

On The Architecture Of The Yugoslav Diplomatic Mission In Ankara As A Result Of Collaboration Between Two Balkan Leaders And Countries

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ABSTRACT

Construction of the Yugoslav embassy in Ankara had huge political, economic and cultural importance for the development of relations between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Turkey. Its location and distinctive style ensured it a special place among the residential and public buildings in the new capital of Turkey. The ideologist of the entire undertaking was Branko Lazarević (1883–1961), an eminent Serbian aesthetician and diplomat, from 1934 serving as ambassador of Yugoslavia to Turkey. There are indications that he had pleaded with the King for the architecture of the embassy to emulate conspicuously the sumptuous Dedinje residence in form and structure. As a steadfast advocate of the ideology of primordial Yugoslavism, admirer of folk epics and champion of a return to the ancient Slavic and Balkano-Illyrian “founts”, he saw the Dinaric type of the Balkan townhouse smoothly fitted into landscape as the desirable architectural emblem of modern state identity.

Key words: *architecture, embassy, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Folklorism*

Rapidly secularized and from the consequences of the liberation wars from the colonial powers, recovered and internationally acknowledged Republic Turkey in the Yugoslav foreign politics in the mid of twenties had more significant importance. Radical reforms performed in Turkey after its internal consolidation, enticed attention of the numerous Muslim populations in Yugoslavia and also interested official establishment for the social climate of that regional might. Representatives of the instant modernization in bought countries saw in radical toward the West orientations of their societies suitable parallelism for the numerous impetus for the repressions of the prevailed conservatism and patriarchal sense.

Development of the political and cultural relations between the Kingdom of the Serbs, Slavs and the Croats and the Turkish republic considerably became powerful after the official reestablished diplomatic relations, proclaimed on October in 1925.¹ Political approaching of two friendly countries and their authoritative leaders, King Aleksandar Karadjordjevic (16. 12. 1888 – 9. 10. 1934) and Mustafa

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¹ Б. Прпа (ур.), *Хронологија модерне српске државе 1804–2004*, Београд, 2004, 213.

Kemal Ataturk (12. 3. 1881 – 10. 11. 1938),² especially became powerful during the First Balkan conference (on October in 1930) and during the Second Balkan conference in Istanbul in 1931 and particularly during the official visit of the Yugoslav monarch to Turkey on October in 1933 and establishment of the Balkan defense alliance on February in 1934.



King Aleksandar Karadjordjević (16. 12. 1888 – 9. 10. 1934)

In his foreign policy, King Alexander wear the Balkans favored, running initiative under the slogan "The Balkans - Balkan peoples." Friendship of two rulers, based on long flank of mutual respect historical military merit, personal likes and foreign policy, conceived through official correspondence (intensified since 1930. year) and meet colleagues and carefully cultivated by Alexander unexpected death, and after that, until the death of Ataturk, and in the years afterwards, was constantly emphasized in the diplomatic and media reports. Two rulers over the years, the close cooperation that so endeared they fraternized, becoming a tight military allies and genuine political

² M. Teodosijević, *Mustafa Kemal Ataturk u jugoslovenskoj javnosti*, Beograd, 1998; A. Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, Woodstock, NY, 2002; P. Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, London, 2003; Б. Глигорјевић, *Краљ Александар Карађорђевић (I–III)*, Београд 2002.

supporters. Ataturk is still emphasized that the Serbs had the right to create a strong balcanic state of Yugoslavia "is deserving of the battlefield field, defending his land and honor against the much-number care will be stronger and armed enemy". The process of glorification of Ataturk in Alexander's Yugoslavia, partly helped by a propagandistic mechanisms of the state, were influenced by striking parallelism in the biographies of the two statesmen.³ As a military, fearless in battle, but energetic autocrat rulers, are easy to understand the issues interior design of their countries and the strengthening of the community any foreign policy position. Hence the loud advertisements about "imposing friendship" between the two countries continued at not in the years after Aleksander's death, and that the union would decline, organized frequent mutual visits prime ministers, ministers, senior officials, representatives of culture, science and art.

Instead of distrust and blind to conform to the dictates of great powers, working for a political rapprochement and functional cooperation of the Balkan countries, possibly integrated into a military defense alliance. Hence no wonder that the 18th June 1935th state architect Petar J. Popovic, for a long speech about the architectural skim ventures "blessed" Yugoslav monarch before his unification of the national role just glorified Balkan policy of linking people in the alliance.⁴

Long unsettled, burdened many citizens harmonious and historical disputes, relations between Balkan countries are the largest in the late twenties and early thirties significantly improved. The new geostrategic context of inherited most lay voice was temporarily relegated to the background. World economic crisis and the need to overcome historical influence of Italian and French interests, has further intensified balcanic cooperation. Introduction of the institution Balkanic conference, modeled after the League of Nations, the process is formalized. At these conferences, which are primarily sitting in committees, promoted Gender Balkan nations affirmed their full sovereignty and the principle of mutual non-aggression and establishment of a customs alliance. Their most important results that was in fourth February 1934th the initialing pact between Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece and Romania.

The architecture of the state buildings in bought countries in the great measure accommodated to interests and taste of their rulers. Leaders shown similarity upon many foreign and internal political questions but they did not share the same comprehensions about the questions of shaping and arrangements of representative buildings.⁵ Therefore similarities, parallels and contrast of the ideological and aesthetic program of their architecture deserve special attentions of the experts.

³ M. Teodosijević, *ibidem*.

⁴ See: П. Ј. Поповић, *Краљ Александар Први као љубитељ архитектуре, уметности и технике*, Технички лист, 11–12, Загреб 1935, 153–155.

⁵ About architecture of Alexander's Yugoslavia see: A. Ignjatović, *Jugoslovenstvo u arhitekturi 1904-1941*, Beograd 2007. About architecture of Ataturk Turkish Republic see: J. Landau (ed.), *Ataturk and the modernization of Turkey*, Boulder, 1984; S. Bozdogan – A. Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking modernity and national identity in Turkey*, Washington, 1997; S. Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building. Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, Washington, 2001; B. Dogramaci, *Im Dienste Ataturks Deutschsprachige Architekten und Bildbauer in der Türkei*, in: *Politische Kunst, Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte III*, Berlin, 2004, 97–120; S. Bozdogan, E. Akcan, *Turkey. Modern Architecture in History*, London 2012, 26–103.

Construction of the Yugoslav embassy in Ankara had huge political, economic and cultural importance for the development of relations between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Turkey.⁶



Ambassador Lazarević and his staff in front of the Ankara residence

Its location and distinctive style ensured it a special place among the residential and public buildings in the new capital of Turkey. The ideologist of the entire undertaking was Branko Lazarević (1883–1961),⁷ an eminent Serbian aesthetician and diplomat, from 1934 serving as ambassador of Yugoslavia to Turkey. There are indications that he had pleaded with the King for the architecture of the embassy to emulate conspicuously the sumptuous Dedinje residence in form and structure. As a steadfast advocate of the ideology of primordial Yugoslavism, admirer of folk epics and champion of a return to the ancient Slavic and Balkano-Illyrian “founts”, he saw the Dinaric type of the Balkan townhouse smoothly fitted into landscape as the desirable architectural emblem of modern state identity.⁸

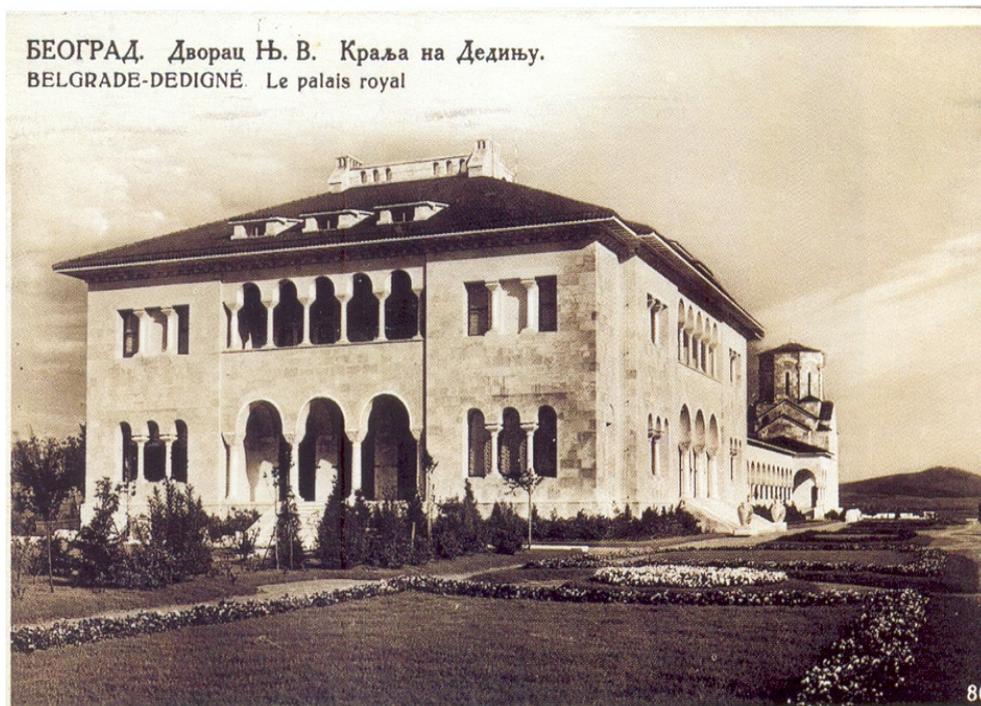
The King's Palace in Dedinje (1924–29) commissioned by King Alexander I Karađorđević inspired the design of several government buildings whose style is

⁶ A. Kadijević, *O arhitekturi Jugoslovenskog poslanstva u Ankari*, Nasleđe XI, Beograd 2010, 55-70.

⁷ D. M. Jeremić, *Estetička shvatanja Branka Lazarevića*, in: *Kritičar i estetski ideal*, Titograd, 1965, 119–144.

⁸ A. Ignjatović, *ibidem*.

close to the folklorized version of the national style developed under the direct influence of the King and his ideological like minds.⁹ It is well known that Serbian



Dedinje residence, Old Court

nineteenth and twentieth century architecture characterized different stylistic appropriations. But among them, the one of the most original undoubtedly is that style which we can characterize as national style. Conceived as the typical idiom of the epoch of romantic historicism in Serbian architecture in the 19th century, the idea of national style survived until to this days. The exponents of this style since the middle of the last to the middle of this century had imprinted a deep track in Serbian art. Inspired with wealthy Serbo-Byzantine architectonic tradition, they created a new

⁹ Б. Трпковић, *Стари двор на Дедињу*, Свеске Друштва историчара уметности Србије, 16, Београд, 1985, 100–104; М. В. Ивановић, *Дворови на Дедињу. Српски забрањени град*, Београд, 1993; М. Јовановић, *Краљ Александар и руски уметници*, у: *Руска емиграција у српској култури XX века* (књ. 1), Београд, 1994, 93–98; А. Кадјевић, *Рад Николаја Краснова у Министарству грађевина Краљевине СХС/Југославије у Београду од 1922. до 1939. године*, ГГБ, XLIV, Београд, 1997, 235–237; А. Кадјевић, *Београдски период рада архитекте Виктора Викторовича Лукомског (1920–1946)*, ГГБ, XLV–XLVI, Београд, 1998/1999, 118–121; М. Ђурђевић – А. Кадјевић, *Russian Emigrant Architects in Yugoslavia (1918–1941)*, Centropa, 2, New York, 2001, 143–144; Љ. Милетић-Абрамовић, *Архитектура резиденција и вила Београда 1830–2000*, Београд, 2002, 116–123; Н. Н. Калинин – М. А. Земляниченко – А. Кадиевич, *Архитектор высочайше двора. Н. П. Краснов*, Симферополь, 2003, 160–163; S. Kallestrup, *Art and Design in Romania 1866–1927*, Boulder, New York, 2006, 163–168; А. Кадјевић, *Један век тражења националног стила у српској архитектури (средина XIX – средина XX века)*, Београд, 2007, 232–236; А. Ignjatović, *Jugoslovenstvo u arhitekturi 1904–1941*, Београд, 2007, 179–191; А. Ignjatovic, *Architecture, Urban Development and the Yugoslavization of Belgrade, 1918–1941*, Centropa, 9, New York, 2009, 110–126.

models in architecture, known as national or Serbo-Byzantine style. Almost all talented and productive Serbian architects of that epoch, had contributed to the development of a national style designed the buildings across Serbia and Yugoslavia later.

The architects of a national style were inspired by different ideological, professional and patriotic motifs, regardless of that which European recent orientation they also equally preferred. A lot of buildings were built with characteristic of national style, as churches, chapels, chancel-houses, memorial monuments, as well as the administrative, apartment, commercial and other secular buildings. Existing and non-existing works represented the ideological diversity of Serbian builders, in the span of naïve imitations to the partial or total mimicry of famous medieval church buildings. Also, on the other side, many of them expressed a solid, but rigid academic compilations, and at the end, some of them created a original and distinguished works, which corresponded with current academic historicism, art-nouveau or expressionistic streams. The different senses of a national style during various periods were considered as the symbol of a national spirit, in spite of all facts all of them were based on the same artistic pattern, on Serbo-Byzantine medieval tradition or the examples of folkloristic legacy. In the new multinational country, founded in 1918 as Kingdom of the Serbs, of the Croats and of the Slovenians, Serbo-Byzantine style, thanks cultural and financial support of State, experienced a renaissance after which the new romantic enthusiasm rose upon euphoria of South Slavs integration. Serbo-Byzantine style spread out through the west and south of new state, in the areas with mainly Serbian population. In spite of a fact that academic eclecticism represented official state of style, acceptable for all of three Yugoslav nations, building in Serbian national style was also supported from the court and state circles, because he represented actual wishes to dominated of Serbian entity in the new cultural environment. These efforts especially supported a versatile and experienced Russian architects emigrants,¹⁰ who came in the friendly state after they forced to depart from homeland. Until the middle of fourth decade of this century, Serbian national style was strong and successful as popular and widespread movement, but in next years, slowly disappeared from opened historic stage. Neoclassicistic totalitarian monumentalism, imported from Italy and Germany, as well as aggressive modernism were pushed supporters of national style in the past. That process especially grown after homicide of main style sponsor and supporters, King Alexander Karadjordjević in France 1934. He tried to satisfied all national entities in his kingdom, but without real success. His architectural taste was turned towards the Russian Imperial architecture and Serbian national style, but he simultaneously and unwillingly supported supranational eclecticism, acceptable for the Croats and the Slovenians.

Identified as belonging to the same architectural corpus so far are the State Hotel on Avala (1931), a few competition designs for the White Palace in Dedinje (1934), and the Yugoslav diplomatic missions in Ankara (1932–36) and Sofia (1935–41), but it also seems to include the designs for the embassy in Tirana (1938) and a few Falcon Society buildings in the country.¹¹ They are related in terms of type and

¹⁰ M. Djurdjevic-A. Kadjevic, *ibidem*.

¹¹ A. Ignjatović, *Jugoslovenstvo...* 198-200.

composition, and show corresponding contents in terms of style, rhetoric and landscape. The Yugoslav embassy compound in Ankara stands out as the most complete statement of the programmatic ideas heralded by the Dedinje residence.

The paradigmatic role of the Dedinje palace proved to be politically justified in Ankara, given the Turkish leader Atatürk's open sympathies for the Yugoslav sovereign and his regional initiatives. In the early 1930s Atatürk made a gift of land to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a sizeable rectangular lot in the elite city quarter on the slopes of Çankaya, the elevation which gave its name to an entire district. In 1932, the Yugoslav Ministry of Construction organized a competition by invitation pursuant to the law on diplomatic missions. The winning design, by the architect Kosta J. Jovanović, had been prepared in 1931 in the favoured "folk" spirit. Little information about the competition has survived, but Vojin Simeonović and Miladin Prljević are known to have been invited as well.

The main residential building,¹² comprising a basement, a ground floor and an upper floor, is cubic in form and shows differently treated façades. It is arranged on a central plan (16 by 16 m), and the front is 20 m in height (16 m to the roof ridge). The massiveness of its boxlike silhouette is counterbalanced by a picturesque double porch, developed on both floors as the main compositional motif of the front facade.



Ankara residence, front facade, detail

Behind the ground-floor arcade, which is not organically connected with the main interior rooms, is a five-bay wall arcade, while the upper floor shows a seven-bay one.

¹² A. Kadijević, *O arhitekturi Jugoslovenskog poslanstva u Ankari*, Nasleđe XI, Beograd 2010, 55-70.

A shifting plastic rhythm considerably lightens the effect of the massive whole, introducing diversity, formal dynamism and effective contrasts of light and shade. Another distinctive feature of the residence is the emphasized “fifth” façade, conceived folkloristically in the form of a hip roof enlivened by effective attic windows and tall chimneys with decorative “caps”. Allusions to the baronial mansions from the first half of the 19th century in Serbia and to the King's Palace in Dedinje are obvious. They predominate in the exterior design, while the interior layout draws more heavily on the Dedinje residence.

General analogies between the Dedinje residence and the Ankara building suggest a close conceptual and aesthetic relationship. In spite of the difference in space and size, the two are conspicuously related in compositional, plastic and rhetoric terms. They also share in common the interaction of representative residential and landscape architecture designs, except that the Ankara complex is considerably smaller in area (the park with structures covers about two hectares as opposed to Belgrade's fifteen), while in terms of cubature the mission is smaller by nearly two-thirds than the Dedinje palace (which encompasses 3,278 sq m). The Ankara complex also lacks sacral buildings (chapels, churches) and a more elaborate communication network (wide terraces, long arcaded porticos, larger pavilions, intimately enclosed gardens, tunnels, pools, service and guard buildings).

The two representative buildings are related by a mixed initial design which blends elements of the Balkan two-floor townhouse (with a porch and a hip roof covered with barrel roof tiles, prominent chimneys, the largest room at the centre of the ground floor) and those of the nature-surrounded aristocratic mansion of the modern age (symmetrical composition, centrally arranged interior layout, rooms furnished with antique furniture). The upper floor of the Ankara residence is a direct but morphologically elaborated paraphrase of the front upper-floor porch of the Dedinje palace, while its ground-floor porch emulates the ground-floor zone of the Dedinje facade facing Košutnjak Park. Although similar in outline, the two buildings differ in many details other than size. The Ankara one is more stilted and massive in composition, with a simpler treatment of individual facades. Its exterior facing is not nearly as impressive (plastered façades instead of marble facing), and it lacks the rich architectural ornamentation capping the top of the front wall and window mouldings. Assuming that architecture was an important instrument of Alexander's official ideology, one may recognize in the Ankara residence elements of constructing and exploiting a Yugoslav cultural identity. The primordial Yugoslavism theory, which informs the architecture's rhetoric, connects the two residences fitted into “hidden” intimate gardens (isolated from the real, historical, world and time), while the pavilion system, landscape design and the iconography of the sculptural and architectural decoration add to the atmosphere of timeless bliss of Yugoslav primordialism revitalized and perpetuated over and over again.



Ankara residence, front facade, view

Much more communicative and accessible to the public, in accordance with its representative diplomatic purpose, the Ankara complex is more rational and less intimate too, but that does not degrade its ideologized aesthetic function.



Ankara residence, ground-floor drawing room

The romantically picturesque building at Ankara seems a fruitful combination of its designer's striving for a nationally recognizable architecture and the monarch's insistence on an integral Yugoslav culture, thereby asserting the potential of a new civilizational-artistic synthesis. Its diverse architectural merits has ensured it a high place within the folkloric stream of the new Serbian style, while, ideologically, it helped inaugurate a new social paradigm initiated by the earlier Dedinje palace.¹³

¹³ This article is a result of the work on the scientific project „Serbian art of XXth century: National and European" (no.17703 in Serbian Ministry of Science and „Serbian architecture of 19th and 20th centuries" in Matica srpska, Novi Sad).