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POSTCARDS, IMAGES AND POLITICS: A CITY'S SYMBOLS THROUGHOUT TIME

I would like to thank my friend and colleague
Mr Damir Krenenić for generously letting me
use his extensive postcard collection.

Abstract: Photography is, without doubt, one of the most powerful means of conveying a desired identity of a social, spatial or geographical unit, be it a village, a city, a region, the whole country or even a continent. Especially photographs made by the local authors can inform us about the way the locals want their city to be perceived. A photographer chooses both its object and the way it is going to be pictured, in accordance with his aesthetic criteria, the aesthetic criteria of a given period, but also with the way he or she wants to present the photographed city. Living in a city with an old university, developed industry financial institutions, Zagreb's citizens boasted a Central European identity. This is evident from the city's older photographs and postcards: the majority of them show elegant architecture, while some of them present the nearby villages, their inhabitants, their national costume and their customs as an inherent part of the city's identity. While the pre-WWII Zagreb was more or less free to enjoy this above all cultural image, the post-WWII Zagreb has become a capital of a socialist republic, "socialist" being the operative word. The new photographs of the city, although almost always showing the older architecture and city's cultural heritage, often have new motives: new part of town, called "New Zagreb" with its numerous low-cost buildings, the socialist monuments and other symbols of the era. Finally, after the year 1990, new motives that show the city's progress, were shown to the tourists. Such developments of the motives that were placed on postcards and in the tourist brochures can show us not merely the contemporary history of the city, but also the way its public identity was shaped.

Keywords: anthropology of tourism, postcards, Zagreb

Tourism is an extremely complex form of human activity. It has been defined many times, each definition discussing one or more of its aspects. For example, as Lowry (1994: 28) argues, "many people believe that tourism is a service industry that takes care of visitors when they are away from home.

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Some restrict the definition of tourism by number of miles away from home, overnight stays in paid accommodations, or travel for the purpose of pleasure or leisure. Others think that travel and tourism should not even be referred to as an industry." However, behind each traveller there *is* a small army of professionals who take care of the journey¹, fulfilling each and every need the traveller might have, including the most basic ones, such as accommodation and food, to the whole range of the goods the traveller might want, thus commodifying the culture, architecture, history, landscape and inhabitants of the tourist destinations. Contemporary tourists or, according to Feifer (1985, 269-270), *post-tourists*, are indeed aware that there is no authentic tourist experience, but merely a series of games or texts in which they can, but do not have to participate. A *post-tourist* knows that "he is not a time-traveller when he goes somewhere historic; not an instant noble savage when he stays on a tropical beach; not an invisible observer when he visits a native compound" (ibid. 271). In other words, a post-tourist chooses to participate in the game called tourism, buys commodities he wants to have and arbitrarily ascribes meanings to them; he is aware of the meanings a postcard can have, he chooses the meanings he would like to relate to it and the same is done by its receiver.

Presentation of the destination is one of the most important part of the tourist industry. Words and especially photographs are being made into clichés, when describing a specific destination. For example, Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren argues that specific forms and conceptual frameworks for communicating feelings and experiences are being produced, so that "many of the adjectives we still use to describe tourist events and sights belong to a vocabulary developed in these traditions. (...) Here roads still tend to be winding, forests lush, brooks babbling, villages sleepy, views from the hotel breathtaking" (Löfgren 1999: 75). The same has happened with the photograph, that is, the motifs chosen to be photographed for travel literature or postcards also turned into some sort of visual clichés. Today, when some images are automatically connected with popular tourist destinations, it is hard to imagine that it was as late as the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries that, for the most Europeans, the image of Louvre was not automatically connected with the notion of Paris, as well as the palms and long sandy beaches with summer destinations or snowy mountain slopes

¹ John Urry makes a observation that "Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely, regulated and organized work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organized as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies. Indeed acting as a tourist is one of the defining characteristics of being 'modern' and is bound up with major transformations in paid work. This has come to be organized within particular places and to occur for regularized periods of time" (2002: 2).

with popular ski resorts, but that the production of visual clichés was for the most part influenced by the selection of photographs used for postcards, tourist brochures, leaflets and guidebooks, and that it took several decades for these associative mental connections between images and destinations to establish. When talking about the urban environment, the process of producing stereotypes of a city, or, as Löfgren (1999: 76) refers to it, of "urban picturesqueness" followed the steps of the stereotyped "natural" landscape, making the language of the picturesque an early example of transnational standardization; he even argues that "somehow the globalization of the tourist industry starts here". In other words, the postcards teach a visitor what is important in a city, what should be visited and photographed, which building is more significant than others, which museum is worth spending more time in, which features of a city should be admired, and which ignored. The selection of motifs presented by postcards makes a visitor more sensitive towards uniqueness of each visited city or other tourist destinations; numerous travels and encounters with tourist destinations and their visual presentations make one an experienced traveller who can recognize and evaluate important points of a city himself.

Photography is, without any doubt, one of the most powerful means of conveying a desired image or identity of a social, spatial or geographical unit, be it a village, a city, a region, the whole country or even a continent. Especially photographs made by the local tourist workers, in the first instance the ones chosen for tourist monographs and postcards, can inform us about the way the locals want their city to be perceived. Jeremy Boissevain (1996: 6-7) argues that "one of the most striking characteristics of tourism is the way it promotes self-awareness, pride, self-confidence and solidarity among these being visited. (...) These communities have discovered themselves through the interest of tourists. This has encouraged reflection about their own traditions and culture and stimulated the preservation of moribund crafts and rituals." Bearing that self-awareness in mind, we might argue that the local photographer chooses both his object and the way this object is going to be pictured, in accordance with his aesthetic criteria, but also with the way he or she wants to present the photographed city. However, we also have to keep in mind that sometimes it is not a local photographer who portrays the city, but an outsider: as Boissevain (*ibid.*, 7) continues, "national and regional tourist authorities usually commoditise and market local culture without consulting the inhabitants". This way, the emphasised and advertised features of a city might differ from the ones a local photographer would choose to single out and present to a wider audience of potential visitors.

When discussing the urban tourism, we also have to be aware of the fact that culture and all of its contents (such as history, architecture, and traditions) has become a major commodity at the tourist market, and it is being readily sold to

the visitors². As Boissevain (1996: 12-13) also argues, "every tourist brochure demonstrates this. History is marketed via calls to visit ancient monuments and heritage parts; colourful photographs advertise carnival and religious ceremonies; illustrations of smiling natives and colourful street scenes promote the character and way of life of host communities. (...) It is clear that dealing with tourists involves large-scale commoditisation of culture. (...) While not denying that commoditisation has destroyed nature and culture, studies show that by marketing their culture people (re)discover their own history and traditions". This (re)discovery of the local history, architecture and traditions can be clearly observed from the motifs chosen to be photographed, both by the local, insider photographs, as well as by the outsiders who produce picture postcards intended for the massive consumption.

Taking into consideration all of the above, I have chosen to discuss postcards as a means of identity construction by both insiders and outsiders. Namely, a postcard is a communication medium that plays more than one role. It is not merely a mass product: after a motif has been selected and photographed and the postcard designed, usually complying with the design standards of a period, it continues to live. Being singled out from the shelf and sent to a receiver, its life continues long after it has been sent and received (see Puljar, 1997). Here, I shall focus only on the first of its levels: the visual one, the one addressing a visitor who buys it and the person who receives it. Besides being a communication medium that allows one person to get in touch with another, postcards are an important document of the public history, witnessing to a city's architectural, urbanistic, ethnographical and historical features through time.«The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. (...) People linger over such a gaze which is then normally visually objectified or captured through photographs, postcards, films, models and so on. These enable the gaze to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured» (Urry 2002: 3).

I have mentioned the notion of identity and identity construction several times so far. As it is perceived by most anthropologists, identity is not fixed either in its contents or in its form. On the contrary, identity is defined as an on-going process of constant and never ending re-definition of oneself (within a narrower or wider scale), mostly in relation with the other (see Grbic, 1994 and Mestrovic, 1988), and has a tendency of becoming more and more informal (see

² According to Urry, "Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze" (2002: 3).

Frykman, 1995). Having in mind the increasingly informal quality of identity, as well as of the postcard as a communication medium, it would not be inappropriate to argue that postcards are one of the best choices for communicating a certain, primarily visual, form of local identity, that they are messengers of both the picture and the idea of a tourist destination that the local inhabitants want to send out, as well as of the more complex and elaborated symbols that are meant for the identity construction even among the locals, as we shall see later from the examples. The goal of this paper is to present the manifold and informal nature of identity and the ways the changes of political systems, ideologies, their rhetorics and public discourses during the twentieth century have reflected in the selection of motifs for the city's postcards.

From the Beginning of the Century to the WWII Zagreb – a Romantic Central European City

The city of Zagreb was always perceived as a strong regional centre; living in a city with an old university, developed industry and being a strong financial centre, its citizens boasted a Central European identity. This is evident from Zagreb's older photographs and postcards: the majority of them show the city's elegant architecture and parks. It seems that the postcard producers always wanted to picture what was new in Zagreb, and to show the numerous sides of the city: the urban one, the busy traffic, the palaces, the streets and the passers-by, the city squares with markets and the villagers who sold their goods to the Zagrebians, the city's parks and tranquil nature, showing off its more romantic side. As Löfgren (1999: 77) informs us, "some claim that the first souvenir postcard was issued at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889 and depicted the Eiffel Tower. From there on the medium developed into a booming industry, and the decades around the turn of the century proved to be the golden age of the postcard. (...) The picture postcard, as a cheap and attractive pictorial medium, filled a void, a hunger for images, and thus became a very important means to visualize the world." The first postcards of Zagreb were produced approximately at the same time as anywhere else, and had a specific design. On the one side, one could write merely the receiver's address, while on the "main" side, there were both photographs as well as space for the message (see postcards 1 and 2).

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postcard 1



postcard 2

There were usually more than one photograph on each postcard, because one of the main goals of the postcard was (and still is) to inform a receiver of the appearance of a visited city. Therefore, a sender often chose a postcard that allowed transmitting as many pieces of information as possible. Those postcards, however, were soon replaced by the postcard design we know

today: photograph(s) with short messages like "greetings from..." on one side and space for the address and text on the other.

The motifs seen here will be present on Zagreb's postcards throughout the whole century: the main square (which was about to change its name several times throughout the twentieth century), the main railway station, the largest grammar school (today one of the major museums), the University, the Croatian National Theatre, Maksimir, the largest park in the city and Ilica, Zagreb's longest street, connecting the main square with the Western suburbs.

The wish of the postcard producers to depict the new and the contemporary has made postcards a reliable source of the city's cultural history, to say the least. It is also interesting to observe the ever present descriptions, messages and greetings on the front page: sometimes, they were written in Croatian only; sometimes, there were bilingual messages, one of them always being Croatian but the second languages varied: from French, to German or Hungarian, depending on the current political situation.

Let us take a look at the most common motifs from the pre-WWI postcards of Zagreb. One of the most frequent motifs was certainly the building of the University of Zagreb. Founded in 1669, the University was moved to a new building, built in 1856, and found its way to many postcards. One of the first postcards showing the University building is the one showing the University with a vast empty space in front of it. Namely, this space was used as a market for the villagers who came from the surroundings of Zagreb, and it was soon to be filled with another prominent building – the Croatian National Theatre.

However, the University, one of the most photographed buildings in Zagreb did not stand alone very long on what was going to become one of the most beautiful city squares. "In its history, the city was often victim to natural disasters: fires, floods, and earthquakes. The biggest earthquake, in which the city was heavily damaged, was in 1880, but removal of the ruins made way for a modern city to be built under the hills of Gradec and Kaptol: the main railway station was erected in 1892; in 1895 the Croatian National Theatre was constructed on what later became known as Marshall Tito Square. (...) In 1891 the horse-car became the first mode of public transportation. Milan Lenuci (1849-1924) planned a whole series of parks and green areas throughout the city centre. The overall scheme was shaped like a horseshoe and is still referred to as "Lenuci's green horse-shoe". This series of parks stretches along today's Zrinjevac, Strossmayer Square, King Tomislav Square, the botanical garden, Marulić Square, Mažuranić Square and Marshall Tito Square" (Kalapoš 2002; also see Horvatić 1999).

All of these were popular motifs for postcards. Observing the postcards, one can also get a reliable impression of the pace of the mentioned construction works. For example, merely several years after the above shown postcard was photographed, the University building looked completely different, due to the newly arranged park and several new buildings and palaces (postcards 3 and 4).

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postcard 3



postcard 4

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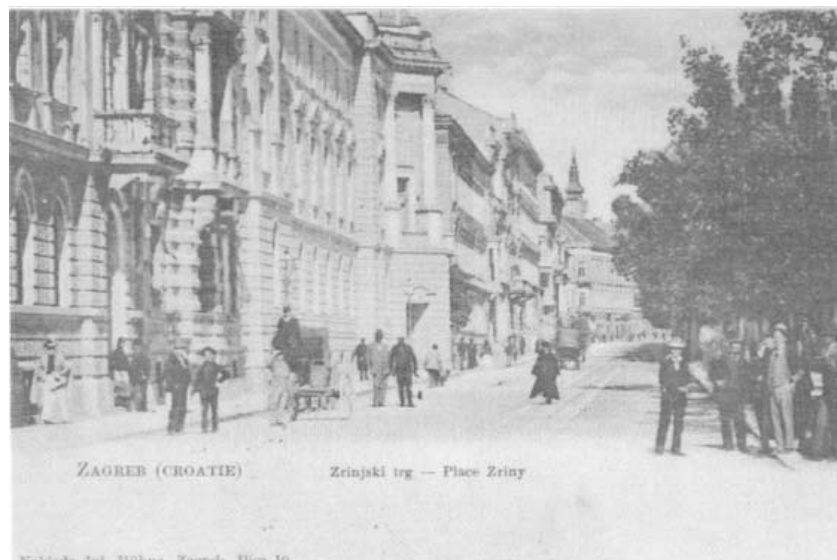
As I have already mentioned, the Croatian National Theatre was build on the same square, and became its centre.



postcard 5

This postcard (see postcard 5) shows not only the new Theatre, but also some passers-by and atmosphere, and this way its author made it a valuable source for other cultural data about this period: fashion, for example. It also tells us that that square used to be a strolling promenade. However, this was not the only promenade the city had. The above mentioned "green horse-shoe" was one of the most popular ones. It consisted of many squares, each of them showing off at least one of the important buildings: from the Arts Pavillion to the Academy of Sciences and Arts, museums, etc (see postcards 6 to 9).

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postcard 6



postcard 7



postcard 8



postcard 9

One of Zagreb's unique features is a cable car called Uspinjača that connects the hill of Gradec (the Old Town) with the downtown Zagreb. It began operating in 1889 and was also one of the most beloved motifs presented at postcards (see postcards 10 and 11).

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postcard 12



postcard 13

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postcard 14

Other fine examples of the picture of the city centre are the postcards showing some of the random street scenes. One of them shows a street café in the city centre, while the other presents an everyday scene in front of the grammar school: a lady, obviously from the city, walking alongside a peasant woman, sharing the same space, but with no contact whatsoever (see postcards 15 and 16).



postcard 15



postcard 16

The Zagreb Cathedral and its immediate surroundings was also one of the most photographed buildings, shown on many of the city's postcards (see postcard 17).



postcard 17

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It is interesting to observe the style shifts between the postcards taken in the early twentieth century and the ones taken several decades later. The first postcards were usually black and white, but they were additionally coloured. This additional colouring almost regularly blurred the lines, creating a romantic atmosphere. Later on, having better technical equipment and complying with the stylistic demands of the era, the photographers made the picture postcards purely realistic and a long period of black and white photograph, with no additional colouring, had started. One of the best examples of this style shift is almost the same postcard with the photograph of the Esplanade, one of the oldest and best-known hotels in Zagreb (see postcards 18 and 19).



postcard 18

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postcard 19

The same observation can be made about the postcards showing the main railway station (see postcards 20-22).



postcard 20

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postcard 21



postcard 22

Maksimir, the largest park in Zagreb, in which the city zoo is also situated, was also pictured with interesting style shifts (see postcards 23 to 26).



postcard 23



postcard 24

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postcard 25



postcard 26

Zagreb is a city that has been, especially from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, the target of many migrations. The last census before the World War I, dating from 1910, showed that Zagreb had 79,038 inhabitants. The number of inhabitants doubled by 1924 and it had done so

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once more by 1945. Therefore, during this period, a lot of new buildings and parts of the city were built, and were also shown on postcards. One of the nice example is the Rackoga Street, which is proudly presented as "the new part of town", while today it is the core of Zagreb's centre (see postcard 27).



postcard 27

This is an example from the early twentieth century. Some later examples include the Napredak building in the centre of the city (see postcard 28).



postcard 28

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And, finally, the main square was one of the most beloved motifs of the photographers (see postcards 29 to 32). They very often photographed its buildings, but also one of the most powerful symbol in the whole city: the statue of Ban Jelacic, one of the Croatian historical figures. The history of this square, as well as of the monument itself, is very turbulent and quite emotional for the most inhabitants of Zagreb. Although himself being a controversial historical persona, Ban Jelacic was always celebrated as one of the most important figures of Croatianhood. His monument, erected in 1866, was one of the most significant places in the city, and because of its symbolical and national value, it was removed by the socialist government soon after the World War II was finished (see Rihtman-Augustin 2000).

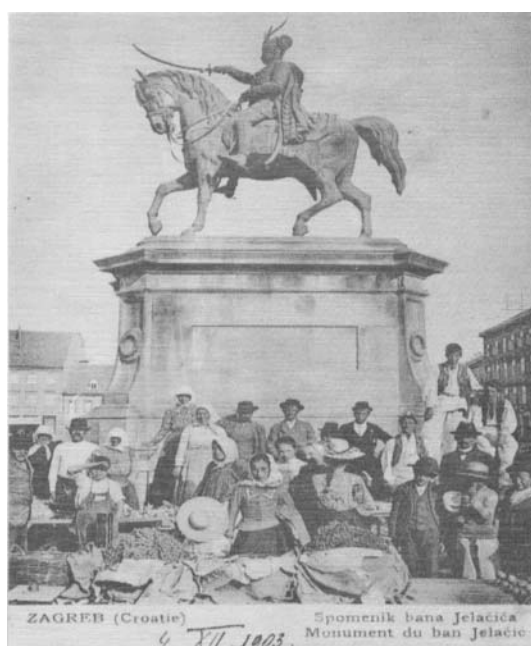


postcard 29

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postcard 30



postcard 31

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postcard 32

The postcards' authors have obviously had in mind two things: presenting those features of the city that were common to all of the capitals and big cities of the time, such as theatres, libraries, busy streets, museums and parks, while on the other hand, they wanted to depict the uniqueness of a particular city, in this case, Zagreb, by showing the city's features that cannot easily be found elsewhere. During the period from the beginning to the mid-twentieth century we can observe a style-shift: the blurred, romanticized and additionally coloured photographs, showing the most representative parts of the city were replaced by documentary, precise black and white postcards that tried to show not only the attractive palaces and beautiful parks, but also the new, relatively unattractive and often desputed localities of Zagreb.

Post-WWII Zagreb – Development, Brotherhood and Equality

While the pre-WWII Zagreb was more or less free to enjoy its above all cultural image, the post-WWII Zagreb has become a capital of a socialist republic, "socialist" being the operative word. The new photographs of the city, although always showing the older architecture and city's cultural heritage, often had new motifs: new part of town, called "New Zagreb" (Novi Zagreb) with its numerous low-cost buildings, the socialist monuments and other symbols of the era. Zagreb was perceived as an open and multicultural environment, and therefore, besides the Roman-Catholic churches, other churches and places of religious worship also found their way into the tourist brochures and onto postcards.

I do not want to make the false impression that the above pictured examples have entirely disappeared from the Zagreb's postcards. On the contrary, they still composed the majority of the motifs, and only the photography techniques and design trends were those that changed significantly. However, I am not going to show many of those I have discussed earlier, since I would like to focus on the postcards that, although not being numerous or very present, tried to construct the "new" identity of Zagreb as a socialist city.

One of the most controversial buildings in the city was the one originally intended to be the arts pavilion. It was designed by a group of Zagreb architects after the project by Ivan Meštrović; the building was built in 1938. However, it was soon converted into a mosque, but served as a place of religious worship for a very short period of time (1941-1945). In 1949, the minarets were torn down and in 1951 started the reconstruction of the building's interior and the building became the Museum of the Revolution and thus regularly present on the postcards. In 1991, the building was returned to its original owners, the Croatian Association of Artists, (see the HDLU's website at <http://www.hdlu.hr>). Although the building itself is considered to be an architectural masterpiece, it was the building's symbolic connotations that placed it on the city's photographs so often; not only are there many postcards showing only this building, but it is often placed on postcards with several photographs. Besides the old museums, the University or the National Theatre, each of them representing the "backwards and bourgeois" side of Zagreb, as the socialist rhetoric of the time readily proclaimed them to be, there had to be the Museum of the Revolution on the same postcard for the sake of ideological balance (see postcards 33 to 37).

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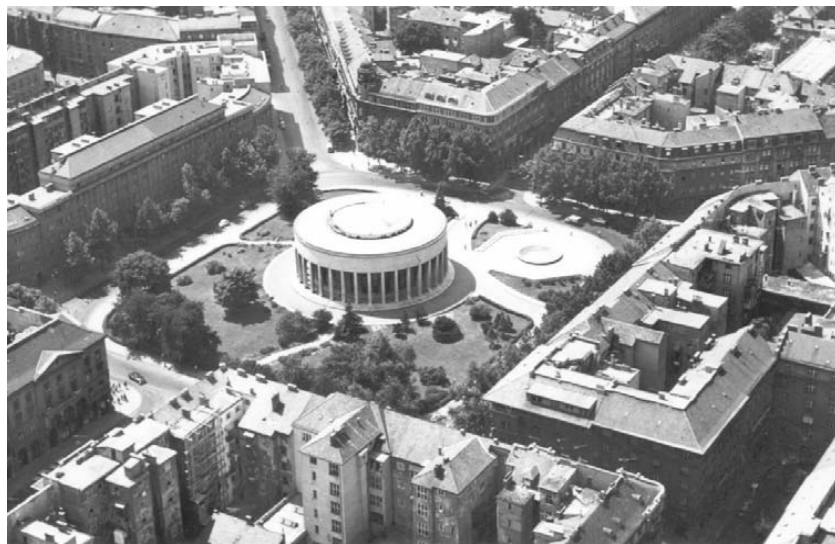


postcard 33



postcard 34

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postcard 35



postcard 36

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postcard 37

The main square, with its new name, the Republic Square, soon got rid of the Ban Jelacic's statue and boasted a building that became one of the most prominent features in Zagreb's skyline, called simply Neboder ("Skyscraper"). The new building, together with numerous cars parked on the square and the neon lights that ought to symbolize wealth, progress and prosperity, soon replaced the monument, that used to be the main motif just several years before. Especially popular were the "Zagreb by Night" photographs, showing the splendour of the republic capital (see postcards 38 to 40).

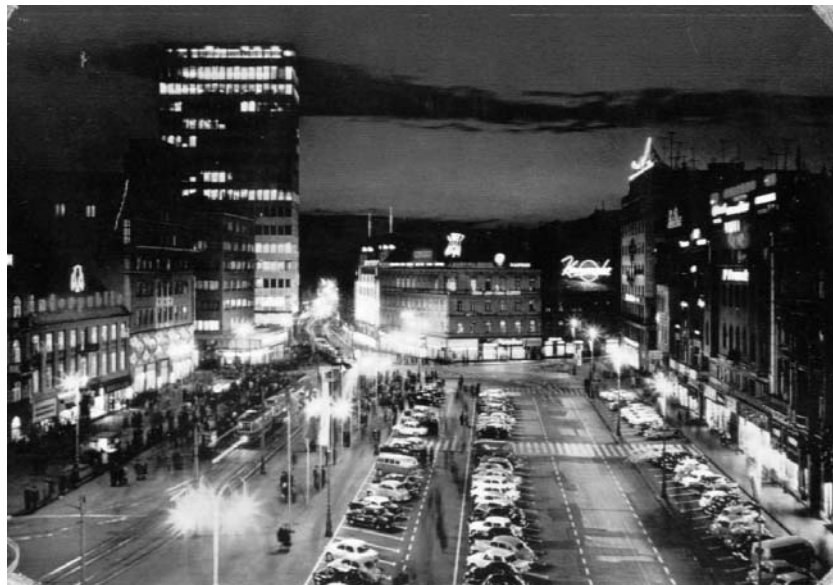


postcard 38

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postcard 39



postcard 40

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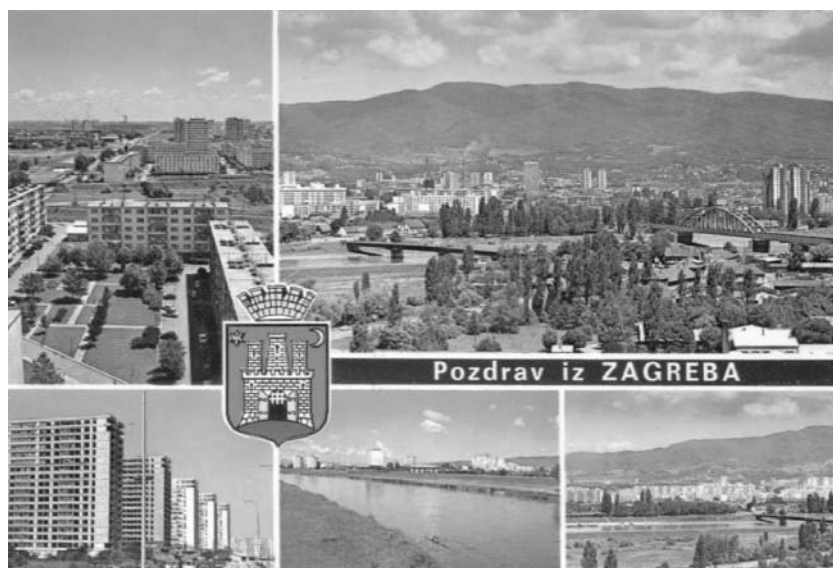
Future, prosperity, progress, equality, brotherhood... Those were the keywords of the socialist rhetoric. As expressed by words, the socialist ideas also had to be expressed by photographs and symbols. In order to show the rest of the country and the world how well the city of Zagreb was doing, the new buildings, whole parts of town, built on the South bank of the Sava river, as well as the roads, avenues, bridges, even the airport and other symbols of progress were often photographed and placed on postcards. Although the most distinguished architects of the time complained how the new part of town, called Novi Zagreb ("New Zagreb") lacked any kind of cultural activities, interesting sights or anything that would make it different from the "mass sleeping area", as it was often called in the media, the postcards with Novi Zagreb were not hard to find. Of course, one of the most practical answers to the question one might ask, and that is, how come the photographers chose exactly those motifs and the publishing companies decided to print them, although there were numerous other, and certainly much more attractive sights in the city, was that the printing companies were state owned. Such a company could not go bankrupt, did not have to compete on the market and thus did not have to make its products competitive with other products. Here are some of the examples of those postcards (see postcards 41 to 45).



postcard 41



postcard 42

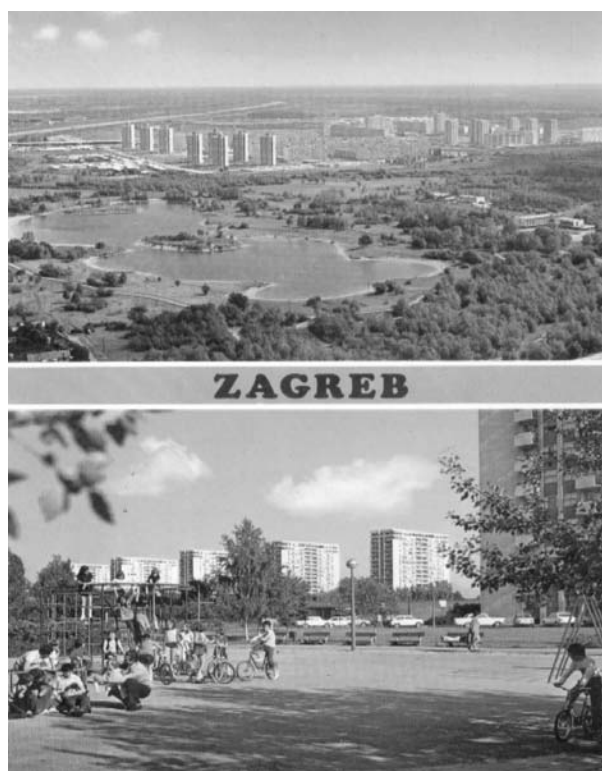


postcard 43

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postcard 44



postcard 45

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One of the main features of the contemporary image of Zagreb is that it is a strong economic centre of the whole region. Since 1909, the Zagreb Fair ("Zagrebački Velesajam") has been regularly taking place, and since 1959 it has been moved to the new location, on the South bank of the Sava river, in Novi Zagreb. Nowadays, a specialist fair takes place in average once a month, and sometimes there are up to seventy participant countries that gather on the Fair's 500,000 square meters (Horvatić 1999). No wonder that the Zagreb Fair was often photographed and placed on postcards (see postcard 46).



postcard 46

Another peculiarity associated with the socialist system were the youth working summer camps ("Omladinske radne akcije"), organized throughout the country. One of the best-known was the camp "Sava" in Zagreb. Young people (high-school and university students) from all over the country would choose a camp they would like to go, and sign up for several weeks of voluntary work during the summer. For some of them it was the only chance to do some travelling and spending summer months away from home, but these camps were primarily organized as places where "brotherhood and equality" among the young from different republics could be developed. The "Sava" camp had its own postcards, as well (see postcard 47).

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postcard 47

As far as the obvious socialist symbols on city postcards were concerned, those were quite hard to find. Among several thousands of Zagreb's postcards from the collection I have examined, I have managed to find merely several examples: one of them showing the coat-of-arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia besides a photograph of the city, both cut out to be used as stickers (see postcard 48).

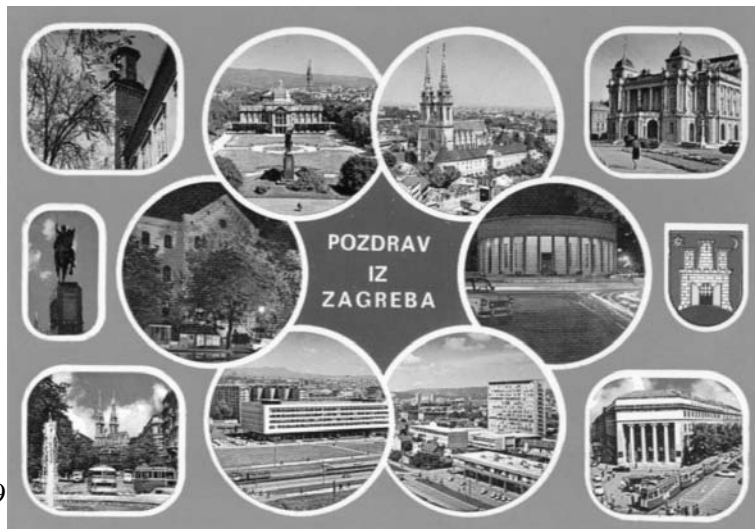


postcard 48

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During the 1970s, the main feature of the postcards' design were many photographs, background in golden or some bright colour. Those photographs most often showed the same motifs as the photographs from the beginning of the century. However, the Museum of the Revolution was added to the list almost as a rule, and sometimes also motifs from the new parts of town were added as well (see postcards 49 and 50).

postcard 49



postcard 50



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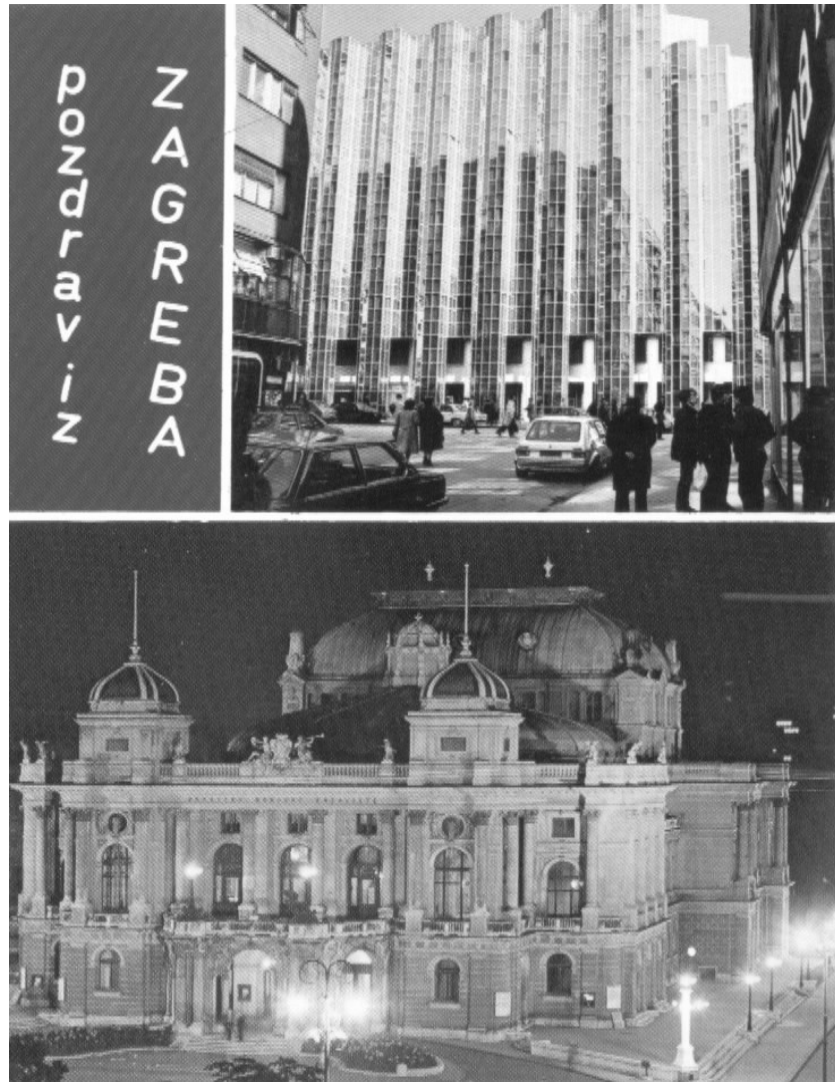
In the 1980s, the postcards usually did not contain more than one photograph. Usually, they presented an old and a new motif at the same postcard; however, the traditional motifs, like people wearing national costume from the surroundings of Zagreb are also found. The strict socialist rhetoric of the 1960s and the 1970s was replaced by a more subtle one: the Cathedral and other religious motifs are still balanced with the new and the contemporary, but are more often placed on postcards than before (see postcards 51 to 56).



postcard 51



postcard 52



postcard 53

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postcard 54



postcard 55



postcard 56

As it is clear from these examples, there are no longer obvious socialist symbols, but they are still present in the form of certain buildings or flags that happen to be hanging at the time of the photo-shoot. It is also interesting that the socialist symbols, such as the republic coat-of-arms, the red star and others, were not adopted at all. Quite the contrary, it is the traditional coat-of-arms of the city of Zagreb that is often, especially in the 1980s, placed on postcards. This coat-of-arms is free of political ideology and carries merely regional connotations, unlike the one shown above.

1990s and on – Back to the Roots

Finally, after the year 1990, when Croatia became independent from Yugoslavia, new motifs that show the city's progress, were shown to the tourists. Such developments of the motifs that were placed in the materials that were meant for the broad tourist use³, can show us not merely the contemporary cultural history of the city, but also the way its public identity was shaped.

One of the most significant carriers of the symbolic identity of the Croatianhood, the statue of Ban Jelacic, was re-erected on the main square, that changed its name from the Republic Square to its original name, the Ban Jelacic Square. As a matter

³ In the early 1990s, a completely new range of Croatian souvenirs has been created; it is discussed by Reana Senjković (2002: 17.20), who also mentions the tourist products with national and religious symbols.

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of fact, it was in 1989 that the inhabitants of Zagreb were standing in line to sign the petition for the statue's re-erection, but it was only in October 1990, after the first multi-party elections were held, that the statue found its way back to the main square. It was not placed at its original position, because the square has been significantly rebuilt in the mid-1980s and made into pedestrian zone. Now, Ban Jelacic was more Northern than before, and facing the South with his sword; before, he had a more central position, but he was facing the North (see Rihtman-Augustin 2000). The celebration of the statue's re-erection was made into a large populist gathering and is documented on postcards⁴.



postcard 57

⁴ Ban Jelačić was not merely a postcard motif: "Many entrepreneurs have found the 'return of ban Jelačić' to be their chance for emphasizing their patriotism and to collect money from their buyers' similar needs. Numerous copies of Jelačić's portrait and his monument have expressed the message that "Croatia calls" its Ban even in spring of 1990, before the monument was erected; those were mainly offered through unofficial sales locations and in the form of three-dimensional replicas, different calendars, cheap plastic boxes or stickers, lighters or bottle openers, for the most part with additional red, white and blue stripes, pleter edges and red and white squares. From the autumn of 1990, simultaneously with the ritual of the return of the bronze monument, the Jelačić's horse-riding figure has been shown on postcards and even on a ticket for a Croatia-USA football game, held in October 1990; one could drink "Ban beer" (Bansko pivo), the candy selection "Ban Jelačić" was added to the series of Croatian sweet souvenirs..." (Senjković 2002: 26).

Later on, many similar gatherings took place on the same square, each of them looking very much alike: crowds of people with flags, popular singers and actors on stage and loud cheering. Such gatherings became a tradition: people came to the Ban Jelacic Square to greet the late president Tuđman after Croatia became a member of the UN in 1992; to greet the football players after they won the bronze medal in the world championship in 1998; to greet the national skiing representation, and especially Janica Kostelić, after she won four medals in the 2002 Olympics; the last gathering was in 2003, and was organized to greet the national volleyball team after it won the golden medal in the world championship, to mention merely a few⁵. Therefore, although the crowd shown by this postcard gathered for the re-erection of the Ban Jelacic's statue, this photograph is not outdated; it could have been taken at any of the above mentioned gatherings (see postcard 57).

The statue of Ban Jelacic has again become one of the most present motifs on the Zagreb's postcards, together with the Ban Jelacic Square. However, what is specific for the postcards produced during the 1990s is the return to the tradition. Namely, during the previous forty-five years, many of the Croatian symbols, together with some writers, artists or sites, were, if not completely banned, then just kept away from the public discourse. During the 1990s, they were re-lived, came back into the attention of the public and were, of course, very much present in the public. One of the fine examples is Marija Jurić Zagorka, the first Croatian female journalist and the author of many populist and easy-to-read novels about the Croatian and Zagreb nobelty and lower classes. Although her novels were for the most part romances, their contents did not comply with the standards of the socialist rhetoric, so that her works were ignored for the most part, and she died in poverty in the post-WWII period. During the 1990, a statue of Marija Juric Zagorka was erected in the centre of the city, in front of the house she used to live in and it became a new motif for numerous postcards.

⁵ Of course, The Jelačić Square has hosted not only celebrations, but also protest meetings, the largest and most important of which was held in November 1996 as support to the local radio station Radio 101 (see Kalapoš 1998).



postcard 58

Besides the statue of Marija Jurić Zagorka, there are other traditional symbols of Zagreb and its surroundings on this postcard: children wearing national costumes and the typical umbrellas, as well as some of the most typical details of the "old" Zagreb: the Stone Gate, a place of worship of Virgin Mary (see postcard 58).



postcard 59



postcard 60

Postcards, Images and Politics...



postcard 61

The contemporary postcards of Zagreb (see postcards 59 to 61) are not keen to show the new parts of town. Those were, also during the socialist period, when they were built, strongly criticized of being "aesthetically unacceptable", "inhuman" and "deprived of possibilities to do anything but sleep". They were populated by poor immigrants from other parts of the country and were known as parts of town that were dangerous at night and that should be avoided. However, their images used to be proudly shown. Nowadays, although the new parts of town are being increasingly renovated, many new cultural institutions and leisure sites are placed there and are now much more pleasant places to live than twenty years ago, they are not being photographed for postcards. The same happened with the building of the former Museum of the Revolution. Although it has been returned to its original owner and is one of Zagreb's prominent galleries, it is the building's former connotations that prevent it to be chosen for the majority of the postcards. The photographers have returned to the older buildings, palaces and parks and try to picture Zagreb as a Central European city, in accordance with the city's identity as it has been systematically built in the public discourse since the early 1990s.

Concluding Thoughts

postcards have been present in our everyday lives for more than a century. They are an attractive and affordable way for a traveller to get in touch with his friends and family, to show the places he visited and to create his personal

collection of professionally taken photographs of the places he visited. On the other hand, the postcards are easy to be manipulated with. As we have seen from the examples of the postcards of Zagreb, political and other aesthetic criteria, rhetoric and ideas can easily be transformed into this simple communication medium and thus serve a subtle, and yet persuasive role. Motifs chosen to be presented on the postcards become a strong symbols of special, selected spots of a city, thus becoming superior to other places, that are, justifiably or not, being ignored. Generally speaking, it is not seldom that postcards, as one of the firmest connecting points between tourism and visual culture, are mobilized for political, ideological or social purposes (see Moors 2003). The process of the motifs' selection can be very indicative and can tell us a lot about a time and a place; the analysis of the motifs shown on postcards can be very useful tool for an anthropologist who wants to study the informal, everyday ways of larger social and political systems and their presence in the lives of the "ordinary" people.

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**RAZGLEDNICE, SLIKE I POLITIKA:
SIMBOLI GRADA KROZ PROTOK VREMENA**

Bez sumnje, fotografija je jedno od najsnažnijih sredstava prenošenja željenog identiteta društvene, prostorne ili zemljopisne cjeline, bez obzira radi li se o selu, gradu, regiji, cijeloj državi ili čak kontinentu. Posebno nas fotografije čiji su autori stanovnici fotografiranih područja mogu informirati o načinu na koje lokalno stanovništvo želi kroz javni diskurs predstaviti svoj kraj. Fotograf bira i svoj objekt i način na koji ga predstavlja, u skladu sa svojim osobnim, ali i s estetskim i stilskim kriterijima određenog razdoblja, no i s načinom na koji želi oblikovati identitet fotografiranog kraja.

Promatramo li u fotografije razglednica Zagreba tiskane tijekom dvadesetoga stoljeća, prema odabranim motivima moći ćemo ih podijeliti u tri veće skupine. Prvu čine fotografije od kraja devetnaestog stoljeća do završetka Drugog svjetskog rata, na kojima su prikazane velike gradske građevine, najčešće prateći realan ritam njihova građenja, no i stanovnici grada i njegove okolice. Razglednice tiskane nakon Drugog svjetskog rata obilovale su često diskretnim, a vrlo rijetko izravnim simbolima političkog sustava: tako su se uz bok starijoj arhitekturi na razglednicama počeli pojavljivati motivi koji su simbolizirali napredak i blagostanje, poput novih dijelova grada, avenija, mostova, zračne luke, pa čak i eksplicitnih simbola vizualne socijalističke retorike poput razglednice omladinskih radnih akcija ili republičkog grba s crvenom zvijezdom petokrakom. Konačno, od 1990. godine primjećuju se novi motivi, ponovno okrenuti povijesti grada, često bogati nacionalnom simbolikom.