

“Yugoslavian Industrial Heritage and Photography in Creation of a Narrative: Landscape of One Era”

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1. Introduction

The paper reflects on the process of the “socialist construction” of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) through the analyses of articles in one local newspaper published over the period 1946–1957. The goal is to explore how the narrative of technical and industrial progress shifted and shaped the perception of one sacred landscape in southwestern Serbia. In doing so, the paper relies on narrative-representational approaches linking the concepts of landscape and photography. In the words of William Cronon, narratives are “fundamental to our understanding of history and the human place in nature”.ⁱ They are essential to the way we organize our understanding of the world and our place within it, and provide larger contexts for interrelationships between place meanings, landscapes, cultural identities, heritage and memories. Narratives therefore allow for the reading and interpretation of landscape in the multitude of its layers.ⁱⁱ At the center of this investigation is landscape, regarded as a mental construct and symbolic category vital for sustaining collective memory, as well as establishing a sense of belonging to a place, a community and a nation.ⁱⁱⁱ In this, we embrace Sörlin’s approach to landscape as a product of the articulation of territory, continually reproduced through social and cultural processes employing diverse media and forms (such as language, text, art, etc.).^{iv}

The case study of the paper is the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge (Serbia), between 1946 and 1957. This was the period of the building of the new Yugoslav socialist country, which transpired on the principles of “administrative socialism, mass volunteer work, cult of physical labour, anti-capitalistic collectivism and five-year plan”.^v In this process, SFRY also employed diverse channels and strategies of representation to shape and emit specific, desired image of the new nation-state. According to Radović, these strategies relied on various media and unfolded two-ways, directed inside (the domestic “self”) and outside (the foreign “other”).^{vi} The following study will illuminate how one such representational strategy employed a combination of photographs and texts to conjure, via local weekly magazine, particular narrative around the landscape of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge. While similar strategies were surely employed to send the similar image to the international public, the paper suggests that the primary recipient of this communication was the homeland, that is, domestic public and primarily, the people living in the gorge and the surrounding region. In the framework of such perspective, the analysis illustrates how the image of the modernization of the landscape of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge gradually unfolded before and for the eyes of its inhabitants, evoking and strengthening the sense of a much deeper shift that was taking place in the state and society they belonged to.

1.1. Photography and Narratives of the SFRY

Modernization and industrialization were most important changes that marked the creation of the SFRY, transforming agricultural country and society into a developed industrial one. After the WWII a lot of the country’s prewar industry was destroyed, as war left a country ruined on many levels. Close to 40 percent of the manufacturing industry was destroyed or badly damaged. Twenty-five percent of the population was left without shelter, 50 percent of the livestock and agricultural equipment was destroyed as well as the same share of the railways and rollingstock.^{vii} Following the Soviet model of economy recovery, The First Five Year Plan in 1947 was created and covered the period of 1947-1951. Industrialization of the country became the leading branch of economy. In that period new industries developed, unknown before the war: the production of machinery and equipment, shipbuilding, radio industry, oil refining and production of cars. With industrialization,

new energy sources were included in the exploitation. Country energy wealth, especially the great potential of rivers, enabled the rapid post-war development with the construction of hydroelectric power plants all around the country.

With the development of the country the need for propaganda was created to construct a new narrative of young, prosperous, social based country, provoking interest for the urban and industrial realities as a symbol and reflection of progress. Photography, consider to be the best tool of the authenticity, helped to create the public image of Yugoslav narrative. In that framework, photography, as the language of visual communication, acquired a prominent position in cultural re-education and was charged with quite specific tasks as part of the projected Five-Year Development Plan.^{viii} When we look into a simple definition of narrative as way of presenting or understanding a situation or series of events that reflects and promotes a particular point of view or set of values^{ix}, it makes photography the perfect medium for constructing narratives.

Stated by Campbell, in photography, narrative is related to the idea of context.^x It's need to be emphasized that in context of former Yugoslavia, "agitation and propaganda apparatus" were set up by Communist Party to create new story. In one of early editions state commissioned publication *Fotografija* (Photography) in the spirit of that time interesting description of role of photography was found:

Artistic photography should portray the struggle of the working man who is creating a better future for himself, it should express the thoughts and desires of the people, their aspirations, sacrifices and efforts with which the capitalist society is being brought down and a new socialist society is being built.^{xi}

Going into theory of photography, according to Walter Benjamin, invention of photography played a very important role in human perception of reality and it illustrated a fundamental example of how technology influenced our aesthetic and visual perception of the world. In his well-known essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, he stated that the media of photography, has the potential "to form revolutionary demands with the art public". Exactly in that direction the Communist Party of Yugoslavia constructed a new narrative with a photography media mostly in charge to show "reality", narrative of the new born country, of the industrial society and its belief in technical progress.

One of the channels of doing this kind of propaganda was through various state commissioned publications, very richly illustrated, as already mentioned *Fotografija* (Photography), and another channel of propaganda was using the local newspapers to create an image of new country marked in the same spirit. Whether a magazine devoted to photography or a local newspaper, they both used the tools of the agitprop culture^{xii} to succeed in that intention. According to Todić, some of the very well-known theoreticians of photography of the time as M. Macarol knew that well.^{xiii} To more describe a power of image he stated:

If we compare once more photography with the second strongest propaganda medium - the press, then we could say: every piece of news, every report and every article have a beginning and an end; the photograph does not! It speaks for hours and days, it speaks a language understandable to both the worker and the intellectual, understandable and convincing to every man, regardless of his national affiliation. In that sense, photography is an international language.^{xiv}

The generally accepted belief is that photographs are reproductions of reality and the truth. However, in the words of Benjamin power of the photograph combines a simultaneous claim on the truth and the need for a story to give the photograph meaning.^{xv} Taking in consideration this interpretation of Benjamin, it could be said that the role of photography as a part of one of the tools of constructing narrative was a representation of the "great times we are living in" as one of the

mains principles of the socialist ideological character in Yugoslavia. Same as photography, narrative differs from mere representation: instead of mirroring or reproducing reality, it filters it through particular linguistic or visual codes or conventions.^{xvi}

2. Case Study: Ovčar-Kablar Gorge

With its origins traced to the end of the XIVth and the beginning of the XVth century, the landscape of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge is mostly known as one of the monastic mountains of the Eastern Christian Orthodoxy in the Balkans. Sculpted by the West Morava River in a snakelike form between the mountains of Ovčar and Kablar, the area preserves around six centuries of history and living religious practices, with ten medieval monasteries and two church – caves. With a unique combination of geological and hydrographic phenomena, great diversity of wildlife habitats, flora and fauna, it is also protected landscape of outstanding features (1st category natural asset). As such, it's recognized within the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest and as Important Bird and Biodiversity Area of Europe.

The past of the gorge is shrouded in mystery, as it remained mostly inaccessible until the middle of the XXth century. It is assumed that the monks arriving amidst the Ottoman expansion from the southern Orthodox centres (especially monastic mountains in Greece) founded the first temples here.^{xvii} They brought a new philosophy of monastic life based in the Byzantine traditions of asceticism, for which the gorge appeared suitable with its numerous caves, steep cliffs and dense secluding forests. While monasteries became centers of cultural and artistic life over the following centuries, they also passed through successive periods of destruction and revitalization as a consequence of the country's turbulent history. Many material sources and testimonies of the ancient past of the gorge were lost in these historical shifts. Some of its earliest representations, including the hand-drawn map and lithographic drawings of the individual temples, originate only from the 19th century travelogues. The travel writers also provided intriguing accounts contributing to the sense of remoteness, mysticism and sacred meaning enveloping the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge.^{xviii}

While its history largely reflects religious traditions and past of its monasteries, the second half of the XXth century signified the rapid industrial development of the gorge, with then innovative, large-scale infrastructure projects. This most notably included the construction of two artificial lakes with two hydropower plants that are still operating today. It was in 1901 that the idea first appeared, to build a hydropower plant in order to tame the unpredictable waters of the West Morava River that often flooded and transformed the landscape of the gorge. The plans were made after one of the most devastating floods in 1896, but suffered delays amidst the political and financial crisis during the Balkans' wars and the First World War. Consequently, the construction works started on July 1 in 1946 in Ovčar Banja and in 1947 in Međuvršje (figures 1 and 2).

The "Ovčar Banja" is a flow hydroelectric power plant built at the entrance to the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge nearby the village Ovčar Banja^{xix}, after which it was named. The first power plant built in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, it was considered unique^{xx}, especially due to the natural phenomenon of the gorge. Within the same company "ElektroMorava", the second hydropower plant in Međuvršje was built with almost identical features, but at the exit from the gorge. As a result, the natural flow of the river was modified and two artificial lakes were formed, the Ovčar-Kablar Lake and Međuvršje Lake. Both power plants were built as strategic facilities, to provide electricity supplies for the city of Čačak^{xxi} and its industry, as well as the Copper Rolling Mill Sevojno. The extensive construction works contributed not only to the demographic changes in the local population, but added to the already existing tensions between the newly appointed authorities of the SFRY government and the monasticism living in the gorge. This was a period of intensified pressure and surveillance when monks used to be arrested and persecuted, or harassed physically.^{xxii}

In a decision of authorities that deepened the chasm, the construction projects eventually resulted in the sinking of the St. John's Monastery that dated from the XVIth century.^{xxiii}

Today these facilities remain deeply embedded in the collective memory of the local community. At the same time, as industrial heritage faced with the currently prevailing cultural and touristic focus of the country's official heritage policies, they are imperceptibly assimilated in the dominant narrative of "Serbian Holy Mountain" that's been in revival since the late 1990s.

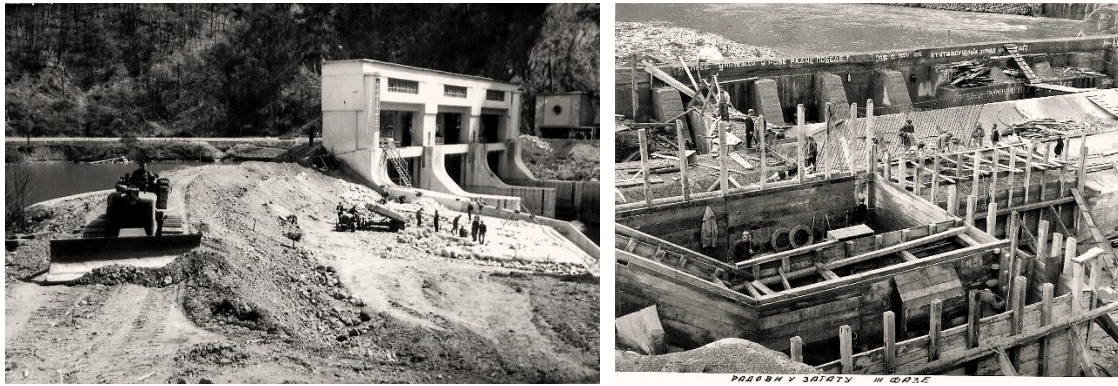


Figure 1 and Figure 2: Construction of the hydropower plant "Ovčar Banja" (left) and "Međuvršje" (right).
Source: EPS.

3. Unweaving Narratives of the New Landscape

Over the centuries, narratives played peculiar role in maintaining diverse histories of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge. The most significant and widespread is the one of the "Serbian Holy Mountain". Dominant to this date, the term was coined as a reference to Mount Athos in Greece, the holiest site of the Eastern Christian Orthodoxy.^{xxiv} It remains unknown how and when exactly the name originated. The monastic manuscript from the middle of the 17th century appears to be one of its earliest preserved traces.^{xxv} It is supposed that, since then, the term survived through travelogues which adopted it from oral histories and legends that abounded over time. People's memories, imagination and superstition mingled, embellishing stories with supernatural elements and fantastical details that further amplified the sanctity of the gorge. These all concur in a shared, poetic vision of the country's medieval past, with the church revered as its spiritual guardian. Such storytelling persisted through political and social turbulences of the modern state, albeit in subtle ways. In the official and institutional heritage context of the XXth century, though, a deeper look indicates its gradual decline, in parallel with the weakening of the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the society.

In a drastic contrast to the centuries-long seclusion of this monastic area, the XXth century symbolized changes and interventions which had a lasting impact on the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge. In the years after the Second World War, following official legislative separation of the state and the church (1946), the role of the Church in the society started decreasing as the newly established SFRY government started expropriation and nationalization.^{xxvi} Amidst the intensified agrarian reform, diverse infrastructure projects also led to the construction of new communications. This made the gorge easily accessible for visitors, as well as open for traffic and tourism. The social structure of the previously rural area changed, too. The Ovčar Banja village received new residents, mainly workers (manual labourers and engineers) employed for the construction of the two hydropower plants. These and similar projects (including electrification of the villages) slowly turned the gorge into a popular recreational and leisure area for the people of the surrounding regions. Simultaneously, exploitation of the geothermal springs stimulated health tourism in the village Ovčar Banja.

Little of the material traces of the ongoing changes in the gorge remains. Some were lost in the wars, many during the periods of renovation of the monasteries and the construction works on the plants. In such lack of sources, many local histories are being preserved only orally. Given these constraints, this investigation looks into the way that photography was employed, not only as a tool of industrialization and regime propaganda, but as an instrument supporting this landscape's narrative (re)constructions. To this end, the paper examined archival sources, focusing on the photographs and complementing texts published in the local journal during the period of construction of the hydropower plants (1946-1957). The survey encapsulated categories of the newspapers, journal articles and photographs, according to the following key words: Ovčar, Kablar, Ovčar Banja, Ovčar-Kablar Gorge, Međuvršje, hydropower plant, holy mountain, monasteries. All materials come from the digitized collection of the weekly magazine "Čačanski Glas"^{xxvii}, at the local library of the city of Čačak. The weekly was founded by a group of local intellectuals in 1932, during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Published continuously to this date, it has since survived through changes in various states and political systems and ideologies, as well as war conflicts.

Gradually, as the processes of industrialization and modernization permeated the gorge with alterations manifested both in the physical and the social realm, the narrative surrounding the landscape shifted, too. Religiosity still remained a significant underlying element of the landscape symbolism.^{xxviii} The storytelling weaved around the gorge also carried on, though with the slightly different protagonists who adequately illustrated both the time period and the general ideology of the Yugoslav society. Examples from oral history and popular culture highlight this change, sometimes combining the elements of folklore. Journalism and newspapers had a peculiar role in establishing these narrative transformations. Issues of the magazine following the Second World War and subsequent decades held little or no mention of the monasteries nor the sacred context. Couple of journal articles from the chosen time frame (1946–1957) hint somewhat negative, critical connotation – they tell of monasteries as exploiting "religious narrow-mindedness of some people"^{xxix}, and emphasize the necessity to "save" young people from the difficult and struggling life which they are forced to live in the monasteries.^{xxx} Otherwise, there are very few similarly fashioned examples, whose vocabulary reflects anti-clericalism so openly.^{xxxi} During the period prior to the First World War, the majority of the references related to the historical and cultural values^{xxxii}, religious significance^{xxxiii}, or the healing waters of the Ovčar Banja.^{xxxiv} In contrast, the articles that came up in the search, even when mentioning monastic life, disregard the religious values. They focus instead on labour identity and socialist progress. In fact, the period between 1946 and 1957 reveals a digression, with the majority of the accounts demonstrating an apparent dominance of the "socialist construction" storytelling. These editions feature texts and photographs that highlight the ideas of progress, workers' enthusiasm and commitment to building the society envisaged by the new government. Among these, there are three key points dominating the narrative development: technical innovation via collective labour, social progress and national context.

Collective industrial labour was one of the most significant symbols of the socialist life in Yugoslavia, a universally shared value embodied in the ideal of a worker as the central figure of socialist ideology.^{xxxv} Articles gathered in the first category of the analysis emphasize the technical progress embodied in the engineering endeavor to build hydropower plants. The texts and photographs in these documents abound in details depicting the process of designing, construction, and future functioning of the plants and the dams (in a simplified manner accessible for the non-expert readers). Additionally, they focus on the successes of organized labour initiatives and efforts of workers, their commitment and unity in exemplifying values promoted by the political ideology (Year II, Issue 323, date 1952 – 08 -12^{xxxvi}, Year V, Issue 19, date 1955 – 05 -18).



Figure 3: Year V, Issue 19, date 1955 – 05 -18 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive).

Cover page article, titled “Hydropower Plant Međuvršje in Trial Operation”:

“On Monday, May 16, at 5 pm, the Morava water went to the turbine of the hydroelectric power plant in Međuvršje for the first time. Two years ago, the mines were still pounding here, breaking the angry rock of the Ovčar Mt. On May 16 this year, a tense and somewhat festive atmosphere reigned over the spacious underground hall when the constitutions and valves were opened. In a few seconds, tens of thousands of liters of water started a huge generator with a power of 3,500 horsepower, which will provide 2,500 kilowatts of electricity. This was the first test drive in Međuvršje. It will last for a long time, and then the electricity from this hydroelectric power plant will flow through transmission lines to our factories and cities. Foto: Bajić”.

The described initiatives and actions fitted well into the general post-war climate in Yugoslavia, which was dominated by the project of modernization envisaged with an idea to transform formerly underdeveloped, rural country into a modern industrial state. With ambitious plans of grandiose changes, electrification and industrialization were a foundation of the formula to “eradicate economic and technical backwardness”.^{xxxvii} In line with the overall representational strategies of the Communist party, this progress was being accomplished by heroes carefully designed to showcase the ideals of socialist man in state marketing.^{xxxviii} Young people, for example, were mobilized through mass labour actions and spirit of competition in the projects of railways, highway construction, industry projects, etc. The second category of the analyzed articles shows how such processes took place in the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge. With a strong social focus, these materials paint images of the future life of the gorge and its inhabitants. The role of the modernization for improving the quality of life in the Ovčar Banja is accentuated as instrumental here. To a large extent, such reports are future-oriented, as they bring forth better life envisioned in the idea of the gorge as an example of innovative technical solutions, economic progress and health tourism development (Year VIII, Issue 323, Date 1952 – 08 -12, Year IX, Issue 373, Date 1953 -08 -18^{xxxix}, Year XIII, Issue 36, Date 1954 – 09 – 29, Year XXV, Issue 29, date 1956 – 07 – 25). Taylor and Grandits have shown that tourism in Yugoslavia served as an important tool of nation-state in building up unique Yugoslav branding^{xl}, with “vikendica” as a place both for idyl and leisure, and for retreat from industrialization towards nature.^{xli} Strategies towards tourism development were, thus, not only an integral part of the socialist marketing in the gorge, but Ovčar Banja in particular served as an example with the “vikendica” (holiday cottage) phenomenon. Though the increased illegal construction took force in the 1990s and later, the construction of these houses played important role in positioning this landscape into the dimension of “touristic” and “Yugoslavian”, as many others already were.



У Овчар Бањи, на месту где су некада биле скоро неапажљиве уцерице познатих експлоататора лековите воде Чвркића, данас је модерно уређено радничко насеље. А у непосредној близини насеља наводе се завршени радови на изградњи велике хидроцентрале. Већ се почело са монтажом машина. Идуће године наша индустрија ће на ове хидроцентрале добити милионе киловат часова електричне енергије.

На слици: Нове станбене зграде у Овчар Бањи.

Figure 4: Year VIII, Issue 323, Date 1952 – 08 – 12 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive).

Text in the upper right corner of the cover page:

“In Ovčar Banja, at the place where there used to stand barely noticeable hovels of the well-known exploiters of the medicinal water, the Čvrkićs, today there is a modern workers' settlement. And in the immediate vicinity of the settlement, final works are being carried out on the construction of a large hydroelectric power plant. The assembly of the machines has already begun. Next year, our industry will receive millions of kilowatt hours of electricity from this hydroelectric power plant. In the picture: New residential buildings in Ovčar Banja.”



Завршени радови на брани у Међувршју

Радници хидроградње „Овчар-Бања“ обавили су једна од највећих и најтежих послова. Овим данас, они су завршили изградњу бране у Међувршју, која је висока 22 м и дуга око три стотине метара. Сада ће се изградити сатнија, спољни радони, како би и ова хидроцентрала, индустрија.

У Горњем овчару

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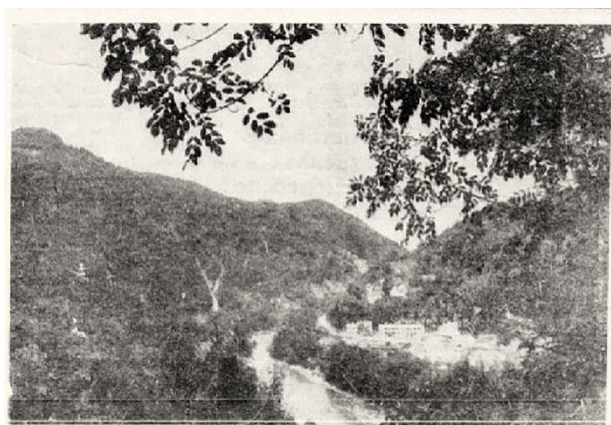
октобра ове

Радио се данас

Figure 5: Year XIII, Issue 36, Date 1954 – 09 – 29 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive). Cover page, in the central lower part, photo with short text:

“Completed works on the dam in Međuvršje Workers of the Hydro construction “Ovčar - Banja” did a great and hard job. These days, they have completed the construction of a dam in Međuvršje, which is 22 meters high and about three hundred meters long. Now, smaller, external works will continue, so that this hydroelectric power plant, as well as the one in Ovčar Banja, will start producing electricity, which is so necessary for our industry.

Photo (below text: Work was done day and night) ”.



рада на писању парохијских и преданих летописа, који би, поред црквеног, садржали и етнографско — историјски карактер. На крају, изабрана је нова управа Пододбора Удружења свештеника Српца Чачак. За председника је изабран прота Аца Санић, а за секретара Рајко Ђуриковић.

Л. О.

Овчар Бања, познато излетиште и летовалиште, све је познатија. Многи Чачани проводе свој недељни одмор у лепотану Овчарско-Кабларске кличуре.

Слика: фото „Глас“

Figure 6: Year XXV, Issue 29, date 1956 – 07 – 25 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive). In the lower central part of the title page, a photo with a short note:

“Ovčar Banja, a pleasant picnic area and summer resort, is increasingly receiving visitors. Many people from Čačak spend their weekends surrounded by the beauties of the Ovčar-Kablar gorge.

The Yugoslav communist leaders utilized the mobilizing principle of “brotherhood and unity” combined with the symbolism of a socialist worker, to gather all people of the new country into one national equilibrium.^{xlii} Particularly evident in the mobilized volunteer work of youth and their labour actions and competitions, such ideal was essential for the creation of a particular social consciousness:

The discourse of the party was, especially in the immediate post-war years, constantly permeated by speech of *udarništvo* and mobilization to it. To be *udarnik* meant to have high awareness and work for the community, for better tomorrow, for all people. To give one’s all in the favor of whole nation.^{xliii}

The third category of the analyzed materials is particularly evocative of this strategy. Compared to others, these materials do not differ significantly, but for the fact that their publication dates coincide with the most significant national holidays. Furthermore, they all appear on cover pages (even if only a photograph with a title), which in itself speaks of their relevance. These photographs capture monumental construction milestones, while the writing style remains consistent with the overall narrative. The key difference is that these texts associate, in a rather explicit way, the depictions of the construction and workers’ effort with the epithets celebrating national unity and modernity of the socialist construction of the still young nation-state (Year XIII, Issue 44, date 1954 – 11 – 29^{xliv}, Year XXV, Issue 17, Date 1956 -05- 01).



Figure 7: Year XXV, Issue 17, Date 1956 -05- 01 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive).

Cover page of the issue on the occasion of May 1, Labor Day, text with a photo of the hydroelectric power plant in the main plan:

“More and More Joyful”

Photo (below: Mounting a turbine at the hydroelectric power plant in Međuvršje)“.

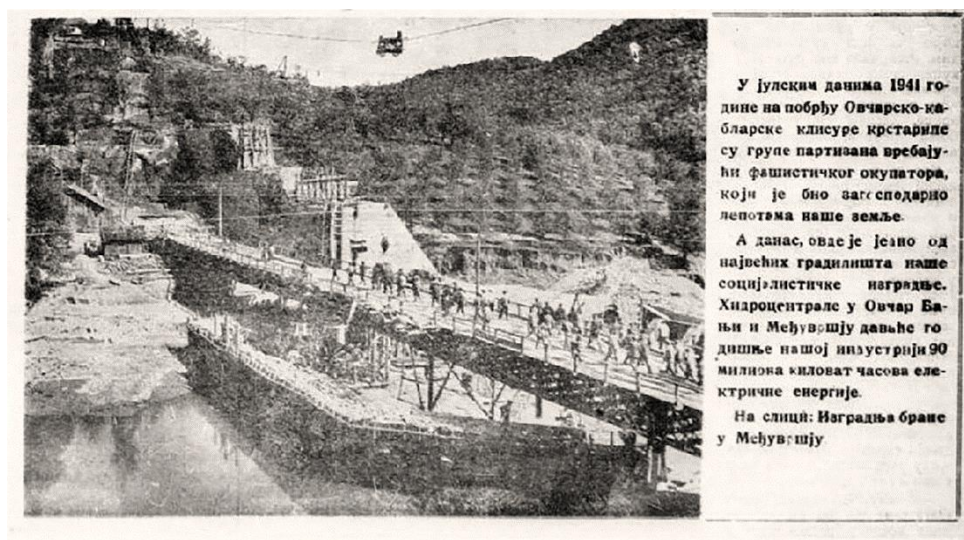


Figure 8: Year VIII, Issue 318, Date 1952 – 07 – 07 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive).

The most evocative of this narration, article published in 1952 for the Holiday of Victory. On the cover page, below the main text about the holiday, and immediately below the reminder of the oath of the Čačak partisans from 1941, a photograph of the works on the dam with the following text:

“In the days of July 1941, groups of partisans were cruising on the hills of the Ovčar-Kablar gorge, stalking the fascist occupier, who had conquered the beauties of our country.

And today, here is one of the largest construction sites of our socialist construction. Hydropower plants in Ovčar Banja and Međuvršje will provide our industry with 90 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually.

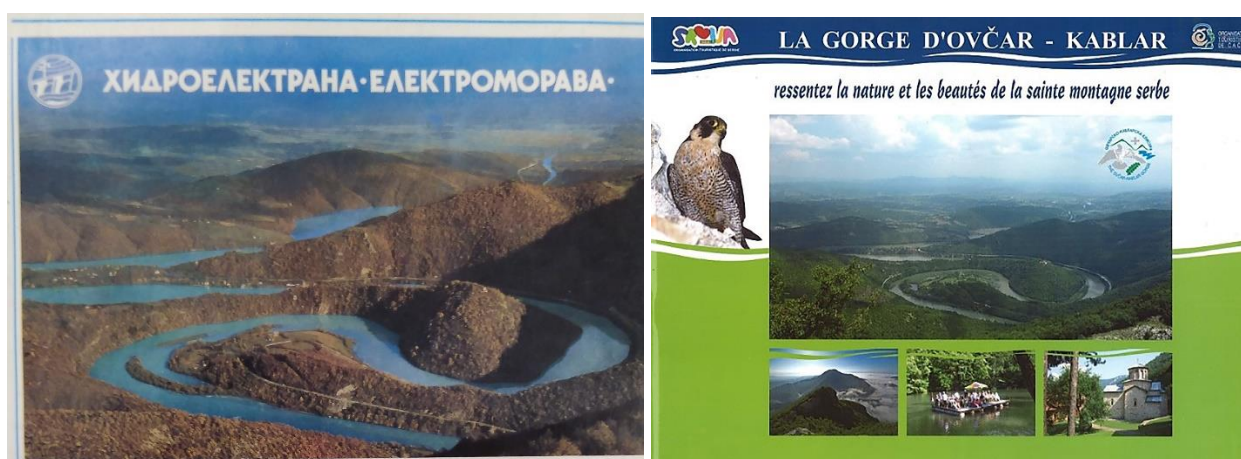
In the picture: Construction of a dam in Međuvršje “.

4. Many Stories of the Gorge, Landscape of One Time

For De Certeau, production of an image differs from its secondary production, which he defines as a hidden and peculiar combination of production – consumption, referring to its utilization.^{xlv} The storytelling about the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge perpetuated by the photographs and the texts of the 1940s and 1950s’ journal articles evoked an image of a landscape that was representative of the socialist life of the SFRY. While these photographs served as, and still remain, a unique testimony of historical moments, their publication in the magazine, displays a specific model of Yugoslavian symbolic narrative representation, especially paired with the accompanying articles. Directed via three axes of the story development (physical, social and ideological transformation), they were simultaneously part of everyday life and an indicator of a particular identity epitomizing society of the socialist man of Yugoslavia. In this incessant intertwining of progress and backwardness, facts and storytelling, visual and textual, the landscape of the gorge emerged as an amalgamation of “in-betweenness” that was so characteristic for the Yugoslav state and culture.^{xlvi} For people who participated in and witnessed its “creation”, the narrative of such landscape played instrumental role in maintaining and sustaining collective memories and sense of community. While faced with novel visions for the future of the gorge that strive to harmonize spirituality, nature protection and tourism, people of the area still preserve memories of the socialist era. In informal conversations they today unveil a tinge of nostalgia. Similar sentiment surrounds the hydropower plants which, still functioning, constitute a part of living heritage. Subject of numerous studies on collective reminiscences of the life in socialist Yugoslavia, these phenomena are collectively described as “Yugo-nostalgia”, “titostalgia” or “Yugoslavian heritage”.^{xlvii} In this way, the analysis indirectly confirms Petrović’s argument regarding the difficulty of the very conceptualization of industrial heritage of SFRY, given that “such heritage still constitutes an integral part of the personal biographies and lived experience of numerous generations”.^{xlviii}

The projects associated with the socialist narrative over time permanently altered the landscape of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge, as evidenced by this date in the qualities of the physical environment. Yet, the dilemma remains if such “technical” landscape has ever indeed overshadowed the one imagined in “Serbian Holy Mountain”. Despite the changes in the communist period, the ever-hidden storyline about pure, holy people who, in their pursuit of the divine, sanctified the very environment of the gorge, re-emerged very easily in the tumultuous moments of the 1990s, with the “post-socialist resurrection of religion”.^{xlix} The official documents and legislation for the protection of the gorge embrace the term nowadays, as it is the case with the researchers, literature, tourism. New heritage marketing venerates the beauty of nature and cultural and historical values of the monastic sites, with the still operating hydropower plants embedded in this new vision of landscape that is to be consumed and enjoyed. Echoing the understanding of landscape as a construct and a hybrid, one articulated by stories, the analysed data suggest that various landscapes of the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge (from sacred to industrial, cultural and touristic) co-exist under the umbrella of this one narrative. As for the specific sources analysed in this work, we must acknowledge the constraints of the investigation, allowing a question, to which extent such materials may suffice as an evidence of the landscape narrative (re)construction. Rather than conclusions, the paper, hence ends with suggestions for further research which is needed to support such hypothesis.

The current analysis indicates that the photographs and journal articles produced during the construction of the hydropower plants in the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge weaved a narrative which contributed to creation of a particular set of community memories, which strongly influenced people’s sense of belonging. Without any criticism, more than often these articles were loaded with political and cultural meaning – yet, while the photographs of the gorge might have focused on the socialist worker and technical achievements, the figure itself could have been anyone in the SFRY. It was, rather, his surrounding setting, the landscape of the gorge that was being articulated in the national context.¹ Embodying values and strivings shared by all the other people and regions of SFRY, the articles portrayed gorge as an integral element of the national landscape. In doing so, they delivered a powerful message to the inhabitants of the gorge, that they themselves, united by one ideology, were part of the new nation-state that was taking them into a better, modern future.



Figures 9 and 10: The most emblematic photo of the gorge – central meander of the West Morava River, with the Monastery Uspenje at the top of the hill.

Figure 9 (left): the promotional, special issue for the 35th anniversary of “ElektroMorava” company in 1985 (Source: “Čačanski Glas”, digital archive). Figure 10 (right): Cover page of the tourist brochure in 2014 (Source: Tourist Organization of Čačak).

NOTES

- ⁱ Cronon, William, 1992, "A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative," *The journal of American history*, vol. 78, no 4, p. 1350.
- ⁱⁱ Drenthen, Martin, 2013, "11. New Nature Narratives: Landscape Hermeneutics and Environmental Ethics," in Clingerman, Forrest (ed.), *Interpreting Nature*, Fordham University Press, p. 225-242.
- Sörlin, Sverker, 1999, "The articulation of territory: landscape and the constitution of regional and national identity," *Norsk geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian journal of geography*, vol. 53, no 2-3, p. 103 -112.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Sörlin, *The articulation of territory: landscape and the constitution of regional and national identity*, p. 108.
- ^{iv} Sörlin, *The articulation of territory: landscape and the constitution of regional and national identity*, p. 103 – 112.
- ^v Luthar, Breda, and Pušnik, Maruša (ed.), 2010. *Remembering utopia: the culture of everyday life in socialist Yugoslavia*. New Academia Publishing, LLC., p. 5.
- ^{vi} Radović, Srđan, 2017, "Channeling the Country's Image: Illustrated Magazine Yugoslavia (1949–1959)," *AM Časopis za studije umetnosti i medija*, vol. 13, p. 17.
- ^{vii} Chittle, Charles R., 1975, "The industrialization of Yugoslavia under the workers' self-management system: Institutional change and rapid growth," *Kiel Working Paper*, No. 26, Kiel Institute of World Economics (IfW), Kiel, p.10
- ^{viii} Todic, Milanka, 2005, *Photography and Propaganda 1945-1958*, p.108
- ^{ix} "Narrative." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/narrative>. Accessed 29 Sep. 2021.
- ^x Notes from lecture from David Campbell's website: Photography and narrative: What is involved in telling a story? 18th November 2010. Available at: <https://www.david-campbell.org/2010/11/18/photography-and-narrative/> Accessed 29 Sep. 2021.
- ^{xi} *Fotografija*, 1949, No. 3, Belgrade, p.38
- ^{xii} Political propaganda promulgated chiefly in literature, drama, music, or art.
- ^{xiii} Todic, *Photography and Propaganda 1945-1958*, p.119
- ^{xiv} M. Macarol, 1950, "Karakter i istoriska uloga naše žurnalističke fotografije," *Fotografija*, br. 7, Beograd, p.91
- ^{xv} Benjamin, W., 1983, "The author as producer," in Jennings, M. (ed.), *Walter Benjamin: Special writings Vol. 2 1927-1934*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 768-782.
- ^{xvi} Stathatos, John, 2004, "Ways of Telling," Thessaloniki Museum of Photography Available at: <https://www.stathatos.net/sites/default/files/texts/131.ways-telling-photography-and-narrative.stathatos.net.1752143877.pdf> Accessed 29 Sep. 2021.
- ^{xvii} Zlatić Ivković, Zorica, 2009, *Manastir Uspenje Kablarsko* [Monastery of The Dormition Of Kablar], Čačak: Manastir Uspenje.
- ^{xviii} Rajić, Delfina, and Timotijević, Miloš, 2012, *Manastiri Ovčarsko-kablarske klisure* [Monasteries of the Ovčar – Kablar Gorge], Belgrade: Službeni Glasnik.
- ^{xix} In translation from Serbian, Banja means Spa, in reference to the springs of geothermal waters in the village.
- ^{xx} <http://www.eps.rs/lat/dlhe/Stranice/HE-Ovcar-banja.aspx>
- ^{xxi} Čačak is the city in the direct vicinity of the Ovčar – Kablar Gorge, a center of the administrative region.
- ^{xxii} Radosavljević, Archimandrite Jovan, 2002, *Ovčarsko – Kablarski manastiri: monaški život i stradanja u 19. i 20. veku* [Ovčar – Kablar Monasteries: monastic life and suffering in the 19th and 20th century]. Novi Sad: Beseda.
- ^{xxiii} Radosavljević, Archimandrite Jovan, *Ovčarsko – Kablarski manastiri: monaški život i stradanja u 19. i 20. veku*, p. 57.
- ^{xxiv} "Српска Цема Гора" translated from Serbian literally means Serbian Athos.
- ^{xxv} Popović, Danica, 2007, « Deserts and holy mountains of medieval Serbia: Written sources, spatial patterns, architectural designs», *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, vol. 44, p. 264.
- ^{xxvi} Timotijević, Miloš, 2009, *Vek sumnje: religioznost u čačanskom kraju: 1886-2008*. [Century of a doubt: religiosity in the city of Čačak: 1886-2008.], Čačak: Legenda, Narodni muzej.
- ^{xxvii} Voice of Čačak, in translation from Serbian.
- ^{xxviii} Timotijević, Miloš, 2009, *Vek sumnje: religioznost u čačanskom kraju: 1886-2008.*, p.164-213.
- ^{xxix} Conclusion of the article published in the issue 38, year XXIV, Date 1955 – 10 – 05, page 6.
- ^{xxx} Article titled "Youth Behind Stone Walls", issue 45, year XXV, date 1956 – 11- 14, page 7.
- ^{xxxi} Article published in the issue 324, year VIII, 1952 – 08 – 19.
- ^{xxxii} Year I, Issue 24, date 1932 – 12 – 18; Year I, Issue 12, date 1933 – 03 – 19 (gorge compared to "Serbian Termopile"); Year II, Issue 25, date 1933 – 06 – 18.
- ^{xxxiii} Year II, Issue 25, date 1933 – 06 – 18 (mentioning "holy mountain"); Year III, Issue 35, Date 1934 – 09 – 01.
- ^{xxxiv} Year II, Issue 29, Date 1933 – 07 – 16; Year II, Issue 38, Year 1933 – 09 -17.
- ^{xxxv} Petrović, Tanja, 2013, "Museums and Workers: Negotiating industrial heritage in the former Yugoslavia," *Narodna umjetnost*, vol. 1, no 50, p. 96-120.

^{xxxvi} Text in the upper left section of the cover page, titled “*In Honour of the 6th CPY* Congress - Competition on the Construction Site of the Hydropower Plant in Međuvršje*”:

“*It has been a month since the youth brigades left the construction site of the hydroelectric power plant in Međuvršje, and the competition and liveliness in the work are still present. Several hundred workers, most of them young people, continued to build this important facility with the same zeal, competing as part of the Sixth Congress of the CPY. At the initiative of the workers themselves, there was a competition between the groups [...] Graphs and records show the results, and eventually the winner of the competition will be announced.*” (translated from Serbian) *CPY is Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

^{xxxvii} Kulić, Vladimir, 2009, *Land of the in-between: Modern architecture and the state in socialist Yugoslavia, 1945–65*, Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.

^{xxxviii} Radović, Srđan, 2017, “Channeling the Country’s Image: Illustrated Magazine Yugoslavia (1949–1959),” *AM Časopis za studije umetnosti i medija*, vol. 13, p. 21.

^{xxxix} Page 4. Article titled “*The construction of the hydro power plant will bring many advantages to Ovčar Banja*”.

^{xl} Taylor, Karin, and Grandits, Hannes, 2010, “Tourism and the making of socialist Yugoslavia,” in Grandits, Hannes, and Taylor, Karin (ed.), *Yugoslavia’s sunny side: a history of tourism in socialism (1950s-1980s)*, Central European University Press, p. 6.

^{xli} Taylor, Karin, 2010, “Holiday Cottages as Idyll and Investment,” in Grandits, Hannes, and Taylor, Karin (ed.), *Yugoslavia’s sunny side: a history of tourism in socialism (1950s-1980s)*, Central European University Press, p. 171 -184.

^{xlii} Taylor, Karin, and Grandits, Hannes, *Tourism and the making of socialist Yugoslavia*, p. 6.

^{xliii} Jovanović, Gorana, 2017, *Omladinske radne akcije u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*, Doctoral dissertation, Department of Interdisciplinary, Italian and Cultural Studies, University of Pula, p. 3 – 4. (translated from Croatian).

^{xliv} Published on the Day of the Republic, whole page text: page 7, text with a photo in the central part (title below the picture: Soon there will be a lake here): “Međuvršje in this November - Morava in front of the second barricade”

^{xliv} Luthar, Breda, and Pušnik, Maruša, *Remembering utopia: the culture of everyday life in socialist Yugoslavia*, p. 13.

^{xlvi} Kulić, *Land of the in-between: Modern architecture and the state in socialist Yugoslavia, 1945–65.*, p. 5-8.

^{xlvi} Spasić, Ivana, 2012, “Jugoslavija kao mesto normalnog života: sećanja običnih ljudi u Srbiji,” *Sociologija*, vol. 54, no 4, p. 577-594.

^{xlvi} Petrović, Tanja, 2013, “Museums and Workers: Negotiating industrial heritage in the former Yugoslavia,” *Narodna umjetnost*, vol. 1, no 50, p. 96-120.

^{xlix} Troeva, Evgenia, Hristov, Petko, 2017, “Sacred Geography of the Post-Socialist Balkans: Transformations of Religious Landscape and Pilgrimage: An Introduction,” *Southeastern Europe*, vol. 41, no 1, p. 1-18.

^{li} The all-pervading use of plural and omnipresent “us” and/or “our” in the language of the articles is another strong indicator of this.