



THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY OF ZEMUN IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE LATER DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Scientific paper
DOI: 10.5937/CT_ITI26064L

Lukić Nenad¹, Čosović Olivera²

¹Museum of Science and Technology, Belgrade, Serbia
E-mail: nenad.lukic@muzejnt.rs, ORCID ID: 0009-0001-6483-7593

²Union of Engineers and Technicians of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
E-mail: olivera.cosovic@sits.rs, ORCID ID: 0009-0002-4442-6997

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the development of the textile industry in Zemun, Serbia, with a primary focus on the interwar period (1919–1941), through case studies on the establishment and operation of several factories and workshops producing various types of knitwear, as well as the significance this industry had for the later development of the textile sector.

Keywords: textile industry, interwar period, Zemun, Serbia, development.

TEKSTILNA INDUSTRIJA ZEMUNA U MEĐURATNOM PERIODU I NJEN ZNAČAJ ZA DALJI RAZVOJ TEKSTILNE INDUSTRIJE

APSTRAKT: Ovaj rad razmatra razvoj tekstilne industrije u Zemunu, Srbija, sa posebnim osvrtom na međuratni period (1919–1941), kroz studije slučaja o osnivanju i radu nekoliko fabrika i radionica za proizvodnju različitih vrsta pletiva, kao i o značaju koji je ova industrija imala za kasniji razvoj tekstilnog sektora.

Ključne reči: tekstilna industrija, međuratni period, Zemun, Srbija, razvoj.

1. INTRODUCTION

The textile industry in Zemun (present – day Serbia) before 1914 did not exist in the form of large modern factories but was instead exclusively based on artisanal and small-scale manufacturing production.

Key characteristics of the period before 1914: Dominance of craftsmanship: Textile production was carried out in small household workshops, weaving shops, and tailoring

guilds. These enterprises barely exceeded the scale of local craft production. Family tradition: The economic development of Zemun accelerated with the construction of the Budapest–Subotica–Zemun railway in 1883 and the introduction of electric street lighting in 1901. These developments created the technical conditions for subsequent industrialization. Market orientation: Zemun functioned primarily as a commercial center. Textile products were more often imported and traded than manufactured locally on an industrial scale.

Zemun is distinguished by the fact that, during the interwar period, a large number of factories of various industrial profiles were established, with the textile industry accounting for the largest share. Between the two World Wars, industry in the Municipality of Zemun experienced significant expansion.

Following the First World War, only about forty small enterprises existed in Zemun, most of which scarcely exceeded the level of artisanal production. Various incentives granted by the municipal authorities to industrial entrepreneurs, together with the introduction of protective tariffs in 1925, [1, 2] made a substantial contribution to industrial development. As existing craft workshops evolved into industrial enterprises and numerous new factories were established, the textile industry became one of the most highly developed industrial sectors in Zemun during the interwar period. Several factors contributed to this development, ranging from the implementation of protective tariffs to the relatively higher wages earned by workers employed in the textile industry.



Figure 1. Aerial panorama of Zemun, 1930s. From the private collection of Miloš Jurišić



The most important factories that shaped the development of the textile industry in Zemun between the two World Wars included: the Woolen Cloth Factory (*Tvornica vunenih tkanina*) of Živojin Vukojičić and partners; the Plush and Velour Factory (*Tvornica klimera i pliša*) of Svetozar Mitić; the Merino Woolen Cloth Factory (*Merino*) owned by Adolf Reiss; Zemun Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company (*Zemunsko tekstilna industrija a.d.*) founded by Aleksandar Dingarac, Aleksa Stojanović, and Dobrivoje Goločevac; Franz Devald's Stocking Factory; Johann Boros's Knitting Workshop (*Štrikeraj*) in Pavlova Street (today Rada Končara Street); the Krango Brothers Factory; Milan Nikolić's Military Clothing and Uniform Factory located on Veliki Trg (Great Square); Sava Knitwear (*Trikotaza Sava*) owned by Ljubomir J. Stefanović & Co.; Milorad St. Janković's Textile Industry on Železnički Put (Railway Road); Javor Mechanical Weaving Mill owned by Vuković and Stojanović; Tibet Textile Industry owned by Viktor Berger; Plaros Weaving Mill owned by Popović and Mihajović; Tekstilind Knitwear Factory owned by Rudolf Klopfer; Yugoslav Textile Industry and Trade Joint-Stock Company; Branko Tokin's Textile Industry; Stela Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company; the First Yugoslav Silk Weaving Company (*Prva jugoslovenska tkaonica svilene robe d.d.*); Dejan Frušić's Silk Fabric Factory; the Avala Mechanical Weaving Mill (*Mehanička tkačnica Avala*) owned by Radoslav Bešević and Dušan Živković; Jadran Textile Industry owned by David M. Levi; Danubius Textile Industry owned by Mosko Nahmijas; the Devald Brothers' factories; as well as several other smaller textile enterprises. [3, 4, 5]

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SELECTED TEXTILE FACTORIES IN ZEMUN DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

2.1 Živojin Vukojičić & Sons Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company

The factory was primarily engaged in the production of woolen fabrics and ranked among the most important textile enterprises in the area of present-day Belgrade during the interwar period. It was officially registered in 1926 in Zemun at 14 Factory Street (*Tvornička Street*). The owner was Živojin Vukojičić, while the factory was managed by his sons, Budislav and Dragomir Vukojičić. Although the factory was destroyed by fire in 1928, production resumed in 1929.

By 1934, the enterprise had developed into a fully integrated textile mill, comprising a spinning mill, weaving mill, finishing department, and dyeing plant. The factory operated throughout the year in two shifts and employed up to 150 workers. Its product range included high-quality woolen fabrics for men's and women's clothing, military blankets, and broadcloth (*čoja*). Part of the yarn, particularly that intended for the production of finer fabrics, was imported, while the remainder was spun on-site.

In addition to the domestic workforce, the factory employed skilled workers from abroad, including immigrants from Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Italy. As production expanded, operations were extended to three shifts, and the workforce increased to as many as 300 employees.

Following the death of Živojin Vukojičić, ownership of the factory passed to his sons, Budislav, Vladislav, and Dragomir. In 1939, the company was reorganized as a joint-stock

company, with the majority of shares, valued at 15,000,000 dinars, remaining in the possession of the Vukojičić brothers [3, 4, 5].



Figure 2: Factory Plan. Archives of Yugoslavia, 65-572-1292.

2.2 The Devald Brothers Textile Enterprise: “Drina” Knitting Factory Owned by Anton Devald and “Dunav” Knitting Factory Owned by Nikola Devald

The Devald family was a Zemun-based family of German origin with a long tradition in textile manufacturing. Adam Devald owned a textile factory in Zemun, and his sons, Anton and Nikola Devald, continued the family business in textile production. In 1918, they established a textile enterprise under the name “Devald Brothers” (*Braća Devald*).

The company headquarters were located at 57 Kraljice Marije Street. The location of the enterprise was favorable, situated approximately 1.5 kilometers from the railway station and 2.5 kilometers from the river port. However, their joint business operation lasted only briefly. In 1919, the brothers separated their business activities, and Anton Devald founded an enterprise that operated under the name “Drina” Knitting Factory.

The factory initially focused on stocking production, but its manufacturing program was later expanded to include a wider range of knitted textile products. Devald invested approximately 300,000 dinars in factory buildings, while investments in machinery and equipment were considerably higher, amounting to around 800,000 dinars. The factory complex included spinning departments, knitting workshops, a drying facility, a building with a steam boiler, a finished goods warehouse, a retail store, offices, and a garage.



The largest volume of production took place during the main season, which lasted from August to March, while operations outside the season were significantly reduced. Under normal operating conditions, the factory employed up to 50 workers, while continuous production required a workforce of approximately 120 employees.

The factory's main products included waistcoats, pullovers, sweaters, and knitted footwear. Secondary products included children's gloves, scarves, wristbands, and gloves.

Following the separation from his brother, Nikola Devald established his own textile production enterprise. He made substantial investments in machinery and equipment; however, combined with the economic crisis and difficult business conditions at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, these investments brought the company close to bankruptcy. Devald succeeded in reaching a financial settlement with creditors and extended the operation of his factory, which he officially registered under the name "Dunav" Knitting Factory (*Trikotaža "Dunav"*) in 1932.

The company headquarters were located at 29 Kraljice Marije Street. The factory site covered an area of 15 ares, while the factory buildings occupied 450 square meters. The complex consisted of a small building of 14 m², another small building of 16 m², and a smaller 60 m² structure containing offices and a finished goods warehouse. The workshop was located in a two-story building.

Like his brother's factory, Nikola Devald's enterprise specialized in the production of stockings and knitted goods, including wool and cotton sweaters, woolen footwear, and similar products. Both factories continued operating until the eve of the Second World War [6, 7, 8].

2.3 Walter Bahrich Mechanical Weaving Mill, Later Textile Industry "Tibeo"

The Walter Bahrich Mechanical Weaving Mill was registered with the Basic Court in Sremska Mitrovica under business file number II Fi. 167/1934 on 30 March 1934. The registration was confirmed by the municipal authorities of Zemun on 9 March 1934. The weaving mill was located at 17 Kej 5. Novembra Street.

The owner of the weaving mill was Walter Bahrich, born in Vienna, an Austrian citizen residing at 11 Karadorđeva Street in Zemun. The location of the factory was favorable, as it was situated approximately 150 meters from the river steamship station and about one kilometer from the Zemun railway station.

The factory premises were leased from Lazar and Leposava Čuturilo, while the initial value of the machinery and equipment amounted to only 35,000 dinars. The installed power capacity of the weaving mill was 5 horsepower, and electricity was supplied by the Zemun power plant. The weaving mill was a small-scale enterprise consisting of one workshop, one small warehouse, and an office located within a private building with several additional rooms. The maximum number of employees was eight workers.

At the beginning of its operation, the weaving mill produced cvilinfuter lining fabric, with a maximum annual production capacity of 20,000 meters under full operation. For military requirements, the factory was initially capable of producing 50 meters of linen fabric per day [8].



2.4 “Paris” Knitting Factory of Vera D. Đorđević

The “Paris” Knitting Factory owned by Vera D. Đorđević was established with the approval of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, decision no. III 45766, issued on 7 December 1938, and was entered into the commercial register by a decision of the District Court in Sremska Mitrovica on 24 December 1938. The owner of the factory was Vera D. Đorđević, a housewife originally from Požarevac and the wife of lawyer Dragomir V. Đorđević from Požarevac. The factory complex, as well as the family residence, was located at 9 Tvornička Street in Zemun.

The history of this factory is particularly interesting because it had been established earlier, in 1931. The original mechanical knitting workshop was founded in that year under the name “Azriel Brothers Knitting Factory” (*Trikotaža braće Azriel*) and was registered with the Belgrade Commercial Court under no. 14,222. It developed into an industrial enterprise in 1935, following a decision of the same court under no. 5557. The owners of the factory were brothers Walter and Robert Azriel from Vienna, Austrian citizens. During its first seven years of operation, the factory worked in rented premises at 130 Kralja Aleksandra Street in Belgrade.

In 1936, the factory employed 80 adult male unskilled workers and 5 adult female unskilled workers, as well as three domestic male administrative employees and one female administrative employee. That year, the factory produced 25,000 kilograms of goods valued at 2.5 million dinars, consisting of women’s underwear and men’s shirts made of silk and cotton. In 1938, the Azriel brothers transferred the machinery and other equipment to a new location in Zemun, at 9 Tvornička Street, and in the same year re-registered the company with the District Court in Sremska Mitrovica.

The year 1938 was a significant turning point regarding the position of Jews in Europe. Due to increasing international political pressure and the deteriorating situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, including Serbia, no direct state laws specifically targeting Jews, comparable to the racial laws already introduced in Germany and Italy, had yet been enacted in Yugoslavia during that year. However, following Germany’s annexation of Austria (*Anschluss*) in 1938 and the pogrom known as Kristallnacht (9–10 November 1938), antisemitic attitudes intensified throughout Europe. Official discriminatory regulations in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were introduced somewhat later, in October 1940, through the Decree on Measures Concerning Jews in the Field of Trade and the Decree on the Registration of Jews in Secondary Schools (the so-called *Numerus clausus*), which restricted Jewish access to education and participation in trade.

These circumstances undoubtedly influenced the Azriel brothers’ decision to withdraw from the business and sell the factory to Vera D. Đorđević on 23 November 1938.

Since the factory operated under her ownership for only slightly more than two years, it is difficult to assess its overall business performance during her management. According to data from 1939, the factory employed 91 workers, including three administrative employees and three technical staff members.

With an eight-hour working day, the production capacity of the factory amounted to 60,000 overalls, 5,000 pairs of women’s underwear, 500 nightgowns, 15,000 shirts, and 100,000 meters of plain fabric. During 1939, the factory produced: 80,000 overalls, of which 60,000



were sold; 10,000 pairs of women's underwear, of which 7,000 were sold; 500 nightgowns, of which 400 were sold; 20,000 men's shirts, of which 15,000 were sold; 120,000 meters of plain fabric, of which 100,000 meters were sold. The total value of the production of these items amounted to 2,575,000 dinars [8].

2.5 “Sava” Knitting Factory of Jovan T. Janković and Brothers David and Anđelko Tajtacak

This enterprise was founded by Aleksandar Ristić in 1924 on a small scale. In 1927, it was taken over by Jovan T. Janković, who initially operated it under the name Lubomir T. Stefanović and Company. In 1928, Stefanović left the company, and the enterprise was re-registered under its new name on 3 December 1928. In 1933, the business was registered as an industrial enterprise for the production of knitted and fashionable goods under the name Janković T. Jovan and Brothers Tajtacak – “Sava” Knitting Factory (*Janković T. Jovan i braća Tajtacak – SAVA fabrika trikotaže*).

The owners of the factory were: Jovan T. Janković, born in Niš in 1882, residing in Zemun; David-Viktor I. Tajtacak, born in Belgrade in 1890; Anđelko I. Tajtacak, born in Belgrade in 1902, who was killed at the Staro Sajmište concentration camp in 1942. All three owners were citizens of Yugoslavia. In 1938, David Tajtacak died, and his heirs — his wife Sarina (born in 1902) and his son Isak (born in 1933) — withdrew from the company by selling their share to the remaining co-owners.

The factory operated at two locations on Gundulićeva Street in Zemun. The premises at number 10 housed the mechanical department, the clothing manufacturing department, and warehouses for raw and semi-finished materials. The administrative offices, stocking department, ironing department, and finished goods warehouse were located at number 6 on the same street [7, 9].



Figure 3: Advertisement for the Sava Factory, published in the daily newspaper *Politika* on 15 October 1927.



9. Međunarodna naučna konferencija
„Savremeni trendovi i inovacije u tekstilnoj industriji“
17-18. septembar 2026. Beograd, Srbija

2.6 “Javor” Mechanical Weaving Mill of Vuković, Bešević and Stojković

This mechanical weaving mill received a temporary operating permit on 5 November 1938, followed by a permanent permit on 13 May 1939 under registration number 19024. The founding capital amounted to 810,000 dinars, equally divided among the three owners: Ranisav Bešević (born in 1903 in Ivanjica), Vojislav Vuković (born in 1906 in Ivanjica), and Miloško Stojković (born in 1912 in Bogova). Prior to these registrations, the enterprise operated under the names “Avala” Mechanical Weaving Mill – Bešević Ranislav and Živković Dušan, and earlier as “Avala” Mechanical Weaving Mill – Ranisav Bešević.

The weaving mill began operating in its new building in Zemun in March 1939. Initially, it employed six workers, while the planned expansion envisaged a workforce of 20 workers, three technical employees, and one administrative employee. The factory complex was located at 27 Tošin Bunar Street. Due to limited space, an auxiliary clothing manufacturing department was established in Belgrade at 18 Kralja Petra Street.

The weaving mill produced silk and cotton scarves, initially using twelve looms, and also carried out the finishing and garment production of these products. The production capacity of the factory was relatively small. During one year of operation, based on an eight-hour working day, it could process 3.5 tons of cotton and 7.5 tons of artificial silk yarn, making it one of the smaller textile enterprises in Zemun. After two years, the factory was relocated to Belgrade, at 37 Živka Davidovića Street, where it was expanded and modernized. It was subsequently re-registered under the name “Javor” Mechanical Weaving Mill – Vuković and Stojković [10].

2.7 “Avala” Mechanical Weaving Mill of Radosav V. Bešević

This mechanical weaving mill was initially established solely under the name of Radosav Bešević. It received an operating permit no. 46066/35 on 4 February 1936 and was registered with the Basic Court in Sremska Mitrovica on 12 December 1936. The company headquarters were located at Despot Đurđ Street. The founding capital amounted to 300,000 dinars, of which 200,000 dinars were invested in the rental of the building and production facilities, while 100,000 dinars represented working capital and funds for the purchase of raw materials. The initial maximum workforce consisted of two administrative employees and fourteen workers.

At the end of 1937, Dušan Živković entered into partnership with Bešević, after which the enterprise received a new operating permit under a new name and at a new location, 50 Dobanovačka Street. At that time, the invested capital increased to 4,000,000 dinars, while the number of workers grew from fourteen to an average of forty employees, although at certain periods it reached as many as sixty. The production capacity of the factory, expressed in linear meters and based on an eight-hour working day, amounted in 1937 to 162,000 meters of natural and artificial silk fabrics. In 1939, the invested capital of the company increased further, reaching a total of 40,000,000 dinars. Under an eight-hour working regime, the annual consumption of raw materials amounted to 65,000 kilograms of artificial silk and 215 kilograms of cotton yarn, while the factory sold 400,000 linear meters of artificial silk fabric.



In 1941, Radosav Bešević's brother, Ranisav Bešević, joined the company as a full partner. When it became clear that Zemun would become part of the territory controlled by the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the partners transferred most of the machinery and equipment to Belgrade in September 1941 and continued operations under a new company name, "Bešević Brothers and Živković" [11].

2.8 Dejan Frušić Silk Fabric Factory

The Silk Fabric Factory began operations following approval issued by the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia under decision no. 14050/37 dated 19 April 1937. The owner, Dejan Frušić, was born in the village of Tovarnik, Šid district. The invested capital for the establishment of the enterprise amounted to 900,000 dinars, and the company headquarters were located at 65 Tošin Bunar Street in Zemun.

The factory's full annual production capacity, based on an eight-hour working day, amounted to 36,000 meters of artificial silk fabric, which was subsequently sent to other enterprises for finishing and dyeing processes. In addition to artificial silk production, in the event of war the factory was capable of producing 40,000 linear meters of cloth and bandage material within the same period. At the beginning of its operation, the factory employed one skilled worker, two qualified designers, and twelve weavers [10].

2.9 First Yugoslav Silk Goods Weaving Company JSC from Osijek, Zemun Branch

The First Yugoslav Silk Goods Weaving Company Joint-Stock Company (*Prva jugoslavenska tkaonica svilene robe d.d.*) from Osijek was established in 1930. In 1938, the factory received approval from the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, dated 18 October 1938, to establish a branch in Zemun, which was managed by the company supervisor Vilim Štraus.

In May 1939, the factory received permission to commence operations in its new premises, located in a building owned by S. Mojsilović and E. Kajon. During the same year, the Zemun branch employed between 39 and 58 workers.

The production capacity of the branch included the processing of 6.098 tons of artificial silk yarn. In 1939, the branch produced 158,326 square meters of artificial silk fabric, of which 154,967 square meters were sold [10].

2.10 Dingarac, Stojanović and Goločevac Textile Industry

The factory was established in 1927 with 50 looms. By 1929, this number had increased to 100, and by 1934 to 146 looms, a figure that remained unchanged until 1939.

The enterprise was founded with a capital investment of 5,000,000 dinars. Its owners were Rista Dingarac, born in Vranje; Petar Stojanović, born in Leskovac; and Jovan Goločevac, born in Vranje and residing in Skopje, who later also moved to Belgrade. The factory buildings and the management offices were located at 18 Tvornička Street in Zemun.

Under normal operating conditions, with an eight-hour working day, the factory employed two administrative employees and 75 workers. During periods of increased production at the end of the 1930s, the workforce could increase to approximately 90 employees.

The factory produced cotton cloth (*American*), with an annual production capacity of 200,000 kilograms or 1,000,000 meters based on an eight-hour working schedule.



In 1939, the factory produced 756,000 square meters of plain cotton fabrics with up to 50 threads per square centimeter, while sales amounted to slightly less, totaling 711,786 square meters [12].

2.11 Hadži Bošković Brothers Textile Industry

The factory was established in 1929 and registered by the municipal authorities of Zemun under no. O. 721 on 19 August 1932. The factory was located at 16/18 Naum Savić Street, and its owners were the brothers Jovan, Trajko, Ljubomir, and Dragan Hadži Bošković, all born in Skopje. At the beginning of its operation, the factory possessed 144 automatic looms powered by electricity. Initially, the enterprise had the capacity to employ five master craftsmen and 115 workers. Based on an eight-hour working day, the factory's production capacity amounted to 1,008,000 meters of plain cotton fabric (*American*), with a thread count of up to 50 threads per square centimeter. On 1 March 1938, the factory was leased by Borislav P. Ristić and Milošević, who continued operations under the new name Borislav P. Ristić and Milošević Textile Industry. At the time of the takeover, the value of the factory amounted to 3,000,000 dinars in real estate, buildings, and machinery, and 1,500,000 dinars in goods and other inventory. During their management, particularly in 1938 and 1939, the volume of production and sales remained at a similar level to that achieved under the previous owners [12].

2.12 First Serbian Velour and Plush Factory of Svetislav N. Mitić

The factory owned by Svetislav N. Mitić was established before the First World War, in 1910. After the war, it was officially registered in 1922 under registration number 8150, dated 23 August. The factory was located at 3 Tvornička Street in Zemun, which also served as the company headquarters. Based on an eight-hour working day, the production capacity amounted to 100,000 meters of cotton fabric and 15,000 meters of wool fabric. In 1939, the factory had a value of 4,018,285 dinars in machinery and equipment, 3,500,000 dinars in buildings and inventory, and 6,455,199 dinars in raw materials and finished products. Under full operating capacity, the factory could employ approximately 150 workers. The factory specialized exclusively in the production of krimer (astrakhan) made from jute and wool, which was used for manufacturing šubare (traditional fur-style caps), as well as plush made from wool and artificial silk, and tailoring accessories such as rošar and plastic materials.

In the same year, 1939, the factory processed: 16,000 square meters of artificial silk plush; 1,600 square meters of wool krimer; 5,000 square meters of jute krimer. It produced 3,000 dozen šubare made from krimer, of which 2,300 dozen were sold [13].

2.13 “Tekstilind” Knitting and Other Textile Products Factory of Rudolf Klopfer

The factory was established in 1934 and received an operating permit in the same year under no. 215/1934 from the Administration of the Municipality of Belgrade, Zemun Division. The first owners were Moritz Wasenstein, born in Sarajevo, and Erwin Mayer, born in Worms. The factory's production facilities were located at 5 Tvornička Street in Zemun, where it manufactured underwear made from silk and cotton yarn.



In 1938, the factory was taken over by Rudolf Klopfer, who relocated it to 184 Cara Dušana Street. The enterprise officially resumed operations at the new location on 2 January 1939. The factory employed 70 female workers and produced cotton, rayon, and silk knitwear. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, Klopfer invested significant funds in new machinery in order to modernize and expand production [14].

2.14 Branko Tokin Textile Industry

The Branko Tokin Textile Industry was established in 1937. The company was registered with the District Court in Sremska Mitrovica on 31 December 1936, while the operating permit was granted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in February 1937. The owner of the company was Branko Tokin, a Belgrade industrialist born in Pančevo. The company was registered at 32 Tvornička Street in Zemun. This was an exceptionally favorable location for industrial facilities, as the factory was situated directly alongside the railway line, while the distance to both the railway station and the river port was approximately one kilometer. In May 1936, Branko Tokin conceived the idea of establishing a factory dedicated exclusively to the production of white cotton cloth, which represented an innovation in the textile sector of this region. He invested his own capital in the establishment of the enterprise.

The factory complex covered an area of 1,620 square meters. For production purposes, the factory acquired the most modern weaving machinery, which was fully automated, as well as all necessary equipment for the bleaching department and finishing operations, including the final treatment of cotton fabrics after weaving and bleaching. The factory was equipped according to modern industrial standards. During the first year of operation, emphasis was placed on training personnel and creating the necessary conditions for the production of high-quality fabrics. A complete water-softening installation was introduced, together with equipment for regulating humidity and temperature. The factory also installed its own electric power plant to supply the machinery located in the weaving department.

The factory complex included an apartment for the manager, company offices, a room intended as a workers' dining area, and storage facilities for raw materials, semi-finished products, and finished goods. The factory operated throughout the entire year. The weaving department worked in two shifts, while the bleaching department operated in one shift. The factory had the capacity to employ up to 120 workers.

Tokin personally managed the factory, while the production process was supervised by engineer Stevan Hiršenberger, born in Budapest. The investments and efforts made produced successful results relatively quickly. The first-class fabrics manufactured by the factory soon gained recognition throughout the entire country. The factory produced white cotton cloth known as chiffon, which was used for making bed linen and men's and women's underwear. In addition, the factory produced white American cotton cloth (*amerikan*) in various widths and qualities, representing a significant novelty among textile products at the time.

Unfavorable market conditions, the practice of selling goods on deferred payment terms, and the accumulation of large quantities of yarn reduced the profitability of the factory during the second half of the 1930s. As a result, Branko Tokin was forced to enter into a

partnership arrangement in 1938. He reached an agreement with Predrag Nikolić, a long-time director of the Vlada Teokarović and Company Woolen Textile Industry in Paraćin. Mr. Nikolić was the nephew of Vlada Teokarović, and it was expected that his extensive experience and expertise would contribute both to improving production processes and to achieving better market placement of the products. According to archival documentation, in 1940 the company gradually began preparing to shift toward the production of military materials, including gauze, cloth, and similar products [12].

2.15 “Stella” Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company

The “Stella” Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company was established in March 1937. The company headquarters were located on Vlajkovićeve Street, while the production facilities were situated in Zemun, at 72 Tvornička Street. The capital invested in the establishment of the company originated from Romanian, French, and Yugoslav sources. The initial shareholders of the company included Romanian citizens Yaridijan Mikerdić and Nahmijas Moscu, each holding 6,250 shares, as well as Yugoslav citizens: Dragan Milenčić (2,000 shares), Ljubomir Hadži Bošković (500 shares), Dragan Hadži Bošković (200 shares), Vladimir Zakić (750 shares), and Milan Belanović (40 shares).



Figure 4: Aerial panorama of Zemun, 1930s. From the private collection of Miloš Jurišić

The factory began operations in March 1938. It was a newly constructed industrial facility equipped with new machinery. The factory complex occupied a plot of land measuring 9,553 square meters, while the factory buildings covered an area of 2,737 square meters.



The machinery and equipment were entirely new and had been imported from Germany. Cotton was used as the primary raw material, and the company operated as a spinning mill processing cotton yarn intended for weaving by industrial enterprises.

Cotton was imported primarily from the United States, while domestic cotton supplied only about 2% of production requirements. The factory's products were manufactured mainly for the needs of the Ministry of Army and Navy. Under peacetime conditions, production operated in a single eight-hour shift and employed approximately 80 workers. The factory director was the Romanian engineer Mikerdić Yaridijan.

The company held a license for cotton spinning with a capacity of 6,000 spindles.

The enterprise was nationalized after the Second World War and later became one of the subjects addressed within the framework of the 1951 French-Yugoslav Agreement on Compensation for French Interests Nationalized in Yugoslavia [12].

2.16“Alda” Mechanical Weaving Mill, Joint-Stock Company

“Alda” Mechanical Weaving Mill, a joint-stock company, was established in 1929. The registration of the weaving mill was carried out with the District Court in Zemun. The company headquarters were located in Zemun, at 140 Tošin Bunar Street. The company's production program included cotton fabrics, known as American cotton fabrics (*amerikan*), produced in various qualities and widths up to 150 cm, as well as terry towels and terry cloth fabrics for bathing purposes.

The raw materials used in the production process were mainly imported. Cotton yarn was imported from Italy and Czechoslovakia, wool yarn from Belgium, while machinery and equipment were sourced from Austria, Belgium, Italy, and Czechoslovakia.

The weaving mill operated throughout the entire year, with working hours adjusted according to production requirements. By the mid-1930s, when production and product distribution had already expanded, the factory operated in two shifts, totaling 58 working hours per week. Under normal operating conditions, the factory employed 72 workers, while continuous operation required a workforce of up to 210 employees.

The production facilities were financed through share capital. By the mid-1930s, the factory consisted of several departments: a terry weaving department; a department for the production of *amerikan* cotton cloth; a fabric inspection and measuring department; a warp preparation department; a finishing department; a boiler house and furnace facility. The factory complex also included accommodation for a security guard. The company director was Josif Almuli. The shareholders of the company came from prominent Jewish merchant and intellectual families who were related to one another. In the mid-1930s, the distribution of shares was as follows: David Alvy, banker, 10 shares; Samuel Davičo, commercial agent, 500 shares; David Mevorah, commercial agent, 10 shares; David Alkalaj, lawyer, 10 shares; Jakov Pijade, merchant, 10 shares; Josif Almuli, industrialist, 10 shares; Rejna Almuli, 200 shares; Ela Eškenazi, 200 shares; Maks Koen, merchant, 10 shares; Dr. Isak Eškenazi, physician, 200 shares; Dr. Žarko Almuli, physician, 10 shares; Samuil Najman, merchant, 10 shares; Leja Almuli, 200 shares; Vera Eškenazi, 100 shares; Ivan Almuli, industrialist, 10 shares.



9. Međunarodna naučna konferencija
„Savremeni trendovi i inovacije u tekstilnoj industriji“
17-18. septembar 2026. Beograd, Srbija

Immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, plans were made for the factory to operate for the needs of national defense in the event of mobilization [12].

2.17 “Tekstil” Woolen Fabrics Factory of Milorad Stojadinović

The “Tekstil” Woolen Fabrics Factory, owned by Milorad Stojadinović, received an operating permit in May 1933. The company was registered in June of the same year with the District Court in Zemun. The factory was registered at 142 Tošin Bunar Street. At the time of registration, both the factory and the land on which it stood were owned by Milorad Stojadinović. The factory building itself had been constructed in 1927 and was originally owned by Dragoljub Stojadinović, but his enterprise was liquidated in 1933. The factory was located only half a kilometer from the Zemun river port and three kilometers from the railway station.

The factory produced šajak (coarse woolen cloth), čoja (wool broadcloth), officer-grade broadcloth, blankets, and plain woolen fabrics. It consisted of several departments: a department for the preparation of artificial wool; a spinning mill; a weaving department; a warping department; a finishing department; a workshop.

The factory did not possess a drying facility. The complex also included accommodation for a security guard and two employees. Regarding the machinery, half of the equipment was owned by Goldberg Volf Simhe. The factory operated seasonally, from March until December. Working hours consisted of an eight-hour shift or two shifts, depending on the volume of orders. The production capacity of the factory amounted to 4,000 meters of woolen fabric when operating in one shift, or 8,000 meters when operating in two shifts. Under normal operating conditions, the factory employed a maximum of five administrative staff members and 110 workers. During periods of full production capacity, the workforce increased by approximately 50 percent. In addition to domestic labor, the factory also employed foreign skilled workers, primarily from Poland.

Immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, the enterprise was contracted for military production and was expected to manufacture blankets for the needs of the Ministry of Army and Navy [12].

3. CONCLUSION

The development of industry in Zemun during the interwar period was rapid and intensive. In 1919, when the new state union was established, approximately forty different enterprises were registered in the territory of Zemun, most of which were organized on a scale that only slightly exceeded artisanal production.

The strong industrial expansion that followed in the subsequent years was primarily influenced by the protective tariffs introduced by the state, as well as by the incentives and privileges granted by the municipality to business owners. According to the Customs Law of 1925, which significantly contributed to the development of the textile industry, all imported goods, machinery, and equipment were subject to high customs duties. At the same time, customs rates were increased for finished textile products imported from abroad. This created opportunities for domestic manufacturers to reorganize production,



9th International scientific conference
„Contemporary trends and innovations in the textile industry“
17-18th September, 2026, Belgrade, Serbia

introduce rationalization and modernization measures, and gain control over the domestic market with their own products.

In addition, the Municipality of Zemun, recognizing industrial development as crucial for the economic recovery of the city, pursued an intensive policy of attracting industrialists and investment. As a result, after the First World War, several Belgrade industrialists relocated some of their factories to the territory of the Municipality of Zemun.

With regard to the textile industry, one of the most significant enterprises was the Woolen Fabrics Factory of Živojin Vukojičić and Sons, established in 1927, which primarily specialized in the production of broadcloth and blankets. Immediately before the Second World War, the value of this factory amounted to nearly 15 million dinars.

Other textile enterprises located in Zemun were either established with private capital or organized as joint-stock companies, combining domestic and foreign investment. Most possessed their own buildings and production facilities, and some also had their own power plants. These enterprises manufactured a wide range of products, including cloth, cotton fabrics, cotton and silk knitwear, yarn, blankets, broadcloth, coarse woolen fabrics, terry cloth, towels, and terry fabrics.

All of these enterprises played an important role in the industrial development of Zemun during the interwar period and represented a solid foundation for the further development of the textile industry after the Second World War.

Although many factories suffered certain levels of damage during the war, the majority were nationalized after the war, and their production facilities, capacities, machinery, and equipment were incorporated into post-war industrial production. In accordance with the Law on the Nationalization of Private Enterprises of 1946, all private enterprises of general state and republican importance, including those in the textile industry, were transferred into state ownership.

Thus, after the Second World War, Zemun's textile enterprises were nationalized. The Woolen Fabrics Factory of Živojin Vukojičić and Sons, together with several other factories, became part of the enterprise "Ivan Milutinović", established in 1948.

A section of the "Danubius" Textile Industry became part of the "Staljingrad" Textile Factory, which later developed into the Belgrade Cotton Combine. The "Stella" Textile Industry Joint-Stock Company, "Alda" Mechanical Weaving Mill, Branko Tokin Textile Industry, and Dingarac, Stojanović and Goločevac Textile Industry became part of the "Sutjeska" Textile Industry in Zemun, established after the Second World War, which later became part of the "Staljingrad" Cotton Factory. The First Serbian Velour and Plush Factory of Svetislav N. Mitić, together with the "Plaros" factory, became part of the "Stevan Dukić" Textile Industry, among other examples.

The interwar development of the textile industry in Zemun, together with municipal incentives and favorable customs policies, created a strong foundation for the further development of textile production after the Second World War within socialist Yugoslavia. Although nationalization deprived the former owners of their enterprises — some of whom had emigrated or had even lost their lives during the war — the production capacities were incorporated into new textile enterprises created through the consolidation of existing factories. Through subsequent reorganizations and transformations, these enterprises



continued to operate and manufacture textiles and knitwear for decades, making a significant contribution to the economic development of socialist Yugoslavia [15, 26, 17, 18].

REFERENCES

- [1] Rafailović, J., (2018). *Razvoj industrije na Balkanu*, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Beograd
- [2] Rafailović, J., (2015). Obim i struktura kapitala u tekstilnoj industriji Kraljevine SHS, Zbornik radova *Tradicija i transformacija 1, političke i društvene promene u Srbiji i Jugoslaviji u 20 veku*, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Beograd.
- [3] Najhold, B. (2013). *Na krilima rode i zmaja*, Trag, Zemun, 48-54.
- [4] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 572.
- [5] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 1292.
- [6] Lukić, N., Ćosović, O., (2025). Iz istorije tekstilne industrije Zemuna - Fabrike trikotaže braće Devald 1918-1939, *Tekstilna industrija* 73(1), 73-80.
- [7] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 580.
- [8] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 586.
- [9] Arhiv Jugoslavije 65, f. IAB, Uprava grada Beograda (1), Kartoteka žitelja Beograda i Zemuna.
- [10] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 578.
- [11] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 572.
- [12] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 576.
- [13] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 581.
- [14] Arhiv Jugoslavije, Ministarstvo trgovine i industrije Kraljevine Jugoslavije (65), f. 584.
- [15] Petrović, D., (2006). *Istorija industrije Beograda tom 1*, Srpsko geografsko društvo, Beograd.
- [16] Petrović, D., (2006). *Istorija industrije Beograda tom 2*, Srpsko geografsko društvo, Beograd.
- [17] Mihailović, K., (1953), *Proizvodne snage NR Srbije*, Ekonomski institut NR Srbije, Beograd.
- [18] 23-zakon-o-nacionalizaciji-priv.privred.preduzeca.pdf