

**GENDER AND WAR IN THE YUGOSLAV MEDIA:  
The Figure of the *Partizanka* in the Making of the Yugoslav New Woman**

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## Abstract

The woman as a participant of the People's Liberation Struggle (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, NOB) became one of its symbols of memory. She was also recognized as the originator of an emancipation process rooted in Marxist doctrine. This dissertation focuses particularly on one group of women who participated in the war, the *partizanke*, and the memory of them as it was constructed and developed primarily in the printed press and connected to the idea of women's emancipation.

My main interest is in the connection between the wartime symbol of women's ultimate advance into the male dominion – the female soldier – and the creation, elaboration, and devaluation of the Yugoslav New Woman in the postwar period. I focus my analysis on the four magazines that became popular among Yugoslav audiences, especially women, under the various political and social circumstances of Yugoslavia's existence. I analyze two magazines edited by women for women, the educational women's magazine *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*), published by communist activist women and the fashion magazine *Svijet* (*World*), inspired exclusively by Western trends. The other two magazines – the family weekly *Arena* and the only Yugoslav men's magazine *Start* – were edited (predominantly) by men, and although they did not cater to the interests of their female readers, they were regularly purchased by large numbers of women.

The study finds that the editors-in-chief and editorial teams profiled each of the explored magazines as an opinion platform. Accordingly, each of the selected magazines developed their own take on the memory culture of the NOB, which resulted in distinctive documentary projects

that, in the words of Joke Hermes, offered their readers very specific “interpretive repertoires.”<sup>1</sup> Although *partizanke* tended to believe that “equality was in the četa,”<sup>2</sup> this research shows that such a consideration was not widely accepted. Moreover, although both men and women regarded the position in the fighting ranks the most prestigious during the war, this was not reflected for women in the postwar era. When representing a symbol of wartime femininity, the journalists subjected the achievements of the NOB to processes of reinterpretation in accordance to the different definitions of women’s emancipation and equality in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>1</sup> Joke Hermes, *Reading Women’s Magazines: An Analysis of Everyday Media Use* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Denver: Arden Press, 1990), 99.

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## List of Abbreviations and Glossary

**AFŽ** – *Antifašistička fronta žena* (Antifascist Front of Women)

**AVNOJ** – *Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije* (Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia)

**KDAŽ** – *Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena* (Conference for the Social Activity of Women)

**KPH** – *Komunistička partija Hrvatske* (Communist Party of Croatia)

**KPJ** – *Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)

**NOB** – *Narodnooslobodilačka borba* (People's Liberation Struggle)

**NOP** – *Narodnooslobodilački pokret* (People's Liberation Movement)

**NOV** – *Narodnooslobodilačka vojska* (People's Liberation Army)

**SBOTIČJ** – *Savez bankovnih, osiguravajućih, trgovačkih i industrijskih činovnika Jugoslavije* (Union of Banking, Insurance, Trade and Industry Clerks of Yugoslavia)

**SKOJ** – *Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije* (Communist Youth Union of Yugoslavia)

**SKJ** – *Savez komunista Jugoslavije* (League of Communists of Yugoslavia)

**SSRN** – *Socijalistički savez radnog naroda* (Socialist Alliance of Working People)

**SUBNOR** – *Savez udruženja boraca narodnooslobodilačkog rata Jugoslavije* (Federal Association of the Veterans of People's Liberation War of Yugoslavia)

**SŽD** – *Savez ženskih društava* (Union of Women Societies)

**ZAVNOH** – *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske* (State Antifascist Council of People's Liberation of Croatia)

**afežejka** (PL **afežejke**) – female member of the AFŽ

**partizanka** (PL **partizanke**) – female partisan

**skojevka** (PL **skojevke**) – female member of the SKOJ

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## Introduction

The official narrative of the People's Liberation Struggle (NOB) was based on several founding claims. Yugoslavia was therein conceptualized as one of the victims of the policy of destruction developed by Nazi Germany and emulated by a number of its allies. Thanks to Josip Broz Tito, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), and its policy of brotherhood and unity, the narrative went on to say, Yugoslav peoples made a significant contribution to the European resistance movement during World War II. One of the founding claims about the NOB was also that the women who participated in this war on the side of the partisans, not only contributed to the military victory and the creation of socialist Yugoslavia, but also won their equality in the emerging country, becoming thusly the first Yugoslav New Women. Who those women were, how they fought, what their emancipation process entailed, and what it meant for women in peacetime, was open to interpretation.

The leadership of the women's organization created during the war, the Antifascist Front of Women (*Antifašistička fronta žena*, AFŽ), documented women's wartime activities most extensively. As Maca Gržetić, the first president of the AFŽ of Croatia, summarized in 1945, "[w]omen's participation in the People's Liberation Struggle had a range of forms: from aiding with medical supplies, provisions, and uniforms, carrying out courier and intelligence services, to demonstrations against the occupiers, and participation in sabotage, diversions and armed struggle in partisan units."<sup>3</sup> She further qualified women's participation in the war by saying that "we

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<sup>3</sup> Maca Gržetić, "Iz organizacionog referata Mace Gržetić" ("From the Organizational Report of Maca Gržetić"), in *Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi, vol. 2 (Women of Croatia in the People's Liberation Struggle, vol. 2)*, ed. Marija Šoljan (Zagreb: Izdanje glavnog odbora Saveza ženskih društava, 1955), 90. "To učešće žena u narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi imalo je najraznovrsnije oblike: od pomoći u sanitetskom materijalu, u hrani i odijelu, vršenju kurirske i obavještajne službe do demonstracija protiv okupatora i učešća u sabotazama, diverzijama i u oružanoj borbi partizanskih odreda."

women of Croatia, like all Yugoslav women, are also proud and happy because in this war we have achieved complete equality, freedom and justice, which befits a woman as a human being and a fighter.”<sup>4</sup> The leading women of the AFŽ aimed to meaningfully represent a multitude of activities that women engaged in during the NOB. The most prominent became the figure of the woman fighter (*žena borac*), in which the functionaries of the women’s organization wanted to unite the most essential women’s experiences of support, struggle, victory, and emancipation. In accordance with the Yugoslav political culture that explicitly linked political, economic, cultural and other achievements with the NOB and war victory,<sup>5</sup> the *žene borci* were credited as pioneers of the process of emancipation of women in Yugoslavia.

The wartime experiences of women who served as soldiers in the partisan army, the *partizanke*, were also subsumed under this umbrella term. This dissertation focuses on the ways in which differing media workers involved in the commemorative practices dealt with the roles women assumed during the NOB, particularly the *partizanke*. With this focus, I situate my research within scholarship on gender and socialism, especially work that addresses the cultural memory of the NOB. I base my inquiry on the questioning of the argument that the figure of the *partizanka* was a member of the partisan pantheon equal to the male partisan soldier in the immediate postwar period. According to this line of reasoning, starting with the backlash of the 1950s that manifested itself in the dissolution of the AFŽ in 1953, the figure of the *partizanka* was gradually and relatively straightforwardly marginalized over time.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to this, I argue that the *partizanka* was never

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 89. “(...) mi žene Hrvatske, kao i cijele Jugoslavije, ponosne smo i sratne (sic) i zato što smo u toj borbi izvojevale punu ravnopravnost, slobodu i prava, koja ženi kao čovjeku i borcu pripadaju.”

<sup>5</sup> Maruša Pušnik, “Media Memorial Discourses and Memory Struggles in Slovenia: Transforming Memories of the Second World War and Yugoslavia,” *Memory Studies* 12, no. 4 (2019): 443, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017720254>.

<sup>6</sup> The most important in this respect are: Renata Jambrešić Kirin, *Dom i svijet (Home and World)* (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008); with Reana Senjković, “Legacies of the Second World War in Croatian Cultural Memory: Women as Seen through the Media,” *Aspasia* 4 (2010): 71-96; Jelena Batinić, “After the War Was Over,” in *Women*

favorably positioned, either in the official narrative of the women's organization or anywhere else. Primarily, the figure of the *partizanka* was never on a par with the male partisan. More importantly for this research project, she was never portrayed as equal to the other representatives that were utilized to express the wide range of women's wartime experiences in the NOB, such as a partisan mother (*majka partizanka*) and wife, an activist of the women's organization, or a partisan nurse. Although participation in combat units during the war was considered the most prestigious position a woman could hold reflecting at the same time "the specific maximalist ethics of the struggle,"<sup>7</sup> neither prestige nor ethics were reflected in the postwar cultural memory of the NOB. Because of the symbolic power of this kind of militarized femininity, *partizanke* were vital for the viability of the claim that women fought for and won their equality during the war. However, although it has been asserted that women's emancipation was won along with peace, this research finds that commemorative practices largely excluded Yugoslav women soldiers – thusly, women who managed to force their way into the bastion of masculinity, in some cases to high command ranks – from direct involvement in inspiring the process of emancipation and the emergence of the Yugoslav New Woman.

As Cynthia Enloe writes, the remasculinization of the armies was set in motion by the governments on both sides of the rapidly materializing Iron Curtain following the end of World War II. That is, she explains, "remasculinization was one of the patriarchal rewards of a victorious peacetime. Peace meant normalcy. Normalcy meant soldiers would be male."<sup>8</sup> More precisely, Karen Petrone notes that in modern Europe there is an ideal of masculinity based on military

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*and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance*, 213-257 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015). I deal with this and some other literature in the literature review section.

<sup>7</sup> Gal Kirn, *The Partisan Counter-Archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 51, 89.

<sup>8</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers, The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 268.

identity and an “ideally feminine civilian counterpart” alongside it. While both are questioned and contested during periods of upheavals, they usually become “anchors for post-revolutionary and postwar retrenchment.”<sup>9</sup> What is more, the practice of “selective remembering” of wars, which tends to favor militarized versions of masculinity as well as forms of femininity that are likely to further consolidate the image of a male war hero, is inextricably linked to the process of “retrenchment.”<sup>10</sup>

Against the tendencies favoring “remasculinization,” “normalization,” and “anchoring,” this dissertation attempts to overcome the discourses inherited from the Cold War that are still strongly visible in scholarship on gender (and war) in the countries of state-socialism.<sup>11</sup> In line with Anna Krylova’s considerations of the methodological possibilities provided by gender analytics in the research on the history of socialism,<sup>12</sup> it adopts an approach that has the potential to reveal the fluidity of understanding women’s wartime engagement and their relevance for creating the conditions for the emergence of the Yugoslav New Woman. By tracing how various media practitioners shaped multiple gendered representations by way of written word and through visual means, the dissertation explains how the cultural memory of the People’s Liberation Struggle acted as a prolific site for the production of gender knowledge throughout the researched period, from the end of the war in 1945 until Tito’s death in 1980.

As socialist modernization enterprise involved a series of interventions to be communicated to the presupposed masses through the (primarily) printed press, popular publications are an excellent

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<sup>9</sup> Karen Petrone, “Gender, Militarism, and the Modern Nation in Soviet and Russian Cultures,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Gender in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, eds. Katalin Fábíán, Janet Elise Johnson, Mara Lazda (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 196-197, quotes on 197.

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Enloe, “Foreword,” in *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, eds. Ayse Gül Altınay and Andrea Petó (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), xx.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Krylova, “Legacies of the Cold War and the Future of Gender in Feminist Histories of Socialism,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Gender*, 41-51.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

source for observing what was “publicly acceptable” in a particular socialist society at different stages of social and political development.<sup>13</sup> In addition, unlike Western means of mass communication, all media in socialist systems were originally intended as means of disseminating political messages, “as a political stage.”<sup>14</sup> Although media in Yugoslavia developed into an amalgam of practices attributed to both Western as well as socialist media, Yugoslav press theory, according to Gertrude J. Robinson, emphasized the importance of social responsibility throughout its tumultuous existence.<sup>15</sup> As Marko Zubak elaborates, reflections on responsible socialist media as public forums open to creative interpretation and open discussion flourished in Yugoslavia, especially during the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> Such evolution of Yugoslav media influenced public practices of commemoration. Despite its largely marginal position, the figure of the *partizanka* was still considered and (re)interpreted across the media.

The dissertation presents the analysis of four representatives of the Yugoslav popular press who conceptualized socialist values in different ways and promoted them to different social groups. The study finds that the editors-in-chief and their editorial teams profiled each of the explored magazines as an opinion platform. Accordingly, each of the selected magazines developed its own take on the cultural memory of the NOB, which resulted in distinctive documentary projects that, in the words of Joke Hermes, offered their audiences specific “interpretive repertoires.”<sup>17</sup> In this respect, the methodological reflections of Kristin Roth-Ey and Larissa Zakharova on the possibilities of researching the Soviet public sphere and therein active media can be applied to

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<sup>13</sup> Sabina Mihelj, “Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West: Uplifting the Working People, Entertaining the Masses, Cultivating the Nation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 3 (2011): 514.

<sup>14</sup> Liesbet van Zoonen, “Popular Culture as Political Communication, an Introduction,” *Javnost – The Public* 7, no. 2 (2007): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2000.11008740>.

<sup>15</sup> Gertrude J. Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communication in Yugoslavia* (Urbana, Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Marko Zubak, “The Yugoslav Youth Press (1968-1980): Student Movements, Subcultures and Communist Alternative Media” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2013), 31-32, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Hermes, *Reading Women’s Magazines*, 8.

socialist Yugoslavia. They write that “the categories of ‘resistance’ and ‘support,’ or ‘belief’ and ‘disbelief,’ are inherently inadequate for the task of analyzing authoritarian socialist societies. The majority of people have spent their lives between these poles and have occupied different positions in relation to them over the course of a lifetime.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the authors go on to explain that the related scholarly insistence on the dichotomy between official and unofficial cultures in socialist societies does not prove its analytic validity. Rather, Roth-Ey and Zakharova advocate for the possibility of the simultaneous coexistence of a number of mutually interacting levels of communication.<sup>19</sup>

This study builds on Roth-Ey and Zakharova’s understanding of communication in the socialist public spheres as an eclectic and complex system. It demonstrates how each of the newsrooms actively constructed gendered representations of war. Although one among them, developed by the AFŽ, can be regarded as the “true” official version of women’s wartime experiences, it had no particular influence on the interpretations that existed in the other three analyzed magazines (or in a number of other materials consulted for this project). Instead, I argue, there were several officially recognized or at least tolerated strategies for dealing with the memory of the NOB in the Yugoslav media. Such an understanding of the medialized memory resists a unified, linear chronology and instead allows for the consideration of multiple perspectives and differing meaning-making approaches rooted in the work of individuals and small collectives.

Due to the vast amount of available material, I decided to focus on the popular printed press published in one Yugoslav republic, Croatia. Whenever possible, I made an effort to explain how a particular magazine is relevant in the context of Yugoslavia as a whole and used other materials

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<sup>18</sup> Kristin Roth-Ey and Larissa Zakharova, “Communications and Media in the USSR and Eastern Europe,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 56, no. 2-3 (2015): 3, <https://doi.org/10.4000/monderusse.8182>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

(primary sources as well as memoirs and other literature, films, and music) that were popular and significant throughout the state. Although my research is situated in the context of a single republic, I think it reflects the general Yugoslav trends. Therefore, throughout the dissertation I will refer to the Yugoslav, not the Croatian press, to the Yugoslav, not the Croatian cultural memory, and so on.

The first two analyzed magazines – the educational women’s magazine *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) published by communist activist women, and the fashion magazine *Svijet* (*World*) inspired by Western trends – were edited by women for female audiences. As they complemented each other, I examined them with the same research questions in mind. For this reason, I introduced them together in a short opening segment. Given that prominent members of the AFŽ, that is, of the Yugoslav political elite, were the first and only ones who continuously maintained practices of remembering women’s contributions to the NOB, this dissertation first offers an examination and appraisal of their commemorative activities in one of their magazines, *Žena u borbi*, as an attempt to create the official narrative of Yugoslav women’s history. *Svijet*, the only other women’s magazine published in Croatia since 1953, presented its audiences with varying interpretations of the war that bore little resemblance to those in *Žena u borbi*. However, both agreed on two things. For both editorial boards, the women’s emancipation was an unquestionable if imperfect fact of socialist modernity. In addition, both found it equally difficult to incorporate the *partizanke* into their considerations of the war. *Žena u borbi* endorsed women’s wartime experience as the origin of the emancipation process and thus of the New Woman. The *partizanke*’s participation, however, did not fit into their rather neat interpretation of women’s empowerment. *Svijet*, on the other hand, eschewed writing about the NOB, even when commemorating the anniversaries of the AFŽ’s wartime conferences, preferring to focus on the current benefits, but also the negative sides, of the process of emancipation in Yugoslavia. Its New Woman was rooted in her contemporaneity. Such

framing allowed this magazine to reconsider the narrative of women's wartime successes but did not lead to the modification of the strategy for portraying the *partizanke*.

The illustrated family weekly *Arena*, which appeared in 1959, and the men's magazine *Start*, which shook the public in 1969, were edited by predominantly male editorial teams. Their content, particularly contributions about the NOB, reflected how men struggled with as well as learned about the idea of women's emancipation. When explaining how the destabilization of gender roles in the aftermath of World War I affected communists across Europe, Eric D. Weitz noted that representations of women and interpretations of women's roles varied greatly. According to him, "[t]he express commitment to women's emancipation provided a core set of beliefs (...) but these beliefs could intersect in a highly mobile fashion with all sorts of other conceptions of women."<sup>20</sup> The exploration of *Arena* and *Start*, moreover, calls into question their journalists' understanding and support of core beliefs regarding women's emancipation during the war and following its end. The process of adapting to these ideas, as well as the countermovement of adapting these ideas to already existing preconceptions is clearly visible in the way journalists in both newsrooms wrote about women in the NOB. Similar to the women in *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet*, the men in *Arena* and *Start* very rarely included the *partizanke* in their narratives of the People's Liberation Struggle. I suggest that, while the women's magazines did not easily connect their activities to the notion of emancipation in socialist society, the journalists of *Arena* and *Start* had difficulty conceptualizing the *partizanke*'s endangered femininity.

This research project poses a number of questions aimed at highlighting the multiple narratives woven into the so-called partisan myth, the interpretation of the People's Liberation Struggle: What

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<sup>20</sup> Eric D. Weitz, "The Heroic Man and the Ever-Changing Woman: Gender and Politics in European Communism, 1917-1950," in *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, eds. Laura Levine Frader and Sonya O. Rose (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 314.

kinds of wartime femininity were available in the print and how did they fit with the notion of the New Woman? What notions of femininity (and masculinity) were promoted and sustained, and what kinds of representations were built upon them? That is, what kinds of wartime relationships between women and men were promoted as an appropriate basis for a foundational, legitimizing narrative of the new state that could also serve as a medium able for unifying Yugoslav society? In connection, how were notions of proper manhood and womanhood (re)shaped by journalists over time, and which stories and which women emerge through their journalistic work? Who is remembered, and which women continue to remain absent?

## **Chapter 1 – Framework for Studying the *Partizanka***

### **1.1 Literature Review and Place of this Project in Existing Historiography**

Historical research is increasingly focused on the state socialist countries, including its Yugoslav variety. My dissertation can be placed within a large field of research that deals with gender and socialism. Within this field, it is located at the intersection of work studying gender in cultural memory and the history of media in state socialist countries. Here, I would like to begin by pointing to key works that examine women's involvement in the military theatres of the Second World War in Eastern and Central Europe, as well as the development of its cultural memories that commemorated, to varying degrees, both the female contribution and the female experience of the war.

Feminist research in the last decade has drawn attention to the gendered nature of remembering and forgetting wars. Although wars have always been imbued with women's pride, courage, strength, aggressiveness, and/or adventurousness, as well as their tenderness, empathy, and care,

women's roles have usually been underrepresented and interpreted as marginal to the overall war effort in order to maintain the appearance that war is a masculine exploit. Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield's edited volume *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* is an influential study that provides an excellent insight into the situated reproduction and reconstitution of the "women/peace men/war" trope.<sup>21</sup> In the introduction, the editors note that the assumed dichotomy between the male-dominated battlefield and the female-dominated home front was nowhere more often violated than in twentieth-century Eastern and Southeastern Europe. They explain that these territories were repeatedly subjected to ethnic conflict and civil war, as well as repression of civilian populations that caused many war-related adversities such as forced migration and displacement, starvation, disease, and gender-based violence.<sup>22</sup> Thus, when Malgorzata Fidelis wrote the book review of this 2006 publication, she expressed surprise that there were no more publications on gender policies in the time of and after wars in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.<sup>23</sup> Ten years later, Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető noted that in the increasingly interesting field of war and militarism studies from a feminist perspective, scholars still rarely include memory studies and *vice versa*.<sup>24</sup> Notably, in this part, I first focus on the literature that deals with the Soviet Union as a relevant comparative example and only then on the literature on the Yugoslav case study.<sup>25</sup> While

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<sup>21</sup> It is also known as the "protector/protected" trope, and Iris Marion Young terms it the "protection racket." She defined it and explained its functioning and purpose in "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State," *Sings* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 1-25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/375708>.

<sup>22</sup> Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur (eds.), "Introduction," in *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1-21.

The same opinions were expressed by Helena Goscilo in the introduction of the book *Embracing Arms: Cultural Representation of Slavic and Balkan Women in War*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Yana Hashamova (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2012), 1-24.

<sup>23</sup> Malgorzata Fidelis, review of *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, eds. Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, *HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews* (January 2008), <https://networks.h-net.org/node/19384/reviews/19868/fidelis-wingfield-and-bucur-gender-and-war-twentieth-century-eastern>.

<sup>24</sup> Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető, "Introduction. Uncomfortable Connections: Gender, Memory, War," in *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories. Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, eds. Ayşe Gül Altınay and Andrea Pető (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> An interesting and in many ways unique case study – that is rarely included in considerations of the Soviet or Yugoslav case studies – is the participation of women in the military forces led by the Greek Communist Party

research on women who participated in the Great Patriotic War has attracted some of the scholarly attention and has generated significant publications in recent years, there are not many scholars who study the role of women in Yugoslav cultural memory, especially the cultural memory of the NOB.<sup>26</sup>

The contributions of Soviet women to the Great Patriotic War and their subsequent commemoration have earned some scholarly attention. For instance, in her book *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat*, Reina Pennington devotes the final chapter to demobilization and the postwar experiences of the women pilots. The author notes that the cultural perception of women's roles in the Soviet Union did not really change following the end of the war. Her final point is that despite the positive contribution of women pilots to the Soviet war effort, this did not contribute to a change in traditional attitudes about women's place in the Soviet polity. War and military service were viewed for generations as acceptable activities for women in emergencies, and the Great Patriotic War epitomized precisely that, an emergency and nothing more.<sup>27</sup>

Some scholars questioned this hypothesis arguing that the world of media remained open to a variety of interpretations of appropriate roles for women, both in war and in peace. For instance,

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during the Greek Resistance (1941-1944) and then the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). The author who has published relatively detailed considerations (and included reflections of the development of the memory of the wars) is Margarite Poulos: "Gender, Civil War and National Identity: Women Partisans during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949)," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46, no. 3 (2000): 418-427; "From Heroines to Hyenas: Women Partisans during the Greek Civil War," *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 3 (2001): 481-501; *Arms and the Woman: Just Warriors and Greek Feminist Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> The ruptures in the cultural memory of the NOB following the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, as well as the memory of these wars, reveal a similar imbalance. This area of research is very prolific, but the gender perspective tends to be neglected. A review of the related literature was recently provided by Vjeran Pavlaković: "Memory Politics in the Former Yugoslavia," *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 18 (2020): 9-32, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36874/RIESW.2020.2.1>.

<sup>27</sup> Reina Pennington, "'Do Not Speak of the Services You Rendered': Women Veterans of Aviation in the Soviet Union," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 9 (1996): 120-151, DOI: 10.1080/13518049608430229; idem, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), chapter 7 "Demobilization and Postwar Experiences," 143-160.

in the book chapter “Neither Erased nor Remembered: Soviet ‘Women Combatants’ and Cultural Strategies of Forgetting in Soviet Russia,” Anna Krylova examines the contributions of Soviet women soldiers in a variety of print media and to reconstruct “the cultural steps that Soviet society took, between 1941 and the 1980s, to turn [a soldier and military nurse Valeriia] Gnarovskaia and over 120 000 more young women combatants and commanders of the Second World War into self-sacrificing noncombatant nurses.”<sup>28</sup> The same author develops this point further in a number of other works. Most notable is her seminal book *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front*. In it, she examines the ambiguous Soviet discourse on gender of the 1930s that led a generation of young urban women to think of themselves as combatants and traces their fate throughout the war and into the postwar period. One of the major strengths of Krylova’s book lies in her analysis of the ego-documents of the women combatants themselves who describe their experience of the war as formative.<sup>29</sup> Adrienne Harris undertakes a similar endeavor by examining the poetry of a wartime nurse Iuliia Drunina and thus exploring her soldierly identity – “I was a

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Krylova, “Neither Erased nor Remembered: Soviet ‘Women Combatants’ and Cultural Strategies of Forgetting in Soviet Russia, 1940s-1980s,” in *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, ed. Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 86.

<sup>29</sup> Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence of the Eastern Front* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

The book that covers the same topic, uses some of the same sources and agrees with Krylova’s findings to a great extent is Roger D. Markwick and Euridice Charon Cardona’s *Soviet Women on the Frontline in the Second World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). The relevant contribution of this book in relation to Krylova’s is the analysis of sexual harassment as well as sexual and professional discrimination to which women in the front (both in combatant and non-combatant roles) were subjected.

Some recent research compares the propagated (and idealized) militarized masculinity in the Stalinist society with the men’s everyday life in the Soviet military. Importantly, it argues that mass inclusion of women in the Red Army caused imbalance to conventional male homosocial bonding. There were, therefore, many instances of opposition to and even hostility toward the inclusion of female soldiers in the military. In addition, many male soldiers considered their female comrades as sexualized objects which sometimes resulted in sexual harassment and violence. See more in: Steven G. Jug, “Red Army Romance: Preserving Masculine Hegemony in Mixed Gender Combat Units, 1943-1944,” *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 5, no. 3 (2012): 321-334, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jwcs.5.3.321\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jwcs.5.3.321_1); idem, “All Stalin’s Men? Soldierly Masculinities in the Soviet War Effort, 1938-1945” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2013); idem, “Militarizing Masculinities in Red Army Discourse and Subjectivity, 1942–1943,” *Masculinities: A Journal of Identity and Culture* 3 (February 2015): 189–212.

rank and file soldier/ In the war/ In poetry/ I remained a rank and file soldier”<sup>30</sup> wrote the poet herself – in the context of the vicissitudes of Soviet politics and media culture. Both authors argue for a more complex media image of women soldiers. Both observed the general tendency of Soviet media to picture women’s wartime activities through traditionally acceptable modes of women’s existence, which Reina Pennington writes about. However, Krylova and Harris also note that beginning in the early 1960s, women soldiers themselves intervened in the officially established and approved narrative of the Great Patriotic War through poetry, like Iuliia Drunina, memoirs, like Valeriia Gnarovskaia, as well as other forms of expression.

With regard to the Yugoslav case study, the most relevant research on women in the cultural memory of the NOB was written by Jelena Batinić and Renata Jambrešić Kirin. Batinić notes that the wartime women partisans, following their expulsion from the army, “moved to the realm of cultural representation and memory.” Then, the author continues, the *partizanka* became “a ubiquitous symbol of the new state - a revolutionary icon par excellence.”<sup>31</sup> Similar to Reina Pennington, Jelena Batinić contends that the image of the *partizanka* in Yugoslavia gradually slid into the margins of war imagery. By encoding heroism as an exclusively male endeavor, post-World War II publicly available narratives reinforced the already familiar division of gender roles, which tended to interpret women’s participation in and experience of war as not properly heroic and, hence, less valuable.<sup>32</sup> From a heroic icon in the immediate postwar period, Batinić argues,

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<sup>30</sup> Adrienne M. Harris, “After ‘A Youth on Fire’: The Woman Veteran in Iulia Drunina’s Postwar Poetry,” *Aspasia* 7 (2013): 69.

The other article focusing on Drunina is: Adrienne M. Harris, “Yulia Drunina: ‘The Blond-Braided Soldier’ on the Poetic Front,” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 54, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 643-665.

The author used similar approach, but focused on poetry and memoirs of a group of Soviet women who served as pilots of the 46th Guards Regiment during World War II in the following article: “No Nastas’ias on the Volga: Soviet Women Veterans and Folkloric Self-Representation,” *Folklorica* 17 (2013): 99-130, <https://doi.org/10.17161/folklorica.v17i0.4678>.

<sup>31</sup> Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, 223.

<sup>32</sup> Not all men and not all instances of war-related memory making repeat always the same heroic story. As men are usually required to fulfill one overriding task in any given war – to destroy the enemy by any means necessary – the postwar image of a soldier is, therefore, tends to be based on war prowess. However, some scholarship highlighted

the *partizanka* became a sexualized figure oftentimes portrayed performing conventional women's tasks.<sup>33</sup> Analogously, art historian Bojana Pejić writes with discontent about the shift away from the "heroic romanticism" of the early postwar years. This process, she explains, was most evident in the "disappearance of the body of the (belligerent) comrades from patriotic war memorials and films [that] was just one move indicative of a de-gendering of collective memory."<sup>34</sup>

Renata Jambrešić Kirin is the most influential scholar who has written about the cultural memory of the People's Liberation Struggle (NOB) and women, and she conceptualizes it in the same way. Moreover, in her book *Dom i svijet (Home and World)*, she explicitly links the perceived gradual marginalization of women's diverse wartime experiences to the dissolution of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) in 1953. Thereafter, the author asserts, the process of dehistoricization and (re)domestication allowed that "within communist, as well as within clerical-civic commemorative practices, the mother of a war widow who voluntarily sacrificed her children for a revolutionary future occupied central iconographic place," and the more militarized version of the wartime femininity – the *partizanka* – was forgotten.<sup>35</sup>

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some instances when this was not the case. For instance, see: Adam Jones, "Straight as a Rule: Heteronormativity, Gendercide and the Noncombatant Male," *Men and Masculinities* 8, no. 4 (April 2008): 451-469; Alexander Friedman, "The Bodily Disabled as a Poster Boy-Veteran: War Invalids in the Soviet Union after the Second World War," in *From the Midwife's Bag to the Patient's File: Public Health in Eastern Europe*, eds. Heike Karge, Friederike Kind-Kovács and Sara Bernasconi (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2017), 173-192; Magali Delaloye, "Heal and Serve: Soviet Military Doctors 'Doing Masculinity' during the Afghan War (1979-1989)," *Aspasia* 15 (2021): 120-139.

<sup>33</sup> Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, particularly chapter 5. "After the War Was Over: Legacy," 213-257.

<sup>34</sup> Bojana Pejić, "The Morning After: Plavi Radion, Abstract Art, and Bananas," *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal* 10 (July 2002): 77, <https://www.ktpress.co.uk/nparadoxa-volume-details.asp?volumeid=10>.

Similar claim about representation of women in partisan films is presented in: Marijana Stojčić and Nađa Duhaček, "From Partisans to Housewives: Representation of Women in Yugoslav Cinema," *Časopis za povijest zapadne Hrvatske* 11 (2016), Special Issue: Revolucije i revolucionari: iz rodne perspektive (Revolutions and Revolutionaries: From the Gender Perspective: 69-108, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/196058>.

<sup>35</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, *Dom i svijet (Home and World)* (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008), 27-28.

Similar argumentation is present in other author's texts, for instance: "The Politics of Memory in Croatian Socialist Culture: Some Remarks," *Narodna umjetnost* 41 (2004): 125-143; "Politika sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat u doba medijske reprodukcije socijalističke kulture" ("World War II in the Period of the Media Reproduction of Socialist Culture"), in *Devijacije i promašaji: Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma (Deviations and Failures: Ethnography of Domestic Socialism)*, eds. Lada Čale Feldman and Ines Prica (Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2006),

Some studies rightfully question the claim that the disbandment of the AFŽ is synonymous with the abandonment of the project of women’s emancipation and that it epitomizes the patriarchal backlash that then engulfed the entire Yugoslav society, including the commemoration of the People’s Liberation Struggle.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, within the corpus of literature focusing on women and their role in the Yugoslav cultural memory of the NOB, there are currently no authors who, like the aforementioned Anna Krylova and Adrienne M. Harris, reconsider the dominant model advanced by Batinić and Jambrešić Kirin. One of the reasons for this is probably that the public practices of remembering the NOB gave precedence to courageous, strong, and male combatants for freedom immediately after the end of the war and conquered the field of cultural memory in Yugoslavia. Thomas G. Schrand’s explanation of the Soviet post-revolutionary processes of alteration and adjustment of gender relations seems reasonable and applicable to the same processes taking place in Yugoslavia following the end of World War II.

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149-178; with Reana Senjković, “Legacies of the Second World War in Croatian Cultural Memory: Women as Seen through the Media,” *Aspasia* 4 (2010): 71-96.

In connection, there is quite a large body of literature claiming that the dissolution of the AFŽ meant the end of meaningful women’s activism, inclusion of women in the public sphere and the process of emancipation. See, for instance: Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Horses, Women, Wars), edited by Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996); Svetlana Slapšak, “Between the Vampire Husband and the Mortal Lover,” in *Women in Post-Communism, Research on Russia and Eastern Europe, vol. II*, eds. Barbara Wejnert, Metta Spencer and Slobodan Drakulić (Connecticut: JAI Press, 1997), 201-224; Gordana Stojaković, “Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije (AFŽ) 1946–1953: pogled kroz AFŽ štampu” (“The Antifascist Front of Women of Yugoslavia, 1946–1953: A View Through the AFŽ Press), in *Rod i Levica (Gender and the Left)*, ed. Lidija Vasilijević (Belgrade: ŽINDOK, 2012), 13-39; Bojana Đokanović, Ivana Dračo, and Zlatan Delić, “1945 – 1990, Žene u socijalizmu – od ubrzane emancipacije do ubrzane repatrijarhalizacije (“1945 – 1990, Women in Socialism – From Accelerated Emancipation to Accelerated Repatriarchalization”), in *Zabilježene: Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku (Recorded: Women and the Public Life of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20th Century)*, ed. Jasmina Čaušević (Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar and Fondacija CURE, 2015), 103-175; Paula Petričević, “How the Female Subject was Tempered. An Instructive History of 8 March and Its Media Representation in *Niša Žena (Our Woman)*,” *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 69, no. 1 (2021): 19-43.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example: Jelena Tešija, “The End of the AFŽ – The End of Meaningful Women’s Activism? Rethinking the History of Women’s Organizations in Croatia, 1953 – 1961” (MA thesis, Central European University, 2014); Chiara Bonfiglioli, “Women’s Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia,” *Aspasia* 8 (2014): 1-25.

Applying Margaret and Patrice Higonnet's double helix metaphor<sup>37</sup> to the 1930s in the Soviet Union, Schrand describes how the aspect of the socialist revolution aimed at eliminating the private sphere of reproductive labor, as well as any barriers that limited the scope of activities available to women by their introduction in the industrial economy and politics, led to the weakening of the position of men. Inevitably, the author continues, "state policies and cultural initiatives restored the balance by bolstering the male side of the equation."<sup>38</sup> While some policies practically increased the value of masculine skills, others were specifically designed to boost the symbolic value of traditionally male social roles. In a similar vein, Karen Petrone recapitulates:

While both men and women embraced the new roles and egalitarian ideals, while both men and women could be Stakhanovites or soldiers, male comradeship, often expressed in military terms, was the central theme of the discourse of the hero in the early decades of the Soviet Union. Because of his pre-eminence, the New Soviet Man undermined the revolutionary rhetoric of gender equality in the Soviet Union.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, women may also be implicated in the process of homogenizing memory. The final section of Wingfield and Bucur's book *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* shows how the formation of collective memory of war can be remarkably diverse and yet "naturally" develop into another conventional account of male bravery and endurance. Examining the topic of remembering through gendered embodiment, in "The Nation's Pain and Women's Shame: Polish Women and Wartime Violence," Katherine R. Jolluck analyzes personal testimonies

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<sup>37</sup> Margaret and Patrice Higonnet used the image of the double helix in order to describe the transformation of gender relations during armed encounters such as the First and Second World Wars. For the duration of these wars, many women experienced certain improvements in their social status through employment or even participation in the militaries. Still, the authors remind, in these situations the women are commonly filling in for men who are, to all intents and purposes, experiencing the all-time highest status as they are physically defending their homelands. Margaret and Patrice Higonnet, "The Double Helix," in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, ed. Margaret Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 31-50.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas G. Schrand, "Socialism is One Gender: Masculine Values in the Stalin Revolution," in *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*, eds. Barbara Evans Clemens, Rebecca Friedman and Dan Haley (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 205.

<sup>39</sup> Karen Petrone, "Masculinity and Heroism in Imperial and Soviet Military-Patriotic Cultures," in *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*, 190.

of Polish women deported to Soviet labor camps between 1939 and 1941. The women wrote about disease, hunger, and beatings, that is, about the mistreatment to which female and male deportees alike were subjected, explaining it as the suffering for the nation. Although sexual violence was rampant in Soviet labor camps, they did not write about it because, Jolluck argues, it contradicted their understanding of Polish womanhood.<sup>40</sup> In “‘The Alienated Body’: Gender Identity and the Memory of the Siege of Leningrad,” Lisa A. Kirschenbaum explores the memory of starvation during the Leningrad Blockade of 1942 – 1943. The author argues that traditional understandings of wartime heroism prevented Leningraders, women and men alike, from writing about and discussing the physical consequences of starvation, in order not to contradict the paradigm of “heroes of the Leningrad front.”<sup>41</sup>

Both Jolluck and Kirschenbaum show how tradition-bound and internalized understandings of femininity operate seemingly without the use of force. Helena Goscilo includes such conventions among the pressure mechanisms that also punished and sought to forget instances of women’s collaboration and sexual intimacy with enemy soldiers and marginalized the memory of women who chose to fight during the wars. Despite the near-universal avoidance of these topics, the author notes that representations of wars vary by geographic area, time period, social and political order, and genre of representation.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, she elaborates elsewhere, “[d]eep-rooted national mythologies adapt and undergo modification according to both genre and gender conventions.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Katherine R. Jolluck, “The Nation’s Pain and Women’s Shame: Polish Women and Wartime Violence,” in *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, 193-219.

<sup>41</sup> Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, “‘The Alienated Body’: Gender Identity and the Memory of the Siege of Leningrad,” in *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, 220-234, quote on 220.

<sup>42</sup> Goscilo, “Introduction,” 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> Helena Goscilo, “Slotting War Narratives into Culture’s Readymade,” in *Fighting Words and Images*, eds. Elena V. Baraban, Stephan Jaeger and Adam Muller (Toronto: University Toronto Press, 2012), 132-160.

In other words, although often marginalized, the diversity of women's war experiences, to a greater or lesser extent, often with delay, come to be included in the accounts of war and warfare.<sup>44</sup>

In connection, public practices of commemorating the NOB gave primacy to certain types of militarized masculinity, but a reconsideration of the commemoration of women in war in various press publications shows that women's war experiences were included, albeit belatedly and conditionally. The woman soldier was reinvented by former partisans, men as well as women, by state officials and state employees, by journalists and war enthusiasts. They all participated in and contributed to the construction of the cultural memory of the People's Liberation Struggle. I found inspiration in terms of innovative methodological and interpretive approaches to the analysis of the politics of memory in Yugoslavia in research on monumental commemorative practices and on Yugoslav media and arts that dealt with the NOB.<sup>45</sup> Importantly, historian Heike Karge discusses and rejects the presumed dichotomy and hierarchical relationship between official memory imposed from above and the more authentic memory of individuals. Instead, the author argues that individuals operating within the system had opportunities and space to alter or adapt the dominant historical narratives.<sup>46</sup> She explains that “the canon of memory’ should not be understood here

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<sup>44</sup> Andrea Pető published works on the mass rapes carried out by the members of the Soviet Red Army in Budapest and elsewhere as well as the reasons for the long silence about them. For instance, see: “Memory and the Narrative of Rape in Budapest and Vienna in 1945,” in *Life after Death*, eds. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 129-148; idem, “Women as Victims and Perpetrators in World War II: The Case of Hungary,” in *Women and Men at War: A Gender Perspective on World War II and its Aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. Maren Röger and Ruth Leiserowitz (Osnabrück: fibre 2012), 81-93.

In the book *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories. Feminist Conversations on War, Genocide and Political Violence* the editors dedicated a section to this topic and entitled it “Sexual Violence: Silence, Narration, Resistance.” This section includes a comment written by Pető and four contributions covering the topics of the sexualized violence against Jewish women in Europe and Asian women in the territories occupied by Japanese forces during World War II, against women during military dictatorship in Greece (1967-1974) and against women in Turkey during the military junta (1980-1983).

Finally, Pető researched women in the Arrow Cross and perpetrators of wartime violence: *The Women of the Arrow Cross Party Invisible Hungarian Perpetrators in the Second World War* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); *The Forgotten Massacre: Budapest in 1944* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021).

<sup>45</sup> Such works sometimes touch upon the issue of gender, most often in passing, but do not focus on it.

<sup>46</sup> For instance, Karge explicates the circumstances of establishment of Jasenovac as a site of memory. She reveals that most often local branches of the War Veterans Union, often in cooperation with ordinary villagers or townspeople who supplied financial means, adapted “their” sites of memory to their particular remembrance. For

only as coercion, as an instrument of repression used ‘from above,’ but also as an opportunity – to be used, and which really was used – to communicate with the past in the local space, the space in which individual, family, local, republican, and federal forms of memory preservation meet.” If observed closely, memory culture becomes a mosaic of social interactions in which the memory appears not only as a commemorative practice, but also act of coping with loss, an artistic interpretation, as an educational and pedagogical activity, or as a business deal.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, recent literature dealing with Yugoslav media and Yugoslav partisan art struggles with another dichotomy. It argues that neither can be reduced to either esthetically worthless state art and plain state-sponsored propaganda or “real” art and journalism.<sup>48</sup> Focusing on art that addressed the People’s Liberation Struggle, Miranda Jakiša contends that the narrative of war was pliable and “transformed between early 1940s and 1992 whenever a new Yugoslav reality was to be provided with meaning.”<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, selected examples from Yugoslav film, art, and literature examined in the book *Partisans in Yugoslavia. Literature, Film and Visual Culture* demonstrate the narratives’ capacity for metamorphosis, that is, the complexity of the representations offered as well as some of the limitations.

In the following chapters, I draw on research trends that emerge from literature that is more concerned with Yugoslav monuments, media, and arts and less with the one focusing on gender

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instance, local veteran groups in the vicinity of Jasenovac as well as family members of the people executed there repeatedly criticized the War Veterans Union because of the official neglect of the former concentration camp and initiated commemorative practices on site themselves. Thanks to their memory work, Jasenovac became a place of remembrance within the officially proclaimed policy of remembrance. See more in: Heike Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu – okamenjeno sećanje?* (Belgrade: XX vek, 2014); idem, “Mediated Remembrance: Local Practices of Remembering the Second World War in Tito’s Yugoslavia,” *European Review of History* 16, no. 1 (February 2009): 49-62.

<sup>47</sup> Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*, 245-246.

<sup>48</sup> Relevant in this respect are: Miklavž Komelj, *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost? (How to Think Partisan Art?)* (Ljubljana: Založba / \*cf, 2008), Nebojša Jovanović, “Gender and Sexuality in the Classical Yugoslav Cinema, 1947–1962” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2014); Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić (eds.), *Partisans in Yugoslavia. Literature, Film and Visual Culture* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015); Kirn, *The Partisan Counter-Archive*.

<sup>49</sup> Miranda Jakiša, “On Partisans and Partisanship in Yugoslavia’s Arts,” in *Partisans in Yugoslavia*, 22.

and gendered representation of war in Yugoslavia. In analyzing some of the Yugoslav print media, I point out various strategies utilized to represent the (problematic) militarized femininity embodied by the *partizanka*, as well as (presumably less problematic) representations that portrayed women's wartime roles as compatible with traditionally conceptualized femininity. Such an approach highlights the tensions between the New Woman, who according to official interpretation, emerged during the NOB, and personal attitudes or ideals that were based on local traditions and reflected in the editorial prerogatives of different chief editors and editorial teams and, sometimes, war participants themselves.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

This project is framed by three major theoretical fields: gender and war, the reconceptualization of the notion of the New Woman, and the role of journalism in the politics of war commemoration. I first address the connections between gender and war. Scholars have long explored and discussed masculinity in and around the military, militarized societies, and war. Only recently have they, primarily feminist researchers among them, asked where women actually are when countries prepare for wars, when the wars are waged, and when the soldiers return home. Insights from research of gender, women, and war illustrate the contradictions in conceptualizing femininity and formulating expectations for women in the process of the systematization of power relations both during the NOB and after its end. Moreover, the same contradictions that marked the relations between men and women in the partisan army and in the People's Liberation Struggle were then captured in the cultural memory of the war.

In the second part, I concentrate on the concept of the New Woman and its importance in defining the women's emancipation in state socialist countries. This term, or its variations, was widely used during the war and in the postwar period. Women who participated in the NOB on the

side of the partisan forces were considered the active foundation of the New Woman in Yugoslavia. The functionaries of the women's organization were especially important in this regard. In this part, therefore, I emphasize the role of the women's organization in postwar Yugoslavia.

A short digression on terminology is in order here. It is well known that early Marxism-inspired women activists – especially Clara Zetkin, who was the first to disparage the feminist activities of non-leftist women – denounced feminism as a bourgeois endeavor and vehemently advocated against the collaboration between so-called bourgeois feminists and proletarian women, even on common issues.<sup>50</sup> As Marilyn J. Boxer demonstrates, “the most far-reaching legacy for women was the socialists’ success in spreading disdain for feminism, on the ideological grounds that to be a practicing feminist was to be ‘bourgeois’.”<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, in the introduction to *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms*, the editors note that there still exists a “certain hesitancy among scholars about including socialist or communist feminists” in accounts of feminism, largely because socialist and communist women have “made explicit their aversion to ‘feminism’” by calling it bourgeois.<sup>52</sup> Although generations of communist activist girls and women did not see themselves as feminists because they considered this label ideologically inadmissible, I follow Ellen DuBois and Francisca de Haan's reasoning and consider their actions to be left-feminist.<sup>53</sup> For instance, DuBois defines left-feminism as a “perspective which fuses a recognition of the systematic oppression of women with and appreciation of other structures of

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<sup>50</sup> Marilyn J. Boxer, “Rethinking the Socialist Construction and International Career of the Concept ‘Bourgeois Feminism’,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 1 (February 2007): 131–158, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4136009>.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>52</sup> Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi (eds.), “Introduction,” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe; 19th and 20th centuries* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>53</sup> Ellen DuBois, “Eleanor Flexner and the History of American Feminism,” *Gender & History* 3, no. 1 (March 1991): 81–90; Francisca de Haan, “The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF): History, Main Agenda, and Contributions, 1945–1991,” [https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic\\_entity%7Cbibliographic\\_details%7C2476925?ssotoken=anonymous](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C2476925?ssotoken=anonymous).

power,” as well as an “understanding that the attainment of genuine equality for women – all women – requires a radical challenge to [American] society, the mobilization of masses of people, and fundamental social change.”<sup>54</sup> I believe that the Yugoslav women activists felt exactly the same way about their activities. However, although I consider them feminists, I will refer to them using the terminology they themselves utilized. During Yugoslav socialism, socially and politically active women were called political workers (Hr./Sr. *političke radnice*, Slo. *politične delavke*).<sup>55</sup> The ones who were predominantly active in the women’s organization obtained a nickname that was also used after the AFŽ was reorganized and changed its name – *afežejke* (Sr. *afežeovke*). Through this work, when referring to the Yugoslav left feminists, I will refer to them either as political workers or as *afežejke*.

In the third part of this section, I reflect on the cultural memory of the NOB, particularly commemorative practices under state socialism and their entanglement with media practices, particularly journalism. Negotiations between the various state institutions and society shaped the processes of war commemoration in all state-socialist countries; the changes triggered with the Tito-Stalin Split made the Yugoslav case in this respect the most dynamic and diverse among the countries of the Eastern Bloc. The Yugoslav case study provides an opportunity to gain insight into different platforms that allowed the multitude of women-centered narratives to emerge and be heard in circumstances in which male-centered narratives predominated. Representational media as the vehicles for the creation, reproduction, and consolidation of group identities are best suited to uncover multifaceted observations about the figure of the woman fighter (*žena borac*), particularly the *partizanka*.

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<sup>54</sup> DuBois, “Eleanor Flexner and the History of American Feminism,” 84.

<sup>55</sup> Tanja Petrović and Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, “Agency, Biography, and Temporality: (Un)making Women’s Biographies in the Wake of the Loss of the Socialist Project in Yugoslavia,” *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women’s and Gender Studies* 21 (Fall 2020): 1-30.

## *Gender, Women & War*

Histories of wars are but one area of historical research that focus predominantly on men, on their roles, their endeavors, their desires and needs, sometimes even on their failures and their fears. This trend inevitably raises the question: what about women? Cynthia Enloe said in an interview with Carol Cohn that “to make sense of any militarized social system, you always have to ask about women.”<sup>56</sup> It is opportune to add a few more questions, such as “why they are there, who is benefiting from their being there, and what they think about being there.”<sup>57</sup> More broadly, but following the same line of thought, sociologist Joane Nagel wonders “why do men and women appear to have very different goals and agendas for the ‘nation’?”<sup>58</sup> Such reflections emphasize that the (in)actions of women and men can never be interpreted as the acts of gender-neutral individuals. Instead, the entanglements of gender and war shape the weight, momentum, and meaning of their exploits.

In addition, Joane Nagel defines nations and states as gendered concepts that ascribe separate sets of roles to men and women. Consequently, she argues, state systems tend to homogenize citizens’ political identities, and in the process, construct concepts of desirable and acceptable masculinity and femininity in peace as in war. In doing so, they influence the relationships that men and women experience in relation to their ethno-national collectives or nation-states. Here

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<sup>56</sup> Carol Cohn and Cynthia Enloe, “A Conversation with Cynthia Enloe: Feminists Look at Masculinity and the Men Who Wage War,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 1199.

Cynthia Enloe has been a pioneer in the field of research of women and war as well as women and militaries and militarism. Most significant publications in which she demonstrates many ways in which armed groups and state militaries use women in order to maintain their forces and support their wars are *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women’s Lives* published in 1983, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* published in 2000, and *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* that was first published in 1990, and revised, updated and re-released in 2014.

It is also important to note that the elaboration of this section owes a great deal precisely to Enloe’s feminist analysis of how militarized systems work to access, wield and consolidate power.

<sup>57</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2014), xiv.

<sup>58</sup> Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, vol. 2 (March 1998): 242.

Nagel draws on Floya Anthias' and Nira Yuval-Davis' widely recognized five concepts through which ethnic groups and nations construct the role of women.<sup>59</sup> Referring to the five concepts, Spike V. Peterson argues that, since group reproduction is one of the fundamental aspects of the state-making processes of the modern period, citizens are often constrained to express and enact their sexual identity as heterosexual in their social relationships. Namely, the author explains that political authority, combined with the means of coercion, serves to enforce heterosexist ideology and practice. By disregarding the “multiplicity of subject locations,” the state creates collective political identities that enable self-other differentiation and facilitate collective action.<sup>60</sup> The French anthropologist Maurice Godelier has aptly explained this state of affairs in the following way: “It is not sexuality which haunts society, but society which haunts the body’s sexuality. Sex-related differences between bodies are continually summoned as testimony to social relations and phenomena that have nothing to do with sexuality. Not only as testimony to, but also testimony for – in other words, as legitimation.”<sup>61</sup>

It is important to note that five concepts that define traditional womanhood, according to Anthias and Yuval-Davis as well as Peterson, include the aspect of women’s active agency in the interest of their collective. And although there was only one Margaret Thatcher, she was not, as Nagel claims, the exception.<sup>62</sup> She was just one of the most notable examples out of a myriad of similar ones. With regard to warfare, Sara Ruddick reminds:

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<sup>59</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, “Introduction,” in *Woman – Nation – State*, eds. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 7-10.

The authors posit five major ways in which women participate in a multitude of ethnic and national processes and in relation to state practices: as biological reproducers, as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups, by enabling the cultural and ideological reproduction of a collective, as signifiers of ethnic/national difference, and as participants in national, economic, political, and military struggles.

<sup>60</sup> V. Spike Peterson, “Sexing Political Identities/Nationalism as Heterosexism,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1, no. 1 (1999): 37-39.

<sup>61</sup> Maurice Godelier, “The Origins of Male Domination,” *New Left Review* 127 (May-June 1981): 17.

<sup>62</sup> Joane Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism,” 242.

Women have never absented themselves from wars. Wherever battles are fought and justified, whether in the vilest or noblest of causes, women on both sides of the battle lines support the military engagements of their sons, lovers, and mates. Increasingly, women are proud to fight alongside their brothers and as fiercely, in whatever battles their state or cause enlists them.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, Carol Cohn explains, while wars and militaries appeal primarily to men, representing characteristics such as bravery, physical strength, and aggressiveness as desirable masculine traits, wars could not be waged and are never waged without the work of women:

State militaries have historically depended on women as everything from nurses, clerical workers, sex workers, faithful wives, and patriotic mothers to pilots and trainers of pilots, drivers, teachers and workers in war industries – and now the roles women play directly in militaries are far wider. Armed groups depend on women and girls as combatants, porters, messengers, spies, weapons smugglers, cooks, sex slaves, and “bush wives.”<sup>64</sup>

Dyan Mazurana goes even further, claiming that if armed groups are unable to persuade women and girls to support their cause and to adequately control their work, then men’s participation becomes questionable as well.<sup>65</sup>

Importantly, Mazurana claims that different historical contexts and wars, construct gender roles in dissimilar ways and make the centrality of those roles appear differently. That is, armed groups shape militarized masculinities and femininities to appeal to the largest number of people possible.<sup>66</sup> The inclusion of women in an armed group requires leaders to understand the society from which they draw support, including its gender dynamics, in order to avoid upsetting the dominant form of militarized masculinity that exists among presumably predominantly male

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<sup>63</sup> Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 154.

<sup>64</sup> Carol Cohn (ed.), “Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework,” in *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 22-23.

<sup>65</sup> Dyan Mazurana, “Women, Girls, and Non-State Armed Opposition Groups,” in *Women and Wars*, 166.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-168.

The cited Mazurana’s chapter, “Women, Girls, and Non-State Armed Opposition Groups,” provides examples how have various armed groups, including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* and Hamas, constructed and mobilized gendered identities in their respective states in order to maintain their movements and reach their military and political objectives.

combat forces, but also to generate new forms of protection and legitimacy to appeal to women and girls.

Yet, women's roles were mostly unacknowledged and portrayed as incidental to the war effort in order to maintain the appearance that war was a masculine exploit.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, in understanding Yugoslav women's relationship to the People's Liberation Struggle, communist ideology, and the socialist state – both for the duration of the war as well as in terms of remembering women's many contributions to the war effort – the lens of gender analysis lends itself to a productive scrutiny of the ways in which various women's activities were (re)produced in the NOB to create the category of the New Woman, and therein reevaluate some of the basic categories associated with the war.

### ***The New Woman***

The New Woman developed into a household name soon following its first appearance in 1894 in the *North American Review*.<sup>68</sup> By the end of the century, the term encompassed everything from “a free-spirited, independent, bicycling, intelligent career-minded ideal” all the way to “a sexually

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<sup>67</sup> For instance, Ayşe Gül Altınay provides an excellent example of decades of resisting “feminization” of the military in Turkey. She explains that Turkish women actively participated in the Balkan Wars, World War I, and the Independence War from 1919 to 1923. However, following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, in 1927 the Grand National Assembly voted that all adult male citizens had to perform military service while women, although they proved to be capable for military service, were not considered. In the following decades only a handful of women served in the Turkish army, Sabiha Gökçen becoming the embodiment of the proud female warrior. But she surrendered all the merits of her success to her adoptive father and the first president of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal *Atatürk*. Moreover, while she attempted to persuade Marshall Fevzi Çakmak to include women in military training, her pioneering role as the first female army pilot did not open the same opportunities to other women. In sum, Altınay argues that “the ‘warrior-woman’ can only be possible to the extent that it is allowed or needed.” The reason for that is, she continues, that Turkish women are primarily required to be “obedient wives” and “sacrificing mothers.” See more in: Ayşe Gül Altınay, “Women and the Myth: The World's First Woman Combat Pilot,” in *The Myth of the Military Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 33-58; idem, “Refusing to Identify as Obedient Wives, Sacrificing Mothers and Proud Warriors,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, eds. Özgür Heval Çınar and Coşkun Üsterçi (London: Zed Books, 2009), 88-104, quote on 93.

<sup>68</sup> Sarah Grand, Irish novelist and feminist, published an article entitled “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” and British novelist Maria Louise Ramé, writing under the pseudonym Ouida, from the title of the Grand's article extrapolated the phrase The New Woman for the title of her own essay.

degenerate, abnormal, mannish, chain-smoking, child-hating bore.”<sup>69</sup> While it referred to the changes regarding the women’s roles in society that actually existed, the New Woman was a journalistic and literary phenomenon as well. Notably, in the article “‘Nothing but Foolscap and Ink’: Inventing the New Woman,” Talia Schaffer asks whether the *fin de siècle* New Woman existed at all.<sup>70</sup> Analyzing the exchange between Sarah Grand and Ouida, Schaffer concludes that, even if the New Woman lived only in “foolscap and ink,” it is precisely her fictional nature that “allowed her to be defined in any way the author needed, at any time”<sup>71</sup> thus representing very disparate sociopolitical groups. The archetypal New Woman subsequently became closely associated with the pre-World War I movement for women’s suffrage as well as with the women’s work in the post-World War I political parties, particularly of socialist and communist provenance.<sup>72</sup> The concept of the New Woman experienced at least another intense wave of transformation following the end of World War II. Of particular importance for current research is

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<sup>69</sup> Greg Buzwell, “Daughters of Decadence: The New Woman in the Victorian *fin de siècle*,” The British Library, May 15, 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle>

<sup>70</sup> Talia Schaffer, “‘Nothing but Foolscap and Ink’: Inventing the New Woman,” in *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de Siècle Feminisms*, eds. Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 39.

The importance of representation of the New Woman in literature and journalism is emphasized in Richardson and Willis’s introduction to *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de Siècle Feminisms*. Good examples of scholarship that explores this topic are: Lynn Pykett: *The “Improper” Feminine: The Women’s Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin-de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

<sup>71</sup> Schaffer, “‘Nothing but Foolscap and Ink,’” 45.

<sup>72</sup> The image of the New Woman as well as the scope of action of new women throughout Europe and in the United States changed significantly from the 1890s to the 1920s. The First World War and women’s engagement both on the home front and in the frontlines became an important factor in the development of awareness about the women’s rights, but the professed postwar “return to normalcy” expedited further development of manifold and even contradictory definitions of womanhood.

Good syntheses of such changes are: Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 2002), especially chapter 7 “Assessing the Consequences of the War for Women,” 101-116; Ann Taylor Allen, *Women in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), especially chapters 2 “Women as Citizens in the Inter-War Democracies” and 3 “Women in the Authoritarian and Totalitarian States in the Interwar Years,” 21- 59. Case study of interwar Yugoslavia is well researched in: Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije: Rodni stereotipi u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji. (Dangerous Illusions: Gender Stereotypes in Interwar Yugoslavia.)* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2014), especially chapter 4 “Rat i rodni stereotipi” (“War and Gender Stereotypes”), 49-122.

how the New Woman was introduced by the communist parties in Germany and Russia (USSR) and then reframed by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, KPJ).

Together with her colleague and friend Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin had been at the forefront of the women's workers' movement in Germany since the early 1890s. Zetkin's opinions on women's rights and women's rights movements constituted the authoritative Marxist-socialist position for decades. Consequently, she is still considered "the leading woman of European socialism"<sup>73</sup> and is often referred to as "the grande dame of Weimar communism."<sup>74</sup> Zetkin accepted Auguste Bebel's thesis that gender equality was closely connected with the pursuit and realization of socialism. Two main elements of the gender equality were women's participation in production and their simultaneous liberation from domestic work. She went further than Bebel in insisting on the primacy of class over gender interests, and, unlike him, she thought that middle-class (bourgeois) and proletarian women could not share common interests and goals.

Many prominent socialist and communist women echoed Zetkin's ideas, and her followers include Alexandra Kollontai in Russia (USSR), Louise Saumoneau in France, and Eleanor Marx in England.<sup>75</sup> As Mary Buckley notes, however, Alexandra Kollontai was also aware that "liberation would not automatically 'happen' or even 'be guaranteed' by a change in the economic substructure or through legislation."<sup>76</sup> Rather, she argued that the underlying attitudes of existing gender relations must be tackled through systematic changes in the spheres of maternity, childrearing, and family, as well as in sexual relations. After the October Revolution, Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand followed on their belief that the emancipation of women had to be

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<sup>73</sup> Philip S. Foner, ed., "Introduction," in *Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1984), 42.

<sup>74</sup> Sara Ann Sewell, "Bolshevizing Communist Women: The Red Women and Girls' League in Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 45, no. 2 (June 2012): 276. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23270374>.

<sup>75</sup> Boxer, "Rethinking the Socialist Construction," 137.

<sup>76</sup> Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989), 44.

promoted through women's organizations and established *Zhenotdel*, the Women's Section, as part of the Central Committee Secretariat. Although some men in the ranks of the Bolsheviks resisted the idea of a separate women's organization, the opinion prevailed that women were not educated enough and, consequently, would not be sufficiently involved with the new government's projects. Thus, the women's group that was established to organize and supervise work among Soviet women in order to educate them and raise their political consciousness.

In the postwar period, similar women's organizations, whose mission was to provide women with the necessary education they needed to catch up with "the rest of society" and to promote women's rights, became a universal feature of European socialist countries. In Yugoslavia, the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ)<sup>77</sup> was founded in December 1941 on the initiative of the Communist Party of Croatia (*Komunistička partija Hrvatske*, KPH) and established as a state-wide organization in December 1942 at a conference in Bosanski Petrovac (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The main tasks of the organization were to involve women in the struggle and to support the partisan army, as well as "to popularize the Soviet Union and its leading role in the struggle for the destruction of fascism (...), to carry out antifascist propaganda, (...) to lead the struggle against the terror of the occupier and the Ustasha gangs," as well as for women's emancipation.<sup>78</sup> Following the end of the Second World War, the organization's broad area of wartime responsibilities transformed into a lengthy list of new tasks related to demobilization and reintegration, aimed at

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<sup>77</sup> The Antifascist Front of Women changed its name (and its organizational structure and status within the state apparatus) five times during its existence, four during the researched period. For the sake of simplicity, I will use only its first name throughout this dissertation.

<sup>78</sup> "Iz okružnice broj 4. CK KPH od 6. prosinca 1941. O organizaciji i zadacima Antifašističkog fronta žena" ("From the Circular No. 4 by CK KPH from December 6, 1941. About the Organization and Tasks of the Antifascist Front of Women"), in *Žene Hrvatske, vol. 1*, 57. "Da populariziraju SSSR i njegovu vodeću ulogu u borbi za uništenje fašizma. (...) Da vodi antifašističku propagandu, (...) Da vodi borbu protiv terora okupatora i ustaških bandi (...)."

the social and political transformation of the country, which the AFŽ activists immediately began to address.

The women who led the work of this institution, both during the war and in socialist Yugoslavia, were strongly influenced by the Soviet example, but also by the work of Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg. While Clara Zetkin's arguments are reflected in the work of Yugoslav communist activist girls and women, Alexandra Kollontai was not as popular. Her reflections on love and sexuality, which first reached Yugoslav readers as early as 1922 with the translation of *New Morality and the Working Class* into Serbian, generated much discussion. Art historian Milanka Todić sees the moment of publication of this book, which the translator published under the title *The New Woman (Nova žena)*, as the moment of birth of the figure of the New Woman in the Serbian feminist press.<sup>79</sup> However, Kollontai was criticized for writing about love at a time of political and economic crisis, and also for the way she wrote about it.<sup>80</sup> She was politically marginalized by the late 1920s; the USSR of the 1930s held a different view of women's emancipation. Many of the activists – Kata Pejnović, Mitra Mitrović, Vida Tomšič, Marija Šoljan (Bakarić), Herta Haas, Neda Božinović, Spasenija – Cana Babović, to name but a few – joined the Party during the 1930s and through their activism became familiar with the Stalinist variation of

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<sup>79</sup> Milanka Todić, "Nova žena ili robinjica luksuza: naslovne strane ženskih časopisa u Srbiji (1920–1940)" ("The New Woman or the Slave of Luxury: Covers of Women's Magazines in Serbia (1920–1940)"), *Muzej primenjene umetnosti* 4/5 (2008/2009): 145, [https://mpu.rs/zbornik/pdf/zbornik\\_4/14.pdf](https://mpu.rs/zbornik/pdf/zbornik_4/14.pdf).

<sup>80</sup> On the reception of Kollontai's writing in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, see: Minja Bujaković, "Recepcija ideja Aleksandre Kolontaj u časopisu Ženski pokret (1920-1938)" ("Reception of Alexandra Kollontai's Ideas in the Magazine *Ženski pokret* (1920-1938)"), in *Ženski pokret (1920-1938): zbornik radova (Ženski pokret (1920-1938): Collection of Papers)*, eds. Jelena Milinković and Žarka Svirčev, 421-438 (Belgrade: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2021).

Interpretations of Alexandra Kollontai's work on love and morality were used as part of anti-communist propaganda during World War II: Ljubinka Škodrić, "Partizanke u viđenjima ideoloških protivnika u Srbiji 1941–1944" ("Partizanke Viewed by the Ideological Opponents in Serbia"), in *Feministički forum Filozofskog fakulteta: izabrani radovi iz studija roda (Feminist Forum of the University of Philosophy: Selected Papers from Gender Studies)*, eds. Nada Sekulić and Marija Radoman, 275-292 (Belgrade: Institut za sociološka istraživanja and Filozofski fakultet, 2016).

socialism.<sup>81</sup> This means, in the first place, that they were familiar with the way the Woman Question was translated into legislation, especially by way of the now infamous 1936 decree “On the Protection of Motherhood and Childhood,” which served as a model for Yugoslav legislation following the end of the war.

In addition, it means that they were familiar with the way Stalinist literature and media “managed to semiotically reencode the category of ‘woman’ in Soviet public discourse”<sup>82</sup> from backward and politically immature *babas* (old women) of the Bolshevik era to living embodiments – stakhanovites, tractor drivers, pilots, and, well, mothers – of Stalinist successes.<sup>83</sup> As the always reassuring Anna Krylova notes, the essentialist discourse on womanhood and motherhood introduced by the 1936 decree “falls short of representing the full spectrum of the Soviet state’s policies and Soviet society’s gender ideals created by state-funded mass entertainment” as well as the newly established integrated education.<sup>84</sup>

Yugoslav communist activist girls and women did not enjoy a decade of modern Soviet education and exciting media development. The 1930s were for them marked by outdated domestic

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<sup>81</sup> Ivan Simić, “Soviet Influences on Yugoslav Gender Policies, 1945-1955” (PhD diss., University College London, 2016), 31.

<sup>82</sup> Choi Chatterjee, “Soviet Heroines and Public Identity, 1930 – 1939,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 1402 (October 1999): 4. <http://carlbeckpapers.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/cbp/article/view/112/113>.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Anna Krylova, “Bolshevik Feminism and Gender Agendas of Communism,” in *The Cambridge History of Communism*, eds. Silvio Pons and Stephen A. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 441-443, 444, doi: 10.1017/9781316137024.020.

In comparison, Wendy Z. Goldman wrote *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) where she argues that the revolutionary élan resulting in 1918 Family Code did not live up to the promises and enabled the ‘Great Retreat’ marked by a set of a more conservative gender policies in the 1930s. On the other hand, in the book *Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) Elizabeth A. Wood researches gender as an organizational principle of the emergent Soviet state and multiple gender concepts that Bolsheviks used in order to make women “citizen-comrades.” She argues that the Bolsheviks used multiple concepts of gendered identities that sometimes opposed each other and that women as mothers have always had an important place among them. Thus, the Stalinist policies were not so much a retreat to the pre-revolutionary family model, but only a new stage that reflected the state’s preoccupation with the population growth and interest in increased social control.

legislation<sup>85</sup> and schooling, which they tried to spice up with hand-me-down literature and foreign magazines, both of which were in short supply and illegal more often than not. While they were aware of the existence of a system in which there were “varied and blatantly contradictory ways of viewing and instituting gender norms,” and which in consequence might have also enabled “varied and contradictory ways of imagining and enacting socialist ideals of womanhood and manhood,”<sup>86</sup> their realities did not allow for such obscene exuberance. Yugoslav communist activists were taught to be more pragmatic. They argued for the emancipation of women on two levels: by putting women on an equal footing with men in the public sphere and by creating favorable conditions for the socialization of motherhood through nurseries, kindergartens, and canteens. That is, the premise that care for children and home are the women’s domain, plus the additional sanction that men and women can participate equally in the role of worker, guided the activists’ work during the existence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This remained the case during the existence of its socialist successor.

### *The Yugoslav New Woman*

As Chiara Bonfiglioli notes, the institutionalization of the Woman Question limited the possible range of activities of the women’s organization in Yugoslavia, as well as of the women’s organizations throughout the Eastern Bloc.<sup>87</sup> First, the types of questions that could have been

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<sup>85</sup> In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, women did not have the right to vote. The constitution stipulated that the election law would resolve the issue of women’s suffrage. However, each time the elections were called, the election law did not include that option. In addition, the civil code that would be valid on the territory of the entire Kingdom was never systematized. In different parts of the state continued to apply the codes from previous systems. The most infamous in that regard is the Serbian Civil Code (in force since 1844), which equated women with “minors, mentally disturbed and insane people, scoundrels and vagrants.” At the same time, women were fully responsible for their actions under the Criminal Code.

Lydia Sklevicky, “Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žena u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do Drugog svjetskog rata (1)” (“Characteristics of the Women’s Organized Activity in Yugoslavia in the Period Before World War II (part 1),” *Polja* 308 (October 1984): 415.

<sup>86</sup> Krylova, “Bolshevik Feminism,” 425.

<sup>87</sup> Bonfiglioli, “Women’s Political and Social Activism,” 8-9.

posed and the issues that could have been raised were by the fact that women's rights were guaranteed by law. Namely, legislation (primarily the 1946 Constitution and the Basic Marriage Law of the same year) was supposed to be the solution to the Woman Question. The appropriation and implementation of relevant Soviet legislation was seen as crucial to the process of transformation of the Yugoslav society into a communist utopia of gender equality.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the Marxist doctrine set another set of boundaries as Yugoslav political workers were obliged to focus primarily on economic issues related to changing modes of production, ending the gender division of labor and achievement of equal access to waged work, then on the political organizing of women through the established platform(s), and finally on the importance of education for young girls and women.<sup>89</sup>

The described circumstances limited the definition of the female subject of the communist state system in some ways. As Eva Fodor observes, by becoming members of a socialist country, all its citizens, men, women, and children, became "subjects of the state" through their membership in one of the predefined social groups, such as workers, peasants, or women.<sup>90</sup> Despite the wide-ranging differences in class, nationality, religion, age, education, geographic location, and even war experience that separated the citizens of a socialist country, each group was always considered to share a set of foundational responsibilities to the state as well as the abilities to fulfill them. Of course, the representatives of the socialist state – the father-figures who implemented "paternalism

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<sup>88</sup> The new laws guaranteed equal rights to men and women and, in connection, removed all legal obstacles regarding the education and employment of girls and women. They legalized civil marriage and divorce, took authority away from ecclesiastical courts and introduced alimony, division of property according to the contribution while at the same time recognizing domestic chores as labor.

<sup>89</sup> Bonfiglioli, "Women's Political and Social Activism," 8-9.

Two recent examples of contemporary scholarly research on the constraints and the possibilities that Marxist ideology imposes on feminist theory are published in *Aspasia* journal as forum discussions edited by Francisca de Haan: "Is 'Communist Feminism' a *Contradictio in Terminis*?" (2007) and "Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited," (2016).

<sup>90</sup> Éva Fodor, "Smiling Women and Fighting Men: The Gender of the Communist Subject in State Socialist Hungary," *Gender and Society* 16, no. 2 (April 2002): 243, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3081863>.

with a social purpose”<sup>91</sup> – decided, in their wisdom guaranteed by membership in the communist party, how the members of a particular group “fit the purported long- or short-term goals of the proletarian revolution.”<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Fodor explains that while the ideal communist subject was portrayed as genderless, its dominant characteristics, its virtues, were traditionally ascribed to men. “Women were made active participants in economic and political life,” Fodor writes, “but not on the same terms as men. They entered by the dubious virtue, and with the unavoidable consequences, of being a woman. Such categorization acknowledged and simultaneously reinforced women’s difference and inferiority.”<sup>93</sup> She concludes that the foundations of male domination in state socialist countries were transformed by the inclusion, however selective and limited, of women in public life, but that were never completely eliminated.

The new state structures simultaneously constructed, enabled, and limited the development of the imagined New Woman. The very organization that was supposed to create favorable conditions for women’s emancipation was itself limited by its position within the state system, by the constraints imposed by the ruling ideology, and also by the aspirations, activities, and performance of its members. Nevertheless, despite the imposed and internalized limitations, the Yugoslav women’s organization, Antifascist Front of Women, as well as the women’s organizations in the other state socialist countries, insisted on the importance of the concerns of women on whose behalf they spoke, and legitimized women’s issues as the subjects of state policies and actions. Furthermore, they worked hard to challenge the terms in which state institutions operated in order to create more favorable conditions for all women.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Helmut Gruber, “The ‘New Woman’: Realities and Illusions of Gender Equality in Red Vienna,” in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe between the Two World Wars*, eds. Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1998), 68.

<sup>92</sup> Fodor, “Smiling Women and Fighting Men,” 242.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>94</sup> As early as 1983, Manuela Dobos wrote about the activities of the Conference for the Social Activity of Women (Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena, KDAŽ), the AFŽ’s incarnation that existed from 1961 to 1975,

A member of the Yugoslav representatives of the second wave of feminism, Rada Iveković, notes in an interview with Chiara Bonfiglioli:

And the strange thing is that they [the prewar feminists and members of the women's organization] had never forgotten their feminism. They were truly very feminist, in the sense of state feminism (...) thinking that the Party would solve all these issues. They were very militant towards men (...). When you read the internal Party discussions with men, it was a genuinely feminist discourse.<sup>95</sup>

Iveković's observation is on point. Yugoslav political workers of the AFŽ, especially the leading women who were active since the 1930s, are comparable to their colleagues of the interwar period. Just like Soviet communists Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand, or German Marxist politicians Marie Juhacz, Helene Overlach, and Clara Zetkin, Yugoslav feminist activists and politicians primarily pursued the realization of suffrage for all women, a basic demand of the so-called first-wave feminists, and complemented it with the introduction of women into new and different forms of paid work and the socialization of motherhood. Analogously, just as at the end

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describing them as feminist. See more in: Manuela Dobos, "The Women's Movement in Yugoslavia: The Case of the Conference for the Social Activity of Women in Croatia, 1965-1974," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 2 (1983): 47-55, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3346285>.

More recent, in-depth research consistently points out the complexities of the activities of women's organizations in state-socialist countries. For instance, Amy Borovoy and Kristen Ghodsee have in 2012 published the discussion entitled "Decentering Agency in Feminist Theory: Recuperating the Family as a Social Project" against the assumption that socialist feminist political projects failed the women whose interests they supported because they did not pursue the goal of creating autonomous political subjects. In the article "Pressuring the Politburo: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement and State Socialist Feminism" (2014), Kristen Ghodsee explained how in the twenty-year period between 1968 and 1989 Bulgarian Women's Association constantly advocated the interests of women both as mothers and workers and how it repeatedly successfully convinced the government to invest funds in the projects that promoted the interests of Bulgarian women. Similarly, Raluca Maria Popa in 2016 wrote about the endeavors of the women's organization in Romania to stop the enactment of the very restrictive abortion law in the "We Opposed it': The National Council of Women and the Ban on Abortion in Romania (1966)."

Other relevant works include (but are by no means limited to): Raluca Maria Popa, "Translating Equality between Women and Men across Cold War Divides: Women Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of International Women's Year," in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, eds. Shana Penn and Jill Massino (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 59-76; Kristen Ghodsee, *Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism: And Other Arguments for Economic Independence* (New York: Nation Books, 2018); Mihajlović Trbovc and Petrović, "Agency, Biography, and Temporality: (Un)making Women's Biographies in the Wake of the Loss of the Socialist Project in Yugoslavia"; Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Women's Internationalism and Yugoslav-Indian Connections: From the Non-Aligned Movement to the UN Decade for Women," *Nationalities Papers* 49, no. 3 (May 2021), 446-461.

<sup>95</sup> Rada Iveković, interview by Chiara Bonfiglioli, first part, March 15, 2008, transcript. "E la strana cosa è che non avevano mai dimenticato il loro femminismo di origine. Loro erano veramente abbastanza femministe, nel senso di un femminismo di stato (...) si pensava che il partito avrebbe risolto tutte queste cose. Erano molto combattive verso gli uomini (...). Quando tu leggevi le discussioni nel partito con gli uomini, era un discorso veramente femminista."

of World War I “the new woman became the new comrade,”<sup>96</sup> and socialist utopia seemed attainable to many European socialists and communists, the period following the end of the World War II brimmed with potential for transformation. However, while, in this case, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia declaratively supported the idea of gender equality, there was little initiative to include women in the Party ranks or in the workforce that did not originate in the women’s organization. In a sense, the Yugoslav political workers who operated in such brand new circumstances obviously continued the trends of the interwar period aimed at the women’s emancipation and equality. According to the periodization based on the American chronology of women’s movements, they can be considered as a middle wave between the long battle for the recognition of women’s civil rights, which was part of the first-wave feminists’ activism and the feminist activism of the 1960s and 1970s known as the second wave. They got to fight numerous new battles so that the legally secured rights would be recognized and exercised properly or at all.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Helmut Gruber, “Introduction,” in *Women and Socialism*, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Research of feminist waves (as well as viability of such chronology) has been a much-researched topic during the previous decade. For instance, in her research on the Women’s International Democratic Federation, Francisca de Haan asserts that the years following the end of the Second World War cannot be characterized as “doldrums,” because a global left-feminist women’s movement continued developing during the 1940s with this left-feminist international organization Francisca de Haan, “Eugénie Cotton, Pak Chong-ae, and Claudia Jones: Rethinking Transnational Feminism and International Politics” *Journal of Women’s History* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 174-189. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/531330>.

An interesting case study in this respect is Italy that had a strong communist party as well as women’s organization – the Union of Italian Women (*l’Unione donne italiane*, UDI) – that was inspired by and collaborated with the women’s organizations of the state socialist countries. See more in: Wendy Pojmann, *Italian Women and International Cold War Politics, 1944–1968* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), Chiara Bonfiglioli “Red Girls’ Revolutionary Tales: Antifascist Women’s Autobiographies in Italy,” *Feminist Review* 106 (2014): 60-77; idem, “L’ondata di mezzo: movimenti delle donne, femminismi e guerra fredda” (“The Middle Wave: Women’s Movements, Feminisms and the Cold War”), *Storica* 21, no. 61/62 (2015): 191–206; Eloisa Betti, “Gli archivi dell’UDI come fonti per la storia del lavoro femminile” (“The Archives of the UDI as the Sources for the History of Women’s Work”), in *Il genere nella ricerca storica (Gender in the Historical Research)*, eds. Saveria Chermotti and Maria Cristina La Rocca (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2015), 485–509; idem, “Generations of Italian Communist Women and the Making of a Women’s Rights Agenda in the Cold War (1945-1968): Historiography, Memory, and New Archival Evidence,” in *Gender, Generations, and Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond*, eds. Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 82-101.

## *Cultural Memory and the Media*

Just hours after the end of the fighting for control of Moscow, the Bolsheviks organized the first service for all those who had died for their cause during the October Revolution.<sup>98</sup> The October generated a wide array of differing individual memories, and the new authorities rushed to manage its commemoration. In the words of Timothy Snyder, the Bolsheviks aimed to establish “sovereignty over memory.”<sup>99</sup> They wanted to influence individual memories of the revolution by way of revision, limitation, and correction, and thus provide a framework of meaning for the development of collective memory.<sup>100</sup> What is more, “[t]he October Revolution did not first occur,” Frederick Corney writes, “only later to be written about. It occurred in the process of writing. It was not first experienced by contemporaries, only later to be remembered. It was experienced (i.e. ‘understood’) by them in the process of remembering. Herein lay the power of the process.”<sup>101</sup> In the following years, the memory work of the new authorities evolved into a large-scale memory project, a broadly defined undertaking oriented towards capturing and securing the “accurate” narrative of the revolution by means of oral, written, visual, archival, and symbolic evidence.

In general, during the process of consolidation of a new social and political system, particularly following a political upheaval, the correlation between national identity and the process of mapping usable collective memory is crucial.<sup>102</sup> World War II was the fateful event that became the point of reference for political elites and ordinary people across Europe and the world in the second half of

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<sup>98</sup> Catherine Merridale, “War, Death, and Remembrance in Soviet Russia,” in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 67.

<sup>99</sup> Timothy Snyder, “Memory of Sovereignty and Sovereignty over Memory: Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, 1939-1999,” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>101</sup> Frederick C. Corney, “Rethinking a Great Event: The October Revolution as Memory Project,” *Social Science History* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1998), Special Issue: Memory and the Nation: 408.

<sup>102</sup> Aline Sierp, “The End of Memory War? From a National to a European Memory Framework,” in *Constructing and Communicating Europe*, eds. Olga Gyarfasova and Karin Liebhart (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2014): 147-170.

the twentieth century. Like the Bolsheviks following the October Revolution, all the victorious powers began formulating the best interpretation of the war even before the armed struggles were over. In the context of the emerging Cold War divide, Jan-Werner Müller argues, the boundaries that shaped collective memories around Europe were defined primarily by the political interests of the ruling elites.<sup>103</sup>

However, the author proceeds, collective memory “is always the outcome of a series of ongoing intellectual and political negotiations.”<sup>104</sup> In other words, as already Maurice Halbwachs established in his pioneering study, collective memory is a social construct that every individual act of remembering necessarily draws upon.<sup>105</sup> Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann, the scholars who elaborate an influential model of analysis for memory studies in the 1990s,<sup>106</sup> largely agree with him. For instance, Jan Assmann writes that “the concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”<sup>107</sup> Memories of the past shared by a community are continuously constructed and produced, circulated and transformed through acts of communication. In the modern age, the mass media, their images, narratives, and

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<sup>103</sup> Jan-Werner Müller, ed., “Introduction: The Power of Memory, The Memory of Power and the Power over Memory,” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 21.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c1992).

<sup>106</sup> In 2011, following their translation into English language, two seminal works of the spouses became more easily accessible to the international public. Jan Assmann’s *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (first published in 1992 as *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*) first defines the framework for the research and study of cultural memory, and then proceeds to four case studies, the written cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece, Israel, and the Hittites, in order to exemplify and illustrate the proposed conceptual framework. Aleida Assmann’s *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (originally published as *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* in 1999) presents the development of the concept of memory in the intellectual and literary realms of Europe from Renaissance until present day. The author searches for the key points of evolution of this concept through analyses of the functions, media and storage of memory.

<sup>107</sup> Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 132, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488538>.

rituals, constitute an integral factor in the process of communication. Thus, Assman continues, “[u]pon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.”<sup>108</sup> Representations of the past play a crucial role in the formation of a shared sense of identity and purpose in a community, such as a nation, through time and space. They provide the framework in which the past events take on meaning and become part of shared narratives, myths, and histories.

Collective memory thus emerges through the interactions between the individual and the collective, between past and present, between remembering and forgetting. As Wulf Kansteiner suggests, research on the emergence, development, and dynamics of collective memory within a given group should take into account three factors: “the intellectual and cultural traditions that frame all our representations of the past, the memory makers who selectively adopt and manipulate these traditions, and the memory consumers who use, ignore, or transform such artefacts according to their own interest.”<sup>109</sup> Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Tea Sindbæk Andersen, and Astrid Erll write that all three factors, particularly the first, which they term as “cultural templates,” can help researchers understand why some memories are more relevant, interesting, or emotionally charged than others. In addition, the three authors note, current political and social arrangement, particularly the conditions under which memory makers live and work and how much access they have to resources and power, need to be taken into account.<sup>110</sup>

I would like to return for a moment to the Soviet Union in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks, I noted, sought to achieve a monopoly over the social

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41, no. 2 (May 2002): 180. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3590762>.

<sup>110</sup> Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Tea Sindbæk Andersen and Astrid Erll, eds., “Introduction: On Transcultural Memory and Reception,” in *The Twentieth Century in European Memory: Transcultural Mediation and Reception* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 10-11.

practices of remembering the Revolution by using oral, written, visual, archival, and symbolic means. That is, they developed the cultural memory of the Revolution within an extensively reorganized media system. In his famous study, Peter Kenez proclaimed that the Soviet Union was the first “propaganda state.” In his view, its increasingly elaborate media system had a very important purpose: “through political education to aim to create a new humanity suitable for living in a new society.”<sup>111</sup> As Kristin Roth-Ey and Larissa Zakharova explain, propaganda for the communists was not limited to any one part of the public sphere. Rather, it was “embedded in all aspects of cultural, social, and economic life.”<sup>112</sup> Collective memory was thus one of the carefully cultivated media practices that would contribute to the expected emergence of the new society.

In a sense, the described Soviet example anticipated the contemporary scholarly consensus that no collective memory could develop without the help of the media. One of the most prominent scholars in the field of memory studies, Astrid Erll, claims that “[c]ultural memory is unthinkable without media,” and then adds: “it is no surprise that cultural memory research is often simultaneously media research.”<sup>113</sup> A number of authors agree with Erll. On this occasion, I would also like to quote Ann Rigney, because she emphasizes even more clearly the importance of the media for the development of cultural memory in a society: “remembrance has come to be defined

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4.

Importantly, for Bolsheviks (as well as later generations of communists), propaganda did not have negative connotations. It was not considered as an attempt at brainwashing as is now often the case with this term. It was, instead, regarded as a handy tool that would be crucial in achieving socialist modernity.

<sup>112</sup> Roth-Ey and Zakharova, “Communications and Media in the USSR,” 1.

<sup>113</sup> Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 113-114.

Literature on this topic includes: Ann Rigney, “Plenitude, Scarcity, and the Production of Cultural Memory,” *Journal of European Studies* 35 (2005): 209-226; idem, “All this Happened, More or Less: What a Novelist Made of the Bombing of Dresden,” *History and Theory* 47 (May 2009): 5-24; Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2008); Joanne Garde-Hansen, *Media and Memory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009); Törnquist-Plewa, Sindbæk Andersen and Erll, “Introduction: On Transcultural Memory and Reception,” 1-23; Maruša Pušnik and Oto Luthar (eds.), *The Media of Memory* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, an imprint of the Brill-Group, 2020).

as an observable cultural practice (...) which involves the public enactment of affective and cognitive relations to the past using whatever media and cultural forms are available and appropriate to the particular context.”<sup>114</sup> The two authors, hence, agree that the collection of memories that a given community cultivates about a turning point in its past, such as a revolution or a war, derives largely from the narratives and images circulating in the media available at that time.<sup>115</sup>

A crucial aspect of cultural memory thusly considered is what Ann Rigney calls the “cultural work” that individuals or institutions do in the present. They may opt for narratives and modes of representation that are already familiar, or they may, through their work, address an underrepresented or even hitherto completely neglected aspect of a particular historical event. Their work is relevant not only because it represents the past, but because it represents “a spectral presence that, like the ghost of Hamlet, demands action in the present and the future.”<sup>116</sup> That is, the social actors who do such cultural work continuously select relevant matters, evaluate them and endow them with meaning by fitting them into a suitable framework, and only then present them to a relevant, in the words of Eviatar Zerubavel, “mnemonic community.”<sup>117</sup> More to the point, sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick argues that many key events are not only memorable, but also

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<sup>114</sup> Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory Studies: Mediation, Narrative, and the Aesthetic,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, eds. Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 68.

<sup>115</sup> See, for instance: Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, “Collective Memory and the News,” *Communication* 11, no. 2 (1989): 123-140, especially 125; Astrid Erll, “Literature, Film and the Mediality of Cultural Memory,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 389-398.

<sup>116</sup> Rigney, “This All Happened,” 20-21.

<sup>117</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, “Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past,” *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 283-299.

See also: Ann Rigney, “The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 345; Maren Röger, “News Media and Historical Remembrance: Reporting on the Expulsion of Germans in Polish and German Magazines,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, 189; Michael Schudson, “Journalism as a Vehicle of Non-Commemorative Cultural Memory,” in *Journalism and Memory*, eds. Barbie Zelizer and Keren Teneboim-Weinblatt (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 88.

“mismemorable,” largely because of their journalistic coverage.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, according to journalism expert Barbie Zelizer, following the rise of mass politics and mass culture inundated by mass media, the various representational media have not only become the most significant platform for the creation of collective memories; they have also assumed the position previously reserved for academic and political elites; the press, alongside television and film, has become the ultimate commentator and meaning-maker.<sup>119</sup>

Every existing collective or cultural memory belonging to the modern age is to some extent journalistic and, Ollick continues, many are “ultimately inseparable from their journalistic coverage and constitution.”<sup>120</sup> Namely, a number of journalists and researchers have claimed so far that journalism represents the first draft of history.<sup>121</sup> It is also more and more often argued that journalism can be considered “the first draft of memory, a statement about what should be considered, in the future, as having mattered today.”<sup>122</sup> Fragments of the past, figures, places, and events, that acquire their place in the press, especially permanently, are not only observed or merely remembered. Oftentimes the figures, places, and events recorded become carriers of meanings

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<sup>118</sup> Jeffrey K. Ollick, “Reflections on the Underdeveloped Relations between Journalism and Memory Studies,” in *Journalism and Memory*, 28.

<sup>119</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

In this book, Zelizer centers her attention on the interaction of the journalists who reported on the assassination of John F. Kennedy and competed for establishing their own journalistic authority through interpretation, authentication, and control of the narrative of the event. The author adroitly details the ways in which journalists managed to dominate the narrativization and representation of the assassination and the ways in which the same individuals came to be considered as experts on that event. Finally, the author asserts, through the ‘craft of narrative’ they were able to not only influence but shape the public understanding of the event. This research enabled the author to consider collective memory as necessarily created by and embodied in journalism. So, in the epilogue of the book she writes: “The story of America’s past will remain in part a story of what the media have chosen to remember, a story of how media’s memories have in turn become America’s own. And if not the authority of the journalists, then certainly the authority of other communities, individuals and institution will make their own claims to the tale. As this book has shown, it is from just such competition that history is made” (214).

<sup>120</sup> Ollick, “Reflections on the Underdeveloped Relations,” 28-29.

<sup>121</sup> Jill A. Edy, “Journalistic Uses of Collective Memory,” *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 2 (June 1999): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02794.x>.

<sup>122</sup> Carolyn Kitch, “Placing Journalism Inside Memory – and Memory Studies,” *Memory Studies* 1, no. 3 (2008): 312. DOI: 10.1177/1750698008093796.

inherent in the value system of a particular community and are deemed worthy of being remembered.<sup>123</sup> Accordingly, “in the quest for coherent understanding, not in the service of commemoration,” lies the one of the most important journalists’ contributions to cultural memory.<sup>124</sup>

Of course, the narratives about the past that are the subject of journalistic attention, as well as the journalistic framing of selected aspects of the past, provide their audiences with examples of men and women whose deeds are worthy of attention, that is, “examples of men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community.”<sup>125</sup> Carolyn Kitch explains that by deciding when and how to feature women and which women to select (and the same is true for men), journalists assign them a place in history. Moreover, through their work, they reveal the values they advocate in the present and for the future.<sup>126</sup>

Basing my research on the described considerations about the importance of journalism for the development of cultural memory, this dissertation focuses on four representatives of Yugoslav print media published in Croatia and the journalistic practices associated with them. It considers them as sites where the negotiation and adaptation of shared meanings and different understandings of the past took place. By focusing on journalistic practices of remembrance, it opens a way to understand what opportunities there were “for [Yugoslav] journalists to act as sleuths of the past”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Iwona Irwin – Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 158.

See also: Carolyn Kitch, *Pages from the Past: History and Memory in American Magazines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>124</sup> Schudson, “Journalism as a Vehicle,” 88.

<sup>125</sup> As cited in: Carolyn Kitch, “Whose History Does Journalism Tell? Considering Women’s Absence from the Story of the Century,” *American Journalism* 18, no. 1 (2001): 14, DOI: 10.1080/08821127.2001.10739291.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>127</sup> Barbie Zelizer, “Why Memory’s Work on Journalism Does Not Reflect Journalism’s Work on Memory,” *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2008): 83.

and to influence the commemorative practices related to the People's Liberation Struggle and the contributions of the girls and young women who served as soldiers in the partisan army.

### 1.3 Methodology and Sources

In this section, I will present the methodology I used to collect and analyze the data and answer the research questions. My analysis is based primarily on published sources, more specifically the printed press and even more specifically four high-circulation magazines, which I analyzed in four separate chapters. There are two main reasons for these choices. The first reason lies in the perceived importance of this type of printed press. The study of popular culture, especially the so-called gynocentric genres, developed out of the collaboration of cultural studies and feminist theory in the midst of the feminist changes known as the second wave. That is to say, one of the major interests of feminist scholars in cultural studies since its inception has been, as film and television expert Charlotte Brundson who completed her doctorate at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies Birmingham in the 1970s, writes, the analysis of “images *of* women” and “images *for* women.”<sup>128</sup> By asking “[d]o these ‘gynocentric’ forms address, or construct, a female or a feminine spectator? If so, how?” they developed a methodology for exploring the ways in which representational practices describe and prescribe what it means to be a woman.<sup>129</sup> According to media ethnographer Joke Hermes, these scholars have pioneered “pathfinder studies for the exploration of new (qualitative) methods in media research and prompted a shift in academic thinking about how media texts have meaning.”<sup>130</sup> Building on decades of work by feminist

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<sup>128</sup> Charlotte Brundson, “Pedagogies of the Feminine: Feminist Teaching and Women’s Genres,” *Screen* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 365 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>129</sup> Annette Kuhn, “Women’s Genres: Melodrama, Soap Opera, and Theory,” *Screen* 25, no. 1 (January/February 1984): 19.

<sup>130</sup> Joke Hermes, “Rediscovering Twentieth-Century Feminist Audience Research,” in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender*, eds. Cynthia Carter, Linda Steiner and Lisa McLaughlin (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 61.

scholars in the field of cultural studies, I have selected two magazines intended for female audiences, *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) and *Svijet* (*World*), as well as two magazines that were not specifically aimed at a female audience but were popular with women, the family weekly *Arena* and the men's magazine *Start*.<sup>131</sup> Through these magazines, I explore how media texts made meaning within a socialist culture that was conceived as free of elitist exclusivity, focused on the needs of society, and aimed to intervene in and transform unequal power relations between men and women.

The second reason for my choices and for analyzing each of them separately, lies in the nature of each of the four selected magazines. The printed press was particularly seen as a teaching and guiding force for the development of socialist Yugoslavia into a classless society of new socialist women and men. As Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Reana Senjković concisely note, the printed press was considered “the most popular, common, and appropriate means of training the masses.”<sup>132</sup> Despite this goal, the mass media in Yugoslavia were shaped by class, age, and gender. Consequently, when searching for the particular strategies of meaning-making and memory-making of each of the selected media, it is necessary to consider who produced them, for whom, and for what purpose. Three of the four (*Žena u borbi*, *Svijet*, and *Start*) had strong editorial leaderships and all four (particularly *Arena*) had defined publishing policies that, as media expert Carolyn Kitch explains, enabled the magazines to combine their interpretation of the past with their

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The author here primarily refers to Janice Radway's study of romance novels readers entitled *Reading the Romance* (1984), Ien Ang's book *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination* (1982) and David Morley's *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (1986).

<sup>131</sup> More detailed explanations of the reasons why I chose *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet* are available in the section “The New Woman in the Women's Press.” Analogously, clarifications for choosing *Arena* and *Start* are in the section “The New Woman in the *Other Women's* Press.”

<sup>132</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Reana Senjković, “Puno puta bi Vas bili izbacili kroz vrata, biste bila išla kroz prozor nutra: preispisivanje povijesti žena u Drugom svjetskom ratu” (“A Lot of Times When They Would Kick You Out the Door, You Would Go Back Inside Through the Window: Rewriting of the History of Women in World War II”), *Narodna umjetnost* 42, vol. 2 (2005): 111.

particular position of authority to provide its explanation to their audience. In addition, when a magazine identifies with a particular social group, its editorial team tends to use “an inclusive language and address their readers (...) as members of a social group with common values, with similar problems and needs, and with a shared understanding of its past.”<sup>133</sup> In this particular case, the focus is on how each particular editorial staff explained what it meant to participate in the People’s Liberation Struggle, especially for women, and how this related to the figure of the Yugoslav New Woman. Owing to such an approach, it becomes possible to observe how the magazines functioned as ideological sites that offered their readers “shared cultural knowledge and interpretations,” which Joke Hermes terms as “interpretive repertoires” that they could use as cultural capital when needed.<sup>134</sup> In addition, it enables to identify the ways in which they tried to direct their audiences, educate them and create new norms of thinking about women at war.

The most difficult task in such a research is to establish the link between a publication and its audience, that is, to determine the effect of the text on shaping identities in everyday life. The circulations and readership of a particular magazine, letters to the editor, the activity or activism of the magazines’ staff or readership, as well as success of campaigns initiated by the magazine (volunteer and charitable activities, games) are the characteristics that will provide insight, however limited, into the journalistic impact on the reading audiences of particular magazines.

All four magazines that are the focus of interest in this project were published in Croatia. This choice resulted from practical reasons regarding the feasibility of the research and easier access to sources. Despite the focus on only one Yugoslav republic, I consider the selected magazines to be

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<sup>133</sup> Carolyn Kitch, “Anniversary Journalism, Collective Memory, and the Cultural Authority to Tell the Story of the American Past,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 36, no. 1 (August 2002): 44-67, quote on 45.

See also: Carolyn Kitch, “Placing Journalism Inside Memory – and Memory Studies,” 311-320.

<sup>134</sup> Hermes, *Reading Women’s Magazines*, 8.

Also see: Joke Hermes, “Media, Meaning and Everyday life,” *Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3 (1993): 493-506, DOI:10.1080/09502389300490321.

representative of the entire country. As for *Žena u borbi*, this magazine was published by the Croatian branch of the Antifascist Front of Women. Following the end of the war, each republican branch of the AFŽ published one magazine aimed specifically at a female audience.<sup>135</sup> The goal of this distribution was to educate women, taking into account the cultural specificities (primarily differences in language and script) of each republic.

Moreover, despite an attempt to realize a Yugoslav women's magazine published by the women's organization, this did not happen. The AFŽ of Yugoslavia published *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*, 1943-1981). Although it one of the required readings in the AFŽ's courses and workshops throughout the country in the first postwar years, women did not develop the habit of buying this magazine. Nevertheless, its editorial staff provided a template for all other women's magazines in terms of the topics covered and the manner of their presentation, which is most evident in the content of all the magazines of the first ten postwar years but continues to linger on in later decades.

*Svijet*, *Arena*, and *Start* were published by the Zagreb-based publishing house, and as will be indicated in the individual chapters most of their print output, between 50 and 70 percent, was sold in Croatia.<sup>136</sup> The same is true for the most popular Yugoslav magazines published in other republics, including the publications of Serbian *Politika*, which had the largest circulations. As I explain in the next chapter, there was no real state-wide entertainment press in Yugoslavia. They, however, functioned within a system that presupposed one, albeit a fluid one, press theory and were

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<sup>135</sup> While the Croatian branch published *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*, 1943-1992), the Serbian AFŽ published the magazine *Zora* (*Dawn*, 1945-1961). Both Slovenian and Montenegrin women's organizations entitled their magazines *Naša žena* (*Our Woman*, 1941-1991 and 1943-1976, respectively). In Macedonia *Makedonka* (*Macedonian Woman*, 1944-1952) and then *Prosvetena žena* (*Enlightened Woman*, 1953-1990) were published. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was *Nova žena* (*New Woman*, 1945-1971). AFŽ of the autonomous province Vojvodina published three magazines, albeit for short periods of time: *Glas žena* (*Voice of Women*, 1948-1950) in Serbian language, *Dolgozō Nő* (*Working Woman*, 1946-1951) in Hungarian language, and *Femeia nouă* (*New Woman*, 1950-1954) in Romanian language. Finally, during the war the AFŽ of Yugoslavia restarted publishing the prewar *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*, 1943-1981).

<sup>136</sup> Krunoslav Kodžić, *Komparativna analiza kretanja Vjesnikovih izdanja: 1968-1978* (*Comparative Analysis of Vjesnik Editions' Trends: 1968-1978*) (Zagreb: Vjesnik, 1979), 49.

part of Yugoslav popular culture, the field of shared cultural experience that cultural studies scholar Martin Pogačar termed as YUniverse.<sup>137</sup> In other words, due to the “intertextual entanglement of different domains of popular culture”<sup>138</sup> and the non-existence of the state popular press, the major representatives of the popular press were all-Yugoslav in character. The chosen three were also trendsetters for the whole Yugoslavia.<sup>139</sup>

To reduce the impression that I am concentrating on the Croatian context, the other sources I use are from all over Yugoslavia. With the aim of reconstructing an historical narrative of developments in Yugoslav cultural memory related to women’s experiences in the People’s Liberation Struggle, I use various types of published primary sources “in a complementary, non-hierarchical way” alongside the printed press.<sup>140</sup> A number of published memoirs, autobiographies, diaries, as well as other products of Yugoslav popular media as films, music and literature, proved to be valuable sources of information.

According to Paul Eakin, diaries and journals are deeply rooted in the cultural and social practices of the community in which the individual lives and writes, revealing how the writer perceives and makes sense of various social situations. Although “[w]e tend to think of autobiography as a literature of the first person, (...) the subject of autobiography to which the pronoun “I” refers is neither singular nor first, and we do well to demystify its claims. We so easily forget that the first person of autobiography is truly plural in its origins and subsequent

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<sup>137</sup> Martin Pogačar, “Yugoslav Past in Film and Music: Yugoslav Interfilmic Referentiality,” in *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, eds. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2010), 199-224.

<sup>138</sup> Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, “Introduction: The Lure of Utopia: Socialist Everyday Spaces,” in *Remembering Utopia*, 25.

<sup>139</sup> For instance, *Svijet* appeared in 1953. The other Yugoslav large publishing houses began printing women’s magazines from the mid-1950s onward. Serbian publishing house *Duga* created *Praktična žena* (*Practical Woman*) already in 1956 and the publishing house *Politika* created *Bazar* in 1964. Slovene *Delo* came out with *Jana* in 1971 and Bosnian *Oslobođenje* started publishing *Una* in 1984.

<sup>140</sup> Chiara Bonfiglioli, “Revolutionary Networks: Women’s Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945-1957)” (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2012), 42.

formation.”<sup>141</sup> Analogously, poetry, novels, and movies often refer to the historical circumstances in which they were created, offer possibilities for an alternative access to historical contexts, and, as Maša Kolanović notes, make visible ideological and cultural patterns that sustain history and memory.<sup>142</sup> It is precisely with these values of diaries and memoirs, as well as literature, music, and films, in mind that I use them to illustrate more clearly how women and men remembered, reflected on, questioned and simultaneously produced the memory of the NOB. Furthermore, these sources helped me to identify similar narratives about the war in different contexts and, more importantly, to show how narratives, images, and meanings move from one context to another, that is, how the same representations came to permeate various Yugoslav media and how they changed and adapted to various circumstances.

Last, but certainly not least, there are the archival sources. Actually, as a proper historian, I initiated my research in the archives. I visited the Croatian State Archives (*Hrvatski državni arhiv*, HAD) in Zagreb, and the Archives of Yugoslavia (*Arhiv Jugoslavije*) and the Archives of Serbia (*Državni arhiv Srbije*) in Belgrade. I began my research project by examining the funds of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ).<sup>143</sup> The relative richness of these funds in each of the archives enabled me to understand why and in what way the magazines published by the AFŽ, including *Žena u borbi*, functioned. At the same time, there is almost no data on publishing policy or on the women who edited them.

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<sup>141</sup> Paul Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories, Making Selves* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 43.

<sup>142</sup> Maša Kolanović, “Partisan Star Wars. Aesthetics of Ideology, Ideology of Aesthetics in Croatian Partisan Novels,” in *Partisans in Yugoslavia*, 110.

<sup>143</sup> Similar to the situation with the media, the distribution of the archival collections of all the socialist organizations including the AFŽ reflects the internal structure of Yugoslavia. The materials of the federal headquarters of this organization are located in Belgrade, in the Archives of Yugoslavia, and the archives of each successor state holds the materials pertaining to the former republican branch of the AFŽ.

The other three magazines – the fashion magazine *Svijet*, the family illustrated magazine *Arena* and the men’s magazine *Start* – were published by the publishing house *Vjesnik*. This publisher went bankrupt and was closed in 2009. The HDA took over its photo archive and the newspaper documentation, i.e., excerpts of all types of printed media published on the Yugoslav territory for the period from 1962 to 2006, but no materials documenting the work of the management of *Vjesnik*’s or the editorial offices of its publications. So far, I have found a small number of documents related to the work of *Vjesnik* in the HDA and used as much as possible to complete my narrative.

Finally, a note on why I did not use oral history is in order. After determining that archival material could not answer many of my questions, I considered the oral history method to be the next best thing. However, the individuals I felt would contribute the most — the women who edited *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet*, particularly Marija Šoljan and Mira Gumhalter — about whom there is not much except general information, are no longer alive. Of course, there was a possibility of talking to their descendants. I inquired about the possibility of meeting the daughter of Marija Šoljan and Vladimir Bakarić’s, but I could not make it happen. After that, I abandoned the idea of using the oral history method for this project.

All in all, the emphasis on the printed press combined with a variety of published primary sources, mass media products, and official archival documents allows insight into the dynamic relationship between gender and war within the realm of state-sanctioned memory culture. The diversity of sources, with an emphasis on magazines provides “a layered interpretation of the past that becomes collective memory.”<sup>144</sup> Due to the nature and diversity of sources utilized in this

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<sup>144</sup> Kitch, “Anniversary Journalism,” 61.

research project, I employ the close reading technique, that is, the interpretation of cultural artifacts, primarily texts, but also visual resources and films.

There is no rigorous methodology for such a strategy of textual analysis. In this case, it includes considering the overall impression of a given text, the key terms or concepts that it employs, and its affective potential. It involves identifying the major points of a particular text and the ways in which they contribute to or challenge the editorial policy of a particular magazine and, more broadly, the cultural and social context in which it originated. Where possible, information about the author, reception, and similar texts is also provided. Finally, somewhat inspired by literary criticism, which maintains that every novel projects its ideal reader, it asks what kind of reader the text presupposes and how it wants to influence the reader's beliefs and attitudes toward other people or the social system itself.

Evidently, according to comparative literature expert Jeffrey Bardzell, this sort of approach is individual and subjective, "it does not follow any disembodied abstract methodology but rather the logic of the scholar-expert in whose hands it is being executed."<sup>145</sup> In other words, this dissertation reflects my personal and scholarly location, which is decisively shaped by my emphatic consideration for the wartime and postwar generation in socialist Yugoslavia.

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<sup>145</sup> Jeffrey Bardzell, "Discourse Analysis vs. Close Reading," Interaction Culture (blog), WordPress, March 24, 2009, <https://interactionculture.net/2009/03/24/discourse-analysis-vs-close-reading/>.

## 1.4 Structure of the Dissertation

Despite the limitations imposed by the official interpretation of the wartime<sup>146</sup> and a somewhat rigid and traditional social system that emerged from the war, media representations of women in war in general and the *partizanke* in particular are numerous. This research shows that published representations of the *partizanke* depended on who the author was, on behalf of which gendered or generational group they wrote, and who the text was intended for. Each of the researched magazines, i.e. each journalistic community that stood behind a certain name, interpreted and presented the topic of the NOB and the activity of women in that war in a different way and followed a different path of development. Therefore, I did not organize the content thematically, for instance, according to the types of representations available in the analyzed materials, but according to the four magazines I chose as main sources for this project.

Following the introductory section and setting the stage in the chapter “Yugoslav Media in Theory and Practice,” each of the four selected magazines is the focus of one research chapter. In other words, each magazine represents of a different gendered and generational group, a different attitude toward the war past, and a different interpretation of the New Woman and of the process of women’s emancipation in Yugoslavia. Thus, each research chapter revisits the war years, but from the perspective of a different actor at a different time. In this way, it is further emphasized that the official interpretation of the war did not limit the development of narratives about women’s participation in partisan warfare as some other factors; in this case, attitudes about women, women’s roles, their emancipation and equality in Yugoslav society figure most prominently. The

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<sup>146</sup> With regard to the printed press, the best representatives of the officially recommended truths about the NOB were the daily newspapers. About the Slovenian *Delo* see: Pušnik, “Media Memorial Discourses and Memory Struggles in Slovenia,” 433-450.

vignette at the beginning of each of the four main research chapters announces in which direction the analysis will move.

The first two magazines analyzed – *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) and *Svijet* (*World*) – were specifically for women and in the dissertation I introduced them in the short section “The New Woman in the Yugoslav Women’s Press.” I present the analysis of the first magazine in the chapter “Establishing the Canon in *Žena u borbi*.” This magazine is the place where narratives about women’s participation in the NOB were foregrounded. The reason for this is that it was published by the women’s organization that had emerged during the war – the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) – and was led by communist women who considered and represented the war as a formative period for the emergence of the figure of the Yugoslav New Woman. The following chapter, “Discovering the Murky Side of War in *Svijet*,” turns from the politically central to the more influential magazine. Here I discuss the work of women who were largely active during the war but were not old enough to be politically active in the interwar period and were not socialized by the AFŽ’s principles and beliefs. Their insistence on fashion as an essential interest of the modern Yugoslav woman, as well as their acceptance of the socialist emancipatory project as part of their own identity produces novel, if comparatively rare, representations of women at war.

The magazines *Arena* and *Start* are the focus of discussion in the second research section. I introduced these two magazines as well as the rationale for choosing them in “The New Woman in the *Other* Women’s Press.” *Arena*, as an illustrated weekly, and *Start*, as a “Yugoslav *Playboy*” are two magazines that were not specifically aimed at a female audience. There were hardly any women in their newsrooms and the narratives about the NOB they presented were significantly different from those found in the women’s press, but also among themselves. In the third research chapter, and the first chapter of this section, I concentrate on “Catching Up with Wartime Sensations in *Arena*.” Despite *Arena*’s overall dubious journalistic quality, numerous articles about

the Second World War in Yugoslavia presented women in a number of roles, so even some *partizanke* sneaked on its pages. Finally, in the last research chapter entitled “Female Icons in the Men’s Magazine *Start*,” I explored who were these icons for men and women of the postwar generation and why *partizanke* were not and could not be among them.

## Chapter 2 – Yugoslav Media in Theory and Practice

The social, economic, and political projects aimed at achieving communism were based on “the attempt to introduce modernity by comprehensive social intervention, assisted by massive ‘agitprop’ machinery.”<sup>147</sup> The main function of this massive machinery was to provide universal access to state-sanctioned official discourse, which, in turn, was to provide the educational foundation for the emergence of the New Woman and the New Man, and thus for the rise of communism. Therefore, scholars agree that in the case of the Soviet Union, “the October 1917 change of regime was accompanied by a revolution in communication.”<sup>148</sup> In addition to newspapers, whose price was set at a lower level than before the war (and which remained as much as four times lower throughout the first decade of the country’s existence for approximately two and a half times more content), there were brochures, pamphlets, posters. Moreover, all these printed materials, along with thousands of agitators, were transported around the newly formed state in so-called agit-trains to introduce the new authorities, their values and political goals.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Marie-Janine Calic, Dietmar Neutatz and Julia Obertreis (eds.), “Introduction,” in *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2011), 13.

<sup>148</sup> Larissa Zakharova, “Soviet Public Spheres,” *Politika*, May 16, 2017, <https://www.politika.io/en/notice/soviet-public-spheres>.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

Extensive literature on the development of media communication in the Soviet Union includes, for example: Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State*; Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Matthew Lenoe, “NEP Newspapers and the Origins of Soviet Information Rationing,” *The Russian Review* 62 (October 2003): 614-636; Stephen Lowell, “How Russia Learned to Listen: Radio and the Making of Soviet Culture,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 591-615; Adelheid Heftberger, “Propaganda in Motion: Dziga Vertov’s and Aleksandr Medvedkin’s Film Trains and Agit Steamers of the 1920s and 1930s,” *Apparatus: Film, Media and Digital Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.17892/app.2015.0001.2>.

Following the end of World War II and the establishment of communist-led governments across Central and Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union became their guide as well as model to emulate.<sup>150</sup> In the case of Yugoslav communists, the practices of emulation have developed almost since the establishment of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) in 1919. Filip Filipović, one of the founders of the Party and its first Secretary General, based his reflections on the role of the press on the soil of the (then) Kingdom of Yugoslavia on Lenin's well-known maxim: "Our newspapers must not be only our collective agitator and collective propagandist, but our collective organizer as well."<sup>151</sup> This same belief in the power of the printed press, as envisioned in the founding texts of Marxism and Communism, remains visible during World War II. In the partisan units throughout Yugoslavia, some 3900 different bulletins, newsletters and other periodical publications were printed, and another 2000 different newspapers and magazines on the home front.<sup>152</sup> For this publishing frenzy to make sense, many had to attend literacy courses as well as various political and cultural programs, because the partisan army and home front organizer were predominantly illiterate peasants. Some Ustasha officials attributed such influence to the written word of the partisan cultural workers by that they warned how the written word, albeit placed "in the service

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<sup>150</sup> Overview of the region is available in: Stephen Lowell, "Communist Propaganda and Media in the Era of the Cold War," in *The Cambridge History of Communism, part II: Everyday Socialism and Lived Experiences*, eds. Juliane Fürst, Silvio Pons and Mark Selden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 354-375. For Polish case study, see, for instance: Patryk Babiracki, "Between Compromise and Distrust: The Soviet Information Bureau's Operations in Poland, 1945-1953," *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 3 (2009): 345-367; idem, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943-1957* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>151</sup> Zubak, "The Yugoslav Youth Press," 25.

<sup>152</sup> Nikola Kern, *Štampa, radio, televizija, film u Jugoslaviji (Printed Press, Radio, Television, Film in Yugoslavia)* (Belgrade: Jugoslavenski institut za novinarstvo, 1964), 7.

A more detailed overview of all kinds of information dissemination activity (on the territory of Croatia) that did not include only printed press, but also leaflets, brochures, books on Marxism as well as poetry and prose (predominantly about the war), and so-called wall and oral newspapers can be found in: Mahmud Konjhodžić, *Riječi istine: Novinarstvo, informacije, štampa u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi Hrvatske (Words of Truth: Journalism, Information, Press in the People's Liberation Struggle of Croatia)* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1975).

of evil, perversion and obscurantism,” was “propelling hundreds and thousands barefoot and hungry through the woods.”<sup>153</sup>

## 2.1 Postwar Beginnings in the Shadow of the Soviet Big Brother

In the first post-war years the Soviet system remained the ideal which the Yugoslav communist authorities tried to emulate with even greater devotion than in the interwar period. Following the end of the war, the communist authorities of the nascent socialist Yugoslavia devoted themselves to reconstruction and, as they hoped, to the building of an entirely new political, economic, and social system. Considering the dynamics of the cultural life, Marijan Matković, who at that time worked as a journalist at Radio Zagreb and as literary secretary of the Publishing House of Croatia (*Nakladni zavod Hrvatske*), said:

We have just set sail under the banner of resistance and volcanic energy, from the blood and darkness of man-eating times to peace, which was immediately burdened with an agonizing struggle to preserve it, to make it meaningful. It was a time of great enthusiasm, but also a time of the so-called Cold War, of the Zhdanovist cultural and ideological monopoly, and of general economic misery. Of the collapse of illusions that collided with inevitable realities. Of outbursts of energy, hatred and self-denial! Cursed and great times. The sense that it was all just beginning and that everything was at stake, almost spontaneously gave birth to the feeling of heightened responsibility. Of course, it was a time of great deceptions, but also of great victories. A time of various cruel coercions, and magnificent instances of resistance. A time of many personal tragedies. Tragic misunderstandings and confusions. That is also, after all, the time of our historic no! of 1948, of the revolutionary inauguration of the path of our social and economic development on which we are still today.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Jambrešić Kirin and Senjković, . “Puno puta bi Vas bili izbacili,” 111. “(...) u službi zla, pokvarenosti i mračnjaštva (...) koja stotine i tisuće danas gura i tjera bose i gladne kroz šume.”

<sup>154</sup> Slobodan Šembera: “Startov intervju: Marijan Matković” (“*Start*’s Interview: Marijan Matković), *Start* 159 (February 26, 1975): 11. “(...) tek se isplovilo, pod zastavom otpora i vulkanske energije, iz krvi i mraka ljudožderskog vremena u mir koji je odmah bio opterećen mučnom borbom da ga se očuva, da ga se osmisli. Vrijeme velikih zanosa, no istovremeno i vrijeme tzv. hladnog rata, zdanovljevske kulturno-ideološke monopolizma i opće ekonomske mizerije. Sloma iluzija u sudaru s neumitnim realitetima. Provala energije, mržnje i samozataje! Proklete i veliko vrijeme. Osjećaj da je sve na početku, pa i sve u igri, rađao je gotovo spontano u čovjeku i osjećaj pojačane odgovornosti. Dakako, bilo je to i doba velikih zabluda, no i velikih pobjeda. Vrijeme raznih surovih prisila, no i veličanstvenih otpora. Vrijeme mnogih osobnih tragedija. Tragičnih nesporazuma i nesnalaženja. To je, napokon, i vrijeme našeg povijesnog ne! iz godine 1948, revolucionarno udaranje trase našem društvenom i ekonomskom razvoju kojim se i danas krećemo.”

The process of imitating the Soviet system, naturally, included the press. The Law on Press, closely modeled on the Soviet one, nominally guaranteed its freedom. This means that all publishing houses as well as printing plants were nationalized. Any and all publications were allowed to be published only by the state institutions, organizations or companies that received subsidies for publishing activities. In addition, as with all nationalized institutions, the directors of publishing houses were appointed by the Party leadership, and the state information agency *Tanjug* disseminated information to newspapers and radio stations, since they did not have their own correspondents. The system for controlling the flow of information was further secured by the establishment of agitprop sections charged with controlling the media as well as with pre-publication censorship.<sup>155</sup>

Party leaders in Yugoslavia were confronted with a variety of practical and political problems that were believed to undermine the quality of press production and thus the ability of Yugoslavs to transform themselves quickly and efficiently into the New Women and New Men. According to Carol S. Lilly, it is possible to categorize them into three broad groups. First, the poor training of the until recently illiterate peasants who were just becoming Party cadres, combined with only emerging infrastructure, led to a gap between prescribed policies and their implementation. Then, internal disagreement over priorities contributed to widening this gap. Finally, pre-existing value

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<sup>155</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 18-19.

Agitprop sections were part of the republican Ministries of Information and Propaganda that was led by Milovan Đilas. Some information on the functioning of agitation and propaganda that existed until 1952 can be found in: Ljubodrag Dimić, *Agitprop kultura: Agitpropovska faza kulturne politike u Srbiji, 1945-1952 (Agitprop Culture: Agitprop Period in the Cultural Policy in Serbia, 1945-1952)* (Belgrade: Rad, 1988); Katarina Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske, 1945.-1952. (Public and Propaganda: People's Front in Politics and Culture of Croatia, 1945-1952)* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2002); Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija: Prilozi istraživanju politike komunističkih vlasti u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1960. na polju kulture i znanosti (Culture, Science, Ideology: Contributions to the Research of the Politics of the Communist Authorities in Croatia in in the Field of Culture and Science from 1945 to 1960)* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2013), especially chapter 1 "Komunistička partija i njezina politika prema kulturi i znanosti" ("The Communist Party and Its Politics toward Culture and Science"), 29-100; idem, "Od pravovjernosti do disidentstva – preobrazbe Naprijeda" ("From Orthodoxy to Dissent – Transformations of *Naprijed*"), *Medijska istraživanja* 22, no. 1 (February 2016): 115-143, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/161257>.

systems, norms of behavior, and traditions also influenced which policies were accepted and implemented and to what extent.<sup>156</sup>

It is important to mention that the entire Yugoslav press system was divided by republic. That is, each republic had at least one publishing house that published the daily press and, depending on feasibility, specialized press, usually weekly and monthly magazines aimed at various groups of the population.<sup>157</sup> The core of these publishing houses were the Party newspapers, some of which were founded in the interwar period and some during the war. In this chapter I mention the Serbian *Borba*<sup>158</sup> and *Politika*<sup>159</sup> and the Croatian *Vjesnik*.<sup>160</sup> However, the same is true also for the Slovenian *Slovenski poročevalec*,<sup>161</sup> the Bosnian Herzegovinian *Oslobođenje*,<sup>162</sup> the Macedonian

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<sup>156</sup> Carol S. Lilly, *Power and Persuasion: Ideology and Rhetoric in Communist Yugoslavia, 1944-1953* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), 61-70.

In this regard, useful information can be found in the memoir written by an Istrian Party activist Berto Črnja (younger brother of better known Zvane Črnja). During the first ten post-war years, he was sent to the Higher Party School in Belgrade, appointed to work at agit-prop department in Zagreb, transferred to the position of lecturer of economics at the Party high school in Zagreb and then to the editorial board of *Naprijed*, newsletter of the Communist Party in Croatia. His reminiscences about that period reflect some of the early developments of the socialist system, particularly in the field of the media, as well as obstacles to that process. Berto Črnja, *Zbogom drugovi (Goodbye Comrades)* (Rijeka: Matica hrvatska, 1992).

<sup>157</sup> Zubak, "The Yugoslav Youth Press," 26.

<sup>158</sup> *Borba (Fight)* was launched in 1922 in Zagreb and was conceived as the Party's weekly. It was occasionally printed during the war, and already on November 15, 1944 (that is, a week before the fights for the liberation of the city ended) it was re-launched in Belgrade as the official Party daily newspaper. From November 1948, the Latin edition of this newspaper began to be published in Zagreb.

<sup>159</sup> *Politika (Politics)* is a daily newspaper that was established by Vladislav F. Ribnikar in 1904 in Belgrade. Due to the cooperation with the communists, but also the rejection of the request of the occupying authorities to continue publishing *Politika* throughout the war, Vladislav Sr. Ribnikar was arrested and imprisoned in the Banjica camp in October 1941. Owing to the efforts of influential friends and colleagues, he was allowed to live under house arrest after spending 6 months in prison. In the spring of 1943, he and his wife Jara Ribnikar joined the partisan army. Only a few days after the liberation of Belgrade, Ribnikar re-launched *Politika*, which has been published as a daily informative newspaper ever since.

<sup>160</sup> The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia started publishing *Vjesnik* in June 1940 as its newsletter. At the beginning of the Second World War, it was published as a monthly, and titled as *Vjesnik Hrvatske jedinstvene nacionalno-oslobodilačke fronte (Gazette of the Croatian United National Liberation Front)*. During the war, the editorial office moved through the liberated areas, and returned to Zagreb immediately after its end. On May 12, 1945, *Vjesnik* began to appear as a daily newspaper.

<sup>161</sup> *Slovenski poročevalec (Slovenian Reporter)* was an illegal newspaper of the Communist Party of Slovenia, founded in 1938. During the war, it became the official gazette of the Slovenian Liberation Front. In 1959, *Slovenski poročevalec* merged with the weekly *Ljudska pravica (People's Right)*. They jointly created the daily *Delo (Work)* and the publishing company of the same name.

<sup>162</sup> *Oslobođenje (Liberation)* was founded by the Bosnian communist, journalist and writer Rodoljub Čolaković in the summer of 1943 as the newspaper of the People's Liberation Front of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In April 1945, it started publishing in Sarajevo as a weekly, and from the beginning of 1947, as a daily newspaper.

*Nova Makedonija*<sup>163</sup> and the Montenegrin *Pobjeda*.<sup>164</sup> Because of this organization of the press, any existing edition could be sold in all Yugoslav republics, depending on demand. Since Yugoslavia did not produce its own roto-paper for newspapers at this time, the available quantities were distributed by the economic planning committee. The newspapers that were distributed throughout Yugoslavia and served as a source for the newspaper of the republics and provinces received most of the paper, as well as funds to purchase reproductive material or to renovate their own facilities. What remained was allocated among the republican newspapers, and then among the provincial ones.<sup>165</sup> For this reason, circulation, that is, the availability of certain editions, depended on their position within this hierarchy, on the relationships of the various directors and magazine editors with the members of the economic planning committee, and only then on the preferences of the readership.

A very limited number of media were considered responsible for the entire territory of Yugoslavia. The two main informative dailies distributed throughout the country were *Borba* and *Politika*. The primary task of the republican daily press, as well as other local and even specialized press, was to participate in the dissemination of information to the readership from central information bodies which, in addition to the two daily newspapers, included Radio Belgrade and *Tanjug*, to the reading audiences. Moreover, Agitprop demanded from time to time the reading and discussion of certain *Borba*'s directive articles at Party meetings, as well as activities based on

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<sup>163</sup> *Nova Makedonija* (*New Macedonia*) was founded on the basis of the decision made during the third session of the Presidency of Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Macedonia (*Antifašističko sobranie za narodno osloboduvanje na Makedonija*, ASNOM) in 1944. The first edition of this newspaper was published in October 1944 by the Agitprop section of the Central Committee of the Macedonian Communist Party. At the end of the war, *Nova Makedonija* became the Macedonian most important information newspaper.

<sup>164</sup> *Pobjeda* (*Victory*) is a Montenegrin informative newspaper founded in 1944. From the end of the war until 1975, it was published as a biweekly, when it began to be published as a daily newspaper. During the existence of socialist Yugoslavia, *Pobjeda* was the only daily newspaper published in Montenegro.

<sup>165</sup> Božidar Novak, "U dugome poraću, od 1945. do 1955." ("In the Long Postwar, 1945-1955"), in *HND – prvo stoljeće* (*Croatian Journalists' Association – The First Century*), ed. Mario Bošnjak (Zagreb: Medijska agencija HND, 2010), 135.

them.<sup>166</sup> Notably, the widespread practice of reading newspapers at meetings of various political and social organizations, which included the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ), is the second reason why the circulation of the press in the first years of Yugoslavia's existence gives only an incomplete picture of the circulation of a particular edition.

## 2.2 Mixing, Matching and Discovering “The Third Way”

The rather dreary life of journalists – as Črnja describes, “[e]ditors of Zagreb newspapers and radio stations came to the Agitprop every day for directives. They were usually criticized for both published and unpublished articles”<sup>167</sup> – was shaken in mid-1948. Following the publication of all materials related to the dispute with the Soviet leadership, the Party organized the Fifth Congress (almost a full twenty years after the previous one). Moreover, all meetings were broadcast live on the radio, and newspapers gave extensive coverage to the activities of the Congress. This departure from the usual practice of keeping state affairs secret, according to Slavko Goldstein, created in the Yugoslav public a widespread sense of commonality for the first time since the end of World War II. The Party and the people felt that they once again had to defend themselves against foreign domination.<sup>168</sup>

The political showdown with the Cominform initiated a period of harsh political dictatorship.<sup>169</sup> For example, Croatian historian Magdalena Najbar-Agičić writes that the shortage of journalistic

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<sup>166</sup> Branko Petranović, *Historija Jugoslavije (1918-1988), III knjiga: Socijalistička Jugoslavija (1945-1988) (History of Yugoslavia (1918-1988), book 3: Socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1988))* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1988), 122-123, 143.

<sup>167</sup> Črnja, *Zbogom drugovi*, 169. “U agitprop su svaki dan dolazili urednici zagrebačkih listova i radio-stanice po direktive. Upućivani su im česti prigovori zbog objavljenih i neobjavljenih članaka.”

<sup>168</sup> Slavko Goldstein, *1941.: godina koja se vraća (1941: The Year that Keeps Returning)* (Zagreb: Novi liber, 2007), 427-428.

<sup>169</sup> Because of the conflict with the Soviet Union and the subsequent expulsion from Cominform, in 1949 the Party leadership ordered the establishment of the political camp *Goli otok* that was chosen because it was not inhabited and because it was virtually impossible to escape from it. Shortly after, the neighboring *Sveti Grgur* became the location of the women's penitentiary. The civilians who were accused of political collaboration with any of the Cominform states (in however vague form) were sent there by an administrative decision. In addition, military personnel have

cadres increased as editorial offices were purged of “active enemies” but also of “political loafers, decadents and other déclassé elements”<sup>170</sup> during 1949. Due to the chronic shortage of professionally and ideologically educated journalists, preparations for the establishment of the School of Journalism in Zagreb began in the same year. This school existed for only three years before closing (without clear explanation) in 1952.<sup>171</sup> Until the early 1960s, there were no similar institutions in Croatia. Then, in 1964, the publishing house *Vjesnik* launched a one-year journalism program, which enrolled four generations of aspiring journalists during the 1960s. It was inspired by a similar program organized by the major Slovenian publishing house *Delo* just a year earlier for the training of its correspondents as well as by the work of the Department of Journalism, also established in 1963, at the College of Political Science in Ljubljana.<sup>172</sup> Although the Faculty of Political Science existed in Croatia since 1962, the Department of Journalism at this faculty was established only in the 1980s.<sup>173</sup>

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been tried in staged processes. After the meeting of Tito and Nikita Khrushchev in 1955, the majority of political prisoners were released, but the penitentiary operated until 1986.

<sup>170</sup> As cited in: Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, “Agitprop među novinarima. Uspostava komunističke vlasti i nadzor nad medijima” (“Agitprop among Journalists. Establishment of the Communist Authority and Control Over the Media”), in *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka: Hrvatsko društvo i ideologija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma (The Creation of the Socialist Human: Croatian Society and the Ideology of Yugoslav Socialism)*, ed. Igor Duda (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2017), 187-191, quotes on 188 and 189, “(...) aktivnih neprijatelja (...) političkih mlitavaca, dekadencija i drugih deplasiranih elemenata.”

<sup>171</sup> Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, “Osnivanje, djelovanje i prekid rada Novinarske škole u Zagrebu 1949.-1952.” (“Establishment, Functioning and Termination of the Journalism School in Zagreb from 1949 to 1952”), *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 47, no. 2 (November 2015): 275-292, [https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=222137](https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=222137).

Similarly, College of Journalism and Diplomacy (*Visoka novinarsko-diplomatska škola*), established in Belgrade in 1948, was closed in 1952. See more in: Dragomir Bondžić, *Novinarska i diplomatska visoka škola u Belgradeu (Journalism and Diplomatic College in Belgrade)* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2013).

<sup>172</sup> To be admitted to this school, students had to be at the end of their studies, with the planned completion within a year and a half so that they could then be employed at *Vjesnik*.

Zlatko Munko, “‘Vjesnikova’ novinarska škola” (“*Vjesnik*’s School of Journalism”), in *Zbornik sjećanja, Vjesnik 1940 – 1990 (Anthology of Memories, Vjesnik 1940 – 1990)*, ed. Milan Bekić (Zagreb: NIŠPRO Vjesnik, 1990), 196-198.

<sup>173</sup> Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, “Obrazovanje novinara za budućnost medija: ideje i počeci institucionalne izobrazbe novinara u Hrvatskoj” (“Educating Journalists for the Future of the Media: Ideas and Beginnings of the Institutional Training of Journalists in Croatia”), *Povijest u nastavi* 40 (2017): 51, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/clanak/294474>.

The considerably broadened ideological perspective of the Party leadership led to major changes since the very beginning of the 1950s.<sup>174</sup> In general, the reinterpretation of the works of Marx and Lenin led to the idea of decentralization of the highly centralized and bureaucratic country as a prerequisite for the anticipated withering away of the state. With inevitable slogans, like “Factories to the workers!” self-management was introduced. The first federal law, entitled Basic Law on the Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations (*Osnovni zakon o upravljanju državnim privrednim poduzećima i višim privrednim udruženjima*), which anticipated the coming changes, was passed in June 1950. It placed the management of enterprises in the hands of workers, and soon workers councils were formed in enterprises and factories throughout the country.<sup>175</sup> Importantly, self-management was founded on the idea of free access to information, which led to a number of modifications in the conception of the role and performance of the media. Further economic reforms and the gradual federalization of the country also affected the media system. Over the next decades, the Yugoslav media were adapted to the general political changes and transformed into “the single most interesting example of socialist democracy in action.”<sup>176</sup>

Although the government introduced the first legal adjustments in the field of media only in 1956 (and then 1960 and 1963), some of the atmosphere of détente seeped into this area from the beginning of the 1950s. For instance, as early as 1950, the editorial board of *Vjesnik*, Croatia’s most influential daily newspaper, and the Zagreb Agitprop department agreed to appoint Frane Barbieri as *Vjesnik*’s editor-in-chief. This was, of course, a precedent because the editors-in-chief of all print media throughout Yugoslavia were at that time still appointed by the republican Party

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<sup>174</sup> To demonstrate its commitment to reform the leadership renamed KPJ as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*, SKJ) in 1953. I will, for convenience sake, refer to this political party by its original name throughout the dissertation.

<sup>175</sup> Igor Duda, “Uhodavanje socijalizma, Hrvatska u desetljeću poslije 1945. godine” (“Getting Used to Socialism, Croatia in the Decade After 1945”), in *Refleksije vremena 1945.-1955. (Reflections of Time 1945-1955)*, ed. Jasmina Bavoljak (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2012), 23.

<sup>176</sup> Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media*, 225.

leadership.<sup>177</sup> Barbieri was responsible for the first technical and content changes made in this daily. Considering that all Yugoslav daily newspapers had the same number of pages, the same layout, and published similar texts on the same topics, he decided that *Vjesnik* should have two pages more in a different layout and with some new topics in order to be more attractive to the readership. Reportedly, following these changes, Milovan Đilas, then still the leading Party ideologue, accused him of introducing the Western spirit into the socialist press.<sup>178</sup> The accusations were true in this particular case, for Barbieri drew inspiration from the Italian press for this first change, as well as for the changes he made over the next three years as editor-in-chief of *Vjesnik* and then as director of the publishing house (during 1952 and 1953).<sup>179</sup>

In the long run, influences from Western European countries, especially of a cultural nature, became an inevitable part of Yugoslav socialist modernity. The country's economic needs were partly responsible for this. Namely, until mid-1948, the communist authorities based economic reconstruction and development on relations with the Soviet Union and the other Eastern Bloc countries. Following the Tito-Stalin Split and the expulsion from the Cominform, the Yugoslav leadership was forced to ask for help and then to establish economic connections with Western countries, particularly the United States.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, "Tito's no" to Stalin had the effect of exposing cultural products from Eastern Block, especially the Soviet Union, to criticism. As an

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<sup>177</sup> Frane Barbieri, "Jedini list na šest stranica" ("The Only Newspapers on Six Pages"), in *Zbornik sjećanja*, 120.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 121; Božidar Novak, *Hrvatsko novinarstvo u 20. stoljeću (Croatian Journalism in the Twentieth Century)* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2005), 500.

<sup>180</sup> Vladimir Velebit, *Moj život (My Life)* (Zaprešić: Fraktura, c2017), 511-523.

Velebit, who already during the war worked as the liaison officer with foreign military missions, dedicated some space in his autobiography to the negotiations he conducted with the representatives of the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development in the second half of 1950 and the related request for free assistance from the US parliament in the beginning of 1951 as well as the talks with State Department and CIA employees he met during the war about military assistance to Yugoslavia.

A comprehensive overview of the related political changes can be found in: Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat, The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War (1945-1960)* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Tvrtko Jakovina, *Socijalizam na američkoj pšenici (1948.-1963.) (Socialism on American Wheat (1948-1963))* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2002).

alternative, Yugoslavia gradually opened up to the previously unwanted cultural products from the West. Maša Kolanović explains the tendency to appropriate, imitate, and absorb Western cultural products in the article with the suggestive title “From Culture for the Masses to Mass Culture:”

(...) in an almost schizophrenic manner, the socialist realist concept of culture of the second half of the forties meets the idea of popular culture of Western provenance, which increases its presence and symbolic influence in the fifties. Thus, mass character and popularity, as the compelling and value-positive aspects of culture in the first post-war years, experience their competition in the concept of mass culture throughout the 1950s, which in these years refers primarily to popular culture of Western provenance.<sup>181</sup>

The further development of such substitution was encouraged by the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the subsequent abolition of the agitprop departments, both of which took place in 1952. The Split-based publishing house *Slobodna Dalmacija (Liberated Dalmatia)*, for example, attempted to capitalize on the perceived change that same year. It published the novel *Grička vještica (The Witch of Grič)*<sup>182</sup> by Marija Jurić Zagorka<sup>183</sup> as a supplement to its daily newspaper. As a result of this and similar innovations, the circulation of *Slobodna Dalmacija* started to increase and the additional revenue enabled its further

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<sup>181</sup> Maša Kolanović, “Od kulture za mase do masovne kulture” (“From Culture for the Masses to Mass Culture”), in *Refleksije vremena*, 178. “(...) u gotovo shizofrenoj maniri, susreću socrealistička koncepcija kulture iz druge polovice četrdesetih i ideja popularne kulture zapadnjačke provenijencije koja s desetljećem pedesetih sve više pojačava svoju prisutnost i simbolički utjecaj. Tako masovnost i popularizacija kao imperativni i vrijednosno pozitivni aspekti kulture prvih poratnih godina u pedesetim godinama 20. stoljeća sve više dobivaju svoju značenjsku konkurenciju u pojmu masovna kultura koji se od tih godina prije svega odnosi na popularnu kulturu zapadnjačke provenijencije.”

<sup>182</sup> *Grička vještica* is actually a cycle of seven novels that Zagorka wrote and published during 1912. Those novels are: *Tajna Krvavog mosta (The Secret of the Bloody Bridge)*, *Kontesa Nera (Countess Nera)*, *Malleus Maleficarum*, *Suparnica Marije Terezije 1 (The Rival of Maria Theresa 1)*, *Suparnica Marije Terezije 2 (The Rival of Maria Theresa 2)*, *Dvorska kamarila (The Court Camarilla)*, *Buntovnik na prijestolju (Rebel on the Throne)*.

<sup>183</sup> Marija Jurić Zagorka was the first Croatian professional female journalist and the most widely read writer. She founded and edited *Ženski list (Women’s Magazine)*, the first Croatian magazine for women, and later the magazine *Hrvatica (Croatian Woman)*. Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer supported her career and allegedly persuaded her to write novels. She has written novels in which love stories are intertwined with adventurous or criminal plots. An important aspect in all of her books are elements from (local) history. Also, Zagorka is the author of the first Croatian crime novel entitled *Kneginja iz Petrinjske ulice (Princess from Petrinjska Street)* published in 1910. More about her life and work is available in: Slavica Jakobović Fribec, “Marija Jurić,” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements, 195-199*; Marina Vujnović, “Forging the *Bubikopf* Nation: A Feminist Political – Economic Analysis of *Ženski list*, Interwar Croatia’s Women’s Magazine, for the Construction of an Alternative Vision of Modernity,” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2008).

development.<sup>184</sup> Following similar reasoning to *Slobodna Dalmacija*'s executives, the director of *Vjesnik*, Frane Barbieri, developed the family weekly *Vjesnik u srijedu* (*Vjesnik on Wednesday*, VUS) in 1952. It was intended to be, in the words of its first editor-in-chief Ivo Mihovilović, “a slightly different and funnier, more colorful and more abundant publication.”<sup>185</sup> Inspired by the success of VUS, the same publishing house in 1953 launched *Svijet* (*World*), a fashion magazine for women, and *Plavi Vjesnik* (*Blue Vjesnik*), a magazine for children and youth replete with comics, in 1954.

At the same time, criticism of such publishing practices was also growing. Zagorka's work, for example, was characterized as petit bourgeois pulp fiction, and the publication of *Grička vještica* by *Slobodna Dalmacija* unpleasantly surprised conservatives in the Party and among journalists. For instance, the director of the Institute of Folk Art (*Institut za narodnu umjetnost*)<sup>186</sup> Zoran Palčok in 1953 wrote:

*Slobodna Dalmacija* from Split on the first pages talks about the conclusions of the Sixth Congress of the KPJ, about the achievements of the working people, about the need to create an even broader, more advanced consciousness, about the development of socialist relations and the quality of socialist man, etc., and on the last page it asks the same reader: ‘Have you bought *Grička vještica*?’<sup>187</sup>

The author explains that such a publishing policy “may raise the question of morality (...), since here the principle of profitability has cast a shadow over the socialist fidelity to principle.”<sup>188</sup>

*Grička vještica* was mentioned in 1954 by Edvard Kardelj, one of the most important Yugoslav politicians who, among other things, designed a system of self-government. In his speech at the

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<sup>184</sup> Novak, “U dugome poraču,” 138.

<sup>185</sup> Zija Sulejmanpašić, “Vjesnik u srijedu” (“*Vjesnik on Wednesday*”), in *Monografije* (*Monographs*), ed. Joško Palavršić (Zagreb: NIŠPRO Vjesnik, 1990), 3. “(...) nešto drugačije i zabavnije, šarenije i oblinije izdanje.”

<sup>186</sup> Now: Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research (*Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku*).

<sup>187</sup> Zoran Palčok, “O bezvrijednoj literaturi i filmu” (“On Worthless Literature and Film”), *Kulturni radnik* 6, no. 1 (1953): 21. “(...) splitska Slobodna Dalmacija na svojim prvim stranicama govori o zaključcima VI. kongresa SKJ, o uspjesima radnih ljudi, o potrebi izgrađivanja još šire, naprednije svijesti, o razvijanju socijalističkih odnosa i kvaliteta socijalističkog čovjeka itd. itd., a na zadnjoj strani pita te iste čitaoc: “Jeste li kupili Gričku vješticu?”

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. “Može se postaviti pitanje morala (...), jer je tu princip rentabiliteta bacio u sjenu socijalističku principijelnost.”

Third Congress of the Communist Party in Serbia, he too referred to it as an example of entertainment literature unsuitable for the Yugoslav socialist audience. However, he took the position that “[w]e will certainly not improve the situation on our cultural front (...) by showing empty disgust at the low taste of our working people who are looking for various *Gričke vještice* and similar things.”<sup>189</sup> Moreover, Kardelj criticized some Party comrades as narrow-minded, saying “that it is essential for entertainment to be healthy, humanly pure, at an elementary cultural level, and jazz music as well as an adventure novel can be like that. If they are that, they will be a path to a higher culture for a lot of people, not a descent into ignorance.” In other words, it comes down to offering more “socialist, political and social content of cultural creation.”<sup>190</sup>

As historian Branko Petranović explains, the Tito-Stalin Split and the reinterpretation of the communist ideology through self-management brought the KPJ in a struggle on two fronts. On the one hand, Party leadership as well as rank-and-file members gradually increased their ideological tolerance in order to find a position free of the extremes attributed to the Stalinist Soviet Union. They also wanted to prevent the renewal of so-called petty-bourgeois habits, which they feared would have been encouraged by the excessive influence of Western culture and art.<sup>191</sup> Accordingly,

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<sup>189</sup> Edvard Kardelj, *Izbor iz dela, sv. 5 (Selection from Works, vol. 5)* (Belgrade: Komunist, 1979), 10. “Sigurno nećemo ni za jotu popraviti stanje na našem kulturnom frontu (...) praznim zgražavanjem nad niskim ukusom naših radnih ljudi koji traže razne Gričke vještice i slične stvari.”

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 16. “da je osnovno da zabava bude zdrava, čovječanski čista, na jednom elementarnom kulturnom nivou, a to mogu da budu i džez-muzika i avanturistički roman. Ako budu to, oni će biti za mnoge ljude put ka višoj kulturi, a ne srozavanje u nekulturu.” (...) “(...) socijalističku, političku i društvenu sadržinu kulturnog stvaranja.”

<sup>191</sup> Petranović, *Historija Jugoslavije*, 328-329.

Many authors have tried to describe and define Yugoslavia’s place in the Cold War Europe and the world and, consequently, much is written on the topic of Westernization (especially Americanization) of the Yugoslav culture. Some relevant studies are: Igor Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem: O povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih (In Pursuit of Well-Being: On History of Leisure and Consumer Society in Croatia in the 1950s and 1960s)* (Srednja Europa: Zagreb, 2005); idem, *Pronađeno blagostanje: Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih (Well-Being Found: Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in Croatia in the 1970s and 1980s)* (Srednja Europa: Zagreb, 2010); Maša Kolanović: *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač...;* Radina Vučetić, *Koka kola socijalizam: Amerikanizacija jugoslovenske popularne kulture šezdesetih godina XX veka* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2012), recently published in English as *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2018); Anita Buhin, “Yugoslav Socialism ‘Flavored with Sea, Flavored with Salt’. Mediterraneanization of Yugoslav Popular Culture in the 1950s and 1960s under Italian Influence” (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2019).

the following decades were marked by debates between conservative views, exemplified here by the position of Zoran Palčok, and more or less liberal views, illustrated by the stance of Edvard Kardelj. Journalists discussed the role and development of the printed press, especially the popular press, at the regular meetings of the Journalists' Association of Yugoslavia (*Savez novinara Jugoslavije*, SNJ), as well as at their republican conferences.<sup>192</sup> At the same time, a trend emerged to organize conferences and advisory sessions dealing with Yugoslav popular culture.<sup>193</sup> The proceedings were then published on the pages of the relevant journals and commented on in other print media.<sup>194</sup>

### 2.3 Balancing Out the West in the East

The communist authorities' search for a balance between the two perceived poles is best seen in the laws focusing on the media. As mentioned earlier, self-management in the media was

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<sup>192</sup> See, for instance: *Srebrni jubilej SNJ 1945-1970, vol. 1 i 2 (The Silver Jubilee SNJ 1945-1970, vol. 1 and 2)* (Belgrade: SNJ, 1971); Božidar Novak, "Pedesete – doba početne živosti, od 1955. do 1965." ("Fifties – The Period of Initial Liveliness, from 1955 to 1965"); idem, "Sedam povijesnih godina od 1965. do 1972." ("Seven Historical Years from 1965 until 1972"), in *HND – prvo stoljeće*, 145-164 and 165-198.

<sup>193</sup> Some information about this topic can be found in: Lada Čale Feldman, "Bijela knjiga, nepoćudna književnost u kulturnostudijskoj perspektivi" ("The White Book, Undesirable Literature in the Cultural Studies Perspective"), in *Devijacije i promašaji*, 53-70; Zoran Janjetović, "Zabavna štampa u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji" ("Popular Press in the Socialist Yugoslavia"), *Studia lexicographica* 4 (2010): 33-59, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/162816>; Maša Kolanović, "Ljubi se Istok i Zapad: Prema napuštanju sorealizma" ("East and West Kiss: Towards the Abandonment of Socialist Realism") and "Socijalistički filing i intelektualno višeglasje" ("Socialist Feeling and Intellectual Polyphony"), in *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač...*, 72-163; Reana Senjković, "Kulturne dominacije: O popularnoj kulturi u jugoslavenskom socijalizmu," ("Cultural Dominations: On Popular Culture in Yugoslav Socialism") in *Izgnubljeno u prijenosu: Pop iskustvo soc kulture (Lost in Translation: Pop Experience of Soc Culture)* (Zagreb: Institut za entologiju i folkloristiku, 2008), 47-89.

<sup>194</sup> For instance, the journal *Kulturni život (Cultural Life)* of the Association of Cultural and Educational Organizations of Yugoslavia (*Zajednica kulturno-prosvjetnih organizacija Jugoslavije*) recurrently published such materials. For instance, in 1963, it published presentations of the participants in the conference "Ideological Problems of Yugoslav Journalism" ("Idejni problemi jugoslavenskog novinarstva") organized by the Federation of Journalists of Yugoslavia. In the same year, it published the proceedings from the forum "Entertainment Literature and *Šund*" ("Zabavna štampa i šund") organized as a part of the plenum of the Cultural and Educational Organization of Serbia. In 1975, it published discussions from the conference "Entertainment Press and Other Entertainment Literature" ("Zabavna štampa i ostala zabavna literatura") organized by the publishing institution, and in 1984 it published the materials from the "Advisory Session on Ideological Struggle in the Sphere of Culture and Creativity" ("Savjetovanje o idejnoj borbi u sferi kulture i stvaralaštva") organized by the Commission for Ideological Issues and Information (*Komisija za idejna pitanja i informiranje*) of the Central Committee of the League of Communist of Croatia.

regulated by several legal interventions, particularly in the period between the mid-fifties and the mid-seventies. Since access to information was seen as one of the prerequisites for the functioning of the self-managing system, it was deemed necessary for the legal framework to reflect this. The 1960 Law on the Press and Other Forms of Information (*Zakon o štampi i drugim oblicima informacija*) established (albeit vaguely) the right of citizens to information and the 1963 Constitution included the legal provision obliging the press, radio and television to inform the general public truthfully and objectively, as well as to publish information about institutions and organizations whose proper functioning is in the public interest. The 1974 Constitution reaffirmed the importance of accurate and complete information in the decision-making process.<sup>195</sup>

In addition, the 1960 Law on Press and Other Forms of Information removed pre-publication censorship from the publication process. However, it laid out several areas that media professionals had to pay attention to and based on which their work could be censored.<sup>196</sup> Gertrude Robinson notes that censorship remained unequal for different types of media content. While it was all but abolished in the sphere of economy and culture during the 1960s, political topics were subject to censorship more frequently.<sup>197</sup> Importantly, some new restrictive legal measures were adopted in the early 1970s. Namely, in 1972 the Serbian branch of the Party promulgated the Law on Amendments to the Republican Tax on Retail Goods (*Zakon o izmenama i dopunama*

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<sup>195</sup> Mihailo Bjelica, *Velike bitke za slobodu štampe (Great Battles for the Freedom of Press)* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985), 148-150.

<sup>196</sup> —, *Zakon o štampi i drugim oblicima informacija* (Law on the Press and Other Forms of Information), in: *Narodne novine*, no. 45, November 9, 1960, p. 819.

This law abolished censorship before publication, but in return provided the list of nine types of offenses under which the press could be banned. They focused on (1) criminal offences against the people, the State or the Yugoslav army, (2) “false, perverted or alarming reports or allegations causing public alarm and menacing public peace and order, (3) revealing military secrets, (4) publishing information representing “an official or economic secret of particular importance to the community,” (5) propaganda “contrary to the goals of the United Nations,” (6) acts which may disturb Yugoslav foreign policy, (7) “violation of honor and reputation of our peoples, their supreme representative bodies, the President of the Republic, as well as violation of honor and reputation of foreign peoples,” (8) “severely offends public decency,” and (9) publishing “information detrimental to the interests of the judiciary.”

<sup>197</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 61-64.

*o republičkom porezu na promet robe na malo*). It was intended to serve as an incentive to return to Marxist roots in the field of culture and to eliminate all kinds of art and media products – magazines, comic books, music, books, films — that were considered artistically inferior or morally questionable. In the following years, this law was also accepted by the other Yugoslav republics.<sup>198</sup>

One of the most important elements of self-management was decentralization. That is, the Yugoslav “third way” allowed for a gradual restructuring of most state institutions, including the media companies. In the immediate post-war period, six republican media systems (which at the time included the printed press, radio, and publishing companies) were integrated into a central, all-Yugoslav information system. The process of decentralization began when several ministries, including the Ministry of Information, were abolished in the 1950s. The 1956 Law on Newspapers Publishing (*Osnovni zakon o novinskim poduzećima i ustanovama*) allowed all media institutions to control what they publish, and the possibility of independent election of top management was realized with the adoption of the Basic Law on Radio Broadcasting Institutions (*Osnovni zakon o radio-saobraćaju*) in 1965. In addition, the 1960 Law on the Press and Other Forms of Information was amended in 1971: the legal regulation of public information was transferred to the responsibility of the republics and provinces. Following on this amendment, the 1974 Constitution stipulated that the means by which information activities were financed should also be decentralized. This meant that, from mid-1970s, the republics and provinces became fully responsible for the overall development of the media and communications systems on their

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<sup>198</sup> Ana Hofman, “Micronarratives of Music and (Self-) Censorship in Socialist Yugoslavia,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship*, ed. Patricia Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 262-263; Uroš Čvoro, *Turbo-Folk Music and Cultural Representations of National Identity in Former Yugoslavia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 43-45.

territory.<sup>199</sup> This applied equally to the printed press, radio, television, and film companies. As

Robinson summarized, Yugoslavia

has a broadcast system which is neither nationally organized nor nationally programmed. There is no pyramidal hierarchy centering in the state capital which would dominate the decision-making and programming of the constituent networks. Instead, the six republics are equal and organizationally independent, deciding autonomously what programs their audiences want to watch and listen to. (...) All they are willing to concede is that they need an umbrella organization to coordinate practical issues of program development and scheduling.<sup>200</sup>

As for the state press, *Borba*, once the Party's authoritative organ for the entire state, lost influence in the 1960s, even within Serbia. At the same time, *Politika*, both the publishing house and the daily newspaper, came to dominate the Serbian market in the 1960s. In the early 1960s, *Borba*, printed in Cyrillic in Belgrade and in Latin in Zagreb, had a circulation of 160,000 copies per issue, while *Politika*, printed only in Cyrillic, had a circulation of approximately 330,000 copies per issue.<sup>201</sup> *Borba*'s circulation gradually declined until the early 1980s. During that decade, its circulation was 19,000 copies per issue distributed to state institutions and the Yugoslav army as part of compulsory subscription.<sup>202</sup> At the same time *Politika* lost some influence, but still sold about 240 000 copies per issue, mainly in Serbia.<sup>203</sup> In Croatia, *Vjesnik* played the same role as *Politika* in Serbia.

It is important to note that over time not only *Borba* and *Politika*, but entire Yugoslav information press lost some of its influence. Instead, increasingly diversified popular press – various fashion, youth, film, television, music, and similar magazines – became more popular among readers. As a result, daily newspaper circulation fell from 10.06 to 8.67 million in the period

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<sup>199</sup> Bjelica, *Velike bitke*, 149.

<sup>200</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 50.

<sup>201</sup> Kern, *Štampa, radio, televizija, film u Jugoslaviji*, 49.

<sup>202</sup> Ivan Mrđen, "Borbina borba" ("Borba's Struggle"), *Helsinkička povelja – glasilo Helsinkiškog odbora za ljudska prava u Srbiji* 9, no. 93-94 (March-April 2006): 36.

<sup>203</sup> Pedro Ramet, "The Yugoslav Press in Flux," in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Boulder and London: Westview, 1985), 107.

from 1964 until 1970. At the same time, the circulation of general-interest press increased from 3.8 to 8.24 million.<sup>204</sup>

All in all, the legal changes combined with the relaxation of Party control were welcomed by media professionals.<sup>205</sup> The changes described above first enabled media openness and journalistic autonomy and then gradually strengthened them. They led to a hybrid creation that scholars sometimes even call schizophrenic to describe the possibilities it offered to those working in the media, but also in arts and culture.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, the printed press could follow the Party line unquestioningly, it could only chase profits, or it could promote the creative vision of its editorial staff. More often than not, popular magazines were a combination of these factors, reflecting the complexity but also the adaptability of socialist Yugoslavia, its politics and its ideological foundations.

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<sup>204</sup> Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media*, 46.

<sup>205</sup> *Tanjug* should also be mentioned in this context. This state news agency has lost some of its influence within Yugoslavia since the 1950s due to decentralization and the possibility of the publishing houses specialized for the printed press to have their own correspondents abroad. However, with the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement, its journalists have repositioned themselves to become recognizable as “the leading voice of news from and for the non-aligned world” and thus challenged the division of the world into two opposing blocs. See more in: Christian Vukasovich and Oliver Boyd-Barrett, “Whatever Happened to Tanjug? Re-loading Memory for an Understanding of the Global News System,” *The International Communication Gazette* 74, no. 8 (2012): 639-710, quote on 701.

<sup>206</sup> Davor Dukić, “Problem početka sadašnjosti ili kako misliti pedesete” (“The Problem of the Beginning of the Present or How to Think the Fifties”), in *Zbornik radova 36. seminara Zagrebačke slavističke škole (Proceedings of the 36th Seminar of the Zagreb Slavic School)*, ed. Krešimir Bagić (Zagreb: Zagrebačka slavistička škola, 2008), 65; Tvrtko Jakovina, “Historical Success of Schizophrenic State: Modernisation in Yugoslavia 1945–1974,” in *Socialism and Modernity: Art, Culture, and Politics, 1950–1974*, ed. Ljiljana Kolečnik, 7-43 (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti – Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2012); Zubak, “The Yugoslav Youth Press,” 35.

## PART 2

### Introduction: The Foundations of the Women's Press

Shortly after the First Congress of the Yugoslav Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ, June 17-19, 1945) in Belgrade, the First Congress of the AFŽ of Croatia was held in Zagreb (July 21-23, 1945). Many of the speeches given during these three days dealt with guidelines for the future work of this organization. The then president of the organization, Spasenija – Cana Babović, stressed that at the moment “when the struggle against fascism ended in victory, when we drove the occupiers out of our country, when we crushed the last remnants of depravity among our peoples, we must do no less than we did during the people’s liberation struggle.”<sup>207</sup> Babović did not go into too much detail about what exactly that would mean. Instead, she remarked that women should “be ready for all sacrifices,” but also that they should be “ready to take hold of the places [they] deem appropriate.”<sup>208</sup>

Kata Pejnović, then vice-president of the Croatian branch of AFŽ, elaborated further on women’s roles and responsibilities. She divided them into five areas: consolidating the values of brotherhood and unity and consolidating the government, building and restoring the country, taking care of the young, the old, and the war invalids and, finally, combating illiteracy and ignorance by organizing literacy courses and courses of political education.<sup>209</sup> The organization’s broad area of responsibilities transformed into a lengthy list of tasks that the AFŽ activists immediately engaged

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<sup>207</sup> Spasenija – Cana Babović, “Govor Cane Babović, predsjednice AFŽ-a Jugoslavije,” in *Žene Hrvatske, vol. 1*, 78. “(...) kada je borba protiv fašizma završena pobjedom, kada smo istjerali okupatore iz naše zemlje, kada smo razbile i posljednje ostatke izroda naših naroda, ne smijemo ništa manje raditi nego što smo radile u toku narodno-oslobodilačke borbe.”

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. “(...) u radu na obnovi naše zemlje moramo biti spremne na sve žrtve. (...) spremne da zauzmemo ona mjesta, koja nam odgovaraju.”

<sup>209</sup> Lydia Sklevicky, “Prvi kongres AFŽ-a Hrvatske: putovi integracije u novo društvo” (“First Congress of the AFŽ of Croatia: Paths of Integration into the New Society”), in *Oslobođenje Hrvatske 1945. godine (Liberation of Croatia in 1945)*, ed. Mira Kolar – Dimitrijević (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1986), 360-365.

with.<sup>210</sup> These included visiting, giving gifts and caring for veterans and war invalids; working in orphanages and babysitting the children of working mothers; participating in mass labor actions and agitating among the youth to do the same; organizing reading groups and new literacy and political courses; registering women on voter lists and preparing them for the first elections; assisting in the newly established state administrative offices; and even donating of blood.<sup>211</sup> Literacy courses and reading classes were gradually incorporated into the nascent system as the authorities sought to combat illiteracy among adults in rural areas where just over three-quarters of the Yugoslav population lived.<sup>212</sup> Instead, the women's organization arranged some vocational training courses as well as the projects for the socialization of motherhood and housework for working women because the leading *afežejke* expected that a large number of women would become part of the labor force. The economic trends that indicated this would happen became evident between 1947 and 1949. During these years, one-third of the national income was invested in industry, which increased the number of people employed in the industry fourfold to approximately two million.<sup>213</sup>

Messiness of the wartime publishing was also restructured. Since the communists regarded the printed press as indispensable to the comprehensive mastery of the rights and duties of the kind of citizenship they offered, the magazines of the AFŽ can be considered as an arm of the developing “massive ‘agitprop’ machinery” specifically charged with refining the female version of the

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<sup>210</sup> Following the end of the war, Yugoslavia faced massive material and demographic losses. During the next eight years, until 1953, it received aid from various sources. For instance, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) alone granted it approximately \$ 420 million in money and goods (food, clothes, and medicine) the highest amount donated to a European country. In addition, the Yugoslav people, mostly voluntarily, donated their labor in work brigades that rebuilt roads, bridges, railways, houses, schools, industrial plants. Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, trans. Dona Geyer (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2019), 171-172.

<sup>211</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, “Žene u formativnom socijalizmu” (“Women in Formative Socialism”), in *Refleksije vremena 1945. – 1955.*, 185.

<sup>212</sup> Duda, “Uhodavanje socijalizma,” 25.

<sup>213</sup> Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 183.

emerging socialist new human.<sup>214</sup> During the war, a large number of local newspapers were published to inform and educate women.<sup>215</sup> Following the end of the war, as mentioned in the introduction, each republican branch of the AFŽ published a magazine aimed specifically at a female audience. In addition, the Central Board published *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*) which was intended to become an all-Yugoslav women's magazine. Continuing the emancipatory policy developed during the war, all AFŽ's publications were to socialize their readership – ideally all adult women in the administrative area assigned to a particular magazine – into the same value system of the emerging socialist society and the role of women in it. Therefore, after the end of the war, reading of *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) and *Žena danas*, as well as the discussion of the readings, were part of the struggle for “the general education and political upliftment” of women in all the study groups organized by the AFŽ in Croatia.<sup>216</sup> The primary readers of *Žena u borbi* were, hence, members of the AFŽ.<sup>217</sup> During this period, the above-mentioned catalog of the organization's tasks was consistently reflected in the magazines' contents from their front covers inwards (figures 1, 2 and 3), and was supplemented with the most important political events.

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<sup>214</sup> Calic, Neutatz and Obertreis (eds.), “Introduction,” in *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity*, 13.

<sup>215</sup> For instance, on the territory of Croatia different locally active AFŽ committees published seventeen journals aiming specifically female audience. See more in: Marija Sentić Žaknić, “Bibliografija članaka objavljenih u listovima Antifašističke fronte žena Hrvatske u razdoblju Narodnooslobodilačkog rata i socijalističke revolucije 1941-1945” (“Bibliography of Articles Published in the Newspapers of the Antifascist Front of Women of Croatia in the Period of the People's Liberation War and the Socialist Revolution 1941-1945”) in *Reprint izdanje “Žena u borbi”* (*Reprint Edition of Woman in Combat*) ed. Marija Šoljan (Zagreb: Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Hrvatske, 1974), 61-156.

<sup>216</sup> Rad i zadatak Antifašističkog fronta žena od prvog kongresa do prvog plenuma, April 13/14, 1946, box 1, folder 1.1. Glavni odbor (1946 – 1961), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (pp. 4, 8). “... borba za opće obrazovanje i političko uzdizanje...”

<sup>217</sup> The documents of the women's organization provide information on the number of copies sold, but not the profile of the women who read this magazine.



Figure 1: Covers of *Žena u borbi* in March 1948, December 1949 (tractor driver Danica Kosijer), May 1951 (spinner Bara Stišćak).



Figure 2: Covers of the Serbian *Žena danas* in September 1948, of the Slovene *Naša žena* in January 1947, and of the Montenegrin *Naša žena* in January/February 1947.



Figure 3: Covers of the Bosnian *Nova žena* in March 1946 and of *Makedonka* in July 1949.

The historical legacy of women as presented in the magazine *Žena u borbi*, published in Croatia, is the subject of the next chapter.<sup>218</sup> The wartime reality in which the AFŽ emerged, and the particular socio-political goals of its members did not permit reliance (only) on stereotypical gender imagery. The functionaries of this organization, the *afežejke*, participated in various roles in the war struggles, but most notably in organizing the home front and educating women. Many women who participated in the work of the AFŽ attended educational gatherings and public events for the first time during the war. They shared many harrowing war experiences with members of the partisan army, which, of course, consisted of both male and female members. Because all of this, “a quiet, self-sacrificing, moral and humane woman who tends to traditional values, and provides moral and material support to her husband on the front while waiting for his return,” the female model favored in the women’s magazines published in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia following the end of the First World War,<sup>219</sup> was simply not enough to embrace female experience of the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB) in all its diversity. It turned out that even the quiet, self-sacrificing, moral and humane women did not want to, and often could not, experience this war in the relative stability of the so-called women’s sphere. They had to socialize or abandon it in order to adapt to the insecurity and violence of the supposed male domain. Consequently, the AFŽ’s women’s magazines, including *Žena u borbi*, made extensive use of images of women at war to represent the redefinition of womanhood in Yugoslavia experienced due to the People’s Liberation Struggle and the emergence of the Yugoslav New Woman.

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<sup>218</sup> This magazine changes its name from *Žena u borbi* to *Žena (Woman)* in 1957. In order to avoid the confusion that the usage of both titles might cause, I will refer to this magazine by its first name, *Žena u borbi*, throughout this chapter and later. In the references, however, I will use the name the magazine bore when a particular text was published.

<sup>219</sup> Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije*, 67-68. “Iza bučnog zveckanja oružja, stajala je šutljiva, požrtvovana, moralna i humana žena koja čuva tradicionalne vrijednosti, pruža moralnu i materijalnu podršku svome muškarcu na frontu i čeka njegov povratak.”

While the establishment of postwar Yugoslavia driven by Stalinist-type communism led to coordination but also impoverishment of the printed press, new changes followed only a few years later. The reactions of the domestic political elite to the conflict with the Cominform and the adjustments to the new political situation created the conditions for pushing the boundaries of what was possible in all aspects of public life including the media already in the early 1950s. In addition, similar to the Soviet Union of the 1930s, the affinities of the new upwardly mobile generation were increasingly echoed in Yugoslav culture and thus in the media – something Marie-Jeanine Calic, Dietmar Neutatz, and Julia Obertreis described as “a kind of *embourgeoisement*.”<sup>220</sup> Accordingly, with the blessing of the newly appointed *Vjesnik*'s director, also a participant in the NOB, Major General of the Yugoslav People's Army, and People's Hero Đuro Kladarin, the women interested in editing a fashion magazine inspired exclusively by the Western fashion press (figure 4) set out to test some of the emerging possibilities.<sup>221</sup> They founded the first Yugoslav fashion magazine and called it *Svijet (World)*.<sup>222</sup> The second chapter of this part will focus on the performance of this magazine, which rearranged, often ignored, and sometimes even opposed the educational goals that the *afežejke* advocated in their magazine.

The question arises to what extent the images of, for instance, Balmain evening dresses (figure 5, page 93) were in touch with the Yugoslav reality of the 1950s. Although the UNRRA ended its mission in Yugoslavia in the summer of 1947, the government continued to restrict the availability of goods, primarily food, by utilizing rationed supply until 1952. Since the communist authorities initially based economic reconstruction and development on their relations with the Soviet Union, the post-partition period was marked by political isolation and virtually nonexistent foreign

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<sup>220</sup> Calic, Neutatz and Obertreis (eds.), “Introduction,” 18. (Emphasis in the original.)

<sup>221</sup> Smilja Dončević, “Kolovoz u Topuskom” (“August in Topusko”), *Zbornik sjećanja*, 84.

<sup>222</sup> Although it bore the same name as the interwar Zagreb glossy magazine for women, according to the first editor-in-chief of the postwar *Svijet*, there is no connection between the two. Ibid.

exchange. Subsequently, the Yugoslav leadership established economic ties with Western countries.<sup>223</sup>



Figure 4: Covers of *Svijet* in May 1953, July 1956, and February 1958.

Thanks to foreign aid, a decade of interrupted economic growth began in 1953. Igor Duda characterizes it as a decade of Yugoslav economic miracle, when the average annual production growth was 9,5%, while the average annual growth of private consumption was 10%. This means that Yugoslav economic growth was among the highest in the world.<sup>224</sup> It was based on industrial growth, but thanks to the rhetoric of progress and modernization focused on the standard of living, it was accompanied by the production of mass consumer goods combined with the emergence of retail networks and the advantage of installment payments.<sup>225</sup> However, the change for the better was not immediately visible. For instance, author Goran Tribuson writes that 1953 was

<sup>223</sup> Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 245-246.

<sup>224</sup> Duda, *U potrazi za blagostanjem*, 47.

<sup>225</sup> Igor Duda, “Tehnika narodu! Trajna dobra, potrošnja i slobodno vrijeme u socijalističkoj Hrvatskoj” (“Technology to the People! Durables, Consumption and Leisure in Socialist Croatia”), *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 37, no. 2 (2005): 371-392, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/8407>.

the time of Stalin's death and the liquidation of Beria, as well as the gradual consolidation of Yugoslav-Soviet relations; from my individual-historical perspective, it is still a period of non-existence of usable toys, chocolate, and other indispensable products such as television, bananas, and cartoons, for example. Some of these fantastic items, such as orange, chewing gum, and a chromed winding car, I encountered a little later when packages began to arrive at Milan Grabar's house from his aunt Rozalia, who had moved to California in 1939.<sup>226</sup>

Slavenka Drakulić's memories of shortages of her 1950s childhood are very similar:

Toilet paper [in the 1950s] fell into an incredibly broad category of luxury items, such as furs, perfumes, gold rings, women's hats, gloves, or stockings, chocolate, candy, washing powder, or toys, even milk and meat – it all depended. The general rule was that anything at any time could be proclaimed a luxury.<sup>227</sup>

At the same time, workers sometimes came into possession of new clothes and shoes through shock work (*udarnički rad*). That is, the most prominent shock workers (*udarnici*) received prizes for their efforts from time to time. Any item of clothing or a pair of shoes was especially prized, as the shops did not have much to offer.<sup>228</sup> And what they did offer, explains Serbian anthropologist Danijela Velimirović, was exceptionally poorly made: “production plans were being met and even exceeded, [but] there was a shortage in the market, as consumers often refused to buy the clothes offered to them.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Goran Tribuson, *Povijest pornografije (History of Pornography)* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1995 (1988)), 29. “(...) to je vrijeme Staljinove smrti i likvidacije Beriije, te postupne konsolidacije jugoslavensko-sovjetskih odnosa; iz moje individualno-povijesne perspektive to je još uvijek faza nepostojanja upotrebljivih igračkaka, čokolade i drugih nezaobilaznih proizvoda, kao što su televizija, banana i crtani film, primjerice. Neke od tih fantastičnih artikala, kao što su naranča, žvakaća guma i kromirani automobil na navijanje, upoznao sam tek nešto kasnije, kad su u kuću Milana Grabara počeli pristizati paketi njegove tetke Rozalije, koja se još 1939. bila odselila u Kaliforniju.”

<sup>227</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (New York and London, W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 77.

<sup>228</sup> Tomislav Anić, “Junakinje i junaci rada” (“Heroines and Heroes of Work”), in *Refleksije vremena 1945. – 1955.*, 45, 49.

<sup>229</sup> The author goes into some detail recounting how the factories made poor quality fabrics because in many plants not all machines were repaired or there were no employees who knew how to handle them. Among other things, fabrics they made were usually monochromatic, in the so-called TBC range because they were made in dark blue, brown and black (*teget*, *braon* and *crna*), which sometimes washed away already upon wearing. Since the plants worked solely to fulfill the plan, not to satisfy customers, pairs of shoes in different shades or of different lengths, men's shirts made of material for women's dresses and underwear made of material for diapers could be found in stores throughout Yugoslavia. See more in: Danijela Velimirović, “Ekonomija nestašice: distribucija i potrošnja odeće u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji u doba dirigovane ekonomije, 1945-1951” (“Economy of Scarcity: Distribution and Consumption of Clothes in the Socialist Yugoslavia in the Times of Directed Economy, 1945-1951”), *Etnoantropološki problemi* 11 (2016): 539-557, quote on 549.

Disregard for post-war shortages and indifference to the project of the creating a new socialist human were characteristic of *Svijet* in the first decade of its existence. For instance, Ivana Čuljak and Lea Vene's research on the AFŽ's magazine *Naša moda (Our Fashion)*,<sup>230</sup> concluded that the *afežejke* liked to present Western fashion to their readers, especially Dior's *New Look*, which was popular in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The emphasis of their editorials, however, was on the "do-it-yourself" approach to cut expenses and focus on the products of the domestic fashion industry.<sup>231</sup> Figure 6 (page 93), for example, shows a page from AFŽ's *Naša moda*. The photographs of the models are almost certainly from the foreign press, but the text explains that similar products or fabrics can be bought in the stores of the domestic clothing factory *Varteks*. In case readers decide to purchase fabrics, a brief description that facilitates sewing is included in the text. Some of this content, albeit limited, can also be found in *Žena u borbi*. Unlike the AFŽ's magazines, *Svijet* simply presented the fashion utopia of the West without mediation and, it seems, without regard for the poverty of its readers. While *Naša moda* or *Žena u borbi* never presented luxury items, *Svijet* regularly flaunted them. In addition, for the first ten years, the copied images gave readers no clues as to where such clothing could be purchased.

*Žena u borbi* and *Svijet* were the two of three editions intended for a female audience published in Croatia. Their differing reputations and success with reading audiences recommend them as natural choices when it comes to exploring the topic of the representation of women in war in the Yugoslav media.<sup>232</sup> While the *afežejke* focused on what they believed women required to

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<sup>230</sup> AFŽ of Croatia published fashion magazine *Naša moda (Our Fashion)*, albeit with a small serving of daily politics in each edition, since February 1946 until 1966. AFŽ of Yugoslavia initiated a similar magazine under the title *Ukus (Taste)* in the summer of 1946 and published it until 1961.

<sup>231</sup> Ivana Čuljak and Lea Vene, "Žena u borbi/Žena u modi: Odjevne prakse u poslijeratnom periodu socijalističke Jugoslavije na primjeru časopisa *Žena u borbi* i *Naša moda*" ("Woman in Combat/Woman in Fashion: Clothing Practices in Socialist Yugoslavia's Postwar Period on the Example of *Žena u borbi* and *Naša moda*"), *Etnoantropološki problemi* 11 (2016): 159-173.

<sup>232</sup> As noted in the introduction, analogous "pairs" can be found in some other Yugoslav republics. As each republican branch of the women's organization published its own magazine, from the mid-1950s onward other large

successfully participate in the public sphere of the new country, *Svijet*'s editors focused on the content they believed women wished to have access to. In addition, while *Žena u borbi* was genuinely popular during the war, AFŽ's own fashion magazine *Naša moda* successfully competed with it for the favor of the female audience in Croatia from 1946 onwards. The decisive factor limiting *Naša moda*'s circulation growth during the first post-war decade was apparently only the paper shortage.<sup>233</sup> Then, from 1953, the affection of the readership began to shift in favor of the new magazine *Svijet*. Following the creation of *Svijet* and throughout the 1950s, the circulation of these magazines ranged from 20,000 to 40,000 copies per issue,<sup>234</sup> which probably depended on how much paper the planning committee allocated to them, rather than how popular they were. In the first half of the 1960s, *Svijet*'s circulation skyrocketed.<sup>235</sup> At the same time, *Žena u borbi* was struggling with circulation and increasing funding problems. At the end of 1966, it's the editors made the final decision to redesign the magazine as well as to stop publishing *Naša moda*. In the beginning of 1967, when *Svijet* was at the height of its popularity, the *afžežjke*'s periodical returned with the subtitle "*Časopis za društvene probleme žene i porodice*" ("Journal for Social Problems of Woman and the Family"), a scientific approach to the stated subject, and a circulation of about 2,000 copies per issue sold to libraries and scientific institutions throughout Yugoslavia. That is,

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publishing houses also began printing women's magazines inspired by some counterparts from the Western Europe (several women's magazines of different profiles were published in Serbia, as well as one in Slovenia and one in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

<sup>233</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, "AFŽ – naslijeđe i granice emancipacije" ("AFŽ – Heritage and the Limits of Emancipation"), filmed on December 6, 2013 in Zagreb, Croatia, video, 17:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIVTp0jH1CQ>.

<sup>234</sup> Jambrešić Kirin, "Žene u formativnom socijalizmu," 196.

<sup>235</sup> The average circulation of this magazine during 1962 was 39,000 copies printed per month. The following year that number rose to 61,000 copies per month. Finally, on the first page of edition no. 6 (March 15) printed in 1964, it is stated that it was printed in 120,000 copies, and already edition no. 16 (August 15) of the same year was printed in 210,000 copies. In the second half of the 1960s this magazine reached its highest circulation of 227,000 copies printed per issue. The magazine kept similar circulation numbers until the late 1980s. Peršen, ed., *Vjesnikov leksikon*, 447.

*Svijet* remained the only glossy women's magazine published in Croatia, and the most prestigious fashion magazine for women on the territory of Yugoslavia.<sup>236</sup>



Figure 5: Balmain model in *L'Officiel* in 1953 and on the cover of *Svijet* in January 1954.



Figure 6: *Naša moda 1* (January 1954): not paginated.

The different political situations in which these two magazines developed, as well as the differences in education and experience between the women who edited them, made it possible to separate them and worthwhile to investigate. Indeed, the positioning of the two editorships in

<sup>236</sup> Notably, similar trends are visible in other Yugoslav republics. All of the AFŽ's magazines struggled with the problem of declining circulation and, consequently, financing. The magazine published by the AFŽ of Serbia, *Zora*, was discontinued as early as 1961, the Bosnian *Nova žena* ten years later, and Montenegrin *Naša žena* in 1976. The editorial board of *Žena danas* opted for the same strategy as the women who edited *Žena u borbi*, and in 1967 transformed it into a scientific journal with the aim of "being useful to cadres, institutions and organizations dealing with this problem [of the position of women in Yugoslav socialist society and their emancipation – author's comment], and a source for writing about them in other press."<sup>236</sup> In this form, *Žena danas* was published barely once a year, rarely more often. For the last five years of its existence (1977-1981) it was published twice a month in the format of a daily newspaper by *Borba*, the daily of the KPJ. Finally, Slovenian *Naša žena* and Macedonian *Prosvetena žena* have taken over much of the content present in magazines like *Svijet*. As hybrids, sometimes with more pronounced tendencies towards content about fashion and beauty, and sometimes with more content about the social and political position of women in Yugoslavia and the world, they survived until the end of Yugoslavia's existence.

Quote in: Nacrt izvještaja o radu KDAŽJ od 04.1961. do 01.01.1965., January 1965, box 58, folder 5.7. Prva skupština KDAŽJ, HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb (pp. 69-70). "...koristio kadrovima, ustanovama i organizacijama koje se ovim problemom bave, i bio bi izvor za pisanje o njima u drugoj štampi."

relation to the recent past and the myth that emerged from it shows what and to what extent the female audiences could learn from these magazines. On the one hand, *Žena u borbi* emphasized the importance of women's past war experiences as the origin of the figure of the New Woman and the successes achieved in the socialist present. And *Svijet* became a remarkable indicator of how early it became possible to bypass the theme of war and war suffering for pedagogical purposes and to reinterpret what Yugoslav socialist modernity had to offer the New Woman.

I consider the role of experiences related to historical and political processes that shaped the professional pursuits of the two groups of editorial board members to be crucial for the content of these magazines. Their brief comparison is therefore an important prerequisite for analysis. The women who headed women's organization and edited *Žena u borbi* supported the Communist Party in the 1930s; their activities in the last decade of the interwar period determined their ideological and political attitudes, as well as their activities during the war and following the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the women who worked in the editorial office of *Svijet* were still children in the 1930s. When some of them, the later editors-in-chief of the magazine, Smilja Dončević and Mira Gumhalter, joined the NOB, they were teenagers and did not participate in the wartime activities of the Antifascist Front of Women, which also excludes the educational aspect of the work of this organization.<sup>237</sup>

Importantly, Dončević and Gumhalter were old enough to actively participate in the NOB, while the three new journalists who joined the editorial board in the early 1960s were born in the late 1920s and early 1930s and had neither the experience of participation nor emancipation during the

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<sup>237</sup> As there is always an exception to the rule, in this case it is Reza Zelmanović (part of the *Svijet*'s founding team) who was, in fact, active in the workers' movement in the late 1930s. However, during that time, she was not connected to the emerging activist women's groups. In the beginning of the war, she was sent to perform forced labor in Austria. Therefore, she was never an *afežejka* and it is not clear how much, if at all, was she influenced by the activities of the AFŽ.

war. In other words, *Svijet*'s editorial staff, which, unlike the editorial staff of *Žena u borbi*, was periodically supplemented by new contributors, did not experience the NOB as a formative experience that shaped their sense of self-awareness and their connections with other women. While the editorial staff of *Žena u borbi* and their wartime and postwar comrades can be considered a “political generation,” the women in *Svijet* were peers who had collective experiences of life in a socialist country, “which do not translate into an understanding of key events of the era.”<sup>238</sup>

The age difference between the *afežejke* who edited *Žena u borbi* and the female journalists who worked in the *Svijet*'s editorial office recalls of a situation in the mid-1930s when young communist women joined the Belgrade-based feminist organization *Ženski pokret (Women's Movement)* and formed the youth section. In her contribution to Barbara Jancar-Webster's study, Mitra Mitrović uses the term ladies to refer to “the older women in their thirties” who were active in this organization.<sup>239</sup> Some young communist feminist activists were not as respectable and referred to those women as *babas (babe)*.<sup>240</sup> In the interview with Ivana Pantelić, Hertha Haas explained that the members of the youth section regarded the older feminists as “more of a cabinet society” who limited their activities to meetings where they expressed their disgust at the current state of affairs, but did nothing more.<sup>241</sup>

Similarly, already in the course of the war, Jancar Webster writes, the erstwhile youths became the ladies themselves: “by the time the war began, although young in terms of real age, the wartime women leaders (...) were ‘the ladies’ in relation to the mass of women participants.”<sup>242</sup> For

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<sup>238</sup> Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik, eds., “Generational and Gendered Memory of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe: Methodological Perspectives and Political Challenges,” in *Gender, Generations, and Communism*, 12.

<sup>239</sup> Jancar Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 24-25.

<sup>240</sup> Isidora Grubački, “Communism, Left Feminism and Generations in the 1930s: The Case of Yugoslavia,” in *Gender, Generations, and Communism*, 54.

<sup>241</sup> Pantelić, interview with Herta Haas, transcript. In: Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke (Women Partisans as Citizens)* (Evoluta: Belgrade, 2011), 173.

<sup>242</sup> Jancar Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 60.

instance, Mitra Mitrović, born in 1912, became a lady in her thirties during the war. The same was true for Marija Šoljan, one of the most prominent members of the Croatian AFŽ and long-time editor-in-chief of *Žena u borbi*, who was born in 1913. Later, when the members of the first generation of Polish communist women who were active in the interwar period and continued to work following the end of World War II became known as “the aunts of the revolution,”<sup>243</sup> the Yugoslav women’s organization was called the ladies’ society (*gospojinsko društvo*) by their own colleagues and wartime comrades.<sup>244</sup> For example, in 1972, Marija Šoljan writes to Milutin Baltić, a member of the Central Committee of the Party, who was awarded the Order of the People’s Hero of Yugoslavia for his service during the war:

There is talk about your alleged statement that the Conference [for the Social Activity of Women – the name of the women’s organization in the period from 1961 to 1975, author’s note] is a ladies’ society and that there are women who are well off. I have never asked you directly about this attitude, because I find it difficult to believe that it is yours. However, the [general] attitude towards the Conference is not far from this point of view.<sup>245</sup>

I am of the opinion that the first time it became apparent that women from the women’s organization were becoming “ladies” – that is, that they were having difficulty coping with social changes – was precisely in the mid-1950s, when the introduction of self-management made possible the rapid development of mass media. On the one hand, the *afežejke* presented their wartime experiences as a “generational master narrative”<sup>246</sup> in which countless protagonists fit

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<sup>243</sup> Natalia Jarska, “‘Old’ Women and ‘Old’ Revolution: The Role of Gender and Generation in Postwar Polish Communist Women’s Political Biographies,” in *Gender, Generations, and Communism*, 137.

<sup>244</sup> The sixth chapter, the one focusing on the magazine *Start*, will demonstrate that the AFŽ and its functionaries experienced criticism and ridicule from others, too. There, the analysis will particularly highlight the postwar generation of the Yugoslav feminists, the so-called *neofeminists*.

<sup>245</sup> Marija Šoljan, personal correspondence. As cited in: Andreja Gregorina, “Žensko i klasno – zaboravljeni historijat” (“Women’s and Class – Forgotten History”), *Slobodni filozofski*, December 31, 2016.

<http://slobodnifilozofski.com/2016/12/zensko-klasno-zaboravljeni-historijat.html>. “Govori se o navodnim Tvojim izjavama da je Konferencija [za društvenu aktivnost žena] gospojinsko društvo, i da su tamo dobro situirane žene. Nisam te nikada direktno upitala za ovaj stav, jer mi je teško vjerovati da bi bio Tvoj. Međutim, odnos prema Konferenciji nije daleko od ovoga stava.”

<sup>246</sup> Joseph Maslen, “Autobiographies of a Generation? Carolyn Steedman, Luisa Passerini and the Memory of 1968,” *Memory Studies* 6, no. 1 (January 2013), Special Issue: Challenging Dominant Discourses of the Past: 1968 and the Value of Oral History: 24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698012463891>.

seamlessly into a linearly evolving chronicle. They succumbed, in the words of Joseph Maslen, “to the gravitational pull of social master narratives that ascribe a systematized generational meaning to their experience.”<sup>247</sup> As a repository of historical facts and fictions, *Žena u borbi* became a place where the same women – Marija Šoljan, Jela Bičanić, Stojanka Aralica and a few others – recounted their memories of the past over and over again, presenting it as a past for everyone to remember and the foundation for everyone to grow from.

On the other hand, some younger women – led first by Smilja Dončević, later by Mira Gumhalter – who had not been directly connected to the women’s organization, during the war or in the post-war years, were given the opportunity to publish a women’s magazine. Without seeking any advice or guidance, they presented in it to the public the content that they considered was missing from the available press and that was intended to appeal to women in Yugoslavia. At first, they decided to make up for the lack of fashion content, especially luxury fashion, and only after a full ten years did they begin to explore the New Woman role model.

For the following analysis, based on the technique of close reading explained in the introductory chapter, I have gone through all the issues of the monthly magazine *Žena u borbi* from the beginning of its publication in 1943 until the end of 1982. As for *Svijet*, I examined all issues published between January 1953 and the end of 1980, firstly once a month, and fortnightly from July 1963.

I was looking for the representations of the New Woman during the war, for the ways in which the women who were considered as representatives of the New Woman were portrayed, and for the affective potential of these representations. In the chapter devoted to *Žena u borbi*, I address the question of what kind of wartime femininities were represented by the women who, as initiators

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 32.

of women's organization and organizers of women's work on the home front, were themselves a part of the liberation movement. Using these examples, I explore how these representations shaped the figure of the New Woman in Yugoslavia. In the chapter devoted to *Svijet*, I want to find out to what extent its journalists followed the classification of women's wartime roles into three models – woman fighter, woman activist (and member of the AFŽ), and partisan mother – that thoroughly shaped the narrative of the People's Liberation Struggle (NOB) in the magazine published by the *afežejke*. In this context, I look for their unique contribution to the narrative of the partisan struggle.

I argue that both of these magazines bear witness to the fact that the meaning of a women's magazine – and thus the meaning of being a woman – varied significantly very early on. Both editorial boards had the freedom to work out their own agendas to fit both the mythical worker-mother-activist and the model of the woman-stay at home wife-consumer. Their agendas were also visible in the commemorative material they published and the kind of anniversary journalism they engaged in. Instead of uniformity, the examination of the two magazines reveals that the narratives about the People's Liberation Struggle that each magazine promoted were marked by ambivalence and competing voices. While the *afežejke* strove to develop a narrative with clearly defined protagonists and obvious motivations, *Svijet's* editorial staff seemed nonchalant toward established truths and even addressed wartime situations that were particularly unfavorable to women. Yet, both magazines treat the figure of the female partisan, the *partizanka*, similarly. That is, the editorial boards of both magazines showed a tendency to marginalize the figure of the *partizanka*, albeit for different reasons.

Importantly, although both editorial boards remembered the war differently, what they had in common was that they never explicitly presented the male experience of war as the standard to which women should aspire. Although this was a common practice, and I write more about it in the third part of the dissertation, both *Žena u borbi's* pride in women's contributions to the war and

*Svijet*'s distrust of the belief that the war was an opportunity for all women's growth were firmly rooted in uniquely women's experiences of the NOB. In this respect, both magazines reflect aspects of wartime and postwar women's emancipation that, as Dijana Jelača, Nikolay Karkov, and Tanja Petrović put it, were "always uneven and often conditional, a product of complicated negotiations that never just scored simple victories and that were often strained between maximalist goals and far more modest political realities."<sup>248</sup> Given the quintessential patriarchy upon which the women who worked in *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet* built their emancipation project, writing about the exclusively female experience of war was a feminist endeavor that diversified the range of issues normally considered in official interpretations of the war. The apparent marginalization of the *partizanke* speaks of the limitations these women imposed on the emancipation process in Yugoslavia thanks to their own interpretation of acceptable wartime femininity.

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<sup>248</sup> Dijana Jelača, Nikolay Karkov, Tanja Petrović, "Editorial: Gender Relations and Women's Struggles in Socialist Southeast Europe," *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies* 21 (Fall 2020): 10.

### Chapter 3 – Establishing the Canon in *Žena u borbi*

In 1982, members of the women’s organization in Croatia launched a mini-initiative to document and publish the memories of the women who had participated in the founding conference of the Yugoslav Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) in December 1942. The initiator was Marija Šoljan (Bakarić)<sup>249</sup>, long-time editor-in-chief of the magazine *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) and one of the most prominent members of the women’s organization in Croatia. At one preparatory meeting, she told her colleagues: “To date, many collections of memories of the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB) have been published. Women do not usually appear. I have gone through at least fifteen of these books, quite thick books with a few hundred memories, and there we can hardly find a woman.”<sup>250</sup> The result of this initiative was the publication of eight testimonies of the participants in 1982 in *Žena u borbi*.

Two published testimonies, given by Jela Bičanić and Stojanka Aralica, are available in the form of stenographic notes in the fund of the women’s organization in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. In the original account, Jela Bičanić recalls, among other things, the peasant girls’ enthusiasm for joining the partisan army as fighters, and this section of her recollection was the only part that was excised in its entirety from the published text.<sup>251</sup> Alternatively, the stenographic transcript of Stojanka Aralica contains a brief comment, only a few words of admiration, about

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<sup>249</sup> Marija Šoljan was married to Vladimir Bakarić, one of the most influential politicians in the socialist Yugoslavia. Some of the materials I examined mention both of her last names, but much more often I came across instances in which she used only her maiden name. I will, therefore, use only her maiden name.

<sup>250</sup> Sjećanja (sic) na 1. konferenciju AFŽ-a Jugoslavije u Bosanskom Petrovcu, 1982, box 133, folder 10.2.1 Časopis „Žena“, HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 4). “Do danas je izašlo mnogo knjiga sjećanja iz NOBa. Žene se uglavnom ne javljaju. Ja sam pregledala 15-tak najmanje tih knjiga, prilično debelih sa nekoliko stotina sjećanja, tamo jedva nađemo ženu.”

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 28-29.

wounded women fighters who participated in the 1942 conference.<sup>252</sup> In the published version, however, this comment is reproduced in a much more elaborate manner:

These girls, with crutches beside their chairs, with bandaged arms, with white bandages on their beautiful young bodies, but with their eyes full of pride in their wounds, aroused in me unforgettably deep feelings, mixed with enthusiasm, respect, but also hatred towards the cruel enemy, during the whole time of the conference.<sup>253</sup>

The two examples shed light on the principles of the official narrative about women who participated in the People's Liberation Struggle, in this case as partisan soldiers (*partizanke*), as promoted by the women's organization. If they were mentioned at all, their image was heavily edited to fit their interpretation of the war. No less importantly, both Jela Bičanić's and Stojanka Aralica's recollections of the same event, as well as of other occasions, were previously published in *Žena u borbi*.<sup>254</sup> Jela Jančić Starc, Marija Erbežnik Fuks and several other well-known members of the AFŽ (*afežejke*) also put pen to paper to publish their memories of the war in this magazine. These examples indicate a biased editorial policy. While Marija Šoljan was correct in expressing dissatisfaction with the editorial policies of many war-related publications, the magazine she edited for decades, as well as numerous projects she oversaw, were equally limited in scope and attest to the *afežejke*'s single-mindedness.

As the primary promoter of women's emancipation, the AFŽ played an active role in the everyday politics of socialist Yugoslavia. I argue that the concept of the New Woman had inherent limitations in *afežejke*'s interpretation that profoundly influenced their work, including the

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>253</sup> Stojanka Aralica, "Ravnopravno u prvim redovima" ("On Equal Footing at the Forefront") *Žena* 5-6 (October-December 1982): 34. "Te djevojke sa štakama kraj stolica, povezanim rukama, te bijeli zavoji na njihovim lijepim mladim tijelima, ali s pogledima punim ponosa na svoje rane, u meni su za cijelo vrijeme konferencije budili nezaboravne duboke osjećaje pomiješane s ushićenjem, poštivanjem, ali i mržnjom prema okrutnom neprijatelju."

<sup>254</sup> Jela Bičanić, "Fragmenti iz sjećanja" ("Fragments from Memories"), *Žena* 7 (July 1958): 4-5; Jela Bičanić, "Dvadesetogodišnjica našeg lista" ("Twentieth Anniversary of Our Magazine"), *Žena* 6 (June 1963): 19-21. Stojanka Aralica, Marija Novak and Anica Rakar – Magašić, "Sjećanje na I. konferenciju žena u Bosanskom Petrovcu" ("The Memory of the 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Conference in Bosanski Petrovac"), *Žena u borbi* 12 (December 1951): 4; Stojanka Aralica, "Sjećanja na proslave 8. marta u NOBi" ("Memories of the Celebrations of Women's Day in the NOB"), *Žena* 3 (March 1961): 4-5.

mediation of women's voices represented in *Žena u borbi*. The first post-war decade is particularly important because, due to the fact that AFŽ's magazines were the only ones aimed specifically at women, and due to their genuine popularity prompted by the organization's wartime activities, publications such as *Žena u borbi* were in the best position for community-building. Shared remembrance of wartime achievements became an important part of this process. As the main "carriers of the social project of gathering knowledge about the war history of women and its presentation to the general public,"<sup>255</sup> the *afežejke* took a place in what soon became known as the grand narrative of the epic achievement of one small partisan collective, claiming to reflect the experiences of all Yugoslav women. I find that the figure that emerged from their work – the woman fighter (*žena borac*) – affirmed women's activities in the war, but not their soldierly duty. According to the *afežejke*, the woman fighter grew out of community work, education, political activism and leadership, and evoked feelings of pride, recognition and belonging. At the same time, the content of the magazine testifies to the fact that the *afežejke* were unsure how women soldiers contributed to the construction of the Yugoslav New Woman and therefore tended to marginalize them.

In this chapter, I address how the *afežejke* dealt with the war legacy and discuss the solutions they applied in the organization's organ. In the following section, I provide a short overview of the development of the communist women's press from the second half of the 1930s through the war years and into the postwar period. By focusing on the key features that survived all the changes of this turbulent period, particularly the representation of the New Woman, this part will show how May 1945 marked in many ways a return to the themes of the late 1930s. In this context, it shows

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<sup>255</sup> Jambrešić Kirin, "Politika sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat," 162.

that the Yugoslav New Woman was founded on the ideal of political education of interwar communist activist women.

The following sections will focus on explaining how the presumed first new women of socialist Yugoslavia, the ones who participated in the NOB, were portrayed. In the second subsection, I analyze how *Žena u borbi* shaped and normalized the topic of women at war through the figure of *žena borac* in the first five post-war years, as it then laid the foundation for the representations of the war that would be used for the most part in the AFŽ's women's magazines as well as in the informative daily press in the following decades. Finally, the third subsection will focus on the personality that was (to use military terminology) MIA from the pages of the magazine for the first five post-war years – the *partizanka*. There, I explain how the *partizanka* became part of the *afežejke*'s narrative and how they tried to fit her into the canon established during the first five years. In the last part of this chapter, I will focus on 1961, when, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the uprising(s), every issue of the magazine contained articles about the People's Liberation Struggle. As a small commemorative project, this group of materials reflects all the essential determinants of the fully developed canon as it was envisioned by the women who led the AFŽ in Croatia. On the whole, the chapter will highlight what the organization's activists consistently tried to teach their readers about women in war and why, despite their best efforts, these communist activists were unable to incorporate the *partizanke* into their portrayal of the *žena borac* as well as their understanding of women's emancipation.

### **3.1 Communist Women's Press from Precarious Beginnings to Contested Domination**

Much has changed in the approximately half century that has elapsed since the New Woman was first mentioned, up to the time when the Yugoslav communist women adopted the idea for their own purposes. Volatile political situations and conditions for social and cultural action

constituted and mediated ideas about this new ideal, but her biological femininity determined much of the debates. Researcher of interwar Red Vienna, Helmut Gruber, got to the heart of the matter when he wrote that “no matter how many new creative attributes became associated with the image [of the New Woman], the emphasis in the end was always on woman’s role as mother.”<sup>256</sup> Indeed, both in the 1890s (when the New Woman first emerged) and in the 1920s (when she experienced profound turmoil), as well as in the decades to come, everything hinged on how many additional roles a woman could accommodate with some comfort alongside mothering and caring for her husband.

With similar thoughts in mind, Lydia Sklevicky pondered the wartime activities of the Antifascist Front of Women: “A woman outside or without a home, with a rifle, on a podium: was that a woman outside her place? Time will give an answer when the guns fall silent, when the rubble is cleared, and a new home rebuilt. The future will decide what modest historical legacy the woman will carry with her from the battlefield.”<sup>257</sup> Sklevicky made her judgment of the women’s “modest historical legacy” abundantly clear. The AFŽ, she notes, was the first women’s organization on the territory of Yugoslavia to win the right to participate in all aspects of social life on an equal footing with men and then set out to overthrow patriarchy.<sup>258</sup> One can easily conclude that *afežejke* failed because they did not succeed in eliminating patriarchy in Yugoslavia. That is not all: in her dissertation, Sklevicky concludes that, by 1953, the communist leadership of the AFŽ

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<sup>256</sup> Gruber, “The ‘New Woman,’ 71.

<sup>257</sup> Lydia Sklevicky, “Antifašistička fronta žena: Kulturnom mijenom do žene ‘novog tipa’” (“Antifascist Front of Women: With Cultural Change toward a ‘New Type’ of Woman”), in *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 55. “Žena van/bez svog doma, s puškom, za govornicom: da li je to bila žena van svog mjesta? Odgovor na to dati će vrijeme kada utihne oružje, kada se razgrnu ruševine i sagradi novi dom. Budućnost će izreći pravorijek hipotezi o skromnoj istorijskoj popudbini koju će žena ponijeti s ratišta.”

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

abandoned its revolutionary feminist agenda and bowed to the Party's (anti-emancipatory) directive ordering the liquidation of the women's organization.<sup>259</sup>

The overall success of the women's emancipatory project in Yugoslavia (as in other state socialist countries) remains contested. As noted in the introduction, there are a number of authors who share Sklevicky's opinion. I am more inclined to the position of Chiara Bonfiglioli, who argues that Sklevicky's interpretation "deprives women of the right to define their own subjectivity *in their own terms*," even if it means working within the state system, and thus reinterprets the work of Vida Tomšič, the most influential Slovenian *afežejka*.<sup>260</sup> The remembrance practices of the women who worked in the women's organization and edited its magazine are, hence, interpreted with an awareness that "[w]omen (and men) can still be meaningful agents even if they are acting to promote communist ideals they believe in, or if they are acting for the goal of improving women's lives"<sup>261</sup> within any system of government they live in.

In general, *afežejke*'s activism can be summarized as working to educate and mobilize women in the spirit of communist ideology. Women's education was of particular interest to the communists, as they attributed gender-specific backwardness to Yugoslav women – much like their Soviet role models in the early years.<sup>262</sup> Consequently, they viewed education as crucial to

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<sup>259</sup> Lydia Sklevicky, "Emancipacija i organizacija: Uloga Antifašističke fronte žena u postrevolucionarnim mijenama društva i kulture (NR Hrvatska 1945-1953)" ("Emancipation and Organization: The Role of the Antifascist Front of Women in the Post-revolutionary Changes of Society and Culture (Croatia 1945-1953)", in *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 63-152.

<sup>260</sup> Chiara Bonfiglioli, "On Vida Tomšič, Marxist Feminism, and Agency," in "Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited," ed. Francisca de Haan, *Aspasia* 10 (2016): 145-151, quote on 148 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>261</sup> Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 251.

<sup>262</sup> For instance, in the book chapter "The Heroic Man and the Ever-Changing Woman: Gender and Politics in European Communism, 1917-1950" (1996), Eric D. Weitz writes: "In order to become free, women had to be more like men" (352). In the book *Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* Elizabeth Wood arguments along the same lines and demonstrates that the *baba*, the ignorant female worker, figured as the antipode to the skilled male worker. More recently, Lisa A. Kirschenbaum in the article "The Man Question: How Bolshevik Masculinity Shaped International Communism" (2017) and Barbara Alpern Engel in "A Gendered Revolution?" (2017) have argued in favor of the same conclusion.

women's emancipation. An oft-cited testament to this is Vida Tomšič's presentation on the Marxist perspective on the role of women in contemporary society, which she delivered at the Fifth State Conference of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) in Zagreb in November 1940. Tomšič identifies work with women, that is, the promotion of their political and ideological education, as "one of the most painful points of all our work"<sup>263</sup> and attributes this unfavorable trend to the neglect and ignorance of the Party cadres. Tomšič then lists several specifically women's issues that should be integrated into the revolutionary goals of the proletariat and proposes that they be addressed through already existing women's organizations and communist women's magazines. A very good example of a women's magazine, she opines, is the Serbian *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*, October 1936-October 1940).<sup>264</sup>

In both its prewar and postwar editions, *Žena danas* introduced the public to the bold and exciting New Woman. She matched with the image of the New Woman in other European leftist organizations and political parties, which Rüdiger Graf describes as "embodying the emancipative ideals but not expressing [herself] by means of fashion and consumption."<sup>265</sup> In addition to *Žena danas*, communist activist girls and women in the Croatian *Ženski svijet* (*Women's World*, February 1939-February 1941) and the Slovenian *Naša žena* (*Our Woman*, January-March 1941) promoted a feminist worldview interlaced with more or less subtle communist propaganda. These magazines offered an interpretation of the socialist bliss-to-come, and what being a Yugoslav woman would entail under those new circumstances. Like the new women in the Soviet Union, and, for example, in the Weimar Republic, Yugoslav women were "supposed to work and to cope with the household,

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<sup>263</sup> Vida Tomšič, "O radu sa ženama" ("On Work with Women"), in *Žene Hrvatske, vol. 1, 2*. "(...) jedna od najboljih točaka našeg rada."

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4, 6-7.

<sup>265</sup> Rüdiger Graf, "Anticipating the Future in the Present: "New Women" and Other Beings of the Future in Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 42, no. 4 (December 2009): 666, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40600975>.

and to be politically active, sexually self-conscious, healthy, athletic, but not to have an affinity toward luxury and consumption.”<sup>266</sup> Notably, before World War II communist activist girls and women promoted the ‘woman – worker – mother’ model with a touch of political activism, while health and sport played a subordinate role. What is more, issues of sexual nature – the issues that catapulted the New Woman to her controversial stardom in the first place – were not on the agenda of most of the communist activists in the interwar period.<sup>267</sup>

It is clear that the communist activist girls and women who published the magazines in the 1930s were not working on their own; they were mandated by the leadership of the Yugoslav communist party. Because of the long-standing ban (in 1920 the government issued the *Obznan*, which banned all activities of the KPJ), in June 1935 the leadership initiated the plan to spread its influence and advance its cause by infiltrating its members into various legal organizations, primarily trade unions, but also youth and women’s organizations.<sup>268</sup> This plan included the publication of the new magazines, which were advertised as feminist and advocated antifascism and pacifism. Of course, they by no means neglected communist tenets, but they wrote about them carefully, and with dare. Describing the content of the Serbian magazine, Jovanka Kecman wrote: “*Žena danas* could not write about Marx, Engels and Lenin because it would have been banned, but it adroitly wrote about Svetozar Marković, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.”<sup>269</sup> This description also applies to the Croatian *Ženski svijet* and the Slovenian *Naša žena*. All three magazines were launched by the Party, all three had the same tasks and the same goals, and in

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Alexandra Kollontai was, in this respect, a notable exception.

<sup>268</sup> Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji: u XIX i XX veku (The Woman Question in Serbia in the 19th and 20th Centuries)* (Belgrade: “Devedesetčetvrta,” 1996), 120-121.

<sup>269</sup> Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941 (Women of Yugoslavia in the Workers’ Movement and in the Women’s Organizations 1918-1941)* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1978), 363. “*Žena danas* nije mogla pisati o Marksu, Engelsu i Lenjinu, jer bi bila zabranjena, ali je zato vešto pisala o Svetozaru Markoviću, Rozi Luksemburg i Karlu Libknehtu.”

terms of content all three were exceedingly similar. As Stanislava Barač notes, the communist activist girls and women styled their magazines as manuals for the revolution.<sup>270</sup> That is, they strove to prepare their readers for revolutionary changes and even incite them to participate in the anticipated revolution.

### ***War and Transformation***

The April war, the disintegration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the beginning of the NOB brought new challenges and opportunities for change for communist activist girls and women. From the first days of its existence and well into the postwar period, the AFŽ endeavored to organize activities that would meet the various needs of women, particularly in the field of education. It organized literacy courses and lectures on health, hygiene, and history. Courses on political education followed, focusing on the nature and importance of the NOB, the importance of women's contributions to the war effort, and the role of women's organization. During the war, many local AFŽ branches began publishing magazines specifically for the female audience.

In the spring of 1942, AFŽ in Lika (Croatia) began publishing the first magazine for women, entitled *Žena u borbi*. The first editors of the magazine were Kata Pejnović, Jela Bičanić, Slava Očko and Marija Šoljan. Of the four women, only Slava Očko was involved in the publication of the prewar *Ženski svijet*. She even served as the magazine's editor-in-chief for several months before being arrested in December 1940.<sup>271</sup> The other three women were also active in the interwar period. Kata Pejnović promoted communist ideology in the cultural and educational associations

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<sup>270</sup> Stanislava Barač, "Žanr ženskog portreta u srpskoj periodici 20-ih i 30-ih godina 20. veka" ("The Female Portrait Genre in Serbian Periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s") (PhD diss., Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, 2014), 207.

<sup>271</sup> Jela Jančić Starc, "Ženski svijet" ("Woman's World"), in *Reprint izdanje "Ženski svijet" (Reprint Edition of the Woman's World)* ed. Marija Šoljan (Zagreb: Konferencija za aktivnost i ulogu žene u društvenom razvoju RK SSRNK i Izdavački savjet časopisa "Žena", 1979), 26.

*Seljačko kolo* (Peasant Circle) and *Seljačka sloga* (Peasant Unity) by “raising awareness” among peasant women and by defusing ethnic tensions between Serbs and Croats in the Lika region of Croatia.<sup>272</sup> Jela Bičanić participated in the activities of so-called progressive youth in her hometown of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina),<sup>273</sup> and Marija Šoljan, a native of the island of Hvar, became acquainted with communist ideology while studying at the Faculty of Law in Zagreb. Following her employment in a bank, she joined the Union of Banking, Insurance, Trade and Industry Clerks of Yugoslavia (*Savez bankovnih, osiguravajućih, trgovačkih i industrijskih činovnika Jugoslavije*, SBOTIČJ), which was notorious for its communist membership, and in which she served as the head of the female section until the beginning of the war.<sup>274</sup>

After approximately one year, the Main Committee of the Croatian AFŽ decided to make *Žena u borbi* their central organ.<sup>275</sup> They published content about the interests of women of all profiles who participated in the People’s Liberation Movement. The most visible were the partisan mothers, but all kinds of women fighters (*žene borci*) were also presented. Women were portrayed as activists and even politicians working with women’s organization – the *afežejke* – and in the newly established political representative bodies. Many of them became “heroes ‘in skirts,’”<sup>276</sup> that is to say, female soldiers, and thus sometimes earned the right to be represented in the women’s press.

Of course, the topics changed to some extent compared to the prewar magazines. “I mean, talking about equal pay in the partisans, that was meaningless,” *partizanka* Herta Haas explained

<sup>272</sup> Maja Brkljačić, “Kata Pejnović,” in *A Biographical Dictionary*, 420-421.

<sup>273</sup> -, “Biografije” (“Biographies”), in *Žene Hrvatske*, vol. 1, 450.

<sup>274</sup> Šoljan, ed., *Žene Hrvatske*, vol. 2, 494.

Marija – Vica Balen, interwar communist activist and wartime *afežejka*, in her memoir describes her experience of communist activism in SBOTIČJ, as well as, in her rendition, quite vibrant communist “subculture” of the 1930s Zagreb. Marija – Vica Balen, *Bili smo idealisti: uspomene jedne revolucionarke (We Were Idealists: Memories of a Revolutionary)* (Zagreb: Disput, 2009).

<sup>275</sup> Nada Sremec, “Ženska štampa za vrijeme Narodnooslobodilačke borbe,” in *Žene Hrvatske*, vol. 1, 205-210.

<sup>276</sup> Vladimir Bakarić, “Borba” (“The Fight”), *Žena u borbi* 1 (June 1943): 1.

casually in an interview.<sup>277</sup> But the struggle for equal rights for women remained unchanged. And its goal, the realization of the New Woman, also remained unchanged. In the issue prepared in the last months of the war and published immediately after its end, Nada Sremec, the magazine's editor-in-chief and the only permanent member of the editorial board at the time, described the New Woman's genesis:

When the people rose to defend their lives and rights, the woman stood by the man's side in the struggle for freedom (...) In the fire of the struggle she was reborn (*preporodila se*) and became a new woman.<sup>278</sup>

Although this New Woman was seemingly tempered in the battles of the People's Liberation Struggle, the *afežejke* tended to emphasize the extra work invested in her rebirth. Crucial, in their view, were literacy and education courses, the publication of wall newspapers, the organization of exhibitions, performances, and celebrations of International Women's Day and May Day. These activities made it possible to identify a Yugoslav New Woman by the following characteristics:

She who lived secludedly in her home, who could neither read nor write, she now speaks at meetings, reads articles and poems, wants and seeks the printed press. She also feels the need to write herself, to say everything she has suffered because of fascism, to say how she herself has fought; she wants to talk about heroism and successes.<sup>279</sup>

In the press, as in reality, the Yugoslav New Woman was a revolutionary phenomenon. However, the coexistence of the traditional and the new can be traced in all seventeen wartime issues of *Žena u borbi* (as well as in the other wartime publications). The illustrations on the covers (for instance, figure 1) show the active woman participating in the historical changes and pay tribute to women's progress. This does not mean that the caring and nurturing aspects of

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<sup>277</sup> Pantelić, interview with Herta Haas, 174. "Mislim u partizanima govorit o jednakim platama to je bilo besmisleno."

<sup>278</sup> Nada Sremec, "Naša ženska štampa" ("Our Women's Press"), *Žena u borbi* 16-17 (July 1945): 42. "Kad se narod digao na obranu svoga života i svojih prava, žena je usporedo s muškarcem ušla u borbu za slobodu (...) U vatri borbe i sama se preporodila i postaje novom ženom."

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. "Ona koja je živjela povučeno u svojoj kući, koja nije znala ni čitati ni pisati, danas govori na zborovima, čita članke i pjesme želi i traži štampu. Još i više, ona osjeća potrebu da sama piše, da kaže sve što je prepatila od fašizma, da kaže kako se borila, ona želi da govori o junaštvu i uspjesima."

womanhood, expected of mothers in particular, have been neglected. As the cover of the first issue of *Žena u borbi*, which was later often used (figure 1), demonstrates, the AFŽ “promoted an image of a woman who performs all important tasks at the same time.”<sup>280</sup> Vida Tomšič explained why this was so at the first congress of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia in the summer of 1945. She said that “the woman of the new Yugoslavia who has emerged from our struggle is a woman who has not forgotten that she is a mother and a sister and who is so aware of her motherhood that she is ready to take up arms to defend the rights of her children, to fight and sacrifice even her life.”<sup>281</sup> Despite the professed break with the past, the leading *afežejke* retained some conservative beliefs about women and the “nature” of women. This duality is visible in the AFŽ’s magazines published following the end of the NOB, reminding that the matter of femininity is not a simple one, not even for the committed communist activists who were tempered during the People’s Liberation Struggle.



Figure 1: Covers of *Žena u borbi* in June 1943, July 1943, and July 1945.

<sup>280</sup> Kim, *The Partisan Counter-Archive*, 92.

<sup>281</sup> Vida Tomšič, “Socijalno staranje kao jedan od najvažnijih zadataka Antifašističkog fronta žena u obnovi zemlje” (“Social Welfare as One of the Most Important Tasks of the Antifascist Front of Women in the Reconstruction of the Country”), in *Naši zadaci: referati na prvom kongresu antifašistkinja Jugoslavije (Our Tasks: Presentations on the First Congress of the Antifascist Women of Yugoslavia)* (Belgrade: CO AFŽ Jugoslavije, 1945), 14. “Žena nove Jugoslavije, izrasla iz naše borbe, je žena koja nije zaboravila da je majka i sestra i koje je svoga materinstva svesna u tolikoj meri da je za odbranu prava svoje dece spremna da uzme pušku, da se bori i žrtvuje čak i svoj život.”

## *Profile of an Afežejka*

All in all, communist activist girls and women continuously promoted the development of the New Woman inspired by Marxist doctrine and communist ideology and used their magazines to inform and educate about the proper way to create the New Women in Yugoslavia. To determine precisely who the women were who worked for these magazines, Barbara Jancar Webster's classification of the participants in the People's Liberation Movement (NOP) lends itself. The author divides them into three groups: women working on the home front, women fighters, and women leaders.<sup>282</sup> She continues by explaining that women who helped on the home front were predominantly peasant women of all ages, who were generally pitifully (un)educated. Those who volunteered to be fighters were almost exclusively very young girls of the same background.<sup>283</sup> In contrast, women leaders who formed the core of the women's movement during the war, and by extension, the core of the AFŽ during and following the end of the war, were predominantly from urban centers. As participants in the workers' movement or in the leftist university student groups at the universities in the 1930s, they were quite well educated and had experience with Party activism.<sup>284</sup> Precisely because of their political training, they became the official leaders of Yugoslav women into the socialist future.

When the AFŽ of Yugoslavia was formed in December 1942, the Central Board was composed of seven women described as intellectuals, six women workers, and five peasant women.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Jancar Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 48.

<sup>283</sup> For example, in her recollection of the establishment of the First Women's Partisan Unit that was formed in Trnavec (Lika, Croatia), its political commissar Narandža Končar recounts that out of one hundred and twenty-five accepted girls less than ten had attended school prior the war and that the majority was completely illiterate. Therefore, in addition to political courses that were required for all partisan recruits, the girls first had to attend literacy courses. Narandža Končar-Rodić, "Prva ženska partizanska četa u Lici" ("First Women's Partisan Unit in Lika"), in *Druga lička proleterska brigada: zbornik sjećanja* (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1988), 125-126.

<sup>284</sup> Jancar Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 48-74.

<sup>285</sup> Women classified as intellectuals were: Vanda Novosel (clerk), Mira Morača (student), Mitra Mitrović (intellectual), Olga Kovačić (clerk), Stana Tomašević (teacher), Jela Bičanić (teacher), Marija Novak (student). As workers were classified: Maca Gržetić, Spasenija – Cana Babović, Rahida Šakić, Judita Alargić, Nada Marković, and

Executive Committee consisted of Spasenija – Cana Babović, Mitra Mitrović, Vanda Novosel, Mira Morača, and Kata Pejnović. That is, most of the organization’s leadership was made up of women from urban centers who were active “on the Party line” during the interwar period. Yet, Kata Pejnović became the organization’s president. The reason for this, I believe, was the fact that she was the exemplary peasant woman – well, apart from the fact that she was literate and had a penchant for reading the so-called progressive press. That is, she represented the majority of the organization’s membership, but because of her exceptionality, she was the perfect example of the woman of the future, the Yugoslav New Woman.

I would also like to mention Marija Šoljan. I have already mentioned her as the editor-in-chief of *Žena u borbi* for many years. She exemplifies a model “woman leader,” dedicated both to communist ideology and to achieving equal rights for women with its help. Her interwar activist work determined her entire life,<sup>286</sup> and her feminist principles decisively influenced the activities of the Croatian AFŽ until the early 1980s, as well as the shaping of the media image of women in the People’s Liberation Struggle. It is no secret that Šoljan was the most important person – I would even dare to say that she was the driving force – who oversaw many publications of the Croatian AFŽ. She carried out this activity, with small interruptions, from 1943, when she became a member of the editorial board of *Žena u borbi*, until the end of 1982.<sup>287</sup>

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Zora Brkić. Women peasants were: Kata Pejnović, Dragica Karan, Kata Vujaklija, Nada Trbović, and Mika Pećanac. -, “Borbena jedinstvo žena Jugoslavije” (“Combative Unity of the Women of Yugoslavia”), *Žena danas* 32 (November 1943): 27-28.

In the first volume of *Women of Croatia in the People’s Liberation Struggle*, the list of members of the Central Committee was published as well as the reproduction of the page from *Borba* containing the article about the first AFŽ conference, again with this list. Notably, in each of the versions, this list is slightly different.

<sup>286</sup> Like many communists, she too was married to a man who shared her political convictions, Vladimir Bakarić. Considering that Bakarić was the member of the KPJ since 1933, one of the principal organizers of the NOB on the territory of Croatia, and the most influential communist leader in Croatia since the end of the war until the beginning of the 1980s (he died in 1983), it is quite plausible that his career helped the development of his wife’s career. And *vice versa*, her work that never wavered from “the Party line” certainly confirmed her spouse’s credibility.

<sup>287</sup> Šoljan managed a stream of projects. The first one was publication of the mentioned two-volume collection of documents *Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi* (*Women of Croatia in the People’s Liberation Struggle*) in 1955. The Croatian AFŽ in 1967 published a “prequel” to that collection: *Žene Hrvatske u radničkom pokretu*

At first, she was a member of a group; the magazine had four editors during the war. In the postwar period, from 1948 to 1953, Šoljan shared the position of editor-in-chief with Emilija Šeparović, another wartime *afežejka*, who then served as the sole editor-in-chief for another three years. In mid-1957, Šoljan returned to this post and introduced changes in the style and content of the magazine. The changes were intended to make it more competitive under conditions of the developing media freedom and gradual opening to the consumer habits of Western Europe, both triggered by the Tito-Stalin Split and the subsequent introduction of self-management. At this time, the magazine became simply *Žena* (*Woman*). Šoljan led the magazine into another phase of its existence; in 1967, *Žena* became a scientific journal dealing with the Woman Question in Yugoslavia and abroad and maintained this course until the end of its existence.<sup>288</sup>

The figure of this *afežejka par excellence* and a small number of close associates marked *Žena u borbi* throughout the research period. In their magazine, Šoljan and a limited circle of associates outlined the new femininity and, in synergy with it, created the figure of *žena borac*. Since the immediate postwar period is exceptional in many ways, the next section examines how the *afežejke* attempted to capitalize on wartime enthusiasm. This part of the analysis highlights some of the

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(*Women of Croatia in the Workers' Movement*). This one, too, was a little late as it was supposed to be published in time to mark the fortieth anniversary of the KPJ's existence in 1959. In 1977, this time right in time for the thirty-fifth anniversary of the AFŽ, the organization published a monograph about Kata Pejnović, its first president. On the other hand, in 1981 it only announced that a book about the First Women's Partisan Unit, marking the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the uprising, was going to be published. It appeared in 1987. Also, the organization in 1974 published the reprint of the war editions of *Žena u borbi*, and in 1979 it published the reprint of the prewar magazine *Ženski svijet* that was edited by communist activists in Zagreb from 1939 until the beginning of 1941. During 1980, an initiative was launched to publish a book about women in the partisan army's Medical Corps (*sanitet*). There are a number of boxes in the fund of the women's organization in the Zagreb archive that are full of surveys conducted for this purpose, but it seems that this book was not written. Also, Šoljan was the initiator and the first president of the "Kata Pejnović Foundation." The only edition of the AFŽ of Croatia where I did not encounter her name was the fashion magazine *Naša moda*.

<sup>288</sup> Šoljan Bakarić resigned from her post only in 1982 because her eyesight has deteriorated so much that she could not do her job well anymore. She was succeeded by a journalist she handpicked herself, Melita Singer. Singer was *Vjesnik*'s accomplished journalist who had several years of editorial experience. -, "Novi glavni urednik 'Žene'" ("New *Woman's* Editor in Chief"), and Neda Andrić, "Priznanje i zahvalnost dosadašnjem glavnom uredniku" ("Recognition and Gratitude for the Former Editor in Chief"); both in *Žena* 5 – 6 (November – December 1982): 4-6.

foundational characteristics that women were expected to possess during the war and in the first postwar years. Importantly, these qualities make the foundation of the wartime figure *žena borac*, too.

### 3.2 Conquering Memory: 1945 – 1950

*Žena u borbi* begins its postwar existence with the aim of so-called cultural and political enlightenment (*kulturno – političko uzdizanje*) of women in Croatia. Its primary and seemingly only goal was their education. Nada Sremec, who wrote for *Žena u borbi* throughout the war and assumed the position of editor-in-chief in 1944, successfully brought the spirit of activism that characterized the wartime issues into the postwar period and tried to sustain it until the very end of 1947. Importantly, she was the only responsible for this magazine during this time, while any member of the women’s organization could contribute to the magazine.<sup>289</sup>

In order to maintain the wartime fervor, in July 1947, in a programmatic article signed as the work of the Main Board (*Glavni odbor*, GO), as was the preferred way of communicating officially held attitudes, it was declared that the war was over, but the struggle was still going on. Namely, the article discussed the possibility of changing the name of the *Žena u borbi*. Some readers no longer considered it appropriate because they thought that the struggles ended with the war. However, the members of the Main Board argued in favor of the name: “It is not time to give up the fight, because the fight is not yet over.”<sup>290</sup> The explanation followed:

The war is over, but the Five-Year Plan to achieve what we fought for, is ahead. The tasks of the plan are not easy, they do not require only perseverance and sacrifice, they require

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<sup>289</sup> Only later, in the second half of the 1950s, the information that the editorial board consists of three members appears in the impressum of the magazine.

<sup>290</sup> GO AFŽ, “Mi se borbe ne odričemo!” (“We Are Not Giving Up the Fight!”), *Žena u borbi* 41 (July 1947): 16-17. “Nije još vrijeme da se odrekemo borbe, jer borba nije dovršena.”

that each individual progresses. We must fight to ensure that the work of each individual advances as much knowledge and as much work skill as possible.<sup>291</sup>

In sum, the article concludes that the Five-Year Plan postulates the continuation of the struggle. To justify this, the authors invoked the ultimate motherhood argument, stating that without the struggle for the Five-Year Plan, there will be no happy future for all their children.<sup>292</sup>

This article, like many others, confirms Carol S. Lilly's explanation that "the wartime sense of urgency," which emphasized endurance, self-sacrifice, courage, and heroism remained an integral part of communist leadership's rhetoric for several years following the end of the war. It perpetuated the revolutionary *esprit de corps* that included activism and sacrifice as well as radicalism and even violence. Accordingly, the NOB in its many manifestations continued to be at the forefront of motivating the masses of Yugoslav citizens to act in the desired way.<sup>293</sup>

In this regard, the leadership resorted to formulating the tasks of repairing war damage and rebuilding and restoring infrastructure, industrial and cultural facilities in military terminology.<sup>294</sup> Of course, everyone had their assignments. The AFŽ, as part of the People's Front, bore its share of responsibility. In addition, women who constituted a significant part of the labor force were entrusted with more tasks for the normalization of the economy through restoration and reconstruction and for the creation of resources for the transition to planned production. In addition, in the first postwar years, shock work – as a special variety of (not so) voluntary work typically practiced in the socialist countries – was advocated, encouraged and imposed on people of all ages. As Marija Šoljan wrote in 1946, "[d]eep consciousness that today it is not only about preserving the heritage of the People's Liberation Struggle," but also about "the awareness that today we are

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 17. "Prošao je rat, ali pred nama je Petogodišnji plan, koji ima da ostvari ono, za čega se i vodila borba. Zadaci plana nisu lagani, oni ne traže samo ustrajnost i požrtvovnost u radu, oni traže da se uzdigne svaki pojedinac. Treba se boriti, da rad svakog pojedinca donosi što više znanja i što više vještine u radu."

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Lilly, *Power and Persuasion*, 86-88, quote on 87.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 87.

taking hard steps on the road of building and restoring our country,” was once again based on the notion that “we [will] create for ourselves, for our children, and for all our people more beautiful and joyful life.”<sup>295</sup>

In connection, the People’s Liberation Struggle was considered as a uniquely useful source of inspiration. While cultural life in the new state was to draw inspiration from many historical figures and cultural developments, the early postwar years, as Lilly notes, were marked by an “obsession with wartime themes.” The recent glorious past was to be used to promote the values that true socialist citizens should cherish. These included heroism and self-sacrifice, of course, but optimism and elation for a better future and the development of community values were also consistently promoted.<sup>296</sup> Since *Žena u borbi* was primarily intended as a guide instructing its readers how they could become the New Women, worthy companions to the New Men, the articles about the NOB had the task of informing how this New Woman was forged, who the boldest women were before that became fashionable and/or legal, and what kind of womanhood they promoted.

The perceived symbiosis of wartime victory and postwar needs stimulated the women who wrote for *Žena u borbi* to further develop the female portrait model – women’s writing about noteworthy female personalities with the aim of promoting women’s emancipation. This particular kind of writing, as Serbian literary historian Stanislava Barać shows in her dissertation, developed in the 1920s on the territory of Yugoslavia to become “a characteristic discursive practice of interwar feminist activism” during the 1930s.<sup>297</sup> A key feature of the female portrait is that it is not constrained by one formal literary genre, as it is a type of didactic and propagandistic writing that

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<sup>295</sup> Marija Šoljan, “Radimo udarnički!” (“We Are Shock Workers!”), *Žena u borbi* 27 (May 1946): 4. “Duboka svijest, da se danas radi ne samo o očuvanju tekovina narodno-oslobodilačke borbe (...), svijest da se danas ide teškim koracima na putu izgradnje i obnove naše zemlje, da bi sutra stvorili sebi, svojoj djeci i čitavom našem narodu ljepši i radnosniji život, (zahvaća sve šire redove žena).”

<sup>296</sup> Lilly, *Power and Persuasion*, 92-100, quote on 98.

<sup>297</sup> Stanislava Barać, “Feminist Counterpublic and its Genres: The Continuity of Women’s Political Engagement in the Two Yugoslav States,” public lecture, Central European University, Budapest, November 23, 2018.

uses any in order to, depending on context, to further its feminist intent.<sup>298</sup> In the immediate postwar years, *afežejke* used a version tailored to the requirements of the period to demonstrate the emergence of the New Woman.

This is not to say that the female portrait changed completely in the period between the 1930s and the postwar 1940s. Just like in the interwar period, *afežejke* wrote articles about successful female artists, scientists, and politicians who were exceptional due to their professional success. However, the New Woman in socialist Yugoslavia was conceived as a more democratic standard. Yes, the characteristics of this particular entity were precisely defined from above, there was nothing democratic about that. However, she was represented as a widely attainable ideal rather than a model accessible only to a privileged few. As Milanka Todić notes, this trend of portraying both New Women and New Men can also be observed in the arts. She explains it as “a functionalized representation of the building of the new society.”<sup>299</sup> Analogously, over a period of almost five years, the authors of *Žena u borbi* described lives and achievements of ordinary Yugoslav women in dozens of articles, drawing inspiration from the same set of qualifications over and over again, thus developing the female portrait of the New Woman of socialist Yugoslavia.

The key attribute of the *afežejke*'s female portrait was activism. Every woman was described as an activist, created in the image (including political education) of her creators. This means that the women were most often described as dedicated workers, usually in a factory. It also means that they were described as aware of the importance of education, meaning that they could at least read and write; in the immediate postwar years, literacy was a major achievement for many (previously) peasant women. Finally, activism means that women were involved in politics, most likely, but not

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<sup>298</sup> Barać, “Žanr ženskog portreta,” especially chapter “O prepoznavanju ‘novih’ žanrova i žanru ženskog portreta” (“About the recognition of the ‘new’ genres and the female portrait genre”), 1-17.

<sup>299</sup> Milanka Todić, *Fotografija i propaganda, 1945-1958 (Photography and Propaganda, 1945-1958)*, see especially chapter “The Image of the New Man” (Banja Luka: JU Književna zadruga, 2005), 135-150, quote on 142.

exclusively, in the AFŽ. The profile is not completed here: the activism of the New Woman was depicted as strongly rooted in the experiences preceding the current life with its opportunities and promises of prosperity. It thus described the misery that life in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had brought to women, and the challenges that arose during the war.

The People's Liberation Struggle itself was not the dominant topic in such articles. Nor did it appear in all of them. However, the vast majority of the articles were about women's participation in the war effort, among other elements. In them, the war was described as a watershed moment when masses of women "did the right thing," in a manner of speaking. Why was "doing the right thing" relevant is attested to by Mitra Mitrović's memoir fragment titled "Particulars for a Biography:"

It seems to me I could write down an entire life with only a few details:  
When was he [sic!] admitted to the Party  
In what kind of Party organization did he work  
Was he in prison – conduct  
Did he join the partisans?<sup>300</sup>

Continuing to ponder about acquaintances and colleagues – comrades, of course – from the time of her underground work in Belgrade, Mitrović continues:

I could draw up a more or less accurate biography of anyone according to general data – the first demonstrations against Petar Živković, a meeting in the dark corner of the seminar room, a strike, a failed exam, exile, camp in Bileća, and so on, so on...<sup>301</sup>

The most important elements of one's biography, as Mitrović explains, are closely linked to the existence and functioning of the Communist Party. "Doing the right thing" entailed underground

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<sup>300</sup> Mitra Mitrović, *Ratno putovanje (War Journey)* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1971 (1953)), 188. "Čini mi se, mogla bih ispisati sav nečiji život, samo sa nekoliko podataka:

Kad je primljen u Partiju  
U kojoj je i kakvoj partiskoj organizaciji radio  
Bio ili nije bio u zatvoru – držanje na robiji  
Stupio u partizane?"

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, 189. "Mogla bih da sačinim manje ili više tačnu biografiju svih, svakog pojedinačno, po opštim podacima – prve demonstracije protiv Petra Živkovića, sastanak u mračnom uglu seminara, štrajk, nepoloženi ispit, progonstvo, logor u Bileći, i tako redom, redom..."

work before and during the war, as well as supporting the People's Liberation Army with activities such as knitting socks for the partisans, willingly sending daughters as well as sons to the partisan army, up to and including active participation in the armed struggles. These biographical points were uniquely relevant in socialist Yugoslavia; until the end of the country's existence, participation in the NOB as part of the partisan movement meant "doing the right thing" and was likely to open a range of opportunities for those who did so.<sup>302</sup> Analogously, in the immediate postwar years (but less so as time went on), this also meant that the person being addressed was supposed to be privy to the knowledge of the greater good that could be accomplished with a little more perseverance, a little more self-sacrifice, a little more courage. For instance, figure 2 shows a set of photographs; the photos on the left illustrate some of the adversities women faced during the war, and the ones on the right show the opportunities that opened for women who "did the right thing" during the war.

In the early years, the ode to partisanship tolerated no ifs, ands, or buts. As the reconstruction gathered momentum, this became evident in the fervor with which calls were made for more and more work, as well as in the contributions made to the other aspects of the communist state-building vision for a new and better society. And the culmination of the Tito-Stalin Split – the deterioration of the economic situation in the country and the intensifying confrontation with (real and imagined) political opponents – cemented the need for ideological orthodoxy in all areas of interest to the

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<sup>302</sup> This primarily refers to easier employment as well as to better retirement conditions and more extensive health care. Importantly, participation alone did not mean automatic benefits. For instance, factors such as the length of participation in the war on the partisan side, the activities the person engaged in, the person's gender and nationality all contributed to the calculation of retirement benefits. See more in: Heike Karge, "Transnational Knowledge into Yugoslav Practices? The Legacy of the Second World War on Social Welfare Policy in Yugoslavia," *Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 20, no. 5 (2010): 75-86; Tina Filipović, "Osnutak, struktura i djelovanje boračke organizacije na lokalnoj razini: Općinski odbor SUBNOR-a Labin" ("Establishment, Structure and Operation of the Veterans' Organization at the Local Level: Municipal Board of SUBNOR Labin"), *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 53, no. 1 (2021): 43-68.

Party. With regard to the Second World War, when in doubt, one needed only to consult Tito's report at the Fifth Congress of the KPJ for this report "in the following years gained the status of the canonical text according to which the history of the NOB and the Party was shaped, written and taught."<sup>303</sup>



Figure 2: "Fascists Destroyed – The People's Front Is Building," *Žena u borbi* 19 (October 1945): 12-13.

The text in the middle reads:

"Ustashas, Germans, chetniks, and Italians burned, killed and left ruins and rubble behind. The united people is renewing and building. Women *are helping* rebuild the destroyed homeland, and in the pictures we see how she makes bricks, works in a lab, builds a railroad, makes thread at the factory, feeds flax to the threshing machine and prints *Žena u borbi*."<sup>304</sup>

<sup>303</sup> Snježana Koren. *Politika povijesti u Jugoslaviji (1945 – 1960): Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, nastava povijesti, historiografija (Politics of History in Yugoslavia (1945-1960): Communist Party of Yugoslavia, History Teaching and Historiography)* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2012), 350.

<sup>304</sup> "Ustaše, Nijemci, četnici i Talijani su palili, ubijali i ostavili iza sebe ruševine i garišta. Ujedinjen narod obnavlja i gradi. Žene pomažu u obnovi uništene domovine i na slici je vidimo, kako pravi opeke, radi u laboratoriju, gradi prugu, pravi konac u tvornici, redi lan kod vrše i štampa 'Žena u borbi'" (my emphasis).

The report gave honorable mention to women's activism in support of the partisan army. However, that was more than women partisans received – complete silence.<sup>305</sup> Nevertheless, the interests of the Party leadership seemingly coincided with the interests of the leadership of the Antifascist Front of Women. These women were, by and large, prewar activists and wartime organizers on the home front; they *knew* that women's equality lay in the Party cell or, even better, in the AFŽ section. Moreover, the AFŽ in Croatia was the strongest and best organized among the republics during the war. Logically, the officials who edited or wrote for *Žena u borbi* tended to describe the successes that were familiar to them as organizers of the home front. Thus, in the first five years, the officials of this women's organization did not represent the experiences of all women who actively participated in the war. In their publication, they favored the women who worked in the rear, organized by the AFŽ. And, more importantly, the women who responded enthusiastically to the incentives of the AFŽ.

Therefore, in March 1946, Marija Šoljan appealed to the women's *esprit de corps* congratulating them the first International Women's Day, which they celebrated as free women in a free country. "Today, female workers in every factory put a question mark on the celebration of Women's Day,"<sup>306</sup> Šoljan notes. They are thinking, she continues, "what we have done so far and what we will do next to fulfill the tasks Tito set for us [for] the May Day competition."<sup>307</sup> Oh, yes. In 1946, March 8 marked the end of about three months of all kinds of competitions of workers in preparation for the celebration of Women's Day and the beginning of the competitions that would culminate on May 1. In addition, several months of contests preceded the Women's Day

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<sup>305</sup> Josip Broz Tito, "Politički izvještaj Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Jugoslavije: referat održan na V. kongresu KPJ" ("Political Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: Paper Given at the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the KPJ") (Belgrade: Borba, 1948).

<sup>306</sup> Marija Šoljan, "Proslavimo 8. mart u radu" ("Let's Celebrate the Women's Day Working"), *Žena u borbi* 24 (March 1946): 2. "Proslavu 8 marta radnice u svakoj tvornici danas postavljaju u znaku pitanja (...)."

<sup>307</sup> Ibid. "(...) što smo do sada uradile i što ćemo od sada uraditi, da bi sprovele zadatke koje nam je postavio drug Tito, da bi [ispunili zadatke] prvomajskog takmičenja.

competitions, which were preceded by several months of competitions occasioned by the November elections.<sup>308</sup> Such a pace of work surely required some persuasion. In the article, Šoljan points to the bleak working conditions in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the extreme living conditions imposed on everyone during the war, contrasting them with the future that hardworking peasants and workers will carve out for themselves. For, she explains, “[n]ew understanding of work, a new attitude toward work, is what imbues hundreds of female workers in our factories.”<sup>309</sup> In other words, taught and guided by the AFŽ (and the Party), women understand the importance of work and readily rush into a better, emancipated future.

In order to thoroughly cover all the relevant aspects of the holiday, two additional articles focused on the celebration. The article “How We Used to Celebrate Women’s Day” highlighted events happening in the interwar period. It illustrated the aforementioned dreariness by evoking the difficulties surrounding the observance of Women’s Day and the perseverance and courage with which communist activist girls and women circumvented them.<sup>310</sup> And in the article “With Work We Prove the Awareness of the Working Woman” the anonymous author touched on the diligence to the point of self-sacrifice of the working woman.<sup>311</sup> Echoing the principle of the accessibility of the new femininity, the author substantiated it with almost twenty examples of women workers who, according to worker Rezika Horvatek, refused to rest while the reconstruction of the country was going on.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Rad i zadatak Antifašističkog fronta žena od prvog kongresa do prvog plenuma (izvještaj), undated, box 1, folder 1.1. Glavni odbor (1946 – 1961), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archive, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 8).

<sup>309</sup> Šoljan, “Proslavimo 8. mart u radu,” 2. “[N]ovo shvatanje rada, nov odnos prema radu jeste ono što danas prožima stotine radnica u našim tvornicama.”

<sup>310</sup> Vera Jurić, “Kako smo nekad slavili 8. mart” (“How We Used to Celebrate Women’s Day”), *Žena u borbi* 24 (March 1946): 4-5.

<sup>311</sup> D.P., “Radom dokazujemo svijest radnice” (“With Work We Prove the Awareness of the Female Worker”), *Žena u borbi* 24 (March 1946): 6-8.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

The three articles line up to frame the portrait of the New Woman as outlined by the Croatian *afežejke*. From the September 1945 issue<sup>313</sup> to the end of 1950, in a total of 63 issues published at least one hundred and fifteen articles reflecting the ideas exemplified in the three articles described above. The publication of such articles increased, particularly with the inauguration of the first First Five-Year Plan in the very beginning of 1947. From then, each issue published as many as six articles dealing with the details of the emergence and development of the New Woman. The focus was on the efforts of women in the factories<sup>314</sup> and in the peasant cooperatives.<sup>315</sup> To a much lesser extent, the magazine dealt with the work of white-collar workers,<sup>316</sup> primarily teachers and politicians.<sup>317</sup> The emphasis on women's work in the content of the magazine diminishes over time in favor of other types of content. However, paid work, especially in industry, as the main source of self-worth and emancipation as well as belonging and recognition, remained one of the pillars of social values in socialist Yugoslavia, especially for women.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Previous edition of this magazine (no. 16/17) was published in July 1945, but it was prepared while the war was still going on. *Afežejke* considered it as the last wartime edition, which makes the September issue the first one that was copy edited and published in the peacetime.

<sup>314</sup> For instance: Tihomil Rivosechi, "Žena je sposobna za svako zvanje" ("A Woman Is Capable of Any Profession"), *Žena u borbi* 40 (June 1947): 18-19; T.Š., "Dobila sam orden rada" ("I Received the Medal of Labor"), *Žena u borbi* 5 (May 1949): 9.

<sup>315</sup> For instance: -, "Odbornica koju poštuje čitavo selo" ("Councilor Respected by the Whole Village"), *Žena u borbi* 38 (April 1947): 3; -, "Odbornica AFŽ" ("Councilor of the AFŽ"), *Žena u borbi* 1 (January 1949): 1.

<sup>316</sup> For instance: -, "Narodna učiteljica" ("The People's Teacher"), *Žena u borbi* 37 (March 1947): 11; Nina Timotijević, "Učiteljica, frontovka, domaćica" ("Teacher, Frontwoman, Housewife"), *Žena u borbi* 6 (June 1949): 23.

<sup>317</sup> For instance: -, "Žene kandidati" ("Women Candidates"), *Žena u borbi* 33 (November 1946): 10-11; Zora Matijević, "Dina Zlatić, ministar Vlade NR Hrvatske" ("Dina Zlatić, Minister in the Government of the People's Republic of Croatia"), *Žena u borbi* 3 (March 1948): 3-4.

<sup>318</sup> A number of studies of women's experiences of participation in paid labor in Eastern Bloc countries, often based on oral history, show that women were aware of the value of their work. They felt that they were contributing to a better life for their community, especially their offspring, and considered work as a source of social recognition. For instance, see: Jill Massino, "Constructing the Socialist Worker: Gender, Identity, and Work under State Socialism in Braşov, Romania," *Aspasia* 3 (2009): 131-160; Eszter Zsófia Tóth, "'My Work, My Family, and My Car': Women's Memories of Work, Consumerism, and Leisure in Socialist Hungary," in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life*, 33-44; Jelena Pavlinušić, Nikola Križanac and Dragana Modrić, *Što je nama naša Dalmatinka dala (What Our Dalmatinka Gave Us)* (Sinj: Kulturno umjetničko središte Sinj, 2017); Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Post-Socialist Deindustrialization and Its Gendered Structure of Feeling: The Devaluation of Women's Work in the Croatian Garment Industry," *Labor History* 61, no. 1 (2020): 36-47, DOI: 10.1080/0023656X.2019.1681643.

Corresponding portraits can also be found among approximately thirty literary works published by the end of 1950. Short stories and poetry published during this period, at least until mid-1948, were largely authored by Soviet writers. A smaller number of contributions (the mentioned thirty) were largely written by participants who had already published their work during the war, such as Branko Ćopić, Vladimir Nazor, Vanja Žanko, Ivana Vujčić Laszowski.

The most remarkable example of the female portrait I found in Vera Luketić's novella – a romanticized biography of an *afežejka* – which enumerates the most important qualities a New Yugoslav Woman should have, as well as the style in which she was most often portrayed. The protagonist Mila Vučković – who was indeed a real person – experienced one misfortune after another as a peasant woman born in one of the poorest areas of Croatia. According to the author, through a combination of intuition and alertness, Mila recognized “the voice” of the Party at the very beginning of the war; she first became an activist of the AFŽ, then she began to learn to read and write, and soon she was nominated for membership in the Party.<sup>319</sup> The protagonist recounts: “[I]f there had been no people's struggle, I would have remained what I was before... an ignorant woman who does not know how to think, who does not dare to say a word, who only suffers, suffers like cattle. In my hard life, this struggle has saved my life! Through the Party I was reborn!”<sup>320</sup>

And in 1950? By then, she had finished primary school, while at the same time working and agitating for the AFŽ and continuing to work for the consolidation of the new social system. In other words, Mila “belongs to a group of women whose thoughts, significance, feelings, and even habits have completely changed.”<sup>321</sup> She changed to such an extent that, according to the author,

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<sup>319</sup> Vera Luketić, “Mila Vučković,” *Žena u borbi* 8/9 (August/September 1950): 4-6.

<sup>320</sup> Vera Luketić, “Mila Vučković,” *Žena u borbi* 10 (October 1950): 5. “(...) da nije bilo narodne borbe, ja bih ostala kakva sam bila... žena neuka, koja ne umije da misli, koja se ne usuđuje riječ da progovori, koja samo trpi, trpi kao blašče. U mom teškom životu ova me je borba spasila! Mene je Partija nanovo rodila!”

<sup>321</sup> Vera Luketić, “Mila Vučković,” *Žena u borbi* 11 (November 1950): 7. “(...) spada u red onih žena, čije su se misli, značaj, osjećanje, čak i navike sasvim izmjenili.”

she would be willing to renounce her sons if they turned out to be agents of the Cominform (*informbiroovci*).<sup>322</sup> With this grim remark, Luketić provided the final piece of information: Mila Vučković was a mother. However, as was common in *Žena u borbi* during this period, the narrative about her life did not revolve around her children. The reader is free to infer whether her sons were grown up and was she a partisan mother (*majka partizanka*), because the text does not share that information. In other words, this portrait represents a revised version of the *mater dolorosa* template, imbued with its own purpose and determination. Of course, not all contributions of this type were so vague when it came to the children of the AFŽ's activists. But all of them made it clear that many Yugoslav women underwent a complete transformation when they became communists. As the fifth chapter on *Arena* magazine demonstrates, however, the portrayal of *majke partizanke* in other media was not so revolutionary.

In the five-year period (1945-1950), among many articles related to the People's Liberation Struggle, only one article explicitly features women partisans. The *partizanke* were the protagonists of Milka Kufrin's piece "July 27 – The Day of the Uprising of the People in Croatia." Importantly, Kufrin was herself a *partizanka*. More than that, she was one of the first women to be permitted to join the partisan army and the very first to serve as a commissar of the *četa*, a basic tactical military unit consisting of approximately eighty to one hundred soldiers. Barbara Jancar Webster cites her as the source for the statement that during the war, "equality was in the *četa*."<sup>323</sup> Her fondness for military life made her the right choice for an article that would simply point out the achievements her female comrades-in-arms made during their military service. In the article, she described their

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 99.

courage and determination as equal to male combat prowess, but did not leave out their capacity for compassion and tenderness as desirable feminine qualities outside the battlefield.<sup>324</sup>

In comparison, in 1945, the political commissar of the Nineteenth partisan division praises the stamina and bravery of the women soldiers fighting in his unit. He also makes an additional effort to explain that women soldiers voluntarily washed and mended their comrades' clothes and supervised the hygiene of the soldiers in the division. In doing so, *partizanke* "in their tender concerns retained all the traits of a woman."<sup>325</sup> Fortunately, the political commissar continues, "this attribute does not interfere with the other side, the energy and determination to fight."<sup>326</sup> A similar view is presented in Ivan Šibl's memoir. Šibl, a prewar activist, partisan, and political commissar of several brigades in Slavonia, inserted a few pages about the women he fought with amid some two hundred pages of descriptions of his experiences in partisan warfare.<sup>327</sup> Outside of that one chapter, he mentioned his female comrades in arms only twice. Apparently, he did not write easily about them in the context of daily marches, fights, retreats and diseases. As if the segregation was not enough, in the mentioned chapter he also emphasizes his concern that the *partizanke* might become rough like men and that their participation in armed conflict might "deprive [them] of the wonderful quantities that make a woman a woman and that we want to feel from the women we love."<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Milka Kufrin, "27. jula – Dan narodnog ustanka u Hrvatskoj" ("July 27 – The Day of The Uprising of the People in Croatia"), *Žena u borbi* 7 (July 1949): 10-11.

<sup>325</sup> "Dokument 373: "Dopis političkog komesara XIX. divizije Glavnog odboru AFŽ Hrvatske o ženi vojniku" ("Document 373: "A Letter of the Political Commissar of the Nineteenth Partisan Division to the Main Committee of the AFŽH about the Female Soldier"), in *Žene Hrvatske*, vol. 2, 136. "(...) i u svojoj nježnoj zabrinutosti očuvala je sve osobine žene."

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. "(...) toj osebini ne smeta druga strana, energičnost i odlučnost u borbi."

<sup>327</sup> Soon after the publication of the book, the chapter was published also in *Žena u borbi*: "Partizanke XVII. udarne" ("Partizanke of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assault Brigade"), *Žena u borbi* 11 (November 1953): 3-4.

<sup>328</sup> Ivan Šibl, *Partizanski dnevnik (The Partisan Journal)* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1960), 271. "(...) lišiti divnih svojstava koja ženu čine ženom i koja želimo osjetiti kod žena koje volimo."

Šibl did not clarify what these “wonderful properties” were. Was it washing and mending the partisan’s clothes? The political commissar of the Nineteenth partisan division mentioned above seemed to think so. So did the writer and politician Vladimir Nazor, too. In his popular wartime diary, Nazor was so grateful to a young partisan woman for sewing a button on his blouse, that he had to mention her; at least her kind deed, if not her name. But when he considered that Yugoslav partisan girls *were not* “Muljikas, Rudicas and Srnas”<sup>329</sup> any more, and just as he began to write what those girls *were*, he put in three dots, excused himself with an air raid and never broached the subject again.

Vladimir Nazor was an intellectual of the old school, born, raised and educated during the existence of Austria-Hungary. It is therefore understandable that he was the one who struggled to understand the extent of the changes in his homeland. However, the gift of eloquence returned to him when he remembered that the Yugoslav *partizanke* had a counterpart in the ancient Amazon warriors. He concluded that, despite the fact that women had given up “everything Eve’s daughters always loved,” this modern phenomenon embodied by the *partizanke* was “by no means unnatural and forced.”<sup>330</sup> What Eve’s daughters loved, Nazor did not elaborate. It is fairly certain, however, that it was not mending the partisans’ clothes.

On the other hand, Ivan Šibl, apart for being much younger, was active in the revolutionary youth movement in the 1930s and at least decently familiar with communist ideology, otherwise

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<sup>329</sup> The three are tragic female characters presented in the opus of Croatian author Dinko Šimunović (1873 – 1933). Muljika and Rudica appear in two short stories named after them, and Srna appears in a short story entitled *Duga* (*The Rainbow*). All three break in the collision with bleak and cruel conditions of life in rural Dalmatinska zagora (Croatia), predominantly due to the perceived inviolability of the patriarchal mores. Vladimir Nazor, *S partizanima: dnevnik* (*With Partisans: A Journal*) (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1958), 44. “(...) Muljike, Rudice i Srne.”

<sup>330</sup> -, “Nazor o partizankama” (“Nazor on *Partizanke*”), *Žena u borbi* 7 (March 1944): 17. (...) svega što su Evine kćerke uvijek volile (...), (...) nije nikako neprirodno i prisiljeno (...). This is an abbreviated version of Nazor’s famous speech “Od Amazonke do partizanke” (“From an Amazon to a *Partizanka*”) which this poet gave in January 1944 in Otočac (Lika, Croatia) and which was quoted quite widely after the war.

he would not have been a political commissar during the war. And he too shared similar reservations about female soldiers. Just like her male comrades, Milka Kufrin also reproduced the dichotomy that marked the existence of female combatants around the world and haunted the fantasies of many a soldier in the People's Liberation Struggle. From the war all the way into the 1950s (and beyond), the divide between women as biological beings and women as social beings persisted and was reproduced (even) by one of the most prominent female fighters.

If the weakening of revolutionary fervor meant partial return of women to the private sphere, to the familiar same old same old, it seems that it was only then that the AFŽ activists became aware of the scope of their tasks. That is, although publications about the People's Liberation Struggle were becoming more numerous in the very beginning of the 1950s, they dealt with the role of women and their contributions to the war only in exceptional cases. At the same time, the activists of the organization launched their first project aimed at preserving the memory of women who had participated in the People's Liberation Struggle and adjusted the way they wrote about the war in their monthly publications. Due to the general underrepresentation of women's contribution to the NOB, in the following years the magazine *Žena u borbi* experimented with presenting aspects of the women's struggle that had previously been neglected. What this meant for this magazine's editorial staff and how long it lasted will be explained in the next section.

### **3.3 Negotiating the *Partizanka***

In the first years of the 1950s, advertising of the shock work continues. Almost every issue of *Žena u borbi* contains an article about many women "building socialism" in Yugoslavia. However, only one article appears in each issue, portraying one or more women workers or peasants, and in such articles the *afežejke* give more and more space to young, (more) educated girls. More space is also given to the work and successes of entire factories or peasant cooperatives and the associated

facilities (courses, canteens, kindergartens). The great progress of the Croatian and, by extension, the Yugoslav economy got its five minutes of fame. But it was not more than five minutes, because already from 1952 the magazine focused more and more on the problems of women workers. The issue of the double burden (*dvostruko opterećenje*) – the strain of paid work in addition to the undiminished amount of unpaid domestic work – premiered in April of that year,<sup>331</sup> and that was the first time the *afežejke* mentioned the problem caused by the socialist system.

The decreasing number of portraits of ordinary women workers and peasants matches the *afežejke*'s return to their roots with regard to the use of the female portrait genre: they again regularly wrote articles about exceptional women, primarily artists and scientists, who could, but did not have to, be communists. The first to be portrayed were their role models Rosa Luxembourg<sup>332</sup> and Clara Zetkin,<sup>333</sup> which is not a surprise. But Marija Jurić Zagorka, the first Croatian female journalist and writer – whose work was usually labeled as cheap pulp fiction by the communists and who was denied the opportunity to join the partisans – was presented in the pages of this magazine in 1951.<sup>334</sup> For instance, Florence Nightingale and George Sand also soon found their place on the pages of *Žena u borbi*.<sup>335</sup>

Furthermore, contemporary Yugoslav scientists and artists, though not fully portrayed, were encouraged with awards, as were women workers and peasants. As the figure 3 below shows, although women were portrayed as workers laboring toward a common goal, the patrons who

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<sup>331</sup> -, “Pred plenum centralnog vijeća Jedinostvenih sindikata Jugoslavije: Problem žena radnica” (“Before the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Unions of Yugoslavia: The Problem of Women Workers”), *Žena u borbi* 4 (April 1952): 4.

<sup>332</sup> V.L., “Roza Luksenburg” (“Rosa Luxembourg”), *Žena u borbi* 11 (November 1951): 10.

<sup>333</sup> Vera Luketić, “Veliki borac za ženska prava” (“Great Fighter for Women’s Rights”), *Žena u borbi* 3 (March 1952): 24-25.

<sup>334</sup> -, “Marija Jurić-Zagorka: Prva žena novinar u Austro – Ugarskoj Monarhiji” (“Marija Jurić-Zagorka: The First Woman Journalist in the Austro – Hungarian Monarchy”), *Žena u borbi* 9 (September 1951): 14-15 and *Žena u borbi* 10 (October 1951): 19.

<sup>335</sup> Ruth Trouton, “Žena-pionir u polju narodnog zdravlja” (“A Woman-Pioneer in the Field of People’s Health”), *Žena u borbi* 4 (April 1952): 19; L., “Književnica i borac za ravnopravnost žena: George Sand” (“An Author and a Fighter for Women’s Equality: George Sand”), *Žena u borbi* 9 (September 1952): 11.

avouched for them were usually male. In the attached example, quotes of Tito – as was customary – as well as Rodoljub Čolaković who was, among other things, the first postwar head of Bosnian government, guaranteed with appropriately uplifting statements that the women depicted, regardless of the field in which they worked, all contributed to the development and well-being of the young state.

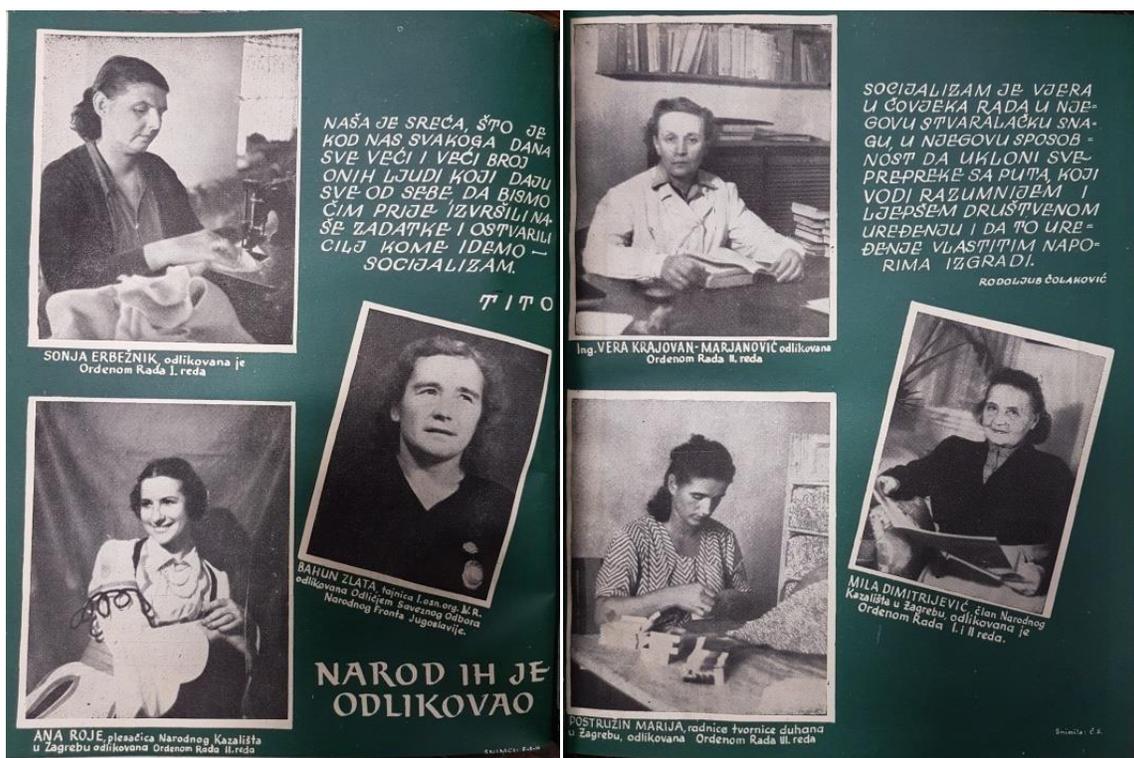


Figure 3: “The People Decorated Them,” *Žena u borbi* 2-3 (February-March 1950): 2-3.

Tito’s quote on the left reads “We are lucky that each and every day we have an increasing number of people who give their best to accomplish our tasks as soon as possible and realize the goal we are going toward – socialism.”

Photographs on the left page: Sonja Erbežnik (factory worker), Ana Roje (ballerina), Zlata Bahun (secretary of the city council – it is not written of which city).

Rodoljub Čolaković’s quote on the right reads: “Socialism is faith in the working (hu)man, in his creative power, in his ability to remove all obstacles from the path leading to a more sensible and beautiful social system and (in his ability) to build that system with his own efforts.”

Photographs on the right page: Vera Krajovan Marjanović (engineer), Mila Dimitrijević (actor), Marija Postružin (factory worker).

Despite the insistence on the multitude of opportunities offered to each new woman in socialist Yugoslavia, their tradition-bound role proved resilient. Among the innovations introduced in the early 1950s was an increasing amount of advice on housework and motherhood; what had previously been one or two pages of such content expanded to five or six. The article instructing a wife and mother what *she has to do* concerning cooking and cleaning when she becomes ill is certainly the best example of the resilience of the old in the New Woman's life.<sup>336</sup> However, it is also an example of the new trends in women's organization. In the 1950s, in the context of the introduction of self-management and decentralization in Yugoslavia, this organization underwent a significant transformation. In her master's thesis, Jelena Tešija notes that after the dissolution of the AFŽ in 1953 and the establishment of the Union of Women's Societies (*Savez ženskih društava*, SŽD), the women in the organization were still feminists fighting for emancipation. They tried to find satisfactory solutions to the problems faced by women in the country – this included the struggle against the so-called women's return to the kitchen – and discussed at length the organization's position in the new circumstances. And they “strived to enhance women's position in society in a way they found the most suitable for the context they lived in”<sup>337</sup> by addressing the double burden through alleviation of many domestic duties. This became one of the organization's strategies, and their magazines distinctly reflected it.

Whatever other content there was in *Žena u borbi*, the editors and journalists tried to adapt it to the goals of the women's organization and to the ideal of womanhood that the magazine promoted. Even articles on fashion were conceptualized as intertwined with learning (sewing) and a woman's role as a *sui generis* manager of her family (including managing their apparel). They provided

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<sup>336</sup> -, “Što da se radi kad domaćica oboli” (“What Is to Be Done When the Homemaker Falls Ill”), *Žena u borbi* 3 (March 1956): 24.

<sup>337</sup> Tešija, “The End of the AFŽ,” 69.

information on how to adjust children's last year clothing to current fashion trends or what to sew for children of different ages. Only one contribution, which was usually on the back cover, featured novelties for readers themselves. Although it appears that an effort was made to include fashion in the content of the magazine, everything was aimed at educating and informing the readership.

Under these circumstances, the topic of war no longer appeared in all sorts of articles; gradually it retreated into articles specifically intended for commemoration or into literary features. The first round anniversaries – tenth anniversary of the uprising(s) in 1951, tenth anniversary of the First conference of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia in 1952, tenth anniversary of the First conference of the AFŽ of Croatia in 1953 – also provided an opportunity to consolidate the war narrative. In time for all of them, in 1950, the Central Board of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia decided to establish the Commission for the Collection and Processing of Historical Material charged with collecting documents on the history of the progressive movement of women in Yugoslavia since the turn of the century.<sup>338</sup>

This initiative was not set in motion only in the AFŽ or because of the upcoming anniversaries. In fact, the resolutions of the famous Fifth Conference of the KPJ contain the decision to organize the research of the history of the Party, the workers' movement, and the NOB, as well as the related matter of the development of socialism in Yugoslavia."<sup>339</sup> Thanks to this initiative, the members of the AFŽ took notice of the lack of historical publications focusing on women. So, they set the commission an additional task: to publish some of the collected materials in the popular press in order to "introduce its people to the women's work" and "revive many events and shining examples of the struggle of our woman."<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Dopis Glavnom odboru AFŽ Hrvatske, March 3, 1950, box 76, HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 1).

<sup>339</sup> -, "Rezolucije V. kongresa Komunističke partije Jugoslavije" ("Resolutions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia")(Belgrade: Borba, 1948).

<sup>340</sup> Dopis Glavnom odboru AFŽ Hrvatske, 3. "(...) upoznavanje svoga naroda radom žena." "(...) oživljuje mnoge događaje i svetle primere borbe naše žene."

Furthermore, the Central Board provided a detailed list of twenty-two groups – neat little boxes – into which all the collected documents were to be arranged. The group relating to the period of the People’s Liberation Struggle held the conspicuous name “Work and Fight of the AFŽ from 1941 to 1945” and contained ten subsections. Among them, four were intended for documents explaining the existence and work of the AFŽ from different perspectives. Thus, the *afežejke* and their work were to be treated in detail. Other types of women’s activities acknowledged in this document were women’s membership in the armed forces (in one subsection) and imprisonment (one subsection added in ballpoint pen on an otherwise typed document).<sup>341</sup> The project initiated in 1950, in the case of the Croatian AFŽ resulted in the publication of the two-volume collection of documents *Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi (Women of Croatia in the People’s Liberation Struggle)*, which was published in 1955. In addition, while this nationwide document collection project was initiated with the intention of commemorating the tenth anniversary of the AFŽ’s existence, the final result was the publication of six collections of documents and memories by participants, one for each republic, over a period of more than twenty years.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Plan sređivanja istoriskog materijala, March 3, 1950, box 76, HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 2).

Importantly, a separate group was allocated for the “Victims of Fascist Terror and Domestic Traitors” (pg. 3).

<sup>342</sup> The last collection, *Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the People’s Liberation Struggle (Žene Bosne i Hercegovine u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi)*, appeared in 1977.

Importantly, each republican branch, sometimes in collaboration with other branches of the women’s organization or with other state institutions, launched a number of smaller initiatives over the years and published similar publications. In other words, the women’s organizations archived the history of Yugoslav women making it available for future researchers.

At the suggestion of the list, a new way of writing about the war was also initiated in the articles published in *Žena u borbi* in 1951 and 1952. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the uprising(s) of the Yugoslav peoples, the first consequences of the implementation of this project became visible in the magazine. In addition to reprinting the first cover of the magazine – the drawing of a barefoot woman in a tattered dress holding a toddler and a rifle – and the appropriate editorial, the magazine featured three articles, eight pages in total, as well as a fitting short story by Josip Barković, a participant in the NOB and an acclaimed writer. Two of the articles – “Not a Grain of Wheat for the Occupier” and “About Conferences and Courses” – were devoted to the activities that the AFŽ organized during the war and about which *Žena u borbi* had already written

on multiple occasions. But “We Are Not Afraid of Death” brought new materials to the fore. The introduction to the article reads like a literary device, a climax (gradation) building up to the description of the ultimate sacrifice:

In the struggle, women knew no bounds. They gave everything, their homes, their children, their lives. Many died heroically in an armed struggle, knowing that they are falling for the freedom of their people.<sup>343</sup>

In the rest of the article, almost three pages (out of the eight mentioned) of documents from the army archives, as well as from the wartime issues of *Žena u borbi* and *Primorka* (*Woman*



Figure 4: *Žena u borbi*, July 1951, page 4. The *partizanke* on the photographs are Karmela Grubelić (top left) and Ruža Perić (bottom right).

<sup>343</sup> -, “Mi se ne bojimo smrti” (“We Are Not Afraid of Death”), *Žena u borbi* 7 (July 1951): 2. “U borbi žene nisu poznavale zapreka. Davale su sve od sebe, svoje domove, svoju djecu, braću, muževe, pa kad je trebalo, i svoje živote. Mnoge su herojski poginule u oružanoj borbi, svjesne da padaju za slobodu svog naroda.”

from Primorje) talk about female partisans; why they decided to enlist, how they fought, how they persevered, how they died. The text was accompanied by the first ever published photographs (in this magazine) of some of them – our very own “combat cuties” in the shabby chic of the Yugoslav partisan art school (figure 4).

A tiny detail from Barica Klemenčić’s story says it all about the nature of the stories presented in the documents. “For five months I hiked barefoot on Žumberak [mountain in NW Croatia – author’s comment],”<sup>344</sup> Klemenčić testifies to a fairly common aspect of partisan life throughout Yugoslavia. “It was spring,” she continues, “the snow was melting, but my feet felt no change; even today I do not really understand how I did it.”<sup>345</sup> This detail fits quite well the era in which it was published. In the early 1950s, nothing short of purest self-sacrifice for the partisan cause counted, as for men, even more so for women. Every detail of a published story was usually put in the service of formulating a heroic, even legendary, wartime past.

The second relevant article from this period, which devoted considerable attention to women partisans, appeared in 1952. In honor of the tenth anniversary of the First conference of the antifascist women of Croatia, which took place in June 1943, the AFŽ published the decision to collect the documents on women in the People’s Liberation Struggle in a book. On this occasion, the magazine published an article about women’s multifaceted involvement in the World War II in Yugoslavia. While retelling a conventional narrative about women in war, the author divided the article almost precisely into two halves. One part described events and people important to the history of the AFŽ. The other focused on the *partizanke*. Just like Milka Kufrin’s article, it was

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 3. “Pet mjeseci hodala sam po Žumberku bosonoga.”

<sup>345</sup> Ibid. “Bilo je proljeće, snijeg je, istina, kopnio, ali moje noge nisu osjećale bilo kakvu promjenu, ni danas mi nije jasno kako sam to zbilja podnijela.”

about the courage and heroic deeds of women partisans, nothing less and nothing more.<sup>346</sup> Thus, with several years of delay, the narrative about the courage of the *partizanke* was officially recognized as a part of the narrative that *Žena u borbi* should propagate.

In accordance with the mandate of the Commission for the Collection and Processing of Historical Material, the editorial board published the articles containing the material they collected for the book several times over the next years – first to remind the readership of the project and invite them to contribute with their own material, and later always in time for an anniversary.<sup>347</sup> All such articles were unsigned, and thus suggested that they reflected the opinion of the editorial board, i.e. the women’s organization as a whole. As it was the case with the book, the authors added very little, if any commentary to such contributions. As they sometimes put it, they expected the documents to “speak for themselves” and provide free access to the truth about women in the People’s Liberation Struggle.<sup>348</sup>

In 1953, a contribution was finally published on the subject that was at that time still largely excluded from the press and, accordingly, missing from the magazine – affection and affairs among the partisans. It is well-known that love and sex had been political issue for the communists since the early days of the Party in Yugoslavia. During the war, deep-rooted sexual anxieties based on the fear of women’s sexuality getting out of control were the catalyst for some of the anti-

<sup>346</sup> -, “Knjiga dokumenata o učešću žena Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi” (“The Book of Documents About the Participation of Women in the People’s Liberation Struggle”), *Žena u borbi* 8 (August 1952): 2-3.

<sup>347</sup> For the first case, see for instance: -, “Knjiga dokumenata o učešću žena Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi” (“The Book of Documents About the Participation of Women in the People’s Liberation Struggle”), *Žena u borbi* 9 (September 1952): 6 – 7; -, “II knjiga: “Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi” (“Second Volume: “Women of Croatia in the People’s Liberation Struggle”), *Žena u borbi* 7 (July 1955): 4.

On the occasion of Women’s Day 1953 (among other contributions appears): -, “U spomen ženi – vojniku” (“In Memory of the Female Soldier”), *Žena u borbi* 3 (March 1953): 6-8.

For the Labor Day of 1955: -, “Dragica Končar, veliki borac za radnička prava” (“Dragica Končar, Fighter for the Workers’ Rights”), *Žena u borbi* 5 (May 1955): 1 – 2.

For the proclamation of the *partizanka* Ljubica Gerovac as the People’s Hero: -, “Smrt drugarice Ljubice Gerovac” (“Death of the Comrade Ljubica Gerovac”), *Žena u borbi* 12 (December 1956): 2.

<sup>348</sup> Jambrešić Kirin, “Politika sjećanja,” 162. “(...) da dokumenti ‘govore za sebe.’”

communist propaganda, as well as for some of the rules that were instituted among the women and men in the partisan army.<sup>349</sup> The communist leadership set the rules for sexual behavior and (for the most part) strictly enforced them in order to achieve, as they used to say, a high moral standard – whatever that meant – while countering enemy propaganda.<sup>350</sup> The practice of avoiding this topic in public characterized the immediate postwar years. Against this background, the publication of a short chapter from Mitra Mitrović’s memoirs, and in five republican women’s magazines, is certainly a happening worthy of attention.<sup>351</sup>

In the chapter entitled “Unfinished” (“Nedovršeno”), Mitra Mitrović describes love, particularly woman’s love, in revolution and war in a lyrical language characteristic for her writing. Here I single out a slightly longer section from the introductory part of this chapter because, I hope, Mitrović’s poetic and sensitive approach will be remembered until the sixth chapter, which returns to the topic of love and sexuality (in the partisan army):

A strict, unwritten partisan law, a law of war, I suppose, but in a war where man and woman are fighting together for the first time – it demands the deprivation of everything, even love. And it, love –  
it was seen by the night partisan fire, in the fire of the eyes, and in her hand gently holding his overcoat on her shoulders,  
it was seen sneaking up like hunger,  
in the tear, seen and unseen, in the voice that cannot even tremble when she or he must leave the *četa*,  
how it fights the consciousness, the war, wins or is defeated,  
how it dies slowly in his eyes when she is gone,  
how it, harmless, gets interrupted by the condemnation of revolutionary times and collective life,

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<sup>349</sup> On anti-communist propaganda: Nemeč, Gloria. “Un altro essere, che non è un animale, vive nei boschi. Percezione del partigianato e memoria collettiva in una comunità contadina dell’ Istria interna” (“Another Being, Who Is Not an Animal, Lives in the Woods. Perception of the Partisans and the Collective Memory in a Peasant Community of Inner Istria”), in *Donne guerra politica: esperienze e memorie della Resistenza (Women War Politics: Experiences and Memories of the Resistance)*, eds. Dianella Gagliani, Elda Guerra, Laura Mariani, Fiorenza Tarozzi, 337-350 (Bologna: CLUEB, 2000); Škodrić, “Partizanke u viđenjima ideoloških protivnika,” 275-292.

<sup>350</sup> Jelena Batinić endeavored to explain what that meant for women and men in the partisan army in “The Personal as a Site of Party Intervention: Privacy and Sexuality” in *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, 168-212.

<sup>351</sup> Alongside Croatian, also Slovene, Serbian, Montenegrin and Macedonian journals featured the same part of the memoir in the last months of 1953. Bosnian *Nova žena* was not published for three years in between May 1952 and May 1955, so they did not have the chance to publish this text.

how it steals moments to blossom, or waits, or flashes, disappears, perishes, unseen and unrecognized.<sup>352</sup>

Although she was married, very much in love, and separated from her husband most of the war, Mitrović did not write about love as an affair between two specific people. Instead, she transferred the authorship of the story to an unknown *partizanka*, allowing it to become a story of all the women soldiers out there who waited and worried, but at the same time were confronted with the situation in which being “a warrior yourself, first you may not, then you do not want to, and finally you cannot anymore”<sup>353</sup> wait or worry. Here Mitrović completely disregarded the familiar narrative consisting of the (predominantly) male fantasies inhabited by the shrews who forgot how to wash and mend clothes during the war. Instead, she expressed concern that the partisan military ethos, which forbade and even punished women (and sometimes men) if they cared for a comrade and expressed it, may make female partisans less women than they were before the war began.

Mitrović’s literary work in a unique way addressed the issue that was only whispered about at the time and that officials avoided, most likely because no one knew how to handle such a sensitive topic. Although concern and care for her man could have been nicely fitted into the preferred narrative that framed women in a rather traditional manner – as caring wives – such narratives remained the exception in this and other women’s magazines of the period. This was not necessarily an oversight on the part of the magazine’s editorial board; Mitrović’s sensibility was a rarity in

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<sup>352</sup> Mitra Mitrović, “Nedovršeno” (“Unfinished”), *Žena u borbi* 12 (December 1953): 5. Or: Mitra Mitrović, *Ratno putovanje*, 168 – 169. “Strogi, nepisani partizanski zakon, ratni valjda, ali u ratu u kome prvi put tako, jedno uz drugo, ratuju čovek i žena, – traži lišavanje svega, i ljubavi. A ona, ljubav –

videla se kraj noćne partizanske vatre, u vatri očiju i njenoj ruci kojom meko pridržava njegov šinjel na svojim ramenima,

videla se kako se prikrada kao glad,

u suzi viđenoj i neviđenoj, u glasu koji ne sme ni da zadrhti kad ona ili on moraju otići iz čete,

kako se bori sa svešču, sa ratom, pobeđi ili biva pobeđena,

kako umire polako u njegovim očima kad nje više nema,

kako je, bezazlenu, prekida osuda revolucionarnog vremena i kolektivnog života,

kako krade trenutke da procveta, ili čeka, ili blesne, nestane, pogine i neviđena ili nesaznana.”

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

Yugoslav memoir landscape in general, especially when it came to the portrayal of partisan love. The tendency to trivialize and sensationalize it, as well as the incessant focus on the question of how much sex there really was among the partisans, became a common way of treating this topic in the coming years, especially in the magazine *Start* discussed in the sixth chapter.

Evidently, in the early 1950s, the *afežejke* who worked for *Žena u borbi* made an effort to include a wider range of wartime interpretations in their reconstruction of the past. Nevertheless, throughout the decade, articles about women who were the members of the partisan army, the *partizanke*, were much rarer compared to the amount of material about women who, led by the women's organization, supported the war effort of that same army. Yet, the aforementioned articles provide examples of the development of more inclusive representational practices.<sup>354</sup> The following section shows, however, that in the long run the women who edited this magazine allowed very limited concessions toward an inclusive representation of the women's wartime experiences.

### 3.4 The Canon

In 1956, the Commission for Women,<sup>355</sup> monitoring the many changes in the media after the introduction of self-management, made an overview and analysis of the sections for women in

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<sup>354</sup> Notably, several articles (I counted three in the period from 1951 until 1961) focused on women's, and one on men's, experience of war camps.

<sup>355</sup> The Commission for Women was one of many departments within the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (*Socijalistički savjet radnog naroda*, SSRN). According to the Program of the Communist Party adopted at the Seventh Congress (1958), this political body was "general people's socialist parliament" in the developing system of Yugoslav socialist democracy. Since the SSRN dealt with a broad array of current issues in all areas of social(ist) life, different auxiliary commissions, sections, councils, and working groups were established to cover different segments of life. One of them was the mentioned commission which had different names in different periods, and which could cooperate with the women's organization (Antifascist Front of Women and its successors) but was not the same thing – until 1975.

Namely, although officially, according to the statutes of the SSRN, the women's organization was considered as a part of the SSRN, the structure and manner of its work left the impression of an independent organization. The definitive solution to the relationship between the AFŽ and the SSRN was achieved in 1975, when the women's organization was fully integrated into the SSRN as its working body. The activity of the organization did not change.

daily and weekly newspapers, women's magazines and radio programs for women. With regard to magazines, they acknowledged the existence of only one women's magazine in Croatia, *Žena u borbi*. However, they did not have many positive comments on its content, except that it maintained a commendable level of ideological and political contributions. Apart from that, the articles were evaluated as too long and poorly equipped (in terms of pagination, visuals, paper quality) and the manner of presentation as dry and "overly educational." All in all, the document concluded that the magazine "does not correspond to a contemporary, cultured edition for women" and advised against the practice of the magazine being edited by only one person who also had another job.<sup>356</sup> At the same time, *Svijet (World)*, a fashion magazine published in Zagreb from 1953, successfully competed with both AFŽ's editions, *Žena u borbi* and *Naša moda*. No less important, in the beginning of 1956 another magazine, Belgrade-based *Praktična žena (Practical Woman)*, appeared. It swiftly became the most widely read magazine for women in Yugoslavia.<sup>357</sup>

The editorial staff of *Žena u borbi* was forced to change. The new/old editor-in-chief, Marija Šoljan, was appointed at the end of 1957, and two colleagues from the women's organization, Marija Erbežnik and Čuča Smokvina-Boranić, joined her on the editorial board. To signal acceptance of the new times and new mores, the board changed the name of the magazine, it became simply *Žena (Woman)*. Šoljan and her colleagues, however, did not join the general trend evident in *Svijet* or *Praktična žena*, simply increasing the amount of material, usually copied from foreign magazines, relating to fashion, beauty, hair, trendy furniture and the like. Nevertheless, they saved some space for the attractive but non-educational topics. For instance, each issue now

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<sup>356</sup> Štampa (1956.), no date, box 146, folder Sjednice Komisije (1954. – 1962.), HR-HDA-1228-SSRNH (1944.-1990.), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (pp. 9-11, quote on 10). "(...) ne odgovara jednoj savremenoj, kulturnoj ediciji za žene."

<sup>357</sup> *Praktična žena*, as its name suggests, placed significant emphasis on practical advice that first and foremost sought to ease the demanding roles of a wife, mother, homemaker and worker that many women worked hard to reconcile on a daily basis.

featured several contributions dealing with fashion trends for adult women, and hardly any gave advice on how to sew a piece of clothing. A section devoted solely to hair was created, and another dealt with beauty and health.

The long journey of reflecting about fashion and beauty and adapting it to the ideal of the New Woman for the editors of *Žena u borbi*, long-term activists, began in the 1930s. In her analysis of the history of the sister magazine *Žena danas* in the interwar period, Stanislava Barać notes that it was the first magazine on the territory of Serbia that “happily combined” consistent feminist and communist activism with content stereotypically characterized as bourgeois in an attempt to reach the widest possible audience.<sup>358</sup> It is important to note that, considered more broadly, this topic may not have been all that controversial at the time. As Lynne Attwood explains, Soviet magazines for women, especially the famous *Rabotnitsa (Working Woman)*, in the 1930s accepted that women had a “natural” inclination towards traditionally feminine appearance and promoted it as an attribute of the New Soviet Woman. Following the end of the war, the author adds, fashion returned as an important part of the content of postwar women’s magazines. As an anonymous writer noted in *Rabotnitsa* in 1950, “[w]e can and must ensure that the legitimate desire of Soviet women to have beautiful clothes will be fully satisfied.”<sup>359</sup>

By and large, however, Šoljan focused on increasing the share of social issues, primarily the ones addressing the Woman Question. She made them more diverse and engaging by, for example, publishing interviews with women from different walks of life. The introduction of interactive

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<sup>358</sup> Barać, “Žanr ženskog portreta,” 192.

It was not the case for the whole Kingdom of Yugoslavia, though. Marija Jurić Zagorka published a successful women’s magazine *Ženski list (Women’s Magazine)* from 1925 until 1938. As the author of the majority of the articles, she tried to combine widely popular topics with her interests that promoted women’s right to paid employment. More about *Ženski list* can be found in Marina Vujnović’s doctoral dissertation “Forging the *Bubikopf* Nation: A Feminist Political – Economic Analysis of *Ženski list*.”

<sup>359</sup> Lynne Attwood, *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women’s Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922 – 1953* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 130-135, 163-165, quote on 164.

advisory sections entitled “Intimate Conversations” (“*Intimni razgovori*”), in which a doctor answered women’s inquiries of intimate nature, and “The Legal Advisor” (“*Pravni savjetnik*”), in which a lawyer informed women mostly on their marriage and divorce rights, proved that the *afežejke* also had an open ear for their readers’ problems.<sup>360</sup> All in all, while the editor-in-chief had to adjust some of the content to the existing demand for entertainment, the magazine still largely followed the goals outlined by the women’s organization and the socialist project to which they subscribed, and remained committed in the sense of affirming social values specifically related to the Woman Question. Finally, Šoljan included in the reconceptualization also a greater emphasis on politics as well as commemoration of the NOB. Regardless of whether an anniversary was celebrated or not, reminders of the formative period of socialist Yugoslavia were published regularly.

The intensification of publishing content related to the NOB corresponds to the spirit of the times, too. According to Snježana Koren, the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s – that is, the time when the youth who had not experienced the war came of age – were the glory days of celebrations related to the People’s Liberation Struggle. The fervor of this period, she adds, was quite comparable to that of the immediate postwar period. Koren cites the following example of holidays whose celebration was recommended by the Party’s History Commission in 1960 and 1961 indicating their profusion: (1) fifteenth anniversary of the liberation, (2) twentieth anniversary of the Fifth State Conference of the KPJ, (3) thirty-fifth anniversary of the Moša Pijade’s arrest, (5) fiftieth anniversary of the women’s movement, and (6) twentieth anniversary of the uprising(s).

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<sup>360</sup> In comparison, in the same year (1958) the magazine *Svijet* introduced the rubric “You Asked Us” (“*Pitali ste nas*”) which was similar in nature to the rubric “Intimate Conversations.” What is more, experts working with *Žena*, dr. Marijan Košiček who wrote for the “Intimate Conversations,” and Anka Dračar who wrote for the “Legal Advisor” started co-operating with the *Svijet* after the *Žena* changed its concept in the beginning of 1967. Dr. Košiček also cooperated with *Start* during the 1970s.

As if that was not enough, the Commission for Ideological and Political Work listed for the same period several anniversaries related to the important events (lamentably, mostly deaths) in the lives of prominent communist officials. Finally, Day of the Republic, May Day, Day of Youth, Day of the Fighter, and, for instance, International Women's Day were supposed to be celebrated as usual.<sup>361</sup>

*Žena u borbi*, it seems, did its best to publish one or two articles on most events, year after year. Among them, the twentieth anniversary of the uprising(s) certainly received the most attention: in 1961 each issue of the magazine contained at least one, but usually more contributions on the topic. Eighteen different contributions grouped under the title "On the Twentieth Anniversary of the Revolution" were distributed in eight of eleven issues published that year. In addition, another eighteen contributions were included in the content independent of this temporary section.

The editors opened the year with the contributions of two well-known and reliable *afežejke*, Jela Bičanić and Marija Erbežnik Fuks. They summarized the familiar interpretation of war past focusing on the women's work on the home front. In her first article, Bičanić put an emphasis on the difference between "us comrades," that is, the leading women activists, and "girls and women [who] stood together with their families and friends and participated in the expulsion and destruction of the fascists."<sup>362</sup> And the second one detailed the contribution of women in the home front.<sup>363</sup> In the next two editions, Erbežnik Fuks provided editorials emphasizing the link between the trials of wartime and the achievements, even blessings, of the present. The March issue, predictably, focused on the International Women's Day, inviting readers to remember the wartime

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<sup>361</sup> Koren, *Politika povijesti u Jugoslaviji*, 469-470.

<sup>362</sup> Jela Bičanić, "Doživjele smo duboke promjene u svom životu" ("We Have Experienced Profound Changes in Our Lives"), *Žena* 1 (January 1961): 5. "... mi drugarice ... omladinke i žene ustale su zajedno sa svojim bližnjima da učestvuju u istjerivanju i uništavanju fašista."

<sup>363</sup> Jela Bičanić, "Tako jedinstvenog bloka fronta i pozadine nikad nije bilo u historiji naših naroda" ("There Has Never Been So United Block of the Battlefield and the Home Front in the History of Our Peoples"), *Žena* 2 (February 1961): 5-7.

celebrations. In the next issue, in anticipation of the women's organization's conference, the author focuses on the occurrences of the one held in December 1942.<sup>364</sup>

The four articles were complemented, as might be expected, by collages of wartime documents. The section featuring materials published in the collection *Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi* was entitled "We Revive the Documents." The magazine's editors continued publishing reprints of short written documents accompanied with sparse explanations. Why did the women of Split demonstrate in 1942? Why is Marija from Vrginmost grateful to the Party?<sup>365</sup> How did Jela Jančić Starc describe the evacuation of the Drežnica partisan hospital in 1942? How did the AFŽ in Lika develop?<sup>366</sup> Selected documents answered these and similar questions, and the majority tended to describe women and their wartime activities in a factual way. Only the selection of illustrations showing the ugly side of war veered of the course of moderation. The documents showing violence against civilians were graphic and included photographs of dead children and a (quite famous) portrait of the Istrian woman Roza (or Ruža) Petrović whose eyes had been gouged out by Italian soldiers.<sup>367</sup> While the 1961 commemorative contributions did not include documents featuring a barefoot yet buoyant partisan like Barica Klemenčić, magazine's editors returned to the brutal depiction of death as in the early postwar years.

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<sup>364</sup> Marija Erbežnik Fuks, "Solidarnost i tradicije praznične" ("Solidarity and the Holiday Traditions"), *Žena* 3 (March 1961): 2; idem, "Pozdrav konferenciji žena" ("Salute to the Women's Conference"), *Žena* 4 (April 1961): 2.

<sup>365</sup> -, "Oživljavamo dokumente" ("We Revive the Documents"), *Žena* 1 (January 1961): 7.

<sup>366</sup> -, "Oživljavamo dokumente" ("We Revive the Documents"), *Žena* 2 (February 1961): 7.

<sup>367</sup> -, "Teror" ("Terror"), *Žena* 4 (April 1961): 7-9.



Figure 5: Covers of the magazine in November 1951 (Kata Pejnović's bust), July 1961 (*Kozarčanka*), and January 1963 (Nada Dimić).

A photograph reminiscent of the mentioned buoyant partisan is *Kozarčanka* (figure 10, second photo). The much publicized and famous photograph of a smiling *partizanka* that “communicates confidence and optimism, even joy and enthusiasm”<sup>368</sup> was used as the cover for the July edition. Despite the *Kozarčanka*'s prominence, the twentieth anniversary of the uprising was the only occasion on which the *afežejke* decided to use it as a cover, as well as one of only two appearances of the photograph in this magazine during the period under study. This is a conjecture, but it is worth noting that either sorrowful or dramatic stories about individual women, accompanied with photographs of restrained if not stern faces and war casualties were the norm by 1961. Thus, although Natascha Vittorelli is correct in noting that the young female volunteer in the photograph lent legitimacy to the partisan struggle, it is possible that *Kozarčanka* did not convey the emotions that the *afežejke* considered worthy of the sacrifices women made during the war. That is, she was

<sup>368</sup> Natascha Vittorelli, “With or Without Gun. Staging Female Partisans in Socialist Yugoslavia,” in *Partisans in Yugoslavia*, 126.

probably a bit too overjoyed to be able to express the scale and gravity of the women's wartime efforts and the relevance of the ensuing progress.

The photograph of one of the founders of the first partisan detachment in Croatia and undercover activist Nada Dimić, for example, fits the narrative of sacrifice and heroism infinitely better. Her tragic war story, which ended in the Ustasha concentration camp *Stara Gradiška*, was a well-known part of the partisan narrative, and the *afežejke* contributed to it. Her face appeared twice on the cover of this magazine (figure 10, third photograph) – surely not enough to make a case in comparison to *Kozarčanka* – but the story about her activism and death appeared a dozen more times over the years, making her the most frequently represented female participant of the NOB who was not an *afežejka*. And the most famous member of the AFŽ was Kata Pejnović (figure 10, first photograph), self-taught peasant from Lika, prewar communist activist, the first president of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia elected at the 1942 conference in Bosanski Petrovac, and a quintessential partisan mother. It is safe to assume that it was common knowledge that Nada Dimić did not even reveal her name to the Ustasha who tortured her, and that she died bearing the nickname Yellow Girl (*Žuta*). And that Kata Pejnović lost three sons who were murdered together with her husband in 1941. And that she then “clenched her heart and her fist” in order to avenge their deaths.<sup>369</sup> Dimić's and Pejnović's were the kind of dedication and sacrifice this magazine published about repeatedly as long as it existed.

Accounts of bravery and sacrifice, as well as accounts of fear and grief, and personal growth in spite of both, characterize – upon excluding the smiling *Kozarčanka* – the majority of contributions published on the occasion of the 1961 anniversary. Of course, they fit perfectly with the narrative the magazine sought to promote. The featured women are strong, brave and unrelenting. The largest

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<sup>369</sup> Nataša Popovicki, “Žena u tamnoj marami” (“Woman in a Dark Scarf”), *Žena u borbi* 1 (January 1958): 22-23.

group of materials published on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the uprising(s) in 1961, consisting of sixteen contributions, follows the relatively narrow options offered by the *afežejke*'s partisan narrative. These contributions combine fragments from various diaries, memoirs, and literary works, including one radio drama.

By the time of this anniversary, there were already numerous written works, poetry and prose, fiction and nonfiction, short stories and novels, wartime diaries and memoirs about the NOB, available to the Yugoslav public. In 1960, for instance, the Croatian SUBNOR's Commission for the Preservation of Revolutionary Traditions compiled a series of lengthy bibliographies of all kinds of works about the NOB. Among others, it listed one hundred and forty-nine novellas and novels – excluding action novels, for which there was a separate list – written by ninety-two authors, forty-eight collections of poetry and eighty-six books for children, all published in Croatia following the end of the war.<sup>370</sup> Yet, most of the sixteen contributions published in the magazine are authored by people closely associated with the editorial board. The *afežejke* active in the Croatian branch – in this instance Jela Jančić Starc, Stojanka Aralica, Nada Sremec and Vanja Žanko – have recounted fragments of their war experiences in six contributions. Their recollections – some identical – have already been published in this magazine, and, as noted before, will be again. For instance, in 1942 Jela Jančić Starc wrote about the evacuation of Drežnica partisan hospital for *Žena u borbi*. During the anniversaries of 1961 that article was republished, and in 1965 the events of evacuation were retold instead of being simply reprinted.<sup>371</sup> Analogously,

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<sup>370</sup> Bibliografija NOB-e Hrvatske, December 10, 1960, box 216, folder Bibliografija NOB-e Hrvatske (Knjige, brošure i muzikalije), HR-HDA-1241-SUBNORH (1947 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (pg. 6-22).

<sup>371</sup> Zdenka Šnajder, “Bilo je teško, bilo je divno spasiti čovjeka” (“It Was Hard, It Was Wonderful to Save a Human”), *Žena* 11 (November 1965): 18-20.

Stojanka Aralica gave pretty much the same account of the First Conference of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia in 1951 and in 1982.<sup>372</sup>

Among the thirty-six contributions about the NOB published during 1961, only two interviews offer a departure from the norm as well as insight into the recollections of several *partizanke*. The magazine's journalists spoke with several women veterans about their involvement in the People's Liberation Struggle. Importantly, the women interviewed were not well-known members of the organization and had not written for this (or any other) magazine in the past. Their stories are differently oriented and colored and do not, for instance, allow for the good-humored interpretation of the war exemplified in Barica Klemenčić's memory and the *Kozarčanka* photograph, and do not follow Mitra Mitrović's emphasis on the wartime emotional journey and its costs.

In July, one journalist spoke with four women whose names and biographies, as the introduction states, can be found in the ever-present book *Žene Hrvatske u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi*. In, what is a unique "revival of documents" for this magazine, Ljuba Pejnović, Katica Kušec, Ruža Slezak Dejanović and Paula Humek supplement their own biographies included in this essentially important collection of documents with anecdotes from the war. Close encounters with Ustasha authorities, attacks and retreats, marches and wounds were as real and as important to them as the day-to-day care for their families. The extent to which the war engulfed women's lives and sometimes took precedence is evident in the accounts of the two interviewees who left their infants at home to join the partisan army, and one woman who gave birth to a baby boy only to lose him the next year while she continued her wartime engagement.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Stojanka Aralica, Marija Novak i Anica Rakar Magašić, "Sjećanje na 1. konferenciju žena u Bosanskom Petrovcu" ("Memory of the First Women's Conference in Bosanski Petrovac"), *Žena u borbi* 12 (December 1952): 4; Stojanka Aralica, "Ravnopravno u prvim redovima" ("On Equal Footing at the Forefront") *Žena* 5-6 (October-December 1982): 34.

<sup>373</sup> Zdenka Šnajder, "Na tragu staza i odjeka revolucije" ("On the Track of Paths and Echoes of the Revolution"), *Žena* 7 (July 1961): 7-12.

In the next issue, the journalist reported on the meeting with women who fought in the First Women's Partisan Unit and her conversation with Narandža Končar, the unit's political commissar. On this occasion, Končar recounted that she was wounded several times during the war, and that she survived both types of typhus that plagued the partisan army. As a result, the people closest to her (*najrođeniji*) did not recognize her when she returned home. In fact, she adds, it was she whom they asked about the fate of Narandža Končar.<sup>374</sup>

The information provided by former *partizanke* in the two interviews – about the partisan mothers who left their children in the care of others so that they could more actively support the partisan army, and about the many more ways in which the war harmed women – remained lonely examples of such women's war stories in this magazine. Instead, for subsequent anniversaries, when the *afežejke* in charge of *Žena u borbi* published interviews, they chose to publish conversations on foolproof topics with safe persons, that is, with the other *afežejke*. For instance, in 1963, on the twentieth anniversary of the first conference of the Croatian branch of the AFŽ an interview with Maca Gržetić, prewar communist activist and the first president of the Antifascist Front of Women of Croatia, was published.<sup>375</sup> And in 1966, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the uprising(s) was marked with an interview with Ružica Turković, also a prewar communist activist, an *afežejka* from the early days of the war, and the editor of the wartime magazine *Woman of Primorje (Primorka)*.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Marija Erbežnik Fuks, "Prozivka legendarne djevojačke čete" ("Roll Call of the Legendary Girl Unit"), *Žena* 8-9 (August-September 1961): 12-16.

<sup>375</sup> Marija Erbežnik Fuks, "Naš intervju s Macom Gržetić" ("Our Interview with Maca Gržetić"), *Žena* 6 (June 1963): 7-8.

<sup>376</sup> Ante Kesić, "Sudionik vremena potvrđenog u revoluciji" ("Participant of Time Confirmed in the Revolution"), *Žena* 7-8 (July-August 1966): 4-6.

### 3.5 Conclusions

*Žena u borbi*, imbued with the Leninist notion of the printed press, was intended as an instrument for easier access and education of the supposedly backward masses of women in socialist Croatia. The magazine was to be read by all adult women in the republic, and the activists of the women's organization sought to demonstrate to their readers what the socialist system offered to its women and how would it assist them to develop into the New Women of Yugoslavia. Despite the difficulties caused mainly by the magazine's decline in popularity, the *afežejke* who worked for *Žena u borbi* did not abandon the basic principles of informing their readership, which they had adopted in the 1930s when they were just beginning their activist path, for as long as the magazine existed. Even after this magazine was transformed into a scientific journal in 1967, the editorial board continued to remind readers of the most important dates in the women's and war history of socialist Yugoslavia (with the articles similar to those described in this chapter).

Throughout the researched period, the overall content of the magazine reflected the editorial board's and the AFŽ's view of the Woman Question. This included the representation of the People's Liberation Struggle as well. In short, it reflected the maxim that Yugoslav women won their rights by participating in the partisan war. I would even go so far and to suggest that the *afežejke* had to insist on it because it was a watershed moment that validated their earlier efforts, enabled emancipation as they envisioned it, and required their continued political activity. Because of this, *Žena u borbi* offered the most developed and refined account of women's participation in the People's Liberation Struggle available to women in the republic. The same role was played by the periodicals published by the other republican branches in the countries where they were published. Included in these, of course, was the most complete and comprehensive elaboration of the women's emancipation and its representative, the Yugoslav New Woman.

Year after year, the *afežejke* worked assiduously to present the figure of the woman fighter (*žena borac*) to the readers of their magazine, as well as in a number of other projects aimed at recording the history of women in Yugoslavia. They believed that Yugoslav women could have everything, but within certain limits. Therefore, the represented *žena borac* was aware of the significance of education for successful emancipation and worked diligently on the first in order to achieve the second. At the same time, she supported the men who were waging the war. Countless times the wartime and postwar editions of *Žena u borbi* emphasized how both the people and women were fighting against multiple enemies (as if women were not an integral part of the people). At least as often, the magazine enumerated the many ways in which women did not cooperate with, contribute to, or participate in the partisan army and its communist leadership, but helped them. In consequence, although the aim of the *afežejke* was to give grounds for and facilitate the emancipation of women, with this kind of discourse they have also provided the limits of the emancipatory project.

The *afežejke*'s interpretation of women at war obviously veered away from the depictions of women soldiers. Only here and there did they publish contributions that briefly broke the mold in which women in wartime were portrayed as helpers engaged in the socialized activities of the private sphere. Literary works – such as the excerpt from Mitra Mitrović's memoir – as well as a few articles – such as the contribution about Barica Klemenčić and interview the with Narandža Končar – refreshed *Žena u borbi*'s narrative about women in the NOB.

The *afežejke* had good reasons for framing women and women's achievements in the war in this way. According to them, *žena borac* is the one who takes the *partizanka* by the hand when needed and shows her how to preserve wartime equality in the routine of everyday life, even if it actually

did exist “in the *četa*,” as some of the *partizanke* felt.<sup>377</sup> Namely, *žena borac* was primarily a hard worker – a capable wife and mother, a strong worker, and a vocal participant in political organizations – who strives for and achieves women’s emancipation and equality, as during the war, so in peace. And *partizanka* is, both metaphorically and literally, the daughter who took part in an incredible effort, but who must also learn to be a capable wife and mother, a strong worker, and a vocal participant in political organizations, preferably the women’s organization.

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<sup>377</sup> Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 99.

## Chapter 4 – *Svijet*: Discovering the Murky Side of War

At the fourth plenary session of the Main Board of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) of Croatia, held in Zagreb in October 1948, Vida Tomšič, the president of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia, considered how Yugoslav women would benefit from the Tito-Stalin Split. She touched on even the topic of fashion:

Thus, socialism will mean happiness and not the one that is proclaimed today as a model socialism in the U.S.S.R., grey bureaucratic socialism (...). In the Russian newspapers we see how all the women there are badly dressed, and this [is presented] as a necessity of socialism, as everything that negates what we are looking for – beauty, joy and diversity. Women should be taught how to dress nicely and how to clean up the apartment, and how to do it quickly.<sup>378</sup>

The cited statement by one of the most prominent communist women in Yugoslavia symbolically cut all possible ties with the former role model and ally, even in the field they typically considered mundane. Djurdja Bartlett summarizes the impact that the conflict with the Cominform had on Yugoslav fashion, noting that “[u]rbanized and elegant Western dresses played an ideological role in the domestic fashion press, where they were presented in opposition to the deprivations of the Soviet type of socialism.”<sup>379</sup> Under the new circumstances, then, Tomšič’s countrywomen had to continue to do their housework in an efficient manner. That enabled them to continue contributing to the construction of socialist society in accordance with the Yugoslav New Woman’s nature. But! Unlike women in the Soviet Union, Yugoslav women, following the Tito-Stalin Split, were able to do all that while being pretty.

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<sup>378</sup> As cited in: Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 134. “Znači, socijalizam koji će značiti sreću, a ne koji će biti onakav kakvim ga danas proglašuju za uzor socijalizma u SSSR, sivi birokratski socijalizam (...). Mi vidimo po ruskim novinama kako su tamo sve žene ružno odjevene, i to kao neka potreba socijalizma, sve što negira ono što mi tražimo – ljepotu, veselje i raznolikost. Treba učiti žene da se znaju lijepo odijevati i pospremiti svoj stan i da to znaju brzo uraditi.”

<sup>379</sup> Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 134.

At the same time, the first steps were taken to develop the new magazine, which would enable Yugoslav women to develop their femininity with the help of modern fashion and cosmetics. As mentioned earlier, the leaders of the Croatian branch of the AFŽ, the *afežejke*, who edited and published reputable *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*), had been publishing the fashion magazine *Naša moda* (*Our Fashion*) since 1946. However, from 1953, the public's affection gradually leaned in favor of *Svijet* (*World*), which soon became the most prestigious fashion magazine on the territory of Yugoslavia.

During the first ten years of *Svijet*'s existence, sixteen out of twenty-four pages were as a rule devoted to oftentimes luxurious fashions clipped from Western fashion magazines. Its first editor-in-chief, Smilja Dončević, wrote: "We asked acquaintances who traveled abroad, as well as our colleagues, to bring us as many women's fashion magazines as possible. This helped us inform the readers of *Svijet* about fashion, news for women, and events from other countries."<sup>380</sup> Magda Weltrusky, the fashion editor who joined the editorial team in 1959, was even more precise: "We mainly used French *Vogue* and *L'Officiel*, but also other journals, like one Swedish magazine and the French magazine *Modes & travaux*."<sup>381</sup> Copying content from the European press was a widespread practice, both during the existence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in socialist Yugoslavia, and references to it can be found in various magazines.<sup>382</sup> Thus, while women who read *Svijet* encountered content from, for example, *Vogue*, readers of the women's page of Serbian

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<sup>380</sup> Dončević, "Kolovoz u Topuskom," in *Zbornik sjećanja*, 84.

<sup>381</sup> Bartlett, *FashionEast*, 134.

<sup>382</sup> Part of that practice was publishing content without copyrights. For example, Smilja Dončević said in an interview with Djurdja Bartlett that the editorial staff of *Svijet* stopped using *Modes & travaux* when they received an invoice for publishing their paper patterns. The editorial offices of other magazines they copied never discovered (or did not care about) this practice, so the journalists of *Svijet* continued to publish their contents. *Ibid.*

*Ilustrovana politika (Illustrated Politics)* and then *Bazar* could enjoy content from *Marie Claire*, *Elle*, and Italian *Grazia* (to which members of the editorial boards were subscribed).<sup>383</sup>

In the early 1960s, *Svijet* underwent conceptual and content changes. It appears that the transformation of this magazine, at least partially, can be attributed to the growing influence of Božidar Novak, who became director of the *Vjesnik* publishing house in the summer of 1963. One of the meetings between him, various editors of *Vjesnik*'s magazines, and Vladimir Bakarić, absolutely the most influential member of the Communist Party in Croatia (mentioned in the previous chapter), can serve as an illustration of Novak's methodology. During the meeting in the fall of 1963 – at which the editor-in-chief of *Svijet* was not present – Novak noted that this magazine was undergoing a process of transformation in order to better meet the needs of women workers, but that it would not omit any content that would be interesting and useful for housewives.<sup>384</sup> Undoubtedly, this remark expressed the pursuit of higher circulation and profits in a more palatable, more politically correct vocabulary. In turn, Bakarić encouraged such a focus saying that *Vjesnik* should indeed have its own women's magazine, as AFŽ's *Žena u borbi* was too narrow. In addition, Bakarić mandated that *Svijet* “must really be run very professionally in all aspects of the field.”<sup>385</sup> He did not specify which aspects he had in mind. In practice, this advice was implemented in such a way that magazine, while retaining content related to fashion and beauty, opened to topics dealing with the broadly conceived Woman Question. In accordance with the new strategy, while in the early years of its existence *Svijet* bore the subtitle “fashion, cosmetics, theatre, film, novel,” from

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<sup>383</sup> Andrijana Ristić, “Modna štampa u Srbiji u 20. veku” (“Fashion Press in Serbia in the Twentieth Century”), *Muzej primenjene umetnosti* 11 (2015): 10. <https://mpu.rs/journal/article.php?zbornik=11&clanak=3>.

<sup>384</sup> Razgovor s redakcijom “Vjesnika,” September 26, 1963, box 136, folder Sastanak u redakciji Vjesnika, HR-HDA-1228-SSRNH (1944.-1990.), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 12).

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid* (p. 13). “(...) stvarno mora da bude rukovodjen sasvim stručno sa svim aspektima tog područja.”

May 1964 the new subtitle “journal for women” imbued it with new ambition, to reach the largest possible number of adult female readers.

I begin the analysis of *Svijet* by focusing on the changes that the magazine underwent in the early 1960s. An important aspect of this period was the introduction of observances of various anniversaries, as *Svijet* did not pay attention to any of the politically relevant events in the first decade of its existence. The inclusion of the International Women’s Day and the anniversaries of the founding of the AFŽ, occasions that were relevant to the *afežejke* who regularly observed them in the pages of *Žena u borbi*, signals that the members of *Svijet* accepted the basic framework of the narrative of women’s emancipation in Yugoslavia. The treatment of the two occasions is therefore the focus of the second part of this chapter. It brings some comparisons between the two women’s magazines and indicates how the women in *Svijet* shaped their narrative of the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB). In the final section of the chapter, I focus on materials about the war that were not tied to a specific anniversary and were not meant to commemorate an important figure or event. Two sections represent this category well: the long-running section “Women and Espionage” (“Žene i špijunaža”), published intermittently from 1964 to 1974, and the short but very interesting section “My Street Bears Her Name,” published in ten episodes in 1977. Both of these sections are relevant because, especially in relation to *Žena u borbi*, they bring novelties in terms of approach to the subject of the NOB.

In sum, the forthcoming analysis explains how *Svijet* transformed from a magazine focused on luxury clothing to a (still fashionable and entertaining) publication with a purposeful attitude towards the figure of the Yugoslav New Woman and her needs. It will show how its editorial staff represented the People’s Liberation Struggle and the women’s involvement in the war in relation to the women’s emancipatory project in socialist Yugoslavia. All in all, the examination shows how socially-minded, informative, educational – and emancipatory – *Svijet* actually was, although

throughout its development in the 1960s and 1970s it avoided the exemplary and instructive function of the *afežejke*'s work aimed at commemorating the NOB.

#### 4.1 Entertainment and Its Others: From a Picture Book to an Engaged Women's Magazine

The first issue of *Svijet* was released in January 1953. Alongside Smilja Dončević, in the magazine's editorial board worked art critic Josip Depolo and journalist Reza Zelmanović. Aleksandar Srnec, a member of *Exat-51*,<sup>386</sup> created the visual design for the new magazine.<sup>387</sup> *Svijet* was subtitled with the words "fashion, cosmetics, theatre, film, novel," which accurately represented its content for almost an entire decade. In addition to sixteen pages of pictures showing the latest fashion trends, the editorial, titled "The Fashion Review," discussed dress codes and whims of contemporary fashion, while the section "Fashion Lexicon" taught readers the most important terms related to fashion. Unsurprisingly, the only events the magazine covered were fashion shows, both international and domestic. Among the recurring sections, squeezed onto one page were contributions about theatre and film that habitually featured one or two new releases. Finally, literary features took up to three pages. Two pages were usually devoted to a novel in

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<sup>386</sup> *Exat-51* was a group of architects from Zagreb who in their work advocated the development of contemporary visual arts and the synthesis of different disciplines of artistic creation – that is, total design. The name is a combination of the abbreviation of the words Experimental Studio (*Eksperimentalni atelje*) and the year of its official formation, 1951. This group existed until 1956.

<sup>387</sup> Mira Gumhalter, "Svijet," in *Monografije*, 2.

The employment of Aleksandar Srnec is by no means exceptional instance of collaboration between an artist and a women's magazine. For example, Zoe Borelli, modernist painter and graphic artist as well as one of the participants of the Spring Salon (*Proletni salon*), in the 1950s cooperated with the AFŽ's *Naša moda*. Furthermore, Belgrade surrealist artists Lula Vučo from 1946 to 1949 and Lela Matić from 1949 to 1956 were the art editors of the fashion magazine *Ukus* (*Taste*) published by the Central Committee of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia. Milanka Todić, "Supruga, muza, umetnica: žena u beogradskom nadrealizmu" ("Wife, Muse, Artist: Woman in Belgrade Surrealism") *Zbornik Seminara za studije moderne umetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu* 16 (2020): 57-73. More broadly, *Vjesnik*'s graphic editor Branko Šimunić explains, in the first post-war years there were no experts dealing specifically with graphic design and technical editing of the printed press. When developing the visual identity of various newspapers and magazines became relevant, academic painters, illustrators and cartoonists started collaborating with, in this particular case, *Vjesnik*. Apart from Srnec (who also designed the headline of the VUS magazine in 1952), Šimunić mentions Fedor Vaić, Ivo Režek, Oto Reisinger, and others. Branko Šimunić, "VUS-ova' škola grafizma" ("VUS' School of Graphic Art"), in *Zbornik sjećanja*, 129-133; Sulejmanpašić, "Vjesnik u srijedu," 5.

installments, and the third to a short story. The first novel *Svijet* printed was *Up at the Villa* by W. Somerset Maugham. The protagonist of the novel, a young widow named Mary Panton, moves to Florence to mourn the death of her husband. The plot develops around her relationships with three men: her suitor, her confidant, and her one-night stand. This novel set the tone for the literature published in the magazine for decades to come. While *Žena u borbi* featured a large number of literary works dealing with the Second World War in Yugoslavia, *Svijet* published literature authored by Yugoslav writers in exceptionally rare moments and never engaged with literature about a war.

In its first months of publication, the magazine experimented with socio-political topics. In particular, the “World Events through the Month” column in March and April 1953 briefly recounted main political events of the previous month and accompanied them with photographs.<sup>388</sup>

In addition, in March the editorial staff congratulated its readers the International Women’s Day.

It was the only occasion in 1953 when the editorial on fashion was replaced by an article of a different kind. The board chose the approach that catalogued women’s achievements during the war and in postwar reconstruction, describing them using the familiar vocabulary of self-sacrifice that readers may have been familiar with from *Žena u borbi*:

In the struggle for freedom, our women gave their children, brothers, husbands, their lives and their strength. They have shown countless examples of heroism and devotion, they have



Figure 1: *Svijet*, March 1953, page 3.

<sup>388</sup> In March this section largely focused on floods in Western Europe, particularly in Great Britain, and the most important event reported on in April was Tito’s visit to Winston Churchill. -, “Događaji u svijetu kroz mjesec dana,” *Svijet* 3 (March 1953), 4; -, “Događaji u svijetu kroz mjesec dana,” *Svijet* 4 (April 1953), 7.

broken the shackles that bound them for centuries, and they have become new women. Yesterday, the homeland asked the woman for her last son and the last bite of food, and she gave them. Today, the homeland asks her for a new heroism – heroism of work. And she gives.<sup>389</sup>

The editors supplemented the text with the famous illustration that appeared on the cover of the first issue of *Žena u borbi* in 1943 (figure 1). It documented the significance of women's advancements into the traditionally male domain, the military, but also celebrated women's femininity and emphasized the importance of motherhood in the time of war.

In other words, the editorial board paid tribute to International Women's Day as was customary in *Žena u borbi* as well as in the informative daily press of the period. However, it was not until March 1963 that the importance of this date was again emphasized. Moreover, for almost an entire decade there was nothing but the 'four Fs' – fashion, family, food and furnishings – supplemented by small monthly rations of love and romance in the literary section, in the pages of this magazine. That is, the first ten years of this magazine's existence offered no material that would be useful to my research. As indicated in the introduction, however, the magazine underwent major transformation during 1962 and 1963.

Primarily, there were significant changes in the editorial office. Smilja Dončević, the editor-in-chief since the magazine's inception, left her position in 1963. Mira Gumhalter, who had worked as a journalist for a variety of newspapers during the People's Liberation Struggle and continued to advance in the same profession following the end of the war, became *Svijet*'s second editor-in-chief and remained in that post until her retirement in 1980. In 1958, Reza Zelmanović's husband moved to West Germany when he became *Vjesnik*'s correspondent there, and she moved with him.

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<sup>389</sup> -, "8. mart – Dan žena," *Svijet* 3 (March 1953), 3. "U borbi za slobodu naše žene davale su svoju djecu, braću, muževe, svoje živote i svoju snagu. One su pokazale bezbroj primjera herojstva i požrtvovnosti, raskinule okove koji su ih vjekovima sputavali i postale nove žene. Jučer je domovina tražila od žene posljednjeg sina i posljednji zalogaj i ona ga je dala. Danas domovina traži od nje nova herojstva – herojstva rada. i ona ih daje."

In turn, Magda Weltrusky joined the editorial staff in 1959, and Neda Vrbačić and Vlasta Švarcmajer in the early 1960s.<sup>390</sup>

In the introductory section, as well as in the chapter on *Žena u borbi*, I highlighted the age of the women who in the postwar led the women's organization and edited its magazine. They supported the Communist Party in the 1930s, and their activities in the last decade of the interwar period determined their ideological and political attitudes as well as their pursuits during the war and following the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the women I mention in this chapter – e.g. Smilja Dončević and Mira Gumhalter – were too young to participate in activist circles in the 1930s. When they joined the NOB in 1943, they were twenty and nineteen years old, and did not participate in the wartime activities of the Antifascist Front of Women. The other members of the editorial board were even younger than the two editors-in-chief. This means that they were not directly socialized (before or during the war) into a set of ideological values that were paramount to the editors of *Žena u borbi*.

Moreover, I noted that the ideas of the two editorial boards about the content to be presented to female audience differed considerably. The editors of *Žena u borbi* insisted on an educational approach and a multitude of current socio-political topics. As staunch communists, they relied on Lenin's teaching on the role of the print media in the political education of the people with the goal of developing socialism in Yugoslavia. From the early 1950s, however, they lagged behind the transformation of the press, particularly the popular magazines, whose logic and capacities seemed to elude them. Conversely, the editorial staff of *Svijet*, supported by the management of *Vjesnik*, styled the content of their magazine as primarily entertaining making the educational aspect optional. Throughout the rest of the research period, until 1980, the aim to publish both socially

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<sup>390</sup> Gumhalter, "Svijet," 5-6.

responsible and entertaining and perky content (as well as socially responsible, entertaining and perky at once) shaped the development of this magazine.

### *Hybridization of Entertainment*

In the consultations between the representatives of the Croatian AFŽ and their magazine and the representatives of the publishing house *Vjesnik*, the difference between the *afežejke*'s ideological priorities and the *Vjesnik*'s profit-oriented inclinations became clear.<sup>391</sup> The editors of *Žena u borbi* thought that some of the content available in *Svijet* was scandalous and that some topics, especially in the “Confidential Conversations” section where women received answers to their inquiries about love, sex and marriage, were treated in an irresponsible manner. However, they considered seven out of forty-eight pages of what they termed “light” socially engaged topics to be a good foundation for further transforming *Svijet* into an even more socially responsible and politically engaged magazine.<sup>392</sup> I believe that the *afežejke* would certainly have “improved” *Svijet* into a new *Žena u borbi* if they had given a chance. Their expectations, however, were cut short at what appears to have been the last meeting with the representatives of *Vjesnik* (which was also attended by the officials of the Socialist Alliance of Working People (SSRN) of Croatia). The director of *Vjesnik*, Božidar Novak, referred to his previous talks with the editor-in-chief of *Žena*

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<sup>391</sup> Publishing of *Žena u borbi* produced continuing financial losses for the women's organization. Forced to find a solution, they decided to reconceptualize their magazine into a scientific journal. At the same time, they insisted on meeting the needs of their roughly 35 000 readers and to that end started the negotiations with *Vjesnik* as early as 1961. Final preparations for the reconceptualization of *Žena u borbi* were implemented throughout the 1966, and the last negotiations were conducted in November of the same year.

Elementi za plan rada Konferencije za društvenu aktivnost žene Hrvatske u 1962. godini, no date, box 2, folder 1.2 Sekretarijat (1949 – 1966), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archive, Zagreb, Croatia (pg. 8); Prošireni sastanak sekretarijata, June 15, 1963, box 2, folder 1.2 Sekretarijat (1949 – 1966), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (pp. 2-3).

<sup>392</sup> Sastanak sa Kepijem, November 8, 1966, box 1, folder 1.4 Ostali sastanci (1956 – 1985), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 5).

*u borbi*, Marija Šoljan, as a factor that had contributed to the changes that had already taken place in *Svijet*. However, he refused to approve any further modifications:

In principle, we agreed that *Svijet* and the daily press should address women's issues. I claim that *Svijet* adopted some matters, but that it did not accept the form of the magazine *Žena (u borbi)*.

(...) because it [the magazine *Svijet*] refers to a woman living in the city, not an activist or a woman in the village. Within the framework of this physiognomy, *Svijet* created its own circulation. (...) *Svijet*, which today has a circulation of 250,000 and aims for 500,000, cannot lower its taste and deal with women's topics with which *Žena (u borbi)* deals.<sup>393</sup>

In this discussion, although not directly, the issue of the female audience in the countryside was raised. The representatives of the editorial board of *Žena u borbi* claimed that it was rural women who were most strongly represented among their readers. On the other hand, Novak clarified that they are not relevant to *Svijet*'s concept. Of course, given the megalomaniacal goals regarding the magazine's circulation, every potential reader was important. But as Patrick Hyder Patterson explains, *Svijet* (like its Slovenian counterpart *Jana*, which he also analyzed) ignored the lifestyles and needs of the rural population. The Yugoslav Dream, the author argues, was founded on and represented an almost exclusively urban lifestyle.<sup>394</sup> According to *Vjesnik*'s research, *Svijet*'s audience was indeed for the most part located in the urban centers of Croatia and other republics.<sup>395</sup> Only 1.6 percent of all women surveyed stated that their occupation was related to agriculture. The largest part of *Svijet*'s audience, 21%, were (as the survey specifies) housewives outside

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<sup>393</sup> Stenografski zapisnik sa sastanka s predstavnicima časopisa "Žena" i "Svijet" u Glavnom odboru SSRN Hrvatske, 15. novembra 1966, box 65, folder 7.2 SSRN Hrvatske, HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 16). "U načelu mi smo se složili da 'Svijet' i dnevna štampa treba da se bave problematikom žene. Tvrdim, da je "Svijet" preuzeo neku problematiku o ženi samo nije prihvatio formu koju ima časopis 'Žena' (my emphasis).

(...) jer on je upućen ženi koja živi u gradu a ne aktivistkinji ili ženi na selu. U okviru te svoje fizionomije 'Svijet' je stvorio i svoju tiražu. (...) 'Svijet' koji ima danas tiraž od 250 000 a ide na 500 000 ne može ići linijom snižavanja ukusa i da daje žensku tematiku čime se bavi 'Žena'" (my emphasis).

<sup>394</sup> Patrick Hyder Patterson, *Bought & Sold. Living & Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 272-273.

<sup>395</sup> According to the same research, *Svijet* was sold in 1435 cities and towns throughout Yugoslavia, 722 of them in Croatia. Grozdana Mance, *Profili čitalačkih publika (Profiles of Reading Audiences)* (Zagreb: NIŠP Vjesnik, 1976), 145.

agriculture. The remaining nearly eighty percent of readers were fairly evenly distributed among girls in high schools and universities, and women employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors.<sup>396</sup>

This discussion does not mean, of course, that *Vjesnik* shied away from, what Novak presumed to be the lower tastes of the rural population. As long as this, or any other group of potential readers, could further increase the publisher's profits, *Vjesnik's* leadership, as well as the leaderships of other Yugoslav publishing companies, usually found a way to place their preferred product to the market. Instead, I estimate that Novak's refusal to allow *Svijet* to cover women's issues and women's activities in the villages to a greater extent highlighted the publishing house's unwillingness to adopt the admittedly rather harsh journalistic style of *Žena u borbi*. After all, the publishing house had the daily *Vjesnik* for the so-called "agitprop" kind of journalism, and probably did not want to spoil the medium that was first and foremost aimed at entertaining its audience.

The world of Yugoslav road to socialism first allowed and then endorsed magazines for women as *Svijet* was. In the words of Danijela Velimirović, "by legitimizing the 'superfluous' newspapers, the socialist woman entered the field of hedonistic culture."<sup>397</sup> And while the *afežejke* considered *Svijet's* socially engaged sections as light in terms of content, some contemporaries did not even appreciate them that much. Among them, the most prominent (critics) were members of the younger generation, whose work was inspired primarily by American and Western European feminism of the second wave who became known as the neofeminists (*neofeministice*). The journalist and media expert Neda Todorović-Uzelac, for example, reflected in the 1980s on the socially engaged content that women's magazines featured as "alibi topics" they were obliged to

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>397</sup> Danijela Velimirović, "Kad kupovina nije razonoda. Ženstvenost, moda i potrošnja u FNRJ (1952-1961)" ("When Shopping Is Not Leisure. Femininity, Fashion, and Consumption in FNRJ (1952-1961)"), in *Pažnja! Odjeća, umjetnost, identitet (Attention! Clothes, Art, Identity)*, ed. Irfan Hošić (Bihać: Tehnički fakultet, 2014), 33. "Legitimacijom 'izlišnih' novina socijalistička žena kročila je na teren hedonističke kulture."

publish.<sup>398</sup> When introducing the notion of alibi, Todorović-Uzelac used precisely the example of *Svijet* to make her point. On the first pages of this magazine, the author writes, readers are offered topics that “comprehensively and adequately, speak of the current position of women in Yugoslavia and the world.” At the same time, she continues, this magazine publishes romance novels in which “the personality of the female protagonist is reduced to an inadequate, almost feeble-minded creature whose only goal is a ‘good’ marriage.” In the end, the author asks: “How can a reader, who is on the pages of the same magazine offered two completely different worldviews, and two incompatible value systems, make a decision? Is not such a discrepancy ‘more dangerous’ than the naïve uniformity of the magazine, which has no higher pretensions?”<sup>399</sup>

Todorović-Uzelac’s dilemma evokes the question of the possible consequences of the publication of Marija Jurić Zagorka’s novel *Grička vještica* (*The Witch of Grič*) as a supplement to the daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* (as described in chapter 2). According to Zoran Palčok, “socialist adherence to principle” is endangered when the printed press spoils its content by publishing such novels.<sup>400</sup> Moreover, like Palčok (and a sizeable number of domestic critics of many forms of Yugoslav popular culture), Todorović-Uzelac uses language strongly critical of the mainstream mass media throughout her book. When referring to *Svijet* and other magazines for women appearing in the 1950s and later, she puts the word women’s (in the phrase “women’s magazines”) in quotation marks, as if they were not the real thing. This recalls the document of the SSRN mentioned in the previous chapter, which did not consider *Svijet* as a proper women’s

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<sup>398</sup> Neda Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti* (*Women’s Press and the Culture of Femininity*) (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga, 1987), 7.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid, 15. “(...) sveobuhvatno i novinarski adekvatno, govore o aktuelnom položaju žene u Jugoslaviji i svetu. (...) Ličnost žene svedena je (...) na nedoraslog, gotovo maloumnog stvora čiji je jedini cilj dobra udaja (...). Kako da se opredeli čitateljka kojoj se na stranicama istog glasila nude dva, sasvim oprečna, pogleda na svet i dva neusaglasiva sistema vrednosti? Nije li, možda takva nedoslednost opasnija od naivne jednoznačnosti lista koji nema veće pretenzije?”

<sup>400</sup> Palčok, “O bezvrijednoj literaturi i filmu,” 21.

magazine. Moreover, Todorović-Uzelac openly accuses *Svijet* and similar women's magazines of supporting the women's "return to the kitchen" and restoring the division of labor based on traditional gender roles. At the same time, she argues for the return of a women's press more akin to the "fighter-type" magazines published by communist activist girls and women in the late 1930s, during the People's Liberation Struggle, and in the first few postwar years. Such magazines, she continues, would empower women because they would challenge the patriarchal concept of femininity, that is, the traditional femininity describing women as mothers and wives.<sup>401</sup>

Todorović-Uzelac's approach in this example is analogous to the views of members of Yugoslav society who advocated a more rigid adherence to socialist morality. However, it is more appropriate to consider it as a Friedanesque "angry repudiation" of women's magazines as representatives of consumer culture.<sup>402</sup> The reason for this is their alleged involvement in "preventing women from developing their potential and maintaining them as prisoners within the home," that is "in identifying femininity with the role of housewife."<sup>403</sup> Analogously, Todorović-Uzelac's work primarily reflects the attitude that the contemporary Yugoslav women's press condemned its readers to return to the bonds of the private sphere.

Todorović-Uzelac was not the only Yugoslav scholar and feminist activist who judged the women's press as regressive for its readers. I would like to give another example here that also mentions *Svijet*. And because no one expressed the disdain for the traditional femininity offered in

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<sup>401</sup> Todorović Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti*.

<sup>402</sup> Angela McRobbie, *In the Culture Society: Art, Fashion and Popular Music* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 48.

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) is considered as one of the foundational texts of the second-wave feminism. As Joanne Meyerowitz writes, in it "popular magazines represented a repressive force, imposing damaging images on vulnerable American women." Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond *The Feminine Mystique*: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946-1958," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (March 1993): 1457, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2080212>.

<sup>403</sup> Joanne Hollows, "Spare Rib, Second-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Consumption," *Feminist Media Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 271.

Accordingly, almost all Todorović-Uzelac's references are recent works by American, British, and French contemporary authors, especially those of feminist provenance, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

such magazines better than the author Slavenka Drakulić in the essay “A Doll That Grew Old.”<sup>404</sup> In this essay, Drakulić looked back at the games she and her friends played with their paper dolls in Zadar (Dalmatia, Croatia). They made plenty of paper garments and accessories inspired by the models from *Svijet* and did their dolls’ makeup. Then they took them to work or shopping. Commenting on those games, Drakulić writes: “[l]ater on, it took me – and our whole generation of women – years and years of hard work to unglue ourselves from those paper idols; to break through into another dimension, away from the dolls of our childhood, to which we were constantly reduced.”<sup>405</sup> Worried that her daughter would fall into the same trap, she refused to buy her a doll that was, for instance, “the most valuable movable property”<sup>406</sup> for Croatian author Maša Kolanović – Mattel’s Barbie. She relented only when her daughter was in her twenties and able to explain her childhood “longing” for a doll in adult terms, and when the author was ready to accept that her daughter “had to pay a toll to an ideology, too”<sup>407</sup> as well as to redefine the role a doll can play in a girl’s life.

Angela McRobbie used a more academic language to address the same assumptions about the traditional femininity often advocated in women’s magazines. Analyzing *Jackie*, a British magazine for teenage girls, in the late 1970s, the author argued that *Jackie* cultivated adolescent femininity that prepared girls for future consensual participation in British society as wives and mothers.<sup>408</sup> McRobbie eventually softened her position, and in the article “Shut Up and Dance: Youth Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity” she explains how this formulation – changing modes of femininity – serves to remind that gendered practices and related structures of meaning

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<sup>404</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, “A Doll That Grew Old,” in *How We Survived*, 55-65.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

<sup>406</sup> Maša Kolanović, *Sloboština Barbie* (Zagreb: V.B.Z., 2008), 15. “(...) najvredniju pokretnu imovinu (...)”

<sup>407</sup> Drakulić, “A Doll That Grew Old,” 72.

<sup>408</sup> Angela McRobbie, “*Jackie* Magazine: Romantic Individualism and the Teenage Girl,” in *Feminism and Youth Culture. From Jackie to Just Seventeen* (London, MacMillan 1991), 81-134.

are fluid categories. Referring to the 1980s and early 1990s in Britain, she notes that second-wave feminism led to “a greater degree of uncertainty in society as a whole about what it is to be a woman.” Naturally, there were both positive and negative changes in the process, but by no means just progress or just backlash.<sup>409</sup>

So far, no one has attempted to assess how the Yugoslav version of state feminism affected the content of *Svijet* and how this magazine contributed to its development. However, Reana Senjković’s analysis of *Vjesnik*’s magazine for teenage girls *Tina* can provide some useful clues. *Tina* was published between 1971 and 1976 and was in fact inspired by the British magazine for girls *Princess Tina*. Just like *Svijet*, *Tina* in its beginnings did not at all reflect Yugoslav realities of the early 1970s. However, Senjković notes, the magazine evolved over time. Its editorial board consisted of five young women who, as its editor-in-chief Gruda Špicer wrote, had full freedom to create a magazine to their liking.<sup>410</sup> Thus they kept *Princess Tina*’s comics and the content about beauty, music, film and boys, but included many current and socially oriented topics, travelogues and portraits of famous individuals, founded *Tina*’s clubs and reported on their activities, as well as on the activities of Yugoslav girls and boys throughout the country. Importantly, at the end of her analysis, Senjković did not refer to the introduced themes as alibi topics. Instead, she allowed the possibility that *Tina*’s editorial board wanted to entertain readers, but also advise them on sensitive issues and teach them a thing or two at the same time. Therefore, the author concluded, *Tina* was a hybrid.<sup>411</sup> It published a lot of content that favored traditional aspects of (adolescent) femininity and masculinity, but it was no less socially engaged, political if you wish, because of it.

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<sup>409</sup> Angela McRobbie, “Shut Up and Dance: Youth Culture and Changing Modes of Femininity,” *Young* 1, no. 2 (May 1993): 13-31, quote on 15.

<sup>410</sup> Gruda Špicer, “Tina,” in *Monografije*, 3.

Špicer reiterated the same opinion in an interview with Reana Senjković.

<sup>411</sup> Reana Senjković, “*Tina* i jugoslavensko djevojaštvo. Ili: Jeste li čitali Angelu McRobbie?,” in *Izgubljeno u prijenosu*, 91-185.

The development of *Svijet* in the 1960s, just like the development of *Tina* in the 1970s, happened so that this magazine could better reflect the circumstances of the society for which it was published. Much of the content was entertaining, some was educational, and other still was political: *Svijet* became a hybrid socialism-inspired magazine for women that did not seek to impose ideologically correct lessons on its readers at any cost. Accordingly, the magazine's staff strove to fulfill the promises they had made to their readership in May 1962:

Apart from fashion, *Svijet* will henceforth address all those questions and problems that might interest a contemporary woman, not only a mother and housewife, but also one who participates in public life. In other words, on the pages of our magazine from now on you will find articles on family matters, family relations, education, healthcare, legal issues, instructions for furnishing and decorating the home, economical housekeeping (...).<sup>412</sup>

Announced novelties did not occupy the pages devoted to fashion and beauty. Instead, the magazine expanded by eight pages. Then, it grew to forty pages in October 1963, and to forty-eight in June 1964. Its final page count, reached in the end of the 1960s, was seventy-two. In addition, from July 1963, *Svijet* was published twice a month.

The number of new columns, whether permanent or intermittent, proliferated during the period of change. To list them all would be counterproductive, as this could easily blur the fundamental characteristic of the transformation that affected the magazine in the early 1960s. Two examples – first, the way in which the magazine interpreted the feminist potential of the female portrait (explained in the previous chapter), and, second, a small selection of events and activities it organized – will much better illustrate its nature. Moreover, this will shed light on the difference between *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet* at a time when this fashion magazine assumed some of the journalistic responsibility for the New Woman in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>412</sup> Redakcija, “Obavijest našim čitateljicama” (“A Note for Our Readers”), *Svijet* 5 (May 1962), 3. “Osim mode, ‘Svijet’ će odsada tretirati sva ona pitanja i probleme koji mogu interesirati suvremenu ženu, ne samo majku i domaćicu, nego i onu, koja učestvuje u javnom životu. Drugim riječima, na stranicama našeg lista nalazit ćete odsada tretirane probleme porodice, odnosa u porodici, odgoja, zdravlja, probleme s pravnog područja, upute za uređenje stana, ekonomično vođenje domaćinstva (...).”

On the occasion of upcoming Olympic Games in Innsbruck, *Svijet* published an interview with three young Slovenian female athletes in January 1964. Mladen Ivanišević, a sports journalist who at that time worked in the newsroom of *Sportske novosti* (*Sports News*), another *Vjesnik*'s publication, conducted the interviews with the figure skater Katjuša Derenda, and two skiers, Krista Fanedl and Majda Ankele. Ivanišević was loaned to *Svijet* to conduct these interviews and in the introduction to the article he describes his insecurity, even discontent, with the task. Specifically, he wonders how to write a “perky” interview that contains information not only about sports, but also about the girls’ thoughts on music, literature, fashion, and love.<sup>413</sup> His dilemma illustrates what one short note in terms of hard news can become when embellished with the ingredients that make journalism entertaining but informative, light but educational, as well as soft, feminine, and (presumably) appealing to a wide range of women.

Thus, in Ivanišević’s article, the reader learns that Katjuša Derenda, the figure skater, is currently dancing on roller skates because the Yugoslav Olympic Committee has decided that Yugoslav figure skaters will not participate in the coming Olympics. Therefore, time at the local ice rink is divided between training sessions of the hockey team and hours for the public, with no time set aside for the young athlete and her partner. The reader also learns that Katjuša is preparing for her prom and what attire she has in mind for the event.<sup>414</sup> The conversations with the two skiers, Krista Fanedl and Majda Ankele, revolve around their mutual differences. The subsection on Krista is titled with the question of whether she is a woman at all, as her practical, sober spirit is subsequently described. And the subsection dedicated to Majda relates her delight for falling in

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<sup>413</sup> Mladen Ivanišević, “Tri vrhunske sportašice: Tri intimne priče” (“Three Top Athletes – Three Intimate Stories”), *Svijet* 2 (January 15, 1964), 4-5.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

love, so the journalist lists some information about her relationship and her boyfriend. And – not to be forgotten – at the end, readers do find out that both train hard for the upcoming competition.<sup>415</sup>

In addition to successful female athletes, *Svijet* also portrayed female artists, domestic and international. It featured articles on businesswomen as well as ordinary women, and both groups were often represented by female workers employed in numerous factories throughout Yugoslavia. While *Žena u borbi* strove to publish feminist female portraits in line with the requirements of their political education – first by publishing articles about women who fought for socialism in their places of work, that is, the New Women of Yugoslavia, and then also by writing about exceptional women throughout history – *Svijet* developed a dual approach. It offered some feminist content (including female portraits) and complemented it with stereotypical feminine topics. Sometimes, journalists like Mladen Ivanišević in the presented example, tried to combine both in a single article. In addition, he only scratched the surface of the dilemma of women who pursuing a “male” activity. As time went on, the journalists who worked in *Svijet*’s editorial office discussed this topic with much more elegance. At the same time, the next two chapters, focusing on *Arena* and *Start*, will demonstrate the extent to which this topic permeated some other publications and how it influenced the consideration of women who fought in the NOB.

With regard to the *Svijet*’s events and activities, it organized its first fashion show as early as 1959. During the event, the most popular Zagreb stylist and seamstress Žuži Jelinek, the Zagreb Factory of Fabrics *Zora*, the Osijek Factory of Silk, and the Footwear Cooperative *Sloga* presented their latest models. The exhibited models, according to the editorial, favored “simple, practical, and tasteful dress.”<sup>416</sup> It goes on to say that the models faithfully represented the “[b]aseline, which

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>416</sup> -, “I. modna revija ‘Svijeta’” (“First *Svijet*’s Fashion Show”), *Svijet* 4 (April 1959), 2. “(...) jednostavnog, praktičnog i ukusnog odijevanja.”

*Svijet* has supported since its inception to date.<sup>417</sup> While it is not true that *Svijet* emphasized merely simple, practical and tasteful clothing in its early years, this event and its coverage do remind of the variety of socialist fashion that AFŽ's *Naša moda* published in Zagreb (as well as *Ukus (Taste)* published in Belgrade) have been promoting – and in the same language – for more than a decade.<sup>418</sup>

This event inaugurated a long line of endeavors that could have been imagined in AFŽ's magazines *Naša moda* and *Ukus* – albeit in a more serious and less visually attractive presentation advocating responsible spending. For instance, the magazine awarded the best new domestic clothing designs with the sculpture *Svjetlana*.<sup>419</sup> It introduced “A Little Alphabet of Tailoring” with the intention of teaching readers to use the paper patterns included with the magazine and sew their own clothes,<sup>420</sup> and initiated a contest for amateur creators to submit suggestions for creatively restoring old items of clothing entitled “Open Your Wardrobe, Iva.”<sup>421</sup> In addition, *Svijet* periodically launched charitable activities. With “You as Santa Clause” the magazine collected clothes, footwear, toys and food for children who needed the help four years in a row,<sup>422</sup> and it promoted traditional women's crafts with “A Blanket of Good Will” for which readers knitted squares three years in a row that were used to make blankets, shawls, and scarves for women in nursing homes.<sup>423</sup>

There seems to be no particular order, pattern, or agenda behind such activities. Nor is it possible to determine whether some of them and which ones were publicity stunts, and which were created with the needs, wishes, or preferences of the magazine's audience in mind, let alone the

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid. “Osnovna linija, koju ‘Svijet’ zastupa od svog osnutka do danas (...)”

<sup>418</sup> Čuljak and Vene, “Žena u borbi / žena u modi,” 166-169.

<sup>419</sup> First appeared: -, “Vi ste izabrali: Svjetlana” (“You Have Chosen: Svjetlana”), *Svijet* 19 (October 1, 1964), 9.

<sup>420</sup> First appeared: -, “Mala abeceda kroja” (“A Small Alphabet of Tailoring”), *Svijet* 1 (January 15, 1964).

<sup>421</sup> First appeared: -, “Od starog – novo” (“From Old – New”), *Svijet* 19 (September 22, 1971), 22-24.

<sup>422</sup> First appeared: -, “Vi kao Djed Mraz” (“You as Santa Claus”), *Svijet* 23 (November 17, 1971), 8-9.

<sup>423</sup> First appeared: -, “Pokrivač dobre volje” (“A Blanket of Good Will”), *Svijet* 1 (January 9, 1973).

development toward a socialist society. Nevertheless, all of them provide some clues to the *Svijet*'s evolution in the 1960s and later. In terms of fashion, *Svijet* considered and encouraged the emerging domestic fashion industry, as well as the needs of its readership for “simple, practical, and tasteful” clothing, not only luxurious items for special occasions. And they attest to the fact that *Svijet*'s editorial board promoted humanitarian and volunteer work. While it was oriented toward traditionally feminine interests – mostly caring for children and the elderly – it opened up some space for the so desirable socialist activism reminiscent of the early postwar years, when the AFŽ organized care for orphans and poor children, elderly in need, and all types of social institutions. All in all, while *Žena u borbi* represented the same values by way of *ex cathedra* pedagogical approach, *Svijet* became more interactive. Its goals were modest – its editorial board never claimed to create the New Woman, but only to entertain her – but it involved women in many activities that could help achieve that aim.

#### **4.2 International Women's Day: In Search of Own Canon**

Since International Women's Day represents the historic struggles that women have fought to enjoy some of the same rights as men, it was only natural to include the celebration of this holiday into the content of the magazine, which claimed to be for women. From 1963, when the magazine observed Women's Day for the second time in its existence, until 1974, when it found a celebratory formula that it adhered to until the end of its publication, the editorial staff tried various possibilities. It is noteworthy that, although the *afežejke* had established the main characteristics for celebrating Women's Day years ago, the *Svijet*'s editorial board did not reproduce the same narratives. Although they did not have a ready-made solution for their magazine, over time they discovered a way that was both entertaining and educational. Here, I describe what the editorial

board tried out from 1963 until 1974 as it, I believe, provides illustration how *Svijet* developed its own understanding of the New Woman and her needs.

The 1963 observance of International Women's Day very much resembled the one of 1953. On both occasions, the editorial board took an approach reminiscent of the AFŽ's commemorations of this festivity. In 1953, they published the famous illustration of the first wartime edition of *Žena u borbi* and a suitable editorial. In 1963, they followed the recommendation of the women's organization, which regarded that Women's Day should be explicitly linked to the discussion of the new Constitution and upcoming elections, and more broadly, to the issues of war and peace worldwide.<sup>424</sup> The March editorial included all of it. It was entitled "Women – The Guardians of Peace," but largely focused on women's participation in the Yugoslav labor force and the successes achieved so far, as well as the tasks ahead of them. The last paragraph of the editorial mentioned for the first time in this magazine Clara Zetkin, the founder of International Women's Day, who, along with Rosa Luxemburg, was a fixture in the magazines published by the women's organization.<sup>425</sup>

Such a direct match between the recommendations of the women's organization and the *Svijet's* execution did not occur again. In the years between 1964 and 1974, five times they published articles dealing with the broadly conceived process of women's emancipation. Such articles were by now commonplace for this magazine, so they could and possibly would have been published regardless.<sup>426</sup> For instance, the 1964 collection of three interviews with three international students in Zagreb, Hida Mtumwa Muhamed from Zanzibar (Tanzania), Drora Kaspi from Israel, and

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<sup>424</sup> Stenografske beleške sa sednice Sekretarijata Konferencije za društvenu aktivnost Jugoslavije, February 1, 1963, box 8, AS-Đ-129-KDAŽS (1947 – 1967), Archives of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia (pg. 58-59).

<sup>425</sup> -, "Žene – čuvari mira" ("Women – The Guardians of Peace"), *Svijet* 3 (March 1963), 3.

<sup>426</sup> In fact, they published one of them, "Does the Women's Day Last 365 Days?," in August: -, "Da li 8. mart traje 365 dana?," *Svijet* 16 (August 15, 1967), 8-9.

Achieng Ambassa from Kenya, presents conversations comparing and contrasting the lives of the three girls in their home countries with their lives in Yugoslavia. They were prefaced with several sentences about the history of International Women's Day and the friendship and solidarity it stands for in order to, undoubtedly, connect the interviews to the occasion.<sup>427</sup> In the following three years, the journalists wrote about the current state of emancipation of Yugoslav women, about the promises habitually made to women on Women's Day, and how these promises reflected women's actual needs.<sup>428</sup> Furthermore, by 1974, *Svijet* tried congratulating Women's Day with artistic contributions by publishing some poetry or works of visual art (figure 2). In 1969, once again, there was nothing at all published for Woman's Day, and in 1971 it congratulated their readers Mother's Day instead of Women's Day. On one precious occasion, in March 1968, it published an interview with Jovanka Broz (figure 3).

Finally, in 1974, the *Svijet*'s editorial staff celebrated International Women's Day for the first time in a way that became a recognizable element of gifting its readers for as long as the magazine existed. That year, it organized a concert of classical music in the *Vatroslav Lisinski* music hall in Zagreb. From 1974 on, each year on March 8, renowned musicians gave two concerts for women who were the fastest to get free tickets. In addition, an exhibition was organized in the foyer of this music hall and in the museum of another Yugoslav city (the location of the second exhibition changed each year). Of course, the reports about the events were always included in the next issue of the magazine, and, as can be seen in the figure 4, the auditorium was (always) full.

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<sup>427</sup> K.Š. and M.W., "Dan koji traje cijelu godinu" ("The Day that Lasts the Entire Year"), *Svijet* 5 (March 1, 1964), 4-5.

<sup>428</sup> Boris Osim, "Živjele žene! Buket cvijeća jednom godišnje ili svakog dana po jedan cvijet?" ("Long Live Women! Bouquet of Flowers Once a Year or One Flower Every Day?"), *Svijet* 4 (February 15, 1965), 4-5 and 8; A. Horvat, "Jugoslavenke 70. između proklamacije i prakse: Plaća jedna, rad dvostruk" ("Yugoslav Women in 1970 Between Proclamation and Practice: One Salary, Double Work") *Svijet* 5 (March 11, 1970); Mira Gumhalter, "Njenih 364 dana (ne računajući 8. mart)" ("Her 364 Days (Not Counting March 8<sup>th</sup>)"), *Svijet* 5 (March 8, 1972), 6-7.

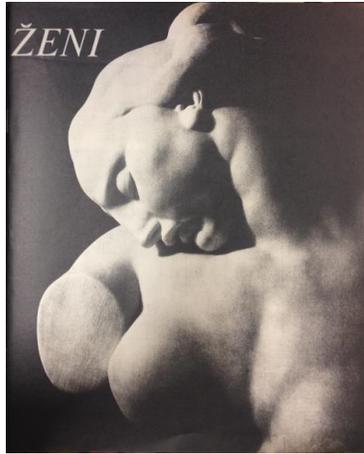


Figure 2: “Ženi” (“To the Woman”), *Svijet* 5 (March 7, 1973): 10-11.

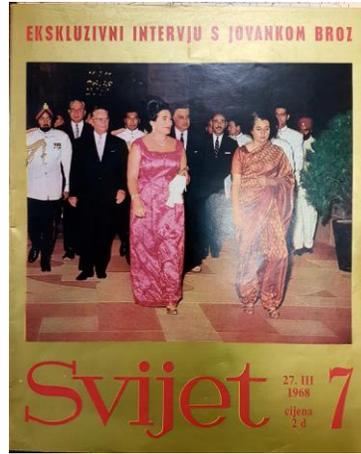


Figure 3: Cover of *Svijet* 7 (March 27, 1968) featuring Jovanka Broz and Indira Gandhi.



Figure 4: “Čestitka koja se pamti” (“A Greeting to Remember”), *Svijet* 6 (March 20, 1974): 3.

During the International Year of the Child and starting with March 8, 1979, *Svijet* added well-known socialist activism specifically aimed at women in the mix. As if they too were promoting the old AFŽ’s policy that “the ‘new woman’ was supposed to nurture the motherly love by including all the children of the entire social community,”<sup>429</sup> the editorial board launched a charity campaign “Let’s Donate a Kindergarten-Bus!”<sup>430</sup> This was supposed to fund a bus for one Yugoslav administrative unit that did not have its own nursery school. At the same time the next year, the magazine launched the “I Donate My Toy” charity to supply the mentioned bus with the necessities so that it could be opened.<sup>431</sup>

While *Svijet*’s journalists tried various ways of congratulating and celebrating Women’s Day – including not congratulating it at all and congratulating it as Mother’s Day, which the *afežejke*

<sup>429</sup> Danijela Velimirović, “One su bile svuda – stizale su sve: kulturna konstrukcija heroina novog doba” (“They Were Everywhere – They Managed Everything: Cultural Construction of the Heroines of the New Age”), *Etnoantropološki problemi* 7 (2012): 174. “(...) ‘nova žena’ trebalo je da neguje majčinsku ljubav tako da ona uključi svu decu svekolike društvene zajednice.”

<sup>430</sup> -, “Uz međunarodnu godinu djeteta: Darujmo autobus – vrtić!” (“In the International Year of the Child: Let’s Donate a Kindergarten – Bus”), *Svijet* 4 (February 24, 1979), 3.

<sup>431</sup> -, “Darujem svoju igračku!” (“I Donate My Toy!”), *Svijet* 3 (February 8, 1980), 35.

warned against<sup>432</sup> – they never congratulated it as Women’s Combat Day (*borbeni Dan žena*). This is important because the Yugoslav *afežejke* used this phrase to symbolically commemorate the struggle for women’s rights around the world, as well as the celebratory tradition that had been established thanks to the communist politicians and activists who had led this struggle in earlier decades. In *Žena u borbi* (as well as in other magazines published by the women’s organization), this very meaning of International Women’s Day was usually clearly emphasized in the March issue. In connection, the militant character of Women’s Day was often associated with the struggles of the NOB in the magazines of the women’s organization because it highlighted the contribution that Yugoslav women made during the war to the ongoing women’s struggles for emancipation and equality. Conversely, *Svijet* exceptionally rarely published stories connected to the People’s Liberation Struggle on the occasion of International Women’s Day. That is, besides the editorial published in March 1953, they mentioned the war only in a conversation with Jovanka Broz in March 1968. But, on this occasion, they kept Jovanka Broz’s wartime biography to a minimum and played up her peacetime social role – of the president’s wife and the first hostess of the country.<sup>433</sup>

When, in the mid-1970s, *Svijet* found its own formula for congratulating Women’s Day, it turned out it primarily wanted to entertain its audience. In comparison to the recommendations circulated by the women’s organization, it allowed for more flexibility and softness in approach. Instead of AFŽ’s receptions, which always featured speeches and lectures and were almost always celebrated with a little more work, *Svijet*’s editorial board chose to present music and art that the majority of their readers did not often have the opportunity to enjoy and allowed them to enjoy it without lecturing about it. Such a choice of cultural content – the “capital C” culture that many

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<sup>432</sup> Tešija, “The End of the AFŽ,” 61.

<sup>433</sup> Iva Jelušić, “Jovanka Broz and the Yugoslav Popular Press during Tito’s Reign: At the Crossroads of Tradition and Emancipation (1952-1980),” *Aspasia* 16 (forthcoming).

communist officials were so eager and so unsuccessful to bring closer to the proverbial masses – testifies to the fact that the editorial board did not disregard the educational potential of this occasion. Furthermore, it added the activities that encouraged the magazine’s audience to engage in socially useful activism – another activity that was supposed to characterize the Yugoslav New Women and Men. That is, while *Svijet*’s board ignored the aspects of this festivity that had to do with the history of the struggle for women’s civil rights, which the women’s organization presented as paramount, it still fashioned a formula, or even a canon, that conformed to the general principles of socialist culture. No less important, such conceptualization of Women’s Day fit well with the never-ending stream of well-dressed and dolled up ladies who were “striking a pose” on this magazine’s pages.

In the next section, I turn to the manner in which the editorial staff dealt with the Yugoslav New Woman’s embeddedness in the context of the NOB. I focus on the commemorations that were more difficult to avoid – the anniversaries of the first conference of the Antifascist Front of Women of Yugoslavia, held in Bosanski Petrovac (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in December 1942. In addition, the commemoration of this event was sometimes complemented by the commemoration of the first conference of the Antifascist Front of Women of Croatia, which took place in June 1943 in Otočac (Lika, Croatia). The questions I seek to answer by looking into the commemorations of these two events focus on the image of women at war that *Svijet* painted. While the celebration of Women’s Day allowed *Svijet*’s hybrid format to come to the fore, the following section will show how the editorial board challenged the legacy of the woman fighter (*žena borac*) that was championed in *Žena u borbi*.

### 4.3 Commemoration of the AFŽ's Conferences

In view of the perceived significance of the AFŽ, specifically with respect to mobilizing women during the war and in the immediate postwar period, its officials and the officials of the Socialist Alliance of Working People, regarded that the twentieth anniversary of the organization's first conference should be widely celebrated. They jointly established the Committee for the Celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the AFŽ, which met in October 1962 and laid down the guidelines for organizing the event countrywide.<sup>434</sup> During the meeting, the members of the committee mentioned several times the importance of media coverage of this anniversary. Therefore, a small group of participants prepared a list of literature that was first sent to the republican branches of the women's organization and then, presumably, disseminated to local administrative centers, work organizations, and the media.<sup>435</sup> In addition, all republican branches of the women's organization published appropriate materials in their magazines. For instance, the Serbian *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*) devoted the whole December issue to the anniversary, while the Croatian *Žena u borbi* published the January issue with an increased number of pages and devoted the first thirty to the event twenty years ago and the event organized to commemorate it. At the same time, *Svijet* did not mention the anniversary with a single word.

In late 1962, changes in *Svijet*'s editorial and content were still several months away. And despite all the changes that had taken place in the magazine since 1963, and the fancy rhetoric behind them, it was not until one decade later (in 1972), that the (thirtieth) anniversary of the first conference of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia was in *Svijet* duly commemorated. This means that for the

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<sup>434</sup> Pismo Saveznog odbora SSRNJ Glavnom odboru SSRNH povodom planiranja proslave dvadesete godišnjice AFŽ-a, October 15, 1962, box 164, folder 11.1 Obljetnice AFŽ-a (1957-1968), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia.

<sup>435</sup> Stenografske beleške sa sednice Odbora za proslavu 20-godišnjice AFŽ, October 22, 1962, box 10, AS-Đ-129-KDAŽS (1947 – 1967), Archives of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia (p. 17); Štampa, radio i televizija u proslavi dvadesetogodišnjice AFŽ-a, November 17, 1962, box 10, AS-Đ-129-KDAŽS (1947 – 1967), Archives of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia.

commemoration of this anniversary, the *Svijet*'s journalists used several crucial elements that made up the standard account of women's activism during the war, as interpreted, for instance, in the magazine *Žena u borbi*. At the same time, in terms of *Svijet*'s reporting and with respect to its approach to the NOB, the commemoration of this anniversary is characterized by several "first times." First and foremost, in the introductory part of the article and in bold letters, *Svijet* refers for the first time to Tito's famed words that were part of his "magnificent speech, a gem in his impressive oratory record,"<sup>436</sup> which he delivered on the occasion of the first conference of the AFŽ. These words were quoted time and time again, especially in the magazines published by the women's organization, and rightly so, for in this speech Tito expressed the ultimate endorsement of women's contributions to the war effort: "I am proud to stand at the forefront of an army that has a large number of women. I can say that in this struggle, by their heroism, by their endurance, women were and are in the first places and in the front ranks, and it is an honor for our peoples of Yugoslavia to have such daughters."<sup>437</sup>

Next to this quote is a photograph of Kata Pejnović, the first president of the AFŽ (among many other things). On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the event, her picture and her wartime biography appear for the first time in this magazine. The caption next to the photograph reads: "Kata Pejnović had three sons, 'three golden apples,' who remained forever in the rows of the Revolution."<sup>438</sup> Later, in the text, the writers of the article inform the reader in more detail about Kata Pejnović's fate, and, within this magazine, it was the first time since *Svijet*'s inception that a wartime leader of the women's organization, an exemplary *afežejka*, appeared on this magazine's

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<sup>436</sup> Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, 93.

<sup>437</sup> Jovo Popović and Jovan Hovan, "Rezolucija viđena u šest legendi" ("Resolution Through Six Legends"), *Svijet* 24 (November 29, 1972), 6. "Ja se ponosim što stojim na čelu armije u kojoj ima ogroman broj žena. Ja mogu kazati da su žene u ovoj borbi po svom heroizmu, po svojoj izdržljivosti bile i jesu na prvom mjestu i u prvim redovima i našim narodima Jugoslavije čini čast što imaju takve kćeri."

<sup>438</sup> Ibid. "Kata Pejnović imala je tri sina, "tri zlatne jabuke", koji su zauvijek ostali u stroju Revolucije."

pages. Moreover, it was the debut of the partisan mother, because the loss of three sons was always presented as indivisible from Pejnović's fierce wartime engagement.

On this occasion, journalists only told the story that, just like Tito's words, must have been familiar to the readership. The reason for such treatment of the anniversary, in my opinion, is not difficult to see. In December 1971, the political and cultural movement that had developed during several years, the Croatian Spring (*Hrvatsko proljeće*), was abruptly ended. In its aftermath, the younger generation of Yugoslav politicians who held more liberal views were forced to resign,<sup>439</sup> and in Croatia many prominent supporters of the movement were expelled from the Party, lost their jobs, or faced incarceration. In connection, some supporters of the movement worked in the media that were by the authorities singled out as mediators in its development. The publishing house *Vjesnik* and Zagreb television were considered as the most important. They were denounced as encouragers of anti-socialist activities, which is why their work came under close scrutiny in the following years.<sup>440</sup>

Thusly, I believe that, when the political situation in the country was stable – as in the period when this magazine was reconceptualized in the early 1960s – its editorial board could select the anniversaries that fit its overall editorial policy and ignore the others, including the twentieth anniversary of the AFŽ's first conference. But the domestic political turmoil of the Croatian Spring influenced its publishing policy, too. The described commemorative article marked the beginning of five exceptional years in *Svijet's* oeuvre, during which the editorial staff thoughtfully commemorated many major war anniversaries as well as some marginal events, probably to distance itself from the fallout caused by the Croatian Spring. The stories the magazine published

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<sup>439</sup> Marko Zubak, "The Croatian Spring: Interpreting the Communist Heritage in Post-Communist Croatia," *East Central Europe* 32 (2005): 200.

<sup>440</sup> Novak, "Sedam povijesnih godina," 190-191.

during this period were examples of socially engaged and responsible journalism or, more cynically, exemplary alibi articles.<sup>441</sup>

Well, almost all the stories were perfect examples of socially engaged and responsible journalism. While the reasons for this remain obscure, I find it interesting that in 1973 the observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the first conference of the AFŽ of Croatia remained in the form of a note. To be sure, the editorial board organized an exhibition on the folklore of Slavonia in cooperation with the Brod Regional Museum and the women's organization of the municipality of Slavonski Brod (Slavonia, Croatia). However, the announcement of the exhibition was reduced to an advertisement and placed below the article with the thoroughly undignified topic of male impotence. In the end, the follow-up article about the exhibition was published almost two months later, without any mention of the original motive for this exhibition, that is, of the anniversary of the AFŽ of Croatia. Such negligence in no way corresponds to the way in which the editorial board of *Svijet* usually covered its own activities, and that is why it caught my attention. Unfortunately, I have not (so far) found any documents that would explain why the editorial board opted for such a (lack of) representation of this anniversary.

To make matters more interesting, in 1978 the magazine, in cooperation with the Automobile Association of Croatia, organized a women's rally from Zagreb to Otočac, the site of the first conference of the Croatian branch of the AFŽ. While it was not the first NOB anniversary that included car racing, it was certainly the first (and to my knowledge the only) occasion on which an event related to women's participation in the war was commemorated in this way. The best driver received a prize, a trophy sponsored by none other than the War Veterans' Union (SUBNOR).<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> Of course, as noted in the introduction, due to the unavailability of *Vjesnik's* documentation, this is my estimate of the most likely causal sequence based on the material I found in the magazine.

<sup>442</sup> -, "Svijetov' ženski rally" ("*Svijet's* Women's Rally") *Svijet* 9 (May 5, 1978), 3.

The report about the event was so strongly focused on the race that the reporter failed to mention some relevant information. For instance, readers were informed that Narandža Končar, the political commissar of the First Women's Partisan Unit, gave a speech in which she spoke about the events of thirty-five years ago. However, the article did not include a single detail of her speech that would have illustrated her experience of the conference. Similarly, readers learned that Radojka Prhić competed in the rally to honor her mother, who “came on foot from Čazma to Otočac to attend the First Conference of the AFŽ of Croatia,” but not who her mother was or what she did in Otočac during the conference. Finally, two women who participated in the People's Liberation Struggle took part in the rally. Yet, there is no information about what Anka Špiljak and Zdenka Brčić did during the war and whether they also participated in the conference. Instead, readers found out that the two women received *Svijet's* gift packages for their successful participation.<sup>443</sup>

At this point, it is safe to assert that there was resistance to commemorating the NOB in *Svijet's* editorial board. Therefore, the *žena borac* in any of her many forms – *partizanka*, mother partisan, AFŽ's activist, or someone else – did not appear in the pages of this magazine until the early 1970s. Even then, and even considering the post-Croatian Spring backlash as part of its publishing policy, *žena borac* was very rarely featured in the *Svijet's* pages. The thirtieth anniversary of the AFŽ's first conference that featured parts of Tito's speech and Kata Pejnović's biography was an exception. Instead, when *Svijet* published content about the NOB, its journalists usually did not retell already familiar narratives. They wrote more often about people who did not have the chance to tell their story, or about the less familiar aspects of the stories of famous war veterans.

Several articles published during the 1975 jubilee attest to this trend. First, Magda Weltrusky interviewed Branko Čopić and Mira Alečković, partisans and renowned authors who repeatedly

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<sup>443</sup> Drago Kastratović, “Kapelski plesovi” (“*Kapela's Dances*”), *Svijet* 13 (June 30, 1978), 3, 24-25 (quote on 25).

returned to the topic of war in their literary work and who spoke to *Svijet* for the first and last time in 1975.<sup>444</sup> And secondly, Jovo Popović, the *Vjesnik*'s journalist, author and World War II enthusiast who, among other things, prepared and published some thirty collections of memories and miscellaneous other records of the People's Liberation Struggle, memorialized the war victory with three pieces about ordinary people and their lives during the war. While one of the articles described the destinies of war orphans in the Communist Party's care and protection, especially through the activities of the AFŽ,<sup>445</sup> the other two articles focused on female partisans, a rare and therefore valuable occurrence.<sup>446</sup>

In "Victory Experienced Up Close: The Engagement Gun," Jovo Popović recounts the story of Anka Kovilić who served as a sergeant major in the Yugoslav army during the war. In conversation with the journalist, she recalls two people in love – Ivan Kraljić, the commander of her unit, and Seka, the unit's nurse – who died fighting by her side. On the one hand, the story of Ivan and Seka is the story about forbidden love and partisan morality. Anka Kovilić tells how Ivan and Seka's romance developed under her watchful eye. Eventually, the two young people decided to marry, even though they barely knew each other and despite the constant supervision. On this occasion, Ivan gave his pistol and a ring to Seka.<sup>447</sup> On the other hand, the article offers a striking first-person account of a battle Anka Kovilić participated in:

Ivica [diminutive of Ivan – author's comment] left two machine-gunners to cover the retreat. We were about to leave, but one machine gunner was shot. Seka goes to him, she pulls him out. I take the machine gun and slash. The second machine-gunner perished, too. So I am standing there alone. SS soldiers seem to see that I have been left alone and push

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<sup>444</sup> Magda Weltrusky, "Svijetov portret: Zlatna bajka o ljudima" ("Svijet's Portrait: A Golden Fairytale about People"), *Svijet* 11 (May 28, 1975), 8-9; Magda Weltrusky, "Svijetov portret: Mira Alečković" ("Svijet's Portrait: Mira Alečković"), *Svijet* 15 (July 23, 1975), 10-11.

<sup>445</sup> Jovo Popović, "Svijetova obljetnica: Djeca između frontova" ("Svijet's Anniversary: Children Between the Fronts"), *Svijet* 10 (May 14, 1975), 6-7.

<sup>446</sup> Jovo Popović, "Pobjeda doživljena izbliza: Zaručnički pištolj" ("Victory Experienced Up Close: The Engagement Gun"), *Svijet* 9 (April 30, 1975), 8-9; idem, "Uz jubilej Republike: Doktor Manda iz stroja ratnika" ("For the Republic's Jubilee: Doctor Manda from the Row of Warriors"), *Svijet* 24 (November 26, 1975), 6-7.

<sup>447</sup> Popović, "Zaručnički pištolj," 9.

forward. As they approach, I cut them down with short bursts. (...) I have a bullet in my left leg, in my jaw and shoulder. I cannot go any further. My left arm has gone numb. I cannot do anything with it. But I can with my right. I start placing the bombs around me. I left one for the end, for me: anything is possible, but I am not going to fall into their hands alive. (...) Then the reinforcements arrived and the proletarians launched a new attack. Ivica leads the attack. Seka is at his side. They left, and I did not see them again. The comrades told me later that the German fire suddenly slashed them down. Ivica died on the spot and Seka died a short while later. A comrade brought me her engagement pistol. She was buried with the ring and next to Ivica, as she wanted...<sup>448</sup>

This is a kind of narrative that was part and parcel of many published memories of the war, but rarely featured a woman as the protagonist. The women editing *Žena u borbi*, for example, did not publish such narratives about women in the NOB. Even in cases when they considered the role of the *partizanke* in the war, they did not venture so far as to detail the circumstances of a battle. A more interesting example in this respect is the magazine *Arena*, whose journalists gradually opened to narratives about the *partizanke*. Yet, during the same year as *Svijet*, they published a story in installments under the title “Partisan Hidden Love” (“Partizanska skrivena ljubav”), in which the female protagonist, also a partisan nurse like Seka, was described as so preoccupied with the exuberance of her emotions that she could not properly engage in the warfare.

The interview with Branko Ćopić supplements Jovo Popović’s article very well. Namely, the interviewer suggested to Ćopić that he described only a few female characters, although he wrote profusely about the war. In response, the author emphasized his partiality toward loud and rowdy old ladies (*goropadne babe*), the type of female characters whom he had devised during the war to entertain soldiers with comedic sketches, and who appeared sporadically in his novels. Apparently, wartime audience reacted favorably when one of these *babas* punished their mischievous husbands

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<sup>448</sup> Ibid. “Ivica ostavi dva mitraljesca da drže odstupnicu. Mi da ćemo natrag, a jednog mitraljesca pogodi. Seka k njemu, izvlači ga. Ja za mitraljez, pa kosim. Pogibe i onaj drugi mitraljezac. Tako ostanem sama. Esesovci izgleda vide da samo ostala sama, pa stisnuli. Kako se koji približi, siječem kratkim rafalima. (...) Dobila sam u lijevu nogu, u kuk i rame. Ne mogu dalje. Lijeva ruka mi obamrla. Ništa s njom. Ali desna još može. Počnem oko sebe slagati bombe. Jednu ostavim za kraj, za sebe: sve može, ali živa njima u ruke, to nikako. (...) Tako nam je stiglo pojačanje i proleter i počeo novi napad. Ivica opet na čelu. Seka do njega. Kako odoše, tako ih više i ne vidjeh. Poslije su mi drugovi rekli da ih je njemački rafal odjednom pokosio. Ivica je ostao na mjestu mrtav, a Seka je još malo živjela. Po jednom drugu meni je poslala pištolj, onaj zaručnički, a s prstenom su je zakopali, pored Ivice, tako je htjela...”

by beating them.<sup>449</sup> Although at first glance such characters seemed to fit perfectly into the time when social norms seemed to collapse, their representation in the comedy genre in fact reminded the audiences of the conventionally accepted women's appropriate position and behavior.

Ćopić also mentions the *partizanka* Jagoda, who “[o]n the road to Podgrmeč, proud and without movement, (...) watchfully keeps guard, with her hair unbound.”<sup>450</sup> This famous literary figure of the partisan woman is the protagonist of Ćopić's poem “The Grave in the Rye.” She is described in a lyrical language, as befits, the author and the interviewer agreed, a dignified memorialization of the death of seven partisan girls executed by the road somewhere in Bosnia.<sup>451</sup> However, according to Ćopić, the small number of female characters in his works primarily derives from the perceived laboriousness of the subject.<sup>452</sup> Yet, it is unfortunate that in the opus of this truly prolific writer, between comedy and poetry, there was no place for a female character to match his “everyday man who grows to greatness in the war,”<sup>453</sup> who becomes a *delija*.<sup>454</sup>

The second Jovo Popović's article relevant to this analysis is “Doctor Manda from the Row of Warriors.” It recounts the fate of Manda Stržić, an ordinary partisan fighter. After the general said, “You have accomplished your duty, heroes!,” she joined the Kozara circle dance, a common part of every celebration in the days following the victory. This seems logical, because she contributed to its achievement. At the same time, Zagreb was not her hometown and she had no place to sleep that night. Moreover, she dropped out of high school in order to join the partisan army and did not

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<sup>449</sup> Weltrusky, “Zlatna bajka o ljudima,” 9.

<sup>450</sup> Branko Ćopić, “Grob u žitu” (“The Grave in the Rye”), in *Ognjeno radanje domovine (Homeland's Fiery Birth)* (Omladina: Sarajevo, 1944), 52.

<sup>451</sup> Weltrusky, “Zlatna bajka o ljudima,” 9.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>454</sup> During the existence of the Ottoman Empire, *delija* was a member of light, irregular military corps that operated in border regions of the empire. In everyday speech this term came to mark a brave, even heroic (but also disorderly) male.

know what to do as a demobilized *partizanka* whose only marketable skill was soldiering.<sup>455</sup> Stržić's story has a happy ending. She attended the so-called partisan gymnasium and, after graduation, enrolled in medical school. However, this development was initiated by a chance encounter during that night of dancing, and not because of the care of the army or emerging state system for its soldiers. Thus, the story of Manda Stržić provides a glimpse into the rocky and uncertain transition of a young partisan girl into civilian life. What is more, Stržić was literate and was able to enroll in a high school. Many *partizanke* were peasant girls whose only education was wartime courses. While her story is one of success, the underlying impression is that she was fortunate as her life could just as easily have gone in a different direction.

Indeed, after life had finally started, as Manda Stržić formulated it, many war veterans were not able to fully participate in or enjoy the civilian life. The reason may have been bodily injuries. Stržić herself was wounded in the leg by a shell, and according to official figures, approximately forty percent of all *partizanke* (not counting women active in the home front) were wounded during their war service.<sup>456</sup> Despite this substantial percentage, only she represented the disabled women veterans in *Svijet*. In *Žena u borbi* it was Ruža Petrović, a well-known partisan mother, who was blinded by the Italians because of her connection with the partisan army. Moreover, while the wounded women were mentioned here and there in the women's press, they were not represented in photographs. Only once did I come across a picture of a disabled *partizanka*, and that was in the pages of *Naša žena* (*Our Woman*), the women's magazine published by the AFŽ of Slovenia. In the end of 1945, a photograph capturing a *partizanka* without a right lower leg in the arms of a war comrade was reproduced. "She sacrificed her limbs for the homeland," it said underneath.<sup>457</sup> While

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<sup>455</sup> Popović, "Doktor Manda iz stroja ratnika," 6.

<sup>456</sup> Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 46.

<sup>457</sup> Helena, "Za letošnji Božič bodo naši borci doma" ("Our Fighters Will Be Home This Christmas"), *Naša žena* 12 (December 1945): 254. "Domovini je žrtvovala svoje ude."

it was sometimes possible to come across photographs that reminded the readership of the horrors of war, they as a rule did not include photographs of war invalids.<sup>458</sup> Similar to the case of men, the war experience was stabilized on the image of an able-bodied soldier and veteran.

In addition to physical injuries, many soldiers also had psychological problems, that is, in modern scientific jargon, PTSD. The interviews with Branko Ćopić and Mira Alečković, however briefly, address this issue. Branko Ćopić mentioned his real life *delije*, “a succession of heroes who, when peace came, suddenly no longer knew what to do; some of them, the simple ones, became arrogant and shot over the heads of waiters, others started drinking, the third... there were those who simply got lost.”<sup>459</sup> Mira Alečković elucidates the same matter from a different angle providing one of the rare examples of the legacy the war has left in the psyche of this former partisan. The author, who spent her entire life recounting the war, still felt the terror thirty years later: “Even today, I sometimes wake up at night with a shock from the dream of the horror of war. I feel ice, ice in my bones. So, I think: maybe I will die on one such night ...”<sup>460</sup> With this remark, Mira Alečković refers to one of many psychological and behavioral symptoms that affect war veterans. Similar to the two examples, there were some allusions to this issue here and there in the various media outlets. Notably, Irena Vrkljan, author known as the Croatian Virginia Woolf, recalled in her autobiographical account a friend and colleague, filmmaker Ante Vinculin, who “[d]rank a lot and told me: whenever I go to a pub, all my dead comrades go with me and then we

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<sup>458</sup> At the same time, in the very first postwar years, but not later, the occasional deceased war victim, usually a woman, was published on the pages of *Žena u borbi*, as can be seen in chapter 3.

<sup>459</sup> Weltrusky, “Zlatna bajka o ljudima,” 9. “(...) niz heroja koji kad je došlo mirno doba, odjednom više nisu znali kamo će, šta će poneki od njih, koji je bio priprost, okolo se silio, pucao preko glava kelnera, drugi se propio, treći... bilo ih je koji su se naprosto izgubili.”

<sup>460</sup> Weltrusky, “Svijetov portret: Mira Alečković,” 11. “I danas me nekada noću trgnu iza sna ratne strave. Osjetim led, led u kostima. Pa pomislim: možda ću jedne takve noći od toga i umrijeti...”

stand together at the bar, the pubs are always full of morning light, and we drink to all our health.”<sup>461</sup>

Vrkljan also noted that he was sometimes absent from work, but that no one talked about the reasons for his absences except sometimes she and his wife.<sup>462</sup> During the existence of Yugoslavia, however, no practical information on this issue emerged in the mainstream media. And, as Heike Karge’s recent research shows, although several institutions for the treatment of war veterans’ mental problems began to appear throughout the country only in the 1960s, silence on the subject prevailed both in Yugoslav psychiatry and among the public in general until the 1980s.<sup>463</sup>

In the short period between 1972 and 1978, the narrative focused on the NOB went from the opening and climax to a gradual return to the initial positions. Moreover, while my research stops in 1980, I checked out the magazine’s content during the early 1980s, too. It is worth mentioning that the fortieth anniversaries of the first conferences of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia or the AFŽ of Croatia were not mentioned in *Svijet* in any way. Instead, the women’s wartime achievements were in 1983 tackled only from the aspect of Tito’s support for their engagement in an article entitled “Tito, Revolution, Women.”<sup>464</sup> At that time, the commemoration of Tito’s birthday as well as the anniversary of his death became omnipresent and *Svijet* conformed without delay in this respect. It also published relevant materials each year, not only on “round” anniversaries, as was the case with the anniversaries of the AFŽ’s conferences. It appears that, at least in the case of *Svijet*, the practice of commemorating Tito’s life and accomplishments absorbed some parts of the narrative about the

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<sup>461</sup> Irena Vrkljan, *Svila škare (Silk Shears)* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 2004 (1984)), 80. “Mnogo je pio i govorio mi: uvijek kada idem u neku krčmu, sa mnom idu i svi moji mrtvi drugovi i mi tad zajedno stojimo za šankom, krčme su uvijek pune jutarnjeg svjetla, mi pijemo u zdravlje svih nas.”

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>463</sup> Heike Karge, “Afflicted Heroes: The Rise and Fall of Yugoslav War Neurosis after the Second World War,” in *From the Midwife’s Bag to the Patient’s File: Public Health in Eastern Europe*, ed. Heike Karge, Friederike Kind-Kovács and Sara Bernasconi (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2017), 195-216.

<sup>464</sup> -, “Tito, revolucija, žene,” *Svijet* 9 (April 29, 1983), 6-7.

People's Liberation Struggle, such as the struggle for women's emancipation and equality, which freed the editorial board from the obligation to commemorate some of the anniversaries separately.

In sum, the *Svijet's* editorial board never showed real eagerness or enthusiasm in commemorating the official anniversaries of the People's Liberation Struggle. In addition, they wrote the least about the *partzianke*. But they did not completely disregard the opportunities this topic offered outside of the official commemorations and published several interesting pieces that dealt with the topics that *Žena u borbi* avoided. In the coming sections, I continue the exploration of *Svijet* by focusing on two sections that were not published with the intention of commemoration. My objective is to examine their characteristics, identify the patterns, and to determine how they fit into or build upon the way *Svijet* commemorated the anniversaries of the People's Liberation Struggle and the New Woman forged therein.

#### 4.4 On the Margins of Memory

Among the various regular sections, which dealt with the People's Liberation Struggle, "Women and Espionage" ("Žene i špijunaža") stands out. As the title suggests, it focused on women, both foreigners and Yugoslav citizens, who engaged in espionage to obtain intelligence at some point in their lives. While the authors and styles changed, during much of the decade in which it appeared in *Svijet* (1964-1974), its contents seemed to mimic Western pop-cultural popularity of literary and cinematic secret agents.<sup>465</sup> Although "Women and Espionage" was not nearly as sexually suggestive as the iconic spy products of the period, I included it in the analysis in order to

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<sup>465</sup> Photographs of fashion trends were not the only things that the journalists of *Svijet* (as well as the journalists of other *Vjesnik's* editions) took from the Western media. However, just like they did not record the sources of the illustrations, they did not note where they found the materials for this section. Namely, several issues in the beginning refer to international spies, predominantly active during the Second World War. As for the representation of domestic spies, to the best of my knowledge, there was no similar literature in Yugoslavia, and the authors of the column had to write these texts themselves.

ponder more about what (however soft) erotica available in it contributes to the discussion about *Svijet*'s New Woman. While reading it, I experienced a reaction that feminist media expert Janice Winship once termed “a kneejerk response in feminists,”<sup>466</sup> that is, the automatic dislike for women's unnecessary nudity in the mainstream media. Basing her analysis on *Etcetera*, one of the many British magazines for teenage girls, and its penchant for depicting them semi-naked in fashion editorials, Winship argues that this is not merely (however soft) erotica which exposes young, sometimes underage, girls to the male gaze. Rather, the author explains, even such a representation of gender can help its further modification and, therefore, have added value.<sup>467</sup>

At the opposite end of the journalistic spectrum is “My Street Bears Her Name.” If I thought, at least initially, that “Women and Espionage” would be a better fit for a magazine like *Start*, this section is the kind of material I could imagine in *Žena u borbi*. On the one hand, it is orthodox in its portrayal of women who participated in the NOB and who got “their” streets due to their wartime merits. On the other hand, it questions the social order in which local authorities tend to remove such streets on the outskirts of cities. Although the two sections are completely different and seem unexpected in a magazine as *Svijet* was for different reasons, in the upcoming analysis I will try to show why they are, in fact, expected in a magazine as *Svijet* was and can be considered as complementary to the previously examined material.

### **“Women and Espionage”**

In the introduction to the first edition of “Women and Espionage,” the author explained that “[t]he secrets of the underground war have always stirred the imagination of those who learned of

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<sup>466</sup> Janice Winship, “‘A Girl Needs to Get Street-Wise’: Magazines for the 1980s,” *Feminist Review* 21 (Winter 1985): 45. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1394838>.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid*, 42, 45-46.

them from books, newsprint, by word of mouth, or trials for espionage. For centuries, the imagination of the laity has been tickled by the stories of women's involvement."<sup>468</sup> While the narrow definition of espionage refers primarily to the "gathering of intelligence, usually of military nature, that is not openly available," and, broadly understood, can also include covert gathering of information, organizing resistance, subversive activities, and sabotage,<sup>469</sup> the introduction promises something else. Indeed, in the first published installments, the author delved on descriptions of actual intelligence-gathering activities and its intricacies.

During the first year of publication, however, the author turned more and more to "[t]hose tales, interwoven with threads of love adventures, infidelity and seduction, true and feigned love, [that] have sometimes obscured the true meaning and seriousness of women's roles in the struggles of intelligence services."<sup>470</sup> With each new issue, he "purge[d] these characters of layers of motifs to show them unadorned."<sup>471</sup> In this way, "Women and Espionage" consolidated its similitude to the Western products of popular culture that, since the interwar period onward, portrayed women's espionage activities as profoundly gendered endeavors. In actuality, these were most often "mundane gendered tasks" such as analyzing, sorting, and filing data and then typing up reports about it. In spite of that, the contemporary imagination was "stirred" and "tickled" by novels and films that fed on the cult of Mata Hari and portrayed women's espionage activities as founded on and inseparable from female sexual allure.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> M. Ružić, "'Luda Beta' koja je mrzila ropstvo" ("'Crazy Beth' Who Hated Slavery"), *Svijet* 12 (July 15, 1964), 39. "Tajne podzemnog rata oduvijek su raspaljivale maštu onih koji su ih saznali iz knjiga, štampe, usmene predaje ili špijunskih procesa. Posebno su fantaziju laika kroz vjekove razigravale priče o učešću žena..."

<sup>469</sup> Juliette Pattinson, "The Twilight War: Gender and Espionage, Britain, 1900-1950," in *Handbook of Gender and War*, eds. Simona Sharoni, Julia Welland, Linda Steiner, and Jennifer Pedersen (Cheltenham UK, Northampton USA: Edward Elgar, 2016), 68.

<sup>470</sup> Ružić, "Luda Beta," 39. "Te priče protkane nitima ljubavnih avantura, nevjere i zavodenja, prave i hinjene ljubavi, oduzimale su ponekad pravi smisao i punu ozbiljnost ženskom udjelu u bitkama obavještajnih služba."

<sup>471</sup> Ibid. "...da očistimo te likove od naslage motiva i da ih prikažemo bez uljepšavanja."

<sup>472</sup> Pattinson, "The Twilight War," 66-67, quote on 83; Tammy M. Proctor, *Female Intelligence: Women and Espionage in the First World War* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003).



Figure 5: M. Ružić, “Špijunska ‘Gola Maja,’” *Svijet* 2 (January 15, 1965): 36.

The insistence on the sexual aspect of the wartime activities of the female protagonists is evident in the titles of individual editions as well as in the accompanying illustrations. For instance, the fifth issue, which for the first time addressed World War II and introduced three women spies in the service of Nazi Germany, was titled “Unclear Motifs of Betrayal.”<sup>473</sup> Toward the end of 1964, editions appeared with headlines like “False Weddings,”<sup>474</sup> and “She Betrayed Everyone But Her Lover.”<sup>475</sup> And in 1965, gems like “Spy ‘Naked Maja’”<sup>476</sup> and “From an Easy Woman to a Hard Spy”<sup>477</sup> were published.

The illustrations accompanying individual articles emphasize male-female interactions and the sensuality contained therein (figure 5). Unlike photographs and documents that were commonly enclosed with the articles about the wars, especially if the topic was the NOB, to support their authenticity, these illustrations perfectly match the illustrations that were attached to the romance novels published in *Svijet* as literary supplement.

Each sequel, according to the author, “purged” the female protagonists in several stages. Rather predictably, the story usually began with their physical description, continued with a clarification of their marital status before and during the war, and usually included descriptions of their extramarital relationships, sometimes with their liaisons, colleagues, and superiors, and sometimes

<sup>473</sup> Ružić, “Nejasni motivi izdaje,” 36-37.

<sup>474</sup> M. Ružić, “Lažna vjenčanja” (“False Weddings”), *Svijet* 17 (September 1, 1964), 36-37.

<sup>475</sup> M. Ružić, “Sve je izdala osim ljubavnika” (“She Betrayed Everyone But Her Lover”), *Svijet* 20 (October 15, 1964), 37.

<sup>476</sup> M. Ružić, “Špijunska ‘Gola Maja’” (“Spy ‘Naked Maja’”), *Svijet* 2 (January 15, 1965), 36-37.

<sup>477</sup> M. Ružić, “Od lake žene do teške špijunke” (“From an Easy Woman to a Hard Spy”), *Svijet* 4 (February 15, 1965), 36-37.

with members of the enemy army. The relationships were sometimes described as romantic, but more often than not, they were primarily sexual in nature. The reason for this is the assumption that these girls and women usually based the gathering of information and its further dissemination precisely on the ability to attract men sexually. In doing so, the spies were usually described as enjoying their work. For instance, the aforementioned Naked Maja was described as “an attractive, loose divorcee (*raspuštenica*)” who reportedly used “unsparingly (...) her beautiful body and her skill to be irresistible.” Everything else, naturally, was taken care of by someone else.<sup>478</sup>

Unlike the foreign women, the local spies were not described as enjoying their spying activities to such an extent. This refers particularly to the sexual aspect of their espionage activities. The spies in this case were most often described as members of the communist youth organization, the *skojevke*. They were usually partisan couriers or illegal activists in urban centers, who were captured, imprisoned, and tortured for information by the Ustasha or the Germans. For this reason, enemy treatment of female spies, which usually included sexual acts, served as evidence of their perfidy. Moreover, in several cases, the author implied that the women in question were coerced or intimidated into performing sexual favors. That is, the Yugoslav protagonists, unlike their international counterparts, were portrayed as trapped and used by the enemies, but, at times by the partisans as well.<sup>479</sup>

The different positioning of “our” and “their” female spies reflects a widespread view of women and female sexuality in socialist Yugoslavia. Journalist and author Veselko Tenžera formulated it for *Start* as “the ideology of our girl.”<sup>480</sup> In this frame of reference, even if “our girls” engage in

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<sup>478</sup> Ružić, “Maja,” 36-37.

<sup>479</sup> For instance: M. Ružić, “Udovičina veza” (“The Widow’s Connection”), *Svijet* 6 (March 15, 1965): 38-39; “Osuda bez priziva” (“Conviction Without the Right to Appeal”), *Svijet* 14 (July 15, 1966), 26-27; idem, “Špijunka se ne javlja” (“The Missing Spy”), *Svijet* 19 (October 1, 1966), 28-29.

<sup>480</sup> Veselko Tenžera, “Ideologija naše cure” (“Our Girl’s Ideology”) *Start* 269 (May 16, 1979): 16-18. I will return to this opinion piece and analyze it further in the chapter 6.

such compromised activity, they can by no means be as morally depraved as foreigners to enjoy working as “sexual servants of the state.”<sup>481</sup> This discrepancy evokes the dilemma pointed out by British historian Penny Summerfield. She analyzes *Odette* (1950) and *Carve Her Name with Pride* (1958), the only British films of the 1950s and 1960s to focus on female secret agents working for the Special Operations Executive (SOE). In both cases, the women were in course of the films sent on missions to France, captured, incarcerated in a concentration camp, and tortured. Since both films feature quite brutal scenes of torture, which was not common for British war films in the 1950s and 1960s, the author asks why these two heroines were tortured on screen. According to her, there are two answers to this. On the one hand, it helps to portray women’s wartime service as heroic in masculine interpretation of the word. On the other, it helps to confirm that even the strongest women are “in fact little different from other women in terms of their positions in the gender hierarchy.”<sup>482</sup>

The two answers could in equal measure be applied to the portrayal of women in the section “Women and Espionage.” The inconsistency, however, in positioning the main female characters depending on their affiliation – whether they are “ours” or not – suggests that there is a correct answer. It appears that the women in “Women and Espionage” are positioned as protagonists to point out their exceptionality. But when the author switches from British, American, German spies to Yugoslav women, his narrative changes. From *femmes fatales* prone to excesses, the protagonists become victims of circumstances controlled by men. That is, because they are different – morally unspoiled – from British, American, or German women, “our girls” who participated in the war suffered more.

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<sup>481</sup> Proctor, *Female Intelligence*, 149.

<sup>482</sup> Penny Summerfield, “Public Memory or Public Amnesia? British Women of the Second World War in Popular Films of the 1950s and 1960s,” *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 4 (October 2009): 948-949, quote on 949.

This section underwent an important change in 1968. Instead of an unknown author,<sup>483</sup> Mato Rajković, an experienced *Vjesnik*'s journalist, took over the section. In the introduction he promised important changes:

Completely openly: this is not about the “femme fatale” like the biblical Dalila, Mata Hari or “Miss Doctor” (...) but about our ordinary girls, wives and mothers who led ordinary lives, and about their unusual ventures inspired by our liberation struggle.  
(...) We chose precisely the informers, the former illegals from the ‘links’, the ‘points’ in the enemy garrisons, the couriers with the most difficult and confidential tasks on the ‘woods-Zagreb’ route and *vice versa*, because we know the least about the endeavors of these women.<sup>484</sup>

Indeed, Rajković moved away from a narrative that placed female sexual availability and/or vulnerability at its center. However, instead of showing how, “with unprecedented readiness for self-sacrifice and astonishing skills, these women achieved successes equal to those from the most intense spy novels,”<sup>485</sup> the protagonists continued to seem marginal to the events in which they participated. While his articles support the claim that some women participated in the NOB, he portrayed the Yugoslav *skojevke* and *partizanke* as such marginal actors that they seem like observers of the undertakings of their male comrades and superiors.<sup>486</sup>

It is important to note that, for unknown reasons, neither the previous author nor Mato Rajković wrote about young women who actually became part of the cultural memory of the NOB due to their war efforts. For instance, in the previous chapter I mentioned Nada Dimić, an illegal partisan activist and courier who was murdered in the Stara Gradiška concentration camp in 1942, and

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<sup>483</sup> M. Ružić never signed their full first name.

<sup>484</sup> Mato Rajković, “Obavještajke 13. divizije” (“Intelligence Agents of the 13<sup>th</sup> Division”), *Svijet* 10 (May 10, 1968), 34-35. “Posve otvoreno: ovdje nije riječ o “femme fatale” tipa biblijske Dalile, Mate Hari ili “Gospođice doktor” (...) nego o našim običnim djevojkama, ženama i majkama koje su živjele običnim životom i neobične pothvate kojih je inspirirala naša oslobodilačka borba.

(...) Izabrali smo baš obavještajke, nekadašnje ilegalke sa ‘veze,’ s ‘punktova’ u neprijateljskim garnizonima, kurirke s najtežim i najpovjerljivijim zadacima na liniji “šuma-Zagreb” i obratno, jer se baš o pothvatima tih najmanje zna i govori.”

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>486</sup> For instance: Mato Rajković, “Obavještajke Istre” (“Istrian Intelligence Agents”), *Svijet* 13 (June 19, 1968): 36-38.

Narandža Končar, a *partizanka* who served as the political commissar of the First Women's Partisan Unit. In the next chapter, I write about Ljubica Gerovac, who was posthumously awarded the title of the People's Hero of Yugoslavia for her participation in the armed struggles against Italians and Ustasha on the territory of Lika and Gorski kotar (Croatia), and Božidarka Damnjanović who was reportedly feared by the Chetniks of the Kosmaj mountain (Serbia) because of her military skills. And in the last one, I mention Anđelka Martić, a *partizanka* who authored some of the most famous novels about NOB for children. The only exception worthy of this pantheon are five installments based on interviews with Anita Drobnić-Mrđenović and Marija Vuković.

In other words, these published interviews demonstrated that Mato Rajković is indeed capable of writing texts about the Yugoslav version of women spies that are intriguing, occasionally witty as well as open to discussing the positive and negative sides of participation in the NOB. Importantly, this was made possible for him when he talked about the war with the women who took part in it. A particularly refreshing feature of these five issues is that there was no stereotypical consideration of the physical characteristics of the women interviewed, no questioning of their marital status, or possible wartime sexual transgressions, all staples in the first years of the existence of this section as well as in popular texts and films about secret agents. For instance, Anita Drobnić-Mrđenović spoke about the continuing relevance of women's beauty during wartime. She recounted a discussion she had with one of her wartime comrades who, in the midst of the war chaos, albeit sincerely concerned for her well-being, worried that she might be jeopardizing her good looks. To him, her looks were important enough to cite as a reason enough not to participate directly in the war conflict. Even many years later, Dorobnić-Mladenović was

proud to state that she knew it was more important to fight against enemy regimes so vile that they organized concentration camps for children.<sup>487</sup>

Conversely, Marija Vuković recounted using the same worn-out stereotype about the importance of beauty to mock a man she considered a particularly inadequate enemy specimen. Talking to an Ustasha double agent who was chatty and prone to boasting, but who wanted to sneak quietly into a partisan unit, she feigned naiveté: “Alas, Mr. Velčić, what a dangerous task you have assumed! Have you no pity for your beautiful head? You want to go to the partisan headquarters? Do you know what kind of creatures those forest people (*šumnjaci*) are? What if they get suspicious? What a pity for your youth and your red hair!” Toward the end of the war, Vuković was more than happy to trade places in order to boast with her real identity, not as a nursery garden employee, but as the fully uniformed chief of the Primorje (Croatia) intelligence center.<sup>488</sup>

When the collaboration with Anita Drobnić-Mrđenović and Marija Vuković ended, the author of this column ceased to be able to produce contributions of similar quality. Instead, Rajković’s writing abilities declined to the level of expression characteristic of his predecessor in the last two years of this section’s existence, in 1973 and 1974. The section that was in the last years renamed into “From Crinoline to Tapping Device” once again focused on sensationalism and sex. For example, in the article “In the Web of a Young Widow,” the mentioned widow was first trapped by an Italian officer who was housed in her home and flirted with her tirelessly. She was then used by the partisans who saw in the woman’s situation an opportunity to find out more information

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<sup>487</sup> Jozo Petričević, “Špijunaža u bijelom” (“Espionage in White”), *Svijet* 13 (June 30, 1971), 60-61

According to the author’s interpretation, the interlocutor who was an illegal activist at the time of the conversation with Drobnić-Mladenović redeemed his “lack of personal courage” by becoming a partisan fighter and dying, but “as a hero.”

<sup>488</sup> Mato Rajković, “Licem u lice s opasnim provokatorom” (“Face to Face with a Dangerous Provocateur”), *Svijet* 16 (August 11, 1971), 61. “Joj, gospodine Velčiću, kakvog ste se vi opasna posla prihvatili! Hoćete u glavni partizanski štab? A znate li vi tko su i kakvi su ti šumnjaci! Što ako posumnjaju u vas? Šteta vaše mladosti i vaše ruse kose.”

about the Italian and Ustasha forces.<sup>489</sup> Similarly, in the article “Blackmail on the Upland” a guide affiliated with the Ustasha demanded sexual favors from a woman he was illegally transferring to Italy. In this way he wanted to charge her for the second part of the trip, from the border to her destination.<sup>490</sup>

In this second period of the existence of “Women and Espionage,” not a single foreign debauched spy appeared. Nevertheless, the dilemma remained. Drobnić-Mrđenović and Vuković proudly testified how diverse and demanding the job of an illegal activist was during the NOB. Yet, the other women and girls Mato Rajković wrote about were described as victims of unwanted sexual exchanges. In other words, the texts that emerged from interviews with real illegal partisan activists described the adventures of the two women and their numerous associates and managed to conjure the sense of severity of the situation without any mention of possible sexual relations. However, without actual women describing their wartime experiences, the texts published as part of “Women and Espionage” and its sequel occupied the positions that Rajković pledged to avoid. Whether it was his personal preferences or perhaps the perceived preferences of the audience, the return to sex as an integral component of women’s intelligence service combined with the tendency to portray Yugoslav female illegal activists as victims of their work points to two things. General sexual immaturity is demonstrated by the protection of “our girls” from what foreign women allegedly enjoyed. And through the repeated allusions to the women’s sexual victimization, the belief that war is not an appropriate place for women is made clear.

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<sup>489</sup> Mato Rajković, “U mreži mlade udovice” (“In the Net of a Young Widow”), *Svijet* 4 (February 20, 1974), 45.

<sup>490</sup> Mato Rajković, “Ucjena na visoravni” (“Blackmail on the Upland”), *Svijet* 5 (March 6, 1974), 44.

### ***“My Street Bears Her Name”***

In the spring of 1977, the section “My Street Bears Her Name” (“Moja ulica nosi njezino ime”) appeared. The first edition of this section was at the same time the first Zoja Padovan’s serious journalistic assignment in *Svijet*. Before delving into the content of the section, it is important to note that Padovan was the *Vjesnik*’s journalist who had learned the tricks of the trade at *Tina*, the only Yugoslav magazine for girls, which was published between 1971 and 1976. According to the magazine’s editor-in-chief, Gruda Špicer, *Tina* was not under close political scrutiny because it was a youth magazine.<sup>491</sup> Accordingly, Reana Senjković’s analysis showed that the magazine practiced and encouraged the expression of a multitude of opinions and ideas. Senjković assumes that “the ‘image of *Tina*’ might manifest, among other things, the influence of the Zagreb feminist ‘group’ from the mid-1970s, which might have been primarily reflected in the media.”<sup>492</sup> Padovan, however, began her journalistic career a bit before the young women who developed into the so-called Yugoslav *neofeminists* and became active in the media. I am more inclined to conclude that Jasmina Lukić’s observation about “a number of emancipatory practices that were [already] part of Yugoslav reality” as well as at least some of the social customs derived from them influenced Padovan (as well as her *neofeminist* colleagues).<sup>493</sup>

In connection, “My Street Bears Her Name” is, in my opinion, a good example of how, despite the domination of Western popular culture, there was still room for content that in some ways came close to the canonical representation of women who participated in the NOB. Moreover, it showed that even such an approach still held the potential for something new. To be specific, this section

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<sup>491</sup> Senjković, *Izgubljeno u prijenosu*, 116.

Zubak has shown that the editorial offices of youth newspapers in Yugoslavia, even those that were subsidized by the state, often used those funds on projects for which they were not actually paid. They, therefore, by and large acted as sites of social criticism instead of expected ideological education. See: Zubak, “Yugoslav Youth Press.”

<sup>492</sup> Senjković, *Izgubljeno u prijenosu*, 158. “(...) ‘slika Tine’ mogla, među ostalim, odraziti utjecaj zagrebačke feminističke ‘grupe’ iz sredine 70-ih, koji se možda i ponajprije ogledao u medijima (...).”

<sup>493</sup> Jasmina Lukić, “One Socialist Story, or How I Became Feminist,” *Aspasia* 10 (2016): 135-145, quote on 142.

was a mini research project on the nature of the cultural memory of the NOB in Yugoslavia, which used investigative journalism to reveal a lot about Yugoslav society and its attitudes toward women, while still treating the People's Liberation Struggle with due respect.

This section started out with Padovan's attempt to find out why the naming of one dirt road on the outskirts of Gospić (Lika, Croatia) after Kata Pejnović has been delayed for three years. In a rather orthodox tradition of compiling CVs of deserving Party members (for Mitra Mitrović's elucidation, see previous chapter), the journalist noted that Pejnović was “[m]ember of the KPJ from 1938, first president of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia, member of AVNOJ and ZAVNOH, member of the Central Committee of the KPH, tireless organizer, fighter and worker.”<sup>494</sup> Following Padovan's introduction of this most famous member of the women's organization, the article provides excerpts from the journalist's conversations with Pejnović's friends and family. Padovan also chatted with an anonymous local, the resident of the street in question, who told her that the residents have already unofficially named their street *Logorište* because “everyone in Gospić knows where during the existence of the Austro-Hungary the military training ground was.”<sup>495</sup> That is, while the local administration stalled, the citizens named the nameless street themselves. Padovan finished the article wondering whether the women revolutionaries deserved more.<sup>496</sup>

Zoja Padovan and five *Svijet's* correspondents involved in the realization of this project did not really reach a conclusion of Padovan's reflections. Instead, it was an incentive for them to write about the commemoration of women revolutionaries in the public space of various Yugoslav republics. Padovan's article about Kata Pejnović's nameless street, which over time got closer to

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<sup>494</sup> Zoja Padovan, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Kata Pejnović,” *Svijet* 4 (February 25, 1977), 7. “Član KPJ od 1938. godine, prva predsjednica AFŽ Jugoslavije, član AVNOJa i ZAVNOHa, član Centralnog komiteta KPH, neumorni organizator, borac i radnik.”

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*

The street Logorište still exists in Gospić.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*

another name, touched upon several points that recurred in the subsequent nine editions of “My Street Bears Her Name,” revealing an intriguing pattern. While the first edition focused on a figure whose wartime engagements and postwar work were well-known throughout Yugoslavia – the memory of Kata Pejnović was not affected in the least by the glitch in the process of naming one crummy street after her – the following editions introduced nine women whose contribution to the success of the People’s Liberation Struggle remained only locally known. As expected, the streets bearing their names appeared in the urban centers where these women were born or where they were active during the war. However, as this project shows, the streets named after these women did not necessarily successfully convey information about the revolutionaries and heroines of the Second World War, but the educational institutions, which were as a rule close by, did.

Namely, while the street that was supposed to be named after Kata Pejnović became *Logorište* over time, the residents of the street of the *skojevka* Ivanka (Seka) Klaić in Slavonski Brod (Slavonia, Croatia) who talked to Zoja Padovan did not know who this woman was and why their street was named after her.<sup>497</sup> Similarly, the random passers whom Zoja Padovan met in Zadar (Dalmatia, Croatia) did not know that the street of yet another *skojevka*, Jelka Bučić, even existed in their small town.<sup>498</sup> And the residents of the street in Belgrade named after the partisan doctor Zora Ilić – Obradović who conversed with Seška Stanojlović guessed that the woman had participated in the NOB, but knew nothing about her.<sup>499</sup>

On the other hand, younger interlocutors were often well informed about the women about whom the journalists inquired. Local elementary schools were named after four out of ten women

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<sup>497</sup> Zoja Padovan, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Ivanka Klaić – Seka,” *Svijet* 6 (March 25, 1977), 16.

<sup>498</sup> Zoja Padovan, “Moja ulica nosi njezino ime: Jelka Bučić,” *Svijet* 11 (June 3, 1977), 12.

<sup>499</sup> Seška Stanojlović, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: dr. Zora Ilić-Obradović,” *Svijet* 5 (March 11, 1977), 13.

the section talked about,<sup>500</sup> and two more borrowed their names to kindergartens.<sup>501</sup> Finally, near one of the streets, the street of the *partizanka* Marija Vidović (Abesinka) in Varaždin (Zagorje, Croatia), there was an elementary school that was not named after her, but, as was the case with the other educational institutions, nevertheless commemorated her life and death through various activities.<sup>502</sup> By analogy with Heike Karge's research of the practices of constructing war memorials by local communities throughout Croatia and Serbia – where she concluded that local branches of the War Veterans Union, often in cooperation with ordinary villagers or townspeople who supplied funding, adapted “their” monuments to their particular memory and praised local heroes<sup>503</sup> – some of the communities that *Svijet*'s journalists visited (to a greater or lesser extent) cherished memories of “their” heroines of war.

While the practice of street naming has not always delivered the desired results, this section has drawn attention to the role of education in the nurseries and primary schools. The teachers in these institutions have eliminated some of the glaring blind spots in the state schooling system that established gender discrimination as the norm, as Rajka and Milan Polić found in the study of the textbooks for elementary schools in Croatia. Their findings were considered so important by editors of the journal *Žena u borbi* as well as the magazine *Svijet* that both wrote about it in 1979.<sup>504</sup> Curiously, in accordance with Polić's findings, the author of the textbook for the first grade of

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<sup>500</sup> Padovan, “Kata Pejnović,” 7; idem, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Slava Klavora,” *Svijet* 7 (April 8, 1977), 16; Ivica Nosić, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Amalija Lebeničink,” *Svijet* 8 (April 22, 1977), 13; Zoja Padovan, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Marija Lovrenčak,” *Svijet* 9 (May 6, 1977), 8.

<sup>501</sup> Padovan, “Jelka Bučić,” 12; Vojko Mužina, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Bosiljka Rakić,” *Svijet* 14 (July 15, 1977), 26.

<sup>502</sup> Mario Porobija, “Moja ulica nosi njeno ime: Marija-Vidović Abesinka,” *Svijet* 10 (May 20, 1977), 10.

<sup>503</sup> See more in: Heike Karge, *Sećanje u kamenu*; idem, “Mediated Remembrance: Local Practices of Remembering,” 49-62.

<sup>504</sup> Rajka and Milan Polić, “Dječji udžbenici o (ne)ravnopravnosti među spolovima” (“Children's Textbooks on Gender (In)Equality”), *Žena* 1 (January/February 1979), 12-28; Zoja Padovan i Vesa Blüml, “Udžbenički ratnici i majke” (“Textbook Warriors and Mothers”), *Svijet* 13 (June 29, 1979), 24-25.

elementary schools (in Croatia) considered it appropriate to present “Ivo and Ana,” “Mišo and Mara,” dad and mom.” As Ana Tajder notes in her memoir:

I met Ivo and Ana at school. *Ivo and Ana*. They should have in fact been called *Ana and Ivo*. Back then, we were taught that it was decent that women’s names come first. Just like opening the doors for the ladies and helping them put on a coat. Women were equal, but the old rules applied. I wonder, who and why decided on *Ivo and Ana*?<sup>505</sup>

All in all, Zoja Padovan and her colleagues with “My Street Bears Her Name” discovered that local authorities in three republics (as this project included cities in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia) were either similarly unorganized or prone to tuck their own heroines – no matter how renowned – to the margins of their plans and their towns. In contrast, local primary education institutions ensured that these women were not forgotten. This section only scratched the surface of the contradictions embedded in the practices of commemorating the women who participated in the NOB. It might not have been possible otherwise, as *Svijet* was not about burdening its readers but entertaining and informing them. Finally, I cannot but mention that in this case it would have been quite gratifying if the work of Zoja Padovan had influenced the development of the Zagreb feminist group. It would have nicely supplemented and balanced out the famous research of the first Yugoslav scholar to be recognized as a historian of women’s and gender history, Lydia Sklevicky, who, informed by the work of Rajka and Milan Polić, entitled one of her articles “More Horses than Women: On the Difficulty of Founding Women’s History in Yugoslavia.”<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> Ana Tajder, *Titoland ili jedno jednakije djetinjstvo (Titoland or One More Equal Childhood)* (Zagreb, Sarajevo, Belgrade: V.B.Z., 2013), 17. “U školi sam upoznala Ivu i Anu. *Ivo i Ana*. Ustvari su se trebali zvati *Ana i Ivo*. Tada su nas učili da se iz pristojnosti prvo nabrajaju ženska imena. Kao što se damama otvaraju vrata i pomaže im se pri odijevanju kaputa. Žene su bile ravnopravne, ali stara pravila još su vrijedila. Pitam se tko se, i zašto, odlučio za *Ivo i Ana*” (author’s emphasis).

<sup>506</sup> This text was published in Croatian in 1987 in the collection *Žena i društvo: Kultiviranje dijaloga* edited by Sklevicky herself. It was published in Italian in 1988 in the book *Gli studi sulle donne nella Università* edited by Ginevra Conti Odorisio, and in English in the first issue of *Gender&History* in 1989.

## 4.5 Conclusions

*Svijet* was one of the pioneering media that emerged in the early 1950s as the *Vjesnik*'s leading men tried to grab as much space as the Party would allow during that first phase of opening to the ideas of decentralization and liberalization. As Djurdja Bartlett observes, its use of fashion was an example of resistance that made Yugoslav socialism seem superior to other socialist countries in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>507</sup> From the early 1960s, however, *Svijet*'s contents captured the blossoming of the Yugoslav way into socialism. In this period, it gradually adapted to the actual circumstances in which it was published and in which its audience lived, and this included a nod of acknowledgement to the communist elite's requirements for socially responsible journalism. At the same time, *Svijet* shows how the New Woman was co-opted during the expansion and evolution of Yugoslav mass media against the backdrop of the introduction of self-management, Westernization, and the development of a modern consumer society. *Svijet* developed to create a more nuanced and dynamic image of the New Woman of Yugoslavia than adherence to communist ideology allowed to the *afežejke*. In other words, its editorial board integrated both old and new images of femininity and of women's social roles into its portrayal of the New Woman, tracing the gradual transformation of women (and sometimes men) in terms of their social and economic aspirations in the newly developing middle class.

The magazine did not easily accept either pre-established patterns of commemorating various events or the roles associated with them. The way *Svijet* commemorated International Women's Day exemplifies well its wandering that resulted in its own recognizable canon. Notably, it did not blend in by way of simply accepting the narratives the magazine *Žena u borbi* – the representative of the politically and ideologically correct interpretation of women's participation in the NOB and

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<sup>507</sup> Bartlett, *Fashion East*, 134-136.

women's emancipation that originated there – developed as a template for its own work. *Žena u borbi* established a neat narrative in which three main figures, the *afežejka* (the activist of the AFŽ), the *majka partizanka* (the partisan mother), and the *partizanka* (the woman partisan), all worked in sync, albeit some more than others, to help Marshal Tito, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and the partisan army to reach the bright, socialist future. In contrast, *Svijet*'s narratives were rarely designed to clearly focus on either of the pre-defined protagonists of the partisan saga. Or on a bright, socialist future, for that matter. Instead of rewriting the established truths, it wandered “the roads of the revolution” (*putevi revolucije*), bringing to its readership contents heterogeneous with regard to inspiration and quality.

Unexpectedly, its content includes concern rather than respect for the women who participated in the NOB. In discussing the underrepresentation of women in World War II British films, Penny Summerfield summarizes the source of the problem thus: “For this new woman to display her competence in a war situation, her feminine attributes had to be displaced by the masculine qualities of ‘resolution, toughness and a stiff upper lip.’”<sup>508</sup> Negotiating the same issue – the inability to imagine women in heavy military boots (to echo the poetry of Soviet wartime nurse Yulia Drunina<sup>509</sup>) – *Svijet* in various ways replicated the dilemma, and in its own discursive extreme, the “Women and Espionage” section, interpreted femininity not just as a “source of temptation,”<sup>510</sup> but as debilitating. In other words, *Svijet*'s journalists never published a contribution that countered or devalued the official account of women's participation in the NOB and its outcome – emancipated and in all equal to men – the Yugoslav New Woman. However, with the exception of the immediate post-Spring period, the habitual different interpretations revealed, however small, negative aspects

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<sup>508</sup> Summerfield, “Public Memory or Public Amnesia,” 948.

<sup>509</sup> See: Harris, “Yulia Drunina: ‘The Blond-Braided Soldier,’ 643-665; idem, “After ‘A Youth on Fire,’ 68-91.

<sup>510</sup> Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the ‘New Look’* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000): 174.

of participation in the NOB and suggested that women should not have been drawn into the war conflict.

## PART 3

### Introduction: In the *Other Women's* Press

The first conference of the Yugoslav Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) was held in in Bosanski Petrovac (Bosnia and Herzegovina) December 1942. Mitra Mitrović, communist activist and political worker since the 1930s and one of the founders of *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*), gave one of the speeches. In her talk, Mitrović focused on the women involved in a range of activities in the People's Liberation Movement (NOP). With a heavy dose of *licentia poetica*, she spoke about gender equality that has “achieved itself.”<sup>511</sup> Several years later, Mitrović recalled male and female comrades with whom she shared some of everyday life during the war, describing how a group of them made a conscious effort to simplify the division of household chores:

The female comrades are responsible for cleaning our room, lighting the fire and washing the dishes. The male comrades who live with us, we have released from these duties, without reservations and discussions about “equality” (...). We explain this “theoretical” intransigence: this domestic work is a hardship for us and for women in general, so why should our male comrades now be acquainted with such thankless tasks when, because we are fighting for that, they will disappear for us women too?!<sup>512</sup>

Undoubtedly influenced by enthusiasm over the perceived achievement of equality, Mitrović interpreted the described situation as an independent decision. She concluded her recollections of this situation by noting that “the [male] comrades were obviously satisfied with our theory.”<sup>513</sup>

Many women who participated in the NOP exercised their equality by taking on the tasks that were considered women's work. According to the official figures, approximately two million

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<sup>511</sup> Mitra Mitrović, “Antifašistički pokret žena u okviru narodno-oslobodilačke borbe” (“Women's Antifascist Movement within the Framework of the People's Liberation Struggle”), HR-HDA-1722-AFŽH (1942-1945), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 5).

<sup>512</sup> Mitrović, *Ratno putovanje*, 78-79. “Drugarice dežuraju redom u brisanju sobe, loženju vatre i pranju sudova. Drugove koji stanuju s nama oslobađamo tih dužnosti, bez rezerve i diskusija o “ravnopravnosti” (...). Mi tu nepopustljivost “teoretsku” objašnjavamo: da je taj domaći posao jedna tegoba i za nas, i za žene uopšte, i čemu bi se i drugovi baš sad upoznavali s takvim nezahvalnim poslovima kad će ih jednom, i za to se borimo, nestati i za nas žene?!”

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid*, 79. “Drugovi su očevidno zadovoljni našom teorijom.”

women throughout Yugoslavia were organized by the AFŽ and participated in the NOP in various capacities on the home front.<sup>514</sup> Moreover, numerous examples demonstrate that men left the tasks of cleaning, tidying, repairing clothes, and cooking to women whenever possible. Desanka Stojić, a *partizanka* who began her wartime journey in the First Women's Partisan Unit, noted that the rules of war required that *partizanke* participate in the daily work of the military on an equal footing with their male comrades. Night work — mending, sewing, and washing clothes for combatants, for instance — was exclusively female wherever there were women in the units.<sup>515</sup> At the same time, when reading Mitrović's writings, a thought suggests itself: What if the activity she interpreted as women's desire not to disturb their male comrades while they attended to their important manly concerns was understood by men as women's genuine, even "natural," interest in the sphere to which they "belonged" — the private sphere.

The assumption that an overwhelming number of, in this case, Yugoslav men did not know better, or did not want to know better, simplifies the chaos that partisan everyday life was and for which almost none of the men, nor of the women, were prepared. It does, however, point to two important factors of wartime reality that spilled over in the postwar period. First, beyond the legal changes, women alone were to learn what equality was, what emancipation meant, and work to achieve both. The courses organized by the Antifascist Front of Women during the war and in the immediate postwar years were based precisely on this political premise. Second, taking on new social roles did not mean challenging the traditionally defined gender order for women or men. As Kristen Ghodsee and Angelina Eimannsberger write, the state apparatuses of the socialist states instead focused on "reducing the social, political, and economic consequences of being a woman"

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<sup>514</sup> Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, 46.

<sup>515</sup> Desanka Stojić, *Prva ženska partizanska četa (First Women's Partisan Unit)* (Karlovac: Historijski arhiv u Karlovcu, 1987), 90.

and focused on socializing women's traditional tasks.<sup>516</sup> Moreover, a gap stubbornly continued to exist between the *afežejke*'s advocacy of women's rights and general trends that tended to oversimplify the issue or avoid it altogether – because some men and women indeed did not know better and because others did not want to know better.

By 1960, even a poet like Mitra Mitrović was no longer nurturing the wartime ideals. That year she published another book. Entitling it *Women's Position in the Contemporary World (Položaj žene u savremenom svetu)*, this time she approached gender equality more soberly, armed with statistics. She examined women's participation in education, paid work, and politics, as well as their involvement in the arts and sciences around the world and found that discrimination exists in all these areas. While Mitrović repeatedly reminds the reader of her belief that socialism is still the most effective means of women's liberation, her analysis concludes that, regardless of the socio-political system and the level of economic and cultural development, women around the world continue to find themselves in the gap between the private and public spheres. The author does not ignore any of the problems faced by women. She mentions and outlines the overcoming of harmful traditions, the role of women in the family and the related contradiction between the professional and family spheres. She also describes the widespread practice of employing women in predominantly unskilled jobs, their slow penetration into many educational fields and professions, and their even slower affirmation in the highest political and social functions. At the same time, Mitrović notices persistence of the belief in the so-called eternal nature of women, as well as in the existence of specifically female occupations.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>516</sup> Kristen Ghodsee and Angelina Eimannsberger, "Politicized Representations of Love and Sex: Reading the GDR's *Das Magazin*," *Groniek* 226 (Spring 2021): 29.

<sup>517</sup> Mitra Mitrović, *Položaj žene u savremenom svetu (Women's Position in the Contemporary World)* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1960).

The previous chapters have shown how two magazines intended for a female audience conceptualized and represented the process of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia and the place occupied by the NOB and the women who participated in it, especially the *partizanke*. Journalists writing for *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet* focused specifically on women's activities and contributions, as these were women's magazines edited almost exclusively by women and with a predominantly female readership. Consequently, in their interpretation, the People's Liberation Struggle abounded in instructive or simply entertaining as well as significant but also skeptical narratives about the deeds of Yugoslav women, which often took place precisely on the home front.

The following two chapters show that Croatian women's magazines, regardless of their mutual differences, represented only one side of the partisan myth. The examination of the illustrated weekly *Arena*, published from 1959, and the men's magazine *Start*, published from 1969, in the following chapters delves into a different cultural circuit of power from which the journalists of the women's magazines were largely removed. This was not visible when the focus of the analysis was on women's magazines, but Yugoslav journalism was subject to widespread sectarianism towards both women and so-called women's issues. Zorica Mutavdžić's transfer from Radio Belgrade to the position of editor-in-chief of the newly founded women's magazine *Politika's Bazar* in 1964 attests to the prejudices that male journalists harbored towards the women's press. Mutavdžić claims that several male colleagues (she mentions them by name) convinced her of their support if she accepted the position. Yet, none of them wanted to cooperate with her when she actually took the job because, she explains, they did not want to work for a women's magazine.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> Tamara Krstić, "Kod dva bela goluba: In memoriam Zorica Mutavdžić" ("At Two White Doves: In Memoriam Zorica Mutavdžić", Radio Belgrade 1, December 2, 2011. Audio, 28:25-31:00. <https://www.rts.rs/page/radio/sr/story/23/radio-Belgrade-1/1001480/kod-dva-bela-goluba.html>.

The illustrated weekly *Arena* and the men's magazine *Start* contributed to this gender politics of the socialist era. Both editorial staffs were male for most of the period studied, with the exception of the support staff. By the second half of the 1970s, female journalists in both magazines appeared for the most part only as external contributors.<sup>519</sup> In the last years of the 1970s, several female journalists were permanently employed in the editorial department of *Start*.<sup>520</sup> The composition of the staff and the content indicate how women were received in the profession, what topics male journalists considered suitable for women and what their opinions were on such content. Nevertheless, I argue that they contributed to the development of the cultural memory of the war as well as to the practice of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia. The following analysis will illustrate how the men in *Arena* and *Start*, just like their female counterparts in *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet*, chose which NOB-related content to engage with in order to disseminate new narratives to their audiences. I suggest that it shows how these men worked to adapt the notion of women's emancipation to their preconceived notions about women without overtly undermining either.

Moreover, the predominantly male journalists of *Arena* and *Start* paid no direct attention to the possible preferences of their female readers. Thus, only in April 1980, Vinko Česi, who was *Arena*'s editor-in-chief from 1976 to 1986, titled the editorial with "Something for the Gentler Sex." It was the first time an *Arena*'s editor-in-chief had publicly indicated what kind of content would be aimed at the magazine's female audience. In it, Česi mused about creating a section "for the woman, the housewife, the mother, the worker [in order to] ease their constant standing in the

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<sup>519</sup> In 1990, Zlatko Glik listed 89 people who have worked in *Arena*'s newsroom since its inception in 1959. Among them, Glik named 19 women. Consulting *Vjesnik's Lexicon*, I was not able to find two among them. Among the remaining 17 women, as many as eleven belonged to administrative staff (secretaries, editors, financial advisers), three were longtime correspondents from other cities, and only three Glik listed were full-time journalists at *Arena*'s editorial team. Glik, "Arena," 22; Peršen, ed., *Vjesnikov leksikon*.

<sup>520</sup> These women were Jelena Lovrić (who joined *Start* after the magazine *Vjesnik od Wednesday* was discontinued in 1977), Ingrid Badurina (from summer 1978), Vesna Kesić (from January 1978), Slavenka Drakulić (who became an associate in 1979 and a permanent employee in 1985), Maja Miles (who was the magazine's associate from 1979 to 1985). Mladen Pleše, "Među nama" ("Between Us"), *Start* 300 (July 23, 1980): 13; Peršen, ed., *Vjesnikov leksikon*.

kitchen, by the broom, vacuum cleaner, iron and so on.”<sup>521</sup> By the time Česi wrote this editorial, advisory sections for women were in fact a worn-out cliché. Since the founding of socialist Yugoslavia, many editors of newspapers and magazines that were not specifically aimed at a female audience had catered to the perceived interests of that audience by creating a section that combined on one page material about the so-called “four F’s” – food, fashion, family and furnishings.

Prompted by this trend, the women political workers added a gendered dimension to the burgeoning critique of the emerging Yugoslav Third Way in the printed press as early as the 1950s. In 1956, for example, the Croatian section of the Commission for Women of the Socialist Alliance of Working People’s (SSRNH) analyzed a series of printed press publications and radio broadcasts that were accessible to women in Croatia. The document notes that all newspapers and magazines had a section for women, mainly aimed at housewives. Interestingly, the document notes that the issues related to raising children are always found in the section for women, “although they are not only women’s issues.”<sup>522</sup> On the other hand, it explains that such topics are almost never addressed elsewhere, for instance in sections dealing with other internal social issues. The document concludes that such a division of topics indicates that many have not embraced the fact that “to speak and write about the problems and results of this sector [related to the Woman Question – author’s note] is to speak about the problems and results of building socialism.”<sup>523</sup> Women political

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<sup>521</sup> Vinko Česi, “Nešto za nježniji spol” (“Something for the Gentler Sex”), *Arena* 1006 (April 2, 1980), 4. “(...) za ženu, domaćicu, majku, radnicu, olakšati im na neki način ono vječito stajanje u kuhinji, uz metlu, usisivač, glačalo i tako dalje.”

<sup>522</sup> Štampa (1956.), no date, box 146, folder Sjednice Komisije (1954. – 1962.), HR-HDA-1228-SSRNH (1944.-1990.), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 2). “(...) iako to nisu samo ženski problemi.”

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

A similar action was taken by the women’s section in Belgrade in 1959. They researched and then argued against the shallow definition of women’s interests in the six daily newspapers sold throughout Yugoslavia. Newspapers in question were: *Politika* from Serbia, *Vjesnik* from Croatia, *Slovenski poročevalec* from Slovenia, *Nova Makedonija* from Macedonia, *Oslobođenje* from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and *Pobjeda* from Montenegro.

Prilog o rubrikama za žene u dnevnoj štampi, June 8, 1959, box 91, folder 192-91-409, AJ-142 SK SSRNJ (1947 – 1990), Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, Serbia.

workers continued to write and organize discussions about the representation of women in the media as long as the country existed.<sup>524</sup> Still, their efforts were usually published only in their own magazines, which, it seems, were easily overlooked and ignored.<sup>525</sup> In other words, in 1980, three and a half decades after Yugoslavia joined the socialist project of creating a New Woman, many of the male magazine editors – and there were many, because with the exception of women’s magazines, printed publications were usually entrusted to male journalists – did not know what interests women might have outside the family and household.

What Vinko Česi and (many) men he worked with overlooked was the fact that a remarkable number of women regularly bought *Arena* and *Start* as well as other magazines, even if they did not have stereotypical women’s sections. More to the point, women readers made up about forty percent of *Arena*’s readership in the beginning of the 1960s, and their share grew steadily to well over sixty percent by the end of the 1970s.<sup>526</sup> In the early 1970s, moreover, the AFŽ leadership commented that *Arena* was a magazine that influenced “the average woman, the intellectual as well as the non-intellectual, the woman in the countryside as well as the woman in the city” even more than *Svijet* magazine.<sup>527</sup> In the case of *Start*, about one-third of its readership was female throughout

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<sup>524</sup> For instance, Dragomir Pantić and Ljiljana Bečević, employees of the public opinion research center at the Institute of Social Sciences (*Institut društvenih nauka*) in Belgrade, prepared research under the title “Woman in the Informative and Political Press” (“Žena u informativno-političkoj štampi”) especially for the KDAŽ of Yugoslavia which organized a conference on “The Social Position of Women in the Media” in the summer of 1972. Boxes 473 and 474, AJ-142 SK SSRNJ (1947 – 1990), Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, Serbia.

<sup>525</sup> For instance: Gordana Bosanac, “Lažna slika žene predmet manipulacije u sredstvima masovnog komuniciranja” (“Woman’s False Image as the Subject of Manipulation in the Mass Media”), *Žena* 25, no. 5 (September/October 1968): 39-42; Gordana Bosanac and Mirjana Poček-Matić, “Problem komunikacije seksualiteta u masovnom mediju” (“The Problem of Sexuality Communication in the Mass Media”), *Žena* 30, no. 1/2 (January-April 1973): 11-28; Đurđa Milanović, “Teze za drugačiji pristup odnosu žene i masovnih medija” (“Theses for a Different Approach to the Relationship between Women and the Mass Media”), *Žena* 38, no. 6 (November/December 1980): 2-12.

<sup>526</sup> Mance, *Profili čitalačkih publika*, 68.

<sup>527</sup> Zapisnik sjednice Predsjedništva KDAŽH, November 2, 1973, box 6, folder 1.3 Predsjedništvo (1972-1983), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945 – 1990), Croatian State Archive, Zagreb, Croatia (pp. 2/34) “(...) vrše utjecaj na prosječnu ženu i intelektualku i neintelektualku i ženu na selu i ženu u gradu (...).”

the entire researched period.<sup>528</sup> The popularity of both magazines with the female audience is one of the reasons why I consider that the illustrated weekly *Arena* and the men's magazine *Start*, published under the guise of the magazine for the modern reader, are excellent places to continue the search for representations of the *partizanka* in the press.

Their popularity with the reading public in general is the additional reason why I chose these two magazines in particular. First, both *Arena* and *Start* were recognizable and popular brands of the Zagreb publishing house due to their innovation in the context of Yugoslav print media (and despite later attempts to reproduce magazines with similar concepts in other republics). Both were well received throughout Yugoslavia, and *Arena* was also quite popular among Yugoslav workers abroad.<sup>529</sup> Moreover, these magazines appealed to different audiences: *Arena* was aimed at audiences in rural areas or people who had just moved to urban centers – either within Yugoslavia or abroad – and worked in industry. The audience defined in this way was truly numerous, as by the end of the 1960s some 5,5 million people had left the villages to find work in the urban centers, especially in industry. Moreover, the 1960s are considered as a decade in which Yugoslav society “could no longer be characterized as a rural-traditional one, but at the same time it had not yet fully become urban- industrial.”<sup>530</sup> While it began with similar ambitions, *Start* became recognized in the 1970s as a magazine for the urban elite. This term refers to students and highly educated workers employed in white-collar occupations, both of which had increased markedly by the early 1970s given the strong impetus to education. While the authorities in the immediate postwar period focused on spreading literacy and enforcing compulsory elementary school attendance for both

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<sup>528</sup> Mance, *Profili čitalačkih publika*, 164.

<sup>529</sup> For instance, in 1975 *Arena* was sold in 805 cities throughout Croatia, in 308 Serbian (including Vojvodina and Kosovo), 259 Bosnian, and 144 Slovenian towns, but only in 31 Macedonian and 17 Montenegrin towns. *Start* was sold in 571 Croatian, 318 Serbian (including Vojvodina and Kosovo), 171 Bosnian, 141 Slovenian, 29 Macedonian, and 17 Montenegrin cities. Ibid, 65, 161.

Regarding *Arena*'s success abroad see: Zlatko Glik, “Arena,” in *Monografije*, 20-21.

<sup>530</sup> Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 192-194, quote on 192.

female and male children, it was estimated for the state as a whole that by the early 1970s the number of high school graduates had tripled and the number of people with college degree had increased sixfold.<sup>531</sup>

Both magazines can be used as representatives of the profession that privileged male professionals and favored masculine values throughout the researched period. The forthcoming analysis, therefore, helps to establish to what extent and in what ways their interpretation of the war and women at war differs from that available in the women's magazines. It is based on a close reading of relevant texts selected, as described in the introduction, after a review of about one thousand issues of *Arena* published between its first issue in April 1959 and the end of 1980, and of just over three hundred issues of *Start* published from the magazine's appearance in January 1969 to the same end date. The questions guiding the study of *Arena* and *Start* are: What approach did these magazines take to the portrayal of stereotypical gender imagery and how did they portray wartime masculinity and femininity? How did the representation of wartime femininity correspond to the ideal of the New Yugoslav Woman presented by *Žena u borbi* and echoed to some extent by *Svijet*? In other words, these questions will help me find out what story about the war and women in the war *Arena*'s and *Start*'s reporters presented to their numerous female audiences and what their male readers could learn about many women's wartime efforts. Furthermore, they will help me determine what message about women's emancipation (mainly) the men in *Arena* and *Start* were conveying to their readers when they were not writing about the socialist project of women's emancipation per se.

Since male journalists largely did not view the war as a special interest for women, their interpretations of partisan warfare were based on the male war hero prototype. Eric Weitz has

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<sup>531</sup> Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju socijalističke samoupravne Jugoslavije (Woman in the Development of the Socialist Self-governing Yugoslavia)* (Belgrade: NIRO Jugoslovenska stvarnost, 1981).

already noted that “the masculinist definition of labor and politics that had become a fixed part of the socialist movements of the 19th century” was adopted by communist parties across Europe. During and after World War I, this dominant representation of masculinity was refreshed by “a pronounced militaristic tone.”<sup>532</sup> After the end of World War II, the idealized image of militarized masculinity was first restored and then maintained in a number of states, and as a result much work was invested in promoting the ideals derived from the war.<sup>533</sup> This observation, of course, applies to Yugoslavia as well. That is, the communist male activist and the male partisan soldier in the two magazines studied clearly “promoted an acceptable form of martial behavior on behalf of the communist state.”<sup>534</sup> If gender order does indeed emerge from everyday practices, then *Start*’s journalists, just like the men who worked in *Arena*’s editorial staff, reproduced male gender roles in their traditional form and affirmed militarized men as physically as well as morally and ideologically strong role models of Yugoslav socialism.<sup>535</sup>

Certainly, the female fighter played a role in their interpretations of the war. Taking into account that the magazine’s journalists tended to simplify the modern world of gender relations and promoted the idea that women were primarily interested in housekeeping and child rearing, the following chapters examine how the Yugoslav New Woman looked and behaved in *Arena* and *Start*. Responses of men in these editorial offices most often fluctuated between the frequently used

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<sup>532</sup> Weitz, “The Heroic Man,” 312-313.

<sup>533</sup> The Soviet case study received some scholarly attention in this regard. See, for instance: Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially chapter 4 “Wartime Heroes for Post-War Youth: The Rise and Fall of The Young Guard,” 137-166; Catherine Merridale, “Masculinity at War: Did Gender Matter in the Soviet Army?,” *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 5, no. 3 (2012): 307-320; Erica L. Fraser and Kateryna Tonkykh, “Cosmonaut Gossip: Socialist Masculinity as Private-Public Performance in the Kamanin Diaries,” *Aspasia* 15 (2021): 61-80.

<sup>534</sup> Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly, “Boys Must Be Boys: Gender and the Serbian Radical Party, 1991-2000,” *Nationalities Papers* 35, no. 1 (March 2007): 98.

<sup>535</sup> This attitude extended also to the soldiers of the Yugoslav People’s Army (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*, JNA). See more in: Tanja Petrović, “Contested Normality: Negotiating Masculinity in Narratives of Service in the Yugoslav People’s Army,” in *Negotiating Normality: Everyday Life in Socialist Institutions*, ed. Daniela Koleva (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 83-102.

option of marginalization and the discourse that had existed in the public sphere since World War I and throughout the existence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. According to this discourse, a woman's abilities are measured against the generally accepted values of masculinity, that is to say, whether she is capable of being a hu(man).<sup>536</sup>

Unlike their colleagues in *Žena u borbi* and *Svijet*, I argue that the remembrance practices of *Arena's* and *Start's* editorial staffs reflect men's struggle with women's emancipation, and even their – sometimes sincere and sometimes obdurate – misinterpretation of it. *Arena's* journalists found refuge in traditionally accepted imagery. I find that they developed the representations of both female and male NOB participants based on regular surveys of audience attitudes and adjustment of content to their preferences. The development of *Start*, on the other hand, testifies to the extent of freedom of expression in the Yugoslav press of the 1970s. In their work, *Start's* journalists positioned themselves against the perceived Yugoslav moral puritanism and explored Yugoslav sexual ideology by, in the words of art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau, moving dangerously close to the prostitutionalization of femininity. Following her “Legs of the Countess,” in which she focused on the new and insatiable market of the French Second Empire characterized by the commercialization and commodification of all spheres of life, I suggest that a similar phenomenon developed in Yugoslavia, especially in the 1970s and later. Solomon-Godeau postulated the emergence of new forms of commodification of women and their bodies in connection to the general trends of consumption.<sup>537</sup> Similarly, a quasi-capitalist media market in

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<sup>536</sup> In the BCS languages, both the word man and the word human can signify a male person.

Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije*; Ana Kolarić, “‘Što nisam muško?!’: predstave o vezi između žene i nacije u časopisu *Žena u ratnim i poratnim godinama* (1911-1921)” (“‘Why Am I Not a Man?!’: Representations of the Relationship between the Woman and the Nation in the Magazine *Woman* during the War and Postwar Years (1911-1921)”), *Knjiženstvo* 3 (2013): not paginated. <http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/sr-lat/casopisi/2013/zenska-knjizevnost-i-kultura/sto-nisam-musko-predstave-o-vezi-izmedju-zene-i-nacije-u-casopisu-zena-u-ratnim-i-poratnim-godinama-1911-1921#gsc.tab=0>

<sup>537</sup> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “The Legs of the Countess,” *October* 39 (Winter 1986), 65-108. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778313?origin=JSTOR-pdf>.

partnership with socialist patriarchy led to the spectacle of sexualized femininity. *Start*'s journalists tended to portray women as sexualized commodities exacerbating the double standard already evident in popular media's the treatment of men and women. That was also true of the People's Liberation Struggle and was particularly evident in the way *Start*'s journalists wrote about the women who participated in it.

## Chapter 5 – Catching Up with the Wartime Sensations in *Arena*

A *četa* was lying in front of a bunker which was supposed to be taken. Such were the orders of the Supreme Headquarters. The commissar tried to lead the fighters into the attack. To his great astonishment, no one follows him. People are lying down with their heads on the ground, they are not getting up. He calls them a second time. Nothing. The commissar leaps over the rows of soldiers, stands behind them and shouts “Forward” at the top of his lungs firing from his machine gun over their heads, adding with the same crazed cry “Or I will kill every last one of you!” He flies forward and everyone rushes after him. The bunker is taken. The next day, the Supreme Headquarters of the People’s Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia praises over the radio the brave and fearless, experienced and conscientious fighters who conquered the bunker. Everyone is standing around, they are showing off, no one remembers what happened yesterday.<sup>538</sup>

According to Jara Ribnikar, the commissar and original narrator of this anecdote was Slobodan Penezić – Krcun, participant of the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB), who was declared a People’s Hero of Yugoslavia for his achievements. Ribnikar published this account as part of her ruminations about courage during wartime in the magazine *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) in 1969 and then, in a slightly modified form in the third part of her memoir series *Život i priča* (*Life and Story*). The second volume of the same series contains a biographical detail about another People’s Hero, Koča Popović:

Somewhere near Mlinište, after the raid on Drvar, our column is winding its way over the hill, they are firing mortars at us, a column of tanks is passing below us, we are moving fast, here is an intersection, our path turns left, a stone is lying on the meadow. On it sits Koča with his legs crossed singing at the top of his voice: “The troops of the partisans are going, the glory of the fight they are bearing.”<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Jara Ribnikar, “Nekoliko priča o hrabrosti” (“A Few Stories about Courage”), *Žena* 3 (May/June 1969): 30. “Četa je ležala pred bunkerom koji je trebalo osvojiti. Naredio je to Vrhovni štab. Komesar je pokušao da povede borce na juriš. Na veliko njegovo zaprepašćenje niko ne polazi za njim. Ljudi leže, glave zabili u zemlju, ne dižu se. On ih pozove drugi put. Ništa. Komesar preskoči redove vojnika, stane iza njih derući se iz sveg glasa: ‘Napred!’, opali iznad njihovih glava rafal iz mašinke, dodajući istom onom ludom svojom drekom: ‘Ili ću vas pobiti do jednoga!’ Poletí napred i svi juru za njim. Bunker je osvojen. Sutradan Vrhovni štab NOV i POJ pohvaljuje preko radija hrabre i neustrašive, prekaljene i svesne borce koji su osvojili bunker. Svi stoje, prse se, niko da se seti što je bilo juče.”

<sup>539</sup> Jara Ribnikar, *Život i priča I-II* (*Life and Story I-II*) (Belgrade: Prosveta and Srpska književna zdruga; Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša; Zagreb: Mladost, 1986), 22. “Negde blizu Mliništa, posle desanta na Drvar, vijuga naša kolona na brdu, gađaju nas bacačima, dole ispod nas drumom ide kolona tenkova, pokret je brz, tu je raskrsnica, naš puteljak

It is even possible to imagine the author gently whispering the following words: “Someone is always singing somewhere. That is why we endure.”<sup>540</sup>

Jara Ribnikar’s writings, published in various periodicals as well as in her memoirs, contain many small events from wartime life that testify to the worries, fear, and cowardice, but also to the tenacity, courage, and even zeal of the people who fought in the partisan army during the NOB. The short publication in *Žena u borbi* is all the more important because in the conclusion the author points to an important aspect of the development of the partisan narrative as shaped by the mass media, usually the partisan films, which has been rarely addressed. This topic is the portrayal of partisan soldiers always as exemplary fighters, communists, and comrades. Seemingly, in Ribnikar’s words, these men and women – mostly men, honestly – were too often depicted as “warriors [who] belonged to an extraordinary generation born only once in history.”<sup>541</sup>

In the present chapter, I attempt to match the *Arena*’s journalists’ portrayal of male Yugoslav partisan fighters with their portrayal of the women fighters (*žene borci*), particularly the women partisans (*partizanke*) who fought alongside the men. The analysis so far has shown that, although the two women’s magazines highlighted women’s experiences whenever they published NOB-related content, archetypal heroic stories such as the described conquest of an enemy bunker are virtually absent. This chapter, and to a lesser extent the one that follows, focuses more on the notion of wartime courage. I observe the extent to which the male partisans were represented, in a manner of speaking, as always ready to charge into battle and to sing during one. In connection, I examine whether the *partizanke* were described as charging into battle with the same courage as their male comrades and singing with the same defiance. Importantly, analysis of *Arena* reveals tremendous

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krivuda ulevo, jedan kamen leži na livadi. Na njemu, noge prebačene preko noge, sedi Koča i peva iz sveg glasa:

‘Idu čete partizana, slavu borbe pronose.’”

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. “Neko negde uvek peva. Zato izdržavamo.”

<sup>541</sup> Ribnikar, “Nekoliko priča o hrabrosti,” 3.

amount of content about the NOB that seemed to conscientiously emulate the main points of the official narrative about the NOB as presented, for instance, in Tito's report to the Fifth Congress of the KPJ. According to one of the magazine's editors-in-chief, publication of contributions about the NOB was part of *Arena*'s editorial prerogative.<sup>542</sup> However, at no point within the researched timeframe (in the case of this magazine: 1959-1980) did the journalists of this magazine include the emergence of the New Woman through the AFŽ's efforts in the content. In other words, while various militarized femininities gained their place in *Arena*'s rendering of the NOB, albeit with considerable delay, the politicized and emancipated *afežejka* did not.

In the next section, I first describe the circumstances under which *Arena* developed and reached record circulation statewide. I then address the content, which focused on the People's Liberation Struggle and divide it into three components. While I have examined all of *Arena*'s materials about the war – with the exception of the first two years (when it was a magazine about film), each issue during the researched period (as well as beyond) contained at least one but often more articles about the NOB – I focus largely on the serialized historical feuilletons. Because the magazine was partly redesigned in the early 1970s, I have divided the analysis into two parts, each covering a decade. The chronological division of the content facilitates the analysis of the representation of wartime femininities in comparison to the wartime masculinities as each of the two decades offers some distinct characteristics. In between, I insert the evaluation of the long running section “*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones” (“*Arena traži vaše najmilije*”), which marked the 1960s and which requires separated consideration due to its character and impact.

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<sup>542</sup> Glik, “*Arena*,” 13.

## 5.1 Making Entertainment for the Working Class

The program adopted at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (April 1958) set out to describe the people inhabiting socialist Yugoslavia. These people, the document alleges, are fortunate to live “in the most fateful and magnificent period in the human history to date,” when man “becomes the master of unimagined energies sufficient to liberate the entire human kind from all humiliation, scarcity and poverty, from all previous material and technical constraints.”<sup>543</sup> The exuberant optimism present in the document is indicative of the beginning of the period Igor Duda named the long sixties – the years in between 1958 and 1971 – when the country “gathered momentum and spread its wings to full swing in all areas – political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, artistic.”<sup>544</sup>

In the same period, the media throughout Yugoslavia developed considerably both in a technological as well as professional sense. At the mentioned congress, the Yugoslav press was characterized as “better, more diverse, more informative and more independent” in comparison to the previous decade.<sup>545</sup> One month later, at the twelfth assembly of the Journalists’ Association of Croatia (May 1958), its secretary Viktor Knivald reiterated the idea that was expressed at the Congress in April. Emphasizing journalistic responsibility to a socialist society, he confirmed that the role of the media lies in “informing correctly the public and in shaping public opinion toward

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<sup>543</sup> *Program Saveza komunista Jugoslavije. Prihvaćen na Sedmom kongresu Saveza komunista Jugoslavije (Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Accepted at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia)* (Stvarnost: Zagreb, 1965), 242. “(...) u najsudbonosnijem i najveličanstvenijem vremenu dosadašnje historije čovječanstva. (...) postaje gospodar neslućenih energija, dovoljnih da cijelo čovječanstvo oslobode svih poniženja, oskudica i neimaštine, svih dosadašnjih materijalno-tehničkih organičenja.”

<sup>544</sup> Igor Duda, “Šezdesete su bile vrhunac idealističkog socijalizma.” (...) hvatanje zaleta i širenja krila do punog zamaha na svim područjima – političkom, ekonomskom, društvenom, kulturnom, znanstvenom, umjetničkom.“

<sup>545</sup> *Program Saveza komunista Jugoslavije.*

socialism.” To achieve this goal, Knivald explained, journalists should focus on the lives and work of ordinary citizens, that is to say, the workers who are involved in the creation of socialism.<sup>546</sup>

In such a socio-political climate, *Arena* was conceived. It was supposed to be a bi-monthly magazine about film and television.<sup>547</sup> However, it was not popular – during 1959 and 1960, the first two years of its existence, it barely reached a circulation of 40 000 copies per issue – and, therefore, did not earn enough to remain part of *Vjesnik*’s production. *Arena* kicked off 1961 and the new decade with a completely different profile. While the name remained the same, its subtitle became “Illustrated Entertainment Weekly” (“*Ilustrirani zabavni list*”). The new editor-in-chief, Ante Ungaro, advertised the redesigned magazine as “a 32-page weekly in rotary print with interesting and entertaining content, a weekly that is richly illustrated, current and informative; a weekly with sections that can interest readers of all ages and preferences; a weekly that will try to surprise you in every issue.”<sup>548</sup>

*Arena*’s front covers reveal content that Ungaro described as entertaining. A typical *Arena*’s cover was routinely adorned with a Yugoslav or international celebrity, most often a young actress or singer. The magazine’s editorial staff maintained a preference for attractive but completely presentable eye candy for as long as the magazine was published. The first enclosed cover (figure 1) features Irena Prosen, an actress from Slovenia who appeared in her first feature film in 1960, while the second one features Margaret Lee, the English actress who was, as the caption explains,

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<sup>546</sup> Josip Mihaljević, “Liberalizacija i razvoj medija u komunističkoj Hrvatskoj 1960-ih i na početku 1970-ih” (“Liberalization and Development of the Media in Communist Croatia During 1960s and in the Beginning of the 1970s”), *Društvena istraživanja* 24 (2015): 242-243. “(...) pravilnom informiranju javnosti i formiranju javnog mnijenja u pravcu socijalizma.”

<sup>547</sup> Fadil Hadžić, “Filmski žurnalizam” (“Film Journalism”), *Arena* 1 (April 26, 1959): 3.

Fadil Hadžić, creator of the magazine’s concept as well as its name, hoped that the new magazine will assist the development of the Yugoslav cinema as the Pula Film Festival (that has been taking place in the Roman amphitheatre named *Arena*) has been doing since its inception in 1954.

<sup>548</sup> -, “Danas” (“Today”), *Arena* 1 (January 1, 1961): 2. “(...) tjednik na bakrorotaciji sa 32 stranice zanimljivog i zabavnog sadržaja, tjednik bogato ilustriran, aktualan i informativan; tjednik s rubrikama, koje mogu zainteresirati čitaoce svih dobi i najrazličitijih sklonosti; tjednik koji će nastojati da vas u svakom broju ugodno iznenadi.”



Figure 1: Front covers of the magazine on March 3, 1961 (no. 10), April 6, 1962 (no. 67), and June 14, 1963 (no. 129).



Figure 2: Front covers of the magazine on August 7, 1964 (no. 189), August 27, 1971 (no. 557), and December 26, 1975 (no. 783)



Figure 3: Front covers of the magazine on May 22, 1964 (no. 178), April 28, 1972 (no. 592), and November 25, 1976 (no. 831)

filming in Zagreb during the spring of 1962. In the early years of *Arena*'s publication, alongside perspective female celebrities or, in rare cases, male stars, various elements from the lives of the rich and famous – festivals, premieres, openings – appeared on the magazine's cover. Sometimes scenes from successful and (relatively) new films were also featured, such as Juliette Greco and Bradford Dillman in 1960 film *Crack in the Mirror* (figure 1, third cover).

The truly big stars of the YUniverse<sup>549</sup> – for example, Velimir (Bata) Živojinović, Milena Dravić and Ljubiša Samardžić at the Pula Film Festival, the musician couple Gabi Novak and Arsen Dedić posing for a photographer, or Boris Dvornik in the scene from the hit TV series *Kapelski kresovi* (*Bonfires of Kapela*; figure 2) – could have been on the cover without meeting the original criteria. Finally, the editorial staff kept a close eye on the calendar of the Party and the NOB, and accompanied many events with appropriate materials, both on the front page and with relevant text contributions. As the attached covers attest (figure 3), girls and young women (often) graced the covers of *Arena* on the occasion of these events. For instance, girls carrying the baton for the rally (*slet*) in honor of Tito's birthday graced the cover page just before the Day of Youth in 1964, girls in traditional attire were featured on Labor Day 1972, and a photograph of a group of obviously cheerful young people commemorated the Day of the Republic 1976.

Initially, the two main sections that brought together stories about unusual experiences of ordinary people, had equally suggestive titles: "True Stories" ("*Istinite priče*") and "Pages Written by Ordinary Life" ("*Stranice koje piše običan život*"). *Arena* was also the first magazine in the territory of Yugoslavia that gave its readers the opportunity to express their opinions on some of the hardships, most often of a legal nature, faced by their fellow citizens. In the beginning, the

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<sup>549</sup> Martin Pogačar, Slovenian cultural studies expert, named the the field of common cultural experience, particularly of the Yugoslav popular culture, as YUniverse. See: Pogačar, "Yugoslav Past in Film and Music," 199-224.

section that offered this opportunity was titled “How Would You Rule?” (“*Kako biste vi presudili?*”). What is more, interactive sections formed a major ingredient in *Arena*’s content. Besides the usual suspects – the readers’ club, the funny page, the section for the lonely – the editorial board from time to time invited readers to send in their suggestions, according to which they modeled their magazine, sometimes even inviting small groups to participate in adjusting and editing it.<sup>550</sup> While the sections changed regularly, sometimes in name only and sometimes substantively, their essence, as well as the essence of the magazine, remained the same for almost fifty years; *Vjesnik*’s leadership decided to cease publication only in 2009.

The described concept proved to be extremely popular. During 1961, *Arena*’s circulation increased to 120,000 copies per issue, and in 1968 this magazine reached its record circulation. While its average circulation oscillated between 300,000 and 350,000 copies printed per issue in the second half of the 1960s, seven editions were printed in March and April 1968 with a circulation of more than 450,000 copies per issue, an all-time high for this magazine.<sup>551</sup> In the early 1970s – with the appearance of similar magazines in other publishing houses, as well as a slight change in *Arena*’s concept – The magazine’s circulation declined; during this decade, *Arena* was printed at a rate of 220,000 to 270,000 copies per issue.<sup>552</sup>

In the words of an anonymous contemporary who prepared a report on the entertainment press in 1962, “one has to wonder what kind of people are those who are satisfied with the morbid themes of crimes, murders, affairs, scams, scandals, catastrophes and other people’s misfortunes?”<sup>553</sup>

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<sup>550</sup> This for the first time happened in the very beginning of 1966: Boris Janković, “Što je pokazala ‘Arenina’ anketa” (“What Did *Arena*’s Poll Show”), *Arena* 265 (January 21, 1966): 3; Boris Janković, “Vjerni čitaoci tri dana urednici ‘Arene’” (“Faithful Readers Three Days as ‘*Arena*’s Editors”), *Arena* 270 (February 25, 1966): 5.

<sup>551</sup> Kodžić, *Komparativna analiza*, 111.

<sup>552</sup> Peršen, ed., *Vjesnikov leksikon, 1940 – 1990*, 10.

<sup>553</sup> Aktuelni problemi zabavno-revijalne štampe, April 25, 1962, box 146, folder Sjednice Komisije (1954.-1962.), HR-HDA-1228-SSRNH (1944.-1990.), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 13). “(...) se čovek mora zapitati kakvi bi to ljudi trebalo da budu koji se zadovoljavaju morbidnim temama kriminala, ubistava, afera, prevara, skandala, katastrofama i nesrećama drugi ljudi?”

When he was the director of *Vjesnik*, Božidar Novak deemed that *Arena* had a “rather hillbilly content” because it appealed to the rural population or people who had just moved to urban centers to work in the growing industrial production in Yugoslavia or abroad.<sup>554</sup> Thusly defined audience was numerous, with more than 5 million people finding employment in industry throughout Yugoslavia. Zlatko Glik, one of the *Arena*’s editors-in-chief, noted some characteristics of the newcomers in the big cities who bought and read this magazine. He noted that most of *Arena*’s readers had low incomes, and that they were certainly not primitive, as at least fifty percent of them (in the 1980s) had secondary education.<sup>555</sup> That is, according to *Vjesnik*’s research, in the mid-1970s, 18.4% of *Arena*’s readers had completed four grades of primary school, and 28.5% had completed all eight. After subtracting 12.1% of readers who had started but not finished high school, the result is that 41% of (surveyed) *Arena*’s readers had completed secondary or higher education.<sup>556</sup> At the same time, approximately 30% were blue-collar workers. Just like in the case of *Svijet*, 21% of *Arena*’s readers were housewives outside of agriculture. 14% of the readership were retired, 5,6% were high school students, while the rest of the readership, approximately one-third, was scattered in various bureaucratic and service occupations.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Stenografski zapisnik sa sastaka održanog u redakciji “Vjesnik” u prisustvu dr. Vladimira Bakarića, September 25, 1963, box 136, folder Sastanak u redakciji Vjesnika, HR-HDA-1228-SSRNH (1944.-1990.), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (p. 11). “(...) prilično seljački sadržaj (...)”

*Arena* was the only entertaining weekly that dedicated up to five pages to the people who moved for work outside Yugoslavia, and during the 1970s it sold approximately 65 000 copies throughout Europe, mostly in Western Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

<sup>555</sup> Glik, “Arena,” 7, 11, 13.

<sup>556</sup> In comparison, according to the same survey, 6.6% of *Svijet*’s readers completed four, and 18.8% all eight grades of primary school. In addition, 12.5% of their readers who did not finish high school. That is, 62.1% of their readers had a high school or university degree. In the case of *Start*, only 1.4% of their readers completed four, and 10.1% eight grades of primary school. Excluding another 16.2% of readers who did not complete secondary school, 72.3% of all their readers had completed secondary or higher education. Mance, *Profili čitalačkih publika*, 68, 148, 164. At this time, *Žena u borbi* was not a magazine, but a scientific journal. Before 1967 (when the transformation happened), the women’s organization did not conduct such detailed surveys.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid*, 69-70.

The content of this magazine was the subject of many discussions (both among journalists and more broadly) about politically correct journalism in a socialist country and what it should look like. In connection, the magazine had an exceptionally bad reputation throughout Yugoslavia during the 1960s; if a magazine's journalism was viewed as *Arena's* (*arenaški*), it meant that it was regarded as a periodical “on whose pages streams of blood flow and nude girls, criminals and Čarugas parade.”<sup>558</sup> Although *Arena* has been the subject of much discussion, I have never come across documents that would question its coverage of the People's Liberation Struggle. Equally important, none of the documents available to me question the magazine's reasoning with regard to gender politics. Moreover, *Arena* was awarded in 1974 by the “Kata Pejnović Foundation,” established by the women's organization, for its “diversified activity that affirms social position of woman and family.”<sup>559</sup>

At the same time, *Arena's* content suggests that the journalists who contributed to this magazine were either not familiar with or uninterested in the work of the women's organization. The content of the magazine *Žena u borbi*, as well as the commemorative projects of the women's organization, clearly show that the *afežejke* had a precise idea of the characteristics of the *žene borci*, who participated in the NOB in a variety of usually supportive roles. It also demonstrates that they were in a constant process of reflecting on and questioning the figure of the *partizanka* (as explained in chapter 3). This was not reflected in *Arena* in any way. Rather, this magazine bears witness to *Arena's* journalists', for the most part the peers of the leading *afežejke*, own struggle with the militarized femininities of the NOB. How these men wrote about the war and what does it say about their attitudes on femininity and masculinity is the subject of the next sections.

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<sup>558</sup> Stenografski zapisnik sa sastaka održanog u redakciji “Vjesnik,” 20.

Čaruga was Jovo Stanisavljević's nickname. He was an outlaw and became known during and after World War I as Slavonian Robin Hood.

<sup>559</sup> Pero Homovec, “Žene vas vole!” (“Women Love You!”), *Arena* 690 (March 15, 1974): 11.

## 5.2 *Arena's* Discovery of the *Partizanke* in the 1960s

Throughout the entire researched period, historical feuilletons and serialized articles were a common part of *Arena's* content; during 1960s and 1970s, it published more than three hundred contributions of this kind. The first feuilleton, about the aforementioned criminal Jovo Stanisavljević Čaruga, appeared in February 1961. It was followed by similar contributions about famous criminals and criminal organizations, about the Interpol's work, and forensic medicine. Among feuilletons on loosely conceived historical subjects included such titillating topics as pirates, witches, werewolves, and sexual relations in the Middle Ages. However, the historical feuilletons most frequently addressed the workers' movement in Yugoslavia and the People's Liberation Struggle. Zlatko Glik writes that "[i]t can be stated without hesitation that *Arena* is a weekly that devoted the most space to this topic in our country. Starting with the first feuilleton on actions in occupied Split, there is no edition in which we do not find it."<sup>560</sup> He was not exaggerating; in the perusal of *Arena*, I really did not come across any edition in which there was nothing related to the NOB.

The reason for publishing such content was beyond doubt its popularity. According to the survey *Arena* conducted in 1966, serialized articles about the People's Liberation Struggle were among the three most popular sections.<sup>561</sup> The readers' letters, which served as a forum for war veterans throughout the sixties and to a lesser extent during the seventies, support the survey's findings. The published letters attest to the fact that veterans regularly sent comments on these feuilletons (with corrections, mind you), as well as shout-outs to their wartime comrades to reunite and information about graves of unknown soldiers. In several instances, when the editorial board was overwhelmed

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<sup>560</sup> Glik, "Arena," 13.

<sup>561</sup> Janković, "Što je pokazala 'Arenina' anketa," 3.

with letters on a particular topic, they selected some and published them as an extra part of the feuilleton in question.

The serialized articles and feuilletons devoted special attention to the anniversaries of the founding of the Party, the uprising, the great battles (especially the battles on Neretva and Sutjeska), the First and Second Sessions of the Antifascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ), and events related to the end of the war (especially the liberation of Zagreb, sometimes the liberation of Belgrade, and other battles). Alongside more or less relevant events, many articles focused on prominent individuals, primarily Tito, but also many other military leaders and combatants. While the general selection of historical topics in the beginning and the profile of the magazine did not promise much than human interest stories, the articles about the NOB were usually far more than adequate. They were based either on documents and literary non-fiction about the war or on interviews with those involved. At times, the war veterans themselves or their relatives wrote the articles about the events in which they had participated, and a few articles were written by professional historians. All these articles were typically complemented with photographs, diagrams, and maps as well as other relevant documents (as in figures 4, 5, and 6).

In 1962, both the prewar workers' movement and the People's Liberation Struggle were included in the longest series of articles of that year entitled "Grand Encounters" ("Veliki susreti"). A short analysis of this series will provide insight into *Arena's* initial vantage point, that is, some basic convictions about partisan warfare and about the men and women who participated in it. These convictions become an enduring property of the partisan narrative in this magazine. The introduction to the first edition states that the journalist based the series "on the recollections of prominent political and social leaders, artists, cultural figures and public officials of our country." It goes on to say that he focused "on these people's first encounters with the idea of communism,

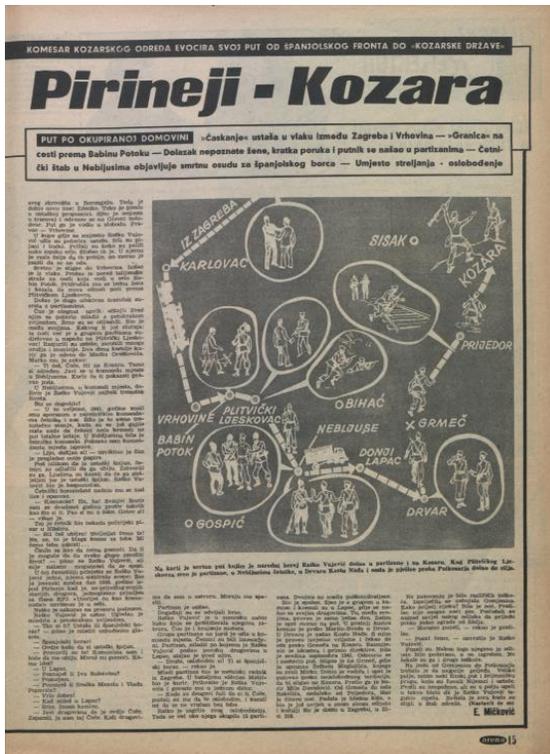


Figure 4: “On the Path of Freedom: Pyrenees – Kozara (2),” *Arena* 70 (April 27, 1962): 14-15. This page features an intriguing scheme which “shows the path by which the People’s Hero Ratko Vujanović joined the partisan detachments on the Kozara mountain. Near Plitvički Ljeskovac he met partisans, in Nebljusi he met chetniks, in Drvar he met Kosta Nađ, and he reached the finish by going on foot through Potkozarje.”

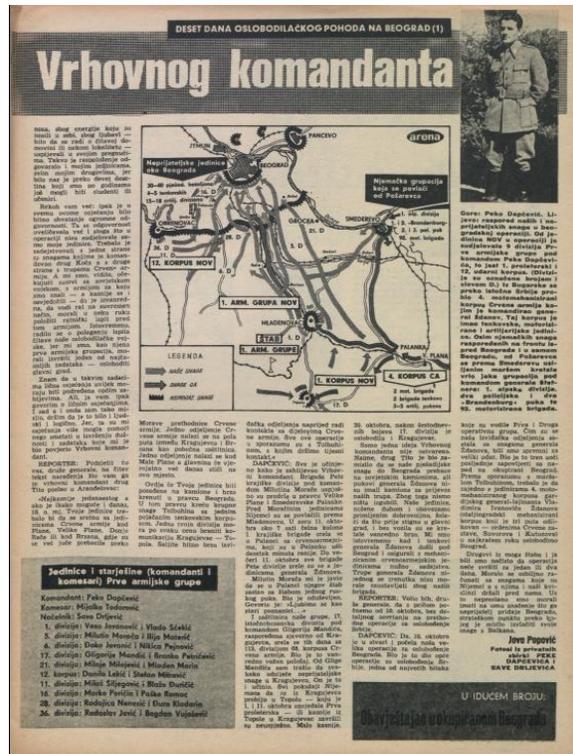


Figure 5: “Ten Days of the Liberation March to Belgrade (1): Supreme Commander’s Emergency Dispatch,” *Arena* 197 (October 2, 1964): 6-7. The first part of the interview with Peko Dapčević is complemented with his photograph, the layout of the partisan and German military forces at the beginning of the liberation of the city, and the list of units and leaders comprised in the First Army Group led by the interviewee.

Figure 6: “The Chronicle of the Liberation (3): Four Days on the Shores of *Bosna*,” *Arena* 224 (April 9, 1965): 6-7. In addition to the usual attachments, parts of the diary of German Major Behm, otherwise stored at the Military History Institute in Belgrade, are annexed to this text in a separate box.



their acquaintance with and connection to the labor movement, their political activity before joining the communists, and their memories of the first meeting with comrade Tito.”<sup>562</sup> In short, in these articles the journalist writes about prominent figures who detail the information relevant to their current achievements. Very much in keeping with the checklist created by Mitra Mitrović and published in her memoirs (see chapter 3), the persons featured in this series shared their memories of “doing the right thing” through prewar communist activism and wartime endeavors.

In the “Great Encounters” series, the figure of a male communist activist and a partisan clearly portrayed. First and foremost, he is resourceful and proactive. The storylines the journalist presented affirm these characteristics as invaluable for young communist activists, because they lived in a country whose authorities seemed eager to eradicate communism from their territory. At the same time, those same authorities kept failing in their goals because the young activists possessed capabilities typical of people forced to fend for themselves. For instance, in the description of Čedo Kapor’s<sup>563</sup> prewar activism, there is an account of his arrest and expulsion from Belgrade, where he was studying. While travelling to Zenica, where he was to be incarcerated, Kapor devised a plan to steal the document that suspected him of spreading communist propaganda, which he succeeded in doing. Thanks to incomplete papers and some transparent excuses, Kapor was released and resumed his activities without missing a beat.<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Toni Šimunović, “Veliki susreti: Sjećanja druga Hasana Brkića” (“Great Encounters: Memories of Comrade Hasan Brkić”), *Arena* 74 (May 25, 1962): 4. “(...) sjećanja istaknutih političkih i društvenih rukovodilaca, umjetnika, kulturnih i javnih radnika naše zemlje. (...) o prvim susretima tih ljudi s idejom komunizma, upoznavanju i povezivanju s radničkim pokretom, o njihovoj političkoj aktivnosti do vremena stupanja u redove komunista, i o njihovim sjećanjima na prvi susret s drugom Titom.”

<sup>563</sup> Čedo Kapor was Spanish and partisan fighter as well as postwar socio-political worker who was, *inter alia*, member of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Centralni komitet Saveza komunista Bosne i Hercegovine*, CK SKBiH) and member of its Presidency.

<sup>564</sup> Toni Šimunović, “Veliki susreti: Sjećanja Čede Kapora” (“Great Encounters: Čedo Kapor’s Memories”), *Arena* 75 (June 1, 1962): 6-7.

Unlike him, many communist activists were imprisoned. In such cases, their perseverance was put to the test and rebuilt. These also appear to have been the perfect opportunities to outwit (or at least try to do so) some clerk of the hostile authorities. Oskar Davičo<sup>565</sup> remembers one confrontation with his examiner in the Glavnjača prison in Belgrade:

- I hear you published poetry again.
  - And what is it to you? – the poet replied defiantly.
- An oblique slap hit Davičo on the cheek. Instead of screaming, the young communist said:
- Well, your punch has weakened in these six years!
- Svetozar Vujković looked at Davičo and then at his palm, dumbfounded. He lowered his hand. He sat down at the table and said in a stern voice:
- If one more of your pieces appears in the journals, I will jam you on the pen you are writing with!
  - That would not be weird for you, - Davičo replied again. – The Turks impaled on a stake, and you would on a pen!<sup>566</sup>

Naturally, Davičo did not reveal any relevant information or his comrades under any kind of pressure. In this series, but also in many other depictions of life in captivity, none of the true soldiers of the revolution broke down. That is one of the reasons they got the opportunity to tell their stories, but also the stories of those who talked and were without mercy labeled as traitors.

Finally, all sixteen men featured in this series joined the partisan army and, as the journalist repeatedly emphasizes, gave their all for victory. It was in this line-up that the “hardened communist and celebrated commander” Vlado Šegrt<sup>567</sup> achieved the greatest military successes

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<sup>565</sup> Oskar Davičo founded the local committee of the Party in Bihać (BiH) because of which he served five years in Lepoglava and Sremska Mitrovica. He participated in the NOB from the beginning as illegal activist, partisan fighter and journalist. Following the end of the war, he became one of the most acclaimed Serbian surrealist writers.

<sup>566</sup> Toni Šimunović, “Veliki susreti: Sjećanja književnika Oskara Daviča” (“Great Encounters: Memories of the Writer Oskar Davičo”), *Arena* 85 (August 10, 1962): 6-7.

“- Čujem da si ponovo izdao pjesme.

- A šta se to tebe tiče! - prkosno mu je odgovorio pjesnik.

Kosi udarac dlanom sručio se na Davičov obraz. Umjesto jauka, mladi komunista mu je rekao:

- E, oslabio ti je udarac u ovih šest godina!

Svetozar Vujković zabezegnuto je pogledao Daviča, pa svoj dlan. Spustio je ruku. Sjeo je za stol i strogo kazao:

- Ako se pojavi još jedna tvoja svar u časopisima, nabit ću te na pero kojim pišeš!

- Ne bi to bilo ni čudo za tebe, ponovo mu je odvratio Davičo. - Turci su nabijali na kolac, a ti bi na penkalo!”

<sup>567</sup> Vlado Šegrt was a prewar communist activist and a participant in NOB. He was a reserve Major General and People’s Hero. He held a number of social and political functions including presidency in the Presidium of the People’s Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

during the war. This must be so; otherwise his name would not be so lightly placed next to that of Sava Kovačević (the celebrated division commander who earned his title of the People's Hero primarily for his contribution to the outcome of the Battle of Sutjeska, during which he perished):

Together with Sava Kovačević, his name became a symbol of revolution throughout eastern Herzegovina. While Sava and his celebrated brigade were operating at one end, Vlado Šegrt became the commander of the division of north Herzegovina and then of the celebrated 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade of Herzegovina.<sup>568</sup>

In conclusion, the sixteen men were rewarded not only with successful careers in the postwar era, but also with the honor of meeting Tito, as each of their stories ends with a description of their first encounter with the Marshal. While all of them, and many more, could have been resourceful and proactive, tenacious and loyal, fearless and courageous even in the most dangerous situations, Tito transcended the boundaries of (hyper) masculinity defined by military and/or political service. He grew into an institution – the only truly Yugoslav institution, as Maja Brkljačić argues<sup>569</sup> – and therefore defied characterization in the same terms as the other men, notwithstanding the habitual *Arena*'s portrayal of partisan soldiers as larger than life.

The chapter examining the magazine of the Croatian branch of the women's organization *Žena u borbi* shows that the *afežejke* took the same approach whenever they published female portraits. The *afežejke*, however, did two things differently. First, the women portrayed in these articles were primarily meant to be representatives of the mass of the New Women being tempered in Yugoslavia, and therefore it was better if they were not particularly known for their activities during the war or before. Unlike them, and many other series focused on celebrities of the workers' movement and the war who had successful and lasting careers in the postwar period. Second, the

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<sup>568</sup> Toni Šimunović, "Veliki susreti: Sjećanja druga Vlade Šegrt" ("Great Encounters: Memories of the Comrade Vlado Šegrt"), *Arena* 80 (July 6, 1962): 6-7. "Uz Savu Kovačevića njegovo ime postaje simbol revolucije u cijeloj istočnoj Hercegovini. Dok Sava sa svojom proslavljenom brigadom operira na jednom kraju, Vlado Šegrt postaje komandant sjevernohercegovačkog odjela i kasnije proslavljene X hercegovačke brigade."

<sup>569</sup> Maja Brkljačić, "Disembodied Presences of Josip Broz Tito: Sounds, Voices, Images," (PhD diss., Central European University, 2008).

*afežejke* wrote about women in all their numerous portraits. This series, on the other hand, presented sixteen men and mentioned no women. Women appeared in the background of the few among many enclosed photographs and repeatedly remained uncredited. In the texts, their roles were reduced to a handful of mentions.

In order to compare *Arena*'s exemplary communist activist turned fighter with the model *afežejka* as portrayed in *Žena u borbi*, Vera Luketić's 1950 biography of Mila Vučković, which I analyzed in the third chapter, is the most appropriate example. First, this account of Vučković's life represents well the Yugoslav New Woman as she was portrayed in the women's magazine. Second, the author recounted the *afežejka*'s life in the same way Šimunović presented each of the sixteen men, making the narratives symmetrical and easily comparable. She followed the same timeline – life in the interwar period, wartime undertakings, opportunities in the postwar years – underlining the most important elements of Vučković's doing the right thing throughout.

In this narrative, the author and the editorial board of the magazine promoted the image of a suffering woman who advanced in life thanks to incredible amount of effort and hard work, as well as the crucial influence of the Party and the communist women's organization. The progress Mila Vučković made can be interpreted as heroic, but there is nothing in it that can be attributed to the traditionally defined realm of heroism. In comparison to the men whose biographies appeared in *Arena* in 1962, Mila Vučković was not an adroit Party activist, she did not have the chance to provoke and polemicize with the representatives of the hostile authorities, and she most certainly did not participate in armed battles, nor did she have the honor of leading soldiers in at least one. She did not even carry mail and write slogans on the walls of towns throughout Yugoslavia, like the girls and women activists who supported the Party before the war and, for instance, edited *Žena u borbi* in the present. Mila Vučković's only superpower was the will to work and her avenue of expressing dissent in learning to write and read. Both could have been named perseverance, to be

sure, but it was still not valued as the perseverance of, for instance, communist captives in the prisons of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Ultimately, in the account of Mila Vučković's life, but also in many other female portraits, the women's magazine highlighted the help that the Party provided and because of which all these women were able to make such progress at all. In *Arena*, the men either supported the Party, that is to say, they cooperated with its members, or they claimed membership and thus were the Party itself. In other words, the *afežejke* insisted on the stories of the all-but-anonymous women on the home front (and the journalists of *Svijet* avoided such coverage of conventional topics from the NOB). At the same time, the "Great Encounters" series conveys the impression that *Arena's* journalists recorded only the manly activities of the manliest of men in the People's Liberation Struggle and simply sidelined women. In the early years of the magazine's publication, the journalists of *Arena* seemingly pushed the home front much further away from the front than it actually was; so far away that they oftentimes did not even notice it existed.

To a large extent, the *Arena's* journalists replicated the patterns of behavior existing among the communists in Weimar Germany or in the USSR following the end of the First World War. For instance, Eric D. Weitz notes that neither the German nor the French nor the Italian communists had any problem portraying men; despite the differences, all of them "placed the heroic, productive, and combative male proletariat at the center of its political efforts."<sup>570</sup> The content of the historical feuilletons exemplified by the "Grand Encounters" series suggests that the journalists who worked for *Arena* most often wrote about the male partisans and portrayed them in the same way.

The representation of women also proved to be similar in the sense that it did not develop in a simple and unambiguous way. In contrast to a rather stable portrayal of masculinity, Weitz

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<sup>570</sup> Eric D. Weitz, "The Heroic Man and the Ever-Changing Woman, 315.

continues, stands “the cacophony of female imagery.” Its diversity and lack of coherence, the author explains, reflects a period when gender roles, especially women’s roles, were destabilized and reconstituted. The *Arena*’s representation of Yugoslav women at war can similarly be described as “lurching from one image to another in the search for some way to appeal to women.”<sup>571</sup> Victoria Bonnell’s well-known study of early Soviet posters weaves a corresponding argument, explaining how Soviet visual artists were not always sure how to portray women (peasant women, women workers, women at war), leading to a delay of several years in the representation of women following the establishment of the Soviet Union. This, Bonnell’s analysis shows, led to very different and even contradictory portrayals of womanhood.<sup>572</sup> Similarly to many men before them, including Vladimir Nazor and Ivan Šibl (who are mentioned in the third chapter), who sometimes wrote about the *partizanke* they fought alongside and worried about “the wonderful qualities that make a woman a woman,”<sup>573</sup> journalists of *Arena* struggled trying to portray the New Woman, particularly the one who was forged in war. The following paragraphs focus on the three most visible among a rather modest number of the representations of women published during the 1960s.

The first women in the NOB *Arena* focused on were, as might be expected, relatives of male partisans, their wives and mothers of their children. The first feuilleton about them was located as far away from the war as possible, in the more-or-less safe territory of El-Shatt, Egypt. Namely, while female participants in the People’s Liberation Struggle appeared sporadically in the feuilletons from the very beginning, the first in which their work and contributions came to the fore

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid, 314-315.

<sup>572</sup> Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), especially chapter 2 “Representation of Women in Early Soviet Posters,” 64-99; idem, “The Peasant Woman in Stalinist Political Art of the 1930s,” *The American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (February 1993): 55-82.

<sup>573</sup> Šibl, *Partizanski dnevnik*, 271.

was a series on the El Shatt refugee camp, published in the winter of 1964. In this short series consisting of only four parts, women were represented as part of the recognizable group of civilians known as “oldpeopewomenandchildren.” The only representatives of the military in El Shatt were the wounded soldiers and the *skojevke*, who carried their stretchers, the story goes, on their shoulders from Croatia to the camp.

In this variegated group of people, the partisan wife and mother played an important role. The author of the feuilleton described at least one such woman in each part of the series, and all were similar to one of the Žorž Skrigin’s famous wartime photographs depicting a mother with two children. The author entitled it “Refuge in the Fourth Offensive” (“*Zbjeg u IV ofenzivi*”). It was, however, remembered as “The Mother of Knežopolje” (figure 7), evoking Skender Kulenović’s epic poem “Stojanka, the Mother of Knežopolje” (“*Stojanka, majka knežopoljka*”) written during 1942 on the Kozara mountain (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and dedicated to “a nameless beloved woman born in battle.”<sup>574</sup>



Figure 7: Žorž Skrigin’s Refuge in the Fourth Offensive

The women portrayed in the feuilleton travelled to the camp with their young children, often carrying one on their backs, while their husbands remained in the partisan army. The most striking among them is Marija Rakić who arrived at the camp carrying two small boys, twins, in a knapsack. She is a bit traditional and superstitious: when thinking of her husband, she unravels her braids to

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<sup>574</sup> Skender Kulenović, “Stojanka, majka knežopoljka” (“Stojanka, the Mother of Knežopolje”), Projekat Rastko: biblioteka srpske kulture na internetu (The Rastko Project: Library of Serbian Culture on the Internet), accessed December 20, 2021, <https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/poezija/skulenovic-stojanka.html>. “Posvećujem ženi bezimenoj voljenoj u borbi rođenoj.”

Already during the war, this poem was printed in various publications and recited at cultural manifestations, sometimes even by the author himself. During the existence of socialist Yugoslavia, it was required reading in elementary and high schools.

keep his ways of entangling. She is also a bit religious: she always makes the sign of the cross while undoing her braids. Nevertheless, her energy is unparalleled, her song loud, and her walk manly. Therefore, she becomes a councilwoman in the camp although, even there, men dominate the management positions.<sup>575</sup> Marija Rakić is described as a woman with contradictory characteristics. Seemingly, all the women are. They sing and cry when leaving the country – “That is the AFŽ!,”<sup>576</sup> the author comments – but they shed no tears when their loved ones are dying. Thus, Ana Prlić and her two sons, “one up to her waist, the other up to her knees,” stood silently when the news arrived that their husband and father had died.<sup>577</sup> Despite the women’s exaggerated emotionality, the journalist confirmed that they had managed to build a well-organized community together: everyone was fed, schools worked, theater and newspaper production as well.

Yet, while life in the refugee camp highlighted a range of wartime adversities that constitute stereotypically women’s suffering, the author still categorized it as manly. He concluded that “[l]ife in refuge – and that life was, in fact, a long, constant, and painful struggle – did its part: it taught the participants to the male suffering.”<sup>578</sup> It is possible that he meant to say that conditions in El Shatt were extremely dreary and arduous, and that people living there achieved successes comparable to that of the men fighting in Yugoslavia. However, he used a shortcut to explain it by appropriating the variant of what is probably the greatest compliment in the folk lore. When it comes to explaining a major success in overcoming extreme difficulties, “manly” became go-to attribute in this magazine. The highlight of this trend is certainly the 1967 article commemorating

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<sup>575</sup> Jovo Popović, “Svjedočanstva o El Šatu (2): Djelić domovine seli na jug” (“Testimonies of El Shatt (2): A Fragment of Homeland Moves South”), *Arena* 164 (February 14, 1964): 7.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, 6. “To se zove AFŽ!”

<sup>577</sup> Jovo Popović, “Svjedočanstva o El Šatu (4): Dvije petokrake u pustinji” (“Testimonies of El Shatt (2): Two Five-Pointed Stars in the Desert”), *Arena* 166 (February 28, 1964): 6. “(...) jedno joj do pasa, drugo do koljena.”

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.* “Život zbjega – a taj život je zapravo dugo, neprestano i mučno batrganje – učinio svoje: naučio je sudionike muškoj trpnji.”

the twenty-fifth anniversary of the First Conference of the Antifascist Front of Women of Yugoslavia, entitled “The Women’s Manly Agreement.”<sup>579</sup>

Four years have passed between the publication of the series of articles about the refugee camp in El Shatt and another group of articles in which women were the protagonists. This one is particularly attractive because it is not the result of a journalist’s or historian’s work on a topic they considered important at a given point in time, but the result of favorable circumstances brought about by readers. Namely, in the very beginning of 1968, a photograph of a handkerchief with twenty-seven names embroidered on it of women who had served sentences in the Perugia prison (Italy) in 1943 appeared on the pages of *Arena*. In a short note editorial board explained that this was the last remaining memorabilia reminding Roza Ribičič of her time in that prison and invited the twenty-seven women to contact the magazine and get in touch with Ribičič with its help.<sup>580</sup> Over the next two months, more than fifty women who were incarcerated in Perugia, including Pepca Kardelj,<sup>581</sup> whose letter was published as part of one of the following articles, wrote to the *Arena*’s board. Many of them attended the first post-war meeting of former Perugia inmates, held just before Women’s Day, which was commemorated during March with three articles.

Jovo Popović, an established expert on the People’s Liberation Struggle, contributed with only one text, which was one page long.<sup>582</sup> This is not very much if we remember that he, for example, commemorated the twentieth anniversary of liberation with the six-part “Chronicle of the

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<sup>579</sup> Toma Mihajlović, “Muški dogovor žena” (“The Women’s Manly Agreement”), *Arena* 364 (December 15, 1967): 8-9.

While Toma Mihajlović considered establishment of the women’s organization as a relevant enough event to be termed “manly,” journalists who worked for the *Arena* overall did not consider the event particularly important. Namely, observances of this event were included in the contents on only two occasions during the 1960s, and not once during the 1970.

<sup>580</sup> -, “Kolektiv številka 3” (“Collective number 3”), *Arena* 367 (January 5, 1968): 7.

<sup>581</sup> Pepca Kardelj was a *partizanka* and People’s Heroine, postwar socio-political worker in Slovenia, and, no less important, Edvard Kardelj’s wife.

<sup>582</sup> Jovo Popović, “Proboj iz zatvora do partizana” (“Breakthrough from Prison to the Partisans”), *Arena* 375 (March 1, 1968): 14.

Liberation” and followed it up immediately with “Victory Seen Up Close” in seven parts, and that all thirteen texts were two pages long. Here, Popović focused on the aftermath of the women’s time in Perugia, on the transfer of some of them to the partisan army. Since he always relied on the sources, I am inclined to conclude that he wrote about the only segment for which he had written evidence. Whether there were no other documents or Popović did not look for them remains an open question.

Popović’s colleague, who wrote the other two articles, focused on the meeting of the former detainees and their recollections of the time in prison. He devoted most of the space to all the difficulties of life in prison and all the ways in which the women fought back. One of his interlocutors briefly stated: “It was a life you cannot forget!”<sup>583</sup> Echoing her male comrades, she continued: “We were tortured in every way, but at no point did we give in.”<sup>584</sup> If she spoke about the particulars of the torture, the journalist did not disclose them to the readership. Despite its reputation, this magazine did not record all the gory details of the lives of political prisoners, male or female. Ultimately, the former prisoner lingered on the activities that the women prisoners organized and the examples of solidarity among them, some of which were universal, as in the case of sharing the food that some prisoners received in packages from home, and others that were unmistakably womanly, as in the case of sharing the care of an infant who was imprisoned with her mother and grandmother.<sup>585</sup>

All in all, these articles portrayed the experiences of women incarcerated because of their activism as more similar to those of their male comrades before and during the war and recounted, among others, for this magazine. Yet, the penitentiary in Perugia was reserved for women

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<sup>583</sup> Ivan Pakiž, “Povijest na maramici” (“History on a Handkerchief”), *Arena* 376 (March 8, 1968): 7. “Bio je to život koji se ne može zaboraviti!”

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.* “Bile smo na sve načine mučene, ali ni u jednom trenutku nismo pokleknule.”

<sup>585</sup> Ivan Pakiž, “Nepokorene zatočnice” (“Disobedient Detainees”), *Arena* 377 (March 15, 1968): 6-7.

sentenced to long prison terms of more than a decade, so its convicts were likely prominent activists (such as Pepca Kardelj), but none of the articles contain information about the women's activism. Moreover, while the men's stories contain much more defiance of the authorities and conflicts with them, both before and during imprisonment, the emphasis in this case remains on the life of the prison community and examples of mutual solidarity. Consequently, the tone of the articles remains sympathetic and comforting throughout.



Figure 8: “Always With a Proudly Raised Head”, *Arena* 825 (October 14, 1976): 23. Photographs of the 1976 encounter.

However, even though the total of three articles relating the lives and pursuits of the female Party activists is a modest result for this magazine, they marked a new beginning, both for the former detainees and for *Arena*. Namely, this first encounter motivated the women to engage the editorial staff of the magazine to organize of a visit to Perugia, which occurred already in September 1970. Seventy women accepted the invitation to visit the

penitentiary where they had served during the war. At dinner, after visiting the prison, the former detainees revived their memories by “passing a cigarette from mouth to mouth, and each woman, just like twenty-seven years ago, took only one puff. Likewise, their former economist Alma Zalašček cut two ordinary slices of bread into seventy pieces, as she used to do, so that each woman

got one bite.”<sup>586</sup> In addition, the meetings of the former prisoners became a tradition. In 1976, the magazine reports that more than one hundred and eighty women who had been imprisoned in a number of Italian prisons meet every year since the first encounter in 1968 (figure 8).<sup>587</sup> Furthermore, the developments of 1968 contributed to change *Arena*, because the magazine’s journalists organized several similar meetings in the future, and more frequently reported on various events related to the commemoration of the NOB. In other words, while *Arena* functioned as a forum for war veterans from the very beginning of the 1960s, all the ways in which they tried to preserve and protect their memories became a recurring topic in this magazine only in the end of the decade.

The third major serialized article that focused on a single female protagonist, “Records about the First *Partizanka* in Lika,” appeared in 1969. It dealt with the life and work of Ljubica Gerovac who became a Party activist while studying in Zagreb and whose courage and, as Veljko Kovačević<sup>588</sup> reminisced decades later, “militant combativeness” evolved during the first year of the war, when she acted as a member of the Party’s district committee and secretary of the SKOJ for Brinje (Lika, Croatia).<sup>589</sup> Importantly, the author of this series of articles was not one of the journalists who usually covered the NOB-related topics, but Ljubica Gerovac’s younger sister,

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<sup>586</sup> Vlado Bojkić, “Zatvor njihove mladosti” (“The Prison of Their Youth”), *Arena* 509 (September 25, 1970). “(...) jedna cigareta kružila od usta do usta i svaka je žena, baš kao i prije 27 godina, povukla samo jedan dim. Isto tako je njihov bivši ekonom Alma Zalašček, kao nekada, razrezala dvije obične kriške kruha na sedamdeset dijelova da bi svaka od njih dobila zalogaj.”

<sup>587</sup> Nikica Polić, “Uvijek ponosno uzdignuta čela” (“Always with a Proudly Raised Head”), *Arena* 825 (October 14, 1976): 22-23.

<sup>588</sup> Veljko Kovačević was a Spanish fighter and partisan who was proclaimed a People’s Hero for his merits. After the war he worked in the JNA and was an active political worker. He wrote several books (on partisan warrior strategy, memoirs, novelized memoirs), including *The Bonfires of Kapela* (*Kapelski kresovi*) which was adapted into a successful TV show of the same name.

<sup>589</sup> Veljko Kovačević, *Dani koji ne zalaze, vol. 1* (*The Days That Do Not End, vol. 1*) (Belgrade: Eksport pres, 1982), 202-203. “(...) militantna borbenost (...)”

Vera Gerovac Blažević who had been working for some time to preserve the memory of her older sister.<sup>590</sup>

Like many narratives about people who participated in the NOB, this one follows the familiar chronology. Gerovac Blažević describes her sister's childhood and youth – without omitting her beauty and love life, as that also became part of the narrative about *skojevke* and *partizanke* by the late 1960s – and only then moved to her political activism before and during the war. Eventually, Gerovac Blažević wrote how her sister encouraged civilians to support the partisans while at the same time avoiding hostile authorities. Sometimes she narrowly escaped, as when she fled out the window when a group of Ustasha officers came knocking at the door. And sometimes she used trickery and deceit, such as wearing traditional women's clothing and carrying a spindle, when she pretended to be an ordinary (and very scared) peasant girl.<sup>591</sup>

Thanks to the mentioned militant fighting spirit, Ljubica Gerovac became well-known to the Italian and Ustasha authorities:

'Capture Ljubica alive or dead,' ordered the Italian command. The spies looked for her and the bounty was announced. With the execution of Ljubica, [Ivica] Lovinčić or [Srđan] Uzelac, they believed, the morale of their wavering garrisons would return. They tried everything, but nothing worked. In fact, Ljubica gained a reputation as a folk hero (*narodni junak*) of marvelous abilities...

- The rifle couldn't kill Ljubica, – the Italians said.

- You don't say, why not?

- Ljubica have (sic) a steel armor. And a revolver. Shoots like a man...<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Vera Gerovac Blažević, *Narodni heroj Ljubica Gerovac (People's Hero Ljubica Gerovac)* (Samobor: Zagreb, 1983).

Gerovac Blažević published the same series of articles once more in a book. A number of appendices in it witness her presence at the unveilings of Ljubica Gerovac's monuments and busts (one monument was in her birthplace Jezerane, and busts were in the town Stajnica and in the Park of Brotherhood and Unity in the town Vodoteč) as well as at commemorations of different anniversaries. For instance, Otočac municipality celebrated Hero Day on the day of her death. Kindergarten and elementary school in Jezerane as well as high school of economics in Ogulin that were named after this *partizanka* were just some of the institutions that constituted the social framework for preserving the memory of her.

<sup>591</sup> Vera Gerovac Blažević, "Zapisi o prvoj partizanki u Lici: Šatori na Kapeli" ("Records about the First *Partizanka* in Lika: Tents on Kapela"), *Arena* 456 (September 19, 1969): 10-11; idem, "Zapisi o prvoj partizanki u Lici: Posljednji pucanj" ("Records about the First *Partizanka* in Lika: The Last Shot"), *Arena* 457 (September 26, 1969): 10-11.

<sup>592</sup> Gerovac Blažević, "The Last Shot," 10.

Veljko Kovačević tweaked the image of Ljubica-the-fighter a bit further: “In the enemy ranks, they described her as a monster adorned with bombs, ammunition belts, and other war equipment and attributed to her gigantic strength (...).”<sup>593</sup> Participation in the battles provided the girl with considerable fame making her renown similar to the glory that Soviet women pilots earned for their outstanding military achievements. Because of their military successes, the German forces allegedly called them the night witches.<sup>594</sup> Eventually, Ljubica’s sister and Kovačević agree, she died as she lived: fighting, but far too soon. She perished during the battle for the liberation of Jezerane in the spring of 1942.

Another similar story, that of the *partizanka* Božidarka Damnjanović – Kika, originated on the territory of the mountain Kosmaj in Serbia. She joined the partisans as early as the summer of 1941 and throughout the war served in various positions in the Party branch for the town of Mladenovac, and in the fall of 1944, at the time of the fighting for the liberation of Serbia, Damnjanović became commander of the Kosmaj partisan detachment. In her memoirs, she notes that people compared her to the prewar outlaws.<sup>595</sup> Not only did many among them believe that she was elusive and always appeared where no one expected her, but, as Serbian historian Ljubinka Škodrić discovered, some chetniks fighting in the area believed that she was extremely bloodthirsty and capable of killing her opponents with her bare hands. Apparently, when one of them heard the news that she

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“Uhvatiti Ljubicu živu ili mrtvu”, glasila je naredba talijanske komande. Tražili su je žbiri, raspisvana je ucjena. Smaknućem Ljubice, Lovinčića ili Uzelca, vjerovali su, vratio bi se moral njihovim pokolebanim garnizonima. Pokušavali su svašta, ali im ništa nije polazilo za rukom. Dapače, Ljubica je stekla glas narodnog junaka čudesnih sposobnosti...

- Puška ne mogla ubiti Ljubicu – govorili su Talijani.

- Ma nemojte, a kako to?

- Ljubica imati oklop od čelika. I revolver. Puca kao muško...”

<sup>593</sup> Kovačević, *Dani koji ne zalaze*, 203. “U neprijateljskim redovima su je opisivali kao čudovište okićeno bombama, redenicima i drugim rekvizitima ratne strave pripisujući joj divovsku snagu (...).”

<sup>594</sup> D’Ann Campbell, “Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union,” *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 2 (April 1993): 319, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i348420>.

<sup>595</sup> Božidarka Damnjanović-Marković, *Ja i moji drugovi, vol. 1 (Me and My Comrades, vol. 1)* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1978), 32-33.

was caught, he remarked that “no one can catch her, because it was said a thousand times that she was caught, but she was not.”<sup>596</sup>

While it is not possible to pinpoint Ljubica Gerovac’s motivation for participating in the armed struggles alongside a host of other activities, Damnjanović lived to tell her story. It is clear from her memoir that a sizeable portion of her effort was at the same time an attempt to combat the prejudice against women of which she was more than aware. “As a woman, ever since I joined the partisans, I was constantly anxious not to burden my comrades,” Damnjanović writes, and proceeds to enumerate the examples to which she paid special attention:

Probably because of all this, for instance, I carried a sixteen-kilogram machine gun for several months, and my appearance evoked admiration from peasants and young partisans, but a sneer from the ‘older comrades.’ I never allowed anyone to help me jump over water, fences, and other obstacles. Thanks to my good health and fitness, none of the men could walk better or longer than I could. During that terrible winter of 1942, every day we were forced to travel tens of kilometers through waist-high snow and in minus twenty degrees Celsius. Since I did not wear pants, when I would arrive, for instance, in Šepšin or Dubona via the snowy Varnovica, my legs were cut open and bloody because of the icy crust we had to break through...<sup>597</sup>

Already from this short passage, it is clear that Božidarka Damnjanović, while she was *partizanka* Kika, made every effort to overcome prejudices against women by imitating and trying to outdo “male” combat competences. At the same time, just like Ljubica Gerovac, she became a fierce fighter respected by her comrades and feared by her opponents. With the narrative about Gerovac, heroism to the fullest extent – and by manly standards – was in *Arena* recognized as part

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<sup>596</sup> Škodrić, “Položaj žene u okupiranoj Srbiji,” 346. “Nju ne može niko da uhvati, jer se hiljadu puta pričalo da je uhvaćena pa nije.”

<sup>597</sup> Damnjanović-Marković, *Ja i moji drugovi*, 33. Uza sve to, u meni je kao ženi od dolaska u partizane stalno bila prisutna neka strepnja da drugovima ne budem na teretu. Verovatno da sam zbog svega toga nosila, na primer, nekoliko meseci mitraljez težak 16 kilograma i svojom pojavom izazivala divljenje seljaka i mladih partizana, a malo podrugljiv osmeh „starijih drugova“. Nikada nikome nisam dala da mi pomogne pri preskakanju vode, plotova i drugih prepreka. Zahvaljujući dobrom zdravlju i kondiciji, niko od muškaraca nije mogao bolje i duže od mene da pešači. Te strašne zime 1942. godine bili smo prinuđeni da svakodnevno prelazimo desetine kilometara po snegu do pojasa i na temperaturi od -20°C ispod nule. Pošto nisam nosila pantalone (na prošloj stranici je objašnjenje zašto nije), kad bih stigla, na primer, u Šepšin ili Dubonu preko zavejanih Varovnica, od ledene kore koju smo probijali noge su mi bile isečene do krvi...

of women's experience. As personal narratives like Damjanović's attest, the manly standards, when applied to the activities of girls and women, demanded quite a bit more than from men who fulfilled the same roles. While men were, and often still are, considered "naturally" qualified to perform the duties of soldiers, "women are assumed to be excludable until they prove that they belong in the masculine public sphere."<sup>598</sup> Therefore, some Yugoslav *partizanke* embraced wartime hypermasculinity primarily by emphasizing their physical strength and mastery of combat violence. Importantly, while readers of *Arena* caught glimpses of courageous but intimidating *partizanka* toward the end of 1960s, their representations, just as Jelena Batinić noted for the war years, were strongly reminiscent of the Slavic folklore heritage.<sup>599</sup>

### 5.3 Tribute to the Partisan Mother

Women like Marija Rakić and Ana Prlić, mentioned in the El Shatt series, were in fact the most common female war figures in the *Arena* magazine. While they – the partisan wives and mothers – appeared only occasionally in the serialized articles, the section entitled "*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones" ("*Arena traži vaše najmilije*"), which appeared under this name as early as October 1963 and lasted for eight years, devoted the most space precisely to them.<sup>600</sup> During this

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<sup>598</sup> Gentry and Sjoberg, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, 9.

<sup>599</sup> See more in: Jelena Batinić, "'Proud to Have Trod in Men's Footsteps': Mobilizing Peasant Women into the Yugoslav Partisan Army in World War II" (MA thesis, The Ohio State University, 2001); idem, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, chapter 2 "'To the People, She Was a Character from Folk Poetry: The Party's Mobilizing Rhetoric," 26-75.

<sup>600</sup> The origins of this section date back to the February of 1961. Already in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the magazine appears similar section "*Arena* Searches for the Missing People" ("*Arena traži nestale ljude*") led by the same journalist, Marino Zurl. It was published sporadically until the mentioned October of 1963. Also, although the section ceased to be a part of the permanent content of the journal in 1971, it was published from time to time until the end of the researched period.

time, it was one of the three most popular *Arena*'s sections. Surveys conducted in 1963, 1965, and 1967 showed that approximately 90 percent of the magazine's audience read it regularly.<sup>601</sup>

The section's importance is reflected in the fact that its work was promoted and supported by several social organizations. Saša Javorina, secretary of the War Veterans' Union (SUBNOR) of Yugoslavia, praised the veterans and local branches of the SUBNOR who helped the progress of "Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones" and invited others to join as early as February 1964.<sup>602</sup> Mara Rupena-Osolnik and Sveto Jovanović, both employed by the Red Cross of Yugoslavia, and Jelka Jantarić – Majkica, the commissioner for social affairs and veterans' protection at the Sarajevo municipality, advocated cooperation with *Arena* on this issue. It even happened that local branches of, for instance, Red Cross referred the people they could not help toward the magazine *Arena* and this section.<sup>603</sup> Thanks to this section, Marino Zurl, the leading journalist, witnessed and wrote about one hundred and ninety-eight reunions.<sup>604</sup> Many more "cases" remained open.

What is more, the response of the readership confirmed that a forum like this one had been missing from the end of the war. In addition to numbers and statistics, and even more in addition to the heroic epic about the victorious army consisting of all but perfect men and women and led by the infallible leader, this section brought to the fore the stories of civilians who, through no fault of their own, found themselves in the midst of armed conflict. Reading the section with the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to notice the uniformity of the narrative over the eight years of its existence,

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<sup>601</sup> Janković, "Što je pokazala 'Arenina' anketa," 3; Informacija o pripremama za III. republičku skupštinu SUBNOR SRH, May 1969, box 10, folder III. republička skupština SUBNOR SRH, HR-HDA-1241-SUBNORH (1947-1992), Croatian State Archives, Zagreb, Croatia (unpaginated).

<sup>602</sup> Marino Zurl, "'Arena' traži vaše najmilije: Sobičak ispunjen radošću" ("Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones: Little Room Filled with Joy"), *Arena* 165 (February 21, 1964): 4.

<sup>603</sup> Marino Zurl, "'Arena' traži vaše najmilije: Godine prolaze a javke nema" ("Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones: The Years Go By, And the Password Is Not Used"), *Arena* 444 (June 27, 1969): 10.

<sup>604</sup> Marino Zurl, "Kako sam tražio najmilije" ("How I Searched for the Loved Ones"), *Arena* 831 (November 25, 1976): 13-15.

Later on, Zurl published a book featuring twenty selected stories from this period of his journalistic career and participated in the making of the film inspired by his work.

as well as the standardization of the people represented – first and foremost the partisan mother, that was based on the folk epic tradition and the Christian *mater dolorosa*.

Feminist scholars repeatedly emphasize that the appeal of the figure of the patriotic mother to a great degree derives from its conformity to the hierarchy of the presumably natural gender roles as well as the militarized expectations of innumerable state governments. For instance, Jelena Batinić observes that “tragic, patriotic, and vengeful – yet activist – motherhood permeates the Partisan and AFŽ publications during the war.” Indeed, all kinds of journalistic contributions, some official like reports and letters and those more creative like stories and poems, told the tale “of grieving and vindictive mothers, who proudly give up their children to die for the righteous cause and funnel all of their pain and anger into rallying for the Partisan struggle.”<sup>605</sup> In socialist Yugoslavia, most famous is the mentioned Skender Kulenović’s portrayal of such a mother written already in 1942. In addition, as Kulenović was inspired by South Slavic folk poetry when writing his “Stojanka, the Mother of Knežopolje”, many others borrowed from it as well.

For instance, in the feuilleton entitled “On the Path of Freedom: Pyrenees – Kozara,” the journalist followed the tracks of the partisan soldier Ratko Vujović during the Spanish Civil War and the NOB. In the fourth and fifth parts, whilst describing the events following the end of the Kozara Offensive that happened during the summer of 1942, the journalist combines the military exploits of Vujović and his comrades with the descriptions of some civilians. He writes about an unnamed girl who offered the soldiers (Vujović and Šoša) wild strawberries, an unnamed *skojevka* who helped the soldiers (Vujović, Grga Jankez and Braco Nemet) find shelter from the still roaming enemy soldiers, and (also) an unnamed old lady who fed the same group and kept watch while they

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<sup>605</sup> Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, 53.

slept.<sup>606</sup> In the account, he also included one partisan mother. Her name, as expected, is not mentioned, but the reader learns that she is Vlado Pekić's mother:

On the stretcher made of branches lay the shattered body of the commander of the youth unit Vlado Pekić. His mother was bending over him. The figure of such a mother entered the legend of the liberation war with the Skender Kulenović's poem. By that time, she had already lost two sons older than Vlado. Bent over her third dying son, she was petrified. She did not cry. The people who surrounded the hero wept.<sup>607</sup>

In the case of "Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones," it is important to note that its interpretation of partisan motherhood did not devote any space to the aspect that Batinić characterizes as activist. The war activism of women, especially in the AFŽ, was cherished after the war only by the women's organization, as is evident in the magazine *Žena u borbi*. Nevertheless, this section, although fairly stylized, reflected the experience of a large number of women in Yugoslavia, either those who escorted their sons to the partisan army (and, although this was never mentioned, other militaries operating on the territory of Yugoslavia during the war), or those whose husbands left them at home with their small children for the same reason. However, unlike the vengeful archetype postulated in the portrayal of the mother of Knežopolje, the life stories published in *Arena* allowed for identification with the victims of the tragic events and, more importantly, promoted understanding, compassion, and solidarity between the different social and ethnic groups (as long as they were on the right side of the political divide).

In addition, as Renata Jambrešić Kirin writes, and in this I concur, this section showcased women's traditional memory practices.<sup>608</sup> It drew attention to the long-established customs of remembering and mourning of the dead within the family, found both on the territory of Yugoslavia

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<sup>606</sup> Emanuel Mičković, "Na putu slobode: Pirineji – Kozara (4)" ("On the Path of Freedom: Pyrenees – Kozara (4)"), *Arena* 72 (May 11, 1962): 14-15; idem, "Na putu slobode: Pirineji – Kozara (5)" ("On the Path of Freedom: Pyrenees – Kozara (5)"), *Arena* 73 (May 18, 1962): 14-15.

<sup>607</sup> Mičković, "Na putu slobode: Pirineji – Kozara (4)," 15. "Na nosilima od granja ležao je razmrskana tijela komandir Omladinske čete Vlado Pekić. Nad njim se savila njegova majka. Lik takve majke ušao je u legendu oslobodilačkog rata poemom Skendera Kulenovića. Dotada je već izgubila dva sina, starija od Vlade. Povijena nad trećim sinom koji izdiše, bila je kao skamenjena. Nije plakala. Plakali su ljudi koji su okruživali heroja."

<sup>608</sup> Jambrešić Kirin, "Politika sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat," 167.

and in the wider context of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>609</sup> In other words, instead of showing how the Yugoslav New Woman was born during the war – as postulated by *Žena u borbi* in line with the socialist gender agenda and adopted to some extent by *Svijet – Arena*'s journalists made use of the time-honored traditions in this section. It is not surprising, therefore, that I came across only one story in which a woman searching for her children identified as a *partizanka*.<sup>610</sup> Namely, the women in this section were described primarily – and often solely – as mothers, both during the war and in every other life situation.

In this section, the character of the suffering mother was even overemphasized. At the same time, it exposed an important limitation in the representation of male identities affected by the war. For instance, in December 1964, Marino Zurl launched a campaign of a smaller scale within the “*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones” section. That is, he focused on the seventy-four families from Potkozarje (northern Bosnia) for a while.<sup>611</sup> The stories of fathers who had lost contact with their families while in captivity (much less because of their service in the partisan army) and were looking for their children were published here for the first time. But while recalling his encounter with the families of Potkozarje and the week he spent with them recording their life's misfortunes,

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<sup>609</sup> For instance, in the book chapter “Kosovo Maiden(s): Serbian Women Commemorate the Wars of National Liberation, 1912-1918,” Melissa Bokovoy (while focusing her argument on the commemoration of an ostensibly special sacrifice of the Serbian nation in the Balkan Wars and World War I for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) writes about the role that women – as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of the fallen – had in transmitting the memory of past wars through traditional mourning practices. In the chapter “Women's Stories as Sites of Memory: Gender and Remembering Romania's World Wars,” Maria Bucur suggests that, while invisible on the level of official memory practices, women were irreplaceable in small communities because they were responsible for remembering and mourning the dead as well as, for instance, organizing burials.

Both in: Wingfield and Bucur, eds., *Gender & War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, 157-170 and 171-192 (respectively).

<sup>610</sup> Marino Zurl, “‘*Arena*’ traži vaše najmilije: Djeca partizanke Pave” (“*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones: *Partizanka* Pava's Children”), *Arena* 551 (July 16, 1971): 14.

<sup>611</sup> The Kozara Offensive happened during the summer of 1942. German and Ustasha onslaught triggered the movement of almost the entire civilian population from the villages below the mountain; they hoped to take shelter on Kozara, which was the target of the offensive because a large number of partisan fighters were there at the time. Approximately 25 000 people were killed during and immediately after the operation, and many children who survived were deported in the Ustasha concentration camps.

Zurl refers to a poetic and emotionally charged, but in this instance inaccurate, long line of women with black scarves.<sup>612</sup>



Figure 9: “Potkozarje Has Not Mourned Them Yet,” *Arena* 207 (December 11, 1964): 6 (and 7) and “Potkozarje Has Not Mourned Them Yet (2): Maybe They Live Right Next to Us,” *Arena* 208 (December 18, 1964): 6 (and 7).

Alongside the Žorž Skirgin’s photograph, the text in bold on the second photograph reads: “Some of them were born on Kozara in the midst of the offensive, while enemy planes crashed over their mothers’ heads sowing death everywhere.” However, the photographs attached to the (in the absence of a better expression) announcements below, make clear that many searching for their loved ones in this instance are the fathers.

It is not the intent of this analysis to claim that Marino Zurl neglected one group of people at the expense of another; that was surely not his intention. However, even a cursory glance at the people whose appeals were published during this time (as figure 9 attests), as well as the general composition of those who used this section to search for family members, suggests that he prioritized the experience of mothers searching for their offspring and the mothers sought by children as the ideal type of wartime suffering. In this way, Zurl in a sense subsumed the victimization of others (the children and the fathers) under the category of suffering partisan

<sup>612</sup> Marino Zurl, “Kako sam tražio najmilije” (“How I Searched for the Loved Ones”), *Arena* 831 (November 25, 1976): 14.

mothers. Accordingly, photographs of mothers hugging their children were the standard illustration in this section, while photographs of fathers in the same situation were usually published if mothers were not present. And, in addition, the texts tended to emphasize the surge of emotions when describing the reunions with mothers, while the fathers were described as stoically trying not to cry.<sup>613</sup>

In other words, while the celebration of patriotic motherhood is inscribed in the legacy of a patriarchal and militarized society, for men – soldiers, fighters, heroes – it represents a luxury. In her memoirs, partisan doctor Saša Božović provides examples of military masculinity that were a common part of the partisan experience due to the way the partisan movement functioned but were scarce in the materials about the NOB that I read or saw during my research. Namely, in 1978 Božović published the memoir *To You, My Dolores (Tebi, moja Dolores)*, which she dedicated to the child she lost during the war, and two other similar books. In them, the author recalls several examples of soldiers playing with her baby and for example tangling violets in her hair. She also recalls how “that rough, mustache-wearing guy (*brkajlija*) who conquers tanks,” Sava Kovačević, sent a milk cow to the sickly and often hungry Dolores and her mother.<sup>614</sup> While an occasional caring male partisan appears in the magazines (as well as diaries, memoirs, novels, and poems) I analyzed, this is the unique appearance for the People’s Hero Sava Kovačević.

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<sup>613</sup> The reunions describing the emotional encounters of mothers with lost children are numerous. One among them is: Marino Zurl, “‘Arena’ traži vaše najmilije: Najradosniji 8. mart majke Milice Blesić” (“*Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones: The Happiest Women’s Day of the Mother Milica Blesić*”), *Arena* 480 (March 6, 1970): 9. In comparison, a reunion of a father and son, subtitled with “Male Tears in Banija” (“*Muške banijske suze*”), can be found here: Marino Zurl, “‘Arena’ traži vase najmilije: Dvostruko slavlje u Joševici” (“*Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones: Double Celebration in Joševica*”), *Arena* 158 (January 3, 1954): 6-7.

<sup>614</sup> Saša Božović, *Sve naše Dolores (All Our Doloreses)* (Belgrade: NIRO Četvrti jul, 1983), 78-79, quote on 156. “Taj grubi brkajlija koji osvaja tenkove (...).”

Namely, the author, who was underfed as any other partisan soldier, breastfed as many as four children over a period of time. Along with Dolores, she shortly breastfed the newborn of *partizanka* Đina Vrbica, a baby they delivered literally under enemy fire, an unnamed baby who was found in Drenovača (northern Bosnia) along with her frozen mother, and the boy Ilija, the youngest of seven children of her comrade Ilija Rašeta.

Furthermore, Božović's memoir prose offers the best articulated notion of male detachment from the parental experience that I have encountered so far. Namely, it is not until the middle of her second book, *All Our Doloreses (Sve naše Dolores)*, that the author first mentions how her husband experienced the death of their first child. She writes: "I thought, perhaps due to a certain maternal selfishness, that only we women are created to suffer, to hurt, that only we carry such a deeply wounded heart in such a situation. I put the fathers in second place. This injustice of mine even seemed normal to me."<sup>615</sup> In this way, Božović elucidates, if only for a moment, another face of the revolution that has rarely been part of the narrative about the war, as elsewhere, so in the section "Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones." Nevertheless, despite this discursive blind spot that characterized this section until the end of the researched period, the number of fathers searching for their children with the help of *Arena* rose in the following years. In other words, although the mythical *mater dolorosa* of partisan war did not get her male counterpart during the years of existence of this section, men became a visible part of this community attesting that they, too, remember and mourn for lost family members.

#### 5.4 Struggling with the People's Liberation Struggle in the 1970s

*Arena* experienced a new wave of changes at the turn of the 1970s, although not as dramatic as in the beginning of 1961. Most modifications occurred in a three-year period, from 1969 to 1972, when Jovo Popović served as the magazine's editor-in-chief. Zlatko Glik describes the early 1970s as the time of "the creation of the magazine concept for the reader on the 'city asphalt.'"<sup>616</sup> The number of pages then grew to fifty-two, which translated into an increased number of long readings

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<sup>615</sup> Ibid, 99. "Mislila sam, valjda kroz neku sebičnost majke, da smo u takvoj situaciji samo mi žene stvorene da patimo, da bolujemo, da samo mi nosimo tako duboko ranjeno srce. Očeve sam stavljala na drugo mesto. Ta moja nepravda činila mi se čak i normalnom."

<sup>616</sup> Glik, "Arena," 9. "(...) taj se period označava kao stvaranje koncepcije lista za čitaoca na 'gradskom asfaltu.'"

that included even more serialized articles and feuilletons. Moreover, for the first time, the magazine included into its content social and political topics, from the second-page editor's letter where he usually commented on domestic political developments, to new sections devoted to politics at home and abroad. This magazine always treaded the Party line and, following the statewide trend of popularizing the Tito's cult of personality, it put more and more emphasis on Tito's persona throughout the 1970s.<sup>617</sup> Subsequent editors-in-chief stayed on the same course (which was to be expected, since *Arena* was a magazine with a strong editorial framework within which editors-in-chief moved). In the first half of the 1970s, following the Croatian Spring, the meeting in Karadžorđevo and subsequent purges, this was probably the safest decision.<sup>618</sup>

The economic changes in Yugoslavia, particularly the adoption of the 1974 Constitution and the passage of the Law on Associated Labor (*Zakon o udruženom radu*, ZUR) in 1976, affected *Arena*'s content, too. Edvard Kardelj's theory of associated labor, introduced to facilitate the development of self-management, had an important impact on the newly socially conscious *Arena*. Its journalists wrote more about labor legislation, working conditions in individual industrial plants, and workers' experiences. A figure that attracted a great deal of attention in these, for *Arena* new, topics is Yugoslav worker, first and foremost worker in industry.

Such orientation led to increased coverage of a topic that had been absolutely the biggest hit in the magazine *Žena u borbi* in the first post-war years, and that made its mark on *Svijet*'s contents in the 1960s: portraits of women factory workers, that is, more broadly, in workplaces where men were usually employed. When writing about such material published in *Žena u borbi*, I use Stanislava Barać's term "female portrait," which brings together all texts aimed at showcasing and

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<sup>617</sup> Predrag Marković, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone? – Yugoslav Culture in the 1970s," in *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity*, 119-120.

<sup>618</sup> Zubak, "The Croatian Spring."

encouraging women's emancipation. However, I would not use the same term when describing the articles published in *Arena* of the 1970s. The novelties of the 1970s allowed *Arena*'s journalists to write about women workers and women brigadiers in youth work actions, but also about U.S. women rugby players, Bosnian women paratroopers, or aspiring Yugoslav women soldiers and American women astronauts. This area, I argue, allowed for venting the confusion that writing about the People's Liberation Struggle and the *partizanke* had already revealed.

In addition, the journalists who wrote these contributions more often than not seemed to lack knowledge or conviction about women's emancipation and gender equality. What is more, their texts echoed reservations about women in professions that had only been held by men until then. Therefore, unless the topic specifically required it, they rarely emphasized women's education, perseverance or skills required to perform certain jobs well, a characteristic that was regularly mentioned in the analyzed women's magazines. Additionally, the journalists wrote positively about women who held "men's" jobs and who engaged in "men's" sports as long as these women retained, to repeat Šibl's words once again, "the wonderful qualities that make a woman a woman."<sup>619</sup> In other words, women were in *Arena* represented positively "as long as they could be placed in gender-normative categories." If the women's presence in a particular field of work – trends of the decade demonstrate that same is valid both in a Yugoslav industrial plant and in American rock and roll – did not undermine the masculinity of men, their presence could be accepted.<sup>620</sup>

The *Arena*'s journalists first brought women who worked in industry back into the spotlight. Then they gradually broadened the image of the contemporary Yugoslav woman. That is, in

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<sup>619</sup> Šibl, *Partizanski dnevnik*, 271.

<sup>620</sup> Norma Coates, "Teenyboppers, Groupies, and Other Grotesques: Girls and Women and Rock Culture in the 1960s and early 1970s," *Journal of Popular Music* 15, no. 1 (June 2003): 81.

addition to the women employed in industry, they published articles about girls and young women who had chosen to study defense and protection at the Faculty of Political Sciences and about those among them who aced practical training, about girls and women who successfully navigated the opportunities of self-management, and who achieved unexpected successes in “male” sports. In comparison, it is worth mentioning that the girls and women who read the magazine for girls *Tina* and *Svijet* came across articles intoned quite differently. During the same period, Reana Senjković notes, *Svijet* and *Tina* followed a different logic: they promoted the new professions for women. That is, Senjković observes, while three-quarters of the Yugoslav workforce worked in the primary and secondary sectors, and while girls from rural areas and small towns had virtually no other choices but factory employment, these magazines wrote quite a bit about “the professions that do not get the hands dirty.” Some articles presented already well-known and accepted professions and advised girls and women how to become cooks, gardeners, shopkeepers, educators and nurses, while others turned to more modern professions, explaining to girls and women that they could also become models, journalists, flight attendants, architects, and astronomers.<sup>621</sup>

A fitting illustration of the *Arena*’s general trend is the interview with five women who worked as miners in the Serbian town of Bor. The journalist describes how the women’s faces “reflect serenity, but also pride that they perform such dangerous and responsible job – even though they are women.”<sup>622</sup> In addition, they are especially careful at work because they are mothers who are “needed by their small children who are eagerly waiting for them at home.”<sup>623</sup> Similarly, the first sentence of review of the proposals to amend the Military Duty Act, which focuses on the

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<sup>621</sup> Reana Senjković, “Ugljen i šminka: Narativi o jugoslavenskoj radnici na ponudi posttranzicijskom sjećanju” (“Coal and Make Up: Narratives about a Yugoslav Female Worker Offered to the Post-Transition Memory”), *Etnološka tribina* 48, no. 41 (2018): 187-188. “(...) o poslovima koji ne prljaju ruke.”

<sup>622</sup> Slobodan Ž. Rakić, “Opasnost je njihovo zanimanje: Moja mama ljulja Bor” (“Danger is Their Business: My Mother Is Rocking the Town Bor”), *Arena* 874 (September 22, 1977): 31. “(...) se ogleda smirenost, ali i gordost što obavljaju ovaj opasan i tako odgovoran posao – iako su žene.”

<sup>623</sup> Ibid. “(...) potrebne su svojoj dječici koja ih željno čekaju kod kuće.”

possibility of women serving in the military, reads in bold: “Women in our country will not, of course, do the classic military service.”<sup>624</sup> Without skipping a beat, the journalist continues:

“Marija Bursać, Nada Dimić, Ljubica Gerovac, Cvijeta Dabić and thousands of other revolutionaries have long been in the history textbooks. Needless to say, Yugoslav women always stood by their male compatriots when they were needed. In war, but no less in peace. In the first work brigades, women construction workers were often in the majority. Many of them wore shock-work badges on their chests.”<sup>625</sup>

Although he was referring to women who have been recorded in history as warriors fighting with weapons hand, the journalist concluded that, even if women learned to handle a pistol and a rifle during their military service, in the future they would be in the medical corps, the liaison office, or the commissariat, jobs in which they could replace men and free them up for the front lines.<sup>626</sup>

The article that showed readers of *Arena* that it is possible to write about women’s work in so-called male occupations in a different way was the two-part article on female astronauts at NASA. Its author was a young female journalist who was a member of the editorial staff of the magazine for girls *Tina* during 1975 and 1976. In the chapter focusing on the magazine *Svijet*, I mentioned Zoja Padovan and in the following chapter I will mention Mirjana Gračan, both *Vjesnik*’s journalists who started their careers at *Tina*. I suggest that the educationally inclusive atmosphere at *Tina* taught its journalists to produce reflective and feminist content, something that has so far been foregrounded only for the group of so-called *neofeminists* (who emerged on the Yugoslav media scene in the second half of the 1970s, see chapter 6). Davorka Grenac’s contribution, which is at the heart of the present analysis, confirms this suggestion.

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<sup>624</sup> Ivica Nosić, “Općenarodna obrana: Žena i puška” (“General Defense: Woman and Rifle”), *Arena* 992 (December 26, 1979): 12. “Žene u nas, dakako, neće služiti klasični vojni rok.”

<sup>625</sup> Ibid. “Marija Bursać, Nada Dimić, Ljubica Gerovac, Cvijeta Dabić i tisuće drugih revolucionarki odavno su u udžbenicima povijesti. Gotovo i ne treba naglašavati kako su Jugoslavenke oduvijek bile uz muške sunarodnjake kad god je trebalo. U ratu, ali ništa manje ni u miru. U prvim omladinskim radnim brigadama nerijetko su prevagu odnosile graditeljice. Mnoštvo ih je ponijelo udarničke značke na grudima.”

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

Grenac's two-part article on latest space exploration initiatives by NASA focuses on the role of women in them. This article is especially appropriate here because it does not focus on any male-dominated sphere, but rather – in addition to military – on another incarnation of masculinity, especially in the United States. Although, as Karin Hilck explains, NASA brings together experts from a range of diverse professions, in the 1960s the face of this community became astronauts: “trail-blazing, young, ruggedly handsome individuals who were also brave, honest, devote, patriotic family men who were willing to give their lives to fight evil forces in a hostile environment.”<sup>627</sup> Just like the partisans in Yugoslavia, they were the ultimate manly men of American popular culture.

In the two texts, Grenac tried to answer many questions. She began by asking why American women have not yet had the opportunity travel into space so far, while the first Soviet woman cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova, whom she mentioned twice, did so already in 1963. And she concluded by asking whether women are physically capable of such things at all and, of course, how they manage to balance their personal lives and such a demanding career. But although Grenac addressed similar questions as her male colleagues in the just mentioned articles (as well as in a large number of others), she wondered not whether women belong at NASA, but why there are no more women working there and what the working conditions are like. Moreover, although NASA is the epitome of a masculinized institution, she did not imply that women working there were actually doing “men’s jobs,” that they ought to do it “manly,” and that they should be grateful for it, but rather explained how these particular women were advancing NASA’s research with their knowledge and expertise.

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<sup>627</sup> Karin Hilck, *Lady Astronauts, Lady Engineers, and Naked Ladies: Women and the American Space Community during the Cold War, 1960s-1980s* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2019), 45-46.

As *Arena* changed during the 1970s, so did the way in which *Arena*'s journalists wrote about the People's Liberation Struggle and its protagonists. A good example is a section introduced in October 1970 under the title "This Is My Life" ("*To je moj život*"), for which several journalists wrote. Its announcement did not identify any special features. Much like the "Great Encounters" section published in 1962, it focused on intriguing or successful, oftentimes famous individuals from different walks of life who had already begun their careers in one way or another already during the interwar period. While many of the interviewees participated in the People's Liberation Struggle, the war was not necessarily the focus of the conversations this time.<sup>628</sup>

In addition, although *Arena* for the most part recounted the stylized and aestheticized story of the People's Liberation Struggle, in which men were exemplary models of heroism and women the epitome of self-sacrifice,<sup>629</sup> its scope now broadened a bit more. Luka Kaliterna, goalkeeper and later the first local coach of the Split's football club *Hajduk*, for instance, told of victories in football matches with Allied soldiers on the island of Vis in 1944.<sup>630</sup> The interview with him testifies to the fact that at this time it became possible for an *Arena*'s journalist to interview a man about a sports

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<sup>628</sup> In forty-six articles published in just over a year, fourteen among them did not mention the NOB at all. Notably, in the interview with Josip Badalić *Arena* for the first time published about Philology and Slavic Studies (Petar Vlačić, "Josip Badalić: Međunarodni profesor" ("Josip Badalić: International Professor"), *Arena* 534 (March 19, 1971): 2-3), and in the interview with Fran Kušan it focused on Biology and Botany (Dragan Živanović, "Fran Kušan: Velebit u pokusu" ("Fran Kušan: Velebit in the Experiment"), *Arena* 563 (October 8, 1971): 2-3). It even published an interview with Grga Novak, the president of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (Ratko Zvrko, "Grga Novak: Vodič na najvišem nivou" ("Grga Novak: Top Level Guide"), *Arena* 555 (August 13, 1971): 2-3).

<sup>629</sup> Paradigmatic examples of such practice in this series of interviews provided Pavle Gregorić and Vicko Krstulović. Gregorić recounted his experience of the October Revolution and then concentrated on his many clashes with the authorities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The conversation ended with Gregorić reminiscing about the Second Session of AVNOJ imbued with the dream of freedom (-, "Pavle Gregorić: Tito mu je dao ime Brzi" ("Pavle Gregorić: Tito Named Him *Brzi*"), *Arena* 518 (November 27, 1970): 2-3). Krstulović, later one of the main organizers of the uprising in Dalmatia, in a rather similar fashion described his interwar activism. In the end, he talked about the death of his mother. He was allowed to leave the prison to go to her funeral, and while he stood at her grave with his hands in shackles, he swore to persevere in his struggle (Milivoj Rebić, "Vicko Krstulović: U lancima na sprovodu majke" ("Vicko Krstulović: Shackled at His Mother's Funeral"), *Arena* 524 (January 8, 1971): 2-3).

<sup>630</sup> Ilija Maršić, "Luka Kaliterna: Adresa za balun" ("Luka Kaliterna: Address for the Ball"), *Arena* 557 (August 27, 1971): 2-3.

career during the war. Even more interesting is that the People's Hero Pero Kalanja in his wartime tale of wounding and near-certain death included the worries about the present. At the time of the interview, he was living in a three-bedroom apartment with his wife and four unemployed adult children, two of whom were married and had their own offspring.<sup>631</sup> This example demonstrates that even a People's Hero could be publicly dissatisfied, even sulky, with his life in the country he fought for because he believed that he and his family deserved more and should get more.

Unlike "Great Encounters," this series also included several interviews with women. In addition to articles about three theater stars who did not participate in the NOB – actress Božena Kraljeva and two opera singers Ančica Mitrović and Marijana Radev – nine articles featured women who were involved in various ways. Since 1971 was the last year that "Arena Searches for Your Loved Ones" appeared as a regular section and the tide of tragic fates of Yugoslav partisan mothers ebbed a bit, these articles helped to further expand *Arena's* existing narrative of women's active engagement in the People's Liberation Struggle. The contributions described in these interviews represent a diverse collection of *žene borci*, and the experiences evoked by the participants can hardly be described as typical of this magazine. Among the interviewed are a long-time Party activist Lidija Šentjurg; several illegal activists, Zora Rosandić from Split and the Filipović sisters from Zagreb; a course organizer in Podgrmeč, otherwise an accomplished family law expert Ana Prokop; two doctors, Franja Bidovec-Bojc and Cila Albahari; a *skojevka* and trained saboteur Lucija Petković; a courier Pavica Kovačević; and a sister, Marica Viđak.

In this mosaic of personal experiences, only the last one relies on a woman's family connection to the war. It describes Marica Viđak, the sister of the aforementioned Vicko Krstulović, in beautifully stereotypical language: "Marica Viđak's memories can serve as an exciting biography

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<sup>631</sup> Vlado Bojkić, "Pero Kalanja: Meci koji uvijek bole" ("Pero Kalanja: Bullets That Always Hurt"), *Arena* 548 (June 25, 1971): 2-3.

of a woman who, like a frightened bird with a trembling heart, knew that her nest was constantly in danger, but did not want to leave it.”<sup>632</sup> The remaining eight interviews represent the interviewed women as active participants in the NOB who joined the struggles out of conviction and free will. It is important to emphasize this because it means that some of *Arena*'s journalists were finally willing to talk to these women, and, no less important, knew how to ask relevant questions that would not portray them as honorary men.

Ratko Zvrko, the author of the article with Viđak, interviewed Lidija Šentjunc as well. Given that Šentjunc served her sentence in Požarevac penitentiary in the first half of the 1930s, Zvrko tried to draw an explicit parallel – and this was the first such occurrence in this magazine – between male and female prison experience of the interwar and discovered an important difference. By the mid-1930s, Yugoslav male communists (as well as members of political parties with ethnic or religious characteristics, such as members of the Croatian Peasant Party) formed stable networks in the prisons of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, so that these places “had served the same function as the public schools in Britain in training the next generation of rulers.”<sup>633</sup> Alternatively, Šentjunc and six communist activist girls<sup>634</sup> – and not experienced Party functionaries or, to the very least, full Party members – who were serving their sentences at the same time, felt isolated as they were, at least in the beginning, the first and only female political prisoners in Požarevac. While they did try to emulate the example set by the male comrades, the group encountered problems obtaining

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<sup>632</sup> Ratko Zvrko, “Marica Viđak: Kuća u Kamenitoj ulici” (“Marica Viđak: A House in *Kamenita* Street”), *Arena* 568 (November 12, 1971): 2-3. “Sjećanja Marice Viđak mogu poslužiti za uzbudljivu biografiju žene koja je kao preplašena ptica treperava srca znala da joj je gnijezdo neprestano u opasnosti, ali to gnijezdo nije htjela napustiti.”

<sup>633</sup> Sonia Wild Bičanić, *Two Lines of Life* (Zagreb: Durieux: Croatian P.E.N. Centre, 1999), 8.

Nada Sremec, *Iz partizanskog dnevnika (From a Partisan Journal)* (Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog odbora AFŽ Hrvatske, 1945), 36. While writing her wartime diary, Sremec noted the same thing about the communist leaders who led the partisan movement naming Tito, Moša Pijade, Andrija Hebrang, Pavle Gregorić, Šime Balen and Đuro Špoljarić as former prisoners of the penitentiary in Sremska Mitrovica.

<sup>634</sup> As her colleagues in Požarevac Šentjunc names Kata Govorušić, Savka Tasić, Roza Marton, Beška Bembeša, Ivanka Ivić and Ivanka Muačević.

suitable literature that would have enabled them to continue their education in communist theory and practice.<sup>635</sup>

Another of Ratko Zvrko's intriguing interviews is the one with the doctor Franja Bidovec-Bojc. In addition, his colleague Milivoje Jovović interviewed the doctor Cila Albahari a short while later. The two doctors performed the duties during the war that, as Cynthia Enloe notes, are usually imagined closer to traditional notion of femininity than, for instance, women soldiers.<sup>636</sup> As Natascha Vittorelli puts it, women's work in the medical corps during the NOB represents a "legitimate kind of visibility" that can be considered as a fitting example of the progress of women's emancipation without supposedly disrupting the traditional gender hierarchy.<sup>637</sup> At the same time, such representations of war are very rare, even in this magazine, which published more than any other about the NOB. Janet Lee's comparison of Flora Sandes, a combatant soldier in the Serbian army, and Grace McDougall, a nurse and ambulance driver in Belgium and France, both during World War I, is instructive in this respect. The author argues that for both women war service was an expression of rebellion against normative femininity. However, while Sandes reproduced wartime masculinity and thus could be dismissed as exceptional,<sup>638</sup> McDougall

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<sup>635</sup> Ratko Zvrko, "Lidija Šentjunc: Joža: šifra i legenda" ("Lidija Šentjunc: Joža: Code and Legend"), *Arena* 531 (February 26, 1971): 2-3.

<sup>636</sup> Cynthia Enloe, "Wounds: Militarized Nursing, Feminist Curiosity, and Unending War," *International Relations* 33, no. 3 (August 2019): 395, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117819865999>.

<sup>637</sup> Vittorelli, "With or Without Gun," 122.

<sup>638</sup> History contains many examples of women assuming men's roles during wars by way of crossdressing. See, for instance: Julie Wheelwright, "'Amazons and Military Maids: An Examination of Female Military Heroines in British Literature and the Changing Construction of Gender,'" *Women's Studies Int. Forum* 10, no. 5 (1987): 489-502; idem, *Amazons and Military Maids: Women Who Dressed as Men in Pursuit of Liberty and Happiness* (London: Pandora, 1989).

Among the southern Slavs, such parables are remembered through oral tradition. See: Maja Bošković Stulli, ed., *Usmena književnost: Izbor studija i ogleda (Oral Literature: Selection of Studies and Essays)* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1971).

remained traditionally feminine, which included medical care and self-sacrifice, and thus possessed a greater capacity to subvert the gender paradigms that were in place at the time.<sup>639</sup>

Accordingly, conversations with partisan doctors Franja Bidovec-Bojc and Cila Albahari revealed that women in the medical corps did more than bandage and comfort soldiers. Although they did not carry weapons and their work was (and largely still is) considered conventionally feminine, their experiences were as filthy and dangerous as those of the soldiers they treated. The poetry of Soviet nurse Yulia Drunina, brought to the attention of contemporary readers and researchers by Adrienne M. Harris, complements the narratives of Bidovec-Bojc and Albahari recounted to *Arena's* journalists. In this case, Drunina's poem "Zinka" is particularly appropriate. It was written in honor of Zinaida Aleksandrovna Samsonova, who was posthumously awarded the medal of the Hero of the Soviet Union and illustrates the living conditions on the battlefield that were the same for Zinka, who was a combatant, and Yulia, who was a nurse. Drunina wrote: "We lay down by the broken fir tree/ To wait for the first light of dawn./ Under one greatcoat we kept warm/ On the chilled, damp ground./ (...)/ We just barely warmed up,/ When suddenly came the order 'Advance!'/ Again nearby, in a wet overcoat,/ Walks the blond-braided soldier."<sup>640</sup>

Much in the same vein, Albahari's recollections emphasizes deplorable living conditions in the partisan hospitals where she worked. For instance, she worked for some time in the hospital on

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<sup>639</sup> Janet Lee, "A Nurse and a Soldier: Gender, Class and National Identity in the First World War Adventures of Grace McDougall and Flora Sandes," *Women's History Review* 15, no. 1 (2006): 83-103, DOI: 10.1080/09612020500440903.

<sup>640</sup> As cited in: Harris, "After 'A Youth on Fire,'" 73.

Numerous examples of scholarly literature on women in the First World War also explores the ways in which women's experience of caring for wounded soldiers (often in intersection with nationality and class) blurred the existing boundaries between (militarized) masculinity and femininity. For example, see: Janet Lee, *War Girls. The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry in the First World War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005); Alon Rachamimov, "'Female Generals' and 'Siberian Angels': Aristocratic Nurses and the Austro-Hungarian POW Relief," in *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, 23-46; Laurie Stoff, "The 'Myth of the War Experience' and Russian Wartime Nursing during World War I," *Aspasia* 6 (2012): 96-116; Margaret R. Higonet, "At the Front," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Volume 3: Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter, 121-152 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Petrova Gora (Croatia), which was in fact a series of dugouts that had to be closed from the outside (and opened in the same way) for days at a time during military operations.<sup>641</sup> Bidovec-Bojč's recollections focus more on sorrowful events that strongly influenced her life. Namely, when she learned that her sister Paula was dead, tortured to reveal her own whereabouts, she also came into possession of Paula's short message that said, "It would be better to be buried alive than to fall into the hands of the White Guards (*belogardejci*) and experience what they have in store for you."<sup>642</sup> Precise details like these made it clear that medical personnel do not magically appear at the end of the battle only to disappear unharmed once their work is done.<sup>643</sup>

Among the nine interviews with female fighters, two more ought to be pointed out. The interview with Zora Rosandić is important because it tells the story of an *afežejka*, which is an exceedingly rare phenomenon in this magazine; I have not come across any article (whether it refers to the NOB or not) that describes the figure of an *afežejka* in more detail. Furthermore, this interview portrayed an activist who was worlds away from the narratives focused on by the women's magazine *Žena u borbi*. Rosandić's wartime activism attests that, as Chiara Bonfiglioli notes for both Yugoslav and Italian female participants of the Second World War, "femininity often represents a strategic tool that can be deployed in the political and armed Resistance."<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> Milivoje Jovović, "Cila Albahari: Partizanska liječnica" ("Cila Albahari: Partisan Doctor"), *Arena* 553 (July 30, 1971): 2-3.

<sup>642</sup> Ratko Zvrko, "Franja Bidovec-Bojč: Liječnica i njena bolnica" ("Franja Bidovec-Bojč: Doctor and Her Hospital"), *Arena* 529 (February 12, 1971): 2-3. "Bolje da te živu zakopaju nego da padneš u ruke belogardejaca i da doživiš ono što ti oni spremaju."

White Guards (Hr./Sr. *belogardejci*, Slo. *belogardisti*) were the members of the Voluntary Anti-Communist Militia (Slo. *Prostovoljna protikomunistična milica*), which the members of the partisan army called the White Guard. It was established in the province of Ljubljana under Italian command.

<sup>643</sup> An example of such a "technique" of involving female medical personnel in the narrative of war: Mladen Paver, "Svjedoci slavne povijesti (3): Junaci Druge dalmatinske" ("Witnesses to Glorious History (3): Heroes of the Second Dalmatian"), *Arena* 652 (June 22, 1973): 18-19.

<sup>644</sup> Bonfiglioli, "Revolutionary Networks," 84.

Indeed, leaders of various guerrilla movements readily exploited the sex-segregation in their respective societies as a wartime resource as needed.<sup>645</sup> In this regard, the KPJ and its female supporters were no exception. For instance, the earlier mentioned Ljubica Gerovac and Božidarka Damnjanović - Kika both wore peasant dresses. Damnjanović wore them at all times and Gerovac only on exceptional occasions. But both used them for the same purpose, to deceive the enemies in order to appear like ordinary peasant girls and not the fearsome *partizanke*. On the other hand, Anka Vujičić, who is considered the first female communist activist in the Kordun region of Croatia, was instructed by her male comrades to wear skirts when meeting with rural women because people in the countryside viewed women in pants with suspicion.<sup>646</sup>

In the interview published in *Arena*, Zora Rosandić had been described as a sympathizer of the Party since she moved to Split in the beginning of the 1930s. She then became a friendly and flirtatious courier who transferred many packages during the first two years of the war, precisely thanks to her attractiveness, which was typical in that many female activists learned the trade of illegal work in this way.<sup>647</sup> Her account was at the same time completely atypical, since the reporters of *Žena u borbi* never published such a text about one of themselves. Not even *Svijet*, which experimented with various approaches about women in the NOB quite a bit, published a similar attribution. To be sure, such an article did not appear in *Arena* either until this interlocutor made it possible. Although it can be assumed that young illegal activists (*ilegalke*) could play on the appearance card and many did, the New Woman made on the *afežejka*'s image never did such a thing. What is more, a number of texts published in *Svijet* in "Women and Espionage" section

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<sup>645</sup> Jane Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance, 1943-1945* (Denver: Arden Press, 1997).

<sup>646</sup> Većeslav Holjevac, *Zapisi iz rodnog grada (Notes from the Hometown)* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1972), 183/184.

<sup>647</sup> Milivoj Rebić, "Zora Rosandić: Virtuoz Konspiracije" ("Zora Rosandić: The Conspiracy Virtuoso"), *Arena* 516 (November 13, 1970): 2-3.

assured their readers that the young and attractive couriers of the partisan army were victimized by the enemy soldiers precisely because of their position. There is, of course, truth in this. For example, Vinka Kitarović, a courier who supported the Italian Resistance in the Bologna area, stated in a conversation with Chiara Bonfiglioli that her legs always trembled after “flirting” with German soldiers.<sup>648</sup> In this case, however, the interviewer did not adopt the negative attitude visible in the contributions in *Svijet*, but characterized Zora Rosandić as a successful conspirator precisely because of this aspect of her wartime activism.

Finally, the last interview that I consider important is a conversation with Lucija Petković, who was a “proper” *partizanka* during the war. Of the forty-six interviews that the journalists conducted and that included nine women who participated in the People’s Liberation Struggle, only Petković was a partisan soldier. Starting her career as a freelance saboteur – she filled the bottles with liquid obtained by kneading red forest fruits and painted public areas in her hometown Blato on Korčula island in red during one May night – Petković was admitted into the Communist Youth after the local communists learned of her activism. Soon she became the commander of the SKOJ assault units on the island. She was so successful that she became one of the first thirty-five partisan soldiers and the only woman trained for special tasks on the island of Vis in the spring of 1944. Unlike the interview with Lidija Šentjurc, the interviews with the two doctors, or with the *afežejka* Zora Rosandić, the conversation with Lucija Petković was not groundbreaking in the context of this magazine or in general. The very fact that an article was published about a partisan woman who was not someone’s wife or mother, who was not actually a nurse, courier, photographer, or typist, is important in itself. Because, despite the exceptionally large amounts of the NOB-related

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<sup>648</sup> Bonfiglioli, “Revolutionary Networks,” 84.

material published in this magazine, the *partizanke*, the rank-and-file soldiers who carried weapons and charged into battles, continued to be presented rarely during the 1970s, too.

Naturally, the publication of this series does not mean that all journalists embraced the offered novelties and abandoned the familiar framework. Within the scope of the new, the unofficial stereotype of this magazine – weeping women and courageous men – also reached one of its high points. The text that best exemplifies this is a series titled “Partisan Hidden Love” published in *Arena* during 1975 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the liberation. Having in mind Mitra Mitrović’s chapter “Unfinished” published in *Žena u borbi* (chapter 3), I thought that the author of the “Partisan Hidden Love” was actually joking when he described the love between the commander Rade and the partisan nurse Mila.

This series was introduced as a love story characteristic of young people participating in the partisan struggle. With this statement, it appears, the author General Branko B. Obradović, abandoned the factual representation of the NOB that was the hallmark of *Arena*’s historical feuilletons and serialized articles. Instead, he opted to recount a love melodrama laden with clichés. The very first clue are the illustrations. Articles about the NOB have always been in *Arena* illustrated with appropriate photographs, but the only photograph in this entire series is Obradović’s portrait. The rest are drawings. Second, the authenticity of the characterization of the protagonists is equally questionable. Rade is described as a commander of one *četa* and quite a well-educated and successful communist. Besides that, he is so handsome that girls invariably blush at the sight of him. Mila is a nurse with pearly teeth and a body like an ancient beauty with ample breasts. Although she has been courted for several years, she has ignored all interested parties. And, almost as an afterthought, the author adds that she is literate (figure 10).<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Branko B. Obradović, “Partizanska skrivena ljubav” (“Partisan Hidden Love”), *Arena* 740 (February 28, 1975): 46-48; *ibid*, *Arena* 741 (March 7, 1975): 45-47.



Figure 10: “Partisan Hidden Love,” *Arena* 740 (February 28, 1975): 47.

In the upper half are descriptions of the two protagonists, and in the lower half is a description how they fell in love.

Finally, the plot. Rade and Mila are bound by strict partisan morality and try to keep their love for each other a secret. Yet, everyone but the two of them knows of its existence. The plot advances as a military mission puts Mila into imminent danger, but also in the close proximity of another handsome and well-educated young man with a correct political outlook, doctor Ante. During their escape from

an unnamed German mental institution, Mila vigorously defends her honor against the young doctor’s timid declaration of love. Upon their return to her unit, Mila and Rade register (marry) in front of the unit’s political commissar and all its members. During this event, Mila cries – for the tenth time in this story. While reading this series, I had the impression that nothing happens in the unit, positive or negative, without her crying. Consequently, since she is one of the protagonists in the story and much of the plot development depends on her actions, the fact that Mila tends to cry before she does anything portrays her as overly emotional as well as possibly unfit for war. Nothing of the “masculine” sacrifice, courage, and endurance shown by many of her real-life comrades remained in Obradović’s depiction of the *partizanka*.

## 5.5 Concluding Thoughts

Why did I emphasize that *partizanka* Mila cried ten times in the course of the serialized NOB-inspired love melodrama “Partisan Hidden Love”? It points toward the same reasoning present in the feuilleton about El Shatt published in 1964; the journalist then mentioned the Antifascist Front of Women when he was describing a group of weeping women. And it reminds that women were unrivaled protagonists of only one *Arena*’s section, “*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones,” which invariably represented them as mothers and victims of war. In other words, the majority of the three hundred feuilletons and other articles about the People’s Liberation Struggle published in *Arena* during the 1960s and 1970s offered a rather limited portrayal of the war and its actors. Even if women assumed new roles during the war, *Arena*’s journalists consistently favored the long-established stereotype of the (crying, not singing) *mater dolorosa*, embodied by the partisan mother. The same transpired with the men and their wartime destinies, as they were first and foremost represented as exemplary partisan fighters, honorable, brave, but also disconnected from their families.

Still, as the chapter attests, it would be unfair to claim that *Arena*’s reporters made no effort to diversify the representation of women, and, to a lesser extent, men, who participated in the NOB. During the 1960s, it is possible to trace the progress from the least threatening type of militarized femininity embodied by wives and mothers and then female prisoners. Certainly, part of the accessibility of their wartime stories lies in the circumscribed portrayal of this unthreatening wartime femininity. For instance, while these women must have earned their long sentences in a penitentiary across the sea due to their political activism, *Arena* reveals no details about it. At the end of the same decade, the magazine portrayed full-blooded partisan woman Ljubica Gerovac. In other words, after nearly a decade of existence and constant writing about the NOB, *Arena* finally discovered the *partizanke*.

While the 1960s can be categorized as a decade of slow but visible progress in terms of the portrayal of women in war, the 1970s are not so easy to characterize. There were more contributions about women who supported the war effort than ever before. On the other hand, some authors published feuilletons of inferior quality, teeming with figures seemingly appropriated from the love melodramas of the roto-novels.<sup>650</sup> Given that *Arena*'s journalists have written devotedly and extensively about the People's Liberation Struggle since the very beginning of this magazine, feuilletons like the one about Rade and Mila were not the norm. Yet, "Partisan Hidden Love" hints at the existence of the trend that flourished in the 1970s; it veered toward banalizing and simplifying the war in order to exploit this topic for marketing various media products, especially films. In the mentioned feuilleton, Rade represented an exemplary partisan hero, while Mila remained an exemplary woman who also happened to participate in the war. Importantly, although Mila's character was eroticized, the *Arena*'s editorial staff did not publish content on the topic of sexuality among the members of the partisan army during the researched period.

Finally, a surprising blind spot remains present throughout the researched period. For, although the representation of the NOB in this magazine is closest to the official narrative, as outlined, for instance, by Tito in his famous speech at the Fifth Conference of the KPJ in the summer of 1948, it does not include the figure of the *afežejka*. The emancipated woman the audiences have come to know in the women's magazines is almost non-existent in *Arena*. Their glaring absence from the magazine's contents throughout two decades, I argue, is a clear statement about the nature of the *partizanke* represented in this magazine, too. Although, unlike the *afežejke*, they got a place in *Arena*'s interpretation of the partisan war, the *partizanke* here are not an expression of the progress

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<sup>650</sup> Roto-novels (*roto-romani*) are novels that were printed on rotary printing machines on lower-quality paper, but in large quantities. Publishers who printed newspapers and magazines such as Croatian *Vjesnik* printed various genres of roto-novels – science fiction, thrillers, westerns, romances – and assessment of their quality habitually involved the use of the term 'pulp fiction.'

made thanks to militarized femininity, but timeless folk heroines with special powers whose participation in the NOB contributed nothing to the creation of the Yugoslav New Woman. All in all, *Arena*'s journalists engaged with the opportunities and challenges of Yugoslav modernity by resorting to familiar gender stereotypes. Any departure from the tradition-trodden norm – Zora Rosandić's awareness that her femininity could be an asset in war, or a series of men, mostly fathers, who spoke publicly about the emotional costs of war – came in collaborations that were encouraged by the journalists' interlocutors and the magazine's readers.

## Chapter 6 – Female Icons in the Men’s Magazine *Start*

In describing many elements constituting everyday life in a small urban center of the Yugoslav periphery, author Pavao Pavličić wrote about love as well. He focused particularly on love expressed physically and thus represented in the popular art. Using pop music as an example, the author pointed to the song *Ta tvoja ruka mala* (That Small Hand of Yours) from 1953, performed by Ivo Robić, a singer who built his career singing soft pop and schlager music. Pavličić compared it to the song *Sanjam* (I Am Dreaming), released in 1972 by the Bosnian pop/rock band *Indexi*:

I do not know if you understand how radical the difference is between Robić shaking his sweetheart’s hand after a walk and sensing overwhelming emotions in that grip, and Davorin Popović (called Dick) who in the song dreams ‘how your hot hand wanders, your hand all over my body?’<sup>651</sup>

Continuing his reflections on love and its artistic manifestations, Pavličić insists that in the early 1970s it became “a destructive force claiming its rights.”<sup>652</sup> According to him, at that time love freed itself from the restrictions of social norms and found its expression in carnal pleasures. Yet, another conclusion is possible. In my opinion, a more plausible explanation is that love did not suddenly conquer the body, since the two usually go hand in hand, but that popular culture (in the press, on television, in popular music, and in film) hijacked both.

The trend toward eroticization and sexualization of the body was particularly visible in Yugoslav film production. A (partially uncovered) woman’s nipple first appeared on screen as early as 1955 in the historical melodrama *Hanka*. Over the next decades, the Yugoslav film industry developed in such a way that, as journalist and writer Veselko Tenžera noted in 1979, “in the last

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<sup>651</sup> Pavao Pavličić, *Narodno veselje (People's Party)* (Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga, 2013), 322. “Ne znam shvaćate li vi kako je korjenita razlika između Robića, koji se nakon šetnje rukuje sa svojom dragom, sluteći u tom stisku silna čuvstva, i Davorina Popovića (zvanog Pimpek) koji u pjesmi sanja *kako luta tvoja ruka vreća, tvoja ruka preko moga tijela?*”

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*

ten years it has hardly made a film without a naked woman.”<sup>653</sup> By comparison, the printed press found itself only on the erotica shelf of Yugoslav popular culture,<sup>654</sup> if only during the 1970s.

Media production, focusing on the People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB), resisted the sexualization of relationships between men and women, but this too gradually changed.<sup>655</sup> Within the framework of this research project, the analysis of *Žena u borbi* (*Woman in Combat*) shows that the *afežejke* – with relevant fragment from Mitrović’s work – barely touched on the matter of love between partisan men and women. *Arena*’s journalists did not publish on this topic either. *Svijet*’s (*World*’s) editorial board, on the other hand, published serialized feuilletons inspired by the fascination with the topic of women spies both in the international setting and during the Yugoslav NOB.

At the very end of the 1960s, when the further development of consumer culture and the coveted rise in living standards brought Yugoslavia as close to capitalism as was possible for a socialist country,<sup>656</sup> the ultimate freedom of the decadent West – explicitly displayed female nudity – virtually colonized the Yugoslav printed press.<sup>657</sup> That is, the quasi-capitalist media market in partnership with socialist patriarchy culminated in a spectacle of sexualized femininity, providing fertile ground for advocating traditionally interpreted femininity and masculinity, in which, as Serbian researcher Biljana Žikić resumes, women were most often portrayed as nothing more than

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<sup>653</sup> Tenžera, “Ideologija ‘naše cure,’” 18. “(...) je u posljednjih deset godina jedva koji film snimila bez nage žene.”

<sup>654</sup> Classifying primarily *Start*’s content as erotic, I follow the thinking of Abigail Solomon-Godeau: if a photograph shows a female nude “more or less artfully posed,” than the photograph in question is erotic. If woman’s genitals are visible or if she is shown masturbating, then the photograph is pornographic. Solomon-Godeau, “The Legs of the Countess,” 94.

<sup>655</sup> For instance, the so-called *novi film* of the 1960s – a filmmaking wave that produced several valuable films about the People’s Liberation Struggle – often and in quite drastic manner treated and denigrated women’s sexuality. I find Nebojša Jovanović’s analysis of the *novi film*’s directors’ treatment of women and their sexuality particularly useful. In: Jovanović, “Gender and Sexuality,” 27-31.

<sup>656</sup> Patterson, *Bought & Sold*, 149.

<sup>657</sup> Mihelj, “Negotiating Cold War Culture,” 528-531.

“luxury dolls.”<sup>658</sup> In the last two years of the 1960s, three magazines appeared in Yugoslavia that centered on and experimented with such content, and *Start* became the most notable, influential, and long-lived.<sup>659</sup> In its content, it is evident that the insistence on liberating eroticism from the constraints of so-called socialist morality<sup>660</sup> was reflected in the way women, but not men, who participated in the People’s Liberation Struggle were portrayed. In this chapter, I analyze what exactly that looked like. I use the analysis to give an interpretation of the meaning of such a representation of the *partizanke* in particular and women in general and connect it to the revolutionary figure of the Yugoslav New Woman.

The following segment is devoted to contextualizing the circumstances in which the magazine was created, developed, and reached Yugoslavia-wide renown. It looks at what it looked like in the first years of its existence and why and how it was reconceived following the departure of its first editor-in-chief, Andrinko Krile. The remaining three sections deal with the different ways in which the magazine’s journalists practiced commemoration of the NOB and how they portrayed women in it. Among them, the final part of the chapter highlights the emergence of the new Yugoslav feminism (*neofeminism*) as a phenomenon that *Start* reckoned with, in order to describe its impact on the demise of the image of the *partizanka* and to identify which female role models its protagonists focused on. Taken together, they show that the portrayal of women in *Start* – always as sexually attractive decoration, occasionally as relevant social or political workers, and never as

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<sup>658</sup> Biljana Žikić, “‘Luksuzne lutke’ i lokalni mangupi: rodna paradigma” (“‘Luxury Dolls’ and Local Punks: Gender Paradigm”), *XXZ Magazin*, March 26, 2018, <https://www.xxzmagazin.com/fotografije-obnazenih-zena-u-vreme-socijalizma>.

<sup>659</sup> The other two magazines are *Eva i Adam* (*Eve and Adam*) and *Čik*, both published in Serbia. *Eva i Adam*, published since 1968, was advertised as a magazine for sexual education and reached circulation of 270 000 printed copies when in 1974 Belgrade committee of the League of Communists sought a ban of the magazine on the pretext that it was corrupting young people. *Čik* first appeared as an enigmatic magazine under the title *Čik pogodi* (*Guess What*). During 1967 and 1968, it partially changed its name as well as its profile and became a youth entertaining magazine which over time, under the pretext of education, brought more and more pictures of nude girls.

<sup>660</sup> Such “defense” of erotic content in the printed press in *Start* appeared already in 1971 in the authorship of writer and columnist Igor Mandić who penned similarly intoned texts in the following years, too. Igor Mandić, “Jabuka grijeha” (“The Apple of Sin”), *Start* 72 (October 20, 1971): 13-14.

soldiers –reflects the tenacity of tradition-bound normative gender roles that were unreflectively adopted by the new generation of journalists and mapped onto their supposedly liberal discourse of sexual liberation, but without any real consideration of the Yugoslav emancipation project.

## 6.1 Liberties and Losses of the Socialist Developed Consumerism

In the historical juncture when it was created, half-naked girls on the covers, in the centerfolds, and pretty much everywhere else – from the horoscope page and travelogues about exotic countries (i.e., countries with very warm climates where women do not wear brassieres) all the way to the article on abortion – were far beyond the generally accepted norms of decency. As Andrinko Krile, the *Start*'s editor-in-chief during its first one hundred issues (January 1969 – November 1972), noted, some companies refused to advertise their products in such a magazine, and many individuals refused to be interviewed by *Start*'s journalists. In addition, the editorial board published photographs and film stills without authorization, so several individuals sued the magazine.<sup>661</sup> What is more, the editorial staff fed *Start*'s bad reputation with journalistic content laced with sex and sexism.<sup>662</sup>

Almost twenty years after *Start*'s founding, journalist Darko Hudelist noted quite benevolently that when Krile left it in 1972, *Start* was “a misbehaved child of the sexual revolution of the sixties.”<sup>663</sup> It could just as easily be described “as a masturbatory aid in the least and a way to

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<sup>661</sup> Aleksa Vojinović: “Andrinko Krile: Kako postati otac Starta?” (“Andrinko Krile: How to Become *Start*'s Father?”), *Start* 500 (March 19, 1988): 16.

<sup>662</sup> Reviews of (especially foreign) films where famous female celebrities took off her clothes were a common part of *Start*'s contents until the mid-1970s. It was equally interesting for *Start*'s reporters to ask everyone who agreed to talk to them about nudity on film as well as (usually domestic) actresses who already took their clothes off on film, why did they do it. All of that was topped off with a variety of contributions, own as well as translated from foreign press, about women, men, and their relations.

<sup>663</sup> Darko Hudelist, “Start: kako izgubiti tradiciju” (“*Start*: How to Lose Tradition”), *Start* 500 (March 18, 1988): 15. “(...) neodgojeno čedo seksualne revolucije šezdesetih (...)”

pass the time at most,”<sup>664</sup> as many do when talking about *Playboy*, one of the magazines Krile looked up to during his editorial days.

An interview with him reveals that he did not intend *Start* to be much more than either of the mentioned. Indeed, Krile considered American *Playboy* as well as British *Penthouse* and French *Lui* to be magazines from which he could take pictures of beautiful, scantily clad young women. The reason was that *Vjesnik*, the parent publisher, could not afford an equally good studio and the same kind of equipment that would enable *Start*'s team to run their own studio and produce and publish themselves the photographs of comparable quality.<sup>665</sup>

The importance of the attractive cover and centerfold to *Start* cannot be overstated: within two months of 1969, from the magazine's fifth to the ninth edition, its circulation doubled to 160,000 printed copies and continued to grow steadily.<sup>666</sup> By the end of Andrinko Krile's editorship, the magazine reached its all-time high; in 1971, it was printed in 235,000 copies per issue.<sup>667</sup> From the beginning of 1972, however, the portion of each edition that was sold in Serbia was taxed under the newly enacted “law on kitsch” (“*zakon o šundu*”).<sup>668</sup> Announced as an incentive to return to Marxist roots in the sphere of culture and media, it was intended first to discourage and then eliminate publication of all kinds of art and media products that were deemed artistically inferior

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<sup>664</sup> Amber Batura, “The *Playboy* Way: *Playboy* Magazine, Soldiers, and the Military in Vietnam,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 22 (2015): 222. DOI: 10.1163/18765610-02203004.

<sup>665</sup> Vojinović: “Andrinko Krile,” 15.

This activity of *Start*'s editorial office is obviously analogous to the practice of the *Svijet*'s editorial office to copy the latest fashion from the pages of Western glossy women's magazines. However, *Vjesnik*'s Press Agency (*Vjesnikova press agencija*) was established in 1970 and offered its services to all *Vjesnik*'s editions as well as all other publishing houses in Yugoslavia (if they wanted such assistance). Later on, the offer included the erotic photos used by *Start*. Peršen, ed., *Vjesnikov leksikon*, 532; Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 267 (April 18, 1979): 11.

<sup>666</sup> -, “O ‘Startu’ od starta” (“About *Start* from the Start), *Start* 263 (February 21, 1979): 17.

<sup>667</sup> Kodžić, *Komparativna analiza*, 130.

Later, the magazine's circulation remained fixed at around two hundred thousand copies printed per edition, but it rarely exceeded that number.

<sup>668</sup> Full name of the law that remained remembered as the “law on kitsch” was “Law on Amendments about the Republican Tax on Retail Goods” (*Zakon o izmenama i dopunama o republičkom porezu na promet robe na malo*).

or morally questionable.<sup>669</sup> A large part of this magazine's circulation was sold in Serbia – for instance, about the same number of copies per issue, 20,000, were sold in Belgrade as in Zagreb<sup>670</sup> – and because of the tax, which amounted to 31.5 percent of the sales price, it increased from 3 to 5 dinars in the summer of 1972. Given that the other republics soon followed Serbia's example and began to introduce the same law, there was a danger that the price of the magazine would have to double again in the same year, which threatened to make *Start* unprofitable.<sup>671</sup>

The “law on kitsch” can be regarded as one of the harbingers of the transition from “the long sixties” characterized by a rather romantic belief in the imminent arrival of the rosy future, into, as Predrag Marković writes, the “Yugoslav autumn.”<sup>672</sup> Apart from the failure of the economic reform initiated in 1965 and the so-called “Road Affair” in Slovenia, the transition was mainly due to the suppression of the escalating *Maspok* in Croatia. Its negative consequences for the younger, more liberal generation of the Yugoslav intellectual elite, especially among politicians, contributed most to characterizing the 1970s as the “silent” or “sullen” decade.<sup>673</sup> At the same time, the authorities sought to compensate for curtailing of political freedoms by keeping living standards unjustifiably high. They often took unfavorable loans and intensified imports so that trends established in the previous decade could continue to develop smoothly; just as in the 1960s, Yugoslav citizens dreamed big and tried to spend accordingly.<sup>674</sup> Since the government formally encouraged consumption “that would provide the population with modest, useful, and beautiful things,”<sup>675</sup> it treated the press institutions that stimulated its growth with considerable tolerance. Such behavior

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<sup>669</sup> Hofman, “Micronarratives of Music,” 262-263.

<sup>670</sup> Aleksandar Vojinović, “Start,” in *Monografije*, 12.

<sup>671</sup> Andrinko Krile, “Pismo glavnog urednika” (“Editor-in-Chief’s Letter”), *Start* 91 (July 12, 1972): 17.

<sup>672</sup> Marković, “Where Have All the Flowers Gone,” 119.

<sup>673</sup> Dennison Rusinow, “Reopening of the National Question in the 1960s,” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, eds. Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), 131-148, especially 142.

<sup>674</sup> Patterson, *Bought & Sold*, 295.

<sup>675</sup> Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 208-210, quote on 208.

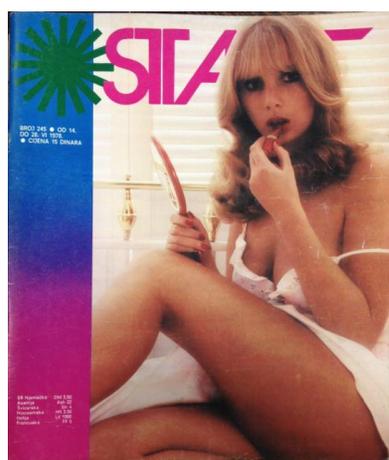


Figure 1: Front covers on July 1, 1970 (no. 38), September 22, 1976 (no. 200), and June 14, 1978 (no. 245)

simultaneously allowed for an increased influx of content that many critics, workers in culture, media, and politics who gathered at various consultations, found inappropriate for the development of socialism (see chapter 2).

As a result, *Start* was also given the opportunity to redeem itself, despite the widespread resentment that included, as Božidar Novak put it, “Bolshevik cadres” headed by the first lady.<sup>676</sup> In order to improve the reputation of the magazine, the *Vjesnik*’s leadership decided to appoint the new editor-in-chief. Sead Saračević, a reliable professional who had been active since the immediate postwar period, was appointed in January 1973. At that time, he was the acting editor-in-chief of the prestigious informative weekly *Vjesnik u srijedu* (VUS). Since VUS endured the heaviest blow of the purges following the end of the Croatian Spring, Saračević’s task was to restore some of its popularity. Upon becoming *Start*’s editor-in-chief, Saračević immediately invited Mario Bošnjak, who had worked at *Studentski list* (*Student Journal*) during his studies and later moved to *Vjesnik*’s *Telegram*, “a journal for social

<sup>676</sup> Novak, *Hrvatsko novinarstvo*, 581.

and cultural issues,” to become his deputy.<sup>677</sup> Thanks to these two men, within one year the magazine no longer had to finance the “law on kitsch” and was praised in various consultations on the quality of the Yugoslav print media.<sup>678</sup>

During the next eight years, *Start* transformed from a magazine “for truck drivers” into “one of the most remarkable products of our contemporary newspaper publishing business.”<sup>679</sup> Some of its contributors described it as an example of “the elite perfection of Yugoslav journalism in the 1970s, with the increasingly noticeable line of moderate politicization.”<sup>680</sup> Compliments about Saračević’s and Bošnjak’s *Start* abound. In many respects, they are well-founded, for, as Saračević testified, he looked up neither textually nor visually to *Playboy* or *Lui*, but to the West German information magazine *Stern*.<sup>681</sup> It is no wonder that editors and journalists who worked for other newspapers and magazines considered them “elitist and being too clever.”<sup>682</sup>

In keeping with the reputation – confidently and with a dose of smugness – its editor-in-chief characterized *Start* as the magazine for the modern individual, taking “special care to ensure that a true self-manager is only a completely free and educated personality.”<sup>683</sup> Statistics on its readership have largely confirmed his claims. The magazine was read predominantly in the major urban centers; alongside Zagreb and Belgrade, it sold best in the twenty largest Yugoslav cities. Its

<sup>677</sup> Slaven Letica, “Start na četvrtom početku” (“*Start* at the Fourth Beginning”), *Start* 500 (March 18, 1988): 10.

<sup>678</sup> Sead Saračević proudly informed the audiences about such occurrences in the editorial: Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 150 (October 23, 1974): 9; idem, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 168 (July 2, 1975): 9.

<sup>679</sup> Vesna Lamza, *Analiza Starta (The Analysis of Start)* (Zagreb: NIŠPRO Vjesnik, 1978), 1. “(...) jedan od najmarkantnijih proizvoda naše suvremene novinsko-izdavačke djelatnosti.”

<sup>680</sup> Hudelist, “Start,” 13. “Elitistička perfekcija jugoslavenskog žurnalizma sedamdesetih, uza sve zamjetljiviju crtu umjerene politizacije (...).”

<sup>681</sup> Vesna Kesić, “Sead Saračević: Savoir Vivre,” *Start* 500 (March 18, 1988): 18.

German journalist Henri Nannen established *Der Stern (The Star)* in 1948 in Hamburg. He was its editor-in-chief until 1980. The magazine covered a wide array of topics including international affairs and news analyses as well as social topics and life-style matters. It oftentimes put semi-naked young women on its covers. During the 1970s, the circulation of this magazine was approximately 1.5 million printed copies per edition.

<sup>682</sup> Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux,” 108.

<sup>683</sup> Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 200 (September 22, 1976): 9. “(...) posebno računa o tome da je istinski samoupravljač samo potpuno slobodna i obrazovana ličnost.”

readership consisted largely of people who had secondary or higher education between the ages of twenty and fifty, of whom 35% were women. Proportionately, only 17% of the readership were blue-collar workers.<sup>684</sup> Saračević was particularly proud of this information. He claimed that this proved that their “level of enlightenment” was increasing,<sup>685</sup> and therefore that *Start*’s educational mission was successfully progressing. Almost eight years after he left the editorial board of *Start*, in 1988, he also said the following about the male readers of this magazine:

As we little by little began to hide those ‘most prominent’ parts, various acquaintances of mine, professors and academics among them, objected: ‘Why did you spoil what we love the most?’<sup>686</sup>

Indeed, even a cursory examination of the so-called “Petete” section – that is, what the editor-in-chief decided to publish as a representative selection of all received readers’ letters – confirms Saračević’s comment. Although the readership (according to the statistics) was a group superior to the average Yugoslav in terms of education and presumably intellectual abilities, many of the male readers were first and foremost intrigued by the appearance and measurements of the girls on the front covers and were more than willing to argue about them with the editorial board and other readers.

As for the content, after Saračević and Bošnjak took over, the amount of contributions, which were primarily intended to entertain readers was reduced by almost half.<sup>687</sup> At the same time, articles on both high and popular culture and art – that is, theater and painting as well as popular music and films – and usually on foreign contemporary politics (as the contributions about

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<sup>684</sup> Mance, *Profili čitalačkih publika*, 164-166.

<sup>685</sup> Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 188 (April 7, 1976): 9. “(...) razina prosvjećenosti (...)”

<sup>686</sup> Kesić, “Sead Saračević,” 18. “Kad smo počeli malo-pomalo sakrivati ona ‘najisturenija’ mjesta, prigovorili su mi razni znanci, profesori i akademici među njima: ‘Što nam pokvariše ono što najviše volimo?’”

<sup>687</sup> This primarily refers to titillating content as well as the content focusing on male-female relationships. For example, travelogues from tropical countries with photographs of young half-naked women, “research” articles investigating why men sometimes marry ugly women or what Yugoslavs buy in the most famous sex shop in Graz, as well as banal interviews thermalizing the weight of a famous female singer or how secretaries manage caring for two men (husbands and bosses) in their lives no longer appear.

domestic politics tended to focus on non-controversial, often historically oriented topics) took up most of the vacated space, occupying a full third of the magazine's pages from the mid-1970s onward.<sup>688</sup> It is equally important that the newsroom was by and large staffed by new, young journalists from *VUS*, *Studentski list*, and *Telegram*, and that some of the external contributors were also widely recognized experts.

Accordingly, the amount of scantily clad girls and young women, previously included as a visual supplement to almost every article, diminished over time. Alongside retaining the usual cover and centerfold, the editorial board cut back on erotic content in the rest of the magazine, turning instead to featuring works by famous authors of erotic photography as well as short erotic stories penned by local (mostly, but not always male) writers. Ultimately, while it had previously been difficult to find interlocutors, the magazine was now able to realize some unexpected collaborations. In 1976, for instance, Miroslav Krleža, arguably Croatia's greatest writer, agreed to be photographed by the *Start*'s photojournalist, after having resolutely refused to engage in such activities for approximately twenty years.<sup>689</sup> And Dušan Bilandžić, historian of socialist Yugoslavia, in addition to two guest appearances in "*Start*'s Interview," in 1977 and 1978, published his scholarly assessment of "Tito's historical work" in as many as twenty-one installments of exemplary dry historical analysis.<sup>690</sup> All in all, the magazine achieved a degree of recognition, as well as relevance, in the 1970s that a popular magazine probably could not exceed.

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<sup>688</sup> Lamza, *Analiza Starta*, 23-31.

<sup>689</sup> Sead Saračević, "Među nama" ("Between Us") and Vlado Duić, "S Krležom: točno u podne" ("With Krleža: At Noon"), both in *Start* 189 (April 21, 1976): 9, 32-33.

<sup>690</sup> First appeared: Dušan Bilandžić, "Na tragu Titova historijskog puta" ("On the Trail of Tito's Historic Path"), *Start* 218 (June 1, 1977): 18-22.

### *Start vs. Playboy*

From 1973, *Start* undoubtedly offered its readership much more than pictures of half-naked women. I find, however, that this self-proclaimed magazine for the modern individual did not consider the modern woman, let alone the Yugoslav New Woman based on emancipatory values. In other words, despite the *Start*'s remarkable metamorphosis into a forum for the promotion of social progress as well as intellectual (and to a lesser extent political) criticism, it has consistently insisted on presenting women as undressed, esthetically pleasing, and sexually arousing bodies.

Editorial policies of one of its original role models as well as a controversial magazine, *Playboy*, appear to have been more liberal. I use the term liberal in reference to Joanne Meyerowitz's consideration of "sexual liberalism" as an expression that signifies endorsement of "sexual expression more than sexual restraint" without simultaneously implying political progressiveness or sexual liberation.<sup>691</sup> I briefly compare the two magazines here by highlighting how they practiced "sexual liberalism" to frame the boundaries of femininity that *Start*'s male journalists, according to my reading, advocated. In this case, it will open an avenue to examine how their interpretation of sexual liberalism, as presented in the pages of the magazine, reflected the emancipatory ideas conceived during the NOB, that is to say, their political progressiveness.

In their major features, *Start* and *Playboy* were quite similar. Young, attractive and very scantily clad girls photographed in not necessarily natural but seductive poses adorned the covers and centerfolds of these magazines from *Playboy*'s very first and *Start*'s fifth issue. In terms of contents in general, *Playboy* habitually emphasized the presumed desires and needs of middle-class heterosexual men, especially those of consumerist nature, which was often coupled with sexism

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<sup>691</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, "The Liberal 1950s? Reinterpreting Postwar American Sexual Culture," in *Gender and the Long Postwar: Reconsiderations of the United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989*, eds. Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel (Washington and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 299.

and “casual misogyny.”<sup>692</sup> The magazine also offered its readers some political and polemical content. For instance, its critical examination of the politics of the Vietnam War and the Johnson administration, as well as its understanding of the rank-and-file soldiers overseas, made it a popular read among the U.S. servicemen in Southeast Asia. Scholars also point to the magazine’s commitment to racial equality, expressed in a series of positively intoned interviews with, for example, Martin Luther King, Miles Davis, and Muhammad Ali.<sup>693</sup> Saračević’s *Start* made no particular effort to introduce its readership to the charms of consumerism, but it did develop a similarly politically engaged approach, although (at least during the researched period) it was more inclined to polemicize about developments abroad rather than in Yugoslavia.

With regard to the portrayal of women, however, *Playboy* and *Start* diverge. American historian Carrie Pitzulo demonstrates that it is possible to plausibly argue that *Playboy* “expanded upon traditional definitions of sexual privilege to include women’s liberation.” She ventures so far as to consider *Playboy*’s attitude on heterosexual monogamy romantic because (during Auguste Comte Spector’s editorship in the 1960s) it continually emphasized the importance of mutual respect in heterosexual relationships.<sup>694</sup> Alternatively, while *Playboy* was one of the sources for *Start*’s portrayal of women, *Start*’s men did not include the full spectrum of their role model’s practices. For instance, *Playboy*’s editorial staff practiced a policy of racial inclusion also by introducing Asian and African American women among its Playmates.<sup>695</sup> In Yugoslavia, the racial diversity of

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<sup>692</sup> Maria Elena Buszek, *Pin-up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006), 244.

<sup>693</sup> Batura, “The *Playboy* Way,” 221-242; Buszek, *Pin-up Grrrls*, 269-270; Michael Carson, “The Rise and Fall of Literary *Playboy*,” *Times Literary Supplement*, <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/playboy-literature/>; Kathryn Leigh Scott, *The Bunny Years* (Los Angeles: Pomegranate Press, 1998), 105–107; Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 60-64.

<sup>694</sup> Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 5-6; Carrie Pitzulo, “The Battle in Every Man’s Bed: *Playboy* and the Fiery Feminists,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no 2 (May 2008): 260-262. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30114220>.

<sup>695</sup> Batura, “The *Playboy* Way,” 230.

the girls and women on the cover could not be interpreted as political as it was in the United States. The *Start*'s men, however, distinguished themselves by causing a scandal by "accidentally" publishing semi-nude pictures of the young Slovenian singer Moni Kovačić and then distancing themselves from the ensuing scandal through a combination of ridicule and condescension.<sup>696</sup> In addition, the girls who appeared on the *Start*'s covers never became like Playmates; a story about a wholesome girl-next-door, however stylized, seems to have been too much for *Start*'s editorial board, who, aside from Kovačić apparently, preferred anonymous models.<sup>697</sup> While the Playboy Foundation supported and funded some issues related to the so-called Woman Question,<sup>698</sup> I did not even notice that the *Start*'s editorial office declaratively supported social practices or legal measures that promoted women's rights.<sup>699</sup> And certainly they did not celebrate female sexuality, even that which would be complementary to the magazine's preferred expression of masculinity.<sup>700</sup> A strict double morale – according to which, in Susan J. Douglas' words, "no 'nice' girl ever, ever, went all the way before marriage, and no nice woman ever really liked sex"<sup>701</sup> – framed *Start*'s journalists' perception of women virtually untouched. All in all, *Playboy*'s broadly conceived aspiration "to create, channel, and sustain vital and healthy bodies and a vital and healthy nation"

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<sup>696</sup> Iva Jelušič, "'Our Girl' Ideology and *Start*'s 'Sexual Swashbucklers': Women and War in the Only Yugoslav Men's Magazine (1969-1980)," *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations* 6 (2020), 9.

<sup>697</sup> -, 10/263, *Start* 263 (February 21, 1979): 24

<sup>698</sup> It donated funds to abortion rights organizations before 1973 *Roe v. Wade*, to American Civil Liberties Union to promote women's right to paid work, including additional funding for day-care centers for the children of working women. Pitzulo, "The Battle in Every Man's Bed," 259-260.

<sup>699</sup> For example, Maja Miles, a legal expert, commented in 1979 on the American case when a woman sued her husband for rape, divorced him, but entered a new relationship with him after a while. In relation to that, Saračević wrote in the editorial: "(...) the Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Slovenia stipulates sanctions for the rape of a lawful wife, too. Therefore, we advise all overly temperamental husbands from our pages: be careful in your own bed!" Sead Saračević, "Među nama" ("Between Us"), *Start* 262 (February 7, 1979): 11. "(...) Krivični zakon SR Slovenije također predviđa sankcije za silovanje zakonite supruge. Stoga svim pretemperamentnim muževima poručujemo s naših stranica: oprez u vlastitom krevetu!"

<sup>700</sup> Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies*, 5

<sup>701</sup> Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: New York Times Books, 1994), 61. (Author's emphasis.)

with the help of “sexual liberalism”<sup>702</sup> generated a degree of political progressiveness and sexual liberation for women too that *Start*’s men did not replicate.

Some examples from the region should also be mentioned. Namely, interested individuals in East Germany and Poland sought to consider erotica through the lens of socialism and produce erotic content that was conceived and presented differently from capitalist output.<sup>703</sup> For instance, as Kristen Ghodsee and Angelina Einmannsberger argue, *Das Magazin*, an East German popular magazine with erotic content, “believed in reshaping everyday life in a socialist manner.”<sup>704</sup> Accordingly – and perhaps because its editor-in-chief was a woman – it reflected women’s political and economic emancipation by including considerations of women’s sexuality and endeavored “to represent women as fully self-actualized individuals even if they never actively undermined gender stereotypes of women’s ‘natural’ femininity.”<sup>705</sup> At the same time, *Start*’s editors unabashedly published Western erotica. Their contribution, it seems, was only to label erotica as emancipatory. In other words, I find that the *Start*’s content reflects the translation of traditionally conceived sexual mores into modern vocabulary without actually contributing to sexual liberation or progressiveness of the socialist politics towards women. I argue that the consistent publication of such content shows the *Start*’s journalists’ questioning of and even struggle with the process of socialist emancipation of women in Yugoslavia. This, in turn, was reflected in the absence of the portrayal of the Yugoslav New Woman, whether as a participant in the NOB or as an emancipated citizen of the socialist Yugoslavia.

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<sup>702</sup> Meyerowitz, “The Liberal 1950s,” 299.

<sup>703</sup> For GDR: Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), especially chapter 7 “Picturing Sex: East German Erotica,” 174-204. For Poland: Anna Dobrowolska, “In Search of Socialist Erotica: Nudity, Popular Culture and Sexualized Advertising in Late State-Socialist Poland,” paper presented at Gender and Materiality in Central and Eastern Europe in the XX century, Sciences PO, Paris, France, September 30-October 1, 2021.

<sup>704</sup> Ghodsee and Einmannsberger, “Politicized Representations,” 30.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

Such a view compromised the portrayal of the women *Start* presented in the state of undress as well as the women with whom the journalists actually wanted to talk to. Returning to the female portrait, I would like to briefly discuss the girls and women presented on the covers and in the centerfolds. In the previous chapters, I defined the female portrait according to the characteristics established in its original habitat, the women's magazines published by feminist and communist activist girls and women before, during, and after World War II (chapter 3). I then traced its transformation in the glossy women's magazine *Svijet* and in the family magazine *Arena*. Finally, it was not *Start*'s habit to publish contributions whose main purpose was a feminist portrayal of women's achievements. However, bearing in mind all the editorials featuring half-naked young women and the oft-repeated view that an undressed woman is an emancipated woman, I think that this was *Start*'s own take on the female portrait, but that they obliterated its original feminist intent. They gave it a whole new look and a completely different meaning that, in a nutshell, asserts: women's "achievements" are to be looked at.

Alternatively, considering the women *Start*'s reporters actually talked to, I will briefly focus on the magazine's signature section, "*Start*'s Interview." In Saračević's eight years – beginning with issue no. 105 (published in January 1973) and ending with issue no. 299 (published in July 1980) – during which one hundred and ninety-four issues of this magazine were published, the famous "*Start*'s Interview" that appeared in all but two editions hosted only twenty-six women. More broadly, this section first appeared in the magazine's eighty-ninth edition, and it continued to appear in every issue after Mladen Pleše took over as editor-in-chief. In the total of two hundred and twenty issues of "*Start*'s Interview" that appeared by the end of the researched period, only twenty-seven women were interviewed for this particular section. Furthermore, among the many men interviewed, writers, politicians, and film directors appeared most frequently. They are followed by actors, then musicians, visual artists, professors and prominent public workers. On the

other hand, among the women interviewed there were no politicians and only one was a film director. The most numerous were actresses, and then authors. In sum, the ratio of male to female interlocutors, as well as the overview of their professions, testify to the limited participation of women in public life and, more importantly, to the lack of interest on the part of *Start*'s editorial board in finding and highlighting the work of, for instance, women politicians.

The visual representation of *Start*'s beauties and guests in the "*Start*'s Interview" makes the difference in the treatment of men and women even more apparent. Despite the great progress in the technical basis for publishing printed press, I have not come across a Yugoslav magazine that was published entirely in color; it was always a combination of pages printed in color and in black and white. For *Start*, this meant that half-naked girls and women photographed in alluring poses were always printed in color. They were there as eye candy. In contrast, "*Start*'s Interview" was always printed in black and white. In addition, the photographs of the interlocutors were close-ups that were clearly not a result of posing and that casually revealed flaws on their faces. The appearance of the individuals interviewed for "*Start*'s Interview" was represented as irrelevant to their work and abilities. Seemingly, not many women (in Yugoslavia or abroad) had the luxury of pulling off something like this.

Overall, the discrepancy between the abundance of anonymous girls and young women who made up the sexualized essence of the magazine and the absence of women in the magazine's most prestigious section, "*Start*'s Interview," indicates how the Yugoslav New Woman was interpreted during the 1970s. That is to say, therein lies the first clue to how the emancipation of Yugoslav women was perceived by people, most of whom had no recollections of the war and the related struggle for women's rights, who cherry picked what they liked about women's emancipation, and

whose work was at the same time seen as “expressly in accordance with socialist morality and our social values.”<sup>706</sup>

To highlight some of *Start*'s assumptions about the Yugoslav New Woman, the next section will be devoted to the magazine's coverage of the release of the film *Bitka na Neretvi* (*The Battle of Neretva*; hereafter *Neretva*). Directed by Veljko Bulajić, a participant in the NOB and one of the most distinguished Yugoslav filmmakers, and directly supported by Tito, this film was released in 1969. As Astrid Erll notes, a film about a historical event becomes a “memory-making film” because of the media representations that “prepare the ground for the movies, lead reception along certain paths, open up and channel public discussion, and thus endow films with their memorial meaning.”<sup>707</sup> To its readership, *Start* presented Bulajić as well as Silva Koščina and Velimir – Bata Živojinović who embodied two of the protagonists in the film. In 1969, *Start* did not yet practice observing the NOB-related anniversaries, nor did it publish other content about this war. The interviews were, therefore, an opportunity for the first, albeit indirect, approach to the subject of the NOB. As the analysis in the next section shows, this opportunity was neglected in favor of the magazine's focus on the sexualization of content offered by the celebrity culture of the time. Considered together, these interviews reveal some of the journalists' assumptions about the Yugoslav emancipation project, even though they did not write a single word about it. While the director of *Neretva* attempted to integrate different aspects of wartime femininity into the character portrayed by Silva Koščina, including the often controversial aspect of participation in battles, the articles published in *Start* introduced the actress as a woman who undressed for *Playboy*. A

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<sup>706</sup> Lamza, *Analiza Starta*, 3. “(...) izričito u skladu sa socijalističkim moralom i našim društvenim vrednotama, (...)”

<sup>707</sup> Astrid Erll, “Literature, Film, and the Mediality of Cultural Memory,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 395-396.

comparison with the interviews with actor Velimir – Bata Živojinović and director Veljko Bulajić shows that Liesbet van Zoonen’s claim (who was writing about politicians) – “the celebrity press shows male [film workers] as living in an integrated world of public and private duties, while female [film workers] are presented as living in two conflicting worlds”<sup>708</sup> – applies outside the realm of politics as well. That is, celebrity culture, as interpreted in the pages of *Start*, to women offered no frame of reference other than that based on appearance and sexuality.

## 6.2 Presentation of the *Battle of Neretva*

On the Day of the Republic (November 29) 1969, *Bitka na Neretvi*, the most ambitious and successful film about the People’s Liberation Struggle was released.<sup>709</sup> *Neretva* was a great commercial success, promoted by many Yugoslav media. *Start* itself did not write about the film, but during 1969 it published interviews with actors Silva Koščina (Sylva Koscina) and Velimir – Bata Živojinović who appear in the film, and director Veljko Bulajić. In this magazine, the actress appeared first and on several occasions; during 1969, *Start* published three articles about her, and the first of the three was specially announced. In the following analysis, I, too, first focus on Koščina, her role in *Neretva*, and the way *Start*’s journalists portrayed her in text and images. Then I compare it with the representation of the two men.

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<sup>708</sup> Liesbet van Zoonen, *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge* (Lanham, MD: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 90.

<sup>709</sup> Many scholars have written about this film. Analyses that I found the most useful are: Dragan Batančev, “*Bitka na Neretvi*: A State-Supported War Film,” in “A Cinematic Battle: Three Yugoslav War Films from the 1960s” (MA thesis, Central European University, 2012), 49-67; Nemanja Zvijer, “Ideology and Values in Yugoslav War Movies: Sociological Analysis of Veljko Bulajić’s *The Battle of Neretva*,” *Images, Journal for Visual Studies* 2 (2014): 27-40, <https://www.visual-studies.com/images/no2/zvijer.html>; Jurica Pavičić, “Titoist Cathedrals: The Rise and Fall of Partisan Film,” in *Titoism, Self-Determination, Nationalism, Cultural Memory*, eds. Gorana Ognjenović and Jasna Jozelić (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 37-66.



Figure 2: Danica and her brothers in *Neretva*.

In *Neretva*, Silva Koščina appears in the role of the young partisan nurse Danica, who serves in the army alongside her two brothers Novak and Vuko (played by Ljubiša Samardžić and Radko Polič, respectively). They represent only a fraction of the Yugoslav

people in arms, and in this context, Danica is presented from the first moment as a soldier no different from her brothers. In the opening scene of the film, gliding through the crowd of soldiers and civilians, the camera captures the three of them in full combat gear – uniforms, boots, rifles – as they are photographed (figure 2). Over the course of the film, Danica fights on par with her brothers and perishes in battle just as her brothers did. As a partisan nurse, she also tries to help her wounded comrades. Since she is not just any soldier, but a woman soldier, Bulajić has also included a romantic subplot. That is, as a woman, Danica loves and dreams of a better future with her beloved. In this way, the director has made an effort to portray her as a complete woman and not merely a combatant.

The first mention of Koščina in *Start* is the announcement of the interview, emphasizing that she posed for *Playboy* (figure 3, first photograph). Naturally, *Start* featured a few pictures from the mentioned photo shoot in the next issue (figure 3, second photograph). Readers who bought the issue were treated to several erotic photographs first published in *Playboy* along with the interview with the actress. While the teaser kept her breasts hidden, one of the reproduced photographs showed Koščina's bare breasts. In the interview itself, the photo shoot was highlighted, and the actress was asked to explain the decision to pose for *Playboy*'s photographer, as well as her subsequent choices to appear nude in several scenes in the Italian films *Vedo nudo* (*I See Naked*,

1969) and *L'assoluto naturale* (*She and He*, 1969). Describing this as overcoming the limitations of a conservative middle-class upbringing that kept her from showing her body on camera, the actress concluded: “At one stage in my career, I decided that I had to get rid of all prejudices if I wanted to make my way in the international film [industry].”<sup>710</sup> In other words, stripping to improve chances of success in the film industry was interpreted in this case as nothing more than a rejection of bourgeois respectability.



Figure 3: Silva Koščina in *Start*:

- (a) “Silva Koščina: ‘I am Stripping to Save Film’” – content announcement for the next issue, *Start* 6 (April 9, 1969): 64;
- (b) “Silva in Color” – addition to the aforementioned article that was published in this issue, *Start* 7 (April 23, 1969): 6;
- (c) “Silva’s Challenge” – stills from the film *L'assoluto naturale*, *Start* 10 (June 4, 1969): 66.

The person who is signed under the interview, as well as some temporal inconsistencies, suggest that the editorial staff took over the interview from an Italian magazine. This would explain why Koščina’s role in the *Neretva* was not mentioned at all, while engagements in upcoming Italian projects were. The next contribution, a commentary on Koščina’s role in *L'assoluto naturale* with a series of accompanying film stills, maintained the same course. The June edition of *Start* proudly

<sup>710</sup> Paola Desi, “Skidam se da spasim film” (“I am Stripping to Save Film”), *Start* 7 (April 23, 1969): 5. “U jednoj fazi svoje karijere zaključila sam da se moram do kraja lišiti predrasuda želim li se probiti u svjetskom filmu.”

published photographs from the set of *L'assoluto naturale* showing Koščina naked (figure 3, third photograph). The anonymous author of this text wrote that, “[a]lthough she is thirty-four years old, Silva Koščina is always in the forefront when producers and directors are looking for a vamp woman, a beauty whose charm and femininity meet the demands of contemporary cinema.” The author lingered on this aspect of the actress’ engagement leaving no doubt that by charm and femininity he meant her willingness to act almost completely naked.<sup>711</sup>

Finally, the editorial board sent one journalist to Split (Dalmatia, Croatia) to speak with Koščina’s mother. In line with previous articles, Aleksa Vojinović insisted on questions about Valerija Koščina’s daughter’s career and on taking off her clothes in front of the camera. Vojinović undoubtedly tried to be a friendly and amiable interlocutor. At least, his description of the circumstances of the conversation suggests this. Yet, the old woman was obliged to explain and defend her daughter in front of a journalist who worked for a magazine that profited from her daughter’s nude photographs. Following several mother’s justifications of Silva Koščina’s career choices, Vojinović still noted that the mother would have preferred her Silva to become a professor of mathematics (she studied physics at the University of Naples) and to have at least two children.<sup>712</sup>

The interviews with Koščina’s colleagues, Bata Živojinović and Veljko Bulajić, differ significantly from the set of materials described. First, while Koščina clearly earned three mentions within a year because of engagements in *Playboy* and films that required nudity, the two men were not eroticized. That this was even actively avoided can be deduced from the interview with the

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<sup>711</sup> -, “Silvin izazov” (“Silva’s Challenge”), *Start* 10 (June 4, 1969): 67. “Iako ima 34 godine, Silva Koščina je uvijek u prvom planu kad producenti i režiseri traže ženu-vamp, ljepoticu koja će svojim šarmom i svojom ženstvenošću odgovarati traženjima suvremene kinematografije.”

<sup>712</sup> Aleksa Vojinović, “Mama Koščina” (“Mother Koščina”), *Start* 17 (September 10, 1969): 16-18.

actor Velimir – Bata Živojinović. This actor often embodied, especially in the partisan films, the Balkan macho man at his best. This was also the case in *Neretva*, where Živojinović plays the division commander Stole. Immaculately groomed – clean-shaven, with his hair slicked back, and in unblemished uniform – he enters the film to explain to the various commanders caught up in the maelstrom of battle, as well as to the viewers watching the film, what will follow in terms of the movements of the partisan army. In the absence of the supreme headquarters and Tito, in this film he is not only the man responsible for killing as many Germans as possible, but also the man everyone will look up to during the battle.

To be sure, some photographs of Živojinović, whom the journalist located on a beach in Pula (Istria, Croatia) are quite a bit more relaxed than the photographs of exemplary men usually tended to be (figure 4, first photograph). In the introduction to the interview, the journalist first informed the readership that Živojinović might remind them of a professional boxer because he actually trained.<sup>713</sup> That is, he justified the actor’s naked torso with the only acceptable excuse at the time – sports. Indeed, *Start* from time to time published articles about athletes (e.g. water polo players and bodybuilders) with similar photographs. In addition, some female readers occasionally taunted the editorial staff that it should “show [their] willingness to end the myth of masculinity and the inviolability of the male body”<sup>714</sup> by publishing nude men in centerfolds. The editorial board never risked that type of scandal. Although it was a popular magazine intended for relaxation and leisure, its reporters did not find it appropriate to entertain their readership by violating the gendered power relations to which the editorial board subscribed to.<sup>715</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> Krešo Špeletić, “Bata muškarčina s velikog ekrana” (“Bata Macho Man from the Big Screen”) *Start* 15 (August 13, 1969): 10.

<sup>714</sup> Senka, “Letter to the Magazine,” *Start* 257 (November 29, 1978): 7.

<sup>715</sup> The conversations Zsófia Lóránd had with Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić about their work in *Start* confirm this assertion. For example, Kesić related that in response to some ironic remarks by American feminist and sex educator Shere Hite about male sexuality (which were part of her interview for *Start*), the editor-in-chief said: “we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male.” However, Kesić noted, they had no misgivings about

With regard to this matter, the publication of the photographs of *Dinamo* goalkeeper Milan Šarović has acquired historical importance. In 1980, the youth magazine *Polet* published photographs of Šarović climbing out of a swimming pool completely naked. The photographs met with negative public reaction and the prosecutor’s office banned the sale of the issue, classifying the photographs as pornographic while arguing that, for instance, nude girls and women in *Start*’s were not pornography.<sup>716</sup> As Slavenka Drakulić, by now famously, asserted, “[t]he case of *Polet* is not about that photo and ten centimeters of naked male flesh,”<sup>717</sup> but about the fundamental difference between men and women in (in this case) socialist Yugoslavia, understood in *focauldian* terms.

When he established that Živojinović’s photographs appeared within a socially acceptable setting, the journalist proceeded to ask a variation of the questions that *Start*’s journalists posed to almost everyone; he asked the questions about beauty, nudity, sex, and



Figure 4: Velimir – Bata Živojinović and Veljko Bulajić in *Start*:  
 (a) “Bata Macho Man From the Big Screen,” *Start* 15  
 (August 13, 1969): 12;  
 (b) “When Daddy Veljko Visits His Home,” *Start* 22  
 (November 19, 1969): 25.

about all that in film. He only did not need to ask the actor why he undressed in front of the camera, because he did not. Živojinović explained that he categorically refused to do such a thing and felt

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attacking their female readership. See more in: “Learning a Feminist Language’: The Intellectual History of Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2014), particularly chapter 3 “Feminism in the Popular Mass Media,” 213-289, quote on 239.

<sup>716</sup> Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 293 (April 16, 1980): 13.

<sup>717</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, “Muški su drugo” (“Men are Different”), *Start* 293 (April 30, 1980): 67.

that whatever a director would ask him to do, he could do quite well with his clothes on.<sup>718</sup> A curiosity related to this matter is how Živojinović explained his wife's acceptance of the fact that he shot many scenes in which his female colleagues had to be more or less undressed. According to him, the solution was simple: "she either had to decide not to come to the shootings anymore or realize that it was a job like any other."<sup>719</sup>

Secondly, due to the fact that Koščina was not a mother at the ripe old age of thirty-four, her career choice was questioned.<sup>720</sup> Conversely, regardless of the impact that the acting and directing professions had on the dynamics of their family relationships, the choices of the men interviewed were not presented as problematic. Neither in the interview with Živojinović nor in the conversation with Veljko Bulajić were possible issues resulting from juggling a successful career and a family particularly emphasized and problematized by the interviewer. In this respect, the interview with Bulajić offers interesting insights. While praising his wife as an excellent housewife, mother, and personal secretary, Bulajić commented on his long absences from home in a manner remarkably similar to Živojinović: "Personally, I do not believe that such a fact is a big handicap for the marriage, if the wife understands what the vocation of the film director is (...)."<sup>721</sup> He even added a family joke inspired by his long absences from home. Bulajić's family and friends joked that the director was away from home so often that his daughter will think he was just an electrician who occasionally comes to fix something.<sup>722</sup> Yet, a set of visuals presented Bulajić as an exemplary family man (figure 4, second photograph).

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<sup>718</sup> Špeletić, "Bata muškarčina s velikog ekrana," 11.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid. "(...) morala je ili odlučiti da više ne dolazi na snimanja, ili da shvati da je to posao kao i svaki drugi."

<sup>720</sup> Desi, "Skidam se da spasim film," 8.

<sup>721</sup> Krešo Špeletić, "Kad tata Veljko gostuje kod kuće" ("When Daddy Veljko Visits His Home"), *Start* 22 (November 19, 1969): 22. "Lično ne vjerujem da je jedna takva činjenica veliki hendikep za brak ako supruga shvati što je poziv filmskog režisera (...)."

<sup>722</sup> Ibid.

The portrayal of the three celebrities involved in the making of what is probably the most famous Yugoslav (partisan) film testifies to the fact that the editorial staff of *Start*, at this early stage of its existence, was primarily interested in talking, discussing, and writing about human – especially female – sexuality. No other topic – in this case: any aspect of the making and shooting of *Neretva*, the (in)success of plot development and character portrayal, or any of the many anecdotes from the set that Koščina, Živojinović, and Bulajić could tell – was as interesting to the editorial staff of this magazine. Yet, the three contributions differ considerably. Again, Slavenka Drakulić diagnosed exactly what was happening to women in *Start* and why the same did not happen to men. Women were often regarded and represented as esthetic decoration on the *Start*'s pages. As a proponent of such practice, Igor Mandić claimed that the entire history of art, especially the history of painting, is the history of the female body, fashion, make-up and posing.<sup>723</sup> In 1980, Drakulić explained that such an understanding of femininity is possible because “[b]eauty is crucial only for those who have nothing else to boast about.”<sup>724</sup> Or, as the representation of Silva Koščina, following an all too familiar scenario of film success, attests, even if they do. Conversely, Drakulić continued, men did not have to be beautiful to achieve what they want in life, as they have a different social standing and handle a different currency bestowed upon them by the patriarchal social order – gender-conditioned respect and power.<sup>725</sup> In these examples, Živojinović did not have to undress to get a role in a film, any film. And neither he nor Bulajić had to choose between work and family or worry about the survival of their families because they were pursuing demanding professions. Apparently, all the two men required was for their wives to understand where the priorities lay and adjust their own lives accordingly.

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<sup>723</sup> Igor Mandić, “Erotika je masovna pojava” (“Erotica Is a Mass Phenomenon”), *Start* 125 (November 7, 1973): 16-19.

<sup>724</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, “Dugi rat nage Venere” (“Naked Venus’ Long War”), *Start* 299 (July 9, 1980): 18.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid.*

While Drakulić was discussing sexism with her male colleagues, her feminist ally Lydia Sklevicky was writing about the Antifascist Front of Women (AFŽ) and its understanding of the emancipated Yugoslav New Woman. She noted that the “[f]uture will make a ruling about the modest historical legacy that the woman will carry away from the battlefield.”<sup>726</sup> She did not elaborate, but it seems plausible to me that she was referring to her own present. In 1973, for instance, the *Start*’s editorial team changed most of its journalists, took a step back from participation in celebrity culture, and transformed the magazine into one of the most respected Yugoslav popular magazines. At the same time, it kept on insisting that nude female beauty was an example of emancipation without giving equal credit to women’s abilities, skills and achievements. This, indeed, must have raised the question of the nature of women’s historical legacy supposedly won in the war.

*Start*’s journalists did not treat Koščina the same as they did her male colleagues, and they also could not consider the historical figure she embodied in *Neretva* as equal to her comrades-in-arms. The materials analyzed in the following sections show that this was the case. All in all, from 1969 and throughout the 1970s, the *Start*’s editorial board quite effectively separated the woman fighter in many of her manifestations, especially the *partizanka*, from its rendition of the partisan myth. While women elsewhere were regarded as capable (if not always equal to men) supporters of the ultimate male endeavor that is war, *Start*’s journalists by and large ignored this facet of the story of the partisan war, working to maintain traditional social relations and affirm conservative values.

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<sup>726</sup> Sklevicky, “Antifašistička fronta žena: Kulturnom mijenom do žene ‘novog tipa,’” 55. “Budućnost će izreći pravorijek hipotezi o skromnoj istorijskoj popudbini koju će žena ponijeti s ratišta.”

### 6.3 Forgetting the *Partizanka*

By now, it became clear that historical topics, especially those from the recent war past, could not be on the list of priorities in *Start* as it was in its first one hundred issues. As the previous section showed, it was not. If the magazine published World War II stories, although they were ambitiously labeled as the historical feuilletons, they were sensational contributions about events on the battlefields outside Yugoslavia. Moreover, despite headlines that often told readers they were reading true accounts, they were of dubious provenance. For instance, the events described in the three-part feuilleton titled “Anna Confessed,” which purported to reveal how the Normandy invasion depended on the cooperation of a male Allied pilot and a female Nazi spy, in fact correspond to the plot of Ronald Dahl’s 1944 story “Beware of the Dog,” and even more to its 1965 film adaptation *36 Hours* produced by Carl K. Hittleman, who is also credited as the author of the *Start*’s feuilleton.<sup>727</sup>

Like other parts of the magazine, historical feuilletons were primarily titillating in the first *Start*’s years. Although they were called historical feuilletons, they were not informative and precise as more than three hundred serialized articles about the NOB published during *Arena* existence. After Saračević’s appointment as the new editor-in-chief, the feuilletons were gradually transformed so that they left the sexually inspired topics and became more similar in their approach to *Arena*’s historical feuilletons. This is not surprising because Aleksandar (Aleksa) Vojinović, previously *Arena*’s journalist, took over the preparation of the historical contributions. The important feature of his work at *Start* is that this magazine covered a much wider range of historical topics than the magazine he had previously worked for.

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<sup>727</sup> First appearance: Carl K. Hittleman, “Anna je priznala” (“Anna Confessed”), *Start* 95 (September 13, 1972): 60-65.

*Start* generally covered the political and war events of the entire twentieth century. According to the quantitative analysis conducted by *Vjesnik*'s team in 1978, two-thirds of all political contributions dealt with foreign policy. And one-fifth of these contributions were historical topics. The remaining third of all political contributions concerned domestic politics, and here a quarter of the contributions dealt with history, mostly with the People's Liberation Struggle.<sup>728</sup> That is, almost every issue of *Start* contained at least one historical text, while most contained two or even three such texts. Vojinović and his staff often drew inspiration from newly published memoirs, television shows, and exhibitions,<sup>729</sup> and only then from relevant anniversaries. Their contributions regularly addressed otherwise poorly covered topics, so much so that Saračević boasted in 1976:

The issues in which our series on [the conflict with] the Cominform was published were collected and somewhere even recommended as material in high schools. (...) And a year ago, when university professor Dr. Vera Horvat Pintarić published the series "Nazism and the Arts" in *Start*, these issues disappeared and are no longer available anywhere. They also serve as seminar materials (...) at some of our higher and reputable institutions.<sup>730</sup>

With regard to the topic of the People's Liberation Struggle, *Start* opened its pages to it only gradually. In addition, the magazine's propensity for publishing about less represented topics and individuals is not so visible in this segment. On the contrary, I find the articles about the NOB to be a textbook example of political correctness as well as, in line with Saračević's previous comment, an example of textbook history-writing that privileged (besides Tito and the Party)

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<sup>728</sup> Lamza, *Analiza Starta*, 33-34.

<sup>729</sup> In 1973, *Start* reprinted (now with full reference) NY Times' review of *The Gulag Archipelago*: Jurij V. Bondarev, "Ruski pogled na 'Arhipelag GULag'" (A Russian View of *The Gulag Archipelago*), *Start* 132 (February 13, 1974): 26-27. In 1975, it published excerpts from Isser Harel's book about Mossad's capture of Adolf Eichmann: Isser Harel, "Klopka za Eichmanna" ("Trap for Eichmann"), *Start* 171 (August 13, 1975): 60-63. Similarly, Soviet novel and television series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* inspired Aleksandar Vojinović to track down and interview Erich Kempka, member of the SS and Hitler's chauffeur until his death: Aleksa Vojinović, "Tragom obavještajca Stierlitz" ("Following Agent Stierlitz's Trail"), *Start* 140 (June 5, 1974): 55-58 and *Start* 141 (June 19, 1974): 62-65.

<sup>730</sup> Sead Saračević, "Među nama" ("Between Us"), *Start* 186 (March 10, 1976): 9. "Brojevi u kojima je objavljivana naša serija o Informbirou skupljani su, a negdje čak preporučeni i kao građivo za neke srednje, (...). Još prije godinu, kad je sveučilišni profesor dr. Vera Horvat Pintarić objavljivala u "Startu" seriju "Nacizam i umjetnost", ti su brojevi nestajali, pa se danas više nigdje ne mogu nabaviti. Također služe kao seminarska građa na temu o nacizmu i kulturi na nekim našim visokim i uglednim ustanovama."

militarized masculinity. Indeed, the formulaic portrayal of war heroes relying on a set of values traditionally correlated with manhood and merit, remained part of the representation of the NOB in this magazine throughout the 1970s. By highlighting the well-established masculine virtues of the featured war veterans, the magazine helped perpetuate the notion that a soldier, primarily a male partisan soldier, embodied essential masculine characteristics.

The most representative example of such a section is Konstantin Miles and Darko Stuparić's "Asovi se sjećaju" ("Aces Remember"), published in seven parts during 1975 and 1976. According to the introduction to the first edition, these journalists decided to present the great warriors of World War II "who were the best in their warrior business."<sup>731</sup> In addition to the two People's Heroes of the liberation struggle – Vlado Šegrt and Milan Žeželj<sup>732</sup> – the journalists interviewed three pilots: Ivan Kozhedub, considered the highest scoring Soviet fighter pilot of the Second World War, Douglas Bader, a British fighter pilot who served in the same war despite having lost both legs several years earlier, and Adolf Galland, a German flying ace and the last general of the Luftwaffe.<sup>733</sup> The remaining two men were naval commanders who engaged in submarine war during which one of the interviewed, Donald Macintyre, sank the submarine of the other interviewed man, Otto Kretschmer.<sup>734</sup>

The seven contributions exhibited the martial skills displayed by the men interviewed on the ground, in the air and under water. Vlado Šegrt and Milan Žeželj were presented in much the same

<sup>731</sup> Darko Stuparić, "Asovi se sjećaju (1): Vlado Šegrt od Sutjeske" ("Aces Remember (1): Vlado Šegrt of Sutjeska"), *Start* 166 (June 4, 1975): 16. "(...) koji su u svom ratničkom poslu bili najbolji."

<sup>732</sup> Ibid, 16-19; Konstantin Miles, "Asovi se sjećaju (4): Nezaustavljivi heroj Žeželj" ("Aces Remember (4): Unstoppable Hero Žeželj"), *Start* 177 (November 5, 1975): 16-19 and 88.

<sup>733</sup> Konstantin Miles, "Asovi se sjećaju (2): Trostruki junak Kožedub" ("Aces Remember (2): Triple Hero Kozhedub"), *Start* 168 (July 2, 1975): 31-33; idem, "Asovi se sjećaju (3): Drska upornost beznogog Badera" ("Aces remember (3): Insolent Persistence of Legless Bader"), *Start* 172 (August 27, 1975): 42-44; idem, "Asovi se sjećaju (7): Galland – zadnji komandant Luftwaffe" ("Aces Remember (7): Galland – The Last Luftwaffe Commander"), *Start* 186 (March 10, 1976): 33-35.

<sup>734</sup> Konstantin Miles, "Asovi se sjećaju (5): atlantski vuk Kretschmer" ("Aces remember (5): The Atlantic Wolf Kretschmer"), *Start* 182 (January 14, 1976): 34-36; idem, "Asovi se sjećaju (6): McIntyreova islandska stupica" ("Aces remember (6): Macintyre's Icelandic Trap"), *Start* 184 (February 11, 1976): 37-39.

way as in *Arena*. That is, just as *Arena*'s journalist had done thirteen years earlier, in 1962, *Start*'s Darko Stuparić first estimated Vlado Šegrt's abilities by equating him with the People's Hero Sava Kovačević, and then conveyed the particulars of their conversation and Šegrt's wartime accomplishments. The 1971 interview with Milan Žeželj is somewhat different as it appeared in *Arena* around the time of Tito's birthday and half of the published text focused on Žeželj's impressions of Tito.<sup>735</sup> However, the war veteran recounted some of his own wartime adventures, captures of enemy soldiers, and combat maneuvers, leading the *Arena*'s journalist to conclude that Žeželj "brilliantly passed the exams for a brave and astute strategist."<sup>736</sup> Some very similar and some overlapping Žeželj's recollections led *Start*'s journalist to characterize him in a similar manner, first as an "e f f i c i e n t hero" (sic), then as an "everlasting, universally heroic man of action" and to compare him directly with the other men interviewed for this series.<sup>737</sup>

Not only did *Start* affirm the partisan ideal founded on the male combat power, but the contributions such as the series described recognized the existence of the same values as constitutive of all – in this series: Yugoslav, Soviet, British, and German – militarized masculinity. The *Arena*'s interests were much narrower in this sense: when its journalists wrote about the war, they wrote almost exclusively about the NOB from the partisan perspective. In addition, its journalists adhered to the terminology that defined and characterized the participants with regard to their ideological and national affiliations based on a rather strict dichotomy between "our heroes" who resisted "the fascist oppressors and their servants." Both magazines, however, developed their

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<sup>735</sup> The reason for this, as the title of the article suggests, was that Žeželj from 1944 onward spent seventeen years in various positions (as the commander of the Guard division and personal escort of the Commander in Chief) in direct cooperation with Tito.

<sup>736</sup> Jovo Popović, "To je moj život: Prvi komandant Titove garde" ("That Is My Life: The First Commander of Tito's Guard"), *Arena* 543 (May 21, 1971): 3. "(...) blistavo položio ispite hrabrog i razboritog stratega."

<sup>737</sup> Miles, "Asovi se sjećaju (4)," 17. "(...) e f i k a s a n heroj" [sic], "(...) vječnog, univerzalnog herojskog čovjeka od akcije (...)." (Author's emphasis.)

portrayal of male soldiers in the same way – as confident and assertive, competitive as well as solidary, undoubtedly enduring, courageous, and skillful warriors.<sup>738</sup>

Highlighting the same characteristics, *Start*'s reporters also wrote, for instance, about seven secretaries of the Communist Youth Union of Yugoslavia (SKOJ), interwar communist Đuro Đaković, the first KPJ secretary Filip Filipović, war pilots Franjo Kluz and Rudi Čajavec. Prominent war veterans and the people who started successful careers that were not directly related to their war service, who periodically appeared in the “*Start*'s Interview,” were thus granted the opportunity to give their own examples of the same set of virtues. In other words, *Start*, just like *Arena*, expressly promoted the male partisan soldier as the strongest role model of Yugoslav socialism in physical, moral, and ideological terms.

However, there was no comparable figure of a woman at war during the research period. Unlike *Arena*'s journalists, the men in *Start* never wrote about illegal activists like Lidija Šentjurg, *partizanke* like Ljubica Gerovac, or partisan doctors like Vera Šarić and Cila Albahari. *Arena*'s journalists portrayed Yugoslav women at war quite heterogeneously, as they wrote about many possible wartime femininities: nurses and warriors, political prisoners and workers, wives and mothers. Other media also offered examples that could have served as inspiration to *Start*'s journalists. The members of the Croatian branch of the women's organization went well beyond the tradition. As the chapter on the magazine *Žena u borbi* shows, they habitually published feminist renderings of Yugoslav women who were capable and able to actively participate in the various arenas of the public sphere; the *afežejke* preferred to focus attention at the women who met

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<sup>738</sup> Naturally, the texts about *Lebensborn* might have at the same time undermined general value of the project in which Adolf Galland and Otto Kretschmer participated. Series about the interwar purges in the Soviet Union and the mentioned series about Tito-Stalin Split could have played the same role in the perception of Kozhedub. At the same time, there were no contributions published during the researched period that would call into question the application of the masculine virtue of Yugoslav partisans or the Allied soldiers.

their ideological prerequisites and most often wrote about women who resembled themselves. The journalists of the magazine *Svijet*, on the other hand, questioned women's wartime roles by publishing a series of texts in the long running "Women and Espionage" section, inspired by spy fiction. In sum, despite the varieties already explored in the mentioned printed press and even more so in other media, and the hitherto marginalized wartime fates, *Start*'s glossing over this subject matter in the 1970s helped to sideline the figure of the woman fighter in all its manifestations, including the *partizanka*.

The frame of reference that the *Start*'s journalists used to portray women was very limited from the beginning, and this affected how women in war and their actions were perceived. The fundamental characteristic of many representations of the *partizanka* – a woman who participated in a quintessentially masculine affair, war, as a member of an institution that privileged men and masculine values, the army – was her willingness and ability "to take it like a man." In my reading of *Start*, combined with information and, admittedly, some rumors about the journalists who worked in the newsroom, they intended and wanted women to be stereotypically feminine. While women's participation in the NOB produced a number of different portrayals of militarized femininity in *Arena* and elsewhere, *Start*'s editorial board turned away from this topic as much as possible. The aforementioned series of articles provides an indication of the degree to which *Start* disregarded them: seven men interviewed, the conversations suggest, were surrounded only by other men and by the machines for much of their lives – or at least in the most important situations. Miles and Stuparić's maneuver, which ostensibly extended the interests of the magazine to various fronts of World War II, in reality narrowed to the wartime exploits of a few exceptional men, with the result that women were banished from their narrative about World War II.

Aleksa Vojinović's article "Forward to Victory!," published on the occasion of the thirty-first anniversary of the breakthrough of the Strymian front, is the one of examples that can further

illustrate the issues *Start* faced. In essence, this article is a review of the battle garnished with the partisans' recollections. As was sometimes the case with the historical feuilletons in *Arena*, this article presented the battle from a purely military-political perspective, but also from the point to view of rank-and-file soldiers and civilians who witnessed the battle (as it took almost six months to achieve the breakthrough).



Figure 5: Anđelka Martić and the comrades in “Forward to Victory,” *Start* 191 (May 19, 1976): 16.

female comrade among the comrades,”<sup>739</sup> and the photograph attesting to this fact was included in the article (figure 5).

Considering this article on its own, the part of Martić’s story about how she met Tito does not seem very special. It is not surprising that she was the only woman in a group of male comrades who had the privilege of meeting Tito, for the *partizanke* made up a relatively small percentage of

In this particular article, Anđelka Martić – *partizanka* and reporter during the war – helped Vojinović describe the events surrounding the battle. A large portion of Martić’s recollections in this article related to the circumstances under which she met Tito. Namely, the editor of the newspaper for which she worked toward the end of the war sent her as a war correspondent to follow and interview Tito when he visited the Strymian frontline. As the article repeated several times, she was “the only

<sup>739</sup> Aleksa Vojinović, “Naprijed u pobjedu” (“Forward to Victory”), *Start* 191 (May 19, 1976): 20. “(...) jedina drugarica među drugovima.”

all partisan soldiers. Although young women readily joined the partisan army – as Mary E. Reed noted, “partisan life was magnetic”<sup>740</sup> – Jelena Batinić calculated that the percentage of women in partisan units could reach up to twenty percent, with an average of about ten percent. As both Reed’s and Batinić’s inquiries into this matter demonstrate, discrimination against women and adherence to the traditional gender division of labor were characteristic of the Yugoslav partisan army as well as the People’s Liberation Movement (NOP) throughout the war.<sup>741</sup> Accordingly, Ljubinka Škodrić noted in her dissertation that the effort to involve women as little as possible in combat activities and in favor of traditional female occupations was indeed a widespread practice in wartime Serbia and Montenegro,<sup>742</sup> and it supports the conclusion that “if there were women in any given Partisan unit, they were most likely found in the *sanitet* [Medical Corps].”<sup>743</sup>

But in the context of *Start*, Martić’s recollection takes on a different connotation: it seems that in the 1970s, just as in the 1940s, the remark still pointed toward the same old truth that war is men’s business. Namely, in 1976, among all the articles dealing with historical topics, Martić was one of only two women who contributed substantially to the development of a historical article about the NOB. In twenty-five issues published during that year, a total of sixty-two contributions (commemorations, interviews, exhibition reviews, and serialized feuilletons, excluding the “*Start*’s

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<sup>740</sup> Mary E. Reed, “Croatian Women in the Yugoslav Partisan Resistance, 1941-1945” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1980), 112.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid, especially chapters 6 “Women in the National Liberation Army” and 8 “Conflicts: The Communist Party and the Anti-Fascist Front of Women,” 112-126 and 182-213; Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, especially chapter 3 “The Heroic and the Mundane: Women in the Units,” 124-167.

Similar conclusions are presented in other places: Mary E. Reed, “The Anti-Fascist Front of Women and the Communist Party in Croatia: Conflicts within the Resistance,” in *Women in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, ed. Tova Yedlin (New York: Praeger, 1980), 128-139; Barbara Jancar Webster, *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, especially chapter 3 “The Role of Women in the Army,” 75-100; Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi*; Škodrić, “Položaj žene u okupiranoj Srbiji,” especially chapter “Učešće žena u narodnooslobodilačkim odredima” (“Participation of Women in the People’s Liberation Units”), 315-336.

<sup>742</sup> Škodrić, “Položaj žene u okupiranoj Srbiji,” 315-336.

<sup>743</sup> Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*, 133.

Interview” section) were published on a variety of historical topics.<sup>744</sup> Fourteen of these focused on the NOB, including two that explicitly addressed the topic of women’s participation in the war.<sup>745</sup>

As for content, in addition to her meeting with Tito, Martić described encounters with several civilians, women and girls, whom she met while working as a war correspondent. Although this is substantially more than she usually talked about – Martić was a revered author of war-themed prose for children,<sup>746</sup> and her public appearances focused largely on children at war and writing for children about war – the *Start*’s journalist was not an interlocutor to whom she could explain her understanding of women’s contributions to war.

Just like Milka Kufrin, who conveyed similar sentiment to the American researcher Barbara Jancar Webster (mentioned in chapter 3), Martić deemed that the *partizanke* achieved equality with men precisely because they served as rank-and-file soldiers. And like Božidarka – Kika Damnjanović, who confided in her memoir (mentioned in chapter 5), Martić thought that an essential part of the equality was reflected in the fact that the girls who participated in the partisan army achieved it by exercising the freedom to do whatever their male comrades did. She related: “We stood guard equally, treaded through impassable areas, went into rivers up to our chests, and

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<sup>744</sup> It should be mentioned that, unlike the *Vjesnik*’s team that did the quantitative analysis of this magazine in 1978, I do not consider historical topics to be only a part of politics. Therefore, I estimated that there were more of such contributions than they did.

<sup>745</sup> Following the same trend, of the remaining forty-eight contributions, only three focused on topics in which women featured prominently (review of Nefretiti exhibition with a short analysis of her life, and feuilletons about two authors, George Sand and Isidora Sekulić).

<sup>746</sup> Martić’s opus on World War II in Yugoslavia is the most comprehensive in the Croatian children’s literature; she published seven collections of short stories and two shorter novels. First published in 1953, *Pirgo* is her most renowned novel. It tells the story of friendship between five-year-old boy Željko and fawn he named Pirgo. Željko is a partisan child; he does not see his mom and dad often as they are both engaged in various tasks of the NOP, and he has lost his little brother. Pirgo has also lost his family, and the boy decides to take care of him. The novel, based on this simple and true story, is considered as the most profound written condemnation of child suffering in the People’s Liberation Struggle and was, therefore, compulsory reading in Yugoslav elementary schools until 1991 (and was adapted into a cartoon and a film for the purposes of the school program).

generally went wherever men went.”<sup>747</sup> To tell this part of her war story, Martić waited a while longer than the other two *partizanke*, that is, until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Martić spoke about her wartime experiences as well as life in socialist Yugoslavia with Sanja Iveković, a well-known feminist artist active since the 1970s, for the documentary film *Borovi i jele* (*Pines and Fir Trees*, 2002). While Iveković often bases her artistic exploration of the role of women on challenging authority and questioning prescribed truths, it was the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the resulting tendency of the Croatian authorities to reinterpret vast portions of shared history that led this artist to reevaluate women’s contributions to the Yugoslav socialist society.<sup>748</sup>

The second woman to contribute to the writing of an article about the NOB in 1976 was actress Božidarka Frajt. When the war broke out in Yugoslavia, she was an infant and was orphaned during offensive on the Kozara mountain (northern Bosnia) in 1942. After being handed over to the Red Cross in Zagreb, she was adopted and learned details about her origins more than thirty years later, after an arduous search for her family.<sup>749</sup> Frajt’s life story is very similar to the dozens of family tragedies exposed in the pages of the “*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones” section (“*Arena traži vaše najmilije*”), one of that magazine’s most popular sections of the sixties. It emulates the same emotional style – including the publication of photographs of the reunited families accompanied by poignant descriptions of their encounters (figure 6). The only difference is that among the truly numerous families and individuals who searched for their lost family members with *Arena*’s help, none was as famous or successful as Frajt. This is probably the reason why no other article of this

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<sup>747</sup> Veronika Mesić, “Anđelka Martić i herojska priča o Pirgu” (“Anđelka Martić and the Heroic Story about Pirgo”), interview by Veronika Mesić, *Vox Feminae*, May 1, 2019, <https://voxfeminae.net/strasne-zene/andelka-martic-i-herojska-prica-o-pirgu/>. “Jednako se išlo na stražu, gazilo kroz neprohodna područja, ulazilo u rijeke do prsiju, i općenito išlo svuda gdje su išli i muškarci.”

<sup>748</sup> The film itself was released following Iveković’s project entitled *Gen XX* (1997-2001): the artist removed commercial content from six photographs of fashion models and instead added names and information about the heroines of the NOB. By contextualizing their names and information about their executions in this way, she pointed out the invisibility of those women in Croatian contemporary society.

<sup>749</sup> Pero Zlatar, “Prava živa istina Bože Frajt” (“Boža Frajt’s Real, Living Truth”), *Start* 197 (August 2, 1976): 60-63.

kind appeared in *Start*. The editors, I believe, were not seeking to publish content about the plagues of war that befell many of their compatriots. The interesting thing about this case was that such a fate was experienced by a successful and, what is certainly not less important, very beautiful actress living in Zagreb.

Obviously, neither of the two women in *Start* was portrayed to contribute to the conventional representation of war as a thoroughly masculine endeavor. In this respect, 1976 is a good benchmark for the

decade as a whole. In addition, throughout the 1970s, only a handful of women featured in this magazine were named as *partizanke*. Yet, none of them were primarily soldiers during the war. In addition, none were invited to talk to *Start*'s journalists because of their wartime service in the narrow sense of the word. Irena Kolesar, for instance, was contacted in 1972, around the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Yugoslav film, *Slavica*, in which she starred. Since she was interviewed in the early days of *Start*'s existence, it is not surprising that the interviewer tried to find out something about “[h]ow did they make love in that warstorm,” but Kolesar refused to divulge any juicy or racy details.<sup>750</sup>



Figure 6: Božidarka Frajt meeting the surviving members of her family. “Boža Frajt’s Real, Living Truth,” *Start* 197 (August 2, 1976): 61.

<sup>750</sup> Đuro Zagorac, “Još uvijek je zovu Slavica” (“They Still Call Her Slavica”), *Start* 80 (February 9, 1972): 26-28. “Kako se u tom ratnom vihoru vodila ljubav (...)?” See also: Jelušić, “‘Our Girl’ Ideology,” especially 16-21.

After the topics related to sex and sexuality were pushed aside (during 1973), there was no other specific interest related to women's activities in the NOB. The work of Aleksa Vojinović, the editor of the historical feuilletons in the magazine, shows that the editorial approach to the matter in question did not change significantly until the end of the period under study. In 1980, for example, it seemed that he at long last published an article about a female fighter. After all, he did title it "The Story about a Girl and a Tank" ("Priča o djevojci i tenku"). For this article, he researched a sequence from the landing at Drvar (internationally known as operation Knight's move or Rösselsprung) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Vojinović used the famous fragment – the *skojevka* Mika Bosnić pulled a blanket off a small partisan tank that prevented the group of three men inside from advancing into battle – but only as an introduction. The stories he focused on were the pursuits of the three men who operated the tank during the offensive.<sup>751</sup>

Even the attached photographs and their descriptions foreshadow the tone of the text. Both Mika Bosnić and the tank are described as legends, i.e., symbols of the battle. The four interlocutors, on the other hand, are (only) men recounting their war stories for *Start*. When the view of the combatants in the tank was obscured by the blanket during the battle, Vojinović simply quoted a short excerpt from a book about the People's Heroes of Yugoslavia, describing the moment for which Bosnić posthumously received this decoration. Then he swiftly switched to the thrills of the battle told from the point of view of the tank operators.<sup>752</sup>

Several contributions who published at the very end of the decade, however, suggested that some individuals associated with *Start* had found a way to meaningfully talk to women about their wartime endeavors. The two most important persons in this regard were the magazine's Belgrade-based associates, authors Draško Ređep and Marija Čudina. In 1978 and 1979, they interviewed

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<sup>751</sup> Aleksa Vojinović, "Priča o djevojci i tenku" ("Story about a Girl and a Tank"), *Start* 296 (May 28, 1980): 34-35.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

Jara Ribnikar and Saša Božović, two very well-known participants of the NOB, whose renown is largely due to their writing. Ribnikar published literary works since the early 1950s. She published bits and pieces of her memories concurrently with other work – I mentioned earlier a text on courage that she first published in 1969 in *Žena u borbi*– but did not begin the book series of memoir prose entitled *Život i priča (Life and Story)* until 1978. That year she published her recollections about war in the journal *Književnost (Literature)*, which were then printed as the first volume in the series. Božović, on the other hand, practiced medicine both in peace and war, and her literary production is limited to a series of war memoirs that she wrote during retirement. Her first book of memories *Tebi, moja Dolores (To You, My Dolores)*, dedicated to her daughter who died during the battle of Neretva, appeared also in 1978.

Ređep, in conversation with Jara Ribnikar, and Čudina, in conversation with Saša Božović, spoke to their interlocutors in the same way – primarily as authors, and only then as women. Thanks to Ribnikar’s long writing career, but also to her penchant for writing down her observations about others, the conversation turned out into a mosaic of lyrical, even elegiac miniatures about the people she encountered during her life, some as a writer, others during the war in Yugoslavia. This included her friendship with authors Saul Bellow and Isidora Sekulić. She spoke about her acquaintance with Tito and, naturally, about her husband Vladislav Ribnikar, the director of the biggest Serbian publishing house *Politika*, as well as, for instance, the young revolutionary who perished during the war, Ivo Lola Ribar.<sup>753</sup> This interview portrays Ribnikar as a compassionate and kind-hearted observer of the people who marked the epoch. Even though Božović, too, wrote about many people she encountered during the war, her first book was recognized by readers as exceptional for its description of pregnancy, motherhood, and loss of a child in the midst of

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<sup>753</sup> Draško Ređep, “Startov intervju: Jara Ribnikar” (“Start’s Interview: Jara Ribnikar”), *Start* 252 (November 20, 1978): 12-15.

liberation struggles.<sup>754</sup> By focusing on the circumstances in which this unique bestseller (which was subsequently published in seven editions) was created, Čudina described in the interview the character of this partisan doctor as a humanitarian and hopeful survivor.

Neither of the interviews attempted to foreground Ribnikar's or Božović's femininity to ensure that they indeed remained women although they fought in a war. While the two journalists and the women they interviewed operated within the profoundly gendered system of knowledge production, the two women's experiences were presented as important and valid without calling attention to the stereotypical representations of militarized masculinity and femininity. Instead, Ređep and Čudina conveyed the women's experiences in universal and philanthropic terms.

In addition to external collaborators such as Ređep and Čudina, toward the end of the decade Saračević hired several journalists who challenged the habitual representation of women in this magazine. Despite all the fancy changes the magazine underwent following his arrival and the subsequent change of the majority of the editorial board in 1973, their one-sided treatment of gender and sexuality met with vocal and steadfast opposition only from women who identified with Western feminists and were recognized as Yugoslav *neofeminists*. The abovementioned Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić (as well as Lydia Sklevicky, who did not publish in *Start*) belonged to this group. I will devote the next few pages to them because their view of the Woman Question has in the second half of the 1970s, and even more so throughout the last Yugoslav decade, outstripped the interwar left-oriented feminism championed by the Antifascist Front of Women

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<sup>754</sup> Marija Čudina, "Startov intervju: Saša Božović" ("Start's Interview: Saša Božović"), *Start* 277 (September 5, 1979): 12-15.

(AFŽ) and its successors.<sup>755</sup> This was in many ways a positive development, but it for its part contributed to the decline of the *partizanka*.

#### 6.4 Neofeminist Debate for Women's Emancipation and Equality

Saračević's editorial credo was, "if something exists, then there is room for it in *Start*, even if I disagree with it."<sup>756</sup> This editorial policy led to intriguing results. On the one hand, the magazine ignored the phenomenon that was firmly rooted in the Yugoslav context – women's activism within the communist women's organization, both during the war and in the post-war period. On the other hand, a very Western phenomenon – second-wave feminism – was treated quite heterogeneously in *Start*.

It is noteworthy that throughout the entire decade the *afežejke* – more precisely Nada Sremec and Čuča Smokvina-Boranić – were mentioned in *Start* only once. It is even more important that they were not mentioned as *afežejke*, that is, because of their work within the women's organization, but as leaders of a project that was not directly related to the organization's work. They prepared and published the manual-style book entitled *The Book for Every Woman (Knjiga za svaku ženu)*. In the realization of this project, they collaborated with almost forty experts who provided input on topics ranging from home furnishings, decorating, maintenance, and cleaning, through caring for flower and vegetable gardens, small domestic animals, and pets, all the way to

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<sup>755</sup> The best analysis of the *neofeminist* movement in Yugoslavia which I have had the opportunity to read so far is Zsófia Lorand's doctoral dissertation "Learning a Feminist Language: The Intellectual History of Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s" (PhD diss., Central European University, 2014).

Further information about this topic can also be found in: Barbara Jancar, "The New Feminism in Yugoslavia," in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, 200-223; idem., "Neofeminism in Yugoslavia. A Closer Look," *Women & Politics* 8 (1988): 1-30; Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac, "Feministička grupa Žena i društvo" ("The Feminist Group Woman and Society"), in *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji: ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih (Toward a Visible Women's history: The Women's Movement in the 1990s Belgrade)*, ed. Marina Blagojević (Belgrade: Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju, 1998), 47-62; Vlasta Jalušić, *Kako smo hodile v feministično gimnazijo (How We Attended the Feminist High School)* (Ljubljana: /\*cf, 2002).

<sup>756</sup> Kesić, "Saračević," 19. "(...) ako nešto postoji, čak ako se ja s time i ne slažem, onda ima mjesta i u Startu."

childcare and basic health education. In addition, the section “Woman Mother” (“Žena majka”) contains candidly written texts about marriage, marital happiness, and marriage equality, as well as basic information about women’s reproductive health, sexual relations, and contraception.<sup>757</sup>

The idea for this book was born in the interwar period, when a group of doctors and educators from the School of Public Health (that is, the medical school) were considering how to educate the rural population. Some of them, and Nada Sremec played a crucial role at that point, returned to work on the project after the end of the war and the first edition of this book was published in 1952. From then until 1976, the year in which the article on this manual appeared, the book was printed in twenty-four editions in Latin and Cyrillic, as well as in Slovenian language.<sup>758</sup> This book continued the type of education that women’s magazines published by the AFŽ and its successors promoted. It is, surely, no coincidence that both Nada Sremec and Čuča Smokvina-Boranić participated in the editing of the magazine *Žena u borbi* in different periods of its existence. Therefore, this book is a *bona fide* companion for every Yugoslav New Woman who aspired to become the representative ideal type, the socialism-inspired superwoman: mother, nurturer and educator, cook and cleaner, handyman, health and financial expert, seamstress and make-up artist.<sup>759</sup>

The most intriguing thing about the *Start*’s article is that the interviewer did not address Smokvina-Boranić as a distinguished member of the women’s organization. Therefore, he did not ask her what seemed to bother him most about this book: why it appears to contain as well as propagate the very essence of patriarchy, despite all the revolutionary changes regarding women’s

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<sup>757</sup> Čuča Smokvina-Boranić, ed., *Knjiga za svaku ženu (The Book for Every Woman)* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Znanje, 1986 (1952)).

<sup>758</sup> Marko Grčić, “Eksplוזija udžbenika za žene” (“Explosion of Textbooks for Women”), *Start* 204 (November 17, 1976): 14.

<sup>759</sup> More about the type of education the AFŽ’s magazines provided see in: Tanja Kamin and Andreja Vezovnik, “Slovenia’s Socialist Superwoman: Feeding the Family, Nourishing the Nation,” *Feminist Review* 117 (2017): 79-96, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41305-017-0091-6>.

rights in Yugoslavia. He spoke to his interlocutor only about the criteria for editing such a book, and then spent most of the article marveling at “the hypocrisy of us men” who believe that a woman has to deal with every possible household chore and wondering about “the unusually lukewarm women’s willpower to expose it more drastically.”<sup>760</sup> He ended his text with the hope that men will help the women chivalrously, so that the never-ending domestic tasks of double burden illustrated in this handbook would not “flatten women’s femininity among its covers.”<sup>761</sup>

As many illustrations as well as some written contributions attest, Sremec, Smokvina-Boranić as well as the other authors of the book certainly did not think that their female readers could not be dressed up and beautiful – because, I am all but sure, that is what the journalist meant by mentioning femininity – an at the same time knowledgeable, skilled and strong (figure 8, first two photographs). It certainly required some more care and work (figure 8, third image), but according to the *afežejke*, it did not threaten the womanliness of the Yugoslav New Women.

The author of the article, on the other hand, doubted it. But other than empty phrases, he offered no alternative. Instead, the article offered an illustration (figure 8, the last image) that pointed to the *Start*’s vision of women: whatever they did, it turned out, it was important to be attractive and, if possible, undressed. What is relevant in women is not their brains, so their heads may as well be cut off (from the photograph), but their bare breasts, which metonymically testify that the spectator is looking at a (real) woman. In addition, the journalist’s expressions of admiration for all that women manage to do under normal, everyday circumstances, coupled with the assessment of women as indifferent to the quality of their lives and the invocation of the phantom of femininity (which appeared in the partisans’ anxious thoughts about their female comrades already during the war, as mentioned in the chapters 3 and 5) suggests that he did not know much about feminist

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<sup>760</sup> Ibid, 15. “(...) licemjerje nas muškaraca (...) neobično mlaku volju žena da ga malo drastičnije razobliče.”

<sup>761</sup> Ibid. “(...) ne spljošti ženinu ženskost među svojim koricama.”

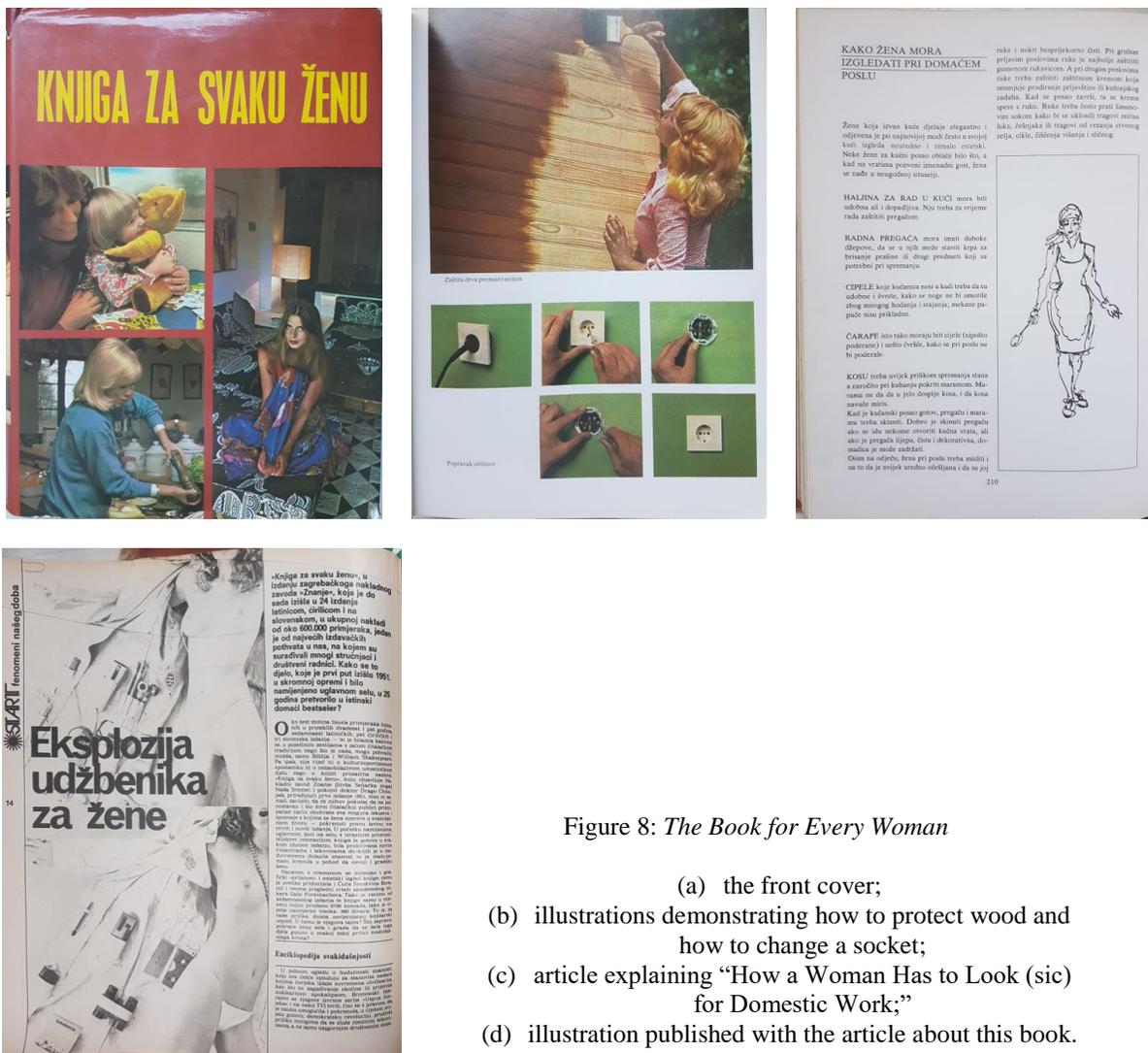


Figure 8: *The Book for Every Woman*

- (a) the front cover;
- (b) illustrations demonstrating how to protect wood and how to change a socket;
- (c) article explaining “How a Woman Has to Look (sic) for Domestic Work;”
- (d) illustration published with the article about this book.

activism, including that of the AFŽ as well as the *neofeminist* one, which were crucial for the realization of every possible women’s right achieved in Yugoslavia since the interwar period onward.

Just like the previous article, many other published contributions show how little the men in *Start*’s newsroom actually knew about feminism and gender equality, and how narrow their understanding of both was. I would like to single out the two texts by the praised commentator and columnist Veselko Tenžera, for it was he who most clearly described the emancipation via stripping

that the editorial board seemingly championed, which was ever published in *Start*. First, he commented to the scandal caused by the discovery that a minor Slovenian pop star Moni Kovačić took part in a photo shoot in the state of undress, claiming that female nudity as served up in the popular media was in fact “a slap to the patriarchal schmuck.”<sup>762</sup> Namely, according to Tenžera, in patriarchal society the said schmuck’s girlfriend or wife exists only to satisfy his own carnal needs. Therefore, he concludes, this scandal reveals that the ego of an average Yugoslav male is still not developed beyond sharing his bed only with an untainted woman. It follows that Yugoslavia is just one step away from the destruction of patriarchy. The step would consist of more girls like Moni Kovačić exposing themselves to the male gaze and showing their pulchritude in the nude to the interested public without shame or restraint.<sup>763</sup> At the same time, Tenžera put together a defense of patriarchy. While the previous author advocated for male chivalry, Tenžera opted for male privilege and openly proclaimed the feminine as an aestheticized object, advising men to do nothing but enjoy the sights without prejudice.

In another text, the same author had revealed that (at least for him) the opportunities of gawking at naked girls are not the core of the problem arising from the women’s emancipation and the attempted gender equality in Yugoslavia. In his opinion, the problem surfaced only when the same girls and women did not fulfill their duties in the kitchen. He posited:

Imagine Odysseus returning to Ithaca after twenty years of wandering and finding a note, instead of Penelope: ‘Dear Odi, I could not wait for you anymore because I had an appointment with the pedicurist. I put your soup in the oven, the steak is in the fridge (do not forget the salt!) and borrow some bread from the neighbor (Do not pout, I informed her). Honey, be good and wash the dishes so they do not get crusty. You do not have to wait for me awake because I will be late. Your Pepica.’<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Tenžera, “Ideologija naše cure,” 16. “(...) pljuska patrijarhalnom šonji.”

<sup>763</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>764</sup> Veselko Tenžera, “Instantijada zbunjenog Odija” (“Confused Odi’s Instant Life”), *Start* 216 (May 4, 1977): 17. Zamislite Odiseja koji se, nakon dvadeset godina lutanja, vraća na Itaku i tamo, umjesto Penelope, zatječe cedulju: ‘Dragi Odi, nisam te više mogla čekati jer sam imala zakazan posjet pedikeru. Juhicu sam ti spremila u reonu, šnicla

Confronted with such a cruel twist of fate, the author continues, it is obvious that Odysseus would kill even more people than he did. In other words, Tenžera did not mind women adding an activity such as stripping to their interests, but he was bothered by women who stopped performing “traditional female functions,” because, he concludes, “neither is a woman oppressed if she cooks lunch, nor is a man modern if he heats up cans.”<sup>765</sup> In this journalist’s interpretation, gender equality went awry because, while women exercised their newly acquired freedoms, they failed to meet the *other* set of their men’s needs. Tenžera confirmed that he could support the Yugoslav New Woman ideal presented by *Žena u borbi*, as long as it came in the form of the exemplary housewife whose work or other activities did not interfere with the traditionally established male privilege of depending on of his wife as an additional child.

As indicated, from time to time, *Start* published articles espousing different, opposing beliefs. And although they were not the only ones, the *neofeminists* were recognized as the group that most vociferously and persistently tried to explain what the sexual revolution and second-wave feminism looked like from women’s perspective. The previously mentioned Slavenka Drakulić, Sanja Iveković, and Lydia Sklevicky belong to this group of young feminists. And Vesna Kesić, who was also involved in the very first *neofeminist* initiatives in Yugoslavia and became a permanent member of the *Start*’s editorial board in the beginning of 1978, exemplified how their work in this magazine looked like:

... but I think it should be remembered on this occasion that the ‘sexist’ *Start* was the first high-circulation domestic newspaper to publish a ‘feminist’ text penned by a ‘domestic feminist’ in its pages. I must also modestly note that it was my article ‘Comrade Woman,’ about our first international feminist conference in Belgrade in October 1978.<sup>766</sup>

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je u frižideru (nemoj zaboraviti posoliti!), a kruheko posudi od susjede. (Ne duri se, ja sam je obavijestila). Dragi, budi dobar i operi posuđe da se ne uhvati korica. Ne moraš me čekati budan jer ću doći kasno. Tvoja Pepica.”

<sup>765</sup> Ibid, 17-18. “(...) tradicionalne ženske funkcije. (...) Niti je žena potlačena ako skuha ručak, niti je muškarac moderan ako podgrijava konzerve.”

<sup>766</sup> Kesić, “Sead Saračević,” 19. “(...) ali mislim da se ovom prilikom treba podsjetiti da je ‘seksistički’ *Start* bio prvi visokotiražni domaći list koji je na svojim stranicama objavio i jedan ‘feministički’ tekst iz pera ‘domaće

Thus wrote Kesić on the occasion of *Start*'s five hundredth issue in 1988. More than twenty years later, her recollections of the same period were less subject to self-censorship. In an interview with Zsófia Lóránd she stated candidly: “After the *Drug-ca* conference, I wrote an article about it and gave it to the editors. They were mad. They asked me, what is this now, what (sic) are you going to publish this bullshit. All these women, they were just out for a good f\*\*\*.”<sup>767</sup>

While *Start*'s editor-in-chief struggled to understand both the sexual revolution and second-wave feminism in the domestic setting,<sup>768</sup> the women who worked in the newsroom tried to explain both. Despite the proclaimed importance of the sexual revolution, the first concrete analysis of the phenomenon, focusing on theretofore largely overlooked figure of Alexandra Kollontai, was authored by Gordana Cerjan, another *neofeminist* activist. In the article, the author describes Kollontai's life and work and uses it to give a better interpretation of the more wholesome sexual revolution founded on the radical transformation of all interpersonal relationships, and to address the contemporary sexual revolution, especially its variant available in the (printed) mass media.

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feministkinje'. Moram također neskromno primijetiti da je to bio moj tekst 'Drug-ca žena', o prvom našem međunarodnom feminističkom skupu u Beogradu u listopadu 1978.”

Before Kesić wrote the article about the 1978 conference, a sketch of second-wave feminism as a phenomenon confined to the US published in *Start* was authored by Miho Maroević, another man who has fallen into the trap of evaluating women – in this case, Gloria Steinem – according to their appearance: “Feminizam na slijepom kolosjeku seksizma” (“Feminism on the Blind Track of Sexism”), *Start* 137 (April 24, 1974): 13-15. And the first feminist account, in my view, was written by Mirjana Gračan, another young journalist who honed her craft in the magazine for girls *Tina*. She proved to be much more capable in considering the importance of the new wave of feminism in comparison to the activities and achievements of the previous generation without having to invoke the appearance of the protagonists: “Frakcionaštvo nagriza feminizam” (“Factionalism Erodes Feminism”), *Start* 158 (February 12, 1975): 13-15.

<sup>767</sup> Lorand, “Learning the Feminist Language,” 213.

<sup>768</sup> And, yet, the situation in the media has even gotten worse over time. Among the lowest points (before the dissolution of Yugoslavia) was the public debate about the second-wave feminism initiated by a slandering article in *Studentski list*. In the next three months (November and December 1982 and January 1983), a number of individuals published their opinions, among others, in another student newspaper, *Polet*, in the daily newspapers *Vjesnik* and *Politika*, in the women's magazine *Svijet* and the informative magazine *Danas*. The debate has become so visceral, a significant number of commentators have stated extremely conservative and even misogynistic views, that even the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Croatia (SSRNH) organized a discussion in order to analyze the matter and propose a solution.

Izbor iz štampe, February 23, 1983, box 7, folder 1.3 Predsjedništvo (1972. – 1983.), HR-HDA-1234-KDAŽH (1945. – 1990.), Croatian State Archive, Zagreb, Croatia (pp. 1-20).

Cerjan is in direct opposition to the earlier mentioned Igor Mandić's text about the importance of the naked female body for the development of the visual arts (which *Start* published two weeks before).<sup>769</sup> No, the author asserts, the liberalization of the availability of naked women's bodies is not the same as the sexual revolution, but only "a drastic example of the inhuman manipulation of the sexual nature of man."<sup>770</sup>

Both the choice of the author as well as her choice of historical figure are telling. Cerjan was a young sociology student who, with a few colleagues organized the *Žena i društvo* (*Woman and Society*) group, which was responsible for introducing second-wave Western feminism into the Yugoslav context. That is, when they entrusted women to write about feminism, the *Start*'s editorial board did not turn to established representatives of the women's organization. Of course, it is possible that the *afežejke* were simply unwilling to cooperate with a magazine of such dubious profile, but it seems more likely that the magazine's editors chose to turn to the women of the younger generation despite mutual disagreements. In addition, as noted in the introduction, the work of Alexandra Kollontai, particularly the part on love and sexual relations, was controversial at the time of the publication of the translation of *New Morality and the Working Class* (1922). It inspired, above all, a more casual attitude toward sex among some young communists and communist activists during the 1920s and 1930s, and was rejected outright by some others.<sup>771</sup>

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<sup>769</sup> Mandić, "Erotika je masovna pojava," 16-19.

<sup>770</sup> Gordana Cerjan, "Seks – kao čaša vode" ("Sex – Like a Glass of Water"), *Start* 126 (November 21, 1973): 25.

<sup>771</sup> Recalling his studies in Zagreb during the 1930s, Istrian communist and antifascist Dušan Diminić wrote: "I also protested against the so-called 'free love' which at that time, especially in Zagreb, began to spread among Marxists as an expression of their alleged emancipation from the so-called bourgeois love. In fact, this theory consisted in emphasizing the excessive importance of sexual relations for society and in propaganda for free sexual relations among young people, so some purported Marxists considered these experiences to be the only content of their communist activity. Dušan Diminić, *Sjećanja: Život za ideju* (*Memories: Life for an Idea*) (Adamić: Labin – Pula – Rijeka, 2005), 40. "Bunio sam se i protiv tzv. 'slobodne ljubavi' koja se u to vrijeme, naročito u Zagrebu, počela širiti među marksistima kao izraz njihove tobožnje emancipacije od tzv. buržoaske ljubavi. Zapravo se ta teorija sastojala u isticanju pretjeranog značaja seksualnih odnosa za društvo i propagandi za slobodnim seksualnim odnosima među mladima, pa su poneki nazovi marksisti ta izživljavanja smatrali jedinim sadržajem svoje komunističke aktivnosti."

While I cannot state with certainty that Kollontai's name did not appear anywhere in the Yugoslav media after the end of the war, it is certain that she was not mentioned in the materials I have reviewed so far, especially in the women's magazines that espoused more orthodox political views of Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg. Slovenian feminist and literary translator Mojca Dobnikar, who belonged to the *neofeminist* network, translated several of Kollontai's works into Slovenian for the Library of Revolutionary Theory (*Knjižnica revolucionarne teorije*, KRT) only in 1982. Dobnikar recently noted that Kollontai's work represented an important discovery for her and her colleagues. Precisely Kollontai's reflections on the possibility of erotic friendship among communists and the new morality based on it were of particular interest to the young Yugoslav feminists.<sup>772</sup>

In this context, Vesna Kesić's article entitled "History Has a Male Gender" ("Povijest je muškog roda") is equally relevant. In it the author gives an overview of the history of feminism with special emphasis on the first and second waves in Europe and the United States. Tracing the development chronologically, Kesić especially accentuates the importance of the international Socialist Women's Movement active at the turn of the twentieth century, and also singles out Alexandra Kollontai as the most consequential representative. Immediately thereafter, she writes about Germaine Greer as a representative of the second-wave feminism, with whom she concludes the article.<sup>773</sup> Greer, the author writes, explained that "the old feminists were imprisoned and their spirit survived the years when women were gradually allowed to take up certain professions and were given parliamentary freedoms, but they failed to use them."<sup>774</sup> It is not surprising, then, that

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<sup>772</sup> Mojca Dobnikar, "Dolga feministična osemdeseta" ("The Long Feminist Eighties"), filmed on April 13, 2021 for *Levica*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, video, 50:19, <https://www.levica.si/mojca-dobnikar-dolga-feministicna-osemdeseta/>.

<sup>773</sup> Vesna Kesić, "Povijest je muškog roda" ("History Has a Male Gender"), *Start* 264 (March 7, 1979): 43.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid. "(...) da su stare feministkinje odsjedile po zatvorima, a njihov je duh preživio godine u kojima su žene postupno pripuštane određenim profesijama i parlamentarnim slobodama, ali su propustile da ih iskoriste."

for the author nothing relevant to the development of feminism happened in the period between the 1920s and the 1960s.

However, this does not mean that she did not mention the AFŽ. Interestingly, Kesić did not list it as a feminist organization. Instead, in introducing the topic of the article, she cited several examples in which the activity of women was interpreted negatively. There, she included the AFŽ as the organization commonly known as directing coffee drinking and practicing idle chatter.<sup>775</sup> In other words, in a series of examples of feminist growth and development, AFŽ is mentioned as an organization that looked foolish. Lydia Sklevicky expressed the same opinion, only in a clearer vocabulary. The term *afežejka*, she explains in her master's thesis (defended in 1984), was “a somewhat peculiar relic – the type of activist that seems inappropriate and a bit ridiculous.”<sup>776</sup> While Sklevicky has devoted a significant portion of her scholarly career to explaining how and why this women's organization betrayed the project of women's emancipation in Croatia, Kesić offered no further explanation or justification for women's communism-inspired activism in her article.<sup>777</sup> Importantly, in *Start*, no further mentions of this organization appeared.

Cerjan's and Kesić's articles attest that the new generation of Yugoslav feminists did not renounce their socialist heritage. However, if they referred to it, they used the work of women active during the First World War and the interwar period. Moreover, they drew most inspiration

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<sup>775</sup> Ibid, 40.

Specifically, Kesić writes about the ironic use of the abbreviation AFŽ. It is pronounced as *afeže*, and when the letter 'k' is put in front, it sounds like *kafeže* (*kafa* means coffee), relating to the beverage ostensibly accompanying all casual socializing, especially women's.

<sup>776</sup> Lydia Sklevicky, *Žene i moć: Povijesna geneza jednog interesa (Women and Power: Historical Genesis of an Interest)* (Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2020), 58. “(...) ponešto osebnog relikta – tipa aktivistkinje koji se čini neumjesnim, i pomalo smiješnim.”

<sup>777</sup> The question remains would these women at that point in time considered the broader perspective as a fresh exploratory possibility if they had known that not only Yugoslav AFŽ was the target of that type of mockery. For instance, the women from the Polish women's organization experienced the same kind of disparagement. See more in: Basia A. Nowak, “Where Do You Think I Learned How to Style My Own Hair?” Gender and Everyday Lives of Women Activists in Poland's League of Women,” in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, eds. Shana Penn and Jill Massino (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 45-58.

from and wrote most about the work of contemporary women from the United States and Western Europe, both in *Start* and in other magazines in which they published their work. As a byproduct, the representation of the NOB was at the mercy of people who had difficulty imagining women outside the kitchens and beds. When one of the *neofeminists*, many times mentioned Lydia Sklevicky, tackled the issue of women's participation in the NOB through her research on the Antifascist Front of Women in Croatia, she judged the *afežejke* by the standards of second-wave feminism. As I noted in the introduction and in the chapter on the magazine *Žena u borbi*, some of her conclusions have been challenged in recent years by another generation of young feminists.<sup>778</sup> In the meantime, even some of her colleagues have reconsidered some of their assumptions. The feminist artist Sanja Iveković referred to the women's contribution to the People's Liberation Struggle. Moreover, although she did not go as far, Slavenka Drakulić recently accepted the view that the emancipation of women existed in socialist Yugoslavia, even if only "from above."<sup>779</sup>

## 6.5 Concluding Thoughts

As I was reading *Start*, my thoughts kept returning to the *Playboy* magazine. Following the changes in the editorial staff and the subsequent transformation of the magazine's concept beginning in 1973, *Start* applied the cocktail of serious journalism and nude women that made *Playboy* so successful. If Hugh Hefner and his editors promoted a "nonthreatening, sexy and fun women's liberation,"<sup>780</sup> Sead Saračević, Mario Bošnjak and their journalists made sure that *Start's* take on that matter was at least equally sexy, even more clement and pleasant. But it was not really that fun, at least not for women.

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<sup>778</sup> By far the most systematic and clear is Chiara Bonfiglioli's article "Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era," published in *Aspasia*.

<sup>779</sup> Slavenka Drakulić, *Cafe Europa Revisited: How to Survive Post-Communism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2021).

<sup>780</sup> Pitzulo, "The Battle in Every Man's Bed," 268.

Time and again, *Start*'s journalists proudly, even arrogantly, affirmed their support for the conservative values and beliefs that the second-wave feminists in the West as well as in Yugoslavia (and many scholars since then who have been inspired by the broad interests of second-wave feminism) have identified as at the root of women's inequality. With a bit of demagoguery, I find, *Start*'s journalists sexualized existing gender inequality and, as Myra MacDonald explains in her famous book, considered women as ornaments that could be either appealing or unappealing to men. Therefore, they consistently portrayed women as primarily shaped by their sexual desirability.<sup>781</sup> On the contrary, by interpreting male bodies through the prism of some (usually athletic) performance or other empowering activity, which included waging war, *Start*'s journalists reaffirmed the dominance of heterosexual masculinity.

The analysis of the representations of war, particularly the People's Liberation Struggle, showed that the ideological framework founded on the war victories and the related achievements in *Start* were faltering in the face of accumulating social change. This is particularly evident in the example of gender equality and its emissary, the Yugoslav New Woman. In *Start*'s translation, the New Woman did not even seem to recognize emancipatory values of the revolutionary woman fighter (*žena borac*). Instead, the magazine journalists substantially relied on the gender paradigm established (at least) in the interwar period. Despite the multitude of available templates that permeated Yugoslav media in all its forms – some of which were presented in previous chapters – and despite *Start*'s reputation of a quality magazine – this prestige still lingers, adding to my disappointment – the editorial board's interest in women's participation in the NOB was slipshod at best. Saračević's editorial, which appeared on the occasion of the publication of the interview with Jara Ribnikar included an apology to the readership because they will read about such an

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<sup>781</sup> Myra MacDonald, "Refashioning the Body," in *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 192-197.

outdated topic in “*Start*’s Interview,”<sup>782</sup> and this move reveals the most in this respect: the *partizanka* – even if still an active social actor – was considered nothing more than yesterday’s news.

Even the achievements these women fought for seemed to have the same status for the *Start*’s men. Some of the mentioned authors, especially Igor Mandić and Veselko Tenžera, distorted the idea of women’s emancipation. Others, like Aleksa Vojinović, avoided writing about women who had fought in the People’s Liberation Struggle. And the women who published periodically for this magazine or became a regular part of the editorial staff in the second half of the 1970s showed no interest in local history, including the domestic achievements of the struggle for women’s rights. Instead, the *neofeminists* were as taken with Germaine Greer, Shere Hite, Erica Yong, and many other American and Western European young women who were looking for new ways out of patriarchy, just as countless boys and girls across Yugoslavia were smitten with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. They presented them in a manner that was often considered provocative and sometimes infuriating by their male colleagues as well as the magazine’s readers.

In sum, while *Start* regularly published content about the People’s Liberation Struggle, articles about its female participants, especially articles that were useful to my research, were rare. When the magazine did publish articles about women who had participated in the NOB, their portrayals were most often bland. Despite significant changes in the composition of the editorial board and the occasional engagements of respected professors, and other public figures, the analysis suggests that *Start*’s men espoused the same core beliefs throughout the researched period (from 1969 until 1980). In the *Start*’s pages, therefore, it was fairly easy for women to prove their emancipation by posing for erotic photographs. It was more difficult for them to get into *Start*’s pages through

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<sup>782</sup> Sead Saračević, “Među nama” (“Between Us”), *Start* 252 (September 20, 1978): 11.

cultural, scientific, or political work. When it came to the ultimate female advance into male territory, participation in the military, there seemed to be only one way – by posing for *Playboy*. Namely, *Start* in 1980 published an article about American women soldiers whose nude photographs were published in that magazine. Some of these photos, as could be expected, were reproduced in *Start*. In his commentary on this, the author once again repeated the ultimate fear expressed by many of his colleagues (some of whom I mention in the previous chapters, particularly chapter 3): “By posing for *Playboy*, the girls proved that militarization does not destroy femininity at all.”<sup>783</sup> Moreover, although the author provided an overview of some wars of the twentieth century in which women participated, he has not thought of including Yugoslav *partizanke* in it.<sup>784</sup> It is, therefore, fair to conclude that *Start* in actuality all but banished women from its narrative of the partisan struggle and confidently – manly – contributed to creating the conditions for their oblivion.

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<sup>783</sup> Miroslav Lazanski: “Vojska: Kad žene marširaju” (“Military: When Women March”), *Start* 305 (October 10, 1980): 48-51, quote on 49. “Snimajući se za ‘Playboy,’ djevojke su dokazale da militarizacija nimalo ne uništava ženstvenost.”

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

## Concluding Remarks

Inspired by some foundational texts dealing with the cultural memory of the People's Liberation Struggle (NOB), I set out to find all the ways in which Yugoslav memory-makers working as journalists dealt with and portrayed the ultimate expression of the women's contribution to any war effort including the NOB – the woman soldier, the *partizanka*. The participation of many, especially young, women in the partisan army in combat roles was seen as the highest possible achievement. As Mary E. Reed noted, “partisan life was magnetic.”<sup>785</sup> Yet the figure of the *partizanka* was deeply controversial. My research has identified the dynamics that thwarted the possibility of including the *partizanka* in the narrative of women's wartime exploits on the same level as other female figures like the woman fighter (*žena borac*) and the *mater dolorosa*, both embodied in the figure of the partisan mother (*majka partizanka*). For different reasons, both the women and the men who worked on the production of war-related content had difficulties with the representation of the *partizanke* and did not consider them as participants in the creation of the Yugoslav New Woman.

Commemoration of the war in the context of socialist Yugoslavia encompassed a variety of actors who sometimes adopted and sometimes adapted, as well as customized and personalized the memory of the war. This research project was not about setting the standards for an adequate representation of the various female subjectivities of the war period, particularly the *partizanka*, or about detecting the failed versions of them. Rather, it aimed at determining some specific motifs and images of women's wartime undertakings and how they were incorporated into the narrative of the emergence of the Yugoslav New Woman. It also allowed insight into synchronously existing

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<sup>785</sup> Reed, “Croatian Women in the Yugoslav Partisan Resistance, 112.

different perspectives, by shifting focus between different groups of memory makers, and over time, from the immediate postwar period to the beginning of the 1980s. For this reason, I have singled out a small sample of actors: four journalistic communities that found themselves, not necessarily intentionally, in the position of memory makers. They all adopted to some extent the officially established frameworks for understanding the past, but they also negotiated them, embedded their own beliefs in them, and thereby enriched Yugoslav cultural memory of the NOB.

We should keep in mind, as already Hallwachs argued in his seminal work, that memory is constructed and always created in relation to a specific set of circumstances of the present and related interests.<sup>786</sup> The memory work of the actors who are in the focus of this dissertation, (alongside beliefs about the women's and men's roles in Yugoslav society) also reflected changing political and social conditions during the three and a half decades of the history of socialist Yugoslavia. In general, the increasing independence of the republics led to a diversification of commemorative practices; within this process, the republican/ethnic narratives competed with the general/Yugoslav ones. In addition, the expansion of freedom of expression in the media allowed journalists to engage – for instance, through acceptance, adjustment, questioning, or challenging – with war-related matters or to marginalize those they did not want to or could not write about.

This dissertation focused primarily on the printed press. I examined four high-circulation popular magazines whose concepts illustrate well the specific circumstances in which each of them emerged and the openings offered by the political and social situation of the time. Most importantly, the analysis shows how certain groups of women and men used the transpiring options to engage with the Yugoslav cultural and historical heritage. Considering the Victorian ideal of femininity, referred to as “Angel in the House” and the phenomenon of the emancipated New Woman, which

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<sup>786</sup> Halwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

coexisted at the end of the nineteenth century, Rita Felski argues that they may represent two faces of the same woman: “Rather than imagining women’s history as a progressive sequence of stages toward ever greater emancipation, we need to recognize that the past remains active in the present and that older ideals of femininity may continue to exercise a powerful pull.”<sup>787</sup> The Yugoslav case study illustrates the same incongruity, and its popular culture clearly reflected it. Although on a declarative level everyone supported the socialist emancipatory project, each of the publications analyzed evidences a different approach to the pre-socialist tradition and the ensuing modernity. Analogously, each of the magazines reflects differently the memories of the women who participated in the NOB. More importantly, I found that none of the editorial teams in their process of making sense of and coming to terms with the past, placed the *partizanka*, the expression of advancement into the paramount bastion of masculinity, in the position of the dominant figure in the developing memory culture. Instead, each conceptualizes the marginalization of the *partizanke* in a different way, casting both the wartime past and the socialist present in a different light.

The research began with the examination of the women’s magazine *Žena u borbi*, which appeared already in 1943. I named the narrative developed by the members of the editorial board, who were as a rule high-ranking members of the women’s organization, a canon. The reason for this designation is the role that the women’s organization was to play in socialist Yugoslavia that was reflected in their commemorative practices. Namely, they were to become the authority that would, among other things, direct and control the aspect of memory culture that dealt with women’s participation in the People’s Liberation Struggle. Realizing that no one was addressing this issue in the very beginning of the 1950s, the AFŽ’s leadership seriously engaged with it in their magazine(s) and through numerous projects. A participant of the NOB, on whom the *afežejke*

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<sup>787</sup> Rita Felski, “Afterword,” in *Women’s Experience of Modernity, 1875-1945*, eds. Ann L. Ardis and Leslie W. Lewis (The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 294.

focused in their work was *žena borac*, most often embodied by the peasant woman. Without the large-scale socialization of women's work, the Yugoslav partisan army could not fight all the enemies it was fighting. Thus, the women organized by the AFŽ provided indispensable assistance to the partisan army and at the same time found the strength for their own education and willingness to participate in the political changes that were taking place. *Žena borac* became the foundation of the Yugoslav New Woman as envisioned by the *afežejke*. At the same time, the *afežejke* marginalized the figure of the *partizanka*. The reason for this, in my opinion, is the fact that the *partizanke* did not fit into the emancipatory project the leaders of the women's organization were working on. For them, the NOB was but a step on the women's emancipatory path to socialist bliss. For *partizanke*, women who fought as men and with men, there was no place in the narrative about women's work, women's progress, and women's values in war. Unable to include them meaningfully in their story, the *afežejke* left them on the very edge of their narrative of the war.

Similar to their Polish counterparts described by Natalia Jarska, the *afežejke* belonged to the second circle of the Yugoslav political elite.<sup>788</sup> Just as the Polish wartime revolutionaries were derisively named as the “aunts of the revolution,”<sup>789</sup> the Yugoslav women's organization was called the “ladies' society” (and more, as evidenced in the sixth chapter). The principal political interests of the *afežejke*, which were to grant women further rights, were habitually downplayed. Correspondingly, their projects aimed at including the politically conscious *žena borac* as a figure of the Yugoslav cultural memory of the NOB were marginalized. That is to say, the combination of the heterogeneous portrayal of female participants in the war with the persistent marginalization speaks not only of the ambivalence of how Yugoslav women who participated in the NOB should be remembered, but also of the lack of a presupposed regulation “from above.” Of the three popular

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<sup>788</sup> Jarska, “‘Old’ Women and ‘Old’ Revolution,” 129.

<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

magazines that are the focus of the following chapters, no editorial team accepted suggestions for a possible interpretation of the People's Liberation Struggle from a group of "ladies" of the women's organization. In addition, each of the three journalistic teams singled out in the dissertation developed new ways of commemoration of the NOB as well as new strategies for pushing out the *partizanka* to the margins of memory.

The magazine *Svijet* was founded in 1953, inspired by the Western European women's press and driven by a desire to introduce some beauty to the women's impoverished realities of the early 1950s. It was only after reconceptualization in the early 1960s that *Svijet* began to look like a part of the Yugoslav socio-political context. This included involvement into the creative processes dedicated to the commemoration of the NOB. At the same time, and despite the efforts of the communist activist women who edited *Žena u borbi*, the *Svijet*'s editorial staff did not merely adopt the vision of the New Woman cultivated by the *afežejke*. While the officials of the women's organization kept the core content of their commemorative practices constant over the decades, the *Svijet*'s team styled their vision of the New Woman in a way that better reflected the possibilities of socialist ideological and political upbringing following the tide of economic growth and opening to influences from the West. By limiting the war-related content and ignoring the figure of *žena borac* that the *afežejke* promoted, *Svijet*'s Yugoslav New Woman turned out exactly as Vida Tomšič had described her in the 1948 speech (mentioned at the beginning of chapter 4). It was understood that she was educated and employed, but also that she competently cared for her family and household and was interested in embodying the socialist ideal of femininity expressed through beauty, modesty, and grace, by following contemporary fashion trends.

Perhaps *Svijet*'s journalists designed their commemorative activities precisely with the multiple burdens of the Yugoslav New Woman in mind. Although they marked relevant events in (local) women's history, such as International Women's Day and the AFŽ's wartime conferences, I find

that its commemorations were conceived in the context of the possibilities of the socialist present, rather than with the aim of recalling its militant roots. Instead of the usual formal receptions, lectures, and often didactic texts about the past, *Svijet*'s editorial staff offered cultural events, and at times surprising and daring happenings, such as participating in a car race. That is, they facilitated for their readers to participate in the more pleasant side of Yugoslav socialism. After all, since the 1958 Party's conference, the availability of cultural and recreational content was considered a right of every individual in socialist society.<sup>790</sup>

Finally, *Svijet*'s section on women in war that stood out primarily because of its longevity, dealt with the topic of women in the world of espionage. It was obviously created under the influence of foreign trends, but it touched on the activities of girls and women who worked at the crossroads of the so-called liberated territories and territories under the influence of the Ustashas as couriers, informants, and illegal activists during the NOB. The dangers of such activities were described in a number of examples. There, the authors touched on a subject rarely mentioned and even less often adequately addressed in the popular media, the wartime sexualized violence against women. The presumably true, although genre-dependent narratives suggested that the girls and women who served as couriers, informants, and illegal activists have more often than not lost control of their own lives and bodily integrity. In the absence of documents that would elucidate the editorial decisions behind the publication of this section, and in addition to the general poverty of published topics related to the NOB in this magazine, I read these texts as cautionary tales warning that the NOB was not just a training ground for emancipation, but that it also harmed women differently than men. The couriers, informants, and illegal activists were not the *partizanke*, but the rigors of the tasks they performed places them on a par with women who fought in the army. Accordingly,

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<sup>790</sup> Igor Duda, "Uvod: od nazadnosti do svemira, od projekta do zbornika" ("Introduction: From Backwardness to Universe, From a Project to Anthology"), in *Stvaranje socijalističkoga čovjeka*, 6-7.

since their activities were presented as precarious, it is not surprising that the number of mentions of the *partizanke* in *Svijet* during almost thirty years can be counted on one's fingers.

In sum, in examining two women's magazines, I began with the same research questions because of their complementary nature. Although their output on the subject of the NOB differed considerably, the research confirmed that both were based on similar assumptions. Women's war experience was unquestionable for the women of both newsrooms, and both foregrounded it when publishing content about the People's Liberation Struggle. Women's emancipation was also a fact of life for them. A difference can only be seen in the fact that the *afežejke* explicitly linked emancipation in socialist Yugoslavia to (their own) war exploits, while the editorial board of *Svijet* focused on the characteristics of emancipation in the contemporary modernity. While *žena borac* played an important role in the *afežejke*'s interpretation of the Yugoslav emancipatory process, neither group considered that the *partizanke* influenced the appearance and role of the New Woman in Yugoslavia.

These two women's magazines, despite mutual differences, were significantly different from the exemplars of the printed press, which were not specifically intended for a female audience. In this dissertation, *Arena* and *Start* are considered as representatives of the press that, at least declaratively, were aimed at readers of both sexes. *Arena* was advertised as a family magazine and *Start* billed itself as a magazine for the educated urban elite, although it never shook off its initial reputation as a men's magazine. As such, they were predominantly edited by male journalists who engaged with the legacy of war and socialist modernity differently than their female colleagues. Judy El-Bushra, who studied the aftermath of the wars in Eritrea and Rwanda, concluded that "the ideological basis of sustaining traditional gender relations seems resistant to change even when its

outward manifestations are reordered.”<sup>791</sup> Similar to her findings, the dynamics observed in the Yugoslav public sphere testify to the existence of different strategies for coping with changes in the gender order. For instance, following the traditional matrix, editorial staffs of both magazines represented the male experience of war as the norm. The analysis of the two magazines suggests that women’s participation in the NOB and the related emergence of the figure of the New Woman were interpreted as ambiguous and questionable.

Moreover, the journalists of *Arena* and *Start* were influenced by contemporary journalistic trends intertwined with the wishes and preferences of their audiences. In this respect, *Arena* stands out as the magazine whose publication policy was based on cooperation with its audiences. What is more, the examination of the magazine’s content shows that it was because of the readers’ interventions that women became visible actors in narratives originally woven of male struggle, male skill and courage, male agreement and victory. Due to the interest of the audience, the section “*Arena* Searches for Your Loved Ones” (“*Arena traži vaše najmilije*”) developed into one of the magazine’s most popular interactive endeavors of the 1960s. Thanks to the desire of former detainees of the prison in Perugia (Italy) to meet, this aspect of women’s war experience became part of *Arena*’s repertoire. And owing to the work done by the sister of *partizanka* Ljubica Gerovac, her story was told in this magazine. Importantly, all these points also speak of memory practices at the grassroots level. Neither *Arena*’s journalists nor its audience showed interest in the emancipatory aspect of the figure of the *žena borac*, but in within her buried idea of *mater dolorosa*. In addition, while they did not exclude the *partizanka*, she was represented as an almost folkloric anomaly.

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<sup>791</sup> Judy El-Bushra, “Fused in Combat: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict,” *Development in Practice* 13, no. 2/3 (May 2003): 261.

Accordingly, a figure that could be characterized as the New Woman did not appear at all in the *Arena*'s narrative of the war. *Arena* journalists came closest to this ideal during the 1970s when they wrote about women as an active part of the Yugoslav workforce. Although *Žena u borbi* published articles about working women continuously since the end of the war, and although *Svijet* returned to this subject regularly since the early 1960s, *Arena*'s journalists took nothing from their work. Instead, the published articles revealed concern with the extent to which paid employment endangered femininity. The conceptual tools they used to consider femininity were the same as in the mid-1940s, when their war colleagues, I quote Ivan Šibl once again, worried about the “wonderful qualities that make a woman a woman.”<sup>792</sup> All in all, the study finds that the *partizanka* was an acceptable expression of women's activity because of its perceived connection to folklore and, no less important, its rarity. In contrast, the magazine's overall opus focusing on women led me to conclude that for the editorial staff, but also *Arena*'s readers, the New Woman was a controversial phenomenon that they did not understand and, hence, could not adequately include into their considerations of war or peace.

Unlike *Arena*, which largely skirted the issue of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia, *Start*'s journalists took a confident and sovereign position in this regard. They suggested that Yugoslav emancipatory practices should be expanded by recognizing female nudity in the mass media as an emancipatory statement. This attitude was intended to bring the *Start*'s men in opposition to traditional values. At the same time, they found some of the actual achievements of socialist modernity, such as women's gainful employment, debatable. For example, according to Veselko Tenžera, the activities that prevented women from adequately caring for their husbands and forced husbands to heat up ready-made meals (but not to cook!?) were not particularly good examples of

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<sup>792</sup> Šibl, *Partizanski dnevnik*, 271.

emancipation. For *Start*'s reporters, it was desirable for women to remain women in a very essential sense of femininity and emancipation to follow suit.

Such, in my opinion, intentional distortion of the notion of emancipation effectively separated *Start*'s consideration from the context of the NOB and the New Woman as envisioned in Marxist ideology and the socialist practice of the AFŽ's leadership. Although *Start* published regularly about the NOB and other wars of the twentieth century, women were usually excluded from such content. I suggest that single-minded peasant women who supported the entire partisan enterprise and still managed to fight for women's rights, as exemplified in the figure of *žena borac* or in the more traditional examples of *mater dolorosa*, lacked the appeal to become the object of attention of the *Start*'s journalists. And the *partizanke*, or even partisan doctors and illegal activists, oftentimes (represented as) young and beautiful, were difficult to portray without using masculine characteristics, that is, they contradicted the type of femininity the *Start*'s editorial team tended to insist upon. All in all, the easiest choice was to marginalize the issue of women's participation in the war as much as possible. Although this magazine was considered a magazine for the urban elite and the best that Yugoslav journalism had to offer, it was negligent and deliberately obtuse in terms of content focusing on women.

The changing approach to the commemoration of the NOB and the related image of the New Woman due to formative social and political experience of women of a younger generation proved to be a relevant reference point. Each of the four research chapters features at least one highly educated woman who was born after the end of the war and published in the analyzed magazines during the 1970s. For analytical purposes, they can be divided into two groups. The first group are the women who started their journalistic careers in the editorial board of the girls' magazine *Tina*, the only such magazine published in socialist Yugoslavia (1971-1976). I mentioned three by name: Zoja Padovan was employed by *Svijet* following *Tina*'s discontinuation, Davorka Grenac became

a freelancer for *Arena* (among others), and Mirjana Gračan wrote several articles for *Start* already while she was a member of *Tina*'s newsroom. The second group are the so-called *neofeminists*, who lived and worked primarily in the capitals of Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, and cooperated through joint sections and projects. They began publishing in the Yugoslav press in the mid-1970s, and their works can be found, for instance, in *Žena u borbi* and *Start*.

These young women contributed content that distinguished them within the framework of the four researched magazines. Zoja Padovan was the author of a ten-part research project about the streets named after the heroines of the NOB for *Svijet*. In it, she illustrated the institutional practices of marginalization of prominent female participants of the NOB. Her research also showed that most of the women mentioned were nevertheless commemorated at the local level through the activities of educational institutions (even though they did not appear in the curriculum). Davorka Grenac published a two-part report on women at NASA for *Arena*. Her two-part piece shows that, while the *Arena*'s men did not stray far from the traditional thinking about women that existed already during the war, young female journalists like her cultivated the emancipatory values reflected in the figure of the Yugoslav New Woman and continued to disseminate them through their work. In similar vein, Mirjana Gračan was the first to introduce the feminist movement developing in the United States to *Start*'s audiences. Notably, second-wave feminism in particular took center stage and was the amplifier for the work of women such as Lydia Sklevicky, whose texts can be found in *Žena u borbi*,<sup>793</sup> as well as Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić, who became an integral part of *Start*'s editorial staff in the late 1970s. They used the discoveries of Western feminism to write about the Yugoslav context, often angering their colleagues and readers.

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<sup>793</sup> It was not visible in my analysis of *Žena u borbi*, but in the second half of the 1970s a number of *neofeminists* alongside Lydia Sklevicky (Rada Iveković, Žarana Papić, Nada Ler Sofronić and others) published their works in this (at that time) journal.

The education, outspokenness and competence of all these women enabled them to publish in a wide range of magazines and to prove that the discourses on the achievements of women's emancipation, which were part of the official state policy, were successful for some Yugoslav women. In other words, although they most often criticized – and in some places outright challenged – the achievements of the Yugoslav emancipation project, they were at the same time those Yugoslav New Women for whom their (metaphorical, but often real) mothers were fighting.<sup>794</sup> The brief research project by Padovan mentioned above as well as the several times touched upon historical research by Lydia Sklevicky, indicate that they were aware of women's wartime undertakings, even though most of these members of the younger generation did not engage with them or disproved of their legacy. The work made by *neofeminist* artist Sanja Iveković in the early 2000s (mentioned in chapter 6) shows that reconsideration is always possible.

Another thing, in this case largely unbeknownst to me, slipped into the research. As described in detail, I discovered that the experience of the *partizanke* were most often marginalized due to the journalists' interpretations of appropriate practicing of gender roles during the NOB and, more generally, about women's emancipation since then. On the other hand, I came across some examples of the female partisan experiences, which attracted my attention. That is, the texts where I found different approach and understanding of women's soldiering experience were memoirs and conversations in which former *partizanke* had the opportunity to give voice to the ceaselessly marginalized figure. I am referring to the excerpt from Mitra Mitrović's memoir, published in 1953 in AFŽ's republican women's magazines, and the conversations with four former *partizanke*, including the political commissar of the First Women's Partisan Unit, Narandža Končar, published in *Žena u borbi* in 1962. Then, as part of *Svijet*'s section "Women and Espionage" ("Žene i

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<sup>794</sup> Una Blagojević recently wrote about educational trajectories of some among them: "The *Praxis* Journal and Women Intellectuals," *Contradictions* 4, no. 2 (2020): 47-69.

špijunaža”), conversations with illegal activists Anita Drobnić-Mrđenović and Marija Vuković offered reflections on the war that were not replicated even once in the nearly ten years of the section’s existence. The same magazine also published interviews with former *partizanke* Anka Kovilić and Manda Stržić in 1975. *Arena* published interviews with partisan doctors Franja Bidovec-Bojč and Cila Albahari and with *skojevka* and trained saboteur Lucija Petković in the early 1970s. Finally, *Start* contributed to this small body of sources through the work of its external associates by publishing interviews with *partizanka* Jara Ribnikar and partisan doctor Saša Božović in the very end of 1970s.

These contributions reminded me of Anna Krylova’s observation that in the Soviet Union after the end of the war, “*the alternative story* of the Soviet war effort that featured female combatants as sharing combat with men and thinking about themselves without the use of conventional gender oppositions was not discontinued.” She explains that such narratives were not usually found in the printed press, but in women veterans’ autobiographies, fiction, and memoirs.<sup>795</sup> Indeed, such works, written and published by the Yugoslav *partizanke* are usually the place where interpretations of women’s wartime experiences resist erasure, simplification, or instrumentalization. However, the echo of such a way of remembering of the war and wartime experiences became visible in the printed press when editors decided to publish some part of the memoirs or when they decided to talk to these women. Although they constitute only a fraction of all published materials on the topic of the NOB, the *partizanke*’s wartime experiences were not merely an alternative, but constituted a part of the memory of the war available in the Yugoslav popular printed press. As a rule, these interviews differ significantly from other content, as the former *partizanke* were not primarily preoccupied with the appropriateness of their wartime

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<sup>795</sup> Krylova, “Neither Erased nor Remembered,” 97 (my emphasis).

femininity. Their recollections offered a glimpse into the world where equality indeed seemed to be in the *četa*, to paraphrase Milka Kufrin, *skojevka* and one of the first *partizanke* in Kordun (Croatia).<sup>796</sup> After all, this extreme experience, for both women and men, can best be understood, explained, and appreciated by those who lived it. The memory work undertaken by the *partizanke* in their autobiographies and memoirs is also a body of work that awaits more thorough expert scholarly analysis.

In the conclusion of my master's thesis, which focuses on the representation of the NOB in *Žena u borbi* in the first eight postwar years, I pointed to the one-sided interpretation of the war as a limiting factor in understanding Yugoslav cultural memory (though, admittedly, not in such elegant terms).<sup>797</sup> With the present research project, I wanted to explore this perceived shortcoming. In addition, I also wanted to contribute to the field of memory studies of socialist Yugoslavia from a gendered perspective. In recent years, scholars have introduced innovative approaches and new topics to the growing field of memory studies. Likewise, much has been written in recent years about the women's everyday lives in state socialist states, about women as part of the labor force, about women's organizations, and, most recently, their international cooperation. Women in the memory culture, as well as women's memory, especially with regards to the People's Liberation Struggle, found itself in the gap between these areas of research and received relatively little scholarly interest.

Given the diversity of the Yugoslav media landscape, I think I have only highlighted some of the existing trends. I discovered some things about the *partizanke*'s afterlife, but certainly not as much as I thought I would at the beginning of this project. The mentioned research idea (which

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<sup>796</sup> Kufrin was the very first woman who served as a commissar of the *četa* (small military unit of 80 to 100 soldiers). Jancar-Webster, *Women and Revolution*, 99.

<sup>797</sup> Iva Jelušić, "Making a Partisan: Founding Narratives on the Participation of Women in the People's Liberation Struggle in Yugoslavia" (MA thesis, Central European University, 2015), 90-91.

once again focuses on the figure of the *partizanke*) is only one in a series of questions that could be explored. I hope, therefore, that this dissertation will inspire further research in the Yugoslav printed press and other media, focusing on other republics or even cover the entire country, and discuss all the ways in which both women's and men's contributions to the NOB have been memorialized.

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