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Salamon Berger and the Beginnings of the Exhibition Activity of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb

This article, based on archival material, official and personal letters Salamon Berger exchanged with various business associates in the country and abroad, seeks to supplement existing knowledge about the early exhibitions of the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum which, as it turned out, followed the footsteps of the exhibition activities of the Commerce & Crafts Museum founded in 1904. Exhibitions, formed by Berger's long-term commitment to improve domestic crafts, and to present the folk arts, were generally limited to textile and small wooden items intended for sale to domestic and foreign markets.

Key words: Berger, Salamon
Ethnographic Museum, Zagreb
Museum's history, exhibition activities

1. Introduction

Traditional textile production should be looked into in the framework of the socio-historical context in which the textiles were produced and used. This opens the possibility of research into the relations and linkages between producers, through institutions, companies, markets or individuals who determine, or according to some criteria select the product - and, ultimately, the consumer. Following the mentioned research focus in this paper I will show how the contemporary concept of the *national textile art*, especially through the actions of the director Salamon Berger, affected the domestic and international exhibiting activities of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb in the period since its establishment in 1919 up to the beginning of the Second World War.

This paper is mostly based on the to-date unpublished archival material - Berger's personal letters and memorandums of dissatisfaction with various domestic and foreign business associates in the period since 1925 to 1933, among others, and lists of items which have survived that were, often at his request, made by craftsmen, merchants and private individuals of different profiles and sent to specific exhibitions at home and abroad. Berger's attitudes are clearly visible as are his constant efforts on marketing the products of domestic crafts and folk art, which significantly determined the contemporary exhibition policy of the Ethnographic Museum - including both the exhibitions in the museum, as well as occasional national and international exhibitions¹. The museum exhibition policy, on the other hand, had an impact on the design of wider social notions of folk textile art in this period.

To describe Berger's activities aimed at promoting domestic trade, in addition to the written history of the museum written by Nada Gjetvaj on the occasion of its 70th anniversary (Zagreb, 1989), two texts were used that Berger himself wrote about the situation in his time and the possibilities of improving the domestic textile production: *The Tragedy of the Croatian domestic textile industry* (Berger, 1913) and *For the improvement of our domestic industry, published on the occasion of the exhibition of folk embroidery and the fabrics of Yugoslavia* (Berger, 1930).

2. Historical framework: organized domestic handiwork in the late 19th and the early 20th century

Attempts to organize domestic handicrafts focused on the practical, economic function of improving the economic status of farmers' classes, as well as on a symbolic level of "the creation and presentation of our traditional textile art², and the proposals for an institutional (museum) framework have been present in the Croatian political and cultural arena since the last quarter of the 19th century (I. Kršnjavi, F. Vrbanić S. Berger). Particularly, such efforts were present in the first decades of 20th century, when in the Croatian areas, in accordance with the current economic and cultural trends then present in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, organized production of home textile items started to appear intended for the local and foreign bourgeois social strata.

These economic, cultural and educational currents were results of the efforts to preserve and enhance the national arts of the farmers of the Dual Monarchy, to bring them to wide industrial production, and to market them on domestic and foreign markets. Namely, Austria-Hungary in the second half of 19th century and early 20th centu-

¹ This material, which is kept in the documentation of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, often augments well the sparsely written "official" information about the exhibitions and partially illuminates the activity of individual manufacturers, and private workshops in the field that were operating in this period.

² Since the last quarter of the 19th century in Croatia there were tendencies recognized among the public that the textiles produced in the framework of handicrafts to be presented as Croatian national textile art. (Bonifačić, 1997: 146; 2008: 16).

ry tried to hold the leading position in the industrial production of applied art that is based on folk creativity, or motifs drawn from traditional usable items. The first impetus came from Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg (1817-1885), Professor of Art history at the University of Vienna and the founder of the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry (Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, 1864)³ Eitelberg based the education not only on the theoretical but also on practical foundations and he established an educational arts-crafts department (Kunstgewerbeschule) at the Museum in 1868. Following these developments, in the coming period, with the initiative of the regional governments, schools of crafts and museum institutions of similar profiles were opened in various parts of the Empire (some of which developed into specialized ethnographic institutions), and several large commercial exhibitions were organized in which an important place belonged to the craftwork production field⁴, objects made in the framework of organized handicrafts, as well as the work / products of different craft schools. The central position in the framework of these activities was occupied by the textile products.

A similar situation developed in the Croatian areas. Objects intended for local and foreign bourgeois and noble social classes were not products true to the traditional origins, but were market adjusted, modified textile products enriched with the application of the common folk decorative elements - various decorative weaving, embroidery and lacework techniques. Modified folk textiles entered the urban fashion "as a symbol of the growing Yugoslav and / or Croatian identity within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and soon became an important branch of economy" (Bonifačić, 2008: 11-12).

Individuals, institutions and associations established in urban and rural areas had a major role in organizing, encouraging and developing the domestic handicraft. More will be written later in this paper about some of these associations and private workshops. The significant Zagreb merchant and industrialist Salamon Berger went furthest in this kind of activity at the turn of the 19th in 20th centuries.

The first positive shift in the institutional sense was the establishment of Commerce & Crafts Museum in 1904. The purpose of the Commerce & Crafts Museum in Zagreb, as well as of other similar institutions throughout Europe, was presenting crafts and industrial products as well as mediation between producers and markets, and customers. Shortly after its establishment several excellent commercial exhibitions were prepared in the purposely built museum building in the today's Mažuranić Square. Eventually, driven by circumstances and / or the determined efforts of individuals (Salamon Berger, Vladimir Tkalcic), the Commerce & Crafts Museum "quietly fell",

³ Today the Austrian museum for applied art (Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst). According to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Eitelberger (19th March 2009)

⁴ Vienna (1873); Trieste (1882); Vienna, Prague, Timisoara, Trieste, Zagreb (1891); Budapest (1896); Vienna (1898) etc

or - turned into the Ethnographic Museum⁵. Berger's textile collection (ethnographic), purchased in 1905 for the Commerce and Crafts Museum, and also exhibited at the exhibitions mentioned above, was actually hidden "under the prominent name of domestic trades" (Kolar-Dimitrijević, 1992: 68) and, with another Berger collection purchased later, was actually the primer and the reason for converting one kind of Museum into the other.

The Ethnographic Museum, i.e. the independent section of the National Museum in Zagreb, was founded in 1919. The first director was in fact Salamon Berger himself, whose ethnographic (textile) collection collected over the last quarter 19th and early 20th century, became the basis of the museum inventory. From the archives and the preserved material it can be seen that the early exhibitions at the museum during the Berger era continued in the tracks of the exhibition activities of the Commerce & Crafts Museum, which was actually the realistic consequence of the contemporary social and economic trends. True, it was all limited solely to the different textile and small wooden items made in the framework of domestic crafts.

3. Salamon Berger: Textiles goods merchant - Director of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb

"... there are possibilities here, that this branch of national economy could amount to millions in exports."
(Salamon Berger, 1931)⁶

Much has already been written about Salamon Berger. His efforts to organize domestic handicrafts and the marketing of their products on the domestic and foreign markets in the last quarter of 19th and the first decade of 20th century are known, which popularized our traditional culture abroad. This, at the time of the growing impoverization of the countryside, opened opportunities to a certain number of farmers to acquire additional revenue.

Berger centered his activity mostly on the collection of folk motifs from the range of traditional textiles and their application in modern textiles production and the fashion industry. Despite the influential position and all his connections in the country and abroad, plans for the expansion of domestic industry did not ultimately succeed. His frustration is voiced in the text *The tragedy of the Croatian domestic textile industry*

⁵ In the article prepared on the occasion of marking the 140th anniversary of Chamber of Commerce and Crafts in Zagreb historian Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević critically addressed the fact that the Commerce and Crafts Museum in Zagreb being opened after a hard effort and much needed by the Croatian economy, under the influence of various factors soon after its establishment gradually turned into the Ethnographic Museum (1992).

⁶ Quote from Berger's letter to Franjo Pakaci, secretary of the Royal consulate in Copenhagen, dated 16th Nov 1931.

(Berger, 1913) where he emphasized that he had "... finally decided, after a 28-year effort to abandon ... operations in the field of Croatian domestic industry "(Berger, 1913: 23).

In the period between 1888 and 1910, thanks to the good organization of activities, entrepreneurship and perseverance, Berger was involved with the products of Croatian domestic industry in 96 exhibitions in Europe, America and Australia and achieved considerable success (Gjetvaj, 1989: 16). Also, he furnished, as he wrote, stores and representations in Hamburg, Berlin, Monaco, Paris, Chicago, St. Louis and elsewhere (Berger, 1913: 6). In the production of the exhibited and sold goods Berger included into the enterprise, in addition to "peasant women" trained in Zagreb clothier school - which he, with the promise of financial means from the Royal Government, established at his own expense in 1902 - also various government firms, craftsmen and individuals. Berger involved the entire area of the Empire in consideration for the development and improvement of domestic industry, but his interest and work was focused, primarily, and mostly, on the Croatian territories. He continued to collect ethnographic material, from which some parts were selected and sold, or, to a lesser extent, donated to museums.⁷ The greatest number of textile items, weaving, twists, embroidery and lace were gathered in the Posavina area. Entitled as the Domestic collection Salamon Berger, it in its most part, as well as the large number of other Berger collections, later became property of the Ethnographic section of the National Museum in Zagreb, and the Ethnographic Museum, after its establishment in 1919.⁸ The following collections entered the holdings of the Museum during its establishment: an ethnographic collection of the historical-archaeological department of the National Museum in Zagreb, the ethnographic collection of the Museum of Arts and Crafts of the Royal Arts and Crafts School in Zagreb, the ethnographic collection of Commerce & Crafts Association in Zagreb and the ethnographic collection of the Museum which existed within the Pedagogic-Literary Assembly in Zagreb (Museum). Objects from these collections make up the oldest and most valuable collection of the Ethnographic Museum, and are related mainly to the traditional textile inventory which emerged from the end of 18th to the 20th century.

Salamon Berger was the director of the Ethnographic Museum since the establishment in 1919 until 1925, when Vladimir Tkalčić takes his place (1925-1934) who was until then its sole curator. Through all this time, and until he died, Berger had the title of honorary director and continued to be actively involved in the work of the Museum.⁹ He continued to cooperate with his old museum colleagues, civil servants, artisans, merchants and private individuals of different profiles in the country and abroad. Berger's letters and documents, preserved in the Collection of Ethnographic

⁷ Certain number of ethnographic objects was donated to the School Museum by Berger (Gjetvaj, 1989: 17).

⁸ On 22nd Oct 1919 the land collection Salamon Berger was included in the National Museum and that section became an independent Ethnographical department of the National Museum in Zagreb, and later, Ethnographic Museum. (Gjetvaj, 1989: 15).

⁹ Berger always signed himself as "the founder and director of the Ethnographic museum in Zagreb".

Museum, in several registries, prove that despite earlier disappointments, and decisions about stopping his involvement in the Croatian domestic products industry, until his death in early 1934 he did not give up his efforts.

In the period between the two world wars the Ethnographic Museum at the invitation of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health of the State of SHS, and later of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, participated in organizing several international exhibitions: in Paris 1925 (National handicrafts, decorative arts), and 1927, also in Paris (carpet-weaving). Exhibits were displayed at the world fairs in Barcelona (1929), Copenhagen (1930) and Saarbrücken (1931/1932) and at the large international exhibition in New York (1939). At the same time the museum was actively involved in domestic activities - for example, in the domestic industry exhibition in Belgrade in 1930 and through several years in the Zagreb Fair Association - presenting items from its holdings and providing the direction and organization for the marketing the product of popular arts and domestic crafts, all of that with motivated by Berger. Current socio-historical conditions and concepts of understanding of popular culture are also reflected in the permanent exhibition of the Ethnographic Museum.

4. Archival material

4.1. Berger's associates: cooperatives, craftsmen, individuals on the ground and national institutions

Berger's long-standing efforts in the promotion of textile products of the domestic handicrafts at the turn between the 19th and the 20th century partially overlapped with the process of abandoning the national costume of the village and the simultaneous strengthening of interest for it and other textile handicrafts of the Croatian village by intellectuals and the bourgeois class. Gradually accepted and valued characteristics of the national culture were recognized in the products of rural origin, the cultural and civic strata were motivated to use peasant style clothes (Muraj, 2006: 10-12). In the early 20th century several women's associations were established in the Croatian areas with the aim of maintaining and promoting traditional art and crafts. Those were the associations of urban women that supported rural women in the production of traditional textiles and handicrafts and also cared for the marketing of these products and financial compensation for the weavers and embroiderers (Muraj, 2006: 28).

The first of its kind, the National Association for weaving and embroidery was founded in 1908 in Petrinja, and its Zagreb version, the Women's association for the preservation and promotion of folk art and folk crafts began functioning in 1913¹⁰. From Berger's letters it is evident that *Cavtajska* association for the preservation and promotion of folk arts and crafts, and education of youth existed in Cavtat - "a human-

¹⁰ More in: Leček (Lepoglava, 2004), Petrović (Lepoglava, 2004), Muraj (Zagreb, 2006).

itarian institution that improves folk arts giving young people an opportunity to earn.”(man(*uscript*)).¹¹ Embroidery Association in Cavtat 1924 was set up by Jelka Miš trying to prevent the disappearance of Konavle embroidery (Benc Boskovic, 1983: 96). The associations that have been mentioned here took part in the exhibition of Zagreb Fair. On the request of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health, and with Berger mediating they took part and sold their works on some international exhibitions too. The Zagreb women’s association with its chairwoman Zdenka Frangeš especially took care for the improvement of domestic trade in the twenties, closely collaborating with the Peasant Concord, cultural and educational organization of the HSS (Leček, 2004: 21, 25).

In the Croatian area there were, apart from the aforementioned institutions, several privately owned craft workshops and warehouses which also participated in national and world competitions. I’ll point out those with whom Berger cooperated, and whose activity is evident from the aforementioned letters and orders: The National Moslavina weavery owned by Ana Šajnović from Osekovo,¹² Industry of National weavery owned by the Matavulj family from Šibenik, The manufacture of clothing and equipment for brides owned by Žiga Brichte from Vinkovci, *The manufacture shop – Own quilt production* and a large store of Slavonian folk costumes owned by Adolf Hirtweil from Vinkovci and furrier Stjepan Šimunić from Gradiška. Here we have to point out two resourceful “entrepreneurs” from Kistanje, obviously from the same family - Darinka Malešević and Ljubica Malešević - who in their place developed trade and crafts activities by paying textile handicrafts ordered from the local women with foodstuffs.¹³

Berger also worked closely with individuals in the field, mostly from Slavonia, from who he purchased the costumes (men’s shirts - *rubin*, belts - *tkanice*, scarves for head, decorated with golden embroidery - *šamija*, aprons - *oprege*) and smaller textile items (wool rug - *ponjavce*, tablecloths, napkins, handkerchiefs, etc.)¹⁴

In the international and national exhibitions Berger tried to include the state institutions and companies that within the scope of their activities produced custom market objects - for example, the State Trade School in Split, the State carpet production from Sarajevo, State clothmaking and weavery from Sarajevo, and the State Penitentiaries in Lepoglava and Sremska Mitrovica. Unfortunately, on the basis of the few surviving documents we cannot make conclusions about the overall activities of the above institutions and companies. Later in the text I will state when possible objects that were produced and sent by to the exhibitions, on the basis of which their share of activity will be seen.

¹¹ Letter from the President Association Venesande Pessiak to Salamon Berger dated 28 Nov 1931 which explains why their papers were more expensive than those made by Darinka and Ljubica Malešević from Kistanje: “Where Maleševićs do trade, these people work not for money but for provisions.” (man).

¹² Ana was stated as the owner on the company’s stamp, although Berger usually addressed letters to Stjepan Šajnović.

¹³ Same letter of the president of the Cavtajska association to Salamon Berger dated 28 Nov 1931

¹⁴ The documentation preserved mostly the letters from Anica Ćurić from Otoka, Katica Paradiković from Semeljci and Eva Perić from Gorjani.

4.2. Exhibiting activity of the Ethnographic Museum 1925-1939

I. Exhibitions abroad

Paris, 1925. The first international exhibition where Ethnographic Museum officially participated after its establishment was in Paris in 1925. Unfortunately, the documentation of the Ethnographic Museum contains no preserved documents relating to this exhibition. Nada Gjetvaj lists only “objects of our national handicrafts” (1989: 94). In the exhibition catalog written in French, *L'art et décoratif industriel dans le Royaume SHS*, is that the exhibited works of art were from the domain of our domestic industry - folk costumes, fabrics and embroideries, drawings on wood and glass, leather, ceramics and other objects to which different techniques of decorating were applied (1925: 9).¹⁵ The catalog contains several pictures. Among the ethnographic material folk costumes from Zagorje (photos), aprons from Dinara area, wooden shepherd's *kepčija* cups, lace, lace and a few carpets from a civic room were shown. It is not possible to determine which of these items were sent, or exhibited, by the Ethnographic section of the National Museum in Zagreb.

Pariz, 1927. Documentation of the museum exhibition sectors doesn't contain any information about this exhibition either. N. Gjetvaj records that carpets and woolen fabric from the Yugoslav area were exhibited (1989: 94).¹⁶

Berger's letters also don't mention anything in relation to the above-mentioned two exhibitions, although one particularly interesting may lead to a connection with them. Specifically, in the letter dated 17th December 1925 Darinka Malešević from Kistanje responds to Berger's inquiry (dated 5 November 1925) about the production and use of carpets, which she had previously sent to him. Malešević emphasizes that such carpets were used on the walls beside the ottoman “... which our peasant women made for the citizens “and that many were being sold in Zadar, Split, Zagreb and Belgrade.”¹⁷ From the letters it is also evident that she sent a greater number of “Dalmatian aprons with fringes and without them, to Zagreb,¹⁸ knitted belts, bags and embroideries on the stockings”.

Barcelona, 1929. The next big exhibition the Museum participated in was held in 1929 - Barcelona - Exposición Internacional de Barcelona. In this case there is also no precise data, but several Bergerovih letters sent to colleagues in the field show that the unsold items from this exhibition were later moved to Copenhagen. Details from Berger's letter sent to Eleonora Švrljuga, wife of the Minister of Finance, which says that to the exhibition only “... our beautiful and new products of domestic work,

¹⁵ For the translation of certain sections of catalog I express my gratitude to my colleague Maja Ergović.

¹⁶ N. Gjetvaj does not name his sources for this part of the text.

¹⁷ In Paris the exhibition catalog from 1925 states that the Kingdom of SHS recently developed a strong industry producing rugs and covers - especially in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Banat (1925: 44).

¹⁸ Those are woven wool aprons from the hinterland of Dalmatia.

which are the only ones that can promote us abroad ... "(Berger, Jan 6 1930), should be sent and that" ... we definitely need to give up practices which was carried out at the exhibition in Barcelona too, that the old, unclean and repaired ethnographic objects were sent that have meaning only for science, and which thus exposed to the international audience only degrade the impression of the cultural and artistic life of our nation ... "(Berger, January 6 1930) are a direct confirmation of Berger's attitudes towards the products of popular art and crafts, and of the need to exhibit them at international exhibitions. The totality of his work is based on this - both private (at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century), and the one realized in the framework of domestic and foreign exhibition activities of the Museum.

Haag, 1929. It appears that Berger sent products of the domestic industry to the exhibition in The Hague in 1929. In a copy of his letter, with no the date and recipient recorded, states that the exhibition in Rotterdam couldn't be arranged, because everything was sold out in The Hague. Perlaković, clerk in the Kingdom of SHS consulate, from Rotterdam says on 12th November 1929 to Berger that the things in The Hague "were carried away by buyers" and relates the praise of several Dutch newspapers. He specifically mentions the *Groene Amsterdamer* in which the critic Otto von Tussenbreek wrote that in connection with this exhibition home industry and trades were promoted, and that he actually saw "folk art" and "the mental creative force of our nation."

Calgary, 1930. An exhibition of the products of popular domestic trades was prepared for Calgary in Canada in February 1930, with the aim of presentation and creating a market. The Emigration Commission in Zagreb sent a letter on 9 November 1929 to the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health, Department of emigration and settlement in Belgrade, in which it stated that in February next year Folk Dance and Folk Song and Handicraft Festival was going to be held in Calgary on which "our country" should be presented.

Salamon Berger wrote memos in early December to all his colleagues in the field, where he informed them about the upcoming Canadian exhibition and asked them to prepare specific products "... in the way they were exhibited in 1928 at the Zagreb Fair". Introductions to the notice were identical, and then a list of needed items followed.

From the furrier Stjepana Šimunića of Gradiška he required: "Jerkin with sleeves, men's, big and solidly decorated; breast covers, female jerkins, bags made of white and yellow skin, all solidly made." (Berger, Dec 12 1929).

Ljubica i Darinka Malešević from Kistanje had to prepare: "Tablets of various sizes, pillows (not filled), embroidered, 2-3 pairs of curtains, knitted or weaved; sets for tea, knitted; pocket handkerchief, silk, and from batiste, knitted (several dozen), women's and children's caps, knitted from batiste (several pieces); Various bags of wool and knitted (multiple pieces); vizitieres and purses, knitted (several dozen)" (Berger, Dec 2 1929).

From the Matavulj company of Šibenik Berger requested knitted national caps and bags in first class quality. And they quickly responded that "... business in these items is again as good as before the war (First World War, which points to the fact that the business existed much earlier, during the Austro-Hungarian monarchy), or even better, because we've built a lot of traditional embroidery that are particularly interesting to foreigners." (Berger, Dec 9 1929). They continued to write about the entire production - which, for better insight into the company's business I quote in full: "We make national caps in a variety of types and makes, and we have all types that are carried in Dalmatia, Lika, Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have bags in various sizes in cotton or silk. In addition we make Obrovac-type men's costumes in larger quantities, the old original Šibenik type men's costumes, and women's *kosovac*. We have mats made of 2 Dalmatian aprons. We produce women's fashion vests in various designs all hand-made in the national fashion of finest cloth and in finest production. These are worn here, and foreigners take them very gladly." (Berger, Dec 9 1929)

To the State School of Crafts in Split Berger recommended to prepare "... textile work, several small carpets, *vanjkuša* (not filled to allow for transport), binders, Pag lace, tablets, tablecloths, etc. but mostly minor things, the collection of carvings, as it your school makes them." (Berger, Dec 12 1929), and to the State carpet production from Sarajevo: "3 to 4 small carpets about 80x120 to 140 in dark burnt color, tablets (*pokrovci*) of various sizes, embroidered and woven, pillows (not filled) knitted, 2 to 3 pairs of cotton curtains, knitted or woven, sets for tea, embroidered, pocket tissues, silk and batiste, embroidered (several dozen), women's and children's caps, from Batista, knitted (multiple pieces), various bags of wool and with embroidery (multiple pieces), vizitiere and purses, knitted (several dozen), lace: *beker-keru cvetna*, Kera on keru, almond-*keru*, works in metal (possibly 2 - 3 doses for cigarettes) and similar in a small number, wooden carvings (just little things)." (Berger, Dec 12 1929)

Berger recommended to the State Penitentiary in Mitrovica to participate in the exhibition and to prepare "... various long small format boxes, round box with and without cover, and smaller kepića cups and small water bottles all naturally rich in carvings and of first class quality ..." (Berger, Dec 7 1929).

The planned exhibition in Calgary was not held. It has not been possible to establish the reason for that from preserved Berger's letters and documentation about the museum's exhibitions. According to the letter sent by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Emigrant delegation for Canada in April 1930 to the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health, Department of emigration and settlement, about an exhibition in Calgary, "our emigrant women took part with their" work, and Salamon Berger sent pictures with ethnographic themes.

Copenhagen, 1930. The material collected for the Canadian exhibition was exhibited in the same year at the great world exhibition in Copenhagen¹⁹. Berger sent a letter on 28th January 1930 to the Minister of Social Policy and Public Health in which,

¹⁹ The exact name of this exhibition is neither in the Documentation on exhibition activities of the Ethnographic Museum nor in Berger's letters.

among other things, he wrote: "As we ... needed the material for this Canadian exhibition, I addressed a variety of producers, my old colleagues, to send me this material, which many already did. - I have to admit, that due to mess created by the cancellation of the Canadian exhibition, because the producers, mostly little people, were brought in trouble with their goods and handicrafts. The situation was at this time salvaged by circumstance, because the things gathered could be used for the exhibition in Copenhagen, which was organized by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. "(Berger, 1930).

Three crates and a few jute bags of material were sent to Copenhagen intended for presentation and / or sale. The items from the Women's Association for the preservation and promotion of popular art and crafts were packed in the crate no. 1: table napkins with 4 or 6 towels, tablecloths, shawls, woven and embroidered pillows, bags, belts, woven skirts, *oplećci*, pants, coats (long and short), costumes, caps, night-wear, covers for postcards, leather notepad, rings for towels, indices, the dose for cigarettes, ashtrays, books and folders (it is not possible to identify which publications were involved). This crate, unlike others, did not have the label "for sale" or "not for sale" so it is not possible to determine whether this material was intended solely for presentation.

The second crate contained items intended for sale. Petrinja women's association was represented with a covering, sets for tea, the national attires, bathrobes, bags, purses, and decorative add-ons for the clothes for which there is no precise data. Anka Šajnović from Osekovo sent, along with the "old originals" - a suit, apron, blanket and pillow - new items: coats, skirts, shoulder bags, tablecloths, table napkins, tablets. In the same crate there were a few pillowcases, towels, and various parts of costumes, which were obtained from Zorka Sever from Popovac and Slavo Jesich from Prelošćica and of Pag lace which was sent by Frane Budak.

Items that were exhibited in Barcelona, but not sold, were listed among other things in crate no. 3. These are identified as material that "is not for sale":

- Workshop Šajnović, Osekovo: bags, *poculice*, pillows, tablecloths;
- Zorka Sever, Popovača: *poculice*, pillowcases;
- Woodcarver Sabljak (no location given): vessel, little case;
- State carpet production, Sarajevo: *čilimi*;
- "Osvitanje", Muslim women's association, Sarajevo: *kerane čipke*, tablecloths and napkins, *towels*;
- Split (no origin given): tablecloth, *nadstolnjak*, *postolnjak*, *kera retičela*, lace in a frame? *rami*, *čilimi*, bags;
- Dr. Zdunić, Sisak: parts of an attire and pillowcases, and
- *national attires of the Osjek oblast* (no origin or owner listed): women's shirt, aprons, men's vest, *potpetalo*, *ponjavac*, tablecloth.

Part of the materials for which it was not clear whether they were located in the same crate (no. 3), and thus unclear whether it was at the exhibition in Barcelona, had the label “for sale”: women’s breast shirt, parts of the Dalmatian coat, *natikači*, sleeves (couples), slavonian suit, aprons, *zobun*, bags, a bed blanket. Manufactured goods store owned by Adolf Hirtweila from Vinkovci was represented with the following items: *kapa zlatara*, *šamija zlatara*, *zavoj embroidered in gold*, *džega zlatara*, *zlatna slavonska džega*,²⁰ and the Malešević family business from Kistanje with *tablets*, *millieu*, *postolnjaks*, rugs, dresses, aprons and bags.

Also participating at the world exhibition in Copenhagen were: The monastery of the Sisters of the Sacred Cross from Djakovo with four Slavonija carpets; District *bez* fabric production from Sarajevo with *tablecloths*, *milleui*, *kera napkins*, blankets, har-em embroidered covers, towels, robes, shawls, jackets, *thanice*, caps and embroidered bags; Banovina shop for artisan crafts from Sarajevo with *ibrici*, puff boxes, inkpots, mirrors and tobacco boxes, an Women’s associations Ferenčak and Craftsmen’s association from Livno. There is no precise information about the last two mentioned associations and their items that were represented at this exhibition.

Saarbrücken, 1931/1932 The Ethnographic Museum participated in 1931/32 at the world exhibition in Amsterdam with items of national handicrafts (Gjetvaj, 1989: 94), but the museum’s documentation contains no written information about that.

Kopenhagen, 1931./1932. At the end of 1931 or the beginning of 1932 another small exhibition was planned in Copenhagen. Secretary of the Royal consulate in Copenhagen, Francis Pakaci, sent a letter to Berger in September 1931 in which he informs him that the Danish cultural society Foreningen af 1860, whose members visited the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb during their travel through Yugoslavia, witnessing the abundance and beauty of our folk art and being excited by it, decided to “arrange a special Yugoslav exhibition on their premises” (Pakaci, Nov 12 1931). The exhibition was supposed to awaken interest in the products of popular art and crafts, or to create an opportunity to purchase “Yugoslav folk art” in Denmark (Pakaci, Nov 12 1931). During the exhibition orders should have been made and recorded, and the items would be sent to customers later. Pakaci asked Berger to send him products from the workshop Šajnović from Osekovo and Malešević from Kistanje for that purpose.²¹ Berger quickly replied that he will do everything in his power and will and that he”... will with [his] work and commitment prove to the Ministry and other relevant factors, that it is in our possibilities, to this branch of national economy could earn millions from exports. “(Berger, Nov 16 1931).

However, the next month Pakaci, who was ready to use his own funds for the acquisition and customs costs, asked Berger to cancel the orders, because due to the economic crisis the dinar exchange rate fell. Great world economic crisis therefore had a negative impact on handicraft and industrial products. Confirmation of this fact is

²⁰ Judging by these local names, the items came from the eastern parts of Slavonia and Sirmium.

²¹ He also emphasized that they should not send handbags and women’s hats - “of any kind” - because they cannot sell there.

provided in a letter from Darinka Malešević from Kistanje addressed to Berger on 20 Apr 1932 in which she complained about the past “hungry year and the poor sale” of her goods. She wrote further: “Women are rushing to me and begging for some work, but I can’t continue to invest because of the uncertainty and for the fact that payment from the goods which I gave on the commission is slow” (i.e., goods sold to Berger).

But Berger was still trying to market the produced handicrafts in foreign markets, recommending to the workshops to lower the asking price of products and paying unsold exported goods with his own funds (Berger: letter to Pakaci, 18 Apr 1932).

New York, 1939. This was the last big international exhibition before the start of the Second World War in which the Museum participated. Unlike previous exhibitions which where market suitable and aesthetically attractive items were exhibited, for this one the material was chosen and presented using significantly different criteria. It was an attempt to systematically show the complete folk costumes of various Croatian and neighboring regions, because of which the, sometimes incomplete, museum material was complemented with material from the field. A significant shift from previous exhibitions was the presentation of everyday usable items, as well as those related to non-material culture, all of which constituted an attempt to give an overall picture of the traditional life in the Croatian village and the neighboring Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Slovene and Serbian areas.²²

Collection, and probably part of the selection of items was taken over by the State School of Trades in Zagreb. An academic painter Zdenka Sertic was responsible for the ethnographic material.²³ Museums from certain regions of the former Yugoslavia prepared, in addition to materials from their holdings, materials from the associations and individuals from the field they were covering with their activities.²⁴

²² The Belgrade News wrote at length on the 20th February under the heading “Yugoslavia will be represented at the great international exhibitions in New York” about the organization that was entrusted to the Zagreb School of Crafts. Yugoslavia was given an area of 1000 m² in a large joint pavilion, which was designed by architect Ernest WEISMANN. Zagreb architect Gjuro Kavurić was responsible for the design of the exhibition, and he ably fitted sculptural works, paintings, objects of artisan trades, charts and other exhibition materials collected from the ethnographic museums in Zagreb and Ljubljana, the State Museum in Sarajevo, Commerce Museum in Belgrade, the Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, the Tourist Association, the Department of hygiene and other “parties” into the interior of the pavilion (20th February 1939). The organization of this exhibition devoted lots of attention to immigrants, in which it should have stirred up national pride and memories of the “home country”. The objectives of the exhibition were, as News stated, “to spur interest among Americans in our natural wealth and business attractions, and attracting American tourists to Yugoslavia.

²³ Zdenka Sertic was employed as of 1921 first as “substitute teacher, then as the “real teacher”, in the department of the National Ethnographic Museum in the position of designer - artist. In the 30’s she worked as a professor at the Zagreb female and male teachers’ training college, the First real male only grammar School and at the Office of the Ban in Zagreb. Since 1941 till the end of her career in 1959 she continuously worked in the Ethnographic Museum as a draftsman, designer-painter, academic draftsman, and designing associate. (Ivkanec, 1997: 9-10).

²⁴ For example, Commerce Museum in Belgrade sent a selection of material from its holdings, and items that were created in the women’s associations Kolo srpskih sestara and Pazar.

The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb completed a greater number of folk costumes from the Croatian and some neighboring areas. Male garments that were shown were from Slavonia, Sveta Nedjelja, Jamnica, Lika, Kijevo Žegar, Šibenik, Konavle and Duvno, the Alkar uniforms were from Sinj and Bey costumes from Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁵. The Alkar's uniform was donated by the Knight's Society "Alkar" from Sinj, while the men's costumes from Žegar were on loan from Pero Milić. Women's costumes were from the following localities and regions: Baranja, Đakovo, Sunja, Brezovica, Kupinec (the bride's costume), Bistra, Jamnica, Kijevo, Obrovac and Livno. Dolls dressed in the traditional attire were exhibited in front of a big, segmented board which presented the whole of Yugoslavia, and the traditional culture of the people living in it. The board was designed and painted by Ljubo Babić. Apart from the set of folk costumes, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb prepared the individual representative items from the traditional textile inventory (bags, bedding), jewelry, shoes, pottery products, tools, wooden carved items (flasks, distaffs), and Easter eggs from different parts of Croatia.²⁶

II. The permanent exhibit of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb

Unlike the previously shown international exhibitions, which exhibited mainly textile and small wooden items made in the framework of organized domestic trades and intended for sale facilitated and / or organized by the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum, the permanent exhibition at the premises of the Museum at that time (1922, 1934 and 1935) reflected a more systematic approach to collecting and presenting material that was directed by its first curator Vladimir Tkalčić with his professional concepts and work. The museum started to systematically collect, "... wide-ranging materials showing traditional culture and the life of peasants, primarily from the territory of Croatia, to try to properly compensate the one-sidedness of the previous system of the museum holdings, where textile products prevailed almost exclusively. (Gjetvaj, 1989: 21). The museum exhibition activity evolved and changed in parallel with its collecting activity.

Collected objects in the Museum were for the first time exhibited on the occasion of the visit of King Alexander Karadjordjević to Zagreb in July 1920 and in 1922 it was opened to the public for the first time. (Gjetvaj, 1989: 21-22). Due to overcrowding and unclear principles of exhibiting the exhibit was partially modified during the first half of 1934 (Širola with Tkalčić and Gavazzi) and 1935 (Ivo Franić). However,

²⁵ On some lists from the covers with the preparatory stages of the exhibitions costumes of the Bokeljska navy costumes and a Montenegrin duke appear, but it is not clear which institution was responsible for their procurement.

²⁶ Commerce and Crafts Museum in Belgrade participated in this exhibition with textile materials - mostly costumes from the area of Serbia and Kosovo, and smaller usable textile items. The museum was founded in 1921, and his tasks were almost the same as those in the rulebook of the policy had the Commerce and Crafts Museum in Zagreb.

The Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana also presented the textile material from their area and a smaller number of small wooden usable items.

even these “new” concepts did not move much further than the 19th century practices of exhibiting large quantities of material, often by several dozen similar items, grouped by type, production technique and decoration or arranged by the regional / local basis. However, according to guides through the exhibit²⁷ it indeed exhibited various items; it covered all aspects of traditional culture of the Croatian and neighboring areas, including the valuable exhibits of non-European cultures. As part of the partially modified from the 1935 exhibition the *Applied folk arts* section was placed in a separate unit (IX) on the first floor of exhibition space. It contained Pag lace, different wool fabric from Slavonia, woven bags, coin bags and belts from Dalmatia, items of leather, clothes and textile room trinkets and “memories of Mr. dir. S. Berger (Gjetvaj, 1989: 40). At the beginning of the Second World War the items were stored in the shelter.

Exhibits in the museum. By the beginning of the Second World War, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb, prepared on its premises, apart from a couple of fixed exhibits and / or their modifications, an exhibition of the works of Srećko Sabljak (1931), in which applied folk art, modeled on the museum exhibits, was shown. These were wooden objects - boxes, razors, distaffs, parts of furniture - decorated using various techniques. Unfortunately, there is no information about this exhibition in the documentation.

III. Exhibitions at home

The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was actively involved in the domestic events in the twenties and the thirties of the 20th century.

Beograd, 1930. During the Panslav Sokol pageant in 1930 an exhibition of the domestic industry was organized in the palace of the *Kolo srpskih sestara* in Belgrade with the aim of improving the production of traditional folk fabric and embroidery. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, under whose auspices the exhibition was held for mandated the organization to Salamon Berger. It is for this opportunity that he wrote a short accompanying text entitled *For the improvement of our domestic industry*, in which he again states his fundamental views on the products of people’s art and crafts.

Numerous institutions and individuals from the Kingdom took part in the exhibition. The Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb presented a variety of textiles - women’s folk costumes from Slavonia (2 sets), Sisak (2 sets), Brezovica and Slovenia and the male costumes also from Slavonia and Brezovica. Other areas were represented with individual items - parts of folk costumes, textiles and usable fragments of fabric and embroidery. The list of the exhibits (from Berger’s letters) the items lack the label showing their origin. However, they can be distributed on a regional basis sometimes recorded local vocabulary. Most were from areas of central Croatia - Moslavina and Posavina. Apart from the textile material, the museum has exhibited, a large number of

²⁷ Kus–Nikolajev, Mirko 1927 *A walk through the Ethnographic museum in Zagreb, Pismeni vodič*, Zagreb; Frančić, Ivo 1935 *Reorganized Ethnographic museum in Zagreb*, Zagreb.

pictures of Zdenka Sertic Osim tekstilnog materijala, Muzej je izložio i veći broj slika Zdenke Sertić – *Nevestice iz Vrbnika, Djevojka iz Šestina, Dječak iz Šestina, Žena u tuzi – Brezovica, Djevojka iz Vukomerca, Posnehalje iz Sv. Nedjelje, Žene iz okolice Siska, Momak iz Rečice, Žena iz Šišljavića, Žena iz Jamnice, Snaša iz Slavonije, Djevojka i snaša iz Slavonije i Žena sa Gorenjskoga.*

From the list and some of Berger's letters it is clear that it is not only material from the holdings ²⁸ (Z.G.Z., Š.M. and Et), but also material from private owners or the manufacturers outside – workshops Šajnović from Osekovo, Malešević from Kistanje and Matavulj from Šibenik, the Hirtweil shop and Brichta Production from Vinkovci and other subjects.²⁹ Croatian craftsmen association from Gornji Vakuf, Beograd women's society, Pirot carpet maker cooperative and other associations also exhibited their products. Exhibitors at this exhibition, as well as those organized within Zagreb Fair, had special offers for tickets and goods on railways.

Exhibitions within the Zagreb Fair. The museum participated in exhibitions of the Zagreb Fair in the 30's, Gjetvaj recorded the Fishermen exhibition and exhibition of applied folk handicrafts - both in 1935 (Gjetvaj, 1989: 94), but there is no data about them. However, in Berger's letters traces can be found that witness about prior participation or influence of the museum (or at least its honorary director) in the events around Zagreb Association. There is a list of items owned by Berger that were exhibited in 1931 - parts of traditional garments, *tkanice*, tablecloths, covers and fragments of fabric and embroidery³⁰. Next year, Berger wrote to his associates in the field that the director of the Zagreb Fair asked him to "help the organization" so he urged them to participate in the exhibition independently and to seek bigger and free exhibition space and discounts on the railway (March, 1932). There is no more information in the documentation about the exhibition activities connected with the Zagreb Fair.

Summary

Attempts to organize handicrafts focused on the practical function of improving the economic status of farmers' classes, as well as on a symbolic level of routing and presentation "of our people's" textile art, and the proposals for an institutional (museum) framework for these activities occur in the Croatian political and cultural public

²⁸ Upon its return to Zagreb the material collected through the Ethnographic Museum was left located in open railroad cars in 5 boxes and 3 jute bags was exposed to several days of rain and considerably damaged. Numerous letters from Berger to the Institute for promoting foreign trade of Ministry of Trade and Industry and the influential persons testify about his steadfast efforts to claim full compensation from the insurance company "Yugoslavia" Ltd., Zagreb branch, which sought to delay this with a court case that was brought forth in Belgrade (1931 and 1932).

²⁹ All of these workshops are not the named on the list of exhibited items, but the trace of their participation in the Belgrade exhibition can be found in the letters and accounts from 1931 and 1932.

³⁰ The items from Berger's collections were exhibited at the exhibition which was organized along with the Zagreb Fair in 1928 and they attracted lots of attention (Leček, 2004: 24).

from the last quarter of the 19th century (I. Kršnjavi, F. Vrbanić, S. Berger). Particularly such efforts were present in the first decades of 20th century, when a production of textile handicrafts intended for local and foreign bourgeois social stratum was organized in the Croatian areas as well as in other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Market adjusted textile items applied folk decorative elements and techniques of production and decoration. Organized home handicrafts / industry in this period became an important economic activity.

Individuals, institutions and associations established in urban and rural areas had a major role in organizing, encouraging and developing the domestic handicraft. The significant Zagreb merchant and industrialist Salamon Berger went furthest in his activity at the turn of the 20th century, having worked for years on organizing, directing and improving the domestic industry. The first significant shift in the institutional sense, led by the Zagreb-Trade Chamber of Trade, was the establishment of Commerce & Crafts Museum in 1904. The paper prepared on the occasion of marking the 140th anniversary of this Chamber the historian Mira Kolar Dimitrijević stated that the trade-Craft Museum to the beginning of the First World War “acquired a likable ethnographic character and became a museum of south Slav handicrafts” (1992: 72). One of the smaller, exhibited with other artisan and industrial products collected previously has been the so-called Domestic trades collection, purchased from Berger in 1905 which, according to M. Kolar-Dimitrijevic, with another later of his collection acquired later (the so-called National collection Salamon Berger, 1919), became the reason for the conversion of the Commerce and Crafts Museum into the Ethnographic Museum.³¹

However, the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb participated, often at the invitation of the competent ministries, from its foundation in 1919 to the beginning of the Second World War, in several international and national exhibitions presenting folk arts of Croatian and other areas of the Kingdom of SHS, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. To these exhibitions, as well as those common Yugoslav, Salamon Berger gave a strong stamp – as an honorary director of the museum already at that time. Berger gave the advantage to the individual folk art objects made in the framework of domestic industries, mostly textiles and less usable wooden items, suitable for sale to domestic and foreign markets. In the exhibition activities he involved many collaborators - craftsmen from the field, national and regional institutions and companies that within their regular or extraordinary activities produced the material suitable for the presentation of folk arts and crafts and, of course, for sale. Surviving Berger's letters and documents from the period 1926-1933 testify about his continuing efforts to enhance the production and sales of domestic product trades. He saw in them not only the expressive force of a creative people, but as a former trader, a great poten-

³¹ Without going deeper into the exhibiting and other activities of the newly established Ethnographic Section of the National Museum in Zagreb, M. Kolar-Dimitrijević stated that the institution “languished, insufficiently equipped, with few financial resources and scarce staff” (1992: 71) until the January dictatorship in 1929. However, she later pointed out that the Ethnographic Museum became a reputable institutions recognized in the world (1992: 71).

tial for economic prosperity of the village. These efforts associated with the museum exhibition business, although limited to a small part of ethnographic material - textiles and small wooden inventory - partially overlap with the goals of the “assimilated” Commerce & Crafts Museum. M. Kolar-Dimitrijević noted that the leadership of the very influential Radić party also cautioned on the need for the existence of “pure ethnographic museum” in which a collection of “creations, which were made by the hands of Croatian peasants” (1992: 71). From the quotations it is not clear whether Radić people were dissatisfied with the “width” of the area from which the material was collected or mediatory role that the museum had between the producers, creators and the market.

Berger’s work cannot be measured by modern museological principles, but it should be seen in the light of the contemporary opportunities and all activities around promoting folk art and the establishment of the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb which, thanks to the earlier Berger’s activities and his acquaintances, soon became a known and respected institution in the country and the world. The fact is that Berger’s idea about the improvement home handicraft, as well as the adjustment of these products to the domestic and foreign markets, and fashion (which he represented as a trader, as shown, and later - as a director of the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum to his death), matches those that were the main objectives of individual activities of civil associations and the Peasant Concord, the cultural and educational organization of the Croatian Peasant Party, in the 20’s and the 30’s. We can say that since the last quarter 19th century to the beginning of World War II home business almost continuously had a protector and promoter who tried to revive, preserve, support, implement and place it on the domestic and foreign markets and at the same time to stir the interest of all social strata in this “national treasure”. A large share of the items, mostly smaller, then placed on the market later became part of the souvenir range of Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

Already at the exhibition held in New York in 1939, also the last major international exhibition before the start of the Second World War in which the Museum participated, significant changes were made in the selection and presentation of the materials. It was attempted to systematically show the complete folk costumes of various Croatian and neighboring regions, therefore the sometimes incomplete museum material was complemented with material from the field. A significant shift from previous exhibitions was the presentation of everyday usable items, as well as those related to non-culture, which attempted to give a wide perspective of traditional life in the village and the neighboring Bosnian, Herzegovinian, Slovene and Serbian areas.

Early Exhibitions. Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb was therefore going in two directions. Domestic and overseas exhibiting activity aimed at the development and presentation of domestic industry and its products for sale to domestic and foreign markets, was defined by the first director Salamon Berger, while the curator Vladimir Tkalčić designed the collection and exhibition policy in the museum rooms (partially the exhibitions too) in which recognizable contemporary professional museological standards could be seen.

Tkalčić assumed the position of director in 1925³², and with other professional and technical staff with appropriate education he set the foundation for further professional and academic development of the Museum - directed, primarily, at the collecting (field work), the preservation, cataloging, evaluation and presentation of the materials. So already in 1923 the seven-member team led by Tkalčić and Gavazzi conducted the first team field research in villages located along the river Kupa (from Karlovac to Sisak). the Department of Folk Music was established in The Museum, a library was opened and publishing activities started³³ - which continued in the period when Božidar Širola (1934-1935) Ivo Franić (1935-1939) And Milovan Gavazzi (1939-1941) were directors. In the meantime, the Museum's holdings significantly increased with the purchase of items on the ground and through donations of citizens.

Translated by Tomislav Redep

³² 1925-1934

³³ *Zbirka jugoslavenskih ornamenata* (1925-1934), *Etnološka biblioteka* (1926-1934), *Šetnje kroz Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu* (Kus-Nikolajev, 1927), *Etnografski muzej u Zagrebu* (1930), *Etnološka istraživanja i grada* (1934, 1940-1942), *Vjesnik Etnografskog muzeja u Zagrebu* (1934-1938) – (Gjetvaj, 1989: 90).