury praised the design’s clear functional solution, as much as its »serious, harmonious, and unpretentious, monumentality« ⁶⁵; as it concluded: »A calm beauty has been achieved.«

⁶⁵ ibid
The overall sense of this »calm beauty« was one of a heavy solidity, as the building sat firmly on the ground; its subdued modernism relied on formal austerity and not on any notion of lightness or transparency. Since this project went into construction in 1948, it was developed to the level of construction drawings (which are being publicized here for the first time) and it is possible to observe its somewhat more overt classicism in its detailing. Construction drawings confirm the intended impression of massive weight implied in competition perspectives: large pilasters, three feet wide and two feet deep and clad in seven inch thick blocks of white marble; pronounced coursework suggesting massive masonry construction (although the actual structure was a reinforced concrete skeleton); and stylized keystones above windows. The discord between the tastes of the profession and the politicians became obvious when it was announced that no first prize was awarded for the Central Committee and therefore no proposal selected for construction.

The fundamental question of monumental expression appropriate for new Yugoslavia thus remained wide open. Considering the stipulation that this competition would be judged by the party leadership, it seems quite clear that politicians were not ready to accept the different variations of modernism that the profession was offering.

Of the three highest ranked entries that won the second prize, only one - by Augustincic and his three architect colleagues - included any overt historicist references and even it featured a rather austere tower in its center. The other two were much more obviously modernist in style. The more surprising choice for the prize was Dobrovic’s entry, not only because of its modernist forms and apparent lack of any sculptural decoration, but even more for the fact that it rejected the central demand of the competition brief: that the building should be a tall tower. This project has been known only through one badly reproduced perspective, but even so it is clear that it was composed to emphasize horizontality instead of verticality. Particularly striking in the scheme is what seems like a conference hall in the shape of a truncated cone, a motif that Le Corbusier would use in various versions in his monumental postwar projects. With a complete lack of

66 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between p.162
67 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between p.163
symbolic representation, it is clear why this proposal was not selected for construction.

More compliant with the competition requirements was the highest ranked entry by **Edvard Ravnikar**. With a tall tower placed in the center of his Corbusian »capitol« organized around a monumental square the proposal had both the required height and sufficient amount of sculptures to convey the necessary ideological message. But it too was in essence rather modernist and it revealed a synthesis of the two formative influences of Ravnikar's early career. Born in 1907, the architect at first attended the Technische Hochschule in Vienna, before coming back to Slovenia to study with Jože Plečnik.68 After graduation, he continued to work with Plečnik and collaborated on the iconic National and University Library in Ljubljana (1938) before embarking on his own projects. But in 1939, Ravnikar decided suddenly to go to Paris, where he spent five months working in Le Corbusier’s studio, exposing himself to a completely different architectural culture. His proposal for the Central Committee merged the lessons learned from his two mentors. From Plečnik, Ravnikar absorbed a taste for sensual surfaces, proposing to cover the building with variously textured stone in rich rhythmic patterns, giving the walls, as the jury put it, »a picturesque and decorative treatment« reminiscent of a »woven rug.«69 The lesson likely learned from Le Corbusier was a taste for openness and flowing spaces; the jury found that the proposed »airy interiors« contributed to an expression of power and monumentality.70 Indeed, the only published perspective of the Central Committee shows the building as seen from the Presidency through a dematerialized glass wall. A gigantic circular medallion, presumably carrying some ideological symbol, hangs above the entrance to Ravnikar's Central Committee and also reappears in his proposal for the Presidency. This motif also seems to be of a Corbusian origin, as it appears in his Mundaneum project (1929). The Palace of the League of Nations and the Mundaneum were Le Corbusier’s early explorations of modern monumentality and as such

68 On Ravnikar's education and early career, see: Peter Krecic, **Edvard Ravnikar: arhitekt, urbanist, oblikovalec, teoretik, univerzitetni učitelj, publicist**, exhibition catalogue (Ljubljana: Arhitekturni muzej, 1996), 9-14

69 See: Vladimir Kulic: **Land of the in-between** p.163-165

70 Quoted in: Stojanović, **Konkursi za dom Centralnog komiteta KPJ** p148.
both appropriate references for the Central Committee project, which indicated the acuteness of Ravnikar's instinct. Ravnikar's Central Committee is difficult to judge in detail because little of it has survived. But several other projects he designed around the same time relied on similar elements: the Opera House in Belgrade, and the Parliament of Slovenia and the Post Office in Ljubljana. None of these projects were built, but all of them indicate his remarkably consistent synthesis of Plečnik and Le Corbusier, sources that could easily be considered irreconcilably disparate. Ravnikar managed to find their common denominator and the picturesque motifs he used on them seem to oscillate between his two sources while never wholly conceding to either. The professional jury of the Central Committee competition must have recognized this when it awarded Ravnikar the highest ranking. As Vladimir Kulic noticed, it is a pity that the party leadership
did not understand it and instead chose to organize a second, limited round of competition to find an appropriate design.

Before they were about to begin work, Tito summoned the participants to lecture them about architecture. In a highly revealing article published after that meeting, Ravnikar described what Tito had in mind for both the Central Committee and all of New Belgrade. The text is a usual hymn that credits the leader with an apparently universal expertise and a better understanding of architecture than architects themselves had.

But more importantly, Tito’s words, at least as reported by Ravnikar, read as a summary of Soviet-style Socialist Realism, «replete with both its theoretical staples and concrete motifs.» Tito’s first criticism was «that architects did not succeed in expressing the new political and social conditions in new Yugoslavia and the role of the party in it» and urged them to create a «powerful living form that would be characteristic only to architecture of new Yugoslavia.» This was virtually a translation of the socialist realist credo «socialist in content, national in form» but it completely ignored the fact that a number of awarded entries, including those by Ravnikar and Augustincic’s team, indeed created specifically Yugoslav statements. Tito then stressed the «dynamism» of the party’s role in society as the main feature to be expressed through the building. How to achieve that? «The energetic forms of the monumental central part of the building,» Ravnikar reports on Tito’s words, «should look like a prow of a ship that clears its way through the waves.» The leader then reminded his architects of the «eternal beauty» of the Greek column and also of the need to engage sculpture, «the highest stage of visual art,» because «architectural forms, which can easily be abstract, must speak!»

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71 See: Ravnikar: Maršal Tito našim arhitektom 363-64.
72 According to Ravnikar, »Tito was so perceptive that he noticed some shortcomings in the regulation that none of the participating architect did«; ibid, p. 364
73 ibid
74 ibid
75 ibid
76 ibid
77 ibid
Having already won the highest ranking in the first round of the competition, »Ravnikar was determined not to let his chance slip away, since his submission for the second round looked like a literal translation of Tito’s requirements«. With its diagonally cut tower, whose purpose now seems to be only to support the sculptures on its top, the building indeed evoked a »prow of a ship« overlooking the water.

Of all other submissions in the second round, only one perspective by Augustincic, Galic, Shegvic, and Bon is known. It features a more conventional sense of monumentality than implied by their original proposal, with a monumental round staircase and two obelisks carrying sculptures in front of the building, clearly relying on their success achieved with the monument at Batina. None of these schemes, however, was developed any further. Instead, Branko Bon alone was hired to work on the design of the building. Some of his models, which were published several years later, reveal versions of modernism monumentalized in a fashion similar to the winning proposal for the Presidency of the government: austere classicizing forms and sparse use of monumental sculpture. In any case, Bon’s designs were never realized either and the construction of the Central Committee had to wait for another twelve years.

Beside these buildings that were directly associated with the interests and accommodation of the Communist Party and the Government members, the planning of New Belgrade also initiated the issue of other amenities that would take the new city out of the frame of a mere administrative centre.

Thus in 1948 a decision was made that a call for competition entries be announced for the Modern Gallery and two years later for the Museum of the Army in New Belgrade. Searching for their own identity, culture and the concept of contemporaneity, these two institutions were to play the key roles. They were meant to be museums of recent history and art of the 20th century of the Yugoslav nations and their programs were meant to establish and promote the legacy of the socialist revolution and culture.

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78 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between, 167
Edvard Ravnikar (1), Veljko Kauzlarić (2), Branko Petricic (3).
Competition for the Museum of Contemporary Art,
two first prizes (1,2) and one second prize (3),
New Belgrade, 1948
The fact that in physical sense they would be dislocated beyond national and historical context of the Old town provided a desired platform for the presentation of a new Yugoslav identity.

However, despite the almost synonymous use of the terms “modern” and “contemporary”, in Yugoslav architecture the issue of contemporaneity was actually profoundly linked to socialism. First of all, socialism was no longer regarded as utopia, but rather as a “work in progress”, that is happening here and now. In this way the contemporary practice and culture of socialism were set opposed to modernism, the recent western model that needs to be reviewed, adjusted or even improved. Nevertheless, as one of the jury members, Kazimir Ostrogovic, wrote: “Yugoslav architects had little experience in museum designing”, so it was no wonder that the competition entries in their architectural expression mainly followed the general tendencies set by the previous competitions for the Central Committee building and the Government Presidency building. The main difference that can be observed is that predominantly horizontal organizational scheme of the structure enabled the authors to create different ambience values of the spaces. The first prize was shared between Edvard Ravnikar and Veljko Kauzlaric, and the second prize was awarded to Branko Petricic.

The site of the Belgrade Fair complex (from 1937) was selected for the location of the future Museum of the Army, for which the call for entries was issued in 1950. The winning entry submitted by architects Ivo Kurtovic, Djordje Stefanovic and Milan Kopsa gave an obvious interpretation of Le Corbusier’s “Five Points of Architecture” – a cube on pillars, lifted off the ground, with a spacious atrium in the centre, surrounded by exhibition spaces. Structural skeletal system that allows an open plan, horizontal windows and on the flat roof – artificial landscape of circular lanterns that can be viewed both from the bridge and from the old Kalemegdan fortress. The ground floor thus remains free, and the park area overflows beneath the structure until it finally meets with the transparent entrance on the ground floor. In comparison to all other projects, the design developed by Kurtovic’s team stood out, without doubt, by its clear modernist concept.
Despite critiques it received and the fact that it was never actually built the Museum of the Army design was an important precedent for the architectural discourse of the period. Its functional scheme became, to a certain extent, a model after which the museums were designed in the period to follow: entrance zone for the audience, with a space for occasional exhibitions and lectures, administrative unit with a staff entrance on the ground floor, depots in the basement and the cellar; an exhibition area for the permanent display with quite appropriately resolved issue of daylight coming from “above” i.e. in the upper floors.

It was not until the 1960s that this paradigm started to change by announcing calls for two very important competitions for the museums on New Belgrade riverside: competition for the Museum of Contemporary Art (1960) and the competition for the Museum of the Revolution (1961). Both competitions were significant also because they underlined the new program orientation of the national cultural policy, so therefore they will be analyzed in more detail in the chapter to follow.
The location of future New Belgrade, view from the Kalemegdan fortress, in Old Belgrade
The results of the 1947 New Belgrade competitions were workable designs for the Presidency and the luxury hotel, and proposed ideas for the master plan. In the months that followed the announcement of winners, the institutional framework for the construction of the city was set up through the establishment of a series of bodies, including the Design institute of Under Dobrović’s guidance, a schematic plan of the new city was developed, fixing the position of the most important buildings. The plan summarized some of the ideas that appeared in multiple competition entries, but essentially represented a version of the »alternative« competition proposal by the Institute of Urban Planning of Serbia, with the Presidency located on the bank of the Danube, the future Parliament on the bank of the Sava, and the Central Committee at the confluence of the two rivers. Each building was positioned as a focal point for a monumental avenue; however, the arrangement of the avenues was no longer radial, as in Dobrović’s previous proposals, but perpendicular to each other. The location of the most important buildings on river banks corresponded with Tito’s own planning ideas as reported by Ravnikar:

»Broad and airy boulevards planted with lush greenery will lead to an enormous central square. All representative buildings will lie on the waterfronts of the two rivers, visible from the water and from the opposite banks«\(^79\)

And while it is difficult to recognize only one »enormous central square« - there were several large open spaces, resembling broad avenues rather than squares - the plan was indeed all about airiness, greenery, and monumentality. Of the three proposed urban axes, only the one leading south from the Presidency towards the main railway station, generated by the suggestive symmetrical plan of the building, would have any long-term impact on later plans of New Belgrade; everything else would be subject to change in the following decades, until even the Presidency axis was discarded in the 1980s.

\(^79\) E. Ravnikar, Maršal Tito našim arhitektom, p364.
The construction of New Belgrade began on 11 April 1948. The text of the dedication carved in a stone plaque celebrated the pan-Yugoslav character of the endeavor:

» On 11 April 1948, three years after the end of the people’s liberation war, preparations for the beginning of a new battle for happiness and well-being of the people were complete. On that day, working people and youth of all of Yugoslavia made an effort to erect New Belgrade, to expand the beloved capital of the state of coequal nationalities on this side of the Sava, to enlarge and beatify the city from which the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, headed by comrade Tito, led the uprising… and to create another eternal symbol of the victorious liberation struggle of our peoples, whom Marshall Tito leads to socialism in a state built by the people itself«

Claiming that the project for the construction of New Belgrade at this stage was an effort of »working people and youth of all of Yugoslavia« was not mere rhetoric, because in its realization the state largely relied on mass volunteer labor, particularly the federal youth brigades that were assembled from all parts of the country. There was a highly symbolic dimension to this kind of work, especially in the light of the fact that enthusiasm was, for the most part, genuine. But the reliance on manual labor was predominantly a result of a pure need to harness that enthusiasm in the lack of material resources.

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80 The plaque is reproduced in Beograd-Novi Beograd (Belgrade: Direkcija za izgradnju Novog Beograda, 1967), 17.
The task at hand was indeed daunting. Even before any construction could begin, the level of the whole area had to be raised by several meters in order to avoid seasonal flooding. Over the length of the Five Year Plan, almost ninety million cubic meters of sand and gravel were to be dug out of the Danube to fill in the construction sites.81 There were few machines in the country necessary for such an endeavor and their capacities were far below the requirements, so a great deal had to be acquired from abroad; however, the work was supposed to start even before any new machines were bought, using whatever was available. Some machinery was used for the technically most demanding operations, but a large proportion of work was done manually, as revealed in contemporary photographs from the construction site, which were frequently publicized to document and celebrate the progress of the endeavor. Images from the period superimpose the enthusiasm of mass manual labor, done in the most primitive and brutal conditions, with the projected modern buildings to create vivid illustrations of what Marshall Berman called the »modernity of underdevelopment«. In a way, they convey a sense of ultimate individual sacrifice for the collective good.

The role of these images was highly propagandistic, as they served to mobilize the population, especially the youth, for participation in volunteer labor brigades.

81 See: Referat po predmetu izgradnje nasipanja Novog Beograda po petogodišnjem planu 1947-1951 god. 5 April, 1947; ASCG, Fond 50, Pretsedništvo vlade FNRJ, Fascikla 78, no. 78-440.
The early construction of New Belgrade, as presented in these photographs, can only be understood in the light of the feverish culture of shockwork, relentlessly promoted by the Agitprop as indispensable in the achievement of the bombastic goals of the Five Year Plan. Following the Soviet Stakhanovite movement, »shockworkers were incredible heroes… able to work 20-30 hours under the most difficult circumstances, never asking is it cold or hot or whether they have anything to eat.« Such rhetoric of self-sacrifice implied that the peacetime labor was a direct extension of and as worthy as the wartime heroism of the Yugoslav people. That was also why New Belgrade could be understood as »an eternal symbol of the victorious liberation struggle of our peoples« as the dedication plaque claimed, even if its construction started full three years after the end of the war.

The quick progress in the construction of New Belgrade, however, was not destined to last long. Less than three months after works began, in June 1948, the Comintern announced its resolution against the CPY that severed almost all connections between Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc and with it the country’s lifeline to its main creditors and trading partners. Work continued for the rest of the year, but the ensuing economic crisis slowed it down more and more, until they came to a complete halt some time in 1951. The bare skeletons of the Presidency and the hotel, rising like ghosts over the sandy dunes of New Belgrade, were monuments to grand ambitions that suddenly faced a bleak reality. When the machines awoke again around them in the mid-1950s, it was to a very different Yugoslavia.

82 On volunteer labor see: Lilly Carol S., Power and persuasion, 115-128
83 Trade union leader Đuro Spoljarić, quoted in ibid., 118.
84 See: Vladimir Kulic Land of the inbetween 175
On 28 June 1948, the Cominform issued a resolution that accused the country’s Communist leaders of diverging from the »correct path« of Marxism-Leninism and invited the CPY membership to put an end to their regime. The resolution set in motion a chain of events that would profoundly transform postwar Yugoslavia. It was a crucial moment in the toward wide-reaching internal reforms and an independent foreign policy. It was also due to the events of 1948 that Yugoslavia developed its uniqueness among socialist states, »ultimately blurring the ideological and political divisions of the Cold War« 85. For outside viewers, the resolution came as a surprise; after all, the Cominform was the very same organization seated in Belgrade the previous fall as a sign of Yugoslavia’s special prestige in the Communist world. But conflicts between the CPY leaders and Moscow had been already brewing clandestinely for years, almost from the beginning of World War II. The conflict was, in its core, about the political and economic control of the country. 86 The resolution indeed caused a rift in Yugoslavia, but it was not sufficient to oust »Tito’s circle«, which enjoyed loyalty among the native Communists for successfully organizing and leading the liberation war with minimal foreign aid for most of the war.

Within months of the resolution, the relations with socialist countries deteriorated so much that between 1949 and Stalin’s death in 1953, there were no official or private contacts between Yugoslavia and the USSR. All trade with socialist countries ceased. The result was a complete political and economic isolation of Yugoslavia: already confronted by the West, now it was cut off from its previous allies as well. A severe economic crisis threatened the very survival of the population. 87 Yugoslavia thus had to move away from the Stalinist system and to distinguish itself politically and economically from the Soviets. Starting in 1950, Yugoslavia set off on a path of an increasing

85 Vladimir Kulic: *Land of the in-between*, 176
86 See: Vladimir Kulic: *Land of the in-between*, 176-180
87 ibid
Eastern block members
political and economic decentralization, restructuring both the state organization and the economy. The federation transferred many of its prerogatives to the constituent republics, thus strengthening their own statehood and replacing a massive federal administration with six regional ones. The Five-Year Plan was abolished and the accent was shifted from the exclusive development of heavy industry to much more consumer-friendly production. A system of »workers' self-management« was also established, allowing individual enterprises to act with much greater independence from the central power than before.

Completely friendless, the Yugoslav leadership was forced to look for new allies to secure bare survival. Under blockade of its former allies, the country needed new trading partners and economic support, as well as protection from the ominous saber-rattling along its borders. On the other had, once it became certain of the definitiveness of Tito’s split with Stalin, the West was ready to exploit the first major crack in the international Communist movement. In light of the extreme hostilities between Yugoslav leadership and Western powers in the early postwar years, the shift had to be cautious and gradual; but once the doors of Yugoslavia opened for Western culture, they were never shut again. Western aid, predominantly American, British, and French, was essential in preserving Yugoslavia’s independence after 1948.

Despite constant minor ups and downs, this was the period of Yugoslavia’s closest connections with the West, but it lasted only until the mid-1950s, to be replaced with the policy of equidistance from both blocs. In terms of cultural cooperation, however, this was an important period of radical reorientation that set up a pattern for decades to come. Unlike politics, Yugoslav culture would never establish symmetrical relations with the two poles of the Cold War world, and Western influences retained a privileged position over all others.

Economic liberalisation combined with generous amount of western aid enable sudden burst of economic growth. In a next few years, the total control of culture was abolished as well, abandoning the demand for absolute tendentiousness and allowing far greater liberties than in the first postwar years. This, in turn, led to the abrupt demise of the
doctrine of Socialist Realism, opening the door for a flourishing of modernism.

Following the broader social and political changes, the landscape of architectural profession changed as well. The turning point occurred in 1951, when principles of self-management were applied to architectural offices, just like to any other economic enterprise. The previously centralized, highly hierarchical state-owned offices and »institutes of design« were gradually abolished and transformed into »self-managing working organizations« based on more democratic principles than before. Some of these were in-house design units of large construction enterprises; but many functioned as independent firms, free to look for commissions in an increasingly active market.

Most investors were other self-managing enterprises, various social organizations, and government bodies of all levels, which generally treated their architects with a technocratic confidence in their professional expertise, rarely questioning their conceptual or aesthetic decisions. Architects thus suddenly found themselves in a situation to operate with considerable autonomy: on the one hand, the state was no longer interested in narrowly controlling their work, while on the other, it protected them from the pressures of a capitalist market.

Simultaneous with the reorganization of architectural profession was the process of gradual liberalization of culture, which brought about the final abandonment of Socialist Realism.
Le Corbusier enjoyed unrivaled reputation in Yugoslavia, which dated back to the prewar period, when a remarkable number of young Yugoslavs worked at his studio at rue de Sèvre. After the war, many of them reached leading positions in practice and academia, including Edvard Ravnikar in Ljubljana, Juraj Neidhardt in Sarajevo, and Milorad Pantovic in Belgrade, all of whom taught at their respective universities and received major state commissions.

The exhibition, which showed not only Le Corbusier’s architecture, but also his paintings and sculptural works, arrived in Yugoslavia in fall of 1952. The exhibition, originally organized in 1948 by the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, had toured the United States and South America before arriving in Europe. Its first stop was Berlin and the plan was to continue to Munich, Vienna, and Milan, before going to Yugoslavia, the only socialist country on the schedule. After Berlin, however, the show was sidetracked from its planned route and sent directly to Belgrade, apparently at the request of the Yugoslav Committee for Science and Culture.88

On display between December 1952 and May 1953, the retrospective visited not only Belgrade, but received an unusual country-wide exposure, making stops at Skopje, Sarajevo, Split, Ljubljana, and Zagreb. In all six cities, it drew considerable attention and was widely reviewed, not only in architectural periodicals but in general press as well.89

The reviews, more than anything else, confirmed Le Corbusier’s reputation: virtually all of them highlighted his exceptional status as a pioneer of modernism and his long combat against conservatism, which only a few years before would have been a highly politically incorrect point to make. They also revealed that the reviewers were well acquainted not only with Le Corbusier’s creative work, but also with the finer points of his theory and his activities as a relentless

88 Nikola Dobrović, Osuvt na izložbu arhitekta Le Corbusiera Arhitekt (Ljubljana) 2, no. 9 (June, 1953): 32-34.
89 ibid
propagandist. By the second half of the 1950s, virtually every major city had at least one recognizably Corbusian building, predominantly smaller and simplified versions of the *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseilles. The exhibition was certainly not solely responsible for this sudden wave, since local architects had already been well acquainted with the architect’s work; it probably only provided a signal that direct references to him would no longer be politically problematic.

Yugoslav foreign policy between 1945 and the early 1960s was all about oscillating between the two poles of the Cold War world. By the late 1950s, however, these oscillations became smaller and smaller, until Yugoslavia settled down in a balancing act half-way between the extremes, its own independence the ultimate goal of its foreign policy. In pursuing this policy, however, it did not take an isolationist road, but instead engaged in international cooperation and actively promoted such orientation as an alternative to Cold War confrontations. As a result, Yugoslavia’s new partners became not only the two superpowers and their satellites, but also the recently decolonized Third World countries that belonged to neither blocs. These partnership with them was formalized through the creation of the Movement of Non-Aligned in Belgrade in 1961. Ever since World War II, the country thus managed to maintain the role of a significant international player whose opinions and reactions counted far more than its size would suggest.

For architecture, these shifts meant that its international frame of reference - foreign journals, exhibitions, books, and destinations for travel - underwent drastic changes in a relatively short period. Through a 180 degree turn, the virtually exclusive orientation to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before 1948 made way in the early 1950s for a complete reorientation to the West. The connections established through the Non-Aligned Movement provided construction industry with an even larger new market in the Third World, turning architecture and civil engineering into one of Yugoslavia’s most successful export products. Throughout the 1950s, economic and military aid flowed from the United States. This aid provided the survival of an independent Yugoslavia outside of the Communist bloc, which was a common cause both for the Yugoslavs and Americans. Tito, however, skillfully maneuvered away from making any real concessions to his sponsors; Despite the hopes of Eisenhower’s administration and initial steps
made in that direction, Yugoslavia never joined NATO and jealously maintained its independence.90

However, it was clear that modernism was a powerful tool for strengthening the country’s international position. By the late 1950s, it became a calculated strategy to show the most advanced modern art and architecture to Western audiences, while reserving the more conservative works for display in the East.91

While trying to present Yugoslav culture as distinct from that behind the Iron Curtain, the United States also invested much in its own propaganda within Yugoslavia, working simultaneously on several fronts: promoting American culture - both, high and popular - to broad audiences, attempting to export the American commercial culture, and subtly influencing Yugoslav officials to appreciate and embrace the American system and way of life. In a similar fashion, the promotion of American art and architecture did not require much persuasion either: another major MoMA exhibition, Contemporary Art in the USA, arrived in Belgrade in 1956 at a direct request of the Yugoslav side.92 The exhibition was remembered for introducing Abstract Expressionism to Europe, but it showcased latest architectural achievements as well, especially the icons of the International Style, such as SOM’s Lever House in New York, which was featured on the cover of the catalogue.

Among others, Mies van der Rohe’s Lake Shore Drive towers in Chicago and Philip Johnson’s Glass House were shown, too. The fact that a wave of glass curtain walls hit the country soon after the exhibition, replacing the recent Corbusian epidemic, is indicative of the new prestige that American architecture acquired in Yugoslavia. Indeed, by the late 1950s, buildings modeled on the Lever House, combining horizontal and vertical slabs encased in light curtain walls—at the time, significantly, known as American facades—began appearing in major Yugoslav cities.

90 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the in-between, 185
91 ibid
92 The recently established Federal Committee for Cultural Connections with Foreign Countries was responsible for the invitation. See: Savremena umetnost u SAD: Iz zbirki Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibition catalogue (Belgrade: Komisija za kulturne veze s inostranstvom, 1956),
Cover page of the catalogue of the exhibition “Contemporary Art in the USA,” 1956
These, however, were often plagued by problems of transferring a highly sophisticated technology into an environment lacking the material means to support it.93

By the early 1960s, Yugoslavia established its foreign policy as a balancing act between the Eastern and Western blocs. As a leader of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries, it placed itself not in opposition to one of the rivals in the Cold War, but to the Cold War itself. The policy of »active and peaceful coexistence« was advertised as a willingness to respect the differences and to collaborate with almost any country in the world, regardless of its dominant ideology or political system.

Architecture participated in the construction of this median position, but it never really reoriented its already established gaze towards the West. The emerging ambiguity of operating within architectural discourses emanating from the political West while constructing the narrative of Yugoslavia distinct from either side in the Cold War deeply marked the country’s architectural production of the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially when that production served the explicit representation of the state.

93 For a technical analysis of curtain walls in Belgrade in the early 1960s, see: Ranko Trbojević, Zid zavesa i njegova primena u Beogradu, Arhitektura Urbanizam 8, no. 44 (1967): 18-19.
CONTEMPORARY
SOCIALIST ARCHITECTURE

Within a year of the 1948 Cominform Resolution, the ensuing economic crisis brought the construction of the city to a complete halt. The Presidency of the Government and the luxury hotel were abandoned as halffinished reinforced-concrete skeletons; the filling-in of the marshy terrain stopped as well. As the economy recovered in the mid-1950s, plans for the construction of the new capital were resurrected. In the meantime, however, the federal state underwent considerable decentralization and the power of the federal government decreased accordingly, causing New Belgrade’s extensive original program to shrink as well. The original three buildings designed in 1947 – the **Federal Government Building**, the **Central Committee Building**, and the **hotel** - still provided the backbone of the city, but the many federal ministries were no longer necessary. In a series of new urban plans created throughout the 1950s, housing gained an increasingly important role, replacing the previously expansive administration quarters.

Simultaneously, the involvement of architects from other parts of the country in the design of New Belgrade decreased as well. The city lost a good portion of its originally dominant pan-Yugoslav connotations; and despite the fact they were never entirely erased, the construction of New Belgrade from the mid-1950s on became an increasingly local affair.

In a broader international framework, the meanings of New Belgrade also underwent significant changes. Gone was the role of a secondary center of the Communist bloc, but in return the city acquired a potentially far broader responsibility as one of the centers of the emerging **Non-Aligned Movement**. It was somehow appropriate, then, that the New Belgrade that emerged in the early 1960s effectively summarized the key formal and technological themes of the International Style. This was exemplified in the city’s most important new structures: from the already partly constructed hotel and the redesigned building of the Federal Government, to the new tower of the Central Committee and the two new museums that became parts
of the federal capitol« - even including some of the first housing blocks in the city’s central area.

The first building that exemplified this transformation was the former Presidency of the Federal Government. Renamed Federal Executive Council and widely known by the acronym SIV (Savezno izvršno veće), it was the first structure whose construction resumed after the break up from the Soviet bloc. This was now the seat of a much smaller administration that no longer controlled the development of the country, but instead only coordinated a limited number of functions of the federal government.\(^9^4\) Except for the central entry pavilion, the reinforced concrete skeleton of the structure had already been finished; but before any further construction could continue, a thorough adaptation of the original project was necessary for functional reasons. A committee was formed in the fall of 1954 to oversee the adaptation and it included, besides officials from the government, several prominent architects, including Kazimir Ostrogović from Zagreb, Edvard Ravnikar from Ljubljana, and Belgrade’s leading prewar modernists, Dragisa Brasovan and Milan Zlokovic.\(^9^5\)

The project was taken over by architect Mihajlo Janković (since Potočnjak died in the meantime), who introduced a series of alterations in the original plan. The client specifically demanded a redesign of the exterior as well, which meant creating the new »official face« of Yugoslavia - a task of great responsibility and a sign that the architect enjoyed special status with the government.\(^9^6\) The redesign of the exterior was necessary to bring it in harmony with the new urban plans of New Belgrade. The SIV was no longer to be a part of a larger administrative complex surrounded by various ministries, but instead stood isolated amidst greenery in a large open space. Perhaps more importantly, this demand also demonstrated the client’s awareness of how obsolete the heavy classicism of the original design became in the short seven years since the competition.

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\(^9^4\) Petranović Strbac, Istorija socijalističke Jugoslavije, 143
\(^9^5\) Vladimir Kulic: Land of the In-between, 2009, p 273
\(^9^6\) Mihailo Jankovic: Kratak opis rada, Direkcija za izgradnju zgrade Saveznog izvršnog veća, n.d.1
on the right
construction of the
Federal Executive Council (SIV), New Belgrade, 1948-1949
down
New Belgrade in the early 1960s.

opposite side
Mihailo Janković: Federal Executive Council (SIV), New Belgrade, 1954-1962
In a series of studies, Janković tried to answer the new urban situation by visually tying the building to the ground; emphasizing its horizontality, adding low extensions around it, and creating a central tower that would contribute to a pyramidal build-up of volumes from the periphery to the center.\(^{97}\) But even more pronounced was an obvious desire to undermine as thoroughly as possible the classicism of the 1947 design and to »break the monotony« \(^{98}\) of its forms.

Janković experimented with various solutions to increase the visual dynamism of the complex, from strip-windows - a staple of modernist design - to irregular, checkerboard patterns reminiscent of Le Corbusier’s contemporaneous facades. Due to his alterations the building got two entrances, a ceremonial one - facing the main road and New Belgrade, and an ordinary one - for administration employees and other parties - at the central positions of both side wings. In addition to the correction of entrances, halls, conference room and salons, he also incorporated the additional feature of a garage for vehicles. He achieved that primarily by introducing colonnades in the ground floor around the entire frontal part of the building facing New Belgrade, behind which the functional requirements of access, circulation and parking of vehicles were met in different ways. Janković’s solution of the added cross-sectional tract and annex with a great glass wall facing the square provided an additional articulation of the spirit of the age in which a new architectural expression of the Federal Executive Council building was created.

As regards facade lining, the original design of lining the entire building with massive blocks of the Brač stone with minimum thickness of

\(^{97}\) ibid.

\(^{98}\) ibid.
12 cm was now abandoned. A classical lining was placed made of the Brach stone slabs, and instead of originally planned oak wood windows, aluminum windows were fitted thus achieving somewhat more modern and ethereal articulation of the facade. Instead of the original colonnaded portico, an elegant glazed box now floated above the main entrance and the reflecting pool in front of it. Containing the most luxurious representational spaces, this pavilion was connected to the side wings through light, newly added one-story corridors raised above the ground. The only place where any hint of the original classicizing aesthetic was preserved were the two concave side facades, whose slightly projecting central fields featured shallow pilasters between the windows of upper floors.

At the time of the renewed efforts to build New Belgrade, Brasilia was under construction and Niemeyer’s designs were widely published, both in local journals and in the many foreign publications that by this time were available to Yugoslav architects. Niemeyer offered not only fashionable »decorative motifs«, but also a practical example of the emerging sense of modern monumentality that was being realized in a city whose meanings resonated powerfully with those of New Belgrade: the brand new capital of a recently decolonized developing country that, at the time, was run by a socialist government. Despite the fact that at the same moment Le Corbusier was also busy designing for Chandigarh - another new capital in an even politically closer country, India - it seems that Janković’s studies for the SIV had a far more pronounced »Brazilian flavor«. Considering the fact that all of the sketches proposed smooth, elegant surfaces, rather than the rough brutalism »a la Chandigarh«, it seems clear that it was Brasilia that provided Janković with a guiding model of modern monumental expression.

The building was completed and opened for the First Conference of Non-Aligned Heads of State or Government in September 1961 under the name the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The FEC building really takes a special place in Belgrade architecture due to the unique way in which the integration of urban and architectural manner of thinking was achieved in it, which marked the period that we discuss.

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99 Vladimir Kulic: Land of the In-between 279
on the right


down
here. The concept of this structure originated from the urban planning ideas of a new city and it was one of the first entirely defined elements of New Belgrade in the Master Plan of Belgrade from 1950, only to become afterwards one of the most powerful driving forces of New Belgrade urban development. In the final plan from 1960 the entire concept of the central section was set in relation to this building.

The second completed building, the building of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, up until 1980s was the tallest structure in New Belgrade. As the Yugoslav federation changed since the 1947 competitions, so did the party: it was no longer a »secretive elite of conspiratorial initiates, but a much broader organization intent on building a mass membership«. Even its name had changed: instead of the Communist Party, it became the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. As a part of the wide-reaching attempts to democratize the country and engage the masses in the political life, a range of organizations was created under the umbrella of the »Socialist of the Working People of Yugoslavia« including war veterans, trade unions, and the official youth organization. The seats of all these organizations were supposed to be housed in the new building together with the Central Committee - hence its official name, the Building of Social and Political Organizations. Nevertheless, the edifice was widely known - and remains so - by the acronym CK (Centralni komitet), reflecting the hierarchy of power that remained untouched despite all the reforms.

According to new urban plans, the site for the building was removed from the confluence of the Sava and the Danube further inland, two blocks east of the SIV, marking the entry into New Belgrade when approached from the old city. A new competition was organized some time in 1959 or 1960, but the exact proceedings remain obscure (all of the documents about the competition have been lost). Since almost no competition drawings have been preserved, it is impossible to say

100 Vladimir Kulic, Land of the in-between, 281
101 ibid
102 The Archive of the Central Committee of the League of Communists, kept at the Archive of Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade, holds no material about the design of the building.
whether Janković’s design was really superior in a competition; »considering the sensitivity of the task, one can also imagine that he was selected by default, as a confidant of the government who required no further vetting«. The competition program remains equally unknown. For this occasion, Janković teamed up with his younger colleagues: Dušan Milenković and Mirjana Marjanović; of the two, only the former would participate in further development of the design. The tower was designed as exclusively commercial building with minor office space for study work and conference rooms, whereas the annex should have included a plenary room with 600 seats, with a separate gallery for the press, a box for VIPs and diplomats and with 200 seats for the audience and all required halls and salons.

During the development of the design, however, the winning entry underwent significant transformations, as the rectangular horizontal slab became a disc-shaped conference hall resembling a »flying saucer«. A previously generic building type thus gained obvious specificity, pointing toward Brasilia far more explicitly than any sketches for the SIV, Niemeyer’s »convex and concave bowls« here are united into a single piece. But the ensemble was a »curious

103 Vladimir Kulic, Land of the in-between, 282
104 ibid
hybrid»\textsuperscript{105}, as the tower was decidedly not inspired by Niemeyer: clad in an apparent curtain wall on all sides, with pronounced vertical mullions that added texture to the facade, it differed from Niemeyer’s smoother forms often framed with solid white walls. Instead, the Belgrade tower evoked a different source, the American postwar skyscraper - a reference that eventually overshadowed Brasilia as the »flying saucer« was never built. Contemporary critics quickly identified the solitary prism in glass and metal as Miesian, although it is questionable whether it was exactly Mies van der Rohe who provided the model; in any case, they criticized the CK for not being as »pure« as Mies would have made it.\textsuperscript{106}

Aside from its appearance, the CK contained a far more profound deviation from its American models. Constructing a steel skeleton would have been a challenge to Yugoslav builders in the 1960s because of the lack of high quality materials and know-how. Moreover, the country’s industrial production of building components was in its infancy; in such conditions, curtain-walls, known at the time as »American facades« while far more expensive, were technically still inferior to conventional facades.\textsuperscript{107} Structural steel, therefore, had to be replaced with reinforced concrete, which was easily available and could be used with a wealth of expertise. During the process of translation from one material to another, however, the structural logic of the American skyscraper, which separated the exterior envelope from the skeleton inside, was transmuted. The ground floor of the CK is supported on conventional large-span columns, but the structure of all upper floors consists of a dense perimeter »cage« of thin structural fins spanning about 1.8 m. One system transitions to the other via a massive concrete slab between the first and second floors. The dualism of load-bearing columns and a light suspended facade, characteristic for most American skyscrapers, was thus conflated into a hybrid structure that at the same time supports the building itself and defines the exterior, with facade panels inserted between the fins. During the construction, further transmutation occurred when the prefabricated spandrel units, envisioned by the design, had to be

\textsuperscript{105} ibid, p283
\textsuperscript{106} See: R.Trbojevic: Zid zavesa i njegova primena u Beogradu, p18-19
\textsuperscript{107} ibid, p7
replaced with conventional masonry walls, which were subsequently covered with green glass on the outside.\textsuperscript{108} Because it was not a membrane independently suspended on the bearing structure, the facade of the CK was not really a curtain wall. But the architects went at great lengths to create an impression that it was: windows were pushed to the outer edges of the »cage« to minimize the visual impact of perimeter columns; the visible sides of columns were clad in aluminum to resemble vertical mullions; and masonry walls were clad in glass mimicking the appearance of prefabricated panels.

References to American commercial skyscrapers, especially those by Mies van der Rohe, were visible in the interior of the CK tower as well. With its sleek marble walls and large expanses of glass, the entry lobby was a less monumental version of the lobby of Mies’s Seagram Building in New York. But the fact that a bust of Lenin stood opposite the main entrance highlighted an inherent paradox of the insistence on replicating an existing model. One could argue that the CK’s repeated references to American corporate architecture may not only be interpreted as mere following of an architectural fashion, but also as a symbolic act of »catching up« with the industrially developed capitalist world - through appropriation of architectural form, if not exactly of technology. However, American skyscrapers were product of necessity, of pressing lack of space that drew construction higher and higher. The CK building, on the other hand, stood amidst a vast expanse of space and its height was motivated by purely symbolic reasons. Its top floors offered spectacular commanding views of the whole city, both of the newly developed areas on the left bank and the old city on the right bank of the Sava. This was nothing like American skyscraper that normally included other competing skyscrapers. The landscape under surveillance was highly symbolic too, containing the junction of Yugoslavia’s two largest rivers, thus expanding the scale of the »controled« area from urban and local to geographic and national.

Residential buildings were not among the first structures to be built in New Belgrade, which was designed in such way to »emit cheerfulness, to seem »light and transparent«, but it was the State exclusive hotel, i.e. a public building intended for temporary stay, transit.

\textsuperscript{108} ibid.
Planned as one of the three major public buildings in the first implementation stage of the administrative city concept, the hotel was also a reason for announcing major Yugoslav competitions for New Belgrade in 1947. According to the announcement, it was intended for VIP guests who would come to official visits to the state government, and also as a temporary housing solution for the highest officials of the Federation administration. It was designed as a »Hotel with 50 two-room suites, 50 double rooms and 100 single rooms, with separate bathrooms and toilet facilities for each individual, which would receive guests coming from the most important institutions, and which would be also used as a temporary place of residence of certain central ministries' officials, until the residential area of the new land is built«.¹⁰⁹

The competition terms did not define the precise site for the building, which left the design engineers with an option to freely locate it in the centre of the new city, or on the river banks. The first prize at the competition was won by the Design Engineering Bureau of Croatia, i.e. architects Mladen Kauzlarić, Lavoslav Horvat and Kazimir Ostrogović. The second prize was shared between the Design Engineering Bureau of Serbia, i.e. architect Momčilo Belobrk (one II prize), and the Faculty of Technical Sciences from Ljubljana, i.e.

architect Edvard Ravnikar with his associate Branko Kocmut (the other II prize). As it can be observed from the designs published in the periodicals at the time of the competition, all three solutions were modernly conceived structures, corresponding to the idea of a contemporary city. All three of them were also quite acontextually set in the undefined landscape of New Belgrade, as detached structures surrounded by greenery. Accommodation unit was organized in all three of them in an elongated six-storey tract of simple parallelepiped geometry, set above common-purpose area on the ground floor and in the mezzanine.

The site for a hotel on the Danube quay, next to the Zemun railway station, was defined in Dobrović’s Concept Plan of New Belgrade in 1948. Based on the first prize winning solution and the design developed by the Design Engineering Bureau of Croatia, the hotel construction commenced already in 1948. Youth work brigades worked on the structure, thanks to the immense efforts of which the founding works on the reinforced concrete slab were executed, in which 3800 t³ of concrete were built, whereas the concrete works lasted for consecutive twelve days. When the building construction in New Belgrade was suspended in 1949, the works on the hotel were also suspended, although its reinforced concrete structure was finished. The works were not recommenced until 1960, according to a modified design prepared by one of the authors of the first prize winning entry at the competition, Lavoslav Horvat, a Zagreb architect. The hotel was then being built for another six years (1961-1967), and it was opened as the Hotel »Yugoslavia« in 1969, when interior design works were completed according to the designs of Belgrade architects Ivan Antić, Mirko Jovanović, Milorad Pantović etc. At the time of its construction, the hotel »Yugoslavia« was the biggest and the most modern hotel in SFRY, with seven storeys and ancillary buildings, 1500 rooms, 1100 beds arranged in 200 single rooms, 400 double rooms and 23 suites, with a restaurant that could seat 600 people and a smaller restaurant for 200 people and all other amenities.¹¹⁰

Only a few hundred meters east of the CK, extending the line established by the SIV and the CK towards the river Sava, stands

¹¹⁰ Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade- Contested modernism
another building of the unofficial Yugoslav capitol: the Museum of Contemporary Art (MSU—Muzej savremene umetnosti), built to house the twentieth century art from all parts of Yugoslavia. The institution, which between its opening in 1965 and the demise of the country in 1991 indeed lived up to the intention to gather the best possible collection of Yugoslav modernism, nevertheless illustrated the declining significance of federalism, since its official founder and financial supporter was not the Federation, but the City of Belgrade and the Cultural Council of the Socialist Republic of Serbia.111

As an institution, the Museum embodied Yugoslavia’s internationalist aspirations, offering an array of important visiting exhibitions from various parts of the world, while as a building, it perfectly matched the similar connotations of its immediate surroundings by adding yet another foreign reference to the stylistic equation of New Belgrade. MSU was the »brainchild of the modernist painter, art critic, theorist, and historian«112 Miodrag B. Protić, who had made a meteoric career after the abandonment of Socialist Realism in the early 1950s. An erudite writer and the key advocate of the autonomy of the arts as much as a successful artist, Protić »skillfully straddled the line between politics and art, always close to centers of power but never crossing the line into explicit political involvement, let alone becoming a member of the party«.113

According to contemporary estimates, the 1959 competition for the new museum building was not particularly successful in bringing about a broad range of thoughtful new ideas.114 That is perhaps why the winning entry by two young architects from Belgrade, Ivan Antic and Ivanka Raspopovic, stood out so distinctly from its competitors. Antic had already enjoyed some reputation in Belgrade thanks to several well-reviewed structures he had built in the previous few years, including Belgrade’s first residential skyscrapers at Zvezdara hill.115

112 Vladimir Kulic, Land of the in-between, 287
113 Ibid 289
The museum project was an inspired work based on a vaguely new brutalist language of exposed concrete frame and brick infill, which Antić had already explored and which at the time was popular among the younger generation of Belgrade architects.\textsuperscript{116} Spatial and formal complexity of the museum, despite being derived from a very simple geometrical system, was an original solution that departed from the »down-to-earth straightforwardness«\textsuperscript{117} of New Brutalism. In plan, the building was based on a rectangular structural grid of reinforced concrete columns three spans wide and five spans long; within every other spatial bay, a brick volume rotated forty-five degrees in relation to the main grid was inserted, creating a complex zigzagging contour of six diamond-shapes connected at their tips. In elevation, each of the resulting volumes ended with a triangular gable, forming a multifaceted roof truncated at the top, which extended the jagged line of the plan into the silhouette. The building thus consisted of six crystalline masses in red brick floating above the surrounding greenery, anchored to the ground by a slender concrete frame, a structure that was at once formally complex and geometrically rigorous.

The competition design did not change much in the development process beyond further clarifying the already clear concept. The most obvious change came not from the architects, but at the urging of Protić, and it concerned neither the function of the building, nor its form, but the material. While visiting the mausoleum of the Karađorđević dynasty at Oplenac, a building in a »national style« clad in white marble from Vencac (Serbia’s best quarry), Protic came to the idea to replace the exposed brick on the exterior, which the original museum design proposed, with polished white marble.\textsuperscript{118} The motivation to use marble was to emphasize the »crystalline clarity of the museum’s forms«.\textsuperscript{119} But as a side-effect, this change transformed a key element in the design’s genetic code, replacing the rough immediacy of the New Brutalist aesthetic with the smooth whiteness of the International Style.

\textsuperscript{116} See: Mihailo Mitrović, \textit{Novija arhitektura Beograda}, p70-81
\textsuperscript{117} ibid
\textsuperscript{118} Miodrag B.Protic: \textit{Nojeva barka}, p571
\textsuperscript{119} ibid, p567

Ivan Antić with the model of Museum of Contemporary Art

Queen Fabiola of Belgium visiting the Museum of Contemporary Art, accompanied by the Museum director Miodrag B. Protić and Tito’s wife Jovanka Broz, c. 1973.

The Museum, which originally departed from such an approach, was placed in harmony with its projected surroundings: the marble-clad SIV and the never-realized white conference pavilion of the CK.

Protic’s further influence had only a limited effect on the physical form of the Museum, but it bears great symbolic significance, completing the range of internationalist connotations of New Belgrade’s key buildings. In 1962, while the Museum was still under construction, Protic was one of the many prominent Yugoslavs who were invited to spend time in the United States, sponsored by a grant from the Ford Foundation. He used his tenure to study modern American art and the organization and functioning of New York’s great museums, especially the Museum of Modern Art. The prestigious grant allowed him free access to collections, as well as a chance to meet the patriarchs of American modernism - among others, the former and current directors of the MoMA, Alfred H. Barr Jr. and René d’Harnoncourt, the director of the Guggenheim Thomas Messer, the aesthetician Thomas Munro, and the architect Philip Johnson.120 Particularly important was the lesson he learned from MoMA and Alfred Barr Jr., which he used in his own museum in Belgrade. Protić »copied« the organization of the institution: following MoMA’s lead, MSU was the first museum in

\[120\] ibid, p531
Yugoslavia to have permanent departments for documentation, public relations, education, and international exchange.\textsuperscript{121}

From Barr and d’Harnoncourt, Protic also absorbed the philosophy of exhibiting a large and complex collection of modern art.\textsuperscript{122} In its concept, his permanent exhibition in Belgrade was for the modern art of Yugoslavia what MoMA’s permanent exhibition was for international modernism: an authoritative, almost canonical view. The solution adopted from American curators consisted in finding a balance between thematic and chronological approaches through organizing the exhibition into smaller »poetic sequences« related to certain movements and periods, which were then presented in a chronological order to create an apparently objective view of the development of art.\textsuperscript{123}

MSU thus transcended the traditional role of a museum that merely collects and exhibits art works and became a far more comprehensive institution aimed at the research and promotion of modern art of Yugoslavia. During the two decades of Protic’s directorship (from which he stepped down in 1980) MSU became an active locus of international exchange, conceptualizing and organizing forty two exhibitions of Yugoslav art to be sent abroad and hosting a hundred and fourteen foreign exhibitions. The museum itself became a luxury art object that pushed the tropes of modern architecture to their logical conclusions, not merely embracing, but amplifying and transforming them into deliberate aesthetic statements like few other buildings anywhere.

If the canon required a truthful expression of structure and material, MSU exaggerated the demand into a rigorous tectonic coding, in which each material denotes a single structural purpose, further coupled with its position in the geometric system of the building. The gray concrete thus exists only as a linear three-dimensional frame that follows the primary orthogonal grid; where it encounters the exterior, it is enclosed only with large glass surfaces. The white marble, on the other hand, serves only as exterior partitions and an infill to the

\textsuperscript{121} ibid, p527  
\textsuperscript{122} ibid  
\textsuperscript{123} ibid, 524
concrete skeleton; geometrically, without exceptions, it follows the secondary grid rotated by fortyfive degrees in relation to the primary.

Furthermore, not only is the building’s interior »open« in plan, but it is open in section as well, so much so that it evokes Adolf Loos’s Raumplan. The museum literally epitomizes the third, final stage of Giedion’s genealogy of architectural space, in which buildings, with equal importance, exist as free-standing objects and hollowed-out interiors, the inside and outside merging through the »incorporation of movement as an inseparable element of architecture«.124 Inside, however, the building blurs its boundaries with the exterior, especially on the second floor sculpture gallery, which offers a spectacular panoramic view of the Sava river and the old Belgrade. A sense of guided movement is implied through a long canopy at the front entrance that determines the path well before a visitor reaches the building, continuing in the interior through a jagged spiral of the main staircase that connects the half-levels and leads to the top floor. The upper level galleries, inside the marble »cubes,« seem to explore another of Giedion’s ideas about modern space, namely, that it was derived from Cubist painting.125 Indeed, the use of two overlapping geometrical grids in the plan radically abolishes the one-point perspective, engendering a somewhat disorienting space whose boundaries dissolve into facets that meet at different sharp angles.

MSU opened on the twenty-first anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade on October 20, 1965. If there were any doubts about the design, by the opening day it was seen as an unqualified success and the architects won that year’s October Prize, the highest recognition for cultural achievement awarded by the City of Belgrade. Praise was almost unanimous and few pieces of architecture ever completed in Yugoslavia rivaled the attention that the press lavished upon the new museum.126 The opening ceremony attracted not only domestic dignitaries, but a considerable number of foreign guests, including a range of French and Italian art critics. A series of laudatory texts,

125 ibid
126 The Archive of MSU contains dozens of articles published in Yugoslav press at the occasion of the building’s opening.
concerning both the building and the collection, appeared in European press, including a muchquoted enthusiastic exclamation by the French critic Michel Ragon that »in Yugoslavia, living art is at the same time official art.«\(^{127}\) Yugoslav political establishment happily exploited such views of the museum, as it became an obligatory stop for foreign dignitaries. Among the most frequent official guests were the art-loving wives of Western presidents and crowned heads, often accompanied by Tito’s own wife, Jovanka Broz.

Compared to its predecessors, MSU represented an evolution in the integration of New Belgrade’s official architecture into the mainstream international modernism of the postwar period. The SIV and the CK were hybrids of sorts, both in pursuit of replicating a preexisting image of modernity. The former updated a more archaic version of modernism, dating back to the 1930s, and brought it in line with the style of the 1950s. The latter appropriated the appearance of a foreign building type but combined it with native technical possibilities, arriving at an innovative structural solution that, however, was not tectonically articulated with the same self-conscious originality. MSU, on the other hand, recombined the stereotypes of high modernism into an original statement that had no obvious predecessors. At the same time, however, it also supported the ideology of aesthetic autonomy associated with high modernism, which, however, was everything but apolitical. What was unusual about it - and perhaps hybrid, at least with respect to the political preconceptions about high modernism entrenched in the West - was the fact that this autonomous art supported a socialist one-party system, rather than a Western liberal democracy. In that context, however, MSU was much more than a mere representation of »artistic freedom«, as its many programs, such as the children’s studio and the exhibitions dispatched to provincial regions, truly sought to bring the »high art« to the people. This was a paradoxical revival of the ideals of socialist culture through a theory and form language appropriated from a political system that was firmly opposed to socialism.

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\(^{127}\) Quoted, among other sources, in: Denegri, *Inside or Outside Socialist Modernism*, 174
For the past thirty years, foundations of an unfinished building have stood between the SIV and the CK as a further testimony to the declining power of Yugoslav federalism, all the more convincing considering the building’s high ideological charge: The Museum of the Revolution of the Peoples and Ethnicities of Yugoslavia. Designed in 1961 (although the construction did not begin until 1978), the museum never advanced beyond the basement level. If finished, it would have been a white box raised on large-span columns, topped by a dynamic sculptural skylight, in style not unlike the neighboring floating volumes of the SIV and MSU and the also unfinished conference pavilion of the CK. But despite this formal similarity with the rest of New Belgrade, the design of the Revolution Museum was a result of significantly different motivations and theories about the role of architecture in a socialist society and about the appropriate architectural representation of the country. The museum’s designer was Vjenceslav Richter, a Croatian architect, designer, artist, theorist, and activist, whose career reveals a radically different path from those of his colleagues who designed other New Belgrade structures. Unlike Jankovic and Antic, who were both politically inactive, Richter was closely involved in the political life.128

Born in 1917, he began his studies of architecture at the University of Zagreb in 1936, where he became active in leftist circles and joined the Association of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia in 1939. After the war, he continued his studies of architecture at the University of Zagreb, where he graduated in 1949 under professor Zdenko Strižić, an eminent modernist and former student of Hans Poelzig in Dresden.129 While still a student, thanks to his political reputation, Richter was able to acquire modest, but important commissions for various small exhibition pavilions at fairs in Yugoslavia and abroad, including those in Stockholm (1949), Vienna (1949), Hannover (1950), Paris (1950), etc.130 Such commissions allowed him to travel to the West well before it was possible for ordinary Yugoslavs and thus to acquire first-hand information on latest foreign architecture. This experience also determined Richter’s architectural career, since exhibition pavilions comprised the bulk of his executed projects.

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128 See: Marijan Susovski, Richter (Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2003), 25
129 See: Marijan Susovski, Richter (Zagreb: Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2003), 15
130 ibid
Vjenceslav Richter,
Competition for the Museum of the Revolution of the People and Ethnicities of Yugoslavia, second (highest) prize, ground floor and model, New Belgrade, 1961
Some of them were among the most important architectural representations of Yugoslav socialism, all the more potent for being shown abroad. Richter was the main ideologue of EXAT 51, Yugoslavia’s first independent group of artists, and he who wrote the group’s Manifesto. In it, Richter argued for a synthesis of visual arts in the creation of totally designed environments based on abstraction and continuous experimentation. Moreover, in Richter’s view, artists were supposed to be leaders in the construction of socialism, rather than to merely follow or retreat from the realities of social life.

This was a stance in total opposition to the modernist ideology of autonomous »art for art’s sake«, and it indeed continued the socially minded concerns of the interwar avant-garde, especially Russian constructivism and the Bauhaus. Richter’s neo-avant-garde position, which owed significantly to his ongoing immersion in the world of the historic avant-garde, is perhaps best exemplified by his 1964 book Synthurbanism, which radically denied the separation of visual media and argued for a continuity in design of human environments, from the smallest scale of individual objects to the largest scale of the city. Synthurbanism clearly revealed that Richter saw his artistic activities as part of his political commitment, since the book was dedicated to the »engaged youth« and repeatedly raised the issue of socialism as a part of and precondition for a »general transformation of our image of the world.«

According to the announcement of the competition, the main idea of the museum was to »exhibit development path of the struggle of the working people of Yugoslavia for its versatile progress, from 1870 to the present day,« and to acquaint the visitor with the ideology and practice of the working class. Given the location, it was emphasized that, "in addition to uniformly high quality of treatment of all facades, should be paid special attention to the visual effect of the roof surface, which can be seen from Kalemegdan."
According to the competition announcement, the basic idea of the Museum was to «display the path of development of the Yugoslav working class struggle to achieve its all-embracing progress since 1870s to the present day»\textsuperscript{136} and to introduce the spectator with the ideology and practice of the working class. Taking into consideration the Museum location, a request was stressed that in addition to equal quality finishing of all the facades a special attention should be paid to the visual effect of the roof structure that can be overlooked from Kalemegdan.

Richter’s design that was finally chosen for realization introduced certain novelties in the architectural expression in more than one aspect. A simple and yet expressively shaped form with almost a sculptural roof successfully created something of a symbolic image of the entire building. The decision to use concrete both as a construction element and as a final lining additionally contributed to the strong effect and »authenticity« of the building, making it quite fit for its purpose. As regards its functional organization and constructive scheme, although it seemingly repeated previously set models, this design actually gave some essentially new solutions for the museum space. The main exhibition hall located in the cube lifted off the ground, was designed as a unique space with two main levels and several inter-levels connected by ramps and staircases. Richter implemented the flexibility concept not only in the possibility to create different ambience values, but in the structure itself and in the system of installations. Thus, the design approached the contemporary methods of displaying artwork in all its aspects.

Nevertheless, although the design underwent the preparation of the complete detailed construction documents, already at the very beginning of the design implementation the building site was changed which could be considered as the crucial element for comprehending the ultimate failure of its realization. The new envisaged location for the Museum was next to the buildings that reflected the »policy of

\textsuperscript{136} Natjecaj za idejno resenje zgrade Muzeja revolucije naroda Jugoslavije, Arhitektura (Zagreb) n5-6, p19
might« by which its role of a »cultural edifice« was somewhat diminished. In this new context the Museum was no longer a freestanding pavilion in the park overlooked from Kalemegdan, but yet another building among many monumental ones with a completely different significance. In the succeeding years marked by the weakening and decentralization of the Communist Party the idea of the museum displaying the struggle of the Yugoslav people lost its vigor eventually leaving this project never realized.

However, this very change in the political paradigm led to another competition announcement in 1961 for another building on the main New Belgrade boulevard – the building of Radio Television of Belgrade. Judging from the highest-ranked designs at this competition, the RTB headquarters was to be a tall building introducing new aesthetics appropriate for the contemporary technology of mass electronic media. Whereas this idea was quickly abandoned, at the same time at the location on the other side of this boulevard the building of New Belgrade Municipal Assembly was

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137 ibid
designed by Branislav Jovin and Stojan Maksimovic (1961). The designers of the Municipal Assembly building were obviously inspired by the contemporary architecture of Brasilia which, as it was previously stressed, was already a model considerably appreciated by Belgrade architects. The building construction which was conducted in two stages – the first one in 1964 and the second one in 1973 – in many aspects still represents an unique creation with the conference hall annex which preserved its attractiveness to this day.

In the late 1950s a crucial change was to take place in Yugoslavia’s foreign policy. By building strategic alliances with the recently liberated colonies of the Third World (primarily India, Indonesia and Egypt), Tito slowly began to fulfill his ambition about the country’s importance at international level. It was a period when Yugoslavia finally found its place in the sun, after a long period of skilful balancing and maintaining its independent position between the major powers of the Eastern and the Western Bloc.
The propagandistic role of architecture

this side up

Non-Aligned Movement founders, Nasser, Tito, Nehru, 1961,

opposite side, from left

(1) Photography was created on 27 May 1968 at the arrival of the President of Romania Nicolae Ceausescu

(2) Welcoming Tito on his returning from the Sixth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cuba, from 3 to 9 September 1979

(3) The President Josip Broz Tito at the arrival of the President of Italy Giuseppe Saragat, in New Belgrade on 2 October 1969

(4) Welcome for the president of Algeria, Ahmed Ben Bella of on March 5, 1964

down

Arrival of the President of Romania Nicolae Ceausescu, on 10 September 1976. On the photograph can be seen highway, left the building Genex under construction, and on the right the blocks 37 and 38th
In 1961 Belgrade was the host of the **Non-Aligned Movement summit** - a movement that »offered an alternative to the Cold War«. As it was organized on the premise that international relations should cherish the spirit of peaceful coexistence between the countries and mutual respect of national territories and sovereignty this Movement enabled Tito to govern the country in the direction of developing stable friendly relations with the countries of the so-called First, Second and Third World.

At the time of the **First Summit** held from **September 1 to 4, 1961** not one of the significant buildings in New Belgrade was finished yet, so the member countries were received in the Federal Assembly building in old Belgrade. However, it was then already that Tito used the opportunity to present a new city as a product of a successful model of the Yugoslav socialist system. On that occasion the guests were invited to plant trees in the vicinity of the Federal Executive Council in what was to become the future **Park of Friendship**, a ceremonial tree alley that was to represent a tangible form of newly established relations. Over the following decades in this green complex approximately 200 of the most prominent world’s statesmen would plant some delicate types of birch, linden, maple and similar trees.

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139 Vladimir Kulic: *National, Supranational, International*; paper
Let’s mention only some of them: Indira Gandhi, Queen Elisabeth II, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Nixon, Leonid Brezhnev, Muhammad Hosni Mubarak and many others.

New Belgrade repeated its role as one of the main international stages by hosting the second major gathering such was the **Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe**, in 1977-1978. The Conference that was previously held in Helsinki and Geneva was aimed at relieving political tensions between the continents and encouraging economic and cultural cooperation. Due to lack of an adequate congress center, the city of Belgrade took out a foreign loan for financing the new complex in New Belgrade and engaged a team of architects led by Stojan Maksimovic to visit the most prominent world centers in order to analyze similar buildings.

The result was the **Sava Center**, a building that followed the latest trends in architecture in all its features – both in technological and aesthetic sense, including even the elements of the so-called high-tech architecture which only just came under the spotlight thanks to the Centre Pompidou in Paris.\(^\text{140}\)

\(^\text{140}\) ibid
The building that was constructed in record one-year time, over the following two years was to be expanded by a hall with 4,000 seats and a luxury hotel, thus becoming the main venue for hosting international meetings in Yugoslavia. The building that in the end has 70,000 sqm in area built on the terrain covering approximately 100,000 sqm includes also many amenities such as restaurants, cafes, offices and shops. Typology and the capacity of the complex allowed not only the future major official conferences to be organized, such as the annual meetings of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the UNESCO, but also a series of cultural events by which Yugoslavia was building its cultural relations.

Sava Center and its swift and quality construction entirely carried out by local companies served also as a promotion of one of the most important export industries – construction industry. Using the very connections established through the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslav companies used to build infrastructure and architectural buildings throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East and even in the Soviet bloc. Some of those companies, such as Energoprojekt moved
their headquarters to New Belgrade, using spacious areas offered by the urban matrix and already developed projects that served as their direct self-promotion. However, the landmark of 1970s doesn’t belong to a construction corporation, but to a large export import enterprise – General Export – **GENEX**. With its position along the highway that cut through New Belgrade and shaped in Brutalist style as twin towers connected on top by a bridge – this skyscraper became famous as the Western City Gate. One of the towers was intended for residential purposes only, and the other one was used as Genex office space – topped by a revolving restaurant. The 115m tall skyscraper with its 35 stories is the second tallest building in Serbia, right after the Usce Tower (former Central Committee building) and the third tallest building in Eastern Europe.

Gradually, with this symbolic internationalization in the mid 1970s New Belgrade comes to life as a city with the population of 150,000 people living in scattered modernist blocks. These »neighborhoods« mainly consisting of residential blocks with scarce amenities which were needed such as schools or supermarkets, for a long time would remain isolated from each other by huge empty lots the project designs for which were constantly altered. The identity of the city that was being born and its functionality were called into question by the lack of other urban amenities. However, the design of the central city zone that was being developed since 1960 was in store for another unusual fate.
IT WAS NORMAL THAT THE TIME OF CONSOLIDATION AND INITIAL GROWTH OF SOCIALISM ADOPTED VALUES OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM WHICH WERE CREATED WITHIN CAPITALISM... BUT, IT IS CLEAR THAT HISTORICAL TASK OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW SOCIETY OF NEW SOCIAL QUALITY CAN NOT BE CRAMMED INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF PREVIOUS SOCIAL FORMATIONS, NOT EVEN IN THOSE MOST PROGRESSIVE ONES. WE ARE NOT PROPOSING UTOPIAN GOALS OR RADICAL CHANGE OF HUMAN NATURE, WE JUST WANT TO PROVIDE MAN THOSE TYPE OF SOCIETAL, ORGANIZATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES WHICH ARE NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE.
ADMINISTRATIVE CITY VS. RESIDENTIAL CITY

Despite the lack of consensus regarding the concept and, accordingly, the plan of New Belgrade, in 1948 the execution of utility works was commenced on the terrain to be shortly followed by the construction of the first buildings in the desolate landscape of Bežanija field – the FPRY Federal Government building, an exclusive hotel, the Student City and the residential pavilions in Tošin Bunar. The works were suspended two years later due to the political and economic crisis that followed the Yugoslav split with the Soviet Union. Over the following fifteen years, until the mid 1960s, when the construction of New Belgrade was in full swing and it was then that today’s New Belgrade’s main silhouette started to emerge, its concept and plan sustained some key changes.

In general terms, as shown previously, those changes were the result of decentralization and reorganization of the Federation administrative government, i.e. abandonment of the idea of building a large number of federal ministries, and accordingly, dismissal of the concept of New Belgrade as an administrative city.\textsuperscript{141} The new concept, which was formed by a series of plans starting from the principles of the Master Plan of Belgrade from 1950, all the way to concrete solutions formulated in the central zone plan of New Belgrade from 1960 (and the Regulation Plan of New Belgrade from 1962), put into the limelight the housing issue as a dominant function of the new city. In that way, New Belgrade’s integration into Great Belgrade became the central concept, however, in such manner that it still represented the original ideas of a representative socialist city, although now, it dominant features were of a residential city.

With the dismissal of Dobrović’s Concept Plan and his retirement from the position of Belgrade’s chief architect, there was a need of creating new institutional and personal arrangements for new city planning. For this purpose, the Institute for Studying and Specifying the Problems of

\textsuperscript{141} Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade - Contested modernism pp130
New Belgrade\textsuperscript{142} was formed. The change of institutional framework was related to yet another parallel trend, and that was the process of deindividualization of authorship in the planning of New Belgrade.

It was on October 20, 1950 that the first post-war \textit{Master Plan of Belgrade} was developed by the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade.\textsuperscript{143} With this plan the principle of individual authorship was finally surpassed, although it was not only the result of a shift from physical planning, but rather a result of different mechanisms of socio-political decision-making process.

Miloš Somborski, a new director of the Urban Planning Institute and the plan leader, stated that the main objective of the plan was the application of a new social system to all urban life aspects and, consequently, the change of the urban image of Belgrade.

»The basis of urban planning of Belgrade was a socialist state system, \textit{i.e.} the application of all characteristics of the new social system in organizing the life in the city and the life of every individual… However, the urban image of Belgrade still remained a capitalist one…By its exterior appearance and organization Belgrade will get a completely new image only after the realization of the general plan of construction, development and organization of the city.«\textsuperscript{144}

The concept of New Belgrade as the Federation capital city remained one of the plan priorities, at which an important additional priority was the application of contemporary urban concepts that involved a clear distinction when compared to the Western European model. As Oliver Minić wrote in his addendum to Master Plan:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{142} ibid
\textsuperscript{143} MP of Belgrade was developed in 1949-1950 under the leadership of Miloš Somborski, with his assistants Djordje Šujica and Josif Najman. The design engineers working on the MP were the architects: Nikola Gavrilović, Stanko Mandić, Dragoljub Jovanović, Branišlav Mirković, Oliver Minić and Vido Vrbanić. The design engineers of special designs were the engineers: Miladin Pečinar (hydrotechnic), Miloš Crvčanin (transportation), Djordje Grickat (water supply), Brana Veljković (sewer system) and Sreten Milojević (geology). Architecture (Yagreb, 1951), p.3.
\textsuperscript{144} Oliver Minic: \textit{City Structure and Social Life Centres}, Architecture (Zagreb 1951) p. 48
\end{flushright}
»In the capitalist West, these progressive principles most accurately stated in the Athens Charter of CIAM, were reflected through the realization of smaller, isolated residential agglomerations. Systematic application of these principles in larger scale is in contradiction to capitalistic social system and confronts the real possibilities of realization in such system. It is obvious that only in socialist conditions can these city organization principles be applied«.145

The stipulated premise that the principles of the Athens Charter and CIAM could be applied in their full meaning only in socialist conditions illustrated the way in which Yugoslav architects and urban planners attempted to resolve that double negation reflected in the simultaneous rejection of functionalism of the Western European model and eclectic formalism of the Soviet model. In practice, and particularly in the planning of New Belgrade, a solution was sought after for the application of CIAM principles in given socio-political circumstances. In that process, theoretical postulates of modern urbanism were constantly adapting to changes and administrative models. The ideological foundation was presented through the efforts to reduce, and eventually, make the differences between the centre and the outskirts disappear, and to change the ratio of residential and business public areas in the city in favor of the areas intended for public purposes.

In the Master Plan, zone of New Belgrade has been divided with the main traffic routes into the four longitudinal areas. The costal one has been designed as an administrative area and the three others as residential. A »zone of special construction« has been planned on transversal line between the Federation Place and future railway station. The Great War Island is connected with the coastline and the Danube River branch thus has been transformed into a lake.

145 Oliver Minic: City Structure and Social Life Centres, Architecture (Zagreb 1951) p. 55
Accepted Master Plan also brings revised plan of New Belgrade, designed by architect Vido Vrbanic and Institute for Studding and Developing Problems of New Belgrade.\footnote{Vrbamic Vido (1951), \textit{Urbanistic plan Novog Beograda} (Urbanistic plan of New Belgrade), Arhitektura, Zagreb, no. 1-4, pp. 118-133.}

As for the traffic solutions Vrbanic’s plan is based on the orthogonal system with the main longitudinal lines in direction of Branko’s bridge and new bridge in the direction of Nemanja’s streets, as well as the main highway direction in center of New Belgrade. Railway traffic is based on already known relocation of the existing train station and railway junction in Sava amphitheater and tracing lines on a high embankment on the western edge of Bezanijsko polje and the station in New Belgrade opposed to the Federation Palace building. Territory of New Belgrade is divided into strict mutually isolated areas - governmental and cultural institutions, housing, supplies and
distribution, industry and recreation. Objects are treated individually according to the special characteristics of each zone. The zone of government and culture is situated in the middle of Bezanijsko polje between the Danube River quay and the main road, with the Federation Palace building as the major element of the composition. Central Committee Tower, the highest building in New Belgrade, is located at the tip of Sava River and The Danube River in the monumental avenue with buildings of representative functions. Federation Assembly building is located on the bank of Sava River, between the two newly designed avenues, with its formal access alley and square. In the heart of the plan is a huge manifestation square bounded with closed blocks with free ground floor on the north side, and two tall towers in green on the south side. A monumental building of the Museum of Yugoslav art in form of ziggurat is located Between the Federation Palace and the railway station. Recreation zone includes green spaces around each block, and parks along the river and Bezaniija field, and recreational centers on War Island and Ada Ciganlija. Industrial zone is planned on the south side of the area between Sava River and Bazanijska kosa, directly related to the supply zone, which is located along Sava cargo port on the coast. Connection with the historical center of Belgrade has been planned through Sava amphitheater.

In relation to Dobrovic’s Preliminary Plan, Vrbanic’s plan cancels diagonal lines and, more importantly, with its rigid zoning completely ignores the concept of the urban landscape. While the previous plan concept has been determined by the dynamic composition, with equally importance of each individual object in the complex spatial relationships, in Vrbanic’s plan matrix is determined in a clearly defined and mutually almost independent, longitudinal bands indicating the objects, which are determined according to a strict functional hierarchy. Vrbanic’s plan predicts strictly defined types of construction - a series of frontal tracts in the extension of Nemanjiceva Street and the system of free placed objects in the mega-blocks (500x650-750m) in the central zone, or in small apartment blocks (250x300m),\(^{147}\) which follow the line of the left bank of Sava River in the inland of railway station. Housing zone is arranged by the edge in

\(^{147}\) Vrbamic Vido (1951), *Urbanisticki plan Novog Beograda* (Urbanistic plan of New Belgrade), Arhitektura, Zagreb, no. 1-4, pp. 118-133
the three regions with 80,000 inhabitants each, with density of 300 inhabitants per hectare.\textsuperscript{148} Group of apartment blocks, from four to eight floors with services on the ground floor, has been designed in the system of freely set pavilions, parallel tracts in green (vegetation free area occupy around 65 - 70\%, and total unbilled area of the blocks around 80\%).\textsuperscript{149}

The first realizations in New Belgrade which, opposite to ambitious visions, in a long period really represented a new, socialist architecture, were the first residential blocks.

As a rapid population growth was recorded in the post-war period and Belgrade was exposed to a large mechanical growth of population, urgent resolution of the housing issue emerged as a priority and that is why we are going to dedicate a separate section here to the housing policy in order to clarify the decisions and formation of apartment and block typology that will give that final appearance and shape to New Belgrade.

**HOUSING POLICY**

Upon taking power in 1944, Tito began to place strict limitations on public property, in accordance with Marxist-Leninist theories. By 1947, the federal assembly already approved laws on confiscation of property belonging to »enemies of the state«, nationalization of companies, and expropriation of property. Interestingly, no law limiting the possession of real estate passed until 1958, by which time the federal assembly used a law limiting one’s real estate possessions to two apartments in most cases, or three in some cases. The new regime endeavored from the very beginning to control real-estate ownership. The only one who could produce, own and allocate the majority of all real-estate was the State. It was the mechanism of destroying the power of the landlords. The idea was that state-owned construction companies would build the housing and sell it to state-owned firms and to the enormous state bureaucracy, that would then

\textsuperscript{148} ibid
\textsuperscript{149} ibid.
distribute it to their employees by means of a housing board. This supposed to eliminate the problem of exploitation.\textsuperscript{150}

The housing policy implemented in the course of building construction of New Belgrade which was completely subject to social ownership conditions in socialism had as a starting point an ideological premise that an apartment was a general socially-owned property the same as city greenery and infrastructure. In theory, the right to general socially-owned property, hence to an apartment as well, was a universal one and associated to the ideal of righteous distribution of general socially-owned property. In practice, however, this ideal turned out to be economically and technically unachievable, and also unsatisfying from the aspect of righteous distribution. In the application of a complex theoretical system of distribution, different internal interests became quite distinctive within work organizations through which the workers used to come into possession of apartments. In terms of market in socialism, in which housing construction and housing structure are result of the forming relationships in residential investment area, programming and distribution of socially owned apartments rather than the market price of the apartment, there is a disproportion of the nominal standard, or plan, and economic weakness and lack of technical and technological development of the civil industry. In the period we are talking about, housing construction was planned in a centralized manner, and housing structure was in line with the requirement to build as many apartments as possible thus resolving general housing issue.

This imperative was particularly topical in Belgrade due to rapid mechanical growth of population, i.e. a large number of people moving in Belgrade becoming the new citizens of Belgrade. As a result, in the first ten years after the war, the living standard in Belgrade recorded a significant decline when compared to the pre-war period. The population number was increased by 160,000 which required 35,000 new apartments to be built, and by 1956 only 14,500 apartments were built.\textsuperscript{151} In that way »many households were left without an apartment,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ibid
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and when the families who lived in communal apartments were added up to this number, we got the total number of over 57,000 households without apartments, i.e. that many apartments were needed. In mid-1950s the private housing fund was still predominant in Belgrade (around 79%), whereas 89% of the apartments built in the post-war period were socially-owned.

The structure of new apartments was quite modest, because the main concern was to resolve the issue of insufficient number of small apartments, inherited from the previous historic period, so mainly two-room apartments were built. Thus, during the first ten years after the war, the construction of two-room apartments recorded the highest growth, from 26% to 43%, the construction of one-room apartments and studio apartments was maintained at the level of approximately 46%, whereas the construction of bigger apartments decreased from 18% to 10%, this particularly referring to three-room apartments, and quite rarely, to bigger apartments.

Housing construction funds were raised from the so-called social accumulation, i.e. by mandatory earmarking of a certain percentage of employees’ gross income and from the joint consumption funds, and later on, from bank loans, and quite rarely, by personal contribution of citizens. By mid-1960s the funds for housing construction were centralized into separate, so-called housing trust funds.

By shifting to a communal system the origin of funds remained the same, however, the city of Belgrade, the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs became the principal social investors, instead of the Federation and the Republic. In addition, a large number of apartments in New Belgrade were directly purchased with the funds from the budget of the bodies and organizations of the Federation, the Republic and the City or social organizations.

In the first period of housing construction in New Belgrade the basic organizational unit of every residential zone was »living micro

\[\text{\textsuperscript{152}}\text{ibid}\text{\textsuperscript{153}}\text{Records taken over from B. Pih: Ten Years of Housing Construction in Belgrade (Komuna, Belgrade, 1956) No.2, pp. 32-37}\]
Till the end of 1950s, the concept of planning and design of housing in New Belgrade had been changed and the basic unit of a planned urban city became »residential community«. Despite the fact that the idea of a residential community was built on an earlier idea of »neighborhood unit« defined by Clarence A. Perry and later socialist and urban elaborations of this concept, in socialist Yugoslavia, the introduction of the residential communities is directly associated with the introduction of self-management system. Residential community has been conceived as a community of people living in a neighborhood (a residential area or micro region), organized within the municipality to manage the common social activities which were improving social life in that neighborhood. In new towns and the cities, residential community has been identified with the so-called local community. General Law on residential communities from 1958 established the basics of organization and development of local communities as territorial units and as a form of self-association of citizens. However, despite the legal basis and the general imperative to introduce a residential community as a basis for planning and design, its economic, social and spatial frameworks have remained largely unclear.

HOUSING REALITY

Housing construction became the main priority and in 1949 the building construction of the Student City for 5,000 students began, as well as the construction of a residential block in Tošin Bunar with around 3,000 apartments, according to the adopted density model prescribing from 250 to 300 inhabitants per hectare, i.e. 20-30% of built area on the terrain. The buildings were constructed according to urban designs of the Institute, whose authors were Ljubo Ilić and Vide Vrbanić, and with mass participation of youth work brigades in

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154 Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade - Contested modernism pp136  
155 ibid. pp136  
the construction process. On one hand, the building construction was dictated by ambitious and unrealistic demands of the Five-Year Plan, and on the other hand, it was hindered by poor conditions, poverty and lack of up-to-date building technology. The result of the operation of these contradictory factors in practice was the suspension of any architectural and urban invention. Architectural character or, to put it more precisely, the lack of it when it came to residential settlements such as the one in Tošin Bunar was often criticized by expert community.\textsuperscript{157} To what extent this was a hampering situation for architecture of that period was best illustrated by Milorad Macura's paper presented at the convention in Dubrovnik:

»The main characteristic of that stage was the following one: a certain number of design studies were to be completed within the shortest possible time at the same time without reducing their value below a technical quality minimum. The question of formation and development of our architecture, including all its components, was not even raised.

One remained within the limits of technical design – civil engineering…In such way an impersonal, inexpressive, dry, monotonous and boring architecture was born…Even a strange phenomenon occurred – to suppress and prevent any attempt of introducing some innovation. Novelties were anathematized as being formalist and decadent«, while common and already tried out« was imposed instead. It was obvious that by the application of common and tried out« no socialist architecture could be created…but one would perpetually wander around the spheres of routine and banality, with all adverse effects caused by them from a cultural and economic aspect alike«.\textsuperscript{158}

The settlement of almost identical five-storey residential pavilions in Tošin Bunar was created as a result of those conditions. Residential buildings were erected in a free system at equal mutual distance, within which common open spaces with greenery were formed. The buildings were constructed according to standard designs, with a classical system of load-bearing brick walls and without central

\textsuperscript{157} Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade - Contested modernism pp139-141
\textsuperscript{158} Milorad Macura: Architect and project (Serbian architecture 1900-1970, Belgrade, 1972) p. 60
heating. The basic small apartment model, which was repeated in all of the pavilions, had serious functional shortcomings such as, for example, a walk-through living room with a bed in the central place of the apartment, or exclusively one-sided orientation of those rooms. Uniformity and lack of identity in urban and architectural sense can be also stressed as basic deficiencies of this settlement. Not only were these critical comments regarding the uniformity and collective spirit of the first post-war residential settlements significant for drifting from architecture that resulted from mere building construction and compliance with the plan, but it rather represented an official confirmation of this model being rejected, which provided a significant encouragement to creative freedom and development of authors’ architecture.

In addition, when due to the economic crisis in early 1950s the building construction in New Belgrade was abruptly suspended, room was made again for its thorough reconceptualization.

Until the beginning of the seventh decade, the »first settlers« of New Belgrade who resided in pavilions, barracks and student dormitories in Tošin Bunar were quite cut off from the historic centre of Belgrade by the Bežanijska field waste land, and they were orientated towards central functions of the historic centre of Zemun. In the period when the construction in New Belgrade was suspended, the rash of illegal construction was started yet again.

The Resolution of the Communist Inform Biro adopted in June 1948 signified a break in political and, indirectly, economic relations with the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact. The split with Stalin’s policy resulted in serious economic consequences, in addition to political ones. At the time of the greatest crisis in early 1950s New Belgrade had only 8,000 inhabitants, the construction was completely suspended, and insufficiently stabilized terrain, on which the FPRY Federal Government building was being erected, loosened under the weight of the concrete structure. Economic crisis also raised doubts about the soundness of the idea and concept of New Belgrade, and the period of post-war enthusiasm was replaced by a period of crisis that occurred in the sixth decade. Ambitions and visions were set

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159 Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade - Contested modernism pp143
aside, planning and designing activities were abandoned, and illegal construction of barracks and huts, the real architectural structures for people struggling with poverty, became a realistic and adequate feature of the new city.

Relating to New Belgrade apartment buildings in 1953 and 1954, it is possible to discern two distinct populations: employees of companies who had acquired apartments in these buildings and households whose land and home was expropriated, and who were offered an apartment in the pavilions as compensation.¹⁶⁰

There were two main reasons for expropriating people: to free up land on which the state wanted to build and to eliminate what the state identified as »unhygienic settlements« – essentially, shanty towns of low quality housing with little or no infrastructure. Sometimes these two goals were combined. In a sense, then, the state’s distributive policy was acting to eliminate social inequality, by offering underprivileged people better quality homes.¹⁶¹ This caused another big problem. The distributive mechanism adopted by the state also perpetuated certain existing inequalities. When the state expropriated land, it was required by law to offer people living on it a new home of equal or greater size and quality. But in many cases the given apartments were not appropriate for the large families who had been moved. Because inhabitants of Belgrade were unable to resolve their housing needs through official mechanisms, they resorted to building a home illegally, usually on the periphery of the city, on land set aside for other purposes. Furthermore, in its efforts to keep up the production of housing, the state had run out of funds for other important functions in the urban plans. Most notably, recreational and commercial spaces were conspicuously absent from the construction budget. As a result, people had to travel all the way to Belgrade to do their everyday shopping. Inhabitants of New Belgrade in the 1950s commonly brought up the absence of markets, bakeries, and newspaper stands at voter meetings, and newspaper articles throughout the 1950s and 1960s continued to deplore the lack of day

¹⁶¹ ibid.
care centers and cultural institutions, labeling New Belgrade a »dormitory city«. Very few Local Centers\textsuperscript{162} had been realized. These building were intended to be the »heart« of each neighborhood unit, combining the offices of social and political organizations and associations, schools, day cares, retail shops and services to satisfy day-to-day needs, and a cafeteria, all in one place, within walking distance. »Without centers of local community there is only a mass of houses, a faceless, random section of an endless housing zone of a million inhabitants, and not a community of neighbors«.\textsuperscript{163} This problem was aggravated by shortages that were not directly related to housing policy, such as the weakness of public transportation in New Belgrade. It is not difficult to understand that the absence of essential services was one of the reasons people living in Belgrade’s shanty towns were so reluctant to accept a brand new apartment in New Belgrade in the mid 1950s. This isolation continued to plague inhabitants of New Belgrade, as well as those of other new settlements in Belgrade, into the 1970s, and perhaps later.

The press, and especially \textit{Beogradska Nedelja}, a weekly newspaper with a strong interest in social issues, played a role in disseminating sociologists’ skepticism about settlements like New Belgrade. An article allegedly on Vinko Jerzabek’s 1967 reporting that inhabitants of New Belgrade who lived in towers, were »like sky-scrapers – self-sufficient within their families«, »atomized« households without any ties to their neighbors.\textsuperscript{164} They lived in New Belgrade as if in a hotel, only staying there to eat and sleep«.\textsuperscript{165} The article set aside urban planners for blame while pointing out at the larger responsibility of the state, noting that, probably in the face of the difficult economical conditions and the housing crisis, they gave up convincing the decision-makers that it is socially incorrect to build settlements with only apartments«.\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{162} »mesne zajednice«
\textsuperscript{164} ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} ibid
\textsuperscript{166} ibid
\end{flushleft}
When the planning of New Belgrade was reinitiated in the mid-1950s, along with the reorganization of the state administration, its program basis and conceptual framework sustained some essential changes. Certain large zones that were previously planned for the federal administrative centre were now subject to the change of use and became the terrain for utility development, i.e. for the basic function of the future city – housing. By the late 1950s Tito had somewhat relaxed the rules of housing production. Housing Associations, a type of cooperative through which individuals could group together and commission the construction of an apartment building, were introduced. The investor therefore became home-owners, but the state still had a monopoly on the production of real-estate for sale. It went a step further in this direction with the market-oriented reforms of the early 1960s, which mandated construction companies to produce apartments for »the sale on the market« – although purchasers still depended on their employers for loans to buy these homes. The purpose of these reforms was not to move towards a free market model, in which real-estate is a commodity that can be acquired and sold at a profit. Rather, the purpose of these reforms was to engage a greater share of people’s personal savings, in order to speed up the production of housing, so that this basic social need could be satisfied. The state had not fundamentally altered its profound mistrust of private property.

The Urban studies done in 1954. by Stanko Mandic preceded the planning process for New Belgrade. The study primarily examines the starting point of the Master Plan from 1950 and rejects its proposals for river regulation and formation of artificial lake, filling the entire surface of Bezanijsko polje and building blocks in the free system, with four floors. On the contrary to Dobrovic’s plan key role of Mandic’s study makes a proposal of concentrated building of high apartment blocks distributed at eleven locations in the field of Bezanijska kosa. Based on comparative analysis of the factors in the density of development, Mandic comes to a prototype of a new housing block on the surface of the circle with a diameter of 300 m, with a total 10 000
people in four twenty-four storey residential buildings. Zone of family housing is planned in part of Tosin bunar and in the direction of the old Zemun. Business and trade part is concentrated in the area of a new railway station. Near the residential area and along the main streets are provided bars, shops, offices and similar, while the zone of culture is set in costal area. For the basic traffic lines Mandic’s scheme provides: highways in the middle of the field, diagonally road which goes from Belgrade across the bridge in Brankova Street toward Zemun or new railway station, and diagonal road in the opposite direction - toward the bridge from Zemun to Belgrade, with subordinate connection to the station. Scheme is completed with cross-links to housing blocks situated in the radius of 300 m from the public transportation.

In 1955. Stanko Mandic resigned from the Planning Institute and neither participate in the farther development of the plan, nor had an impact on the further development of his concepts in the elaboration of the planning process. Only some elements of his urban studies were taken as a starting point for the work of the Master Plan of New Belgrade. His concept of designing high-concentrated objects was supported in basics, but in the further development of the plan solution for each block has been essentially completely transformed.

The chief responsibility for the Master Plan of New Belgrade that was finally adopted in June 1958 took Branko Petricic, who was at the time the director of the Urban Planning Institute. The fact that he worked together with Le Corbusier on major urban venture Plan de Paris 37, and adopted the postulates of a Radiant City and the doctrine of the sun, space and greenery – also reflected on the approach to New Belgrade planning. Up until 1963, at first as an author of the Master Plan of New Belgrade, and afterwards as the design engineer of residential blocks 1 and 2, Petricic developed an idea of a modern city set in a landscape, meticulously and systematically reinterpreting Le Corbusier’s schemes now adjusting them to the specific reality of the Yugoslav urban planning of the sixth decade.

168 ibid
IT IN THE CAPITALIST WEST, THESE PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLES MOST ACCURATELY STATED IN THE ATHENS CHARTER OF CIAM, WERE REFLECTED THROUGH THE REALIZATION OF SMALLER, ISOLATED RESIDENTIAL AGGLOMERATIONS. SYSTEMATIC APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES IN LARGER SCALE IS IN CONTRADICTION TO CAPITALISTIC SOCIAL SYSTEM AND CONFRONTS THE REAL POSSIBILITIES OF REALIZATION IN SUCH SYSTEM. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONLY IN SOCIALIST CONDITIONS CAN THESE CITY ORGANIZATION PRINCIPLES BE APPLIED.
Petricic’s Master Plan was based on strict zoning in which clear function of housing in residential blocks set in greenery was created, situated in the centre of a new city, and which was equivalent to Le Corbusier’s housing zone in meanders. The zone of federal administrative centre, similar to Le Corbusier’s commercial centre zone, located »on top« of the plan, along the shore of a newly formed lake on both sides of the Federal Executive Council building, a zone for public, cultural, educational, commercial and sports use and a large park was adjusted to the specific conditions and deviated from the theoretical diagram because it was not set between residential blocks as a »backbone« of the layout of the new part of the city, but in the perimeter area towards the Sava so that it corresponded to the historic centre and became the »backbone« of the metropolis that also included the historic centre. The civil engineering facility zone, like with Le Corbusier, was also situated »at the bottom« of the layout, between the residential and industrial zone.169

However, this symbolically modest concept could in no way be accepted in the context of understanding the New Belgrade building venture as an epochal work, therefore, following a series of discussions and consultations Branko Petričić altered his plan in order to meet the requirement for better integration of functions.170 Nevertheless, as it was established later on, such alteration merely disintegrated the concept of the plan without really achieving functional integration.

Upon the adoption of the Master Plan of New Belgrade in 1958 a large campaign of housing construction was yet again launched in New Belgrade.

Residential blocks 1 and 2 with around 3,600 apartments covering the area of 35 ha were designed in 1958-1959, according to the requirements of the adopted Master Plan of New Belgrade, and they were constructed in the period from 1959 to 1963. The author of this urban solution was architect Branko Petricic, and the authors of

170 ibid 223-228
architectural solution of residential buildings were Branko Petricic, Tihomir Ivanović and Dusan Milenkovic. Block 1 had a square base, the size of which was 400x400m, in the regulation of the central part of New Belgrade, whereas Block 2 had a trapezoid form and followed the regulation of Zemun direction established earlier. Residential buildings were erected according to two basic types: (1) towers, designed as vertical dominants« and (2) elongated two-tract buildings designed as the main artistic element«. Ancillary buildings having other use were low (ground floor and first floor) and they were designed as an underlying artistic element«.171

In apartment designing, the starting point was the analysis of demographic data and statistics that showed the housing situation in Belgrade in early 1950s. Due to a large mechanical growth of population in Belgrade after the war when the city was overwhelmed by young population, natural population growth also occurred which culminated in 1950 with the growth rate of 16,5/1,000 which was the highest population growth rate in the first fifty years of the 20th century.172 Since 1945 when the average useful living area was 12m² per capita, in 1960 this index was dropped to 10.5 m² per capita, i.e. in Belgrade in 1955 more than 50% of the apartments had less than 35 m² in area.173 Based on thorough statistical data analyses, Petricic, Ivanovic and Milenkovic when designing the apartments in Blocks 1 and 2 adopted the standard of 15 m² per capita, and the apartment in which three people lived on average was determined as a basic apartment. Cost-efficiency was a designing and building priority instead of the traditional building system.

In blocks 1 and 2 were applied five types of residential buildings with ten types of apartments:

1. Residential towers, cross square shape, 23 x 23 m, GF+13+L, architect Branko Petricic (two-room flats);

172 Ibid
173 Ibid
Master plan of New Belgrade, led by B. Petricic, 1958

President Tito and architect, model of New Belgrade, 1958

this side

opposite
2. Residential building, two-tracks length 63m (15 fields of construction range 4.20 m), GF+8+L, architect Branko Petricic (one, two or three-room flats);

3. Residential building, two-track length 84 m (20 fields of construction range 4.20 m), GF+8+L, architect Branko Petricic (one, two or three-room flats);

4. Residential building length 63 m (15 fields of construction range 4.20 m), GF+8+L, architect Dusan Milenkovic (one, two or three-room flats);

5. Residential building with three two-tracked units, P+8+L, architect Tihomir Ivanovic (three-room flats and studio).

To achieve the efficiency stairs are installed in all buildings in the center tract, with 6-8 apartments per floor. Flats have a living room, bedroom, small kitchen and bathroom with shower of minimum size and with no natural ventilation and lighting. To avoid the monotony of typical buildings, Petricic varied exterior materials and color processing.

In both types of long building, Petricic develops not only functional organization of an apartment, but achieves a convincing architectural expression of buildings as a whole. Two-tracked building provides all apartments with more light according to double orientation, and those positions on building corners even tree side one. In the type of residential building, designed by Tihomir Ivanovic, attempt has been made to break down the large unit into three separate two-tracked units, which would provide apartments, with a three-sided orientation.

Despite the architects' efforts to achieve a cost-efficient solution for standardized structures and at the same avoid uniformity and monotony, architectural achievement of the Blocks 1 and 2 was rigorously assessed by the contemporaries:

\[\text{Ibid}\]
»Due to the aspirations to achieve mobility of the entire block, tall tower-shaped structures and long eight-storey block buildings were mixed together. However, composition unity was not achieved and in terms of architecture, repetition of standardized structures the architectural design of which failed to reach a purified form, does not look too pleasant«.¹⁷⁵

Petričić was aware of the criticism he received, and he insisted on the importance of the integration of the block composition and horticultural solution, trying to soften the strict geometry of the buildings by introducing ground floor solutions.

Additional asset to the urban and architectural character of the Blocks 1 and 2 was provided when the Centre of Local Community Office

»Fontana« was built (1963-1967), designed by Uros Martinovic. That was the first realized structure of that kind in Yugoslavia in which in addition to successful architectural design, a great success was achieved in providing a clear and logical functional solution for a series of amenities: a supermarket, a dairy restaurant, shops and service units, a cinema with 250 seats, a gallery, a youth club, a reading club etc. Residential blocks 1 and 2 and the Centre of Local Community Office Fontana« confirmed that a new liberal path was taken in designing of New Belgrade, which tested the character of the new city. The urban solution of freely arranged structures set in greenery that represented a logical continuation of earlier researches of Branko Petricic was brought here to its final stage. Besides, in the blocks 1 and 2 the attempt was made for the first time to move from a traditional to a modern, rational and cost-efficient type of construction, both of the settlement itself and of individual structures. The new apartment buildings from this period in general represented an improvement in the living standard of the average lower-class Yugoslav. They were well lit and ventilated, equipped with modern appliances, and had running water and an integrated toilet. They were much more appealing than expensive rooms for rent in kitchens and basements, located inside the city, or houses with wells and outhouses on the periphery.
The concept of the Master Plan of New Belgrade exceeded the same year when it was officially adopted. During the adoption of Master Plan in March 1958 Petricic left the Institute for Urban Planning. For a new director of the Institute has been chosen former president of the Society of Architects of Serbia, Aleksandar Djordjevic, who will remain in that position until 1974. Announcing the change in strategy, Djordjevic noted that instantly during the discussion about the Master Plan of New Belgrade was observed that there are »some demanding issues in the field of design and organization of life in the new part of town« and because of that already in the period of plan adoption, it was recommended that some important parts of the city should be designed by the public competitions.177

And indeed, competition for the first residential block in the central part of New Belgrade, held in 1958, beside the detailed urban and architectural design of a block for 10 000 people at the beginning of Lenin Boulevard (Block 21), included the requirement to make preliminary design for the urban development of the central zone of New Belgrade (the building sector from the Federation Palace to the train station). Nobody has won the first prize. Two equal prizes were given to the teams of architects: (1) Leonid Lenarcic, Milosav Mitic, Ivan Petrovic and Michael Canak, and (2) Josip Svoboda, Dusan Milenkovic, Milutin Glavicki, Gabriel and John Lukic Drakulic. Finally, creating a plan is entrusted to the City Planning Institute, which formed a special working group, made from the winner authors.178

The plan of the central zone of New Belgrade developed in 1960 by the Working Group of the Urban Institute - Leonid Lenarcic, Milutin Glavicki, Milosav Mitic, Dusan Milenkovic and Uros Martinovic, is the final outcome of a long process of planning, which sets out the main character of the center zone of New Belgrade in the spirit of a

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177 ibid
178 See: Ljiljana Blagojevic: New Belgrade - Contested modernism pp179-180
Based on this decision, Milutin Glavicki and Uros Martinovic, with their group from the Urban Planning Institute, have developed in 1962 *The Regulation Plann of New Belgrade*, which served as the basis for the detailed development of the certain parts until the 1980s, until the building of housing block 24 (by architects Bogdan and Vlada Slavica, 1984-1989) had finally canceled the idea of forming the center of the monumental area of New Belgrade.

The plan for the central zone included representative public area with considerable dimensions: 1.6 x 1.6km composed of three squares in the row (manifestation square / in front of the Palace of Federation, central and the station square), with three urban blocks on each side, the corner ones were strictly for habitation, and the core ones also for the extra complementary uses of city center. All the blocks around the center were realised until the eight decade of XX century with common characteristics: designing structure were worked out by one author or a team of several authors; architecture of the buildings were also act of one or two authors; it is often that the same author make spatial composition of the block and design the buildings. All blocks were realised for habitation with withdrawl of introducing the uses of

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180 ibid.
central zone. Although Master plan for the Belgrade which was done 1972 under the title »Belgrade 2000« confirms concept of the realisation of the Central Zone of New Belgrade as it was previously designed (with huge public area, as one of the Belgrade’s center and the central core of the New Belgrade), finally, by biding the highway and after that by realisation of the habitation block at the place where the station square was planned (1989) and sport arena at the place of the »central square« (1999), praxis abolish Plan for Central Zone of the New Belgrade.\textsuperscript{182}

The urban plan of the local community - a residential community for 10000 people, or housing block 21, was the first detailed plan through which were applied the basic elements of the composition of the planned central zone of New Belgrade, and its first realized segment. Detailed urban plan of the block 21, was made in 1960, parallel with a preliminary design of the central zone, and in the same engineering and design team - Working Group of the Urban Institute, by architects Martinovic (head of the team), Glavicki, Lenarcic, Milenkovic and Mitic. Residential buildings were designed in three types according to the compositional requirements set in the preliminary plan of the central zone, and later in the accepted regulatory plan of New Belgrade. End corner of the block, which matches with one of the four points of the square, measuring 1.6 x 1.6 km of the central zone, is highlighted by a group of residential towers - the sixteen-elevated skyscrapers. The center line is emphasized with high skyscraper (Gf +24 +L), designed for single homes and business spaces, which hadn’t been done. Inside the block are residential buildings with four floors height, combined with the low schools and children’s institutions buildings. Towers are compositionally connected with the long ten-story buildings, which follow the boulevard. Block is filled with green space and pedestrian passage.

Urban solution is based on the intention to establish a balance between the different characters of the urban spaces on the left and right sides of the Bulevar Lenjina Street (today Mihaila Pupina Street). The contrast of a large un-built area in greenery with monumental buildings of the Federation Palace and the Central Committee set on one side, and high-density residential buildings structure located on

\textsuperscript{182} ibid
blok 21 finished

Model of the block 21, by architects Martinovic, Glavicki, Lenarcic, Milenkovic and Mitic (New Belgrade 1961)
Situation in the central zone of New Belgrade in 1967 after designing the blocks 21, 22, 23, 28, 29 and 30
the other side (the final block gross density is 21,416 inhabitants/ha, and net 540 inhabitants/ha), in urban way is solved by placing a »full swing« of reduced cubic forms of long housing, and with emphasizing vertical skyscrapers volume in the corner positions. Urban solution was a decisive factor in the setting of architectural concepts of the objects, in which was emphasized the effect of the whole building as an element of great urban composition, with the expression of individual units reduced to minimum. Architectural design has been created by several design teams.\textsuperscript{183}

Construction of the block 21 started with the building of a group of six skyscrapers in the spring of 1962, and was completed in 1966. Considering the fact they were built for the Yugoslav National Army, the objects of the block 21 have been designed according to regulatory regulations of YNA. With the restriction of the size of the apartment and the size of individual rooms, considering their function, it is specifically ordered to avoid locations which were designed to have shops in the ground floor, and it is further prohibited to place facilities for public use in the housing buildings, such as cafes, clinics and so on. Considering the facts that the locals could disturb residents, apartment buildings were reduced to housing function only with the minimum of the facilities required by the technically demands of the urban conditions. The only significant additional functions in the blocks were the school and children’s institution.

Even though it represented the central part of New Belgrade, Block 21 has been left without any seriously developed central city functions for a long period of time. In the apartment structure the biggest number of the flats had two rooms (44%) and three rooms (33%) which lead to the equalization of the social structure of the population\textsuperscript{184}. The main elements of architectural expression in block 21, which is establishes a correlation with the principles of the modern movement: the skeletal system and directly connected partially free ground and the effect of »floating« of the main corpus of the building; and expressed horizontality in the primary plastics, which is potentiated with the

\textsuperscript{183} Lj.Blagojevic New Belgrade – Contested modernism p.178
\textsuperscript{184} ibid
rhythm of the withdrawn and emphasized horizontal parapets at frontal positions; complete standardization of the cubic facade elements; uncompromisingly clear cubical articulation of the facade elements; rhythm »full-empty« and »light-dark« in the processing of plastic facade; the ending roof terrace as the final »wreath« of the building, and others. In block 21, was made an attempt to rationalize building to the maximum and re-interpret the structure of the production line, but concept itself is linked to the modernistic methods of the third and fourth decade. In the reality of the under-developed construction industry and the imperative of building too modest, ordinary, and even substandard apartments, the realizations have just confirmed all problems of the housing construction system.185 When Block 21 was completed in the mid-60s, once again were questioned the characters of the central zone and its special position in regard to the other parts of New Belgrade, and other new housing settlements built on the periphery of Belgrade. Social structure in New Belgrade, as shown in the sociological research of Ksenija Petovar, was very homogeneous with a dominant employment in the no manual sectors. Population structure was further »enhanced« with employees in the state and party administration, institutions and business associations and banks. Petovar, however, shows that, despite the efforts to directly influence on the formation of a representative, or so cold »elite« blocks in the central zone, due to the market conditions and resistance to moving to New Belgrade, this goal has never been achieved.186

As an example Petovar states housing block 28, which detailed master plan was adopted in the 1965 (designer Milutin Glavicki and associate Branislav Jovin). Considering the attractiveness of the location of the housing block 28 in the planned central zone of New Belgrade, the investor, JINGRAP Business Association, has planned around 300 large apartments (120 m2) in the »de lux« category of processing.187 When the apartments were on the market, it has appeared that there are not enough interested buyers for large apartments, so the investor was forced to change the structure of

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185 Ibid.
186 Petovar Ksenija, Living conditions in housing comunity of New Belgrade, PhD theses
187 Ibid.
the apartments and offers a larger number of smaller units. The number of the large apartments has been reduced to a tenth of the originally planned, and the number of two-bedroom apartments, with 364 designed in the first, has been increased to 836 build. In the conclusion of the analysis Petovar says that the »three bedroom apartment is near the upper limit of the size of the apartment«, which most of the companies in Belgrade can afford for its employees, and more importantly, »the working organizations that can buy bigger flats for their workers, have, in addition to the financial resources, more socially influence to obtain the location in the central part of the old town or one of its most attractive peripheral zone«.

So, despite the severe financial and ideological investments in the building of a new city, the intent of the planners of the New Belgrade to equalize or even surpass the historical part of Belgrade thanks to its urban significances has never been achieved. This further indicates the possible reasons why any trade, business, or cultural facilities haven’t been built in this area in a long period of time. Center of New Belgrade remained empty field surrounded by apartment blocks with equal social structure of the new city population, inhabited in the modest two-room apartments, without jobs nearby and therefore without the social and economic potential and without significant central functions. A pattern of the central zone plan has survived only as an empty echo of physical determinism of the planning strategies, and by filling in the plan with the realized housing blocks city has never been created.
CONCLUSION

New Belgrade is often described and criticized as a modernist city par excellence, a tabula rasa development that organizes life in an «obsessively simplified manner» beyond any human scale. One might say that in the core of all this criticism lies the fact that for a long time the city was unable to develop as a complex urban structure with multiple functions which caused a low level of social life and an extended period in the city’s life without any internal economic and cultural dynamics.

This fragmentation and incompleteness is not a surprise considering the fact that the planning and the purpose of its development were undergoing constant changes since the very beginning. Closely linked to the country’s political strategies, its development followed the changes that occurred in the country that never ceased to review the premises of its sociopolitical system, from the model of ownership and labor organization to civil, national and cultural rights. After all, we may say that the entire federation, as the union of nations united under the motto of “brotherhood and unity” was equally unstable and that by going through increasing decentralization it finally entered into war and completely fell apart.

All in all, one can hardly think of a city that experienced more intense denial of its own essence than New Belgrade did in the post-socialist period. Designed with great ambitions and built in conditions of continuous coping with technological changes, New Belgrade has continued to adjust itself to the changes of internal and foreign country policy to the present day. Every succeeding political and social twist inserted a new layer into the modernist concept of the functional city resulting in an urban situation that is now almost as complex as in many older cities that surround it. Nowadays, a mindful eye cannot help but notice a winding road entangled in its urban scheme – from the idea of a capital city of the new state, through the “city’s dormitory”, to the city of grey economy in the transition period that after the destruction suffered in the bombing in 1999 - started booming again and became a new business center.
The country that conceived New Belgrade does not exist for over twenty years now, and the one that succeeded it, is still unsure about the direction in which it wants to go, although it inevitably entered the global market system. The transition period considerably weakened urban regulation and control and introduced some new players – private initiative and capital and international cash flow. These new players started a new construction wave but this time without progressive ambitions of the modernists and more in the spirit of a “laissez-faire” non-liberalism and speculative construction.

It is quite a paradox that New Belgrade’s “incompleteness” is actually recognized as its main advantage. Large urban spaces of the modernist urban fabric are perceived as spaces of huge potential and once major blocks intended for public use are used for new residential and commercial programs. A modernist matrix of grand boulevards and “space, sun and greenery” turned out to be adequate for office-buildings and big-box retail.

Regressive tendencies in searching for the lost national identity after the fall of socialism brought about new paradoxical situations: the buildings that once belonged to modernism became more and more dilapidated and the general attitude is that they are “overmodern”. However, what actually survived (ever since the beginning of the creation of New Belgrade) is the desire to erase the past once again. It is enough to mention that the building with which everything started – the Communist Party Central Committee building – is now transformed into a high-rental office space decorated with a huge advertisement of an Austrian bank. Later on it was expanded with a shopping mall built right in the place where once a congress hall was to be erected.

Although the results of modernist urbanization are largely used, the idea of an urban space from which everybody could benefit was completely repressed by isolated attempts to achieve uniqueness of separate buildings. “Space, sun and greenery” gradually disappear due to the investments of major and relatively autonomous companies that build prestigious and introvert administrative buildings. Like in the 1950s the social system once again provided the architects with the opportunity to test new concepts. Only, behind everything is no longer the ideology of communism, but rather - finance.
However, one may guess that quite soon it would turn out that, both in terms of its ideology and results, the previous modernization was superior when compared to the current situation.

Having no intention of looking back to historical events with nostalgia, but rather determined to critically interpret the values and ambitions that modernization had in socialist conditions – one could not help but notice social justice and solidarity, cultural progress and support in expanding and sharing knowledge, as well as the significance of the public opinion. Although social reality in Yugoslavia was by no means ideal, still it was characterized by constant efforts to go towards that goal, by actively including architecture and urban planning in such process. Whether the experiences and ideas of the period could be actualized again – particularly the lesson that “interruption does not necessarily mean that something has come to an end”\textsuperscript{188} – remains at the same time a political, urbanistic and architectural issue.

\textsuperscript{188} Maroje Mrduljas, \textit{Unfinished modernisations}, paper
Milorad Pantović was born in Belgrade in 1910, where he died in 1986. He studied architecture at the Department of Architecture of the Technical Faculty in Belgrade and continued his education at the Technical University in Berlin. In 1936 he went to Paris where he attended a private school and design workshop of Le Corbusier. In 1938 he attend a private school of the Le Corbusier's former associate Amadeo Ozenfana in London. Then he went to New York for further training and in 1939 returned to Belgrade. He became a Professor of Architecture at University of Belgrade in 1970. 

»Belgrade Fair« from which he achieved great success was the topic of his habitation work. In the period from 1957-1982 he was awarded the prestigious prize for architecture in the former Yugoslavia and Serbia, and his academic career crowned by membership in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU).

The period of his work was celebrated by the impact of Le Corbusier's doctrine of modern architecture. The basic postulate of the theory were used in his winning project of urban planing for Novi Sad (1937) and also in the study of Belgrade. He participated in the competition for the construction of the old Belgrade fairgrounds and several other engineering and urban public competition for Smederevo area, Vranje, Vrnjačka and Niška Banja. In 1940 he won a competition in partnership with Božidar Obradović for the project of the State Opera in Belgrade. In 1953 he participated in the urban competition for Partizan Square in Užice and won the first prize by sharing it with Stanko Mandić. The Belgrade Fair project which he developed in cooperation with Vladeta Maksimović is consisted by three large exhibition halls of reinforced concrete structures. He designed and executed Serovakcionalni institute on Torlak (1947), the interior of the Workers University (1958), underground pedestrian passage to Lenin Boulevard in New Belgrade (1964-65), Hall IV (1975 -76) at the Belgrade Fair and interior of the hotel Yugoslavia in New Belgrade (1967-68).  

Neidhardt was an architect of a remarkable modernist pedigree. Born in Zagreb, 1901, he studied with Peter Behrens at the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts 1920-1924, and in 1930 joined Behrens again in his Berlin office, where he spent eighteen months. With such reputation, he realized his first commission, the Archbishopric Seminary in Zagreb in 1929. Then he moved to Paris and from the beginning of 1933 until the end of the summer 1935 he was employed on and off in Le Corbusier’s atelier at 35, rue de Sèvres. One of a few paid collaborators in the atelier, Neidhardt worked on such seminal projects as La Ville Radieuse and plans for Algiers. He also worked on his own and in 1935 exhibited his designs at the Galerie des Cahiers d’Art alongside such other promising young names as Charlotte Perriand, Tecton, and Claude Laurens.

In 1935, Neidhardt moved back to Yugoslavia. At the urging of his friend and colleague, Slovenian architect Dušan Grabrijan, in 1939 he finally settled down in Sarajevo, where he would stay for the rest of his life. Grabrijan passionately recorded Bosnian vernacular architecture and soon initiated Neidhardt into his passion. The two architects would soon devise a theory that in its spatial layout, formal simplicity, and reliance on nature the traditional Bosnian house paralleled principles of modern architecture, particularly as defined by Le Corbusier; a claim that, in a way, acknowledged Le Corbusier’s early indebtedness to the vernacular of the Balkans. Their joint efforts culminated in the monumental book Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity (1957), for which Le Corbusier himself wrote a laudatory preface.

After the war, Neidhardt became a professor at the newly founded School of Architecture in Sarajevo in 1953, where he would become highly influential for the generations of students. In the same year he became a member of the RIBA.

His buildings and major urban schemes were all marked with the synthesis of traditional building elements and modern technological and artistic developments, with a strong emphasis on the integration of architecture with landscape.190

Vjenceslav Richter was one of the most important Croatian and Yugoslav architects of the 20th century. He was born in 1917, in Drenova near Zagreb, and his studies of architecture began in 1936 at the University of Zagreb under Zdenko Strižić (former student of Hans Poelzig in Dresden), where he graduated in 1949. As a student, Richter became active in the circles of left-leaning and antifascist youth. After the outbreak of the war, he joined the Liberation Movement, was wounded and imprisoned by the Ustaše, and interned in a labor camp in Austria. After the war, his communist and antifascist reputation helped him acquire commissions even before he graduated, the first of which were a series of exhibitions and small pavilions at various fairs in Yugoslavia and abroad.

Richter taught at the Academy of Applied Arts in Zagreb until it was abolished in 1954; after this, he maintained an independent position until the end of his life. Richter’s activities straddled architecture, art, design, and theory, striving to achieve their ultimate synthesis. He was one of the founders of Yugoslavia’s first postwar avant-garde group EXAT 51, for which he wrote the Manifesto (1951) that called for a collaboration of various fields of art in the creation of synthetically designed human environments. In the 1960s, he was active in New Tendencies, an international network of artists centered in Zagreb, which explored the expressive potentials of geometry and new technologies. After 1960, he became increasingly involved in sculpture, graphics, and painting, creating an enormous body of work that found its way into prestigious international collections, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Gallery in London, Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, etc.

Richter built relatively few buildings: the Pavilion of Yugoslavia at the EXPO 58 in Brussels (1958), Plant of the Saponia Factory in Osijek (1960), Catering Trade School in Dubrovnik (1961), Villa Zagorje, the official residence of the President of Yugoslavia in Zagreb (with Kazimir Ostrogović, 1963-64), and several family houses around Croatia. His unbuilt projects are far more numerous, including, most importantly, the unfinished Museum of the Revolution of the Peoples of Yugoslavia in New Belgrade (1961).
Richter was a prolific writer, who published dozens of articles, as well as several exhibition catalogues and books, most importantly, Synthurbanism (1964). He was the first editor of the Zagreb journal Čovjek i prostor (Man and Space).

Vjenceslav Richter was the recipient of numerous awards at architectural competitions and exhibitions of art. His life achievement awards include the Gottfried-von-Herder-Preis (1981), the highest award for architecture in Croatia, Viktor Kovačić Award (1988), and the Vladimir Nazor Life Achievement Award of the Republic of Croatia (1992).191

Janković was born in 1911 in Belgrade, where he graduated architecture on Belgrade University in 1936. He first came to prominence designing the Stadium of Yugoslav National Army in Belgrade (1947-51) in collaboration with Kosta Popović. With the expertise from this project, he also designed the smaller stadium at Tašmajdan in Belgrade (1953-56 with Uglješa Bogunović), as well as the adjacent Taš Hotel (1966-69).

Janković was the founder and director of architectural office »Stadion« through which he designed some of the most significant buildings in Belgrade, many of which were symbols of postwar Yugoslav state. These include the redesign and completion of the building of the Federal Executive Council in New Belgrade (1954-61), Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, also in New Belgrade (1959-64), and the Museum 25 May (1961-62) at Dedinje (Belgrade), built to house the gifts that President Tito received in the country and abroad, including a large collection of decorative batons that circulated through Yugoslavia in a relay race before his birthday.

Janković mastered the language of high International Style, thus giving the Yugoslav state a decidedly modernist face.192


Ivan Antić was one of the most celebrated and prolific Serbian architects after World War II. Born in 1923 in Beograd, he graduated from the School of Architecture in Belgrade in 1950, where he also taught for the better part of his career. He designed a number of influential buildings, but wrote very little.

Antić’s early buildings, like Belgrade’s first residential skyscrapers at Zvezdara (1953-55), are characteristic for rationalist simplicity and straightforward use of materials, frequently combining exposed concrete and red brick. He later ventured into more complex forms, always retaining a level of geometric rigor.

His most famous building is the Museum of Contemporary Art in New Belgrade (1959-65), which he designed in collaboration with Ivanka Raspopović. The building combines two orthogonal systems rotated at 45 degrees to create a complex combination of cubic volumes in white marble, outlined by an exposed concrete frame. A second significant collaboration with Raspopović was the Museum in Šumarice (Kragujevac, Serbia, 1968-75) that commemorates local victims of Nazi persecution, an expressive abstract form in red brick. Besides these, Antić designed a number of residential buildings, several sports facilities (in Belgrade, Zemun, and Split), as well as public and administration buildings. His Ministry of Interior of Serbia in Belgrade, subtly incorporated into a difficult location, was destroyed in NATO bombing in 1999.193

Nikola Dobrović was born to a Serbian family in the Hungarian city of Pécs 1897, a younger brother to the well known painter Petar Dobrović. He studied architecture in Budapest (1919) and at the Czech Technical University in Prague (1919-23), where he came under the influence of Czech modernists. In Prague, he worked for several local offices, as well as an independent architect. His largest commission there was the Yugoslav Student Dormitory (also known as King Alexander’s College, 1932).

In the early 1930, Dobrović took part in architectural competitions in Yugoslavia and won a number of awards, including the visionary design for the Terazije Terrace in Belgrade (1932), which, although never built, made a strong impact on local architects and helped the breakthrough of modern architecture in the city in the 1930s. In 1934, Dobrović moved to Dubrovnik, where he designed a series of elegant villas that combined modernist language with local Mediterranean materials. After the capitulation of Fascist Italy, Dobrović joined the Partisans and spent the rest of the war in their uniform. He arrived in the recently liberated Belgrade in the fall of 1944 and immediately acquired a series of high-ranked positions, taking charge of urban planning in Serbia. For several years, he was responsible for the urban planning in Serbia and in Belgrade and was the founder and first director of the Belgrade Urban Planning Institute. However, he was soon removed from that position and deployed to teach at Belgrade University’s School of Architecture (1947). There, he taught Contemporary Architecture and wrote a monumental five-volume history of modern architecture as the textbook for the course (Savremena arhitektura I-V, 1952-71). After World War II, Dobrović’s built much less than before, but in this period he designed his largest and most famous building, the Ministry of Defense and Yugoslav National Army General Staff (1954-63) in Belgrade. Besides this, he only built a few smaller projects in this period.  

194 Sources:Dobrović, Nikola," in Zoran Manević, ed., Лексикон српских архитеката XIX и XX века 454; Perović, Miloš, and Spasoje Krnić, eds. Nikola Dobrović: Eseji, projekti, kritike
Edvard Ravnikar was born in 1907, in Novo Mesto, Slovenia. He was a student of architect Jože Plečnik in the years 1938-39 whereupon he studied for few months in Paris with Le Corbusier. With knowledge and experience that has accumulated in Le Corbusier’s studio, he created the new architectural school based on the contemporary architectural currents in Western Europe. During 1946-1980 he was a professor at the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Ljubljana.

Ravnikar’s architecture is an unusual mixture of Plečnik classicism, Le Corbusier brutalism and vernacular architecture. His work was important in the field of urban planning. He built a complete new city Nova Gorica after II World War as an independent town on the edge of the old town Gorizia. The master plan of the city is conceived as a network, but was never implemented in full. Other important buildings, designed by Ravnikar are: Building OLO of the Municipality of Kranj, Cemetery for hostages in Begunje, Memorial Complex Kampor on the island Rab in Croatia, a residential complex Ferantov Garden and building of the Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering in Ljubljana. He was also a part of the project team that designed Novi Beograd.195

195 Zoran Manević, ed., Лексикон српских архитеката XIX и XX века
Mihajlo Čanak was Born on June 2, 1932, in Belgrade. During the study, in 1953, with four other colleagues and friends (L. Lenarčiće, M. Mitić, I. Petrović and I. Simović), he founded the group "Belgrade 5". Many awards and more realizations (two apartment buildings in Block 21 in Novi Beograd, Liman I and II in Novi Sad, etc.) marked the work of this group. This is also a first phase in the designing work of Michael Čanak, during which he will prove as a vigorous supporter of functional minimalism, characteristic for the so-called, Industrial Modernism.

In the same period, along with planning activities, Čanak dealt with the scientific research in the field of housing quality. He was actively involved in the issue of evaluating the quality of housing and residential construction. In the period 1970-87 he participated in the Working Group on Construction CEE UN as a member of the Yugoslav delegation. He suggested the international project «Evaluating the quality of housing», which was accepted and implemented. He realised series of housing settlements in Belgrade, Novi Sad, New Belgrade and other cities of Yugoslavia.196

196 Zoran Manević, ed., Лексикон српских архитеката XIX и XX века
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