

Serbs protest moving of famous inventor's ashes

March 8 2014

Several hundred people protested in Belgrade on Saturday against plans to move the ashes of Nikola Tesla, one of the pioneers of modern electrical engineering, to Serbia's biggest church.

Tesla's remains have been housed in his Belgrade [museum](#), surrounded by his inventions, since 1957.

However, in late February the authorities in Belgrade, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the country's Energy Minister Zorana Mihajlovic signed an agreement to allow the famous scientist's ashes to be transferred to the city's giant Saint Sava cathedral.

The move has proved controversial, with protesters, who gathered in front of the museum close to Belgrade city centre, claiming the move would have been against Tesla's wishes.

They also accuse politicians of trying to curry favour with voters ahead of parliamentary elections on March 16.

"The authorities did not ask for permission from Tesla's inheritors and his museum officials, they were even not informed about the decision," Marko Marjanovic one of the protest's organisers said.

More than 36,000 people have joined a Facebook group called 'Leave Tesla alone', strongly opposing the transfer of Tesla's ashes.

A pioneer in the days when electricity was changing everyday life, Tesla was born in 1856 in Croatia which was then a part of the old Austro-Hungarian empire. His father was a Serb Orthodox priest.

Tesla patented more than 700 inventions over the years, including wireless communication, remote control and fluorescent lighting.

Though he made the cover of Time magazine in 1931, Tesla, by then a naturalised American, died alone in a New York hotel 12 years later at the age of 86.

In 2005, Tesla was touted as one of the 100 greatest Americans by the Discovery Channel, the US cable television science and nature network.

Many of Tesla's original manuscripts, inventions, photos and private letters are housed in the Belgrade museum, which were brought together by his nephew Sava Kosanovic following a lengthy legal battle in the US.

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