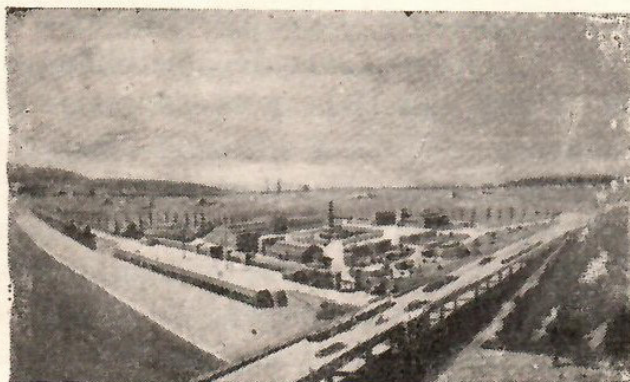


THE BELGRADE FAIR AND ITS INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE first international fair to be held in Belgrade will be officially opened from the 11th to the 21st of September this year, and will be followed by a regular series of international fairs twice annually.

What advantages has Yugoslavia to offer world trade through the establishment of a permanent international fair at Belgrade?

Considering its geographical position, which makes it one of the most important centres of communication in south-eastern Europe, Belgrade should certainly have had



Belgrade Fair

its own international permanent fair long before this. Belgrade is the centre of an extensive economic unit consisting of Yugoslavia and, in the broader sense, all the countries of the Balkan peninsula. All the important lines of communication between the

Balkans and the West pass through Belgrade, not only railways, but also river services and airways. Even though not situated on the sea coast, Belgrade is the most important Yugoslav port. This is due to the fact that not only does it lie right in the centre of the great international river highway of the Danube, but also at the very point where the important waterways of the Danube, Drava, Tisa, Sava and Morava rivers all join. The capital of Yugoslavia is, therefore, the most busy centre for the exchange of goods in all south-eastern Europe. It has always been and will always remain

an important meeting place for merchants and industrialists from east and west, who meet here for trade and mutual consultation. This meeting of east and west is one of the slogans of the new Belgrade fair and nothing could better describe the role the town plays in the international exchange of goods. It is more than certain, therefore, that the new fair will rapidly become an important factor in the economic progress of the Balkans and of all south-eastern Europe.

The organizers of the fair have fully understood the importance of Belgrade in international trade and are endeavouring by the organization of this fair to assure its greatest possible advancement. The fact that the area set aside for the fair-ground is more than 363,000 square metres is in itself a promise that the projected fair will be one of the greatest and most important among such organizations. The principal organizers of the Belgrade Fair are the Belgrade Chambers of Trade, Industry and Crafts, together with the Central Union of Serbian Agricultural Co-operatives, supported by all the principal professional organizations. This year, for the first fair, more than 140,000 square metres have up to now been prepared for exhibits and about 18,000 square metres of this space will be in the form of pavilions. When these preparations are taken into consideration, as well as the great interest already shown by prospective exhibitors both within the country and abroad, one may say without fear of exaggeration that the first Belgrade Fair will be the largest organization of this nature in Yugoslavia.

The fair-ground itself is on the left bank of the river Sava close to the main Paris-Constantinople railway line and in the immediate vicinity of the Zemun railway station. In this way there will be direct access to the fair-ground by river steamer or barge, as well as by lorry, while freight cars will be able to draw up within a few hundred metres of the site. All goods intended for exhibition, both from home and abroad, will be granted special freight concessions and customs facilities; that is to say, freedom from customs duties against guarantees on the part of the exhibitors.

Since the Great War, Belgrade has progressed so rapidly that, from a city of scarcely 90,000 inhabitants, it has now become, after a decade and a half of peaceful development, a city with a population of more than a quarter of a million. The town itself is of great interest to visitors, with its old Roman fortress on the confluence of the Danube and Sava, its wonderful situation at the meeting of these two great navigable rivers and its many cultural and historical centres of interest. Belgrade is the centre of the national life of the country and the best place to become acquainted with economic and touristic Yugoslavia. The visitor always finds persons able to speak his language and the Englishman or American is easily put into touch with Yugoslavs who speak excellent English. The sign: *English Spoken* is frequently to be seen in the shop-windows of Belgrade. For the duration of the fair a special service will be put into operation to assist visitors in every respect.

Owing to these preparations, we may be sure that the establishment of a permanent international Fair in Yugoslavia's capital will be a substantial help towards the trade between the industrial countries of the West and the agrarian states of the East, which are still far from being sufficiently supplied with industrial products.

However, the most important role of the Belgrade Fair as regards international trade will be to afford an opportunity for foreign visitors and buyers to see an exhibition of Yugoslav economic activity, which is of great interest for other nations. Yugoslav exports consist chiefly of agricultural, stock-breeding, forestry and mining products. When one adds to that that the most important articles of Yugoslav import are: steam coal, iron and steel products, petroleum and machinery, that is to say, articles which the Anglo-saxon countries export in great quantities, it is clear that the Belgrade Fair will be of the greatest interest to Great Britain and the United States and will afford the most convenient opportunity for the advancement of economic relations between those countries and Yugoslavia.

Milosav Vasiljević