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**Jasmina Fućkan**

Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, Zagreb

jasmina.fuckan@muo.hr

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## Museum of Arts and Crafts as a Generator of New Institutions in the Time of Director Vladimir Tkalčić (1933–1952)

*Vladimir Tkalčić held the function of Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from the beginning of September 1933 to June 1952, which was the period of his vocational maturity – from age 50 until his retirement. The paper provides insight into Tkalčić's vision of the development of the institution and into his achievements which allowed, already in his lifetime, that practice systems be derived from the Museum of Arts and Crafts and funds be formed as a baseline for the establishment of new institutions in Zagreb, such as the conservation and restoration workshop of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Museum of Serbs in Croatia, and the Technical Museum. Interpretations of certain achievements that Tkalčić accomplished in conditions of economic and political instability, in a whirlwind of confusion combined with the violence of wartime, are inevitably imbued with controversy. Examination of the documentation fund of the Museum of Arts in Crafts, in the first place Tkalčić's legacy and registry books from years of his mandate, provides an insight into the contextual mosaic of his complex endeavours, as well as into the set of his character qualities that supported the principles of professional ethics.*

**Key words:** Tkalčić, Vladimir; Museum of Arts and Crafts (Zagreb); Conservation Department; museum restoration workshop; Museum of Serbs in Croatia (Zagreb); Technical Museum (Zagreb); Szabo, Gjuro; Bach, Ivan; Wyroubal, Zvonimir; Dekleva, Stanislava

## INTRODUCTION

During his almost two-decade-long mandate, Vladimir Tkalčić accomplished achievements whose significance corresponds to the generous amount of time that he, as the first long-standing Director of the Museum after Herman Bollé, was granted by Chronos, master of destiny. The documentation of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (MUO) also includes his personal archives handed over by Vladimir Tkalčić himself in September 1967.<sup>1</sup> The initial fund was supplemented in 1981 by a subsequent donation of archive materials from the family heritage of Želimir Koščević, Tkalčić's nephew.<sup>2</sup> Examination of this fund and registry books from the time of Tkalčić's mandate provides an insight into the contextual mosaic of his complex endeavours, as well as into the set of his character qualities that supported the principles of professional ethics.

Taking over the agenda from Antun Jiroušek, Tkalčić arrived to the Museum of Arts and Crafts in early September 1933 with strongly profiled advantages for the Director position. By that time, he had gained professional reputation as the Director of the Ethnographic Museum and an active member of the Croatian Art Society, especially through his engagement in the organisation of complex international exhibition projects and their set-up.<sup>3</sup> He had insight into the issues of budgeting and maintenance of Zagreb-based museums, developed capillary connections of institutions with which he was previously involved, and an extensive network of trusted people – colleagues, expert associates, and enthusiasts, whom he relied on for support during this period. Even after his transfer to the MUO, for almost two years he maintained a professional relationship with the Ethnographic Museum as a member of the Commission for Status and Business Overview.<sup>4</sup>

The important contextual premise that greatly allowed Tkalčić to put his ideas into practice was the decision of the Ministry of Education from January 1933 refusing the proposal of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to integrate the Museum into the Trade School and thus guarantying the Museum its further institutional independence.<sup>5</sup> During the period intersected with war-time events, and despite of or due to unstable political and very adverse material circumstances, Tkalčić reorganised and expanded the Museum of Arts and Crafts, added new collections, and established a workshop for conserving and restoring artworks, the first one in Croatia (Sunara 2017:108; Podgorski 2018-2019:499), which then evolved into the Restoration Institute of the Yugoslav Academy (Bach Ed. 1955a:2).

In addition to his regular museum-related activities, he was also active in other areas. As a member of the Croatian Art Society in Zagreb, he was intensively involved in the efforts around the exhibition *Pola vijeka hrvatske umjetnosti* (*Half a Century of Croatian Art*), collecting data on the history of the Art Society for a foreword to the exhibition catalogue. Within the Society, as a

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1 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 3/51-1967.

2 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 67/2-1981.

3 MUO Archives, No. 529-1946. He participated, as one of the main organisers, in the exhibitions *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels modernes* in Paris in 1925 and *Exposicion Internacional* in Barcelona in 1929. For the 1927 international exhibition of rugs in Paris, he collected materials from Yugoslavia and wrote a feature about our rug making for the exhibition catalogue. Furthermore, he participated in the 1932 exhibition of artistic crafts in Saarbrücken and Metz. (Form with information about the academic Vladimir Tkalčić dated 3 August 1946, MOU Archives No. 529-1946.)

4 He was relieved as a member in that commission in July 1935. MUO Archives, Ref. No. 184-1935.

5 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 41-1933.

member of the core Zagreb committee in charge of organising the big 1939 exhibition of Croatian church art which eventually did not come to life, he played an important role in defining the concept of the exhibition. However, in addition to his lively participation in the current cultural and artistic endeavours, in order to evaluate his contribution, it is extremely important to discern the continuity of his field conservation activity, which, from his youth to the end of his life, represented the basic professional principle on which all Tkalčić's museum duties built upon.

## HERITAGE CONSERVATION PRACTICE IN THE SYNERGY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ART AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS AND OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

Although Tkalčić himself emphasised in the reporting forms of his professional biography the fact that he had participated in the work of the National Office for the Preservation of Art and Historical Monuments in Croatia and Slavonia since its beginning in 1910<sup>6</sup>, he particularly distinguished himself in the fulfilment of duties of the Office in 1913 by taking photographs of works of art from the Zagreb Cathedral Treasury (Horvat 1955:210-211; Grković 2017:110-112), whose inventory he would complete only in 1952/1953 as one of the members of a broader Commission appointed for that purpose. However, the 1912 restoration interventions in the wooden relief showing St. Paul the Hermit from the St. Mary's church on the cemetery at the foot of the Osap hill in Novi Vinodolski and the renovation of the Gothic part of the altar of St. Mary which, after having been destroyed as a result of previous bad restoration, was brought to the Archaeological Museum from the one-time Franciscan church of Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary in Remetinec near Novi Marof, are for now his first documented independent preservation contributions in the spirit of the conservation principle advocated by the National Office (Wyroubal 1958:327). In the late 1950ies, Zvonimir Wyroubal, qualified restorer of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, stated in his review of the quality of this intervention that the altar "is still in good condition thanks to the work performed on it by Professor Tkalčić" (Wyroubal 1958:328).

Furthermore, in the chronology of Tkalčić's credits in the Museum of Arts and Crafts, particularly worth mentioning is an episode from World War I, when, in 1916, Tkalčić, as one of the *National Office's* 30 conservators in charge of the whole country, participated in the recovery of church bells at the initiative of Viktor Hoffiller, the then-curator of the Archaeological Department of the National Museum and the Head of the Office (Juranović Tonejc 2021: 91). As a member of the *Committee for Evaluation of Metal Objects*, he kept record of, described, and photographed bells at the railway station collection point (Juranović Tonejc 2021: 89-90). As a result of that action, bells of historical and artistic importance were excluded from the decision on metal requisition, and some of them, through the exchange of materials with the Archaeological Museum, later ended in the holdings of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Form with employees' biographical information from 1946, MUO Archives.

7 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 529-1946.

With a view to gaining a more complete insight and thus allowing for adequate valorisation of conservation morality by which Tkalčić was guided while managing the Museum, it is of the utmost importance to understand the conservation activity of his ten-year older colleague, life-long friend, and best man Gjuro Szabo, in which his engagement as a Secretary of the Office (from 1 February 1911) and later on as its President (from 1923) was intertwined with his official duties of the Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts (from December 1919 to April 1926). Szabo was regularly sent by the President of the Office Tadija Smičiklas to field researches for the purpose of inventorying monuments of artistic value and cultural and artistic value and making topographic maps, which was considered one of the most important segments of the monument preservation process.<sup>8</sup> Taking a view that the activity he performed for the Office, primarily on a voluntary basis, was a sort of tool contributing to the general quality of the museum work, Szabo, in the capacity of the Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, and supported by the engagement of the curator Većeslav Henneberg, continued work on the recording and saving of works of art in the field (Brdar Mustapić, unpublished work). However, it should be noted here that the personal enthusiasm of museum workers in their field efforts was also accompanied by the legal regulation of their activity and that the employees of the Museum of Arts and Crafts were deployed to field work by decisions of the Ministry of Education.

On account of his poor health, Szabo was occasionally absent from his duty at the Office, which in 1928 changed the name into Conservation Office. Tkalčić was the associate who substituted for him in field researches and consultations. Following the pattern set by his expert mentor, Tkalčić consistently built on the tenants of integrating field research with museum principles of preservation, thus transferring the same principles of work to the qualified art historians Ivan Bach<sup>9</sup> and Zdenka Munk<sup>10</sup>, young employees hired by the Museum after 1937, that is, following the departure of prematurely deceased Većeslav Henneberg, historian, previous curator, and the long-term associate of the Office<sup>11</sup>.

The second phase of synergy, in addition to personal relations of employees, was also based on the official connection of the two institutions that were dedicated to field research and protec-

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8 The contextualisation of the activities of Gjuro Szabo and Vladimir Tkalčić in the Office was elaborated in detail by Martina Juranović Tonejc in her dissertation *Institucionalni razvoj zaštite pokretne umjetničke baštine u Hrvatskoj od 1850. do 1990. godine (The Institutional development of the protection of movable heritage in Croatia from 1850-1990)*.

9 Ivan Bach, Ph.D. (Zagreb, 12.12.1910 – Zagreb, 9.7.1983), graduated in 1933 in art history and classical archaeology from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb and received his doctoral degree with the thesis *Antikni figuralni bronsani predmeti Arheološko-historijskog muzeja u Zagrebu (Antique Figural Bronze Objects of the Archaeological and Historical Museum in Zagreb)* on 30 June 1939. On 22 September 1938, he was employed with the Museum of Arts and Crafts, where, barring a few shorter breaks on account of other duties, he spent his whole work life until retirement in 1973 (Munk 1983: 5-7; Tonković 1983: 8-9).

10 Zdenka Munk (Graz, 19.8.1912 – Zagreb, 21.3.1985) graduated in art history and was employed with the Museum of Arts and Crafts as a curator in 1938. During the war, she, together with her husband Zdenko Vojnović, joined the Partisans. In 1948, she was appointed a conservator in the Republican Conservation Institute. After Vojnović died, from 1954 she was the long-standing Director of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, staying in office for 25 years (Staničić 2001).

11 Većeslav Henneberg (Zagreb, 22.3.1889 – Zagreb, 5.4.1937), graduated professor of history and geography, professor at the Zagreb-based II Real Gymnasium, employed as a curator with the National Museum, Department of Arts and Artistic Crafts, by the decision of the Minister of 23 January 1925 (Personnel File on Većeslav Henneberg, MUO Archives).

tion against deterioration, which started mid-1938, when the Belgrade-based Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, General Department, adopted a decision to relocate the archives, library, and instruments of the Conservation Office from the premises of the Ethnographic Museum to the building of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.<sup>12</sup> On that occasion, Vladimir Tkalčić wrote: “Two cabinets storing the inventory of that office can be placed in the library hall of this museum, where a writing desk belonging to the same office has already been kept for a while, i.e. since before 1926 (...). Archive materials, especially the library of the Conservation Office, which mostly hold materials in the field of art history and expert preservation of art and historical monuments, would also serve well the purposes of this museum.”<sup>13</sup> Tkalčić’s correspondence with pastors in the field provides contextual insight into the fact that he equals the interests of the museum with the public scientific interests and the interests of preserving the integrity of art monuments. As part of his museum duties, Ivan Bach also intervened in raising awareness among priests and residents of parishes about preserving antiquities and in establishing contacts with Gjuro Szabo and the Conservation Office, which was responsible for finding appropriate restorers and restoration experts.

During World War II, the museum, in co-operation with the Conservation Office, received for storage objects that belonged to Jewish families and individuals who were forced to leave Zagreb. Pursuant to the Legal Regulation of the *Poglavnik* (Leader) of 12 May 1941<sup>14</sup> on the preservation of art monuments and cultural and historical monuments, Croatian state museums were primarily entitled to nationalised objects of artistic value and cultural and historical value. In 1942, the whole museum staff worked on collecting endangered materials, as well as on receiving and organising materials from special collections in Zagreb covered by the *Legal Regulation prohibiting the misappropriation and export of antique art monuments, cultural and historical monuments, and natural monuments in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia*.<sup>15</sup> In addition to objects entrusted to the museum by families or individuals themselves, expert employees of the museum also disposed of confiscated objects in the “nationalised residences” of Jews and some Serbs. Looking for potentially sold objects, they visited weekly fairs and private collections and monitored the offerings of antique shops and pawn shops. The Institute for Colonisation<sup>16</sup> organised public auctions to sell various household items from evicted and abandoned estates, and its employees informed the Museum if any objects of potential conservation

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12 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 343-1938.

13 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 314-1938.

14 *Legal Regulation of 12 May 1941 No. LXXVII-135- Z.p.-1941 prohibiting the misappropriation and export of antique art monuments, cultural and historical monuments, and natural monuments in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia* (Ed. Mataić 1941: 227-228).

15 Article 3 reads: “Institutions and private persons who would not be able to carefully preserve their antique art monuments, cultural and historical monuments, and natural monuments are to deliver them to a Croatian national museum of the Independent State of Croatia, where such museum will issue them a written certificate of receipt or purchase on behalf of the Independent State of Croatia.”

16 The Institute for Colonisation was established on 5 May 1941 by the Legal Regulation on establishment (Official Gazette (NN) 19/1941). The scope of the Institute covered the whole territory of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). The Institute for Colonisation was under the Ministry of Association until 10 February 1942, when the control over the Institute was transferred to the Ministry of Peasant-Farming Economy. Later on, it came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Economy, and, after its abolition in 1943, of the re-established Ministry of Peasant-Farming Economy and Food (source: [http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx?ItemId=3\\_1590](http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx?ItemId=3_1590)).

interest would appear. All collected materials were put in crates and stored in the store rooms of the Museum. Materials were examined, classified, and scientifically assessed at the committee level. The museum management was guided solely by the museum interest and thus accepted only objects of true museum value and importance, either in terms of their age, artistic form, or cultural and historic meaning.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to assess Tkalčić's role in the process of instrumentalising state museums in accordance with the legal regulations during the establishment of the NDH in terms of his life-long work, the described long-term close co-operation with the colleagues from the Conservation Office who, in those years, were directly involved in the activities of the museum, and taking into account his primary commitments to the principles of protection and conservation of artworks in crisis situations, to which he had been practically devoted since 1912. These commitments in the post-war period would manifest in the organisation of two museum exhibitions, which can be considered as results of his conservation efforts put into practice. *Izložba umjetničkih spomenika Srba u Hrvatskoj (Exhibition of Art Monuments of Serbs in Croatia)*, showing materials that were preserved during the occupation and taking place from 30 September to 31 December 1945, was presented as the first post-war exhibition, albeit closed one. Exhibits included icons, textile and metal artefacts, and wood-cutting and book-binding works from the monasteries of Fruška gora. Although not accessible to the wider public, 783 invitees viewed the exhibition while it lasted.<sup>18</sup> A little over a month later, the first restoration exhibition in Croatia was opened, set up by the restorer Zvonimir Wyroubal with a view to presenting the activities of the museum workshop for the restoration of damaged objects during the war period (Sunara 2012).

## FROM A MUSEUM DEPARTMENT TO A CENTRAL STATE INSTITUTION – THE FIRST PUBLIC RESTORATION WORKSHOP IN CROATIA

After years of persistent attempts, and following the controversial role given to the MUO as one of the central state museums during the war years in the newly established NDH, the MUO equipped a restoration workshop where Tkalčić employed a qualified restorer. In her doctoral dissertation *Život i djelo Zvonimira Wyroubala (Life and Work of Zvonimir Wyroubal)* from 2017, Sagita Mirjam Sunara offered an account of circumstances in which the workshop was formed and evaluated the contribution of Zvonimir Wyroubal to the establishment of the first public restoration workshop in Croatia in 1942 (Sunara 2021, 2017). The data from the museum archives presented here complete that account by providing a more detailed insight into the scope of the activity of protection of museum materials, stratified by specialisation, which was pursued in the museum.

At the beginning of the war, the museum employees (Vladimir Tkalčić, Ivan Bach, Zdenka Munk, Ruža Zanon, Zdenko Vojnović and custodians Tomo Bogdanić, Josip Gjekić, and Marijan Gionechetti) were instructed, under a decision of the Conservation Office from June 1941, to catalogue, record, and, where necessary, store art monuments, cultural and historical monuments, and natural monuments in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia.<sup>19</sup> As early as

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17 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1041-1942.

18 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 136-1947.

19 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 254-1941.

July, the Ministry of Education, Department for Colleges and Scientific Institutions, ordered the museum to collect cultural and historical objects and art objects from all abandoned previous Orthodox monasteries and churches.<sup>20</sup> By the order of the Ministry of 22 October of the same year, all objects “delivered from Greco-Eastern residences, churches, and monasteries and from Jewish residences” were to be stored, until further notice, in the premises of the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts. On the same day, Jelisava Bocarić was employed as a daily restorer.<sup>21</sup>

Fourteen representatives of the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts, in co-operation with the administrations of the Croatian State Archaeological Museum, the Croatian State History Museum, and the Croatia State Ethnographic Museum, were instructed to examine and catalogue all under-protected cultural and historical objects and art objects, including the organisation of their delivery to Zagreb.<sup>22</sup> In such circumstances, the museum activities were implemented under an enhanced protection regime, while a dire need for an adequate centre specialised in performing conservation and restoration work on damaged objects, which, by then, Tkalčić had emphasised in his plans of work on several occasions, now became a priority.

By 1939, following a large influx of new objects<sup>23</sup> and establishment of new exhibition departments, the rooms previously used for storage and the workshop for the repair and conservation of objects began to serve as exhibition halls in the Museum. As a result, the Museum lost adequate space for, according to Tkalčić, one of the most important museum functions – the restoration workshop, which should have been technologically equipped for disinfection and disinfestation. At the time, museum objects were repaired in a small 4-square-meter room on the ground floor of the museum, previously a toilette room which in 1938, due to a complete lack of workshops, was turned into a workshop and certainly was lacking when it came to the repair and assembly of larger objects.<sup>24</sup>

Under the extraordinary expense item of the 1941 museum budget proposal, Tkalčić separately budgeted a “Device of the department for antiquities conservation and restoration” and provided an unambiguous explanation of his far-reaching vision of the operation of that department: “Croatia has a long-standing need for a scientific institution for professional conservation and restoration of objects as in most cases unprofessional work of various self-proclaimed, uncritical, and unprincipled “craftsmen” has irrevocably damaged our works of art and other cultural and historical monuments. Since such an institution is essential to both this museum, which collects objects from the whole banovina of Croatia, and the Conservation Offices in Zagreb and Split, which are entrusted with the duty of preserving and properly conserving our antiquities, I propose, as agreed with Dr. Mihovil Abramić, conservator from Split, and Prof. Gjuro Szabo, conservator from Zagreb, that such a model institution be established in Zagreb as part of this museum for the whole banovina of Croatia.”<sup>25</sup> Such an explanation appeared as a fully conscious

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20 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 365-1941.

21 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 701-1941.

22 MUO Archives, ref. no. 478-1941.

23 A comparison of statistical data on the number of objects in the fund from 1934 (MUO Archives, Ref. No. 95/1935) and from 1939 (MUO Archives, Ref. No. 123-1940) shows that the fund increased by around 2 400 objects.

24 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 63-1939.

25 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 304-1940.

and intentional anticipation of the later accomplishment, which in the following year started down the path to concretisation. The list of material equipment was specified in three groups to serve the purposes of the “painting, statuary, and photographic sections” of the workshop. He also mentioned that “special professional auxiliary forces, for example for various carpentry, sculptural, and other works related to conservation and restoration of museum objects” were required.<sup>26</sup> Namely, conservation works and repairs on metal objects had been performed in the Museum by the custodian Josip Gjekić since 1938.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, Tkalčić's request was met with several new hires. Under the Decision of the Ministry of Education of 30 August 1941, the previous employee of the Military Technical Institute Dragutin Horvat<sup>28</sup> was appointed a laboratory technician<sup>29</sup>, the position he held in the Museum until his death in 1950. In addition to his usual custodian duties, he also repaired museum furniture and did other carpentry work. The museum documentation of the war period includes also the name Franjo Fink, a maintenance machinist in the workshop of state railways in Zagreb, who was appointed a preparator on 31 August 1941. Already in November, as an Ustasha soldier, he was relieved of his duties in the Museum and, on 31 December 1941, appointed an honorary preparator in the War Museum in Zagreb, although he was kept on the list of employees of the MOU until as late as July 1944.<sup>30</sup>

Zvonimir Wyroubal<sup>31</sup>, a drawing teacher at the State Real Gymnasium in Požega, was appointed a drawer in the Croatian National Museum of Arts and Crafts on 6 August 1941.<sup>32</sup> The unusual nomenclature of the post that did not match the professional description of restoration activity,

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26 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 304-1940.

27 Josip Gjekić (Kragujevac, (26.3.1906-?)) completed a four-year trade programme and became a foundryman and a silversmith assistant in Vitez (from 1919 to 1923) and finished a course on autogenous metal welding (1929). Since early November 1938, he had been employed with the Museum as a labourer. In addition to various custodian duties, he also performed conservation works on museum objects. He was appointed a custodian in June 1940. In October 1942, under an order of the Head of the Department for Colleges and Scientific Institutions of the Ministry of Education, he was transferred to the Croatian State Museum in Banja Luka and dismissed from his position of the custodian in the Museum in Zagreb in December (Personnel File on Josip Gjekić, MOU Archives).

28 Dragutin Horvat (Zagreb, 12.5.1909 – Zagreb, 21.8.1950), after four years of primary school, finished four years of the aviation non-commissioned officer school in Petrovaradin (1926/1927). In 1948, he attended a three-week federal conservation and preparation course in Ljubljana and already the following year participated as a lecturer and examiner in the museum conservation course for laboratory technicians-preparators. After their residence was damaged by bombing, the Horvat's family was provided with two basement rooms in the building of the museum (a room and a kitchen), where they lived until Dragutin tragically died in a traffic accident (Personnel File on Dragutin Horvat, MOU Archives).

29 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 496-1941.

30 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 340-1944.

31 Zvonimir Wyroubal (Karlovac, 1.1.1900 – Zagreb, 26.12.1990), after finishing the primary school and the gymnasium in Gospić, he graduated from the Royal Higher School of Arts and Artistic Crafts in Zagreb. He studied painting and restoration of paintings and statues in Paris from 1922 to 1925. In 1930, he obtained a certificate for teaching drawing and penmanship skills in Zagreb. He wrote the professional text *Konzerviranje i restauriranje slika (Conservation and Restoration of Paintings)*. A type-written copy of the text, consisting of 41 pages and 11 copyright drawings, was purchased from him by the Museum in 1945 for the first volume of the Publication of the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts. (Reports on Employees, MUO Archives, Ref. No. 529-1946; MUO Archives, Ref. No. 156-1945).

32 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 30451-1941.



which was Wyroubal's primary activity, did not change in all the years in which the idea of a branched department, in terms of specialisation, gradually underwent the process of taking root in reality. Namely, Tkalčić repeated the same description when in 1947, on account of the restoration workshop splitting off from the Museum, he asked the Ministry of Education for a new employee, probably having Edo Kovačević in mind, to join the museum team in March: "a band-8 drawer for making drawings, graphs, geographical maps, inscriptions..."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, according to the Tkalčić's systematisation of professional duties at the time, Wyroubal was not the only restorer employed in the workshop during the wartime period. Starting in 1942, Jelisa-va Paladin (née Bocarić)<sup>34</sup> specialised in painting restoration under the Wyroubal's mentorship and inventoried a large part of objects collected from Orthodox churches. In the Museum of Arts and Crafts, she was appointed a daily restorer on 22 October 1941 by a decision of the Director Vladimir Tkalčić, under the authority of the Ministry of Education in Zagreb.<sup>35</sup> She passed her professional restorer exam by the end of 1943 and restored approximately thirty paintings and icons over the following three years.<sup>36</sup> Tkalčić's understanding of the established restoration workshop was very complex, at least in terms of the conceptual structure of employ-ees and duties, as reflected in the description given in his 1942 activity report.<sup>37</sup> Thus, he stated there that the museum had preparation, conservation, and restoration workshops for: paintings (academy-trained painter Zvonimir Wyroubal), for carpentry and statuary work (laboratory technician Dragutin Horvat), and for locksmithing and goldsmithing work to prepare objects of precious metals and repair fine mechanisms (preparator Franjo Fink). By the end of the year, a disinfection room was set up in the attic, however, it was largely inadequate and lacking. Thus, in 1943, Tkalčić complained to the Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Public Affairs, which contributed to the adaptation of the room, concluding that toxic gas emissions posed a safety risk to the health of the museum employees and that the disinfection procedure had failed its purpose.<sup>38</sup>

The post-war stabilisation of the state organisation created conditions for implementing adequate systematic protection and care of the tangible heritage. The National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia issued on 20 February 1945 the Decision on the protection of cultural monuments and antiquities. Immediately after liberation, on 23 July 1945, the Act on the Protection of Monuments of Cultural and Natural Rarities of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia was enacted, prescribing that the protection of all monuments was taken over by the state and implemented in each Republic by the National Institute for the Protection of Monuments. The Ordinance issued on 7 November 1945 provided that, in addition to an expert protection body, National Committees were control bodies of protection. All the foregoing made it possible that the activity of the museum restoration workshop was given an even more important, and con-

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33 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1192-1946.

34 Jelisa-va Bocarić married Paladin (Zagreb, 10.9.1915-?) interrupted her study of art history at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb due to the war situation in 1941. She worked in the Museum until 1951. In the post-war period, in addition to minor restoration repairs, during the rearrangement of museum collections she worked on collecting data and preparing texts for the exhibition of and a guide on glass objects (Personnel File on Jelisa-va Bocarić and MUO Archives).

35 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 601-1954.

36 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 529-1946.

37 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 986-1942.

38 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 188-1943.

siderably broader, institutional framework. In the type-written text held in the museum archives and entitled *Skica za reorganizaciju i proširenje restauratorskog rada* (*An Outline for the Reorganisation and Extension of Restoration Work*) Zvonimir Wyroubal proposed, on 7 September 1946, two options to extend the restoration activity in Croatia, both based on the position that the workshop of the Museum of Arts and Crafts should be either a generator of a new institution, “possibly under the name State Restoration Institute in Zagreb”, or an incubator of new professional staff (Wyroubal 1946).

The post-war restoration workshop employed the painter and restorer Stanislava Dekleva from Zagreb given that by that point she had already been performing various restoration and conservations tasks for the Museum for a number of years.<sup>39</sup> It is apparent from the documents in the registry archives of the Museum, mostly certificates of professional work, that she had been hired to restore and conserve paintings and sculpturers from the Museum fund on an occasional and part-time basis already since 1936<sup>40</sup>, and particularly in the period from 1941 to 1944, when there was a need for restoring numerous works of art damaged by warfare.<sup>41</sup> On 6 September 1945, the Museum temporarily employed Dekleva to the only available post, that of daily custodian<sup>42</sup>. Already next year, Tkalčić proposed her for advancement as one of our best restorer, highlighting her work experience and formal education.<sup>43</sup> On the same occasion, Tkalčić stated the following about Wyroubal: “His long-term work as a painting restorer has given him extraordinary qualifications, and he can be considered one of the best experts in that field in the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia.” Other letters held in the Museum archives also testify to the excellence of professional work of the Museum’s restorers, who provided their services also to other museum and gallery institutions all over Croatia, such as the State Art Gallery in Split.<sup>44</sup> Zvonimir Wyroubal and Stanislava Dekleva were the ones to form an expert tandem of the “moved-out” restoration workshop which relocated from the closed confines of a single room in the Museum to six new rooms in the building at Strossmayer Square 12. In addition, Tkalčić’s wife Antonija, academy-trained sculptress, started to work in the Museum by the end of the war, hired as a volunteer restorer and conservator from 1 March 1944 to 31 March 1948.<sup>45</sup>

By the end of November 1946, the premises of the Modern Gallery were handed over to the Museum of Arts and Crafts for the purpose of the restoration workshop in the presence of a committee composed of: Prof. Grgo Gamulin, Head of the Department of Culture and Art of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of Croatia; Prof. Vladimir Tkalčić, Director of the

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39 Stanislava Dekleva was born in Maribor on 20.4.1894. She completed the civil school and was professional educated in fine arts by her father Josip, academy-trained painter, and through private lessons in Vienna. Dekleva worked for other institutions, too – the Modern Gallery, the Diocesan Museum, the Modern Art Gallery in Split, and the Gallery in Dubrovnik, as well as for churches, private persons, and merchants. In the interwar period, she successfully conserved and resorted works of art from the collections of Dr. Ivo Tartaglia, Dr. Miljenko Strmić in Split, Drago Magjer, and Dr. Dušan Popović in Zagreb (Reports on Employees, MUO Archives, Ref. No. 529-1946; Certificate of Professional Work of Stanislava Dekleva of 6 August 1955, MUO Archives, Ref. No. 774-1955).

40 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 161-1944.

41 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 774-1955.

42 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1007-46.

43 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1192-46.

44 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 541/46.

45 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 601-1954.

Museum of Arts and Crafts; Mirko Rački, Director of the Modern Gallery; Prof. Zdenka Munk, Head of the Museum Division; Ivo Steiner, clerk of the Fine Arts Division; Prof. Verena Han, curator of the Modern Gallery; and Prof. Zvonimir Wyroubal, restorer of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.<sup>46</sup> At that time, the Museum also got a storage in its immediate vicinity, in the premises of the Art Pavilion at King Tomislav Square.<sup>47</sup> The furnishing of the restoration laboratory at Strossmayer Square 12 started in early 1947, including installation of ceramic kilns and ordering of a table where paintings were to be washed. A more comfortable work area allowed also for the scope of the workshop to be extended, marking its entry into a new phase of development under the lever of direct state supervision.

The new phase was legitimised in December 1947 by the decision of the Ministry of Education, Department of Culture and Art, prohibiting the repair of works of art outside the procedure, under which state and city institutions were obligated to make a list of works of art intended for conservation and restoration according to the urgency and importance of the project and deliver it to the Ministry, which would refer such works to the state restoration workshop for repair, which was free of charge for state-owned objects.<sup>48</sup> Senior restorers Zvonimir Wyroubal and Stanislava Dekleva were transferred to the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, where the workshop would continue its operations as a separate organisational unit as of 1 January 1948, and were relieved from their duties in the Museum of Arts and Crafts,<sup>49</sup> with the handover of the workshop inventory between the Museum and the Academy officially ending on 13 May 1948.<sup>50</sup>

## CREATION OF A BASIS FOR THE FUTURE MUSEUM OF SERBS IN CROATIA

The recent study by Andrej Vujnović entitled *Muzej Srba u Hrvatskoj studija slučaja (The Museum of Serbs in Croatia A Case Study)* (Vujnović 2021) illustrates situations in which the role of Vladimir Tkalčić and the research contribution of the curator Dr. Ivan Bach turned to be indispensable binding elements in the foundation of the museum conservation of materials from the Orthodox monasteries of continental Croatia. The author gives an affirmative assessment by judging Tkalčić's actions from the perspective of professional conservation activity: "Regardless of certain doubts as to Vladimir Tkalčić's motivation, it is our assessment that his activities on collecting and protecting Serbian cultural heritage were based on professional museum principles and almost exclusively served a function of principled protection of museum heritage. In addition to initiating and managing the activities of protection of Serbian cultural heritage during World War II, Tkalčić, without doubt, should be also given credit for participating, within the MUO and before the war, in its establishment and for laying the ultimate professional foundation for its constitution and organisation" (Vujnović 2021:13). Vujnović also refers to the fact that Tkalčić himself emphasised the continuity

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46 Handover of the premises of the Modern Gallery to the Restoration Workshop of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1028-1946.

47 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 136-1947.

48 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1256-1947.

49 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 508-1948.

50 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 388-1948.

between the “inception” of the Museum of Serbs in Croatia and its “establishment” and, in the 1948 Activity Report, indicated 1933, the year in which his mandate started, as the year of creation of the Museum of Serbs (Vujnović 2021:18). The beginning, early development phases, and, eventually, activity of the official Museum of Serbs in Croatia, within the confines of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, can be followed until January 1948, when its collections, library, administrative and accounting archives,<sup>51</sup> and administrative and professional staff were integrated into the History Museum in Zagreb.<sup>52</sup>

During the preparation of the new division of Orthodox church history in 1934 in emptied premises of the second floor following the relocation of the Modern Gallery, Tkalčić, when it came to the targeted collection and research of art objects and cultural and historical objects, relied considerably on the assistance of Boško Strika (†1945), a postal clerk from Zagreb and also an amateur researcher of Serbian monuments in northern and western Croatia, whose book *Dalmatinski manastiri srpske zadužbine (Dalmatian Monasteries Serbian Legacy)*<sup>53</sup> from 1930 was purchased by the new Director for the Museum library in October 1933.<sup>54</sup> Strika was a trusted person on whose support other employees of the Archaeological or Ethnographic Museum and of the Conservation Office counted as well, e.g. Gjuro Szabo asked him in 1922 to look for certain objects for the museum.<sup>55</sup> The fact that, in 1935, graphic sheets of sacral iconography from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries were purchased from Strika<sup>56</sup> was important for the future establishment of the museum department of Orthodox art. Further purchases from Strika were made in 1938. Some, like the purchase of Czech porcelain produced in the Brezova factory (Pirkenhammer)<sup>57</sup> and glass objects from the Vienna-based Lobmeyer factory<sup>58</sup>, show that other museum collections also profited from his support. However, two Strika's icons are to be pointed out, the *St. Martyr (Sv. Mučenica)* icon from the St. Paraskeva Church from Gornje Dubrave dating from 1718 was donated (MUO 6979), and the 17th-century icon showing Christ Pantocrator and scenes from his life was bought (MUO 6981). Despite visible damages, both icons were included in the museum exhibition of Orthodox art, as shown in the photograph<sup>59</sup> of the 1939 exhibition presentation. Up to that point, the Orthodox art collection had already been established as a new department of the museum, although the exhibition was continuously replenished through further acquisitions of objects of artistic value.

The Orthodox art collection was opened in the museum in 1937, which is evident from a letter sent by Tkalčić to the Rector of Karlovac in March 1938 in relation to the examination of works of art in the attic of the St. Nicholas Church in Karlovac. Here Tkalčić indicated the typological set-up of the collection: “It shows icons, shrouds, metal polyptychs, carved panagias, and other

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51 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 77-1948.

52 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 539-1948.

53 *Dalmatinski manastiri srpske zadužbine sa 162 slike i dvema mapama*. Zagreb: Tiskara Merkantile (Jutriša i Sedmak), 1930.

54 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 324-1933.

55 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 35-1922.

56 Objects were included in the inventory under numbers from MUO 5513 to 5535.

57 Objects were included in the inventory under numbers MUO 6412 and from MUO 6471 to 6476.

58 Objects were included in the inventory under numbers MUO 6480-6482 and MUO 6477-6479.

59 Photo Archives No. 728.

church antiquities.”<sup>60</sup> When the Museum of Serbs in Croatia split off, some of the objects that Tkalčić collected in the pre-war period were transferred to the fund of the Museum of Serbs in Croatia, however a group of several valuable objects belonging to that area has been preserved in the Museum of Arts and Crafts to the present day. The mentioned photograph of the 1939 museum exhibition is an important evidence of the observation of Ivan Bach that the Museum “holds an interesting collection of mostly domestic icons” (Bach 1939a:19). His comment referred to works of art such as the icon by Petar Rafailović from 1782, donated by Julijana Brunšmid in 1934 (MUO 4408), the 18th-century icon received from the Salomon Berger collection with provenance from North Macedonia (MUO 4569), two icons showing Jesus and the Mother of God with a child from around 1800, purchased from Nada Ciganović Omčikus in 1937 (MUO 6208, 6209), two icons depicting the Mother of God on a throne with a child from the second half of the 17th century and the Mother of God with archbishops, purchased in 1938 from Strika’s friend, the painter and graphic artist Milenko Gjurić (MUO 6721, 6923), and two icons purchased from Hinko Lederer (MUO 5971, 6240). A comparison of the photographs of individual objects taken by Tkalčić during the organisation of the collection in 1934, 1937, and 1938 with the examination of the inventory base of museum objects can lead to the conclusion that the interesting corpus of the orthodox art collection also included one of the oldest icons from Novigrad from the beginning of the 15th century (MUO 38), the oil painting showing the Salvation History and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem from the early 19th century (MUO 4269), the Dalmatian icon of the Mother of God with a child and the Saints from 1617 (MUO 4276), the icon showing the Deisis from around 1800 (MUO 5565), and the icon showing the Mother of God with a cross from 1617 (MUO 5694).

The activity of organising the Orthodox museum collection at the end of the 1930ies was also simultaneously complementary intertwined with Tkalčić’s field work and his engagement to organise the treasures and libraries of Orthodox monuments in Gomirje, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Komogovina, and Mečečani, as reported in detail by Ivan Bach in his text entitled *Rad Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt u Zagrebu na sačuvanju i proučavanju umjetničkih i kulturno-povijesnih spomenika Srba u Hrvatskoj* (*Work of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb on the Preservation and Study of Art Monuments and Cultural and Historical Monuments of Serbs in Croatia*) (Bach 1946). Boško Strika, author of the book *Fruškogorski manastiri: srpske zadužbine* (*Monasteries of Fruška gora: Serbian Legacy*)<sup>61</sup>, and also the son of a priest, was an experienced specialist in Orthodox Church materials with deep knowledge of people and circumstances in the field, which made him indispensable to Tkalčić when it came to the organisation of the archives and treasury of the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner in Gomirje near Ogulin. Field research and photographing of objects in the monastery treasury were conducted in April 1938. Records show that already in May twelve objects were donated to the Museum by the monastery administration, and, in return, Vladimir Tkalčić sent the first developed photographs.<sup>62</sup> The examination of approximately eighty photographs from the museum photo archives<sup>63</sup> indicates that photographs were taken as late as by the end of the year and that the majority of materials

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60 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 100-1938.

61 *Fruškogorski manastiri srpske zadužbine sa 127 slika i jednom mapom*. Zagreb: Tisak Zaklade tiskare Narodnih novina, 1927.

62 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 191-1938; MUO Archives, Ref. No. 209-1938.

63 Photo Archives 501-545, 565-598, 608-609, 643-648.

were photographed by Tkalčić himself, in accordance with his photographic preferences and competencies, although the job was finished by the curator Ivan Bach in December. Tkalčić, in co-operation with Strika, made a professional catalogue of the collection and organised the treasury collection in one room, displaying it in showcases which he designed himself. In 1939, with the support of the Conservation Office, the same work of photographing works of art in order to catalogue and organise the art collection of the Orthodox church treasury was undertaken in Hrvatska Kostajnica, where Tkalčić photographed the Church of St. Michael and Gabriel, the St. Peter's Burial Chapel, headstones, and the nearby monasteries in Komogovina and Mečečani. Field work for the purpose of researching and photographing monuments continued as late as by the beginning of the war, when the planned furnishing of the treasury in Hrvatska Kostajnica stopped.

In 1941, given the already described circumstances, the expert teams of the Zagreb-based museum institutions and the Conservation Office consisting of approximately 20 associates took over, under Tkalčić's management, the materials from fourteen abandoned monasteries in Fruška gora, as well as from other monasteries and Orthodox churches in the territory of Croatia and Slavonia to store them in the museum. Researches and evacuation were performed at localities exposed to a great risk of collapse and destruction. Works of art, archive materials, and libraries would be examined and sorted in monasteries, archbishop's courts, archbishop's churches, parish churches, and Greek Catholic burial chapels, after which the materials selected for conservation would be immediately packed and shipped. Due to the war situation, the whole work was done at a feverish pace, with Tkalčić processing several different localities in the same day and leaving certain teams to do packaging jobs *in situ*. Ivan Bach wrote: "The Syrmian team had only 17 days to take over antiquities from all monasteries of Fruška gora because that was the only period in which they had a single truck at their disposal to transport items to the railways". Dušan Vuletić provides the documentation on examined localities with the lists of taken works of art in his doctoral dissertation *Spašavanje i inventarizacija kulturne baštine Srema – pokretnih spomenika kulture – u toku drugog svetskog rata (Saving and Inventory of the Cultural Heritage of Syrmia – Movable Cultural Monuments – During World War II)* (Vuletić 1989).<sup>64</sup>

After the war ended, the MUO set about to extract the works of art stored in the museum, and, at the order of the Ministry of Education of 17 July 1945, a Commission was established for that purpose consisting of the Director of the museum Vladimir Tkalčić and the museum employees Zdenko Vojnović<sup>65</sup> and Dr. Ivan Bach, as well as Dr. Radoslav Grujić, representative of the Patriarchate and the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Vujnović 2021:50). According to the existing Records, the Museum delivered all the objects saved from the monasteries of Fruška gora in the territory of Syrmia to the representatives of the Art Museum in Belgrade and the representative of the Holy Synod, professor Radoslav Gjurić, who, as the conservator of the Committee for the Preservation of Historical and Art Monuments, was well acquainted with the

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64 A type-written copy is available in the library of the Museum Documentation Center (MDC).

65 Zdenko Vojnović (Zagreb, 12.3.1912 – Rijeka, 15.7.1954), after graduating in philosophy and aesthetics from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, started to work in the MUO as a library volunteer. In 1941, he received a permanent appointment and, in June 1952, succeeded Tkalčić as the Director of the Museum. He is also important as the founder of the museology programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in 1950 (Staničić 2007).



Picture 1. Photography of the Orthodox Museum Collection display from 1939, Museum of Arts and Crafts

Szabo and Tkalčić's mode of field research for conservation purposes.<sup>66</sup> The Main Committee of Serbs in Croatia further entrusted the Museum of Arts and Crafts with keeping the objects from the Orthodox monasteries and churches stemming from the territory of the People's Republic of Croatia. This Committee, in co-operation with the "Prosvjeta" Serbian Cultural Society, established in 1946 the Museum of Serbs in Croatia as a department of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and, for the purpose of exhibiting the saved materials, made the premises at Ban Jelačić Street 4 available for use (later Ivo Marinković Street, today Frano Petrić Street).<sup>67</sup>

66 Ivan Bach stated that "in 1910, when the Committee for the Preservation of Historical and Art Monuments in Croatia and Slavonia was organised in Zagreb, Dimitrije Ruvarac and Radoslav Grujić, historians from Belgrade, took upon themselves to catalogue, photograph, and preserve Serbian monuments in Croatia" (Bach 1946). Grujić was appointed a conservator of the committee in Zagreb in 1912 (Vučković 2021: 133).

67 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 136-1947.

Dr. Ivan Bach also took time to professionally process the collection and, from 1946 to 1950, prepared and published several papers on its various aspects<sup>68</sup>, among which stands out the segment study on painting, published in the magazine *Historijski zbornik*.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, in 1946, he submitted the manuscript *Umjetničke starine Srba u Hrvatskoj. Rad Muzeja za umjetnost i obrt u Zagrebu na proučavanju i sačuvanju srpskih umjetničkih i kulturno-historijskih spomenika u Hrvatskoj* (*Art Antiquities of Serbs in Croatia. Work of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb on the Study and Preservation of Serbian Art Monuments and Cultural and Historical Monuments in Croatia*) to the “Prosvjeta” Serbian Cultural Society for publishing and gave two lectures on art monuments of Serbs in Croatia in “Prosvjeta”.<sup>70</sup> After the new department was established and the Museum was granted a loan, allowing the Museum to start organising, at the beginning of 1947, the museum exhibition in newly assigned rooms in accordance with the professional concept of Ivan Bach and the art arrangement of Edo Kovačević<sup>71</sup>, for a short period of time Tkalčić and Bach continued to steer preparations towards opening the exhibition to the public and to influence the development of the institution. On a proposal from the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the “Prosvjeta” Serbian Cultural Society procured new works of art, such as the bronze polyptych from the first half of the 19th century (included in the inventory under No. 9177)<sup>72</sup>, while Tkalčić was engaged with employing the restorer Ivan Lončarić, graduate student at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences with a completed course for museum and conservation workers, who, since 19 June 1947, had been working on restoration of metal objects in the Department “Museum of Serbs in Croatia”.<sup>73</sup> Just before Wyroubal and Dekleva were removed from the framework of Tkalčić’s museum activities, Tkalčić, no doubt having them in mind, wrote the following about the new restorer: “Comrade Lončarić can already now prepare metal museum objects quite well and, as a painter, has successfully tried his hand at restoring works of fine art. So, there is no doubt that, working along with the museum restorers of paintings and statues, he would quickly be fully qualified in that field.”<sup>74</sup> The first display of the collection took place in 1947 and was open to experts and attendees of the course for museum and conservation workers. The display of the collection was soon to be opened to the public, which was the reason why Tkalčić requested that two paintings lent to the Art Museum in Belgrade for the exhibition of Serbian painting be returned.<sup>75</sup> In this regard, Tkalčić contacted the Belgrade-based conservator Đorđe Bošković in October, seeking consultation on north-Dalmatian monasteries Krupa, Krka, and Dragović as he intended to include them in the exhibition overview of art of Serbs

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68 BACH, Ivan. *Veze ruske i srpske umjetnosti u Hrvatskoj. Novi prilozi poznavanju ruskih upliva na umjetnost Srba u Hrvatskoj*. In: *Srpska riječ*, 4.1.1946, p. 12.

69 BACH, Ivan. 1949. “Prilozi povijesti srpskog slikarstva u Hrvatskoj od kraja XVII do kraja XVIII st.” *Historijski zbornik* (Zagreb) 2: 185-209; BACH, Ivan. 1950. “Ispravci i dopune Prilozima povijesti srpskog slikarstva u Hrvatskoj od kraja XVII do kraja XVIII stoljeća.” *Historijski zbornik* (Zagreb) 3: 445-446.

70 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 529-1946.

71 Edo Kovačević (Gospić, 16.11.1906 – Zagreb, 15.3.1993) was employed at the Museum of Arts and Crafts as a fine art associate from 18 March 1947 to 26 June 1954 on tasks related to fine art displays of museum collections and exhibitions (MUO Archives).

72 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 644-1947.

73 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 959-1947.

74 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 838-1947.

75 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 810-1947.



through photographic and graphic representations.<sup>76</sup> From mid to the end of 1947, new staff was employed, “independent labour bearers” – first were auxiliary employees Pavao Andrišek and Štefanija Bartolić, followed by the head of the department Branko Sučević, the trainee curator Fedor Moačanin<sup>77</sup>, and the archivist Marija Rukovina, who, from December onwards, continued to reorganise the collection (Vujnović 2021:107-108), meaning that the period of Tkalčić and Bach’s influence on and the authority of the Museum of Arts and Crafts for the organisation of the newly established institution was coming to an end.

## CREATION OF A CONCEPTUAL AND MATERIAL BASIS FOR THE FUTURE TECHNICAL MUSEUM

In the text providing a historical overview of the development of the Technical Museum Markita Franulić and Davor Fulanović synthetically indicate that “the ideas and initiatives on a museum that would collect technical materials emerged as early as by the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century” (Franulić, Fulanović 2015:11). Intentional collection and exhibition of technical products in Zagreb started in 1904 with the first exhibition of the Trade and Crafts Museum in Zagreb (Kolar-Dimitrijević 1992; Jurić, Vujić 2001). As to later initiatives to establish collections of technical materials, of essential importance were the efforts of Vladimir Tkalčić who in the interwar period undertook to establish new exhibition departments and found technological collections in the Museum of Arts and Crafts (Bach 1940a, 1940b, 1940c:17; Munk 1970:12; Tonković 2005:148; Osrečki Jakelić 2005:178). Thinking and operating on a broader basis for planning in that direction, by the end of his mandate he had made a great contribution to the preparatory phase of the establishment of the Technical Museum and, based on those merits, was appointed an honourable member of the Society for the Improvement of the Operation of the Technical Museum of the People’s Republic of Croatia.

The Society for the Improvement of the Operation of the Technical Museum of the People’s Republic of Croatia was constituted after the establishment of the Technical Museum in 1955, while the institutional outlines of the new institution could be glimpsed in the consideration of proposals for its name<sup>78</sup> and physical location. The Society was founded with a view to providing support in “either collecting necessary materials to serve, on one hand, the exhibition departments of the Museum and, on the other hand, any other activity included in the programme of our Museum related to staff education, work, and co-operation with a range of social, mass, and

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76 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 988-1947.

77 Fedor Moačanin (Zagreb, 22.8.1918 – Zagreb, 9.4.1997) interned from 27 June 1946 as a curator of the history collection at the then Gypsotheque before taking up employment at the Museum of Serbs in Croatia. In 1962, he was appointed a Director of the Museum of Serbs in Croatia. In December 1966, he transferred from the position of Director of the History Museum of Croatia to the position of documentary curator at the Museum of Arts and Crafts, where he worked on the professional processing of collections until his retirement by the end of August 1983 (Personnel File on Fedor Moačanin, MUO Archives).

78 It was discussed which name was more appropriate, Technical Museum or Technical Centre.

technical organisations”<sup>79</sup> The duties of the Secretary of the Society were performed by the first Director of the Technical Museum Predrag Grdenić<sup>80</sup>, who was employed in the post-war period as the Secretary of the Museum of Arts and Crafts and was Tkalčić’s close associate, entrusted with all general and administrative operations of the Museum of Arts and Crafts. When putting forward a proposal at the first general assembly to make Vladimir Tkalčić an honorary member of the Society, he described the importance of Tkalčić’s efforts in the process of establishing the basis of the Technical Museum: “...he is one of the first founders of the present-day Technical Museum. Prof. Tkalčić thought about the Technical Museum two decades ago, and everything mentioned in the report that we will receive from the Museum of Arts and Crafts, such as various collections, photo cameras, clocks, machines, etc., all that was collected thanks to the care and effort put in by Prof. Tkalčić, senior of our museology, to one day become the first fund of a great and modern Technical Museum, as our present one, the one that the People’s Government established in 1954, is envisioned to be.”<sup>81</sup> According to data available in the documents of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, this provides an insight into the course of Tkalčić’s contribution to the conceptual and material basis of the new institution.

Already in 1935, Tkalčić expressed in *Apel proizvođačima umjetničko-obrtnih predmeta* (*Appeal to the Manufacturers of Art and Craft Products*) his collection intention in the following words: “...The Museum pays particular attention to the technique itself of art and craft work. For this reason, the Museum establishes special technological collections to illustrate the manner of existence and stages of making of individual artefacts, which is work itself in various art and craft workshops and industries. In doing so, the management of this museum strives to bring together the interests of our science and the interests of our industry and is certainly hopeful that this action will succeed and that our producers will be happy to answer this appeal for their own benefit and for the benefit of the public.”<sup>82</sup>

After a number of individuals and social organisations expressed their support, e.g. the Association of Graphic Artists, Photo-club, or the magazine *Narodne novine*, which answered this and other similar invitations on occasion of the 60th anniversary, at the beginning of 1940 the Museum actually “organised and opened, in a special hall, the latest departments of graphic art, printing and book-binding, and photography” (Bach 1940c:17). This also allowed for the extension of the collection policy to cover the monitoring of the development of cinematography, and thus the curator Bach, in the text published in the newspaper *Jutarnji list* dedicated to new collections, invited readers to donate or relinquish film stock to the Museum (Bach 1940c:17). Although this idea did not come to life in the fund, it is interesting that about fifteen years later

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79 Stenographic minutes of the first annual general assembly of the Society for the Improvement of the Operation of the Technical Museum of the People’s Republic of Croatia (28.6.1957), place: Association of Societies of Engineers and Technicians, Berislavić Street 6/1 Zagreb, 1957, p. 3 (MUO Documentation Department, Vladimir Tkalčić’s personal collection).

80 Predrag Grdenić (Križevci, 15.8.1907 – Zagreb, 4.2.1975) was employed as the Secretary of the Museum of Arts and Crafts from 6 June 1945 to 21 April 1955, when he was relieved from his duties in the MUO and transferred to the Technical Museum (Personnel file on Predrag Grdenić).

81 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

82 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 52-1935.

the federal exhibition<sup>83</sup> dedicated to the 10th anniversary of film development in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia 1945-1955 would be held in the Museum, showing that the Museum continued communicating its orientation towards following media phenomena.

Over time, the initiative to collect technical and industry products for the purpose of documenting and showing the transition from the craft production method to the manufacturing and industrial method as well as the development of industry production, had transformed into a considerably broader vision, as explicitly expressed by Tkalčić in 1948: "Following their further development, these technical and industrial collections must cover such a broad scope that a separate technical museum will have to be organised, and thus the management of this museum has already proposed to the Ministry of Education a detailed plan for the structure of such a museum."<sup>84</sup> Determined to be abreast with contemporary technical achievements, and looking to form lasting partnerships, in the request addressed to the company Philips in Belgrade Tkalčić asked for leaflets showing the apparatus for recording sound on celluloid by applying the Phillips-Miller method: "if you could, from time to time, inform the technical department of our museum about all new products of your company by leaflets or other means, so that the department would learn, not only through press but also directly from you, about new developments in those technical branches in which your company is active."<sup>85</sup>

With a view to establishing a separate technical museum, the Museum of Arts and Crafts co-operated with the Society of Engineers and Technicians of the People's Republic of Croatia. The latter, in a letter entitled *Prijedlog za osnivanje Tehničkog muzeja (Proposal to Establish a Technical Museum)*, informed about its efforts the Belgrade-based Association of Societies of Engineers and Technicians of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia: "It would be up to the Technical Museum to realise the possibility of preserving outdated practices, which can be very illuminating for educational purposes. The establishment of this institution would prevent the destruction of many interesting old machines, devices, instruments, etc., which are no longer in use nowadays but would be exceptionally useful in education of new technical experts. The Technical Museum would allow the future generations to learn about the very beginning of technical development in our country and would certainly be a valuable monument of our technical culture."<sup>86</sup> The letter was addressed to vocational school institutions, the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the Ministry of Mining of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, the Ministry of Mining of the People's Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Light Industry of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and the Ministry of Heavy Industry of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia.

Throughout 1948, the Museum prepared for the exhibition of three technical collections showing the historical development of the photo technique, phono technique, and locksmithing technique. An exhibition of a technical nature would serve the purpose of stimulating the popularisation of interest for technics and should represent "the first actual results in the attempt

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83 The exhibition *Razvoj jugoslovenskog filma 1945 - 1955 (Development of Yugoslav Film 1945-1955)*, organised by the Museum of Arts and Crafts and the Association of Filmmakers under the auspices of the President of the Republic Josip Broz Tito, could be viewed in the Museum from 3 to 9 April 1955 in the morning and in the afternoon with a daily break in between (MUO Documentation Department, Poster in the MUO fund 10976/4).

84 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 539-1948.

85 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 704-1948.

86 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 322-1948.

to establish our special technical museum,” writes Tkalčić in a letter addressed to the newly established organisation “Narodna tehnika”, seeking co-operation.<sup>87</sup> The exhibition was supposed to open in January 1949 in the Art Pavilion, on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of photography and in relation to the congress organised by “Narodna tehnika”, which was supposed to be held at the same time.<sup>88</sup> To ensure a good organisation of the exhibition, a core committee was established to take care of the organisation and set-ups, consisting of Milan Fizi, teacher of the Photo School, Branko Vojnović from the Ministry of Education, Department of Culture and Art, engineer Pavao Jušić, and one representative of “Narodna tehnika”.

In the letter of 25 July 1948 addressed to *Philips*, Tkalčić explained the concept of the exhibition: “This exhibition is conceived so that, using the phono technique and acoustic elements, various music instruments are displayed, then mechanic instruments used only for the reproduction of tones (from Carillon clocks to Ariston and “nanopan”), instruments for sound recording and reproduction (Edison’s phonograph, Berliner’s and modern gramophones, and electric gramophone), and then radio and sound film. The photo-technical part of the exhibition will show the main elements of optics, photography – as a profession with its various techniques all the way to colour photography, cinematography (silent film, colour film, and plastic film) all the way to television... The task of the Technical Department of this museum is to cover all technical branches by collecting materials from different technical branches. So, these very days we have received one of the first steam engines that has been used in Croatia since 1947, then one of the first Peugeot mass-produced automobile engines... Our museum would be much obliged if you could obtain for our technical department already outdated Philips products which at one time marked a certain breakthrough in the development of a particular technical branch. Every little contribution of this kind would serve the corresponding department of our Technical Museum well.”<sup>89</sup> He was also trying to obtain technical apparatuses from the Radio Station Administration in Zagreb, asking that, for the purposes of the future Technical Museum, unusable or discarded technical materials be collected (various old apparatuses or parts thereof, sound recording tapes, discarded gramophone records) that the radio station used as such materials would demonstrate not only the development of the radio station but also radiophony in general.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, he also contacted the Ministry of Education to ask for old, unusable, decommissioned telephones for the Technical Museum.<sup>91</sup> When winding up his *Foma foto-trgovine* shop at Preradović Street 2, Milan Fizi donated a substantial number of items to the Museum, including old apparatuses and accessories for the photo collection.<sup>92</sup>

Collected materials consisting of photographic and phonographic apparatuses, as well as some other collections such as furniture from the Biedermeier to today, musical instruments, graphic technological collection, and toy collection, could not be displayed in the Museum of Arts and Crafts in the exhibitions conceived in 1947 and 1952 as there was not enough exhibition space (Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb 1952:3), which was also the reason why “our only

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87 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1099-1948.

88 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 1103-1948.

89 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 785-1948.

90 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 410-1948.

91 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 376-1948.

92 MUO Archives, Ref. No. 318-1948.

complete photography collection consisting of apparatuses, accessories, and works of international and national photographers” was not included in the 1962 exhibition (Munk 1970:18). After the war, the assistant Ivan Suhodobnik was entrusted with the processing of “collections of clocks, locksmithing works, photography, and printed graphics”<sup>93</sup>. During his three-year museum internship<sup>94</sup>, he committed himself to researching the history of the previous Watchmaking School in Ogulin and made legends and illustrations of clockworks and locksmith mechanisms and their work as a supplement to the museum exhibits. He studied collections of photo and phono products and prepared a plan of a periodical exhibition, which eventually did not take place. The presented data indicate the longevity of mindful procurement of technical materials and shed light on the fact that the fund of the future Technical Museum had already been formed by the time Tkalčić retired (Gašparović 2010:10; Gašparović 2005:11).

## ENHANCED INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

The post-war period saw the uptake of the museum activity across Croatia, with ten new museum institutions established in Zagreb in the period immediately following the end of the war to Tkalčić's retirement (Bach 1955b:47).<sup>95</sup> Guided by the ideological goals of socialism, the cultural policy greatly relied on museum institutions to open their programmes to masses and produce direct educational effects of scientific work and cultural and educational work, which implied the reorganisation of museum work. Intensive development of museums and conservation offices of Croatia was supported by the Museum Division and the Department of Culture and Art of the Ministry of Education, making it easier for the museums to ensure funding for the organisation of collections and procurement of new objects as they had larger amounts at their disposal than in the interwar period. Collective forms of work in accordance with socialist values soon penetrated the entire state infrastructure, with the principle of social cohesion taking hold at all levels of work of the People's Republic of Croatia. Union groups were established in museum institutions, including the Museum of Arts and Crafts, while at the republic level the association *Društvo službenika i suradnika muzeja, galerija i konzervatorskih zavoda Museion u NR Hrvatskoj* (*Museion Association of Officials and Associates of Museums, Galleries, and Conservation Offices in the People's Republic of Croatia*) was founded already in 1946. The following year, at the first congress and seminar of the museum workers of Yugoslavia in Zagreb, Tkalčić gave a lecture entitled *Na putovima socijalističke muzeologije* (*On the Path of Socialist Museology*), which, until the establishment of an academic approach to museological research, was considered our first museological treatise (Bauer 1971:2). In 1952, when the regular publishing activity of the specialised journal *Vijesti Društva muze-*

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93 MDC Archives, Ref. No. 879-1951.

94 Graduated technician Ivan Suhodobnik worked in the Museum from 8 February 1947 to 31 January 1950 (Personnel File on Ivan Suhodobnik, MUO Archives).

95 Museum of the National Liberation of Croatia (1945, later Museum of the National Revolution), Museum of Serbs in Croatia (1946), “Benko Horvat” Painting Gallery (1947), Museum of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Museum of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference of the Communist Party of Croatia, and the Museum of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Zagreb Local Committee (all 1950), Gallery of Fresco Copies (1952), Peasant Art Gallery (1952), Crime Museum (1952), Collection of the Institute for the History of Pharmacy (1952).

*jsko-konzervatorskih radnika NR Hrvatske* started and Prof. Zdenko Vojnović became the first President of the Association of Museum and Conservation Societies of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (Osrečki Jakelić 2016), the process of the popularisation and networking of museum and conservation professionals reached the final point of the formative period. At this stage, it is impossible not to give Tkalčić credit, not only from the viewpoint of the history of the Museum of Arts and Crafts but also from the perspective of establishing certain practices of the museum profession within which that Museum, thanks to Tkalčić, had taken a particularly strong institutional position during his mandate.

## CONCLUSION

Tkalčić's activity in the Museum and beyond in the mentioned period was based on a full application of the basic principles, which, even independently of the management of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, made the fundamental postulates of his method throughout his career. That method was evident in the recording and documentation of monuments of artistic value and cultural and historical value (Horvat 1955; Grković 2017), in the advocacy of appropriate museological methods to protect cultural heritage, and in the participation in the processes to institutionalise various aspects of the national and state cultural policy of preservation (Juranović Tonejc 2021).<sup>96</sup> The sum of these efforts, which, of course, in a changing context of a wild whirlwind of historical events, drive ambivalent interpretations from a partial point of view, still allowed the Museum to take some kind of a parental role on the institutional museum scene, under the auspices of which various collections were not only conceived but also developed, from which, already in Tkalčić's lifetime, practice systems were derived and funds were formed as a baseline for the establishment of new institutions in Zagreb, such as the conservation and restoration workshop of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Museum of Serbs in Croatia, and the Technical Museum.

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96 As to conservation field work in continental Croatia, Tkalčić's efforts correlate to the contributions made by the academic Artur Schneider (Zagreb, 26.8.1897 – Zagreb, 10.3.1946), and, as to the initiative to establish museological criteria, to the activity of Dr. Antun Bauer (Vukovar, 18.8.1911 – Zagreb, 9.4.2000), prominent archaeologist, museologist, and collector, founder and donor of numerous museum institutions.

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