

## ZAGREB FAIR IN 1947

### THE FIRST FAIR TRADE EXHIBITION IN THE POST-WAR YUGOSLAVIA

Iva KRALJEVIĆ\* and Goran ARČABIĆ\*\*

Zagreb Fair and its forerunner Zagreb Assembly have had, for almost a hundred years, a great importance for the economic development of Zagreb and Croatia. Despite that, a complete monograph or a synthetic study of that institution has not been written yet. Besides the unpublished typescript of the historian Rudolf Bičanić, the only complete attempt of writing the Fair's history was a project started in 1967 in the Institute for the History of the Labour Movement, today's Croatian Institute of History.<sup>1</sup> The intention of this paper is to research the circumstances of the transformation of Zagreb Assembly association into the town's company Zagreb Fair and to determine what was its economic and promotional significance immediately after World War II. The purpose of the research of the preparatory works on the organization of the first post-war international trade-fair exhibition was to determine to what extent has the new city company followed the tradition of the Zagreb Assembly. For that purpose were used the sources of the State Archives in Zagreb and the Croatian State Archives, as well as the periodical publications *Narodni list*, *Vjesnik* and *Privredni Vjesnik*.

The association for the organization of fairs, Zagreb Assembly, which was founded in 1909 by Zagreb tradesmen and bankers, in the next thirty or so years became an important market institution, being the bond between Croatian and European economy. It ceased its activities due to the war occurrences in the world in 1940. In the period of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska - NDH), the two exhibitions of a propaganda character were held in September 1941 and 1942; after that, the activity of the Assembly ceased. Until the end of World War II, the military facilities were stationed in the Savska Street, and the premises also served a purpose of the assembly and transit camp for the further deportation of the mostly Jewish population to the concentration camps.<sup>2</sup> The social and political changes after

\* Iva Kraljević, M. A., Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb, Croatia

\*\* Goran Arčabić, Zagreb Municipal Museum, Zagreb, Croatia

<sup>1</sup> On the project see: Mira Kolar - Dimitrijević, "Projekt povijesti Zagrebačkog velesajma iz 1967. godine (u povodu 90-godišnjice Velesajma)" *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (Further ČSP) 31 (1999) no. 2: 319 - 339. Following occasional monographs should be mentioned: *Zagreb velesajmski grad* (Zagreb: 1986) and *Od Zbora do Velesajma 1909.-1999.* (Zagreb: 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Ivo Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu* (Zagreb: 2002), pp. 252 - 261.

the war conditioned the reorganization, a partial change of purpose and the renaming of the institution. The Assembly was, on the grounds of compromising “economic collaboration with the occupier”, dissolved by the decree of the Town People’s Committee (Gradski nadzorni odbor - GNO) on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1946 and its property was placed at GNO’s disposal.<sup>3</sup> The decision of the Government of the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija - FNRJ) on the holding of the International fair of samples in Zagreb, gave initiative to the founding of the new company under the competence of the town’s authorities.

The dissolution of the Assembly and the founding of Zagreb Fair essentially continued the tradition of fairs in Zagreb. However, the socialist regime negated the tradition of the Assembly, critically addressing the past (“...all of the pre – war fairs were improvised, random and chaotic – and were an authentic reflection of the social and political system of that time”).<sup>4</sup> The change of the recognizable name of the Fair institution and the rejection of the pre – war management’s initiative for the renovation of the fair are also indicative of that fact.

### **The attempt of re – establishment of the Zagreb Assembly in 1945**

The first after – war event on the site of Zagreb Fair took place in mid – June 1945. Shortly before the 1<sup>st</sup> congress of the United Alliance of the Anti – Fascist Youth, the damaged congress hall was renovated and the surrounding grounds were arranged.<sup>5</sup> Twenty days after the congress had ended, on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1945, the ex – vice president of Zagreb Assembly Ivo Milošević called an emergency general conference meeting through the daily press, which was attended by Zagreb’s entrepreneurs, the former members of the Assembly.<sup>6</sup> The meeting discussed the destiny and the activities of this economic institution. The president of GNO Dragutin Sali and the committee members Ivo Šnidaršić i Pavao Koporčić represented the town.<sup>7</sup> The representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Craftsmen, the Association of Tradesmen, the Graduate School for Economy and Trade, the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, the Faculty of Technology, the Association of Innkeepers, the Association of Tradesmen, the Association of Industrial Workers attended the meeting. Those occupational associations, according to the Assembly’s effective regulations, had the authority to directly appoint

---

<sup>3</sup> Državni arhiv u Zagrebu (The State Archives in Zagreb) (Further DAZ), Zapisnik sjednica gradskog narodnog odbora Zagreba, 8. zapisnik redovnog zasjedanja (Records of the meetings of the Town People’s Committee of Zagreb, 8th record of the regular conference), 9 - 12 January 1947, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> “Zagrebački velesajam - odraz privredne snage naše zemlje”, *Narodni list* (further NL), 22 may 1947, p.5

<sup>5</sup> DAZ, Fund Zagrebački velesajam (further ZV), Počeci Zagrebačkog velesajma (The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair) p. 183

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> DAZ, ZV, The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair, p. 184.

representatives of the management of the Assembly.<sup>8</sup> During the session of the conference, a new presidium, the management, executive and supervisory board were elected.<sup>9</sup> The meeting was held with the intent of re - establishing the traditional Zagreb Fair institution. Ivo Milošević thought that the Zagreb Assembly “would be set in order at least to that degree so it can continue tasks intended for its purpose.<sup>10</sup> That optimistic statement reflected a hope that the soon restoration of the pre - war economic role of the Assembly would be carried out. The newly appointed leadership began a promotional activity in the state and private companies with the intention of organizing the first post - war fair event “Propaganda for rebuilding the country”.<sup>11</sup> There were plans for organizing of the two specialized exhibitions - “Russian economic exhibition” and “Istrian economic exhibition”. However, the endeavours of Zagreb entrepreneurs to organize one of the first fair events in the post - war Europe were not realized, in large part due to economic and political circumstances. The economy ruined by the war and the damaged exhibitional buildings on the area of Zagreb Assembly in Savska Street were objective obstacles in the way of this intention.<sup>12</sup> Besides that, it was unrealistic to expect that the new socialist authorities would support the civic initiative and permit the re - establishment of the “old” Assembly. As soon as 1946, Zagreb Assembly was dissolved, and its successor was assigned a new role in the centralized economic system.

### **The founding of the Zagreb Fair Company and the preparation for the first post - war fair**

The new initiative for the restoration of the Fair events in Zagreb came from the top structures of the state. On the grounds of the decision of the Government of the FNRJ, in the beginning of 1947, on holding of the International fair of samples in Zagreb, the Ministry of Foreign Trade of FNRJ took over the sponsorship and GNO took over the organization of the event. With that aim, on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1947, Zagreb Town Council carried out by

<sup>8</sup> Pravila društva Zagrebački zbor (Regulations of the Zagreb Assembly Society, Zagreb 1934) article VIII.

<sup>9</sup> The previous president of Zagreb Assembly, Rudolf Erber, was substituted by the newly elected, Ivo Ražen. *The management board consisted of:* Dragutin Saili, Ivo Šnidaršić, Pavao Koporčić, Franjo Kovač, Ante Pandaković, Slavko Perković, Dragutin Henč, Krešimir Brovec, Vjekoslav Mervan, Srećko Diminić, Franjo Durlen, Ivo Hršak, Franjo Krajčević, Rajmond Fantoni, Franjo Bišnjaković, Franjo Schwarzwald, Andrija Mutafelija, Ignac Fišer, Josip Kaučić, Mirko Šturman, Margareta Hemer, Stanko Sakra, Stanislav Tomašek, Vjekoslav Sedmak, Gajo Omčikus, Stanko Stijasni, Ferdo Budicki, Dragutin Rošić, Mirko Broz, Petar Košević, Zdenko Turković and Ivo Belin. *Executive Committee* činili su Ivo Ražen (president), Ivo Milošević (vicepresident), Dragutin Hlavka, Ivo Pečina, Ignac Fišer, Josip Kaučuć, Ante Pandaković, Ivo Župan, Stanko Stijaski and Franjo Durlen. *The supervisory board:* Bogoljub Bratić, Mile Vojnović, Dragutin Filipčić, Ivan Vugrinc, Miloš Cvitaš, Ivo Janjić and Koloman Jesenjki. DAZ, ZV, The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair, pp 183 - 185.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> “Pripreme za jesensku propagandnu priredbu Zagrebačkog zbora”, *NL*, 10 August 1945, p. 5

<sup>12</sup> DAZ, ZV, The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair, p. 186

acclamation a proposition on the founding of “Zagreb Fair, the town’s company for organizing international fairs in Zagreb”.<sup>13</sup> Besides the property of Zagreb Assembly, estimated to 8 million dinars, the company succeeded the site in Savska Street 25-29, the accessory equipment, machines and the cash working capital.<sup>14</sup> The business of the company was “improving the economy, particularly the production and cottage industry of the nations of Yugoslavia, within the framework of the state’s economy plan”, and its goals were organizing the international trade fairs, fairs and sample exhibitions, cultural, educational and promotional events and publishing the promotional editions.<sup>15</sup> The activity of the Fair fitted the federal and the republic five – year plan adopted in April 1947, with a task of improving the electrification and industrialization of the state.<sup>16</sup> The mentioned decision on the founding of the institution assigned the administrative – operative management (the chief of the Department of trade and supplies of GNO Petar Meić assumed this duty) and the provision of the working capital to the GNO of Zagreb. At the same time the town, for the purpose of repairing and decorating of the Fair premises, authorized a guarantee for raising a loan “at a certain state’s financial institution” to the amount of the value of the site placed at its disposition.<sup>17</sup> In this way the legal preconditions for the organization of the first post – war International fair of samples were carried out.

The preparations for the Fair started on 25th January 1947 with the founding of the Advisory Committee comprised of the members of the competent Ministries and institutions. The representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Supplies, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Department for the press of the Government of FNRJ Presidium, the Commission for planning of NR Croatia, the Commission for control, the Chief Committee of the United Trade Unions of Workers and Employees of Croatia, the Committee for plan-

---

<sup>13</sup> DAZ, Zapisnici sjednica GNOZ-a (Records of the GNOZ Meetings), 8. zapisnik redovnog zasjedanja (8<sup>th</sup> Record of the regular conference), 9 - 12 January 1947, p. 85

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Rješenje o osnivanju privrednog poduzeća Zagrebački velesajam (The decision on founding of the company Zagreb Fair), no: 1013-I-1947, p. 86

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> On the federal and republic five - year plan of development (1947-1951) see: Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: 1999), pp. 237 - 240 and 264 - 267; Jakov Sirotković, *Ekonomska politika Jugoslavije od 1945. do 1988.* (Zagreb: 1989), 1 - 24; *Prvo redovno zasjedanje Sabora Narodne Republike Hrvatske* (10th April – 26th June 1947) – *Stenografski zapisnici* (Zagreb: 1950), pp. 92 - 127 and 244 - 288. On the five - year plan of development of Zagreb see: DAZ, Zapisnici sjednica Gradskog narodnog odbora Zagreba, zapisnik redovnog zasjedanja (Minute of the meetings of the Town People’s Committee of Zagreb, Minute of the regular conference), 11 – 13th July 1947, pp. 201 - 205

<sup>17</sup> DAZ, Zapisnici sjednica GNOZ-a, 8. zapisnik redovnog zasjedanja (Minutes of the GNOZ meetings, 8<sup>th</sup> minute of the regular conference), 9 - 12 January 1947, Rješenje o davanju jamstva za zajam Zagrebačkom velesajmu (The decision on authorization of guarantee for a loan), no: 1012-I-3-1947, p. 86

ning of the GNO Zagreb and the tourist agency the Traveller (*Putnik*) entered the Committee.<sup>18</sup>

Along with the adaptation of the damaged pavilions, the authorities invited tenders for the making of an artistic poster that would render a recognizable visual identity for the Fair, which was to show the economic strength of FNRJ.<sup>19</sup> It would be interesting to mention that about forty of prominent painters, such as Zlatko Prica, Nikola Reiser, Željko Hegedušić, Edo Murtić, Mladen Veža, Antun Maraković, Oton Postružnik and Edo Kovačević, participated in decorating the interior and exterior premises of the Fair.<sup>20</sup>

Despite of the changed social and political circumstances, the management of the Fair tried to restore, besides the contacts with the central economic institutions of the particular republics of FNRJ, the cooperation with the exhibiting countries from the pre – war times. However, the division of the world into the two opposing blocs and the Yugoslav affiliation with the socialist bloc had an important role in the initial interest the countries showed for the exhibition. According to this, the great expectations were directed towards the USSR and the countries of “the people’s democracies”, which were treated in a special way. For example, at the request of the USSR’s Chamber of Commerce, the management of the Fair granted this country the representative premises in a separate pavilion.<sup>21</sup> Hungary was granted separate exhibitional premises, while Czechoslovakia had to renovate its pre – war pavilion, built in 1938, with its own funds. Albania was to present its exhibition for the first time.<sup>22</sup> Although the Western countries were invited to participate, the political antagonisms and the social system differences made their response uncertain. The participation in the first post – war fair in the socialist Yugoslavia had not just economic, but also a political meaning. Namely, the traditional relying of the Yugoslav Communist leadership on the USSR until 1948, beyond doubt impacted the absence of the part of pre – war traditional exhibitors such as Germany.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> “Osnovan je savjetodavni odbor za Zagrebački velesajam”, *Vjesnik*, 26th January 1947, p. 5; “Uređuju se prostorije Zagrebačkog velesajma” *NL*, 2nd February 1947, p. 5

<sup>19</sup> “Zagrebački velesajam – Natječaj za izradu plakata”, *Vjesnik*, 26th January 1947, p. 6; Among 16 received offers until 15<sup>th</sup> January judges appraise and awarded the work of Ferdo Bis, while the third place was shared between Vladimir Sačer i Aleksander Sivert; DAZ, ZV, *The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair*, p. 188

<sup>20</sup> “Zagrebački velesajam-odraz privredne snage naše zemlje”, *NL*, 22 May 1947, p. 2

<sup>21</sup> DAZ, ZV, *The Beginnings of the Zagreb Fair*, p. 189

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> “Whereas the question of the post – war participation of particular countries in the international fairs was considered from a view of economic opportunities, the international reactionary forces managed to impose the issue of participation in the first post – war Zagreb Fair in 1947 as an eminent political question. This post – war hostile campaign against the new socialist Yugoslavia forced our old, most natural economic partners to assume an attitude of awaiting, while some semi – official and private business circles in the world displayed revolt at the invitation of Zagreb Fair, accompanied by the possibilities of animosity and insinuations of

## The International sample fair in 1947 – the first Fair exhibition in the post – war Yugoslavia

The tradition of international trade – fairs in Zagreb Assembly in between wars was one of the crucial motifs for the organizing of the first post – war fair event in Zagreb. The socialist authorities saw in this occasion an opportunity to promote the country.

The International sample fair was opened on 31<sup>st</sup> May, and it should have continued officially until 9<sup>th</sup> June 1947. The representatives of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of FNRJ, lead by the vice president Moša Pijade, the president of the Economic Council of FNRJ Boris Kidrič, the presidents of the competent Ministries, the delegation of the Government of NR Croatia, lead by the president Vladimir Bakarić, the delegation of the Parliament of NR Croatia, the representatives of the Yugoslav Army, the representatives of the trade unions, the delegations of the Town's People's Committees of Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade and the representatives of companies along with the numerous citizens, attended the opening of the Fair. Also the diplomatic representatives of the United Kingdom, Poland, Switzerland, Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain and the most of the socialist countries attended the opening. The president of Zagreb GNO Dragutin Saili opened the Fair.<sup>24</sup> On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June the president of the Republic Josip Broz Tito, followed by the top officials of FNRJ, visited the Zagreb Fair. The press extensively covered Tito's tour around pavilions and thereby his visit had a great promotional significance.<sup>25</sup>

According to the catalogue information of Zagreb Fair in 1947, 17 countries ought to have exhibited in 12 pavilions on 7787 m<sup>2</sup>: Yugoslavia, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Egypt, USA, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Switzerland, Brazil, USSR and Albania. *Privredni vjesnik* presented a number of 731 native and 52 foreign exhibitors participating in the Fair.<sup>26</sup> The real figure of the participant countries and companies is hard to establish because of the noncorrespondence between the sources, due to the frequent changes and inconsistencies in the register of exhibitors. Because of good attendance, the first post – war event in Zagreb Fair was prolonged until the 11<sup>th</sup> June, two days longer than planned. According to the official information, around 258 000 people visited the Fair during twelve days.<sup>27</sup>

---

some hidden tasks of Zagreb Fair”, “Međunarodna afirmacija Zagrebačkog velesajma – Borba za međunarodno povjerenje”, *Privredni vjesnik* (further PV), 12 September 1953, p. 1. It should not be forgotten that this article was created in significantly different circumstances, after the “falling out” with the USSR in 1948.

<sup>24</sup> “Danas je svečano otvoren Zagrebački velesajam”, *NL* 1 June 1947, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> “Maršal Tito posjetio Zagrebački velesajam”, *Vjesnik*, 3 June 1947, p. 1; “Maršal Tito posjetio Zagrebački velesajam”, *NL*, 3 June 1947, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> PV, 12 September 1953, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> DAZ, Zapisnici sjednica Gradskog narodnog odbora Zagreba (Minutes of the meetings of the Town People's Committee of Zagreb), Zapisnik redovnog zasjedanja (Minute of the regular conference), 11-13 August 1947, p. 211.

The pre-war dominant role of Germany, which did not exhibit in 1947, was taken over by the USSR, which had the strongest media support. The presentation of the USSR in the Croatian highest-circulation daily press was incomparable to other countries, and came close to open apologetics. This is confirmed by the president of the Government of NR Croatia Vladimir Bakarić's notes in the book of comments during the visit to the Soviet pavilion: "The first exhibition of the Soviet production in our country leaves an unforgettable impression. The selection and the organization of this exhibition prove the high standard of the production, as well as organization. We should learn from the great USSR, learn and learn", or "there was not a country on our fairs that could reveal to our visitors a new world, a world of socialism. There was not a country, which exhibition would be gladly seen by the eyes of the hundreds of thousands of workers".<sup>28</sup>

The countries of "the people's democracies", Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Albania and Bulgaria, although overshadowed by the Soviet appearance, exhibited in shared specialized or separate pavilions. According to the Fair catalogue, the most numerous were Hungarian, and then Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian and Polish companies. The four Ministries and a department for the arts and culture, instead of companies, represented Albania.<sup>29</sup>

The native production was the most represented in the Fair. Its contents should have "given an impetus and self-esteem to our own economic forces", and let the foreign world know "that Yugoslavia has the natural conditions for its own economic growth".<sup>30</sup> Essentially, the Fair tried to affirm the authorities' standpoints on the real and solid foundations of the five-year rebuilding plan. The native metal and electric industries represented on the federal and national level through the general boards were placed to the foreground.<sup>31</sup> In consistence with the Soviet model of the planned production, completely independent from the imported goods, other branches of the industry found their place in the Fair.<sup>32</sup> The agriculture was presented, as it still employed most of the population of FNRJ after the war. In that way, the Fair functioned as a promotional exhibition exclusively, whereas the pre-war Fair features were completely marginalized. The traditional trading business was completely replaced by the product presentation in the Fair of 1947.

<sup>28</sup> "Kroz sovjetski paviljon", *NL*, 3 June 1947, p. 5, "SSSR na Zagrebačkom velesajmu", *Vjesnik*, 6 June 1947, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Katalog (Catalogue), pp. 217 - 260.

<sup>30</sup> *PV*, 12 September 1953, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> "U paviljonu naše metalurgije", *Vjesnik*, 2 June 1947, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> For example "Izložba industrije tekstila i kože", *Vjesnik*, 5 May 1947, p. 3; "Kućna radinost na Zagrebačkom velesajmu", *NL*, 11 June 1947, p. 6; "Izložba naše poljoprivrede i šumarstva na Zagrebačkom velesajmu", *Vjesnik*, 3 June 1947, p. 1.

## The promotional activities before and during the Fair

The promotional activities connected with the organization of the group visits from different parts of Yugoslavia, started months in advance. The Ministry of Transport of FNRJ authorized 50% grants to the native and foreign visitors that came to the Fair by train, and their accommodations were provided for by the Housing Committee, comprised of the members of the Trading Department of the GNO, the members of the People's Front organization and the tourist agency The Traveller (Putnik).<sup>33</sup> For the same purpose, the improvised information offices were placed in the Ban Josip Jelačić's Square and on the main bus and train station. It is a curiosity that the town's first traffic lights were placed in the entrance of the Fair: "On the entrance of the Fair will be placed a high post with shining signals for directing the traffic. Such traffic posts exist in many cities and direct the traffic much easier, helping to prevent frequent accidents."<sup>34</sup>

The promotional activity, assigned to the Department for the agitation and propaganda (Agitprop), significantly contributed to the high attendance of the Fair. The session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Croatia, held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1947, expressed satisfaction over the organization and the attendance of the Fair, although the dedication of the trade unions was estimated as inadequate.<sup>35</sup> On that occasion, Vladimir Bakarić pointed out the importance of the media campaigns.<sup>36</sup> The specially scheduled trains with the visitors from different parts of FNRJ came to Zagreb daily. So, for example, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June, arranged by the Traveller, arrived several trains from Serbia for a three – day sojourn, free of charge, and a visit to the fair supplemented with the sightseeing of the capital of Croatia and "numerous educational, cultural and sporting events"<sup>37</sup>

The pattern of the visitors significantly changed compared to the pre – war period, due to the social and political changes. The earlier industrials, tradesmen and craftsmen were replaced by the new categories of the visitors – the organized groups of workers, trade union activists, pupils, members of the

---

<sup>33</sup> DAZ, ZV, The Beginnings of Zagreb Fair, 189 (The report was issued according to the special information of Zagreb Fair Management from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 1947) and "Povlastice u vožnji za učesnike i posjetioce Zagrebačkog velesajma", *Vjesnik*, 14 April 1947, p. 3 .

<sup>34</sup> "Strani izlagači na Zagrebačkom velesajmu", *NL*, 25 May 1947, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Hrvatski državni arhiv (Croatian State Archives, Further HDA), Fond CK SKH (The Central Committee of the Union of the Communists of Croatia fund, Further CK SKH fund), box 21, Zapisnici sjednica Politburoa (Minutes of the Politburo meetings, 1945 - 1949), Zapisnici proširene sjednice biroa CK KPH (Minutes of the extended meeting of the bureau of CK SKH), 5 June 1947, p 4; Minutes of Politburo's meetings from this period are available also in the book of documents: *Zapisnici Politburoa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske* (The Minutes of Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia From 1945 to 1952 (Zagreb: 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "Završeno je uređenje Zagrebačkog velesajma", *NL*, 16 May 1947, p. 4.



youth organization, members of cooperatives, militia, anti – Fascist associations. The Fair promoted the native tourism also. Along with the presentation of tourist destinations of Yugoslavia in a separate pavilion and the organization of the group excursions, Yugoslav diplomatic missions and consular posts issued free visas to the foreigners.<sup>38</sup>

### The significance of the Fair

From the analysis of the events on the International sample fair in 1947, it can be concluded that the native economy prevailed in the number of exhibitors and products. The most successful exhibitors were awarded certificates and commendations, taking into consideration the capacity of drawing attention of the visitors, the functionality and aesthetics of the exhibition premises and “the discipline and adjustment to the general directives of the leadership”. The certificates were awarded to three companies – from Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.<sup>39</sup>

The attached chart (Appendix 1. The proportion of shares of the native and foreign exhibitors) shows that the native production was represented with about 80% in the Fair.<sup>40</sup> In the total number of the foreign exhibitors, the countries of “the people’s democracies” and the USSR participated with a big share. Among the Western countries, the neutral Switzerland was the most represented country, whereas the others participated with the negligible number of exhibitors.<sup>41</sup> The Politburo of the CK KPH evaluated Switzerland’s appearance as very good, pointing out that “the Swiss tried the hardest, even more than in Paris”.<sup>42</sup> The political division after World War II beyond doubt affected the pattern of exhibitors, which considerably changed in comparison to the pre – war period. Poland, Romania and Albania, which had a secondary significance in the international trade exchange, and the USSR, with which the trade relations were not kept before the war, came to the foreground in 1947. The matters with Czechoslovakia were somewhat different, because it was an important exhibitor even at the times of Zagreb Assembly. However, the Politburo of CK SKH criticized the appearance of these countries in Zagreb in 1947. Czechoslovakian exhibition was evaluated as “a very modest one compared to the one in Paris”, and Polish and Bulgarian exhibitions “were far from presenting to the best of their abilities”.<sup>43</sup> In total, the participation of the countries of the Middle and South – Eastern Europe could

<sup>38</sup> “Na Zagrebačkom velesajmu bit će iscrpno prikazani napori i uspjesi naše turističke privrede”, *Vjesnik*, 7 February 1947, p. 5; “Zagrebački velesajam odraz privredne snage naše zemlje”, *NL*, 22 May 1947, p. 2; DAZ, ZV, The Beginnings of Zagreb Fair, p. 190.

<sup>39</sup> “Domaćim izlagačima na Zagrebačkom velesajmu izdane su diplome i pohvale”, *NL*, 12 June 1947, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> The graph was made according to the information of the alphabetical list of the companies in *Katalog Zagrebačkog velesajma 1947* (Catalogue of Zagreb Fair), pp. 217 – 260.

<sup>41</sup> *Katalog* (Catalogue), pp. 217 – 260.

<sup>42</sup> HDA, CK SKH, Zapisnik sjednice CK SKH (Minute of the meeting of CK SKH) 5 June 1947, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

not have had the considerable practical significance in trading, if only for the character of the Fair. This is supported by the fact that the presented (mostly agricultural) goods were not cost – effective in Yugoslavia.<sup>44</sup> The USSR, which was given a high media visibility, promoted its forces and the success of the socialist social system in a representative way. The Politburo of CK SKH rated the Fair activity in 1947 favourably, emphasizing its role in the establishment of the five – year plan.<sup>45</sup> Although there were objections considering the participation in particular industrial branches, the participation of Croatia was satisfactory, according to the opinion of the most powerful political institution in Croatia. Especially Croatian food industry became prominent, the metal industry was “represented modestly compared to what we have”, the textile industry was rated as less strong than Slovenian, and the linen industry “less developed than Serbian”.<sup>46</sup> In the total offer of Yugoslavian fairs, Croatia was represented with 30%, in accordance with the level of economic development in comparison to the other republics (Appendix 2. chart The proportion of exhibitors from NR Croatia and the rest of the FNRJ).<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

The initiative of Zagreb’s entrepreneurs for the re – establishment of Zagreb Assembly in 1945 was not realized due to the post – war economic and political circumstances. Since the socialist authorities considered the institution of the Assembly compromised on the grounds of “economic collaboration with the occupier”, it was dissolved in February 1946, and the new town’s company Zagreb Fair was founded in the beginning of 1947. Its purpose, according to the announced goals and the fact it was established by the highest officials, was exclusively propagandist, which distinguished it from the earlier business and trade fairs in Zagreb Assembly. The international sample fair, held from 31<sup>st</sup> May to 11<sup>th</sup> June 1947, was organized with a purpose of promoting the Yugoslav five – year plan of industrialization and electrification of the coun-

---

<sup>44</sup> The analysis of the first International Fair of Samples/Patterns was published by *Privredni Vjesnik* in 1953 in the article “Međunarodna afirmacija Zagrebačkog velesajma”. This text, written in the period of an estrangement of relations with USSR, as a result of the Informbureau resolution in 1948, presents far different standpoints on the participants of the Fair in 1947: “...the post-war political situation in the world, particularly in terms of relations towards the new socialist Yugoslavia, brought to the fact that our first Zagreb Fair was exclusively political, propagandist and economic event, without greater practical and trade significance for our trade exchange with foreign countries. (...)” Hungary, Poland, Romania and Albania were always of secondary importance for our foreign trade and we have not traded at all with USSR before the war. Czechoslovakian and Hungarian industry, which supplied our economy with certain machines and material, could not overtake the works, because they were being burdened with the shipments for USSR, which came to Zagreb Fair in order to take and not to bring.” *PV*, 12 September 1953, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> HDA, CK SKH, Zapisnik sjednice CKSKH (Minute of the meeting of CK SKH) 5 June 1947, pp. 3 – 4.

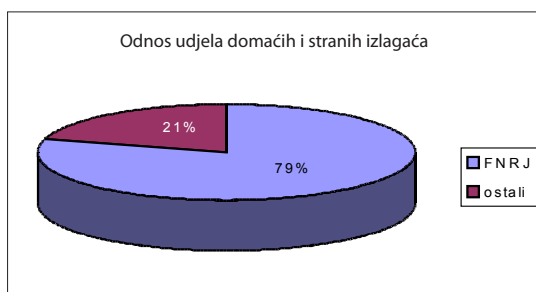
<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> The graph was made according to the information of the alphabetical list of companies of the catalogue of Zagreb Fair 1947, pp. 217 – 260.

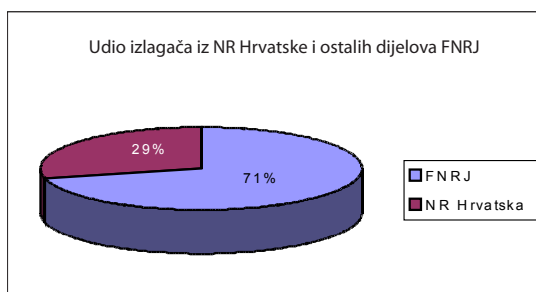
try. According to this, the native production, which was to affirm the economic power and the capacity for the independent economic development of the socialist Yugoslavia, was mostly represented in the Fair. Besides the modest participation of the western countries and the countries of “the people’s democracies”, the biggest media attention was given to the USSR. The appearance of the USSR should have promoted the success and superiority of the socialist system, which the rest of the countries from the Eastern and South – Eastern countries ought to have followed. Because of the economic relations disarrangement (due to the economic blockade) and many other non – economic (political) factors, Zagreb Fair did not make the most of its unique market function. However, the pre – war tradition of fairs had a great significance for the continuance of the trade – fair business, so the propaganda character of the Fair held in 1947 gradually lost its significance to the advantage of its original, trading and exhibitional character.

*Translated by Ida Ljubić*

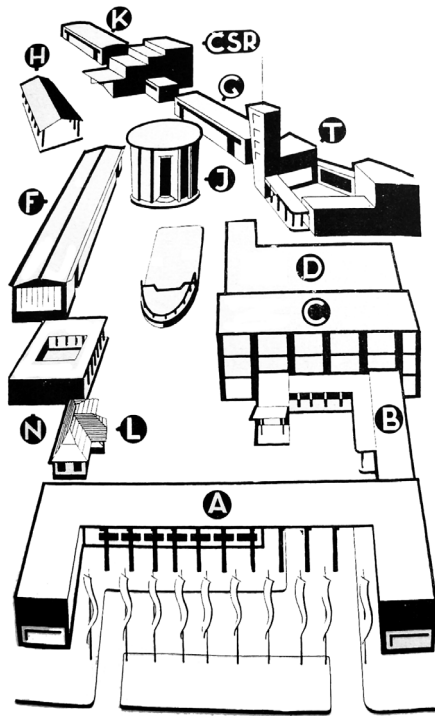
**Appendix 1.** The proportion of shares of the native (FNRJ) and foreign (ostali) exhibitors



**Appendix 2.** The proportion of exhibitors from NR Croatia (NR Hrvatska) and the rest of the FNRJ



### Appendix 3. Arrangement of pavilions on the International sample fair in 1947<sup>48</sup>



- A: upravna zgrada Velesajma / Main building
- B: kolektivne izložbe Albanije, Poljske i Bugarske / Exhibitions of Albania, Poland and Bulgaria
- C: tekstil, koža, duhan, kemijska i prehrambena industrija, ruketvorine, zadruga, voćarstvo i vinogradarstvo, medicinski aparati, zemaljski i zadrugni proizvodi, obrtna proizvodnja, kozmetika / Various products (textile, leather, tobacco, etc)
- D: kolektivna izložba SSSR / Exhibition of the USSR
- E: industrija - metalna, mašinska, elektrotehnička, drvena; švicarska i mađarska kolektivna izložba / Various industries and Swiss and Hungarian Exhibitions
- G: poljoprivreda i šumarstvo / Agriculture and Forestry
- H: SSSR i Francuska / USSR and France
- J: rudarstvo / Mining
- K: Italija, Belgija, Holandija / Italy, Belgium and Netherlands
- L: kućna radinost / Cottage industry
- N: izvozna poduzeća / Export
- T: turizam / Tourism

### Die Zagreber Messe 1947

Die erste Messeausstellung der Nachkriegszeit in der sozialistischen Welt

#### Zusammenfassung

Die Arbeit legt die Umstände hinsichtlich der Gründung des Unternehmens *Die Zagreber Messe* fest, das auf der Tradition der größten Messeeinrichtung in Jugoslawien der Zwischenkriegszeit entstanden war, der Zagreber Versammlung (Zagrebački zbor). Es wurden die Vorbereitungsarbeiten in Bezug auf die Organisation der ersten Messeausstellung in der Nachkriegszeit im Jahre 1947 und ihre Wirtschafts- und Werbebedeutung untersucht.

<sup>48</sup> The sketch of the pavilion was taken from the catalogue of Zagreb Fair 1947, XXII., DAZ, Zagreb Fair fund.