

BRINGING INSTITUTIONS CLOSER TO CITIZENS

Dear visitors,

State-institution and city-hall buildings, in which important political decisions are made, are open to the public. The purpose of the programme Bringing Institutions Closer to Citizens is to enable the citizens of Serbia to get acquainted with the decision-making process in the country, to learn how to follow the "actions" of the Members of Parliament they voted for and to make them better understand how the system functions..

One of the ways of demonstrating the openness of the institutions is to organize the visits to the buildings in which the citizens' representatives work. In all democratic countries the citizens are enabled to get acquainted in this way with the work of their representatives, whom they elected indirectly or directly, and often through organized visits for foreigners.

The President of Serbia, Members of Parliament and committee members of the Belgrade Assembly work in beautiful edifices whose doors are sometimes open for all those who wish to get acquainted with the turbulent history of the Serbian state through interesting stories which follow significant political events and through architectural and art pieces which these buildings encompass.

On the pages of the brochure entitled Bringing Institutions Closer to Citizens, designed for the visitors of state institutions, there are lines explaining the roles of the President of Serbia, Members of Parliament, committee members and citizens of Serbia, as well as the reminders of historical circumstances in which those buildings were constructed and the description of their architectural and artistic values.



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

The President of the Republic presents the state integration of the Republic of Serbia.

The President of the Republic and the Government of the Republic of Serbia are parts of the executive authority.

The position and authority of the President of the Republic are regulated by the Constitution, Law on Election of the President of the Republic, Law on Special Rights and Duties of the President of the Republic and other regulations.

MANDATE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

How is the President of the Republic elected?

Every citizen of Serbia who collects 10,000 voters' signatures may submit his/her candidacy for the President, on the condition that at least one year before calling elections, he/she has had permanent residence in Serbia.

The elections for the President of the Republic are called by the Speaker of the National Assembly 90 days before the expiry of the mandate of the President of the Republic, so that the elections are terminated in the following 60 days.

How long does the mandate of the President of the Republic last and when does it start?

The mandate of the President of the Republic lasts five years and begins with the presidential oath before the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

The text of the oath is the following:

"I solemnly declare that I shall invest all my efforts into maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, including Kosovo and Metohija as its integral part, and that I shall promote human and minority rights and freedoms, respect and defend the Constitution and law, that I shall dedicate myself to maintaining the peace and welfare of all the citizens of the Republic of Serbia and that I shall fulfill all my duties conscientiously and responsibly."

The mandate of the President of the Republic may be extended, but only if it expires during the state of war or state of emergency.

Nobody can be elected President of the Republic more than twice! Therefore, the same person can be the President of the Republic maximum 10 years (two times five).





The President of the Republic may resign and he/she shall thereof inform the public and the Speaker of the National Assembly.

In case the President of the Republic is prevented from performing his/her duties (due to illness or for similar reason) or if his/her mandate ceases before its regular expiry (for example, if he/she is dismissed or resigns), he/she shall be replaced by the Speaker of the National Assembly, for a maximum of three months.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Authority of the President of the Republic in the field of foreign affairs

The President of the Republic represents Serbia in the country and abroad. He/she is therefore authorized to appoint and recall the Ambassadors of our country, upon the Government's proposal, as well as to receive all credentials and revocations from foreign diplomatic representatives.

President of the Republic and Amendments to the Constitution

The President of the Republic may propose amendments to the Constitution.

President of the Republic as Commander of the Army of Serbia

The President of the Republic commands the Army of Serbia.

Also, the President of the Republic appoints, promotes and dismisses the officers of the Army of Serbia.

Nominating a candidate for the President of the Government (mandatory)

The President is authorized to propose a candidate for the President of the Government (Prime Minister) to the National Assembly. He/she proposes a candidate after considering the opinion of the elected representatives from all election lists.

Proclaiming a state of war and a state of emergency in case the National Assembly is prevented from convening

A state of war and a state of emergency are proclaimed by the National Assembly. However, if it is impossible for the

Assembly to convene, the proclamation decision is made by the President of the Republic in cooperation with other state organs - in compliance with the Constitution.

President of the Republic and Procedure of Adopting Laws

The President of the Republic participates in the legislative procedure by proclaiming decrees on laws adopted by the National Assembly. If a law is adopted in an urgent procedure the President of the Republic is obliged to proclaim it within seven days. In all other cases, it should be proclaimed within 15 days of adopting the law.

The President of the Republic may refuse to proclaim the law adopted by the National Assembly. The President of the Republic returns such a law along with a written explanation, to the National Assembly for repeated consideration. This right of the President of the Republic is called a "veto". If the law is passed again, the President of the Republic is obliged to proclaim it.

The President of the Republic is not authorized to propose laws to the National Assembly.

Immunity of the President of the Republic

Often the President of the Republic needs to make difficult and risky decisions in order to enable the functioning of the state.

The President cannot be accountable for criminal or other offenses because he/she has expressed opinion while performing his/her duty.

Also, if the President of the Republic invokes his/her immunity, he/she cannot be remanded in custody and against him/her no criminal or other proceedings that may result in a sentence of imprisonment can be instituted. The President's immunity may be upheld only by the decision of the National Assembly if at least 126 Members of Parliament vote "for".

The President of the Republic is not protected by the immunity if he/she is caught perpetrating an offence for which the imprisonment longer than five years is prescribed. In such cases he/she may be remanded in custody even without the approval granted by the National Assembly.





The impeachment of the President of the Republic

The President of the Republic may be dismissed only if he/she violates the Constitution or if the National Assembly initiates the impeachment procedure upon the proposal of at least 84 Members of Parliament (one third of the Members of Parliament).

HOW DOES THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC WORK?

The President of the Republic is entitled to security, the presidential residence and an official vehicle; he is entitled to receive a salary and has rights that protect

him/her and his/her family. Some of these rights apply even when the President's office is terminated.

The President of the Republic is obliged to perform his/her function conscientiously and responsibly and to respect the Constitution and laws.

Also, the President of the Republic has to keep confidential data (such as military secrets) and must not perform any other public function or professional activity.

The General Secretariat of the President of the Republic assists the President in performing professional and other jobs. The most important positions in the General Secretariat assume Secretary General, Head of Office, Advisors to the President of the Republic and Chief of Protocol.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



WHAT IS THE ASSEMBLY?

Constitutional position of the National Assembly

The National Assembly is the highest representative body and the bearer of constitutional and legislative authority in the Republic of Serbia.

The National Assembly is the most important state organ because it adopts and amends the Constitution - the highest and the most important legal document of the state.

Also, the National Assembly adopts laws, decides about changing the borders of the Republic of Serbia, calls the Republic referendum, ratifies international agreements, adopts the budget and strategy of defence, and decides on war and peace and other issues in accordance with the Constitution.

The authority of the National Assembly is determined by the Constitution and the Rule of Procedure of the National Assembly. In accordance with the Constitution, the Law on the National Assembly is passed.

Constituting the National Assembly

The National Assembly consists of 250 Members of Parliament.

After parliamentary elections, the first sitting of the National Assembly is scheduled. It is convoked by the Speaker of the National Assembly from the previous convocation.

At the first sitting the mandates of the Members of Parliament are verified. The National Assembly is constituted when the mandates of two thirds of the Members of Parliament are verified. On that day the mandate of the previous convocation of the National Assembly expires.

Only upon its constitution, the National Assembly can perform its functions - legislative, electoral and supervisory.

Authority of the National Assembly

The National Assembly elects and dismisses the Government, judges of the Constitutional Court, the Governor of the National Bank of Serbia, an Ombuds-person, judges, public prosecutors and their Members of Parliament, and other officials - in accordance with the law.

The National Assembly may impeach the President of the Republic, but only if he/she violates the Constitution and only in compliance with the procedure regulated by the Constitution. At least two thirds of the Members of Parliament have to vote for dismissal.

The National Assembly supervises the work of the Government, the Governor of the National Bank of Serbia, the Ombudsperson, the security services and other organs elected by the National Assembly.

Relationship between the National Assembly and the Government of the Republic of Serbia

After parliamentary elections, the President of the Republic is obliged to propose to the National Assembly a candidate for the office of Prime Minister (mandatory). At the following sitting of the National Assembly the candidate presents his/her platform and proposes the composition of the Government - which is further debated by the Members of Parliament.

The Government shall be elected if the majority of the total number of Members of Parliament should vote in favour of it. If a minimum of 60 Members of Parliament are not satisfied with the work of the Government, they may submit a motion of no-confidence. After a debate on the motion, the National Assembly shall vote and if 126 Members of Parliament vote "for", the motion is passed.

The National Assembly's supervisory function over the work of the Government is very important. The Government is responsible to the National Assembly for the policy of the Republic of Serbia, enforcement of laws, regulations and by-laws, for the work of state administration organs, and is obliged to submit periodical reports about its work.



HOW DOES THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WORK?

Who takes care of the National Assembly's work?

The Speaker of the National Assembly represents the National Assembly, chairs the sittings of the National Assembly and sees to the timely and coordinated work of the working bodies of the National Assembly. The Secretary of the National Assembly assists the Speaker of the National Assembly in performing duties and manages the National Assembly Support Service.

Sessions

The sessions of the National Assembly can be regular and extraordinary.

The National Assembly convenes regularly twice a year. Extraordinary sessions are held if it is requested by at least one third of the total number of Members of Parliament or by the Government. In case of a state of war or a state of emergency, the National Assembly shall convene without being convoked.

Quorum

The National Assembly may adopt decisions if 126 deputies (which is the majority) are present at a sitting. When the necessary number of Members of Parliament is present the "decision-making quorum" is established.



Adopting laws

All deputies read thoroughly all the laws that enter the procedure before the National Assembly. They can propose amendments - motions for amending and modifying the bill which is in the "parliamentary procedure". The bill is discussed both "in principle" and "on particulars" and after that the National Assembly votes on a bill on a Voting Day sitting.

Most often it is sufficient that the majority of present Members of Parliament vote "for" a law or by-laws, if at least 126 Members of Parliament are present.

When it comes to the voting for the most important laws and decisions, it is necessary that the majority of the total number of Members of Parliament vote "for".

Openness of Work

Sittings of the National Assembly and its Committees are public and their course can be followed by the means of television, internet, press... However, the Government, Committees of the National Assembly or at least 20 deputies can propose to hold a sitting in camera.

Committees

Committees are working bodies of the National Assembly formed for the purpose of the efficiency of work. The members of the Committees are Members of Parliament. (For example, the convocation from January 2004 to January 2007 had 30 Standing Committees dealing with all areas of social and state life) The number of Committee members varies from 11 to 25. The number of members in a Committee and the duties of a Committee are determined by the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly.

WHO ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT?

Electing Members of Parliament (MPs)

Members of Parliament are the representatives of citizens in the National Assembly. They are elected by citizens in secret ballot at the elections regulated by law.

The mandates can be given only to those from the election lists who have received at least five percent of votes from the total number of voters. Special rules apply to the parties of ethnic minorities. Every election list must contain at least 30 percent of women.



Yellow Salon

Immunity

Often MPs need to make difficult and risky decisions in order to enable the functioning of the state. For that reason an MP cannot be accountable for criminal or other offenses because he/she has expressed opinion or voted while performing his/her duty. If an MP invokes his/her immunity, he/she cannot be remanded in custody and against him/her no criminal or other proceedings that may result in a sentence of imprisonment can be instituted. The immunity may be upheld only by the decision of the National Assembly.

If a Member of Parliament is caught perpetrating an offence for which the imprisonment longer than five years is prescribed, he/she may be remanded in custody even without the approval granted by the National Assembly.

Interpellation and parliamentary questions

When Member of Parliament need to get an answer to a question posed to the Government or to some of the Ministers,

related to the issue from their purview, they submit interpellation. A minimum of 50 deputies is required for submitting an interpellation.

The deputy who wants to obtain more information on the Government or a Minister's purview may pose a parliamentary question.

WHAT DOES PARLIAMENTARY LIFE LOOK LIKE?

During the breaks, the halls of the National Assembly building become a very lively place, crowded with deputies, ministers, journalists and parliamentary service staff. The sittings are usually held from 10 a. m. to 6 p. m.

The lunch break usually starts at 2 p. m. and at that time Members of Parliament hold press conferences or participate in the caucus meetings, the Committee meetings; they are in the Research Centre or at the Assembly's restaurant.

Citizens who want to discuss their problems with the MPs often come to the National Assembly. They can enter the building only if they have previously announced their visit and left their ID cards at the reception.

The Committee on Petitions and Proposals considers petitions and proposals addressed to the National Assembly. This Committee proposes measures for the settlement of issues contained therein to the National Assembly and appropriate bodies. It is forbidden to bring weapons into the Assembly building. Also, clothes and footwear must be suitable, which means that slippers, shorts, mini-skirts and similar garments are not allowed.

CITY OF BELGRADE ASSEMBLY

BELGRADE IN THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS

In the Constitution, Belgrade is defined as the capital city of the Republic of Serbia. The legal position of Belgrade is regulated not only by the Constitution, but also by the Law on Local Self-Government, the Statute of Belgrade City and other regulations. The Statute of Belgrade City is passed by the City Assembly.



BELGRADE AS A UNIT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The notion of local self-government

The state authority in Serbia is limited by, among other things, the citizens' right to local self-government. The units of local self-government (cities/towns and municipalities) are in charge of the issues that can be dealt with successfully within the units of local self-government.

Is Belgrade the only city in Serbia?

It certainly is not! In Serbia there are many beautiful and big cities and other settlements. However, the law prescribes that, in addition to Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Pristina and Kragujevac also have city status.

Difference between cities and municipalities

Cities and municipalities have the same authority, but additional rights and duties can be assigned only to cities. Also, only cities can have "urban municipalities" which are established according to the Statute.

BELGRADE CITY AUTHORITY

Belgrade has the City Assembly, the President of the Municipality (Mayor) and the City Council.

Electing Belgrade City authorities

The City Assembly is elected at the local elections. The Assembly of the City of Belgrade has 90 councilors elected for a four-year period.

The Mayor is elected at a direct secret ballot for a period of four years. The candidate who receives more than 50 percent of votes is elected. If in the first round nobody gets the necessary number of votes, the second round is organized in which two highest-ranking candidates participate.

The City Council is a body of the City of Belgrade that coordinates the implementation of the Mayor and City Assembly's functions, and carries out the control and supervision over the performance of the City Administration. The City Council consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and nine members elected for a period of four years by the City Assembly upon the Mayor's proposal.

AUTHORITIES (COMPETENCES) OF THE BELGRADE CITY ASSEMBLY

The City of Belgrade, as well as all other units of local self-government, regulates and secures the performance of communal activities and the use of construction land and business premises, and takes care of the roads, tourism, culture, social welfare, education, health, sport and other activities important for the everyday life of citizens.



Financing the work of the Belgrade City Assembly

The work of the Belgrade City Assembly is financed from the original income of the Belgrade City and from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. The Belgrade City Assembly acquires original income from property tax, local administrative and communal fees, compensation for using the City land, income from donations and contributions, as well as other sources determined by law.

Supervision over the City authority

The Government of the Republic of Serbia supervises the work of bodies of the City of Belgrade. The Government may

dismiss the City Assembly in certain cases stipulated by law.

URBAN MUNICIPALITIES

The urban municipalities are the parts of the Belgrade City Assembly which perform certain work of local self-governments determined by the City Statute.

The urban municipalities are led by the President of the Municipality and the Municipal Assembly. The Municipal Council has the executive power.

How many urban municipalities does Belgrade consist of?

Belgrade has 17 urban municipalities. They are: Cukarica, Novi Beograd, Palilula, Rakovica, Savski venac, Stari grad, Vozdovac, Vracar, Zemun, Zvezdara, Barajevo, Grocka, Lazarevac, Mladenovac, Obrenovac, Sopot and Surcin.

Authorities (competences) of the urban municipalities

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The urban municipality has many authorities important for the everyday life of the inhabitants of Belgrade. So, for example, urban municipalities pass their budgets, constitute local communities, take care of the development of hospitality industry and tourism, lease construction land and perform other jobs in accordance with the Statute.

ARCHITECTURE

- The office of the President of the Republic is located in the former New Court, the Old Court is used by the Belgrade City Assembly, while the National Assembly has two buildings at disposal - the House of the National Assembly and the administrative building of the National Assembly. All four buildings are at different locations, but rather close to one another and together they make a cluster of important public buildings in Belgrade and Serbia.
- Kralja Milana Street was once known as The Road to Kragujevac because it was the south entrance to the town of Belgrade. Terazije, as part of the town, began to be inhabited in the 1840s when Stojan Simic, the Chairman of the State Council, had the building constructed at the place where there is presently a park between the New Court and the Old Court. That building was then used as the first residence of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjevic, known as the Old Palace (Stari konak). The process of urban and economic development of this part of town was continued under the influence of Prince Milos Obrenovic. Upon his return to Serbia he had the palace constructed for Mihailo, the heir to the throne, in 1860, according to the design of the architect Kosta Sreplovic.

Over time, in the vicinity of the palace other buildings clustered. Those were the buildings of foreign consulates and high government officials, such as the house of Stojan Simic, right across the Old Palace, which was used after his death for the needs of the Russian delegation in Serbia. The climax in the development of this part of town presents the construction of the impressive

palace of the Old Court in 1884, according to the design of the architects Aleksandar Bugarski and Jovan Ilkic and then the New Court in 1922, based on the design of the architect Stojan Titelbah.

The tradition of constructing buildings for administrative-governing purposes in this area continued even after the Second World War when the edifice of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia was built. The period after the Second World War was characterized by attempts to insert modernistic buildings in the existing rows of academized multi-story buildings with the purpose of maintaining the representative public character of the street. So the building of the Assembly of Serbia was erected in the place of an old, modest one-story building dating from the end of the nineteenth century. Milos Somborski, at that time the Chief Architect of Belgrade, said the following about the choice of location for constructing a new parliamentary edifice: The Regulation Plan has envisaged the green space between Kosovke Devojke Street and the new building of the Presidency of the Government of the People's Republic of Serbia... There will be no street next to the building, but only the pedestrian path, and the building of the Soviet Delegation will remain in this area until it becomes possible to move it...

► The building of the National Assembly was located next to the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, at the corner of two streets, Kralja Milana Street No. 16 and Dobrinjska Street, where the Economic Institute is presently located. In this edifice, erected in the beginning of

the twenties of the last century, the conference room "Nikola Pasic" is located today. Exactly in that room, in which the Ministry used to hold meetings with international delegations, the 1935 meeting of the Balkan Antanta was held, and the following year, 1936, the meeting of the representatives of the Balkan Alliance took place. According to the adaptation design of the architect Mata Otto from 1974, a passage was made between this building and the edifice of the Assembly of Serbia, which allowed the joint use of the ground floor premises.

The construction of a new building for the needs of the Assembly in Kralja Milana Street started on the basis of design created by the architect Isak Azriel from



the Architectural Institute of the People's Republic of Serbia. The project was approved on October 28, 1948. The construction of the building started on May 4, 1949 and was called the Office Building of the Presidency of the Government of the People's Republic of Serbia. The construction was completed on March 31, 1954 and the building was called the Assembly of the People's Republic of Serbia.

The architect Milan Minic was the interior designer, whose work included the representative final works of halls and vestibules, staircase and marble floor.

The building of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia was designed as a five-story building of solid structure, which is divided by a geometrical line of dominant window openings. According to the concept of the architect Minic, the facade should have been covered by the artificial stone and the height of the facade should have been leveled with the façade of the adjacent building, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The interior of the building was divided into nine levels, including three subterranean levels. The big hall for holding parliamentary sessions and the small conference hall are situated in the subterranean, while on the ground floor, next to the press conference room "Nikola Pasic", there is a hall for the Presidency and the premises of the Information Service and the Research Centre. The first floor premises are the offices of the Speaker and the Secretary of the Assembly. The other floor contains four



The Salon in the Speaker's Cabinet

committee halls and the premises used by MPs. Among other things, there is a ceremonial hall and the presidential salon, the VIP salon, parliamentary restaurant, as well as 160 offices for the Assembly's Support Service staff.

The building of the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia is one of the first public buildings in post-war Yugoslavia, which was constructed for the needs of state administration. Immediately after the termination of construction works, the first regular session of the Assembly of Serbia took place on March 20, 1954 in this building, and since that time the purpose of this building has not changed. Being the place where MPs gather and make important decisions on the future of the Republic and its people, the building of the Assembly of Serbia testifies the parliamentary development and tumultuous events of the 50-year long history of Serbia.

► The House of the National Assembly, one of the most monumental edifices of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was built between 1907-1936. The history of its construction, with numerous interruptions and project modifications, and with the participation of the most important national architects of the first half of the twentieth century, symbolically represents the tumultuous history of the Serbian, and then the Yugoslav state and its parliamentary life. With its exceptional architectural and artistic qualities, the palace stands out in the architectural environment of the capital city.

Already in 1892, the Ministry of Construction entrusted the implementation of this project to the architect Konstantin A. Jovanovic, but due to the political turmoil and financial difficulties, the erection of the building was postponed for several years, when the architect Jovan Ilkic was assigned to perform this task. He was the winner of the repeatedly organized



The Building of the House of the National Assembly



The library of the House of the National Assembly competition for the design of the House of the National Assembly in 1901. The official beginning of the construction was marked by laying the cornerstone on August 27, 1907, in the presence of King Petar the First Karadjordjevic.

Tumultuous events on the historical stage during the following decade influenced the course of construction and by the end of the First World War the building was constructed only up to the first floor. The establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes conditioned the necessity of design modifications, since the envisaged parliamentary halls did not suffice any more. Due to the death of the architect Ilkic in 1917, the elaboration of design related both to the modifications of the original design for the wings of the building and the reconstruction of lost plans, was entrusted to his son Pavle Ilkic. According to the renewed design, the constructions continued as of 1920 and lasted until 1926, when the works were interrupted again.

The decision to begin the next phase of the project implementation was brought in 1934 and the chief designer was the Russian architect Nikola Krasnov.

The works on the palace of the National Assembly were terminated on October 18, 1936, twenty nine years after the beginning of construction. The first session with the presence of all members of Government, was held two days later, on October 20, 1936. In 1939, the group sculpture was placed next to the monumental stairway. It is entitled "Playful Black Horses" and the author is the sculptor Toma Rosandic.

The programme of the interior design of the parliamentary building included special emphasis on the representative premises, big and small halls, halls for sessions and officials' offices. The decorative marble floor contributes to the festivity of the central vestibule overtopped by a dome, along with the polychromous walls with pillars, pilasters, niches and galleries. The heraldic symbols and additionally placed



The Diplomatic Salon



The Diplomatic Salon

sculptures of the rulers attribute a symbolic character to this space. A large hall, known as the "talks hall" represents the central parliamentary room, which is ornamented by rich plaster decoration and engraved furniture.

A large parliamentary room, located in the right wing of the building, was originally designed for 200, and after the modifications, for 400 Members of Parliament. In the opposite left wing of the building, a small hall for the work of the Senate is located. In both halls the walls are covered by plaster decorations, combined with decorative woodwork, while all the furniture is made of walnut.

The communication between the ground floor and the premises of the upper

floor was established through the two monumental, symmetrically placed stairways, made of white marble, with the walls covered with polychromous plaster marble and high stained glass windows. The decoration is complemented by the niches with bronze statues, personifications of Justice and Education and coat of arms of the Kingdom on the white marble fences. Among the premises on the upper floor, those used by Administrative and Financial Committees stand out, and the library is one of the most beautiful rooms in the Assembly.

The Krasnov's design of furniture, especially in the officials' offices, indicates clear investor's instructions and reflects the middle-class taste in Belgrade of that time. This fact is confirmed by the white furniture in the diplomatic salon, made in the combination of styles "Louis XV" and "Louis XVI", while other furniture, for the MP clubs, was mainly modeled in the manner similar to the art deco principles.

In addition to its architectural and artistic values, the building of the National Assembly stands out as the testimony of the most important events in the political life in the history of Yugoslavia, from its establishment till the present day. For its historical, architectural and artistic values, the building of the Assembly was proclaimed a cultural monument in 1984.

► The New Court, a monumental edifice, is located at Andricev Venac, close to the Old Court, which is the present building of the Belgrade City Assembly. Today the beautiful park connects these two buildings. Until 1950, the New Court was used by the Executive Council of Serbia, the Assembly of Serbia, the Presidency of Serbia and for the greatest length of time

was used by the President of the Republic of Serbia with the supporting services.

The New Court was built for the residential purposes of the Karadjordjevic dynasty in the period between 1911 and 1922. The cornerstone was laid on September 14, 1911 in the presence of King Petar I Karadjordjevic, Metropolitan Dimitrije, ministers, state advisers and



The building of the President of the Republic- New Palace

high ranking officers. The construction was interrupted during the First Balkan War and the First World War.

The building was erected according to the design of the well-known Belgrade architect Stojan Titelbah, at the place of the destroyed Court of Mihailo Obrenovic, an

heir to the throne, which had been built by Prince Milos during his second reign, from 1858 to 1860. This building had been used by the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Affairs until it was destroyed in 1911.

The process of construction of the Karadjordjevics' Court began under the supervision of the architect Stojan Titelbah himself and up to 1914 it consisted mainly of construction works, façade decoration and woodwork. The first major damages occurred during the First World War bombardment, when the building was shelled. The reparation and handcraft began when the war ended under the supervision of the architect Momir Korunovic and was completed in the spring of 1921. The interior and decoration works were performed by the French company Besier between 1921 and 1922.

The New Court was an official residence of King Aleksandar Karadjordjevic in the period between 1922-1933 after which the Court was given to the National Museum upon the King's wish. The Museum occupied the premises in June 1934. The Museum collections remained in the New Court until 1948 when the building was taken over by the Executive Council of Serbia.



Ground Floor Salon



Ground Floor Salon



New Palace- historical view

The New Court presents the most important work of the architect Stojan Titelbah. It is created in the academic manner with the elements of renaissance and baroque architecture and its monumentality indicates its purpose. From the aspect of urban planning, the building is part of a series of important public buildings in Belgrade and Serbia, along with the adjacent palaces of the Old Court and the House of the National Assembly.

The New Court edifice was proclaimed a cultural monument for its historical and architectural values.

► The Old Court, presently the Belgrade City Assembly, was built between 1881 and 1884 according to the design of the architect Aleksandar Bugarski, as a private and official residence of Milos Obrenovic, the King of Serbia from 1882. The Old Court is one of the most sig-

nificant creations of Belgrade academic architecture towards the end of the 19th century, designed and formed with the aim of transcending everything that had been built by that time or that had been used as official residences by Serbian rulers. In the period between 1903-1914 it was the official residence of the Karadjordjevic dynasty. In its ceremonial hall, during 1919 and 1920, the sessions of the provisional National Assembly took place and then until 1941, it was the place where court banquets and receptions of high ranking foreign guests were held. After the Second World War, the building was used by the National Assembly Presidium, the Government of the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia and the Federal Executive Council. Since 1961, the Belgrade City Assembly has been located in the Old Court.

The cornerstone of the Old Court was ceremoniously laid on June 11, 1881, in the presence of Aleksandar Obrenovic, Princess Natalija, Metropolitan Mihailo and the State Council members.

The Old Court was designed as a simple one-story building with regular rectangular foundations, with the corner



The Belgrade City Hall- historical view

in the present streets of Kralja Milana and Dragoslava Jovanovica, emphasized by a high-peak dome with the two-headed eagle on top.

Since the Old Court was planned to be the place for celebrations and accommodation of high ranking guests, the architect Bugarski paid special attention to the arrangement of premises and their decoration. The impression of the space, intended for important guests, is intensified by the furniture in Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI styles.

The significant changes of the Old Court building were made during its post-war reconstruction in 1947, which gave the Court a new function, but also a new



The Yellow Salon

appearance to the entrance and the façade facing Kralja Aleksandra Boulevard.

Today, the Court interior is decorated by numerous works of domestic painters and sculptors. In the Red Salon there is a facsimile of the oldest known script in which the Slavic name of Belgrade is mentioned. This is a letter from Pope John VIII to the Bulgarian Prince Boris. The original document has been kept in the archives of the Vatican since April 16, 1878. In this Salon there is also a National Hero Medal awarded to Belgrade on October 20, 1974.



The Red Salon

The Old Court edifice was proclaimed a cultural monument for its historical and architectural values.

ARTISTIC VALUE

Immediately after the initial fights for the liberation of Serbia from the Turkish occupation, the vožd Karadjordje built a fortified town in Topola with two palaces and a church with icons and wall paintings. Thanks to his successor, Prince Aleksandar, a gallery with the Karadjordjevic portraits was established. King Petar used to purchase paintings from the great Yugoslav exhibitions, King Aleksandar was very fond of sculptures and ceded the New Court to the National Museum, Queen Marija was a sculptor herself, while Prince Pavle formed his own collection and established the Museum of Modern Arts, which, unfortunately, ceased to exist soon afterwards.

The members of the Obrenovic dynasty gave even more importance to culture and art. Prince Milos, the founder of the dynasty, began to collect antiques and founded the first museum. However, he was excelled by Prince Mihailo, who, during his reign, established many institutions which still exist. King Milan is mentioned for the first time as a European monarch who used to purchase new paintings of, at that time unrecognized, but later very respected, French impressionism coryphaei. We remember King Aleksandar for his assistance to Hilandar, for which the monks gave him the Gospel of Miroslav as a gift, and for urging the presentation of the most acknowledged Serbian artists' monumental compositions at the World Exhibition in Paris (1900).

Tumultuous political events, wars and revolutions, establishment and dissolution of the state, resulted in ruining rulers'

collections, destroying mobile artistic pieces, selling them at the auctions worldwide, or at best, placing them in different museums. Due to all this architecture, furniture, the works of fine art, especially paintings, in the building of the National Assembly of Serbia, in the building of the Serbian President and the Belgrade City Assembly, edifices are not temporally harmonized with the personalities of those who had them erected.

However, the eclecticism of styles in a specific way exactly indicates the dramatic historical pulsing and expresses the need of every generation for the beauty that will save the world. For that reason, the walls of the ceremonial halls, offices and other rooms of the mentioned significant state buildings are ornamented with some nine hundred paintings, sculptures, drawings and graphics, created in a wide time span, most of them having been acquired in the second half of the 20th century.

The two edifices of the National Assembly of Serbia, at Nikole Pasica Square and in Kralja Milana Street, are embellished with more than four hundred paintings, frescoes, drawings and graphics, created by recognized artists. Only sculptures and wall paintings are related to the state architectural and political programme, while other works of art exclusively indicate the aesthetic achievements of individuals and in part the genesis of artistic movements. The very fact that over time the works of very important artists, even the most distinguished ones, have been collected, brings one to the conclusion that without them it would not be possible to have



Petar Omcikus, „Fish“, 1954.



*Kosta Hakman,
„Landscape with Olive groves“, 1938.*

any anthological overview of art, both in our country and in the former Yugoslavia.

Among many exceptional sculptors who followed the design and created the portraits of statesmen and politicians accordingly, the prominent ones are T. Rosandic, T. Kos, F. Krsinic, P. Palavicini, F. Gorse, D. Arambasic, L. Dolinar, I. Kerdic, R. Valdec, R. Stijovic, S. Stojanovic, A. Augustincic, B. Kalin, N. Jankovic and I. Kolarovic.

The masters of decorative painting, I. Tisov, M. Menegelo Rodic, M. Racki, V. Filakovac, R. Slapernik and P. Petrovic Suhacev, painted the surfaces according to the design.

The paintings of S. Aralica, J. Bijelic, J. Bifel, A. Bocaric, N. Besevic, L. Vujaklija, D. Glisic, I. Job, V. Jordan, D. Kondovski, M. Konjovic, L. Licenoski, P. Lubarda, M. Milovanovic, M. Petrov, V. Pomorisac, K. Hakman and S. Sumanovic remind one of the events up to 1940, and the events after that year are depicted by S. Aralica, B. Damjanovski, M. Detoni, O. Herman,



Vasa Pomoritac, "Old Paris", 1939



*Miodrag B. Protic,
"Still life with a mandolin"*

V. Jordan, B. Kalavaris, P. Lubarda,
 A. Lukovic, P. Milosavljevic, M.
 Milunovic, B. Miljus, B.
 Mihailovic, A. Motika, I.
 Mujezinovic, P. Omcikus, O.
 Petlevski, Z. Petrovic, V.
 Pomorisac, Lj. Popovic, M. B.
 Protic, I. Radovic, R. Reljic, S.
 Samurovic, B. Stevanovic, V.
 Stanic, T. Stevanovic, Dj.
 Teodorovic, A. Tomasevic, U. Predic,
 M. B. Protic, Lj. Sokic, M.
 Celebonovic, F. Simunovic and S. Sohaj.



M. Popovic, "Harbour in Zadar"

M. Milunovic, while the salons, offices and halls are decorated with the paintings of M. Celebonovic, N. Gvozdenovic, M. Popovic, S. Djelic, D. Cigarcic, F. Slana, Dj. Bosan, M. Kurnik, Lj. Sokic, S. Sohaj, M. Pregelj,



B. Karlavaris, "Street in Sremski Karlovci"

The interior of the former New Court, and then the museum, presently used by the President of Serbia, is ornamented with the works of recognized artists. The works of J. Bijelic, P. Dobrovic, S. Sumanovic and M. Milunovic sophisticatedly reflect a stream of events between the two World Wars. The tendencies of the second half of the 20th century are expressed more explicitly: at the entrance hall there are marble allegorical sculptures by T. Rosandic and in the ceremonial hall there are frescos of P. Lubarda and



Sava Sumonovic, "Row of trees"



Zora Petrovic, "Atelier"

B. Prodanovic, M. Milunovic, M. Tartalja, L. Vujaklija, M. Bajic, M. Krsmanovic, K. Divjak, O. Kangrga, A. Lukovic, M. Petrov, Z. Petrovic, S. Samurovic, B. Stevanovic, M. Stevanovic, Dj. Teodorovic, V. Todoric, A. Huter and G. Cemerski, as well as with the sculptures of V. Jocic, I. Kolarovic, F. Krsinic, O. Log, N. Mitric, S. Sandic, R. Stijovic, A. Zarin, V. Stojic, N. Jankovic, V. Stankovic and V. Petric, representatives of different poetic and esthetic movements.

The former Belgrade Municipality used to regularly purchase and forward the pieces of art to appropriate museums. The same practice has continued so that the City Assembly, formerly the Belgrade Municipality, has gathered approximately three

hundred artistic works. The most representative ones revive the spirit of the Old Court. Once its walls were embellished by the representative compositions of Marko Murat and Paja Jovanovic, created in 1900, but presently there are only those which were acquired between the two World Wars and afterwards. The first group encompasses the paintings of N.

Besevic, J. Bijelic, B. Vukanovic, I. Vavpotic, M. Golubovic, V. Grdan, J. Zonjic, P. Lubarda, M. Petrov, V. Pomorisac, I. Radovic, S. Strala and

S. Sumanovic, and the second group includes the paintings of S. Aralica, J. Bijelic, K. Divjak, M. Konjovic, P. Milosavljevic, M. Mitrovic, I. Mujezinovic, P. Omcikus, D. Cigarcic, A. Huter, as well as the sculptures of M. Besarabic, M. Vukovic, A. Gatalica and S. Dukic.



Marko Celebonovic, "Still life"