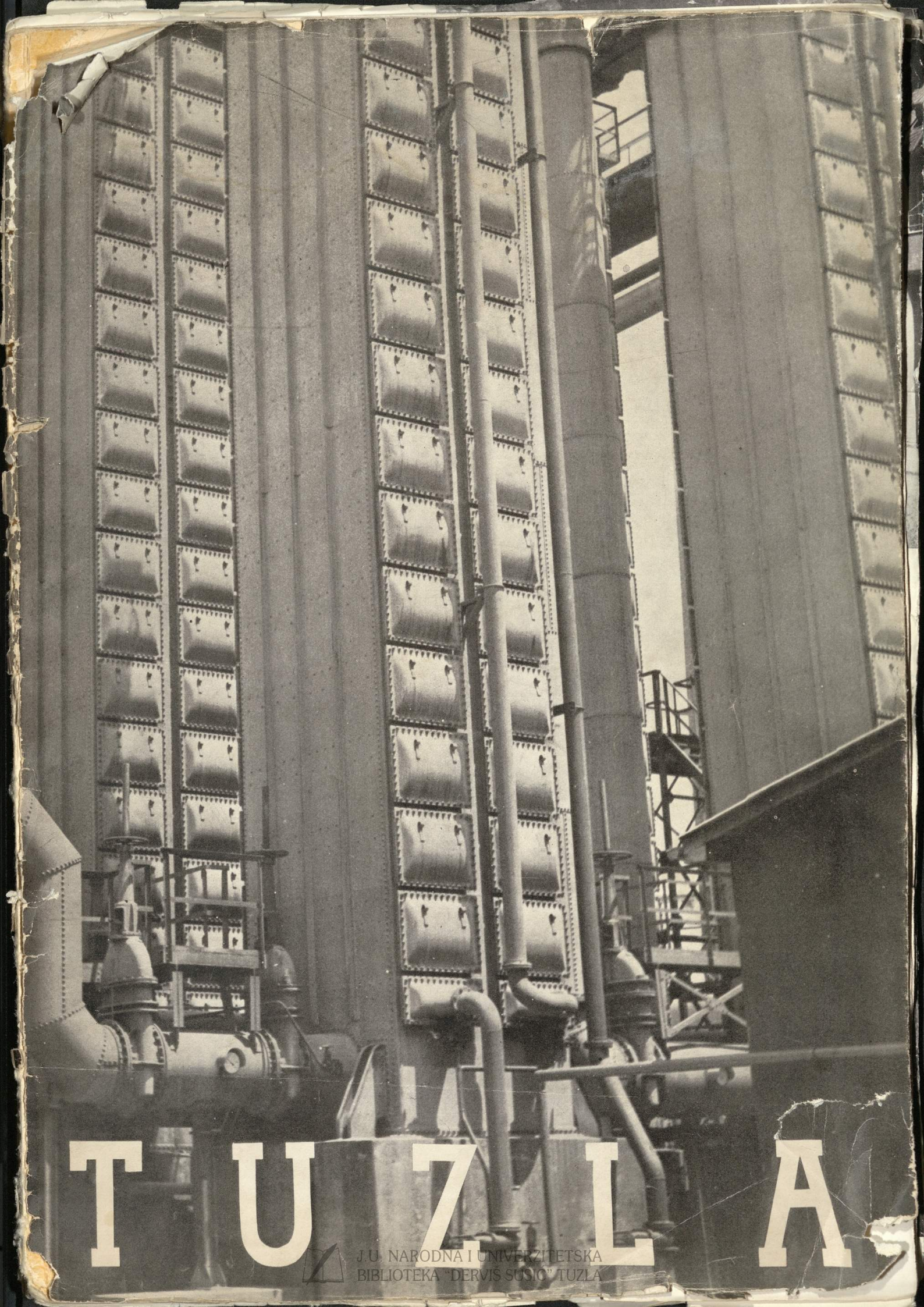




TUZLA

J.U. NARODNA I UNIVERZITETSKA
BIBLIOTEKA "DERVIŠ SUSIĆ" TUZLA

The District
OF TUZLA

A REVIEW
of the Old the New
in
Bosnia and Hercegovina

by
SRETEN LOPANDIĆ
and
DERVIŠ SUŠIĆ

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THE territory of the present district of Tuzla is one of the largest in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and it is one of the most important and economically strongest industrial centres in Yugoslavia. In fact the district could justifiably be called a Yugoslavia in miniature, for its territory is rich in natural wealth.

After the war, as over the whole of the country, there was a rapid development in the industrial and productive forces here. The heroism of work and the great results achieved after the war by doing away with the economic backwardness, all the results and contrasts that, are best seen here. But the reflection of all this lies not only in increased production but also in the spiritual change wrought in men's lives.

DEPOSITS OF SALT IN TUZLA

dense forests, and the favourable climatic conditions. The very extensive deposits of salt, the wide and made it possible for the whole population to concentrate its settlements in the region of Tuzla as

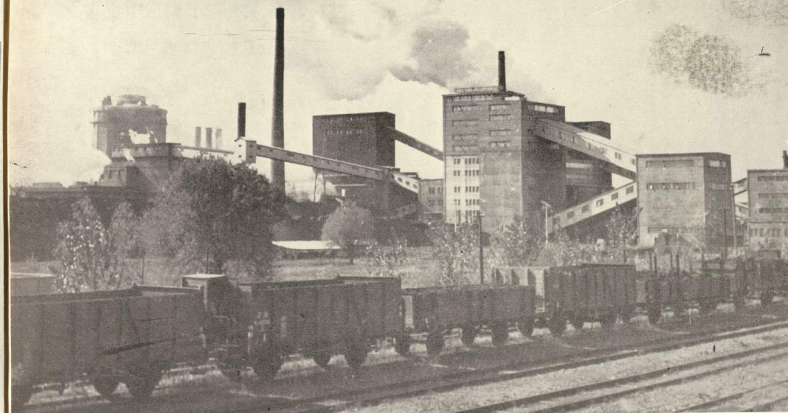
far back as pre-historic times. Not long ago a very large Neolithic settlement was discovered, showing that these first inhabitants of Tuzla used salt in their food. The depth to which the remains of this settlement went down — thirteen and a half feet — and the size of the area covered, large areas both in Donja and Gornja Tuzla, prove that the settlement was one which lasted a long time. Many remains were found, and the fine kitchen utensils of black, grey and red polished pottery, different kinds of ornaments, the colouring of the utensils, things worked from bone, piles of stone axes, knives and scrapers, all represent a high level of prehistoric culture, which flourished here uninterruptedly for a long time. Large quantities of a kind of large barley, the bones of animals, deer, boar and cattle, shells from the river and the hard shells of various nuts were found to a depth of several feet. These show that the riches of the Tuzla basin were even then very varied and offered the settlers conditions for a high standard of life in those far-off times.

The large number of tombstones and other various remains, which are often found lying in the earth, show that this settlement was established in prehistoric times here because of the immense quantity of salt present. This whole territory was called "Soli," mean-



Tuzla: market day

(Taken by M. Pavić)

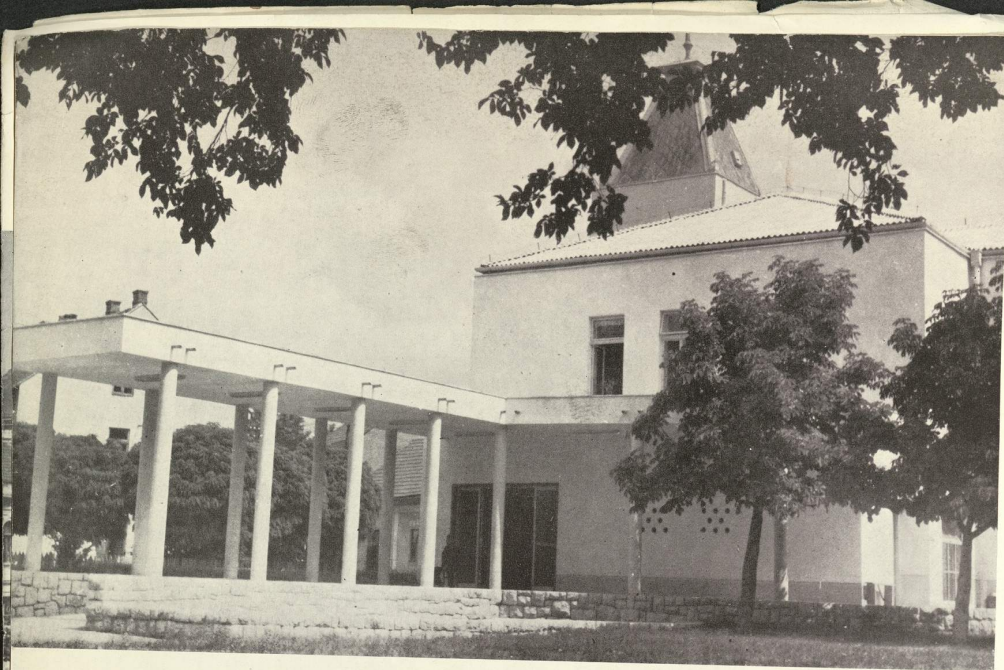


Lukavac: part of machinery of coke factory

Banovići: rammer on coal mine

(Taken by I. Medar)





Tuzla: National Theatre

(Taken by I. Medar)

ing "salt," during the Middle Ages. In a dialect of Northern Albania, the word "bos-aes" indicates a place where salt is obtained by evaporation methods. Therefore some historians consider that not only Tuzla (Soli), but in fact the whole of Bosnia derives its name from "Soli." But there are very few indications as to the method used during that period to obtain salt. The first mention of methods of exploitation date back to the Turkish period, but there are some indications that salt was obtained by the Romans by means of spreading white cloth which had been soaked in salt water, to dry.

The difficulty of placing historic data precisely is a result of the fact, that documents relating to various questions are really to be met at every step in the surroundings of the town. Even today the Soli Trg, the salt market, exists in Tuzla. During the Turkish occupation, salt water was boiled in large containers there and salt obtained by evaporation. The Turks charged taxes for this and paid officials there from the proceeds.

Several ways used to obtain salt in those times are known. Besides soaking knitted articles in salt water and drying them, a finer quality salt was obtained by boiling salt water in large shallow dishes. It was obtained for animals by digging large holes in the ground, piling stakes in them, setting them on fire, and pouring over them salt water, which quickly evaporated leaving the deposit of salt behind. There was also a practice of making several sieves from boughs of

trees, one on top of the other, and when salt water was poured over these, the salt remained on the leaves of the branches.

Not counting the other methods used for obtaining salt in the time immediately preceding the Austrian occupation, about 500 lbs of salt were produced daily from the two salt wells there.

The value of this product made this district a highly coveted one, and many rulers throughout history fought for the possession of it. Consequently it had many different overlords, and many remains from the Middle Ages testify to this fact.

INTERESTING MEDIEVAL REMAINS

Tuzla as the centre both of this district and of East Bosnia was not very well-known during the Middle Ages. Moreover it was dependent on other neighbouring towns, because, amongst other things, of its geographical position. It was then a small settlement. During the Middle Ages this district belonged at different times to Serbian overlords, to Bosnian rulers or Hungarian kings.

The town of Tuzla began to develop more rapidly only after the Turkish occupation. It then became the centre of the kadilik and the seat of the sherif right at the beginning of the occupation. Meanwhile it was populated by settlers who worked for the wealthier feudal lords by using salt water to obtain salt.



Tuzla: new flats

After the Turkish withdrawal from the greater part of Slavonia to the banks of the river Sava, and the establishment of the frontier there, a citadel was built in Tuzla, which was fortified as time went on. It resembled a feudal castle in appearance, by its construction, and by its location, which was the same as medieval castles usually occupied. It was, however, demolished by the close of the last century.

The citadel of Srebrenik had the greatest influence on the district of Tuzla, or rather Soli, as it was known before the Turkish invasion. That citadel is still standing and represents one of the best preserved historic buildings of its kind in Bosnia and Hercegovina. It is situated by the railway line between Tuzla and Brčko. It is built on top of a rock-mass above the river Tinja, and dominates the whole valley. With its beauty and wildness, it is today one of the greatest attractions for the visitor to these parts. It was built by the Hungarians in the second half of the twelfth century, and was under the sway of the rulers of Bosnia for a long period. For a time it was even the seat of the state, but it twice fell under the domain of Serbian lords, and it was finally captured by the Turks in 1512.

Many legends, of which some have historical foundation, are connected with the history of this fortress. Bloody battles were waged under its walls, especially during the persecution of the Bogumils, the Manichee heretical sect in Bosnia. In the history of their sorties into Bosnia and interference in Bosnian affairs, the Hungarians always went along the valley of the river Tinja. The first, and in fact the only

obstacle which they encountered on the way towards the seat of the Bosnian rulers, was this same Srebrenik.

During the invasion of the Balkan peninsula by the Turks, Srebrenik became an important strategic centre. It developed rapidly until its fall to the Turks, but from then onwards it stagnated, until eventually it was left completely deserted. At its foot a settlement has since been established, which is now the seat of a small community. The high walls, with the ruins of the ruler's palace, and many other remains of half ruined forts, are still a reminder of the events of the past.

Today it is a unique place often visited by tourists and others. Besides Srebrenik there are also other well-preserved ruins from the Middle Ages in the direction of Kladanj and Olovo.

Soon after the Turks came, they devoted much energy to building a settlement where Tuzla today stands. Because of the salt found there, they gave it the name of Tuzla, since "tuz" is Turkish for salt. There are actually two of these settlements, lying about six or seven miles apart. They were called Donja and Gornja Tuzla — Lower and Upper Tuzla, or in Turkish, "Tuzlaizir" and "Tuzlaibala" (Solina Inferiore and Solina Superiore). Upper Tuzla was a larger settlement than Lower Tuzla. But the geographical situa-

