



**THE CHAMBER OF LABOUR  
IN ZAGREB SHORTLY AFTER  
CONSTRUCTION**

KOMORA PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE  
KRÁTKO PO VÝSTAVBE

**Source** Zdroj: A contemporary postcard,  
author's collection

# The Buildings Built for Public use by “The KKK Group” in Croatia Architecture, Structure and Conservation

## Verejné stavby z dielne „Skupiny KKK“ v Chorvátsku: architektúra, štruktúra a ochrana

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Architekti Jovan Korka, Đorđe Krekić a Georg Kiverov založili v Záhrebe v roku 1931 skupinu KKK, v rámci ktorej spolupracovali až do roku 1939. Počas ôsmich medzivojnových rokov táto trojica navrhla a postavila v Chorvátsku či v širšom regióne mnohé verejné a obytné budovy, medzi ktoré patria aj ich dve najpublikovanejšie verejné stavby: Komora práce a budova Verejného ústredia práce v Záhrebe. S vynikajúcimi architektonickými riešeniami sa tiež zúčastňovali súťaži v celom regióne bývalej Juhoslávie, usporadúvali výstavy a publikovali odborné články. Hoci sa skupina stala slávnou už na začiatku svojej profesionálnej činnosti a často sa spomína v literatúre či v antológiách venovaných modernej architektúre, predmetom systematického výskumu sa ich práca stala až nedávno.

V rokoch 1934 až 1938 získala skupina KKK priame zadania na budovy Verejného ústredia práce v Osijeku, Záhrebe, Slavonskom Brode a Karlovaci a budovu Komory práce v Záhrebe. Počas svojho pôsobenia realizovala skupina KKK celkovo päť verejných budov so sociálnym využitím. Náš text sa zaoberá verejnými budovami, ktoré sa zachovali dodnes.

Komora práce a Verejné ústredie práce v Záhrebe sa v rámci tvorby tejto trojice považujú za ich najvýznamnejšie návrhy. K zrelosti a dokonalosti oboch budov jednoznačne prispel aj architekt Vladimír Šterk, ktorý bol mentorom a zároveň spoluautorom oboch projektov. Nielen tento spoločný návrh, ale aj tie, čo KKK Group navrhli samostatne, sú pôsobivé a charakteristické modernistickou čistotou a eleganciou.

Objekty s verejným a sociálnym využitím, predmet analýzy tejto štúdie, v sebe integrujú množstvo rôznych komplexných obsahov, pričom sledujú aj súbor prijatých zásad, ako napríklad dôsledné oddelenie mužských a ženských používateľov. Do

objektov bolo potrebné zakomponovať rôzne oddelenia: administratívnu časť, byty pre zamestnancov, ubytovanie a kuchyňu pre nezamestnaných, verejné kúpele, knižnicu, kaviareň, prednáškovú sálu a multifunkčnú koncertnú sálu na verejné využitie večer. Hybridné budovy s komplexnými riešeniami umožňovali nerušenú prácu úradníkov v kanceláriách, zároveň jednoduchý pohyb extrémne veľkého počtu používateľov, ale aj verejné využívanie jednotlivých priestorov vo večerných hodinách (veľká sála, bývanie, azylové ubytovanie). Popri dômyselných funkčných riešeniach sme tiež identifikovali moderné konštrukčné riešenie, napríklad pri strope veľkej sály Komory práce. Zosilnené nosníky tam prekonávajú rozpätie od 23 do 40 metrov, čo bolo v tom čase v Záhrebe výnimočné.

Možnosť vzájomného porovnania týchto piatich analyzovaných budov je vzhľadom na obrovské rozdiely medzi návrhmi a jednotlivými realizáciami veľmi malá. Konečnú realizáciu v súlade s ich sociálnym využitím totiž výrazne ovplyvnili nielen ekonomické podmienky a náklady na výstavbu, ale aj veľkosť objektov, význam a spracovanie projektov či proces výstavby. Pri všetkých realizáciách je však možné sledovať princípy prísnej funkčnosti, opakovanie špecifických riešení i použitie moderných prvkov v rámci konštrukcií, foriem či fasád.

Predkladáme analýzu realizácií, ktorá v doterajšom výskume chýbala, pričom kladíme dôraz na skryté architektonické a štrukturálne hodnoty najpublikovanejších stavieb autorov i na prezentáciu ich neznámych diel. Zachované objekty a odkaz skupiny KKK sú svedectvom funkcionalistickej a avantgardnej modernej architektúry v Chorvátsku, čo si nepochybne zaslúži uznanie a pamiatkovú ochranu.

### Introduction

Jovan Korka, Đorđe Krekić and Georg Kiverov founded the KKK Group in 1931 in Zagreb, and worked together until 1939. During the eight inter-war years, the trio designed and built public and residential buildings both in Croatia and the wider region, including two anthological public buildings: the Chamber of Labour (Radnička komora) and the Public Labour Exchange (Javna burza rada) in Zagreb. They contributed brilliant design solutions to competitions across the entire region of Yugoslavia' and they held exhibitions and published several professional papers.

Even though the Group achieved fame from the beginning of their professional activity, first with their housing design in collaboration with the architect Vladimír Šterk and later with success

on architectural competitions, and has often been mentioned both in scholarly literature and anthologies of modern architecture, its work has only recently begun to be systematically studied.

During its activity, the Group built five public buildings for social use: the Chamber of Labour in Zagreb, and four Public Labour Exchange buildings in Osijek, Zagreb, Slavonski Brod and Karlovac. This article deals with these realised public buildings for social use preserved until today.

In addition to a short retrospective on the development of Croatian modern architecture and social institutions in Croatia, the history of how each building originated was reconstructed by analysing the available documents, the plans and buildings in situ, as well as basic architectural-structural characteristics with emphasis on the original architectural blueprints. By analysing functional and structural particularities, the intention was to show the importance of these buildings and provide information about their current condition.

## The formation of the KKK group

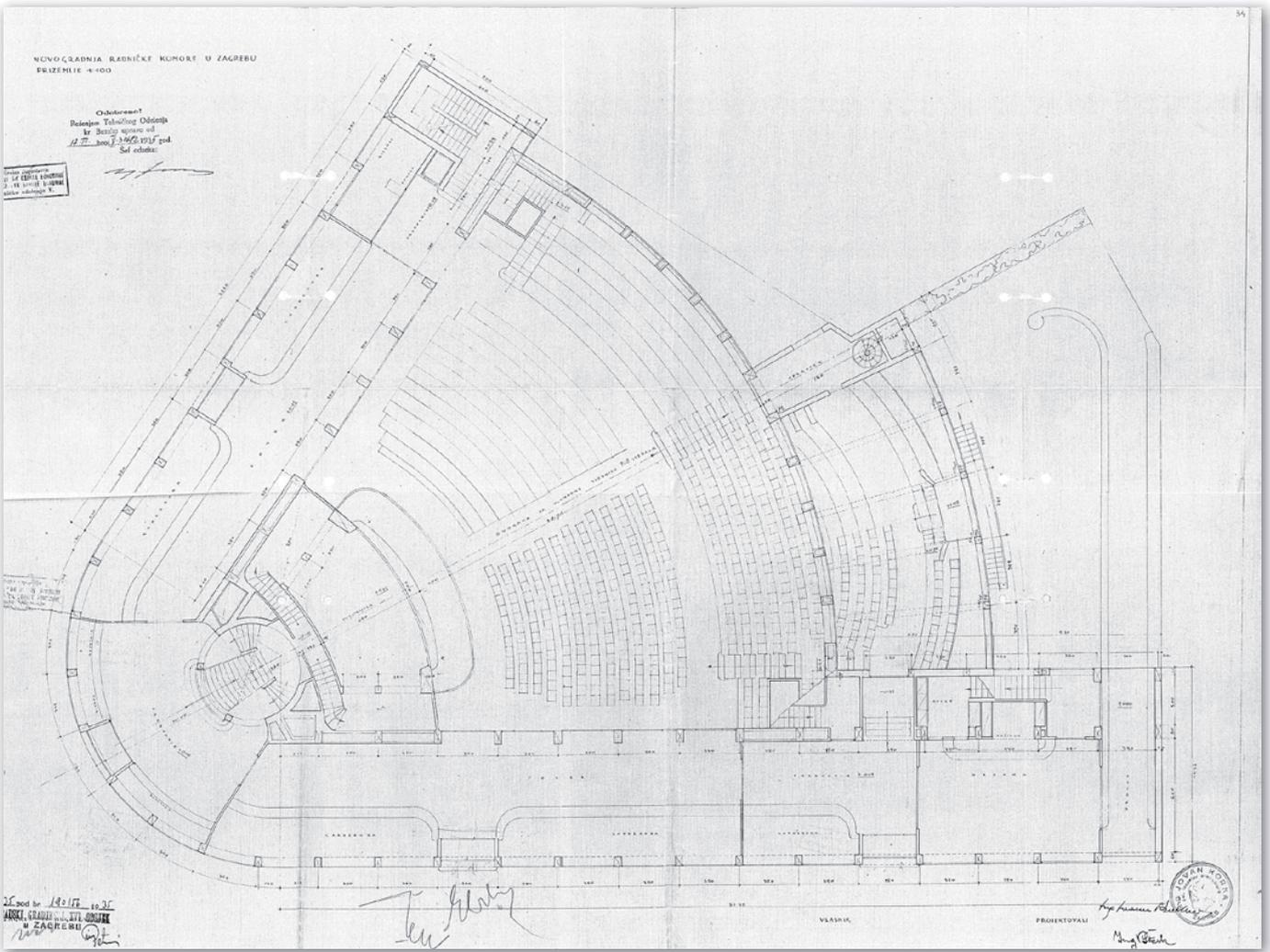
The collaboration of the three architects Jovan Korka, Đorđe Krekić and Georg Kiverov began with the establishment of the KKK Group in July 1931; the name of the Group was formed out of the first letters of their surnames.<sup>2</sup> The group members worked together in the office of architect Vladimir Šterk, which was probably the where they initially met. Kiverov and Korka received their degrees in architecture in Zagreb and Krekić in Vienna. The collaboration with the architect Vladimir Šterk, as mentor and employer, was very important and continued after the Group's formation; in fact, Šterk was the co-author of the two analysed buildings. In the beginning of their collaboration, before designing their major realisations in Zagreb, the work of the Group had already gained public recognition from their housing designs in collaboration with Šterk, winning competitions, participating in exhibitions and issuing publications. Between 1933 and 1939, the group took part in more than eleven architectural competitions, and in nine of them received awards. Three important achievements during the period of their joint work accredited to individual members were Korka's first award for a competition of the Palace of Labour Institutions (*Palača radničkih ustanova*) in 1933 and his third award in the competition for the State Stamp Printing House (*Državna markarnica Beograd*); in 1936. Krekić's Bosnian House (*Bosanska kuća*) in 1937 was exhibited at the Yugoslav Pavilion for the EXPO in Paris.<sup>3</sup>

The prolific collaboration of the Group lasted until 1939. After WWII, the three architects worked as pedagogues and continued to pursue professional careers separately.<sup>4</sup>

The development of the modern movement in Croatia began in the late 1920s: as in many other of the newly independent countries in Europe after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, national integration and social development were its necessary preconditions. In essence, the nation-building process partially formed the work of the Group in giving them the opportunity to build five buildings for social use. The period of collaboration of the Group (1930s) is considered the pinnacle of the modern movement in Croatia, influenced by trends from across Europe and by young professionals who studied abroad like Krekić. Irrespective of the absorption of various influences and norms, its own original value, national and visual identity were created, which can be seen also in the work of the Group. While the aesthetic form of the movement was quickly accepted by the profession, the latest advances in construction methods and materials needed some more time for complete application in Zagreb.<sup>5</sup> In fact, new materials and structures were used only for important buildings in major cities, as we will see also in the work of the Group KKK.<sup>6</sup>

## Five public buildings for social use – the historical and social framework

From the admittedly limited sources, it has emerged that the development of social institutions in Croatia started when the country was still a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where the process of industrialisation lagged behind other European countries.<sup>7</sup> In Croatia, at the beginning of the 20th century, 70 % of the population were farmers, living in great hardship, and due to a social and economic crisis, a part of the population was forced to emigrate.<sup>8</sup> The city of Zagreb, which experienced sudden industrialisation and a massive influx of people, became the main generator of social institutions. In other bigger towns in Croatia, similar institutions were soon founded. In 1907 *The Institute for Intermediation between the Work Bidder and Applicants*, as well as *Services* and a *Hostel* (*Zavod za posredovanje između nudišilaca i tražilaca radnje i službe te konačište*) was opened in Zagreb. *The Institute* had the task of procuring work even outside Zagreb. In 1927, the name of *The Institute* was changed into *The State Labour Exchange*, which established a branch office the following year in



**LAYOUT OF THE GROUND FLOOR  
OF THE CHAMBER OF LABOUR  
IN ZAGREB, ORIGINAL DRAWING  
FROM 1934**

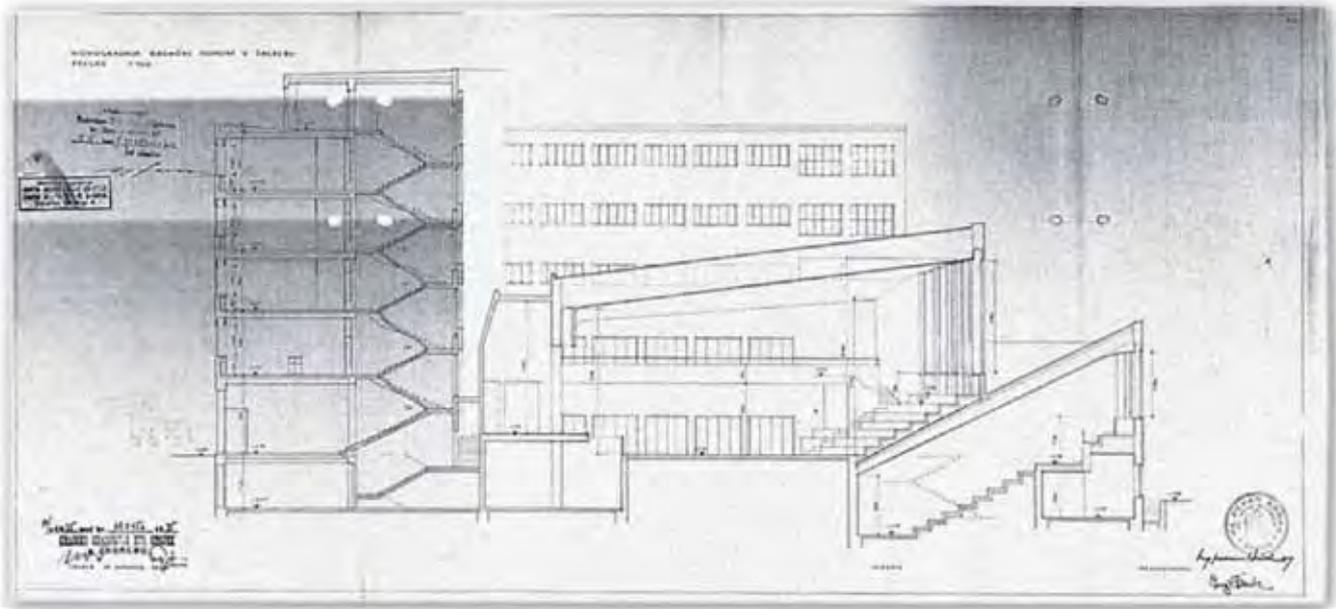
DISPOZÍCIA PRÍZEMIA KOMORY  
PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE, PŮVODNÝ  
VÝKRES Z ROKU 1934

Source Zdroj: State Archives in Zagreb:  
DAZ, HR-DAZG-1122 Zbirka građevne  
dokumentacije

Osijek under the name of *Public Labour Exchange*, and in Split almost a decade later (1935). In 1917 *The Office for Labour Procurement* was founded in Rijeka; in 1931 a *Municipal Social Institution (Ente Opere Assistenziali)* was founded, and in 1937 *The Worker Home*. In Zagreb, in 1931, *The Consultancy for Occupational Guidance* was founded (*Stanica za savjetovanje pri izboru zvanja te smještaj za nezaposlene*), it was intended for health checks and to determine the candidate's ability to work. In the 1930s, the *Public Labour Exchange* branches were intensively built in smaller towns throughout the country.<sup>9</sup>

**Analysis of the buildings**

From 1934 – 1938, the KKK Group received direct commissions for the buildings of the Public Labour Exchange in Osijek, Zagreb, Slavonski Brod and Karlovac, and the Chamber of Labour in Zagreb. All the buildings were constructed on land owned by the towns and financed by *The Public Labour Exchange Zagreb*, and *The Chamber of Labour Zagreb*.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the architect Korke had won the competition for The Palace of Labour Institutes in 1932 – 1933 was an important factor in the success of the Group. Together with Šterk, he worked on the design of the awarded project in 1934, even though this project was never built.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, it can be presumed that this victory was crucial for the commissioning of a great number of buildings of similar use, as the *Public Social Institutions* decided to build their branches independently.



**CROSS-SECTION OF THE CHAMBER OF LABOUR IN ZAGREB, ORIGINAL DRAWING FROM 1934**

PRIEČNY REZ KOMORY PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE, ORIGINÁLNA KRESBA Z ROKU 1934

Source Zdroj: DAZ, HR-DAZG-1122  
Zbirka građevne dokumentacije

**The chamber of labour in Zagreb**

Figure on the page 84 photograph of the Chamber of Labour in Zagreb after the construction. Contemporary postcard, collection of the author.

After the unsuccessful attempt to acquire its own branch office in the Palace of Labour Institutions, the *Zagreb Chamber of Labour* commissioned the KKK Group and the architect Šterk to design its own building in Zagreb in 1934. The Chamber of Labour was to be constructed as the south-eastern corner of an urban block (ul. Kneza Ljudevita Posavskog, Šubićeva ulica (previously Ivkančeva ulica) and Trg Petra Krešimira), in today's downtown Zagreb (Donji grad), (Figure on the page 84).<sup>12</sup> At the time, the entire eastern part of central Zagreb was undergoing construction, and in fact the KKK Group had two building sites in the neighbourhood: the Chamber of Labour and the Public Labour Exchange were under construction almost simultaneously.

The building permit for the Chamber of Labour was obtained in 1935, with construction starting in 1936.<sup>13</sup>

The architects solved the given assignment for situating the functions of administration, cultural and education associations, trade union organisations, a multifunctional hall and apartments for the staff all together within a simple functional and spatial scheme.<sup>14</sup> The administrative section was placed in the multi-storey curved mass of the building following the line of the street. In the lower fan-shaped volume, on the side of the courtyard, was the representative hall, intended for the Chamber and public usage. Behind the great hall and partly below it, a smaller one was planned; and in the courtyard of the plot, a small building was planned for the *Workers' Sports Association* (Figure on the page 87).

In the main volume of the building, offices and smaller conference halls were oriented toward the street and connected by means of a well-illuminated corridor facing into the yard. The large multipurpose hall was functionally independent from the administrative part of the building. Vertical communications were solved with a central staircase and elevator, along with two emergency staircases on the curving ends of the building. All staircases lead to the cellar, where the service utility rooms and air-raid shelter were situated.<sup>15</sup>

The multifunctional amphitheatre hall held space for 1200 spectators. Its parterre was constructed on a single level for versatility and the raised stage was designed as telescopic.<sup>16</sup>

The library and the book depot, the conference room, and the main reading room connected with the 2-storey cafeteria to the southeast were situated on the entire 1st floor of the street-facing mass. The administrative section of the Chamber of Labour was placed from the 2nd to the 4th floor. Archives were situated on the 5th floor, as well as the offices of cultural organisations, and two apartments (for the caretaker and the owner of the bar). The small amphitheatrically shaped hall planned for the area beneath the gallery of the great hall was never eventually built.<sup>17</sup>



**PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN ZAGREB AFTER ITS CONSTRUCTION (1937)**

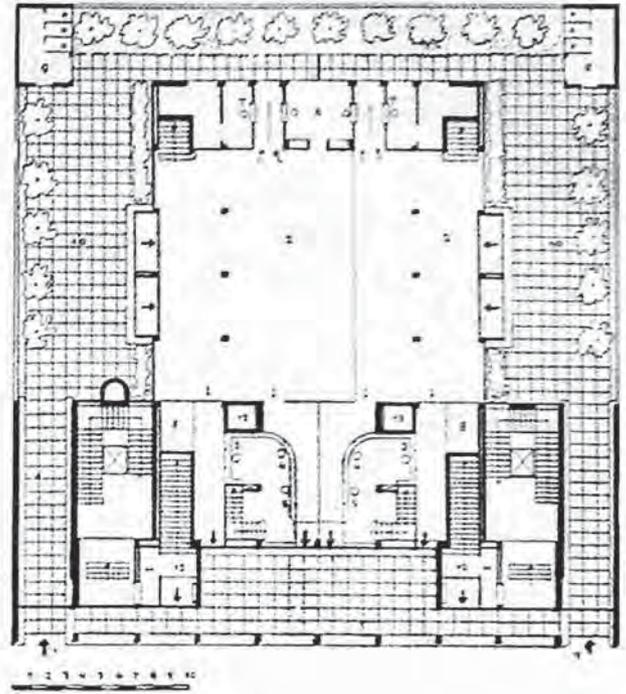
FOTOGRAFIA BUDOVY VEREJNÉHO ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE PO VÝSTAVBE (1937)

Source Zdroj: KORKA, Jovan, 1936. Nova palača Javne burze rada/ Rad ustanova koje su smještene u zgradi. Građevinski vjesnik, 5(2), pp. 132 – 135

**LAYOUT OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN ZAGREB**

DISPOZÍCIA PRÍZEMIA VEREJNÉHO ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE

Source Zdroj: KORKA, Jovan, 1936. Nova palača Javne burze rada/ Rad ustanova koje su smještene u zgradi. Građevinski vjesnik, 5(2), pp. 132 – 135



The functional solution for the Chamber of Labour provided easy and logical movement for large numbers of visitors during the evening hours, when the great hall was used for public events. Flexibility of usage for the conference rooms was achieved by a skeletal frame structure and movable partitions, which enabled the separating and joining of rooms depending on their usage. Even the capacity of the auditorium of the great hall could be extended by opening the side walls on the ground floor and the entrance foyers, or by opening the conference room<sup>18</sup> on the 1st floor across the balcony.

One distinctive feature of this building, in comparison to other public buildings built in Zagreb in the 1930s, was its structural plan. In the original design from 1934, the skeletal frame structure was linked to a solid framework, fitted to a span of 7.3m. Reinforced beams of impressive dimensions (50 × 250 cm), crossing spans of 23 to 40 m, support the roof plate of the great hall. Between the main supportive beams, the plan assumed the use of secondary traverse beams, which formed a kind of grid-like ceiling structure, and a planned height of the hall from 8.50 m to 11.50 m. (Figure on the page 88) For some unknown reason, this daringly advanced structure was not built in reinforced concrete; instead, the girders were replaced by eight steel beams.<sup>19</sup> The standard materials of the time were used for the finishing of the building.<sup>20</sup>

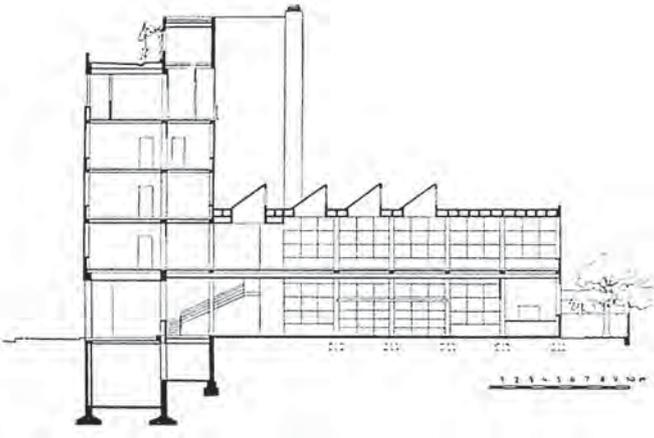
The expressive semi-circular volume of the building formed the completion of the entire urban block; though a frequently used motif of the modern period, its use in this instance was highly effective. The façade of the building was treated using a recognisable three-part division: indenting the ground floor in relation to other storeys and emphasising it with a different surface (façade brick) or wider glass surfaces, while the other four storeys were divided into a row of windows on the smooth stuccoed corpus of the building. Above the finished cornice, the uppermost floor was recessed and invisible at close range. For the main volume of the building, the roof was flat and served as a terrace. The roof of the great hall, pitched at a slope, is covered with copper plating.

Many partial reconstructions of the building, the result of piecemeal alterations by the original client, have caused the loss of the building's original architectural expression. The biggest changes involved the reconstruction addressing the load-bearing structure of the hall<sup>21</sup> and the closing of the roof terrace on the highest floor.<sup>22</sup> To protect the building from further degradation and regain its original quality, it will be necessary to undertake a meaningful restoration of the entire building, to give this valuable cultural heritage the status it deserves.

**LONGITUDINAL SECTION OF THE  
PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN  
ZAGREB**

POZDĹŽNY REZ VEREJNÉHO  
ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V ZÁHREBE

**Source** Zdroj: KORKA, Jovan, 1936. Nova  
palača Javne burze rada/ Rad ustanova  
koje su smještene u zgradi. Građevinski  
vjesnik, 5(2), pp. 132 – 135



### Public labour exchange in Zagreb

*The Public Labour Exchange in Zagreb* commissioned the KKK Group to build its headquarters in Zagreb in 1934, with the architect Vladimir Šterk as co-author.<sup>23</sup> The land for the building was situated within an unfinished urban block structure, on a city-held plot at Zvonimirova ulica 12. The project task requested several independent sections in the building: *Departments for the domestic staff, Department for workers, Department for administration staff in search for work, a Station for consultation for those choosing a profession, and Accommodation for the unemployed.*<sup>24</sup>

The architects finished the design in autumn of 1934, while the building permit was obtained in 1935 Figure on the page 89 left.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of content, it is a complex building, comprised of various independent departments with the need for extensive movement of visitors in short time intervals. The layout was resolved with a simple functional scheme: the administrative section was placed in the seven-storey rectangular street-facing mass of the building, while the service premises and the staircases were set laterally on the rear ends of the main building volume. In the yard of the plot, there was a lower volume with waiting rooms on two floors. The symmetrical division of the entire design composition allowed for separate entrances for women and men from the street level leading into the yard of the building, and enabled the exit of a great number of people from the building to Zvonimirova ulica without jams or overcrowding (Figure on the page 89 right).<sup>26</sup> Functionality was achieved with a complex system of staircases and entrances-exits allowing job seekers and administrative staff to move without hindrance to other offices in the building. Ten entrances-exits faced Zvonimirova ulica, while two main and eight smaller staircases on the ground floor and the 1st floor shortened the route for the greatest number of users through the building (Figure on the page 89 right).<sup>27</sup> On the 2nd floor there was *The Institute Providing Work for Female Domestic Staff and Private Clerks*, while the entire 3rd floor was occupied by *The Station for Counselling in Career Choice*, and *The Hotel for Male Workers without Accommodation* was on the 4th floor. Two apartments for the hotel staff and service facilities were placed on the 5th floor. All the floors above the 1st floor used two main staircases.

Toward the courtyard, the building volume with waiting rooms on the ground floor and administrative staff on the 1st floor was connected vertically with the inner staircase where a part of the monthly administrative obligations of the unemployed were conducted; while the consultations were on the 1st floor. Separate sanitary facilities were located outside the building, on the edge of the plot.

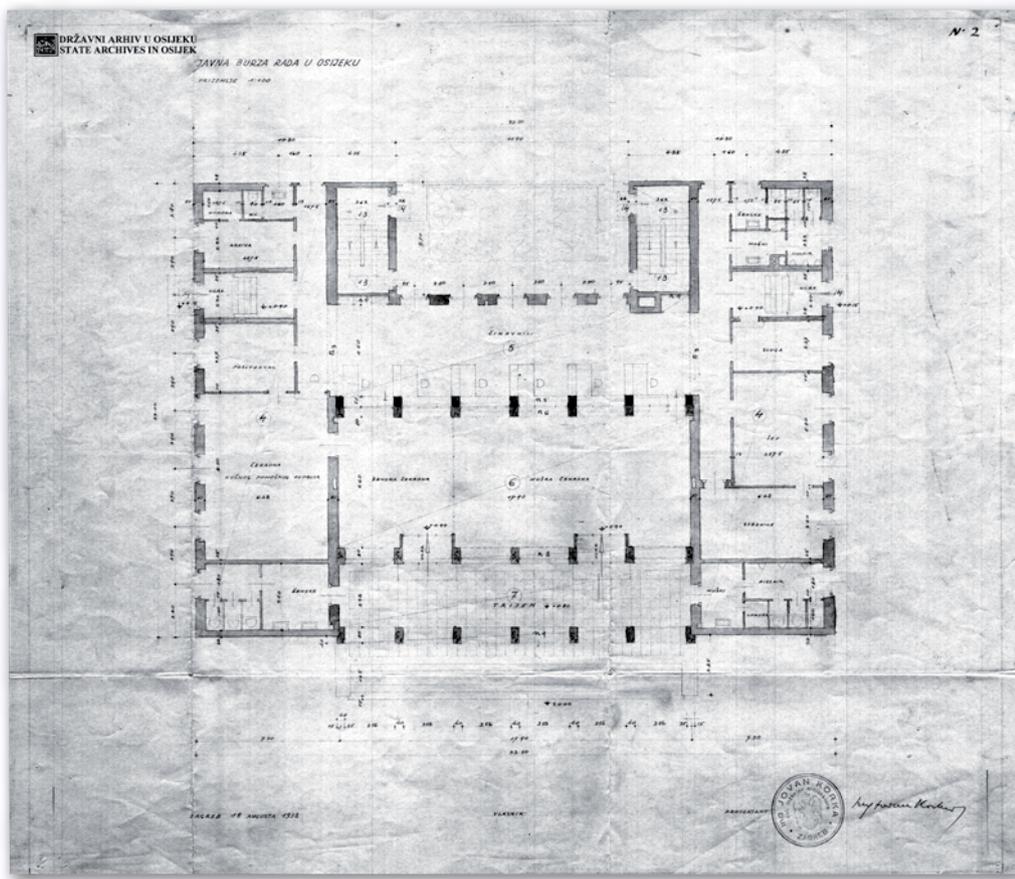
The skeletal frame structure of reinforced concrete is of a small span: the pillars on the main façade have a span of 3.45 m, and the courtyard block with waiting rooms have a structural span of 3.85 m. The ceilings are a monolithic ribbed structure. Natural light for the waiting rooms on the 1st floor of the building in the courtyard was obtained with ribbon windows and shed roofs (Figure on the page 90).

Standard materials of the time were used for the finishing of the building.<sup>28</sup> The façade is elegant in its reserved modernist design: a longitudinal porch along the entire ground floor, rows of windows between pillars, which express the structural body of the building, a loggia with receding

**PHOTOGRAPH OF THE OF THE  
PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN  
OSIJEK TODAY**

FOTOGRAFIA VEREJNÉHO  
ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V OSIJEKU DNES

Source Zdroj: Taken by Cela Matan



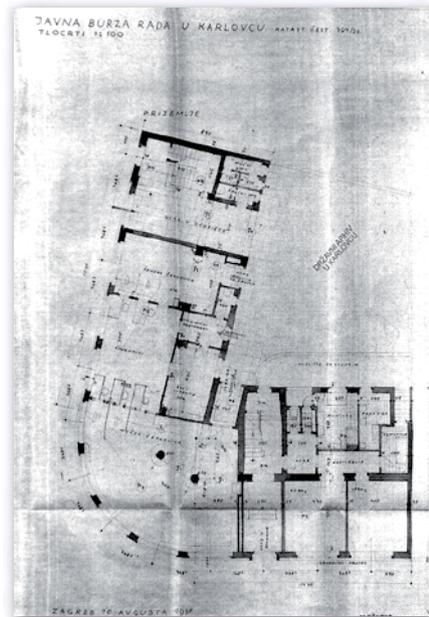
**LAYOUT OF THE GROUND  
FLOOR OF THE PUBLIC LABOUR  
EXCHANGE IN OSIJEK**

DISPOZÍCIA PRÍZEMIA VEREJNÉHO  
ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V OSIJEKU

Source Zdroj: State Archives in Osijek:  
DAOS, L15. Planovi i nacrti (0495)

pillars on the 4th floor, with a height corresponding to the neighbouring buildings so as to make the roof terrace of the 5th floor invisible from the street.

The Public Labour Exchange has been restored over time and adapted for the needs of the original institution. The courtyard building volume containing the waiting rooms has been completely changed, and the shed roof replaced with a simple double-pitched roof of steel structure. The complex original system of internal staircases has been completely removed, while the northern part of the parcel was filled with buildings of two floors, containing archives and a garage. Moreover, the spacious entrance porch shown in the original plans has been destroyed. Following the dubiously functional reconstruction of the interior, the once fast and efficient communication between individual offices, as well as the movement of the institution's clients, is now slow and chaotic, along with the aesthetic damage caused to the integrity of a valuable work of Croatian modernism.



**PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN KARLOVAC TODAY**

FOTOGRAFIA VEREJNÉHO ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V KARLOVACI DNES

Source Zdroj: Taken by Cela Matan

**LAYOUT OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN KARLOVAC**

DISPOZÍCIA PRÍZEMIA VEREJNÉHO ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V KARLOVACI

Source Zdroj: DAKA 1.5. Planovi i nacrti (1.7.5. Burza rada)

**Public labour exchange in Osijek**

Osijek's Public Labour Exchange building was designed in 1938, commissioned by the *Public Labour Exchange Zagreb*. The building permit was obtained in 1939.<sup>29</sup> It was built on city-owned land in ul. Kneza Trpimira 2.<sup>30</sup> This project, also signed by the architect Korka, was built in the period of the Group's collaboration and it is presumed to be of joint authorship.<sup>31</sup>

The Public Labour Exchange was situated on a spacious trapezoidal-shaped plot, with a large area intended in front of the main entrance to the building as a public park.<sup>32</sup> The ground plan of the building was in the shape of the letter 'H'.

In addition to the main entrance on the south-west, there were four service entrances on the other side of the building. The ground floor was raised above terrain level, as the building permit specifically required. Individual entrances from the terrain led to the administrative section, the manager's office, the manager's apartment and the overnight shelter. The three-storey building was functionally divided by floors: the service premises in the cellar, the administration on the ground floor and the dormitories for the unemployed and the manager's apartment on the 1st floor.

Two main staircases on the north, set in the two long wings of the building, led from the cellar to the 1st floor. Ventilation for the cellar was provided by windows below the raised ground floor of the building.

The centrally placed main entrance with its raised porch led to the waiting rooms (separate for men and women), and administrative offices. Sanitary facilities for jobseekers were also accessible from the porch (Figure on the page 91). The waiting room for domestic help was situated in the western wing<sup>33</sup>, while the premises of the head of the branch and the staff were placed in the eastern wing.

On the 1st floor there were separate male and female dormitories for the unemployed, which were accessed from the western wing; the staircase from the eastern wing led to the manager's big apartment.<sup>34</sup>

The building mostly uses brick masonry with reinforced concrete supporting pillars in the middle part, horizontal bond beams, and monolithic ribbed floors with a span of 6.6 m.<sup>35</sup> The roof is flat, covered with aluminium sheeting.

Although it has only two above-ground floors, the building manages to look impressive by its form, with the emphasised flat roof and recessed entrance porch. The strict composition of volume and rhythm of the windows on the side façade make a distinctive and modern impression. Only the decorative loggias and balconies on the northern façade stand out from the strict functionalism.

The recent reconstruction of the façade, with the new colour, additional carpentry, and new air-conditioning system distorts and diminishes the original look and importance of the building.

Although the building has kept its original use, the modernisation of its interior has in great part destroyed its authenticity and functionality.<sup>36</sup>

### Public labour exchange in smaller cities

In the 1930s, the *Central Board of The Public Labour Exchange Zagreb* commissioned standardised design projects for its branch offices in smaller towns. These projects, designed on the level of a schematic draft, were submitted to the *Civil Engineering Departments* of the towns involved for their further adjustment to the specific needs of the separate locations. It is presumed that the same *Central Board*, due to objections by the *Town Councils of Karlovac* and Slavonski Brod, directly commissioned the Group KKK for the preliminary and main designs of two buildings. However, the construction design was made by *Civil Engineering Technical Departments* of the respective towns, and not by the authors themselves.<sup>37</sup>

### Public labour exchange in Karlovac

The building permit for the Public Labour Exchange in Karlovac, constructed on city-owned land, was obtained in 1938.<sup>38</sup> The building was constructed at the intersection of Domobranska ulica and ul. Ljudevita Jonkea (formerly ul. Kralja Aleksandra), on the corner of an urban block that it completes with the convex form of its main façade of U-shape. The Group provided the basic concept and the main design for the Public Labour Exchange in Karlovac, as well as the design for the waiting room in the courtyard a few years later.<sup>39</sup>

The authors of the design placed the needed functions inside the street mass of the building, which was divided into two operationally separate parts: the eastern wing was intended for the employees' housing, and the western wing for the work of *The Labour Exchange Karlovac*, as well as a shelter for the unemployed (Figure on the page 92 right). The two functional parts have separate entrances from the street and separate staircases; in addition, the design completely separated men and women during administrative procedures and accommodation.

According to the plans for the building permit, the building was intended to have four floors: the cellar, the ground floor, the 1st floor and the attic. On the ground floor of the western wing was the administration section for the unemployed, with the shelter on the 1st floor. In the attic there was a washroom with an exit to the service terrace and the janitor's apartment. On the ground floor and the 1st floor of the eastern wing were apartments for administrative employees, and in the attic was another caretaker's apartment. The cellar was divided into two separate small areas around the two main staircases.

The entrances placed at the extremities of the building lead into the courtyard from which the other parts are accessed. Separate waiting rooms for men and women with a highly efficient plan that enabled access to the same administrative section from two different sides. The cellar or the shelter premises on the 1st floor can be accessed from the yard by the staircases in the passage. Separate shelter premises for men and women contain dormitories, utility rooms, spaces for cleaning staff and a kitchen for men.

The building is a masonry structure combined with elements of reinforced concrete; the ceilings are partially prefabricated. The roof of the side facing the street is a pent roof of wooden construction, while the one facing the yard has a flat roof, partly used as a roof terrace. As for the structural support system, it uses a combination of full supporting partitions and a concrete skeleton of the span up to 6.0 m.

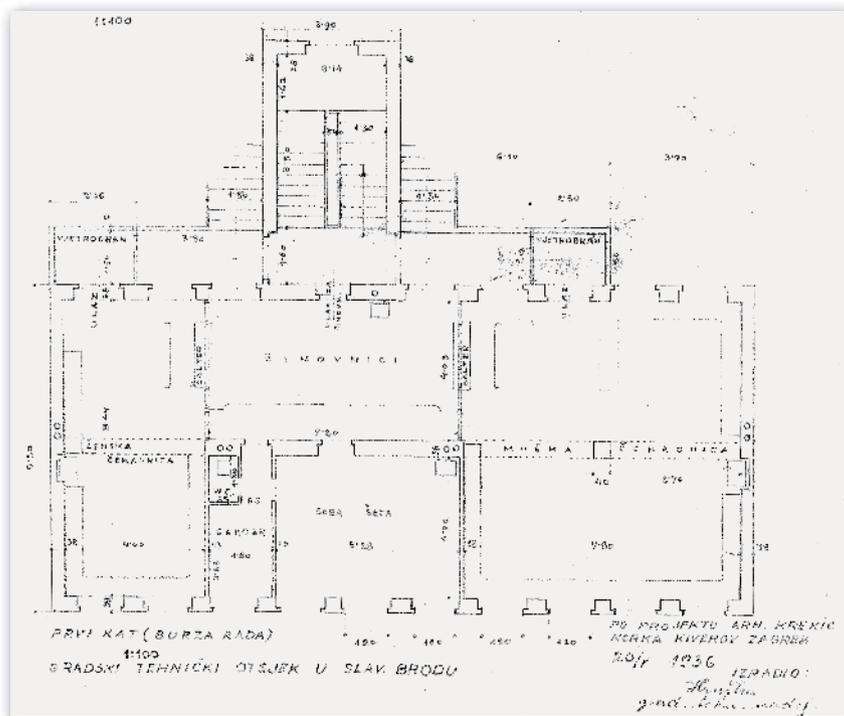
The soft curved form of the outside façade of this modest building closes the corner of the urban block. Facing bricks are used to emphasise the ground floor of the building, while stucco is applied to the higher storeys. The row of windows on the ground floor on higher floors turns into a dotted uniform rhythm. The elongated rectangular windows on the 1st floor and the slightly smaller ones in the attic are highlighted by thin travertine frames.

*The Labour Exchange in Karlovac* is currently making use of only part of the building, while the housing part is privately owned (Figure on the page 92 left). The façade is in poor condition, with stucco chipping off of the building, and the brick façade has been damaged. On the street side of the building, an entirely new second floor is visible, not shown in the original project, probably added after WWII, since there are no traces of this operation in the *State Archives* in Karlovac. Moreover, a new and larger waiting room was built on the side of the yard (accessed by the main entrance), and the service terrace has been closed.

**PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PUBLIC  
LABOUR EXCHANGE IN SLAVONSKI  
BROD TODAY**

FOTOGRAFIA VEREJNÉHO  
ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE V SLAVONSKOM  
BRODE DNES

Source Zdroj: Taken by Cela Matan



**LAYOUT OF THE 1ST FLOOR OF THE  
PUBLIC LABOUR EXCHANGE IN  
SLAVONSKI BROD**

DISPOZÍCIA PRVÉHO POSCHODIA  
VEREJNÉHO ÚSTREDIA PRÁCE  
V SLAVONSKOM BRODE

Source Zdroj: DASB (0346) Zbirka  
planova i nacrtu

## The Public Labour Exchange in Slavonski Brod

The construction of Public Labour Exchange in Slavonski Brod was planned in 1934; the standardised building design was obtained from *The Public Labour Exchange Zagreb* in 1935.<sup>40</sup>

Inserted within the longer side of the urban block toward the square Trg pobjede 6 (formerly Trg Kralja Petra), the building faces the street and the park (Figure on the page 94 top). It is a prismatic four – storey building with a gable roof. The volume of the staircase, covered by the same type of roof, was positioned on the courtyard side in the centre of the basic mass.

The building's rectangular street volume was functionally divided according to the floor. Entrances to the building (separate for women and men) were placed on the sides of the main façade leading to the yard, from which all the parts of the building were accessed. The ground floor included the waiting room, public bath, laundry room, sanitary facilities and the janitor's apartment.<sup>41</sup> Two single-part staircases placed laterally next to the main staircase led from the courtyard to the 1st floor. The main stairs were accessible from the gallery on the 1st floor and led to the attic (Figure on the page 94 down). Entrance to the administrative section was created from two different sides of the gallery into separate waiting rooms for women and men. On the 2nd floor, there was also a separate system of accommodations and bathrooms for the unemployed. Situated in the attic was the central heating system.

The building is of a masonry structure with concrete foundations and concrete cellar walls; of the span of 4.6 m. The staircases and the ceilings on the ground floor and the 1st floor were partly made of reinforced concrete, while the rest of the ceilings use wooden beams. The roof was constructed as a multi-pitched wooden structure, covered with tiles, while the staircase and portico balconies in the yard were covered with galvanised tin.<sup>42</sup>

The ground-floor façade is emphasised with brick, while the remainder of the façade was covered in stucco, interspersed with windows in a uniform rhythm;<sup>43</sup> the smaller windows on the ground floor follow the axis of the windows of the upper floors. The entrances were placed at the extremities of the building and were not emphasised.

Though the building no longer serves its original use, it is relatively preserved and is used in part by various civil-society organisations.

## Discussion

The KKK Group created the design for the Chamber of Labour and Public Labour Exchange in Zagreb, the most important trio's two designs for the national capital, built in the eastern part of the city centre. Vladimir Šterk, who was the co-author for both projects, certainly contributed to the maturity and the beauty of the buildings.

The cooperation between Šterk, who was a Czech Cubist,<sup>44</sup> and the functionalist-minded KKK Group led to the result of structurally interesting architecture using elegant functional solutions. Their joint design for the buildings, as well as the works separately designed by the KKK Group, are impressive and characterised by modernist purity and elegance.<sup>45</sup>

Due to the great differences in design programs and circumstances, the possibility of comparison of the five analysed buildings is very small. The economic conditions, the cost of the construction, the size of the buildings, the significance and treatment of design and processes of construction tremendously influenced the final construction design in accordance with their social use. While the architects followed the complete process of design and construction in the case of the buildings in Zagreb, they had no influence over the design in smaller towns after the preparation of the main design through the buildings' status as defined standard projects. With the analysed buildings, we can note common traits of a stringent functionality and repetition of individual solutions, as well as the use of modern elements in structure, form and façade solutions.

The analysed buildings for public and social use integrate a significant number of different and complex functional programs, all using a set of adopted principles, for example, the complete separation of male and female clients. In these buildings, various departments were required: the administrative section, the apartments for the staff, accommodations and soup kitchens for the unemployed, public baths, the library, the cafeteria, the lecture hall and the multipurpose concert hall for public use in the evenings.

In terms of daily operations, these hybrid buildings with their complex functional solutions allowed for the uninterrupted functioning of many offices, fluid movement of an extremely large number of users, as well as public usage of individual spaces in the evenings (great hall, housing,

shelter). The rapid and easy management of administrative procedures affecting the vast number of unemployed people who used the Public Labour Exchange in Zagreb was ensured with a complex functional scheme. The complex movement of users through the building increased due to different administrative needs, with regard to monthly requirements and different categories of unemployment.

In addition to the skilful functional solution in all the analysed buildings, we have also identified a modern construction approach in the great hall in the Chamber of Labour, which was rare in Zagreb at the time.

## Conclusion

Of the five analysed buildings, only three are protected national heritage. The Public Labour Exchange in Osijek and The Chamber of Labour in Zagreb protected as individual cultural monuments; the Public Labour Exchange in Zagreb is, due to its extensive deterioration, protected as a part of the *Historical Urban Complex of Zagreb*.<sup>46</sup> The buildings in Zagreb and Osijek maintain the same function today as originally intended. The building in Karlovac is partly used as the headquarters of the *Public Labour Exchange Karlovac*, while the building in Slavonski Brod is abandoned, and its original use forgotten.

Almost eighty years after these functional buildings were built, we find a loss of architectural authenticity due to different needs of the current user, a lack of awareness of their value as national heritage and flaws in the regulations needed for their preservation. The functional organisation of space of the Public Labour Exchange in Osijek and Zagreb is currently different. While the Public Labour Exchange in Zagreb has preserved only its original street volume, the Chamber of Labour in Zagreb has lost its original ceiling structure in the great hall: in consequence, these buildings have lost their most valuable characteristics.

Though the avant-garde aesthetic of the modern movement was generally accepted, in structural terms Zagreb's modern architecture remained caught in the 19th century. As the well-known Croatian art historian Feđa Vukić points out: "Buildings built in Zagreb during the 1930's are mainly considered "traditional": modified in architectural expression and adapted to the use of reinforced concrete, yet without audacious structural experiments".<sup>47</sup> The lack of funds, considered the main culprit for this fact, was probably not the only reason, as we can see in the attempt of the KKK Group to create a ceiling structure of reinforced concrete covering spans from 23 m to 40 m in the great hall of the Chamber of Labor, a social-welfare building.<sup>48</sup>

Emphasis in the current analysis focused on the hidden architectural and structural values of typologically similar buildings in the authors' oeuvre that have been neglected in the existing research. These buildings, the legacy of the KKK Group, are the testimony of functionalist and avant-garde modern architecture in Croatia, which certainly deserves adequate awareness and preservation.

1 After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the major part of today's Croatia became integrated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, subsequently the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, though a few coastal cities, territories and islands remained under Italian rule until the end of WWII. Since the work of the Group was related to the Croatian and subsequently Yugoslav territories, in the present article those names have been abbreviated into "Yugoslavia" to make it easier for the readers.

2 For more information about the biography of the architects see: PREMERL, Tomislav, 1990. *Hrvatska moderna arhitektura između dva rata/nova tradicija*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske. PREMERL, Tomislav, 1995. Kiverov, Đorđe. In: Domljan, Ž. (ed.). *Enciklopedija hrvatske umjetnosti I*. Zagreb, Leksikografski zavod Miro-

slav Krleža, p. 429; In: Beyer, A., Savoy, B. and Tegethoff, W. (eds.), 2014. *De Gruyter, Allgemeines Kuenstler-Lexikon: die bildenden Kuenstler Zeiten und Völker*. Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, p. 368. KAHLE, Darko, 2017. Architectural work of Georg Kiverov, Jovan Korka and Đorđe Krekić in Zagreb 1926 – 1940. *Prostor*. 25(2(54)), pp. 256 – 27. and KADIJEVIĆ, Aleksandar, 2017. Arhitekti emigranti iz Rusije i hrvatska arhitektura 20. stoljeća. *Prostor*. 25(2(54)), pp. 358 – 371.

3 BJAŽIĆ KLARIN, Tamara, 2006. Natječaj za željezničarsku bolnicu u Zagrebu/ Jedna međuratna afera. *Prostor*. 14(1(31)), Zagreb, pp. 65 – 73. AJZINBERG, Aleksandar, 2013. Sjećanje na profesore/ Đorđe Krekić. *Časopis odseka: Primenjena grafika*. Fakulteta primenjenih umetnosti u Beogradu, 7, pp. 4 – 6. Kadijević, A., 2017, pp. 358 – 371. Kahle, D., 2017, pp. 256 – 27.

Aleksandar Ajzinberg Private Archives, Serbia.

4 Andrey Redlich Archives, Germany. Ajzinberg, A., 2013, pp. 4 – 6. Aleksandar Ajzinberg Private Archives, Serbia. Beyer, A., Savoy, B. and Tegethoff, W., 2014, p. 368. Kahle, D., 2017, pp. 256 – 271. Kadijević, A., 2017, pp. 358 – 371.

5 A design proposal for a very important architectural competition for an entire urban block (Zakladni blok) in 1932, situated practically in Zagreb's main square, was rejected because of the use of reinforced concrete and glass, which were still considered "experimental materials". ALBINI, Alfred, 1932. Prije dvadeset godina. *Građevinski vjesnik*. 1(3), p. 23 – 23.

6 WEISSMANN, Ernst, 1939. Savremena građevinska tehnika – nova

arhitektura. *Tehnički list*. (11 – 12), pp. 133 – 134.

7 CULPIN, Chris, EVANS, Eric and HENIG, Ruth, 1997. *Modern Europe: 1870 – 1945* (Longman Advanced History). Harlow, UK: Longman.

8 PULJIZ, Vlado, 2006. Socijalna politika i socijalne djelatnosti u Hrvatskoj u razdoblju od 1900 – 1960. godine. *Ljetopis socijalnog rada*. 13(1), pp. 7 – 28.

9 Puljiz, V., 2006. pp. 7 – 28. ŠEŠO, Zvonko, 2000. Počeci djelovanja službe za zapošljavanje u Hrvatskoj. *Revija za socijalnu politiku*. 7(2), p. 175. LOZZI BARKOVIĆ, Julija, 2015. *Međuratna arhitektura Rijeke i Sušaka*, Rijeka: Adamić, pp. 282 – 300. Šešo, Z., 2000, p. 175. Dom nezaposlenih radnika. *Junarnji list*. 17. 8. 1935, p. 8.