

THE LOST
REVOLUTION



AFZ

WOMEN'S ANTIFASCIST FRONT

BETWEEN MYTH AND FORGETTING

EDITED BY:
ANDREJA DUGANDŽIĆ
TIJANA OKIĆ

Impressum

THE LOST REVOLUTION – WOMEN'S ANTIFASCIST FRONT
BETWEEN MYTH AND FORGETTING

Original title: IZGUBLJENA REVOLUCIJA: AFŽ IZMEĐU MITA I ZABORAVA (2016)

Year of publishing: 2018

Published by: Association for Culture and Art CRVENA
www.crvena.ba
www.afzarhiv.org

On behalf of the publisher: Danijela Dugandžić

Edited by: Andreja Dugandžić and Tijana Okić

Illustrations edited by: Adela Jušić

Illustrations by: Adela Jušić, Aleksandra Nina Knežević, Kasja Jerlagić, Sunita Fišić,
Nardina Zubanović

Translated by: Emin Eminagić, Mirza Purić and Tijana Okić

Proofreading by: John Heath

Visual identity, Graphic Design, Layout by: Leila Čmajčanin



Translation is made possible by the grant from Mediterranean Women's Fund. We would like to thank them for their continued and generous support of the Online archive of Antifascist struggle of women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia

Free copy not for commercial use.

THE LOST
REVOLUTION



AFZ

WOMEN'S ANTIFASCIST FRONT

BETWEEN MYTH AND FORGETTING

Chiara Bonfiglioli

Ajla Demiragić

Andreja Dugandžić

Adela Jušić

Danijela Majstorović

Boriša Mraović

Tijana Okić

SARAJEVO, 2018

Contents

4	Introduction
10	About the Illustrations
16	Chiara Bonfiglioli AFŽ activists' biographies: an intersectional reading of women's agency
42	Nardina Zubanović Illustrations
50	Ajla Demiragić Roses are red, violets are blue, me luvly teacher, i believe in you: The role and the position of the People's (progressive) teacher in the crucial years for the construction of a new socialist society in Bosnia and Herzegovina
82	Aleksandra Nina Knežević Illustrations
88	Danijela Majstorović The creation of the new Yugoslav woman – emancipatory elements of media discourse from the end of World War II
121	Kasja Jerlagić Illustrations
126	Boriša Mraović Heroism of Labor The Women's Antifascist Front and the Socialist Dispositive 1945–1953
152	Sunita Fišić Illustrations
156	Tijana Okić From Revolutionary to Productive Subject: An Alternative History of the Women's Antifascist Front
200	Adela Jušić Illustrations
206	Biografije
210	Glossary, Acronyms and Periodicals

INTRODUCTION
A WORD FROM
THE EDITORS



ANDREJA
DUGANDŽIĆ

TIJANA
OKIĆ

The volume we present to the public is one of the results of many years of work by the comrades of the Crvena Arts and Culture Association on the digitisation of documents to create an Archive of the Antifascist Struggle of the Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia (<http://afzarhiv.org>). The idea of the archive was born in 2010, when we started to research the history of the Women's Antifascist Front (AFŽ), under the aegis of the project, "What has our struggle given us?". Realising that the history of the largest women's organisation in our part of the world was by and large unknown to us, we partly turned our efforts to make the archive public into an exploration of a facet of history which has always been, and remains, relegated to the margins. The archive, in its present form, is limited to the materials collected in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but our idea from the very outset was to create a Yugoslav archive – an idea based on the realisation that only collective work can open new areas of research and enrich knowledge. In this sense, the archive is ours, it belongs to no one in particular, and therefore it belongs to everyone. It is in process, becoming, and this is precisely what manifests its basic purpose: to publicly and critically think our own past. We would like to extend an open invitation to everyone to contribute materials, editorial work, and otherwise, and get involved in the collective project of making a more comprehensive archive. At present, the archive comprises a part of the archives of the AFŽ, books and periodicals, stenographic notes, minutes and reports, as well as other materials, and it also contains works of oral history, interviews with surviving members of the AFŽ, a history which Yugoslav historiography failed to record.

Archives are usually seen as repositories of objective truth, or spaces of authenticity where history speaks to us. The archive also legitimates professional history as a scientific discipline, concerned with the past "as it really happened" (Ranke), and founded on the critical scrutiny of sources (Quellenkritik). For Derrida, there is no 'authentic' beginning of any archive, since any beginning, is always already determined by political or scientific authority.¹ All archives constitute assemblages of spoken or written words, images and documents, precisely as 'historical sources'. Access to these sources is restricted, while the state employs scribes or clerks to furnish narratives of state order, legitimacy and continuity. It is not simply that an act of pre-selection precedes the formation of the archive; often it is the wholesale removal of 'irrelevant' materials, as in the 'rubbish dumps' of discarded ancient papyri, that upon subsequent discovery forms the basis of archival knowledge of the past.

¹ Derrida, Jacques *Mal d'Archive* Paris: Editions Galilée, 2008

The origins of this particular archive are no different. The decision to establish a central Yugoslav AFŽ archive, and archives in each of the federal republics, can be found in the archive itself. On 20 February 1950, the Central Committee of the Women's Antifascist Front (CK AFŽ) took the decision the decision to establish a commission for the archiving of documents.² Republic committees were instructed to start working on "the collection and sorting of historical materials from the history of the progressive Yugoslav women's movement – dating from before, during and after the war." The available archival material is incomplete and covers the period from 1942 to 1951, that is to say, from the founding of the AFŽ to two years before its dissolution. The material covering the period of the People's Liberation Struggle (henceforth NOB) is limited, while the immediate aftermath of the war is covered much more extensively. After its dissolution, the archives of the AFŽ formed part of the Institute for the History of the Worker's Movement, and were eventually taken over by the Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In spite of several attempts, we have not been able to ascertain if the material was lost or destroyed during the siege of Sarajevo. What we do know is that a process of archiving took place, in the sense of a committal to the archives, of filing and forgetting, whereby the archive was consigned, in Marx's words, to the "gnawing criticism of mice".

The filing away was indeed thorough. Thus, as early as 1955, with the publication of the first volume of "The Women of Croatia in NOB", the AFŽ was replaced by a new subject – "women in NOB". This marked the beginning of the practice of writing the history of women, focusing on their role in the liberation war by republic or region, but not on the antifascist movement of Yugoslav women, i.e. on the AFŽ.³ Similar publications pertaining to other republics only appeared several decades later.⁴ "The Women of Serbia in NOB" was published on the thirtieth anniversary of victory over fascism, whilst the Bosnian-Herzegovinian edition appeared in 1977 and was not related to any anniversary. Unlike the Serbian and Croatian editions, it was edited not by the former leaders of the AFŽ, but by (male) employees of the History Institute, Sarajevo (successor to the Institute for the History of the Workers Movement).

² Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevo, Dopis Centralnog odbora AFŽ-a Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH od 3. marta 1950. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 317/50, 1950. str. 2.

³ The thirtieth anniversary of the AFŽ finally saw the publication of the synthesis, "The struggle of Yugoslav women in the war"; see Dušanka Kovačević, Dana Begić, et al. *Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije* [Belgrade: Leksikografski zavod Sveznanje, 1972].

⁴ The Montenegrin edition appeared in 1969, the Slovenian in 1970, the Macedonian in 1976.

No comprehensive history of the mass antifascist movement of Yugoslav women was ever written in socialist Yugoslavia. The history of the AFŽ was by and large dissolved into the history of the NOB, into that of women *tout court*, and finally into the figure of the female *partizanka*. The AFŽ thus died two deaths. The first when it was dissolved in 1953, the second in the official memory of the past, where it remained as a spectral trace, the presence of an absence (Derrida), giving way to a new foundational state narrative, which omitted even the People's Liberation Movement (NOP).⁵

All historical and scientific enquiry is led by a logic of question and answer, of problematics and the questions that they generate. Such enquiry is itself historically and politically determined. This volume draws on studies of the work and activity of the AFŽ in particular and women in Yugoslavia in general by Lydia Sklevicky, Svetlana Slapšak, Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, Gordana Stojaković and Ivana Pantelić. Its aim is to open a new discussion and to keep this important heritage alive. Reappropriation of this heritage is an important step in arming a new liberation movement in the struggle against patriarchal, fascist and capitalist tyranny.

What is the significance of an archive that once formed part of the archives of a people's state, which then disintegrated into separate nation states? What does the archive mean to us today? Thinking one's own history is the basic precondition and imperative of any critical relation towards the past which pretends to understand the past as something more than and different to its mere remembrance. Those who remember the past by monumentalising it are condemned to forget it and learn nothing from it, while those who remember by forgetting are doomed to repeat it. By rejecting the history of the AFŽ, we risk marginalising the whole of its experience and failing to draw the lessons it may offer us today.

1989 represents a turning point and a line of demarcation – democracy begins only where communism ends. This view comes to characterise the entire recent past of this region, in the course of which a "state of immaturity", in the literal, Kantian sense, has been imposed upon the post-Yugoslav countries and the rest

⁵ Hoare, Marko Attila, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

of Eastern Europe. Boris Buden has described this state of immaturity as a “democracy in nappies”⁶ which requires tutors who, being adult and knowing the rules of proper behaviour, maintain the political *status quo* by discharging the ideological function of masters of *permissible* speech and behaviour. The rise of historical revisionism after 1989 deprived us of the ability to understand by ourselves the turning points of our own history. Thus the struggle of the Yugoslav communists, the men and women who fought in the Partisan army, as well as the *afeževke* (members of the AFŽ), is today in part - the “totalitarian” part - inscribed in an history of defeat, and hence of totalitarianism, whilst an unchained historical revisionism is recorded in the victorious annals, the mythological state-building narratives of new, free, democratic and progressive societies.

What appears as a remainder in this picture is antifascism. Antifascism is one of the few legacies of the Yugoslav past that one is “allowed” to discuss publicly. At the same time, it has been completely emptied of its political charge and content, separated from the actual, lived historical experience, depoliticised and individualised, reduced to the experience of victory over fascism, with the obligatory erasure of Yugoslavism and communism as its constitutive elements, without which there would have been no victory, either in Yugoslavia or in Europe.

What, then, might it mean to return to the heritage of the AFŽ seventy-odd years later, after another bloody war which has left Bosnia and Herzegovina ravaged, plundered and divided? This volume is an attempt to consider this question. It does not pretend to offer final and definite answers, and its intent is ostensibly quite simple - to initiate and open a debate, which is why it does not present an ideologically one-sided representation of the AFŽ. Instead, going beyond the simple patriarchy thesis and the revisionist concept of totalitarianism, it seeks to contribute to the collective knowledge of a movement which still inspires awe. We might say, paraphrasing Nanni Balestrini and Primo Moroni, that this volume was conceived as a *research tool*, a compass to help us navigate through the labyrinth of archive materials, but also as an attempt to illuminate the contradictions inherent in the archive, contradictions which are the outcome of historic events but at the same time their *driving force*.⁷

⁶ Buden, Boris, *Zona prelaska. O kraju postkomunizma*. Belgrade: Fabrika knjiga, 2012.

⁷ In the introduction to their collection of primary sources on the revolutionary movements in Italy after 1968, Nanni Balestrini and Primo Moroni discuss precisely the problem of presenting archives and oral history, and how one might conceivably represent the complexity of research that is simultaneously within and without the period covered by the book. See: *L'orda d'oro 1968-1977. La grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creativa, politica ed esistenziale* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2015).

In their different ways, the essays seek to examine on the one hand, revolutionary ruptures and, on the other, the contradictions of a moment which marked a historical turning point for women in our region. They question the episodes of a struggle that we must constantly start and accomplish anew. The experience of victory and defeat, past and present, both the AFŽ's and our own, is a reminder that our new and future struggles and fronts, the battles yet to be won, stand open before us and testify to the creation of the possible even where everything seemed impossible. The revolution took place. Let's start another one!

Tijana Okić & Andreja Dugandžić

ABOUT THE
ILLUSTRATIONS



ADELA
JUŠIĆ

“To render women visible is the first step towards questioning the customary relations between the general and the particular in the hierarchy of relevance in the writing of history.”¹

Not only is there precious little material on the political activities of women, what little we have has been neglected and is on the verge of disappearing completely. One of the ways of trying to save history from oblivion is to engage with it through art.

The art produced in the Yugoslav lands in the second half of the last century is full of painterly and sculptural depictions of scenes from World War II. The scenes predominately depict soldiers in decisive battles. In addition to the depictions celebrating the triumph over fascism, we often see artistic compositions celebrating the socialist man rebuilding the war-torn country. Depictions of men predominate; women, although often present on the canvass or relief, are rarely protagonists. When it comes to People’s Liberation Struggle (NOB) monuments, they rarely depict women exclusively. Rarer still are those depicting female historical figures. Women are usually personifications of liberty, victory, revolution, etc. “Women are depicted as bearers of tradition even as they fight shoulder to shoulder with their brothers in arms and colleagues, gun or hoe in hand, child tugging at their skirts.”²

Due to the lack of depictions of the heroic struggle and labour of women who contributed to the defence and development of socialist Yugoslavia, we reached for the stories available in the online Archive of the Antifascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, the documents which testify to the political activities of women in this period. For this volume we decided to produce illustrations which would deal with the key topics of the Archive: women in the struggle, labour heroism, resistance, etc. Together with artists Sunita Fišić, Nardina Zubanović, Aleksandra Nina Knežević and Kasja Jerlagić we selected documents, articles and stories we thought we should try to immortalise in art.

As an artist and feminist, I have examined the topic of the participation of women in the NOB and Women’s Antifascist Front in many works produced over the last five years. The topics I engage with in my work as an artist include the represen-

¹ Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996, p.14.

² Knežević, Saša. ‘Sjećanje i mjesta sjećanja. Rodna perspektiva spomenika iz NOB-a’, p. 9. [WAF Archive, accessed on 9 December 2016, available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/355>].

tation of women in the NOB, women's narratives and oral histories, as well as other "sub-topics" related to women's history in this important period. As I did in some of my previous works, here, too, I am dealing with the topic of the woman in the struggle. For one of my illustrations I used a map from the book *Sutjeska 1943-73*³ as the background. It's a facsimile of a sketch outlining the operations of German, Italian and Bulgarian troops in the canyons or the rivers Piva and Sutjeska. On the map showing the operations of the enemy forces I repeatedly show several female silhouettes in a combat position, prone with a gun.

Another contribution of mine, in a textual form, describes a woman in combat, a soldier, prone, her gun pointing away from the enemy. She is not shooting, but sleeping. Also, she is not an abstract figure, like in the abovementioned illustration, but an actual historical personage – Mitra Mitrović, a prominent anti-fascist and participant in the NOB, an important political figure in the post-war period. Instead of showing her sleeping likeness, I wrote down her frontline memories: "Cannons roaring, rifles cracking, chaos all around me, and I'm sleepy... And so I get some sleep, freshen up, and press on. That's how I survived."

The reproductive role of the woman is another topic I deal with. In one of the illustrations, I foreground a realistically drawn woman with three children, whilst in the background we see the great steel construction of the freshly inaugurated bridge over the river Sava and the sign which reads "FIVE-YEAR PLAN – A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR PEOPLES". I am connecting the Five-Year Plan with the post-war policies affecting mothers and women. I am trying to point out that economic progress and the future of the country in general were closely connected with the issue of reproduction.

Sunita Fišić's work was inspired by a document from the Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina – a memorandum by the county committee of the AFŽ Bijeljina about the heroic work of women of this county engaged in the construction of agricultural co-operative halls and lists the example of 56-year-old Blerta Hodžić, who, "[has been] working with the brick layers from day one, nimbly climbing up and down the scaffolding, fetching brick and mortar."⁴ The artist uses the ink wash technique to repeat the same female silhouette working on the construction of the co-operative hall. This highlights the physical strength

³ Belgrade: Monos, 1973.

⁴ Central Committee of the WAF BiH, 'Sreski odbor AFŽa u Bijeljini Glavnom odboru AFŽa – o radu žena Janje na izgradnji zadružnih domova', Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Box 4, 1370/2, 1948.

and endurance of the woman working heroically on the scaffold and carrying heavy construction material, which is usually considered a man's job.

Kasja Jerlagić also illustrates the heroism of labour. Her allegorical drawing with five figures carrying a large, heavy log, represents rural women who built the country stone by stone, log by log. The artist here is not inspired by only one specific document, article or testimony; instead, she is trying to illustrate the truth: in the post-war years, women put in an enormous number of (wo)man hours of all kinds of voluntary work, from tillage to the construction of roads and bridges, shoulder to shoulder with men, playing a key role in the building of a new Yugoslavia.

Another subject Kasja Jerlagić deals with, in a very realistic pencil drawing, is resistance. Her illustration on this topic was inspired by Olga Marasović's article titled "Stanodavka jedne ilegalke" (A Resistance Fighter's Landlady). Olga describes the courage which the Bašagić sisters showed when the police came to their house: "Talking to the police, the Bašagić sisters displayed the experience of seasoned resisters, members of the People's Liberation Movement (NOP)."⁵ Thanks to their fearlessness, the police did not spot anything suspicious, and left their home in a short while. In the illustration we see two police officers at the house door, opened by one of the sisters who gesticulates with her whole body communicating that there is nothing hidden in the house and that all their suspicions are baseless. The work points out the boldness of the rural women who played important roles in a dangerous time and selflessly risked their lives, and the lives of the members of their households, in order to help the resistance movement forces which at the time operated underground, preparing to form military fronts and liberate the country from the fascist occupiers.

Nardina Zubanović's expressive illustrations were inspired by an event which took place in the city of Mostar early in December 1941. The main protagonists of a mass protest called "Operation Viktorija" were Mostar women who gathered *en masse* at Teka, the city market, to protest against famine and privation, demanding to be given turnip of a variety known as Viktorija. Incensed, they went to the mayor's home to call him to account and demand food. The protest continued and turned into looting and vandalising of the purchasing offices, after which the women uprooted vegetables from the farmers' gardens in order to

⁵ Jasmina Musabegović et al., *Žene Bosne i Hercegovine u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi 1941-1945. godine: sjećanja učesnika*. Sarajevo: History Institute, 1977. Available from: WAF Archive, accessed on 9 December 2016, <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/105>, see: Olga Marasović, Stanodavka jedne ilegalke, p. 9.

conceal the fact that the protest was in fact a deeply political action against the occupiers and collaborationists. The protest was finally broken up by the police.

Aleksandra Nina Knežević uses the digital drawing technique to treat the topic of International Women's Day, or more specifically the official slogans used to celebrate this holiday. The slogans greet the women of China and express support to their struggle against fascism, celebrates the unity of the democratic women's movement, affirm the role of people's teachers in the upbringing of the new socialist man, as well as the role of rural women in the improvement of the economy, consolidation of the existing co-operatives and the establishment of new ones. The slogans tell us something about what women in the post-war Yugoslavia were preoccupied with on their holiday.

Through the illustrations featured in this volume, we deal with the Archive's key topics: the heroism of labour, resistance, women in the struggle, personal narratives and memories. This gesture of post-factum illustration of never before illustrated events, performed through the subjective experience of the artists who are trying to fill the blank pages of the female side of history, is above all a token of gratitude to all the heroines known and unknown.

The stories we recount here are stories of an era, of a struggle, of a heroic age. Thus, these illustrations do not only reflect the spirit of the age or depict specific events, they do so in the present moment, from today's perspective, not only as an historical depiction of the past, but as a contemporary political act.

Adela Jušić

AFŽ ACTIVISTS'
BIOGRAPHIES: AN
INTERSECTIONAL
READING OF
WOMEN'S AGENCY



CHIARA
BONFIGLIOLI

Introduction

The experience of entering an archive is always an affective experience, an encounter. As Antoinette Burton notes, "history is not merely a project of fact-retrieval (...) but also a set of complex processes of selection, interpretation, and even creative invention – processes set in motion by, among other things, one's personal encounter with the archive, the history of the archive itself, and the pressure of the contemporary moment on one's reading of what is to be found there".¹ The process of history writing is always mediated by our assumptions, partiality and position. Faced with the vast array of material contained in the Women's Antifascist Front (henceforth AFŽ) archive in Sarajevo, I chose to start from the published memoirs, photographs and oral history interviews, in order to establish a possible connection through personal stories, visual objects and sound, which could complement the research on digitalized documents – mainly organizational papers testifying the widespread, capillary work of the AFŽ after WW2. The richness of this archive allows for an affective connection with the stories of the women who were part of the AFŽ, while being aware that the encounter with their voices – or the voices of those close to them - has much to do with our own selection, interpretation and invention, or, in other words, with our own *location*.²

A figure that emerges prominently is the one of Vahida Maglajlić, the only Bosnian Muslim national heroine, who is remembered by her friends, family and comrades as an extraordinarily generous, lively and free-spirited comrade, a portrait confirmed by her beautiful short-haired photographs circulating on the web. The interview with her youngest brother Alija, in particular, made clear how much of her personality contributed to her activist choices, and also how much she did and how much more she could have done for other women, if she didn't lose her life in the Resistance.³ It is very uncanny that we can still talk to those who lived Second World War. But we are not going to be able to talk to the people who witnessed the war and the Resistance indefinitely. And so I think that this archive is particularly significant, as a project that is still in the making and that is not closed, as a living archive of one of the most significant

¹ Antoinette M. Burton, *Archive stories: facts, fictions, and the writing of history*. Durham, nc: Duke University Press, 2005, 7-8.

² Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Nomadic Theory as an Epistemology for Transnational Feminist History" in Iris van der Tuin and Bolette Blagaard, eds., *The Subject of Rosi Braidotti* London. Bloomsbury, 2014.

³ Andreja Duganžić i Adela Jušić, "Intervju sa Alijom Maglajlićem," *Archive of antifascist struggle of women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia*, accessed on October 6th, 2016., <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/16>

grassroots antifascist Resistance movements in Europe during World War Two, whose legacy has been increasingly marginalized and made invisible with the end of socialist Yugoslavia and with the growing hegemony of revisionist nationalist historiographies.

What is also not close – and will never be – is the issue of women's emancipation, and of feminism, through time and space, and in the post-Yugoslav region more specifically. Through the archive we can find snippets and glimpses of women's agency and of their long-lasting quest for social justice, freedom and equality during and after World War Two, as in the case of women from the Sreski odbor in Teslić, who asked in 1947 to be included in the reports of the AFŽ magazine *Nova Žena* published in Sarajevo, after repeatedly sending articles. They also specifically demanded more knitting models and advice on childcare, because that's what local women felt was most useful.⁴ Within the dominant interpretative framework of women's history during socialism, this report, as well as others, could be read solely as an immediate proof of patriarchal consciousness, and as socialism's failure to undermine prescribed gender roles.⁵ As I argue

⁴ "In our opinion, at least one of the issues to be dealt with in the section dedicated to our village should relate to the interests of our comrades living in villages: housekeeping, generally on women mothers and children, washing, cooking possibilities feasible for them. From the conversation with our comrades we found out it would be desirable that the *Nova Žena* publishes various sewing patterns and other things useful for it. [...] Comrades like when the children are being written about. One mother says: impatiently I look forward to each new *Nova Žena* because there are very useful advices about children. Following the advice from *Nova Žena*, I liberated my children from *gilt*, so harmful for their gentle organism. Our comrades wonder, how i sit that much is written on other counties, but nothing on Teslić, nothing, as if we were sleeping. We sent few articles for the *New Žena*, but untill today nothing about us came out" Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor Teslić Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – povjerenstvo za štampu', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, f. 1178/1, 1947.

⁵ In anthropological terms, patriarchy defines societies based on the domination of men over women and children, in terms of authority, property and labour. Historically, families in the Balkans are patrilineal and based on male authority over the extended household. In more recent times, the term patriarchy has been strongly re-associated to Balkan societies after the emergence of new nationalist regimes and after the gendered violence occurred during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Socialist regimes in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, in turn, have often been defined by local feminist scholars as a form of "state patriarchy", in which the state exercised control over women's productive labour, while being unable to transform men's control over women's bodies and labour in the private sphere (see notably the works of Žarana Papić and of Mihaela Miroiu on Romania). Such critiques, however, were also often read by Western scholars through pre-existing Cold War stereotypes, and gradually crystallized in what Kristen Ghodsee and Kateřina Lišková define as "common knowledge", namely a range of simplified, dominant claims that are reinstated almost ritually when dealing with women in state socialism and state socialist women's organizations in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Such claims had the result of denying the possibility of women's agency under the regime

in this essay, however, it is important to look beyond, and to resist reading the complexity of women's lives in the WW2 and immediate post-war era through simplified narratives about the success or failure of socialist emancipation, or through the presence of absence of authentic agency.⁶

Through the archive, we can, instead, understand in depth the ambivalence and complexity of that time. It is hard to imagine today the degree of poverty and exploitation experienced by most women across Yugoslavia in the mid-1940s, and how powerful and appealing must have been the newly emerging gendered imaginaries, which associated women's emancipation to peace, freedom from foreign occupation, literacy, work, and a clean, healthy home. As AFŽ activists quickly learned, however, centuries-old patriarchy could not be easily undone, and was intimately tied to women's deprivation, such as in the case of a Muslim woman in Visoko in 1947, who said she would have been happy to leave the full face-veil, but had nothing else to wear for the time being.⁷ Similar details can give a measure of women's lives and struggles in that time, and help us to understand the contradictions of women's history in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a history that has been less prominent within the literature on women's and feminist movements in the post-Yugoslav space, which has itself been in the making during the last two decades.⁸ By engaging with the AFŽ archive, we get

of allegedly homogeneous state patriarchy. See Kristen Ghodsee and Kateřina Lišková, "Bumbling Idiots or Evil Masterminds? Challenging Cold War Stereotypes about Women, Sexuality and State Socialism", *Filozofija i društvo XXVIII* (3), 2016, 489-503.

⁶ On this discussion about the (im)possibility of women's agency under state socialism, see Nanette Funk, "A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women's Organizations, Women's Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 344-360. Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 248-252. Francisca De Haan, et. al. (2016), "Forum: Ten Years After, Communism and Feminism Revisited", *Aspasia*, 10.

⁷ "In relation to taking off the veil the situation in our county is not exactly perfect. There are comrades who took it off and those who want to do it, but cannot for now, since they have nothing to wear. They do not have money to buy it immediately, but they will try to get something. They are saying that they want to look with their own eyes" Republican Committee of the AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor AFŽ Visoko Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – mjesečni izvještaj za oktobar i novembar', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, 1290/1, 1947. Similar cases of women bringing up the lack of other garments are mentioned for other locations, which makes us wonder if women found class-based reasons to avoid the changes, seen that the opposition to such measures was also strong among women themselves, see later in this essay.

⁸ Fabio Giomi, "Introduction" in Aida Spahić et al. *Women Documented. Women and Public Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20th century*. Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Center, 2014. Gorana Mlinarević and Lamija Kosović (2011) *Women's Movements and Gender Studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Aspasia*, Vol. 5, p. 128-38.

to know the complex, fragmented and uneven history of women's engagement, and we encounter women who were often the bravest of that generation, or simply those who happened to find themselves in a certain intolerable situation, and tried to do something about social injustice, the persecution of others, and their own survival. Our engagement with their engagement is a way to counter the invisibility of the antifascist legacy, and of its impact on women's lives.⁹

In this article, I am reading the experience of the AFŽ through the lenses of intersectionality, that is, through a feminist research methodology that considers gender relations in intersection with other relevant factors of social differentiation such as class, geographical location, ethnicity, age, nationality and sexual orientation.¹⁰ I analyse women's biographical differences within the organization, and the ways in which the AFŽ functioned in fact as a bridge between women of different geographical locations, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, classes and political experiences, promoting new forms of solidarity and new life opportunities against patriarchal oppression, but also reproducing new hierarchies and forms of control over prescribed women's roles, for instance in the case of veiled Muslim women. Throughout the article, on the basis of different material (archives, oral history interviews, and published sources), I consider how women's individual stories were tied to the collective framework of gendered "modernity" and "backwardness" promoted by the organization, and how differences among women had a role in the articulation of AFŽ practices dedicated to the construction of modern and emancipated femininities after 1945.

The hierarchical difference between a minority of urban, educated, politicized AFŽ leaders and the peasant and working class women who constituted the rank-and-file base of this organization is characteristic of wartime and post-war women's mass activism in Yugoslavia. Differences among women are also a key to understand the organization of AFŽ archives across the post-Yugoslav space. As Zagreb historian Lydia Sklevicky has shown in her seminal work, antifascist women's organizations were hierarchically structured, in a pyramidal way.¹¹ A fundamental distinction existed between the politicized women who

⁹ On the concept of engagement, see Adriana Zaharijević, *Pawning and Challenging in Concert: Engagement as a Field of Study*, *Filozofija i Društvo*, XXVII (2), 2016.

¹⁰ Texts on intersectionality are numerous, but for an introduction, see Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera Vivar and Linda Supik (eds.), *Framing intersectionality: debates on a multi-faceted concept in gender studies*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2011.

¹¹ Lydia Sklevicky, "Emancipated integration or integrated emancipation: the case of post-revolutionary Yugoslavia" In: Angerman, A., Binnema, G., Keunen, A., Poels, V. & Zirkzee, J. (eds.) *Current Issues in Women's History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

constituted the avant-garde of women's organizations (the "emancipated" or "enlightened") and the (peasant, working class or uneducated) "feminine masses". The organization itself was functioning through village or city committees composed of ordinary members, who would then elect delegates to the county and regional committees, which were in turn united under the republican and federal committees. Archival sources are reflecting such organization: next to the representative, *agit-prop* documents (programmatic statements, speeches given during mass meetings and public occasions, or the press), we find the more reflexive, internal debates, such as transcriptions of central committees and internal reports produced by the local and intermediate cadres of the organizations, who are reconstructing the conditions and problems of a specific area.¹² The local, republican and federal AFŽ cadres, therefore, were waging a battle against what they defined as "backward" conceptions of the position of women, encountering fierce resistance from men and party authorities at the local level, but also from women themselves, since very different femininities co-existed and conflicted in Yugoslavia during World War Two and in the immediate post-war period.¹³ In the next sections, I will explore a number of women's individual biographies, in relation to gendered imaginaries of tradition and modernity, and in relation to women's factors of social differentiation within the organization.

Women's agency between "progressiveness" and "backwardness"

Several biographical collections on the lives of female partisans and activists were published during the socialist era, strongly emphasizing women's bravery, party loyalty and sacrifice for the liberation of the country. In turn, the scholarly works published after 1989 generally dealt with women's experiences from a gendered perspective, on the basis of the new feminist paradigm of women's history. While U.S. historian Barbara Jancar-Webster interviewed former partisans for her monograph on women in the Yugoslav resistance, Zagreb scholar Lydia Sklevicky conducted in depth archival research on the AFŽ during World War Two and in the post-1945 era. The general interpretative framework of these work tends to emphasize communist party and state control over women's mobilizations, documenting in particular antifascist women's gradual loss

¹² On this, see also Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, Žene, Ratovi*, Zagreb: Ženska Infoteka, 1996.

¹³ Chiara Bonfiglioli (2014), Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia, *Aspasia, The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History*, vol. 8, pp. 1-25.

of autonomy during the consolidation of the socialist regime.¹⁴ The dissolution of the AFŽ in 1953 is read as the ultimate proof of such process.¹⁵ While feminist critiques of patriarchal structures during the socialist era are very valuable, the tendency to see women's interests as inevitably opposed to state and party interests has the result of undermining the subjective break in traditional gender roles represented by women's participation to the partisan struggle and by their activism within the AFŽ. This dominant narrative also tends to undermine and dismiss women's agency, especially when it comes to AFŽ leaders. Jancar-Webster writes, for instance, that:

"For a while, women communists experienced the power and responsibility that derived from creating and turning the AFZ into an effective service and procurement organization in the rear. When they were called to account and told to turn the organization into a communist-style mass organization, they did as they were told. The women who sacrificed their lives to defeat the invaders and protect their homes were in a very real sense *victims of the Party* that called them to its standard."¹⁶

In the rest of the passage, the author associates women's lack of autonomy in the AFŽ to women's powerlessness in socialist Yugoslavia, and to gender violence during the Yugoslav wars, framing Yugoslav women's lives in terms of constant victimization, from World War Two until the present. In her recent and thoroughly researched monograph, Jelena Batinić has similarly argued that partisan authorities skillfully managed to adapt their language to the daily needs of peasant and illiterate women, while at the same time considering women a reserve army in the antifascist mobilization, and while being unable to dispel traditional gender roles in combat units and in the organization of the mass resistance. Ultimately, her monograph does not challenge existing interpretations of women's

¹⁴ Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* Denver Colo: Arden Press, 1998. See also from the same author, "Women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement" in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.) *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans. Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, Žene, Ratovi*. See also from the same author "Emancipated integration or integrated emancipation: the case of post-revolutionary Yugoslavia" in A. Angerman, G. Binnema, A. Keunen, V. Poels and J. Zirkzee, eds. *Current Issues in Women's History*, London and New York, Routledge 1989.

¹⁵ For a critical discussion of this narrative, see 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*", Master thesis, Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest, 2014.

¹⁶ Jancar-Webster, Barbara "Women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement", 85. Emphasis added.

participation to the Resistance and of women's activism in the AFŽ.¹⁷ As a result of such interpretations, AFŽ militants' biographies, agency and subjective processes of politicization remain under-researched, notably when it comes to leaders and intermediate cadres, who were invested with leadership tasks during World War Two and in its aftermath. Lydia Sklevicky, for instance, explicitly rejected oral history with former participants, who were still retaining public authority at that time: "Most of the women participants, usually the ones who were the high-ranking members of the organisation and still held considerable positions of power afterwards, are *eager to present their own experiences, visions and memories as the only true version*."¹⁸

While these interpretations have the merit of cautioning us against an excessively romantic image of the AFŽ experience, they also ultimately undermine women's roles as organizational and political leaders, and their different degrees of agency in promoting new gender imaginaries that attempted to establish a "universalizing" discourse of women's equality across classes, geographical locations and ethnicities. They also conceal that new possibilities for political engagement, education and labour emerged after World War Two, allowing masses of women to undertake different choices, and making possible an unprecedented generational break in women's self-determination as citizens and workers. As I have shown in my dissertation, new political discourses and practices of women's activism in the Cold War era had a transnational character and went beyond Cold War borders.¹⁹

Patriarchy, or, in other words, male domination within public structures and in the private sphere, certainly did not cease to exist despite the official socialist politics of women's emancipation. Discourses and practices of women's emancipation had uneven effects, primarily due to the pre-existing strong household patriarchal traditions and unevenness of women's lives across the region, but also due to the creation of new forms of social differentiation.²⁰ As different documentary movies have shown, beside the traditional and widespread double burden, women's experiences of gender (in)equality and social mobility during socialism were

¹⁷ Batinić, Jelena, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

¹⁸ Sklevicky, "Emancipated integration or integrated emancipation". Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks. Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945-1953)*, PhD dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2012.

²⁰ Rory Archer, Igor Duda, Igor and Paul Stubbs, eds., *Social inequalities and discontent in Yugoslav Socialism*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2016.

very much influenced by their biographical trajectory, and particularly by their education, class and family politics.²¹ Despite the ideal of Yugoslavia as a classless society, different forms of capital (political, social, economic and cultural) shaped the extent to which women could take advantage of the new possibilities opened to them in the field of education and labour. Moreover, a “wrong” political or religious background could compromise such advancements, while educated women in key positions risked incurring into harsh political repression at times of turmoil, as it happened after the Soviet-Yugoslav split.²²

What I am arguing here, therefore, is for a more nuanced assessment of women's participation within the AFŽ, one that takes into account intersecting factors of social differentiation and their constant fluidity, rather than assuming an immediate opposition between “women” and “the state”, particularly in a context of highly fragmented and decentralized state power. A biographical and intersectional approach also allows us to map the continuities between women's engagement within feminist organizations and cultural associations in the interwar period, and their leadership within the AFŽ during wartimes and in the post-war era, avoiding a paradigm of absolute discontinuity between «feminist» and «proletarian» women's movements.²³ Another element of continuity, is the interpretative framework of modernity vs. backwardness which read gender relations in rural areas, and particularly among Muslim communities, as an ultimate sign of backwardness and as a result of feudal Ottoman oppression. This framework existed already in the interwar era, and became particularly strong throughout the AFŽ existence in the post-war period.²⁴ Female activists, therefore, found themselves at the crossroads of these contradictions, between different conditions of political engagement, and between different injunctions related to modern vs. backward ways of living. Women's individual aspirations to education, work and marriage intersected with new forms of collective organising and new utopian gendered imaginaries. Poverty and social justice were also strong elements of motivation when it came to paths of engagement. In the rest of this section,

²¹ See notably Sanja Iveković's documentary *Borovi i jele* (2002), as well as Želimir Žilnik's *Jedna Žena, Jedan Vek* (2012) and, earlier, *Vera i Eržika* (1981).

²² Jambrešić-Kirin, Renata *Dom i svijet: o ženskoj kulturi pamćenja*. Zagreb: Centar za Ženske Studije, 2008.

²³ Emmert, Thomas A. “Ženski Pokret: The Feminist Movement in Serbia in the 1920s” in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.), *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans. Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

²⁴ Ibidem. See also Pamela Ballinger and Kristen Ghodsee, “Socialist Secularism. Religion, Modernity, and Muslim Women's Emancipation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, 1945-1991”, *Aspasia* 5 (2011): 6-27.

therefore, I will provide some biographical material that illustrate the complex political trajectories of female activists, particularly for women of Muslim background. I will also provide two examples in which education and class were an important gateway to political engagement, to illustrate how different factors of social differentiation played a role in women's mobilization. These examples are not meant to be representative of the whole situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina or in the rest of Yugoslavia, also since the available published and archival sources are privileging the perspectives of female leaders rather than the ones of rank-and-file members. Rather, through these case studies I aim to suggest that intersectional and biographical approaches might be productive for new fresh perspectives and interpretations of the AFŽ archival legacy.

When looking at AFŽ activists' aspirations towards personal freedom and equality, Vahida Maglajlić (1907-1943) deserves to be recalled²⁵. The eldest of ten siblings, born in Banja Luka in a respected Muslim family, whose father was the local *kadija*, or judge, Vahida expressed a strong, lively personality since her youth, when she was first a tomboy and then a highly skilled weaver and tailor. After finishing a girls' only vocational school, she dreamt of continuing her studies at the teachers' high school in Zagreb. Her father, however, did not allow her to study further, while her brothers were all studying and specializing in different professions. Her activist brother Efrem, however, started to bring her clandestine left-wing literature, which she would read avidly, secretly from her father, gradually becoming a communist activist. Due to her free-spirited attitude, Vahida quickly abandoned the full face-veil (*zar*) and even cut her hair short to the dismay of her parents, following the fashion of the times. She had a strong influence on other Muslim women and girls, whom she frequently encouraged to pursue an education, and with whom she organised a number of excursions through cultural associations such as *Gajret*. Shortly before the war, she became the secretary and then the president of Ženski Pokret, the women's association in which young left-wing women organized before engaging in clandestine partisan work. The *kadija* house in Banja Luka became a core site of antifascist activities under Ustasha occupation. Vahida Maglajlić, together with other notable comrades such as Dušanka Kovačević and Rada Vranješević, frequently used the full veil as a device for hiding and for secret meetings with other clandestine fighters. Vahida was eventually arrested and tortured, but managed

²⁵ See notably Mila Beoković, *Žene heroji*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1967. For other biographical accounts on Vahida Maglajlić, see Himka Maglajlić-Hadžihalilović, *Zapisi o Vahidi Maglajlić*. Banja Luka: Glas, 1973. and from the same author *Rođena za burno doba: životni put narodnog heroja Vahide Maglajlić*. Kragujevac: Dečje Novine, 1977.

to escape from the local prison into the liberated territory.²⁶ Before being killed by German troops in April 1943, Vahida was especially engaged with Muslim women in the area of Cazin, mobilizing them in support of the partisan movement. She was elected as part of the The Central Committee of the AFŽ during its first conference in the liberated area of Bosanski Petrovac in December 1942.

The position of Muslim women became particularly sensitive in the post-war era, also due to the complex political position of Muslim citizens during World War Two.²⁷ In the late 1940s, the AFŽ engaged in the campaign against the *zar* or *feredža*, a garment which covered face and body, equivalent to today's burqa, which culminated in several laws against the full face-veil across Yugoslavia in 1950 and 1951, at a time in which «the simultaneous harnessing of religion and liberation of women became a potent symbol of progress and modernity». ²⁸ The veil was strongly Orientalised and negatively associated with the historical legacy of the Ottoman empire.²⁹ A biography that fully showcases the ambivalences of women's emancipation in the post-war era is the one of Didara Dukazdjini, a seventeen-year-old ethnic Albanian girl raised in a wealthy family in the town of Prizren, who was told by her father that she had to abandon her *feredža/ferexhe*, the full Islamic veil that covered her head and face when she ventured outside the house.³⁰ The local communist authorities had invited the most important families in town to set the example, in order to establish the new socialist values in the traditional and underdeveloped region of Kosovo.

In 1947 a Party directive arrived, about convincing the most influential people in the city of the necessity for women to take off their veils (...) My father was present in the first of those meetings, and immediately made a decision: his daughter was going to take off the veil. Of course, he did not ask my opinion. My father's decision seemed to me the most horrible punishment. I was shocked, stunned, with no force to oppose him when he told me that he had given his word to the local Party committee. I cried all night. I was seventeen. I wanted to get married and I did not want to be different from other girls of my age.³¹

²⁶ Žene Heroji, 216-218.

²⁷ Hoare, Marko Attila, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History*. London: Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2013.

²⁸ Socialist Secularism, 12.

²⁹ For a discussion of Islamic veiling in Bosnia-Herzegovina in a long-term historical perspective, see Andrea Mesarič, "Wearing *Hijab* in Sarajevo. Dress Practices and the Islamic Revival in Post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina", *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 22(2), 2013: 12-34.

³⁰ Malešević, Miroslava, *Didara. Životna priča jedne Prizrenke*. Beograd: Srpski genealoški centar, 2004.

³¹ *Didara*, 39.

Didara was shocked by her father's decision. She thought she could not survive the shame of going out "naked" in the streets. Upon deciding that she had to take off the veil, her father also decided that she would enroll in a teacher training course. Three months later, Didara obtained employment as a teacher, since for the literacy campaign, literate workers who could teach in the different villages of Kosovo were in great demand. Two years later, at age nineteen, Didara fell in love with Toša, a Serbian communist militant, who proposed to her: "Communist from head to toe, he did not care at all about the difference in our national backgrounds".³² In order to marry the man she loved, and in order to avoid an arranged marriage with an Albanian man, Didara had to escape from her father's house, severing relations with her parents for several years to come. She later became a member of the AFŽ, and as "living example" of women's emancipation, she was sent to different villages to recruit other Albanian women for the activities of the Popular Front. While the case of Didara is exceptional, it is also an illustration of the extraordinary social and political transformations that took place in Yugoslavia in the immediate post-war period, and of the implications they had for women.

The AFŽ archives from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also from other former Yugoslav republics, indeed testifies of the strong interest for education and improvement in living standards expressed by women of different ethnicities, also as a result of the new opportunities available to them, and as a result of the efforts placed by the AFŽ in grassroots literacy programs, sanitation campaigns and attempts to reduce infant mortality in rural areas. At the same time, campaigns such as the one against the full veil were received with mixed feelings, since they subverted traditional communal ways of life. The fact that women's illiteracy was widespread in former Ottoman territories such as Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo, enhanced the connection between "backwardness, religion (especially, but not only, Islam) and female oppression" in the eyes of AFŽ leaders.³³ The laws against the veil, therefore, was often read by Muslim women themselves as specific threat against their community, reinforcing the separation between Muslim women and AFŽ activists of different ethnic origin. Similar perceptions, for instance, are documented for Muslim women in the Sandjak province of Serbia, who openly described their shame at having to abandon the veil in public.³⁴ In one of the few autobiographies from the region that was translated into English, Sandak-born scientist Munevera Hadžišehović (born 1933) recalls similarly

³² *Didara*, 47.

³³ Socialist secularism, 16.

³⁴ <http://sandzakpress.net/ispovijesti-sandzackih-zena-nakon-prisilnog-skidanja-zara-i-feredze-1951-godine>

feelings of discrimination and isolation as a result of her Muslim background, while also noting the support received by the socialist state, first as a promising student, then as a scientist employed by a public research institute in Belgrade, and finally as a single mother in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁵

These biographical accounts of upper class women of Muslim background provide a glimpse of the contradictions and ambivalences that were at stake in the rapid process of social modernization which affected women in socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 onwards, and also allow us to see that a variety of intersecting social factors were affecting individual life trajectories. Two other important factors that led to political engagement were education and class. Young students were highly represented in the antifascist movements, as highlighted by the biographies of other women heroes from Bosnia-Herzegovina, such as students Dragica Pravica (1919-1943) and Radojka Lakić (1917-1941), and student and clerk (for lack of possibility of becoming a teacher) Rada Vranješević (1914-1944). An interesting figure in this group is Sida Marjanovic (born 1921 in Bosanski Alexandrovac near Banja Luka), a former student of the gymnasium in Mostar and of the conservatory in Banja Luka, member of the communist youth and member of the resistance. She worked first as nurse, then as a political worker, and finally she was in charge of radio programs and publications until the Bosanski Petrovac conference of 1942. Afterwards, she was engaged in establishing AFŽ sections on the Kozara mountain in both liberated and occupied territory. During the struggle, she witnessed the death of Vahida Maglajlić and other comrades in April 1943 and gave birth to a daughter in October 1943.³⁶ After the war she was vice-president of the Republican Committee and the secretary of the AFŽ in the city of Banja Luka. She continued to work in the media and became the director of Bosnafilm, authoring several engaged documentaries and successively writing the script for the well-known partisan movie *The Battle of Neretva*, a battle she had herself witnessed.³⁷ She later became a diplomat specialized in cultural exchanges, and was the first president of the Association of Film-Makers of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁵ Hadžišehović, Munevera, *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003.

³⁶ Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Centralni odbor AFŽ-a Jugoslavija Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH – biografije narodnih odbornica, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 7, 2526/5, 1949. Her short biography is contained in a list of women activists in people's committees from December. I could only find the date of birth and a few indications on her life online. I am also collecting biographical information from the following books: Himka Maglajlić-Hadžihalilović, *Rodena za burno doba: životni put narodnog heroja Vahide Maglajlić*. Kragujevac: Decje Novine, 1977. Dragoje Lukić, *Rat i djeca Kozare*, Narodna Knjiga 1984.

³⁷ Sida Marjanović, *Na Neretvi...* Sarajevo: 1950.

Beside teachers and students, the antifascist movement was also joined by women who became politicized through working class circles and trade unions. Due to women's concentration in the garment sector, textile workers were especially active in the antifascist movement in the interwar period, and were at the head of several strikes.³⁸ A prominent figure in this sense was Judita Alargić (Novi Sad 1917), who got radicalized as a textile worker in the interwar period and was successively occupying important political tasks within the party and the AFŽ during and after the war. She was the only female representative from Vojvodina at the Bosanski Petrovac conference where she became part of the AFŽ Central Committee.³⁹ She continued to be active in socialist women's organizations, The Union of Women's Association of Yugoslavia (SŽD) and Conference for the Social Activities of Women of Yugoslavia (KDAŽ), after 1953. Despite her high political position, she kept being interested in the fate of female workers, as proven by her intervention during a 1954 SŽD leaders' meeting, in which she lamented that women in the garment industry were working in terrible conditions for miserable wages, with no one to take care of their children: *"in any other system these workers would strike, but this is a socialist country and people understand the situation. We are however indebted to help them as much as we can"*.⁴⁰

This last quote points at the contradictions of the socialist system when it came to addressing class and gender inequalities, something of which female activists were deeply aware. In the next section, I will consider how ethnic and class differences among women were tackled by the Women's Antifascist Front in the late 1940s and early 1950s, especially when dealing with women living in rural areas. I will also look at the differences between socialist ideals and social reality, namely at the tension between the idealised model of the new socialist woman (literate, working, politically active) and women's widespread illiteracy and political passivity. Again, I am interested here in an intersectional reading of women's agency, and at the ways in which differences in class, ethnicity and education shaped the discourses and practices of the AFŽ.

³⁸ Lagator Špiro and Čukić Milorad, *Partizanke Prve proleterske*. Beograd, Export-press, 1978. Kecman, Jovanka *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941*. Beograd: Narodna knjiga, 1978.

³⁹ See the biographical portraits collected by Gordana Stojaković http://www.zenskkestudije.org.rs/01_o_nama/gordana_stojakovic/AFZ/afz_licnosti.pdf

⁴⁰ "In any other system these workers would go on strike, but this is a socialist country and people understand the situation, and it is our duty to help them as much as one can." Beograd, Arhiv Jugoslavije, fund 354: kutija 1: Zapisnici i stenografske sa sastanaka upravnog odbora i sekretariata SZDJ i sa savetovanja SZDJ 1954-1961. Zapisnik 6.3.1954, p. X/3.

Socialist ideals and social reality: AFŽ activists' work on the ground

In the post-war era, antifascist female activists were still motivated by the strong militant *ethos* that emerged during the antifascist Resistance. The values of constant activism and self-sacrifice for the liberation of the country had led to the partisans' victory, also largely thanks to women's political participation. Mass mobilization, therefore, continued to be seen as a necessary tool to reconstruct a devastated country and to strengthen the so-called gains of the revolution, namely the radical transformation of class and property relations against political and class enemies. After 1945, following the Soviet model, Yugoslav leaders were increasingly radical when it came to the propagation of class struggle on a national and international level, and this eventually led to contrasts with the Soviet leadership. The Soviet-Yugoslav split of June 1948 enhanced this radical stance, at least in its immediate aftermath, when Yugoslavia found itself isolated internationally, and in need to mobilize the population in support of its authorities. The late 1940s and early 1950s, therefore, were times in which a high degree of political mobilization and social control was promoted by the authorities, with "passivity" figuring as one of the greatest sins when it came to the political realm. Politicized female leaders, generally raised in urban areas and more educated than the vast majority of the female population, with a long experience of militancy since the interwar period, carried on the *ethos* of self-sacrifice and constant political mobilization, and were keen to propagate their values among "the female masses".

So, what was the idealized image of the socialist "new woman" propagated by the AFŽ and how was it enforced on the ground? What were the activists' expectations and how did they meet with the reality of women's lives across the country, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina? The women's press, with its *agit-prop* character, can give us an idea here of such projections and imaginaries. One significant editorial by Bogomir Brajković, published in *Nova Žena* shortly before the liberation, appealed to the Croatian women of Bosnia-Herzegovina, stating that many of them had already joined the partisan struggle, while another part of the Croatian community had trouble to follow the right political path. The editorial explicitly stated that Croatian and Muslim women were on the same level of backwardness than Serbian women in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but that Serbian women has managed to elevate themselves in the course of the partisan struggle. Serbian women were characteristically more prominent in the struggle in Bosnia, also due to their harsh persecution under the collabo-

rationist regime of the Independent State of Croatia of which Bosnia was part.⁴¹ Croatian women from BiH were invited to join the struggle in order to elevate themselves as well, following the example of Croatian women from Croatia, who strongly contributed to the Resistance in Istria, Lika, Slavonia and Dalmatia. Croatian women were explicitly invited to establish a sisterhood with Muslim and Serbian women, in the name of the common victimization suffered at the hands of a common enemy (the occupying Axis forces and the local collaborationist forces).⁴² On the one hand, the AFŽ magazine was attempting to alleviate ethnic conflicts among women, and to act, as Jelena Batinić writes, as a "trans-ethnic mediator"⁴³, promoting what will be officially defined as the doctrine of "brotherhood and unity". On the other hand, ethnic divides had to be taken into account when designing strategies for women's interethnic mass mobilization.

Differences among women, however, were not only shaped by ethnicity, but also, more importantly, by their degree of political awareness, which also often overlapped with ethnic belonging, as in the case of Croatian and Serbian women mentioned above. In a *Nova Žena* editorial from 1946, the writer reflected on the fact that women had become a true political force. Still, many of them could not be considered antifascists, to the distress of the most engaged activists who attempted to mobilize them. The author argued that depoliticized women had to be approached with understanding and care, since even those who were passive or behaving in an oppositional way had also been victimized by fascism. Their stance was mainly due to ignorance or to the negative influence of family members, especially in the case of peasant or working class women. Only a few women were to be considered authentic "enemies" (*neprijatelji*), and these were collaborationist women of loose morals, or class enemies, mainly women who had lived off the work of others in old Yugoslavia, and wanted to turn back time to pre-war conditions. The article also summoned antifascist women to show less "sectarianism", especially when it came to Serbian female activists, who showed mistrust towards Muslim or Croatian women who had acquired political responsibility.⁴⁴ Class struggle was supposed to supersede existing ethnic ha-

⁴¹ See: Jancar-Webster, *Women & revolution in Yugoslavia*, and Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav partisans*.

⁴² "Serbian woman, whose immeasurable sufferings were recorded by the great Croatian poet Vladimir Nazor in his poem "Orthodox mother", is giving her hand to Croatian and Muslim woman and wants them to mutually cure the wounds afflicted by the common enemy. And patriotic conscious Croatian women looks at the Serbian and Muslim women as her sisters. This sisterhood, consecrated by the innocent blood of numerous victims, all Bosnian-Herzegovinian women must guard as sanctity." *Nova Žena*, br.2, 5, «Hrvatice Bosne i Hercegovine».

⁴³ Batinić, *op.cit.*, 218.

⁴⁴ *Nova Žena* br.6, p.15, «Pitanja, u koja treba da se udubimo».

tred and divisions, with women being invited to jointly mobilize for the common good. At the same time, political awareness had to be shared among women of different political orientations, in the attempt to gain the sympathy of female citizens who had been at the margins of public life.

The late 1940s witnessed a truly capillary effort on the part of the AFŽ to create the preconditions for women's activism through mass literacy campaigns, as well as through massive recruitment in voluntary labour brigades and in the new industrial labour force. AFŽ members were also engaged in the creation of welfare structures for orphans, maternity clinics, and in the opening of crèches for female workers and their children. By sharing cultural, economic and political capital among so-called backward women, AFŽ leaders aimed to expand the socialist regime's legitimacy among women, and to make use of women's work for purposes of reconstruction and mobilization. Yet, the weakness of political "cadres" at the local level was very often apparent, and so was the fact that the organization could not reach and involve all women – especially women in rural areas – across the country. Despite their socialist ideals, which strongly emerge in propaganda material such as the women's press, AFŽ leaders were deeply aware of the difficulties in changing women's position. During a plenum of the AFŽ's Republican Committee of BiH held in March 1948, prominent Bosnian leader Dušanka Kovačević lamented that the organization had not managed to reach all women, especially in villages, due to the gap between urban and rural realities. Kovačević explicitly stated that the organization had to take into account, and make use of, peasant women's agency:

Comrades, what I notice in this meeting is the relation towards the peasant woman, some comrades said that peasant women are illiterate, that they are not skilled, and so on. We cannot talk like this, comrades. We cannot talk about the inability of peasant women, we cannot and won't listen to that, it's not possible to always put the issue in terms of 'if we would have more urban women, more teachers, it would be easier'. See instead what we should do. We want to make political cadres out of peasant women. The peasant woman showed during war what she was able to do, she gave a lot during the war, she is a big patriot of our country, and she needs knowledge. This is our debt towards that woman and we can help her. We should struggle to raise more village cadres.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "Comrades, for me this meeting revealed something, relation towards peasant-woman, when some comrades talked about the peasant women as illiterate, incapable...etc..We, comrades, cannot speak this way. We cannot talk about the peasant-woman's incapability, we cannot and will not always listen about it, and we cannot always put things like this: if only we had more citizens, teachers, etc...it would be easy. Then you would see what we could do! What we want comrades is

This speech testifies that AFŽ leaders were aware of the potential of peasant women's agency. Creating cadres in villages, however, appeared extremely difficult, since the most talented activists often moved from AFŽ cells to local institutions, preferring to work for the People's Liberation Front than among women (an issue also analyzed in depth by Sklevicky)⁴⁶. Oftentimes, notable male party members resisted the wives' participation in the work of the organization, and opposed the work of the AFŽ at the local level.⁴⁷ The reports from the town of Vareš, for instance, well exemplify similar phenomena.⁴⁸ Generally, local peasant AFŽ members were village housewives, with three or four years of education, who had become politicized during the war, due to war losses and involvement of family members. Their political level, however, did not always appear satisfactory, particularly when it came to leadership skills. In a list of biographical sketches of AFŽ members who attended a political course in Sarajevo, many students were described as inadequate to take up a cadre position (*rukovodilac*). Inadequacies most often stemmed from lack of education, or limitations due to personal character, which made leadership difficult ("*tiha*", "*šutljiva*", "*voli intrigirati*", "*ne voli da diskutuje*", "*nedisciplinovana*", "*nije dovoljno bistra*", "*prilično zaoštala, skoro je skinula zar*"). Women who were too young, too old, or in bad health

to turn the peasant into the director, head. She [peasant women] has shown what she can do during the war, she gave a lot in the war, she is a big patriot of our contry and needs education. She is our comarde, and we have to help her. We need to work harder to educate and equip more peasant women directors" Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik IV Plenuma Glavnog Odbora AFŽ-a održanog u Sarajevu, 13 marta 1948. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 5, 2912/32, 1948.

⁴⁶ Sklevicky, *Konji, Žene, Ratovi*, 120-121; 137.

⁴⁷ Bonfiglioli, *Women's Political and Social Activism*.

⁴⁸ "In the regional organisation in Vareš, one big mistake is related to the fact that the comrade who is also a head of a Committee lives the Party life in the local organisation, where she dedicates all her time, and because of it her work in our Regional AFŽ section is neglected (...). In Vareš, the wife of the member of the SNO refuses to work in the AFŽ and she is happy to point that out everywhere" Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik 1 October 1950', ". Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 4288/?, 1950. The situation in Vareš was described as organizationally very weak in another report, which lamented that wives of party members and notable personalities were avoiding work, and that their husbands justified it. The influence of the Catholic Church, moreover, was said to be most important for local women than any conference by the AFŽ or Popular Front. The wife of a local secretary, for instance, constantly attended Catholic masses and stayed away from AFŽ meetings due to some personal antipathy with a local activist, even if they were both partisans during the war. Muslim party members were also not allowing their wives to take off the veil. Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor AFŽ Vareš Oblasnom odboru AFŽ-godišnji izvještaj o radu', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 91/1, 1949.

were also considered unable to direct the local section, and so were those with unconventional morals ("*nesređen porodični život*"). Many candidates showed potential for political work, but needed help and further learning and studying. Generally, but not always, there was a correlation between years of schooling, willingness to learn and the possibility of being selected as a local leader. The ideal new female village cadre, thus, had to be outspoken, disciplined, hard-working, willing to learn and willing to help others.⁴⁹

Seen these difficulties in creating local cadres, and in order to bridge the gap between urban and rural realities, AFŽ leaders placed a great attention towards education and transformations in overall living standards, seeing an immediate connection between women's emancipation and social development in village communities. A speech by AFŽ president Vida Tomšič sent by the Central Committee (*Centralni Odbor*) in Belgrade to the Republican Committee (*Glavni Odbor*) of BiH in September 1948, for instance, stated that women's backwardness was a legacy of old Yugoslavia, and that's what made work among women so important. Talking in her name and in the name of other AFŽ leaders, she stated:

We should teach women to hate their inequality (*neravnopravnost*), which today still for many thousands of women is practically hidden under the veil and under other less visible habits. We should liberate our female masses from superstition, different stereotypes and so on. This is a long and tiring work. Similarly, through the work of our organizations, we should clean, paint and rearrange our homes, get rid of old fireplaces, bring in beds, teach how to keep cleanliness and decent health standards. (...) We cannot think of building socialism without simultaneously raising the living standards, and specifically without considering the emerging aspirations for a better living of our working masses, especially at the village level.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Some of the less successful students, for instance, were described as follows: "D.B., Bos. Dubica, born in 1923, has 4 years of elementary education, vice-president of the County AFŽ Committee. Though she is young and has all the conditions to develop, she did not show particular interest for studying. She does not feel responsible and is not disciplined in work. If she is to be named head, she would have to be familiarised with these mistakes. Thus far, she was not politically elevated and needs to read and learn more." Successful students were described along these lines: "N.D., Mostar, born 1918, has 4 years of elementary education. She has all the preconditions to be independent director, head, she is familiar with the AFŽ work, and is eager to know more about it. Disciplined and shows the will for studying harder. She takes the correct attitude in relation to political events. Has comradely relation to other comrades and is willing to help them." The County Committee of the AFŽ Sarajevo, 'Glavni odbor AFŽ BiH Oblasnom odboru AFŽ BiH – karakteristike polaznica političkih kurseva', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 9, 352/6, 1950.

⁵⁰ "We have to teach our woman to hate her inequality, still hidden in thousands of cases behind the *feredža* and other, though less visible habits, we have to liberate the masses out of our women from

The need to promote women's education, as well as hygienic norms, was also related to the very high rates of infant mortality across the country, and to the socialist state's aspiration to provide its citizens, and especially women, children and war invalids, with social protection and assistance. A great part of AFŽ work, therefore, consisted in educational activities that had the aim to propagate new daily habits and to raise the living standards of the population. The faith placed by prominent AFŽ activists into peasant women's agency and ability to improve their daily lives is perhaps best illustrated by the biography of another notable figure active in the organization, namely Rajka Borojević. A teacher and partisan from Herzegovina, she took shelter with her husband and two children in rural Serbia during the war, and felt indebted to the local peasant population. After founding the Vitaminka food processing factory in Banja Luka, together with her husband, she moved to the village of Donji Dubac in the early 1950s, and started her first workshops with peasant women in 1954. Later she founded the Dragačevo weavers' cooperative, which employed 420 women in the early 1960s.⁵¹

A member of the plenum of the Central Committee of the AFŽ in the late 1940s, Rajka Borojević had already led cultural-political courses for peasant women in Banja Luka. During the plenum in Sarajevo mentioned earlier, she reported on such courses, describing the program designed for female villagers. The women attended conferences, visited children's homes, a home for invalids as well as many factories, where they met "many female shock-workers about whom they had heard previously, but without believing their stories when they were told at conferences". The villagers also saw how books and newspapers were printed, and were taken to the theatre, the cinema and various political events. They were also "placed in the different homes of the best activists, so that they could see how to cook, how to raise children, something that is lacking

the superstition, various prejudices and so on..Equally, through the work of our organisation we need to clean, paint, wash our houses, throw out the middleage customs, put the beds inside the houses, teach women how to keep the place clean and maintain the basic hygiene conditions [...] we cannot imagine the construction of socialism without, at the same time, raising the aspirations to improve the life of our working masses, in particular those in villages" Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Centralni Odbor Beograd Glavnom Odboru AFŽ Bosne i Hercegovine', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 5, 2051/1, 1950.

⁵¹ Rajka Borojević, *Iz Dubca u svet* (Beograd: Etnografski muzej, 2006), first edition 1964. See also Natalja Herbst, 'Women in Socialist Yugoslavia in the 1950s. The Example of Rajka Borojević and the Dragačevo Women's Cooperative', in Roswita Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajilić, and Christian Voß, (eds.), *Doing Gender-Doing the Balkans*. München, Berlin, Washington D.C.: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2012. See also the recent artistic project on Rajka Borojević curated by her granddaughter Ana Džokić, *Taking Common Matter into Your Own Hands* (last accessed 19.10.2016). http://www.stealth.utld.net/stealth/25_taking.common.matter.into.your.own.hands.html

in the villages".⁵² Borojević also discussed issues of schooling and the situation in the orphanages, which she invited AFŽ activists to visit in order to provide war orphans with the love and warmth they missed, since their parents had sacrificed themselves for the liberation of the country. A similar combination of pedagogy, ethics of care and solidarity is present in Borojević's later biographical account of her work in Donji Dubac in the mid-1950s, where she recalls the difficulties she faced when starting the first workshops with local peasant women in the Serbian countryside.

The author recalls her feelings when she arrived for the first time in the village after the war:

I am especially glad because once again, like during the war, I feel closeness with these people. I'm thinking of how I could help them. This idea is not new. I have it since the war days. I brought it here - as a promise to myself. I am the closest to women. They are increasingly coming to see me. Coated, dressed up as during a holiday. They entrust me with their difficulties. I advise how best I can. I show them household tasks, I talk about the care and upbringing of children. I realize it all happens in bits and pieces.⁵³

The rest of the diary retells Borojević's encounter with local customs and superstitions, detailing her daily struggle against peasant women's lack of hygienic norms when it comes to childbirth, childrearing and daily living. It took Rajka Borojević a long time to convince local husbands that they course would be beneficial for their wives. The activist even publicly denounced one of the husbands who had beaten up his wife for taking part in the course, through an article in the Belgrade daily *Politika* (she, however, omitted his name, threatening him that she would have revealed it if he would do it again). Her classes in Donji Dubac included a theoretical part (hygiene of the home, women's hygiene and

⁵² "They saw many firms and factories, they saw many women *udarnice* that they earlier only heard about, but did not believe when they were mentioned at the Conference. They saw how books and newspapers are printed. They went to theaters, cinema, manifestations, reading groups, tea-parties, etc... They were put into the houses of our most advanced activists and were thus able to see how to cook, raise and educate their children, and to learn everything that our village still lacks." Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik IV Plenuma Glavnog Odbora AFŽ-a održanog u Sarajevu, 13 marta 1948 Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8 5, document number missing/7, 1948.

⁵³ "I am very pleased to feel closeness with this people, just like during the war. I ma thinking how to help them. This idea was did not come yesterday. I have been thinking about it since the war. I took it from here/ as a promise to myself. I am closest to women. They arrive more and more. Coated, wearing make up, all ready, like for some fest. They confide their miseries to me. I advise them, as much as I can. I show them things related to household, about raising and educating their children. I understand — all this is really only partial and not much." Rajka Borojević, *Iz Dubca u svet*, 7.

sexual education, first aid, childcare, alcoholism, food, etiquette) and a practical part (cooking, serving, preparing preserves, making soap, dying textiles, knitting and sewing, collecting aromatic and medical plants, beekeeping, cultivation of raspberry, handwork, singing).⁵⁴ Women walked several miles from various surrounding villages to attend. From the village, they were even taken to study visits in Belgrade, where they went to the cinema for the first time in their lives, and later to Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Kumrovec (Tito's birthplace) and Zagreb. In the early 1960s, the Dragačevo weaving cooperative was launched, to increase women's economic independence in the community. Women's position in the village gradually improved, and in 1967, the newly founded House of Culture even hosted the finals of the "best husband" competition, during which women openly assessed the most respectable prospective mate, as shown in the original documentary from that time.⁵⁵ The building itself had been funded with self-organised "best husband" parties in the surrounding villages.⁵⁶

Rajka Borojević's activism, which started within the AFŽ and continued well beyond the demise of the organization in 1953, well exemplifies the combination of utopian imaginaries, collective values and individual aspirations which animated left-wing leaders in their attempt to emancipate women – especially village women – across Yugoslavia. A number of women who had come out of the partisan experience embraced socialist values and strived to improve women's position, particularly from a social and economic perspective, in line with the idea that overall social progress had to be achieved also through the improvement in women's conditions. While elements of social control and top-down emancipation were present, AFŽ activists were also aware of the situation on the ground, and of the gap between socialist ideals and reality, which they tried to bridge as best as they could, sharing social, economic and cultural capital with other women.

⁵⁴ Rajka Borojević, *Iz Dubca u svet*, 39.

⁵⁵ <https://vimeo.com/134070626>

⁵⁶ http://www.stealth.utld.net/stealth/25_taking.common.matter.into.your.own.hands.html

Conclusion

This essay provided an intersectional reading of women's position within the AFŽ, arguing for the need to further explore women's social differences in order to understand the complexity of women's positions within the organization. The paper strives to overcome dominant interpretations of AFŽ organizational dynamics, which mainly focus on the opposition between women's and state's interests, and discusses instead the individual biographies of some key activist figures (Vahida Maglajlić, Didara Dukazdjini, Sida Marjanović, Judita Alargić and Rajka Borojević), in order to show the importance of women's subjective aspirations to equality, freedom and social justice, and the ways in which they were translated into collective political engagement. As I argue in the paper, the AFŽ was not only an instrument of political mobilisation and social control, but also a mean to exercise solidarity and care, by sharing cultural, political and social capital among women. AFŽ leaders, who were generally educated, politically experienced and whose engagement was embedded in the revolutionary *ethos* of the partisan Resistance, strived to promote their values among illiterate, apolitical women, and to bridge the gap between urban and rural words. Hierarchies between politically active and passive women were established, especially when it came to Muslim women, who were specifically singled out as backward and forced to abandon their veils. Nonetheless, because of peasant women's contribution to the antifascist struggle, their social and political agency was recognized, while ethnic and religious identities were not seen as fixed, but as something that could be gradually transformed through education, knowledge and political engagement. AFŽ activists themselves had experienced these transformations, and were keen to provide similar opportunities to other women.

Among AFŽ members, therefore, there were fundamental differences in terms of ethnicity, class, political background and education, as well as different degrees of political and social agency. Yet, the organization encouraged women to cross boundaries, from the city to the countryside and back, across national groups and across class differences. AFŽ activists propagated the socialist ideal of women's equality and emancipation against all odds, through alphabetization courses, courses about hygiene, voluntary work brigades, and various means of local mobilization. The AFŽ archive testifies of the richness of such capillary activities, since the reports from the ground are extremely detailed and precise, providing a precious source for women's history. The archive material can help us reconstructing differences between communes, regions and republics, so that in fact the AFŽ archives can be used to compare women's conditions

across the unevenly developed Yugoslav federation. The archive also allows us to study how federal directives on women's emancipation were translated and negotiated at the local level. Women's individual life paths and stories, as shown in this essay, are another crucial theme that deserves to be explored further, through a combination of archive material, oral history, memoirs and secondary literature published during the socialist era. While the memoirs, biographies and compilations of stories on female partisans that were written during socialism are generally dismissed as ideologically biased and hagiographic, they can nonetheless provide useful historical information on the dominant values and imaginaries of that time. I will conclude this essay with a last passage from Rājka Borojević's autobiography, which makes clear the value of memoirs for historical research, and highlights the utopian values that animated AFŽ leaders:

The Belgrade – Bar railway will also connect these villages to bigger centers. The highway Belgrade – Titovo Užice will be half shorter than the one going through Kragujevac. Roads, railways, houses, schools, power lines...they go further and further, deeper into the hills and in the former remote areas. The time will come when a stranger will wonder if Dubac really was a remote village. The villages are changing faster and faster. These ones as well. The electrification already changed them so much. And in the villages, inevitably, what is new is replacing the old. It's now possible to reach Busenjači by walk, only with half an hour walk, that's right. I sing and I remember those very, very hard travels and the hard work. There were way many. That is the destiny of pioneers. But the fight for the new, and for the better, is beautiful! New women are really blossoming, and that's why I am happy.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ "Pruga Beograd—Bar primaknuće i ova sela većim centrima. Auto-put Beograd—Titovo Užice biće upola kraći od onog preko Kragujevca. Putevi, pruge, domovi, škole, dalekovodi. .. prodiru sve dalje, sve dublje u brda. U nekadašnje zabačene krajeve. Doći će vreme kada će se došljak čuditi: zar je Dubac bio zabačeno selo? Sela se menjaju sve bržim tempom. I ova. Koliko ih je već izmenila elektrifikacija. I u selima, neminovno, staro u-stupa mesto novom. Pešačim trena Busenjači. Tačno je tako — samo pola sata pješačenja. Pevam i sećam se onih vrlo, vrlo teških putovanja i teškoća u radu. Bilo ih je mno-o-o-go. To je sudbina pionira. Ali —lepa je borba za novo, za bolje! Zaista niču nove žene. I zato sam vesela." Borojević, *Iz Dubca u svet*, p. 223.

Archival Materials:

- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor Teslić Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – povjerenstvo za štampu', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, f. 1178/1, 1947.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor AFŽ Visoko Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – mjesečni izvještaj za oktobar i novembar', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, 1290/1, 1947.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Centralni odbor AFŽ-a Jugoslavija Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH – biografije narodnih odbornica', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 7, 2526/5, 1949.
- Arhiv Jugoslavije, Beograd, fond 354: kutija 1: Zapisnici i stenografske sa sastanaka upravnog odbora i sekretariata SZDJ i sa savetovanja SZDJ 1954-1961. Zapisnik 6.3.1954, p. X/3.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik IV Plenuma Glavnog Odbora AFŽ-a održanog u Sarajevu, 13 marta 1948. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovina, Sarajevo, Kutija 5, 2912/32, 1948
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik 1 October 1950', " Arhiv of Bosne i Hercegovina, Sarajevo, Box 8, 4288/?, 1950
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Sreski odbor AFŽ Vareš Oblasnom odboru AFŽ-godišnji izvještaj o radu', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 91/1, 1949
- Oblasni Odbor AFŽ Sarajevo, 'Glavni odbor AFŽ BiH Oblasnom odboru AFŽ BiH – karakteristike polaznica političkih kurseva', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Box 9, 352/6, 1950
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Centralni Odbor Beograd Glavnom Odboru AFŽ Bosne i Hercegovine', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 5, 2051/1, 1950
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Zapisnik IV Plenuma Glavnog Odbora AFŽ-a održanog u Sarajevu, 13 marta 1948, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 5, document number missing/7, 1948

Bibliography:

- Archer, Rory, Duda, Igor and Paul Stubbs, eds., *Social inequalities and discontent in Yugoslav Socialism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016).
- Ballinger, Pamela, and Kristen Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism. Religion, Modernity, and Muslim Women's Emancipation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, 1945-1991", *Aspasia*, 5, 2011.
- Batinić, Jelena, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- Beoković, Mila, *Žene heroji* (Sarajevo, Svjetlost, 1967).
- Bonfiglioli, Chiara, *Revolutionary Networks. Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945-1953)*, PhD dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2012.

- Bonfiglioli, Chiara "Nomadic Theory as an Epistemology for Transnational Feminist History" in Iris van der Tuin and Bolette Blagaard, eds., *The Subject of Rosi Braidotti* (London, Bloomsbury, 2014).
- Bonfiglioli, Chiara, "Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era: The Case of Yugoslavia", *Aspasia*, 8, 2014.
- Borojević, Rajka, *Iz Dubca u svet*, (Zadružna knjiga, 1964).
- Burton, Antoinette M., *Archive stories: facts, fictions, and the writing of history* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
- De Haan, Francisca, et. al. "Forum: Ten Years After, Communism and Feminism Revisited", *Aspasia*, 10, 2016.
- Emmert, Thomas A., "Ženski Pokret: The Feminist Movement in Serbia in the 1920s" in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.), *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans. Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
- Funk, Nanette, "A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women's Organizations, Women's Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21 (4), 2014.
- Ghodsee, Kristen, and Kateřina Lišková, "Bumbling Idiots or Evil Masterminds? Challenging Cold War Stereotypes about Women, Sexuality and State Socialism", *Filozofija i Društvo*, XXVII (3), 2016.
- Ghodsee, Kristen, "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22 (2), 2015.
- Giomi, Fabio, "Introduction" in Aida Spahić et al. *Women Documented. Women and Public Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20th century* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Center, 2014).
- Hadžišehović, Munevera, *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia* (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2003).
- Herbst, Natalja, 'Women in Socialist Yugoslavia in the 1950s. The Example of Rajka Borojević and the Dragačevo Women's Cooperative', in Roswita Kersten-Pejanić, Simone Rajlić, and Christian Voß, (eds.), *Doing Gender-Doing the Balkans* (München, Berlin, Washington D.C.: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2012).
- Hoare, Marko Attila, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History*. (London: Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2013).
- Jambrešić-Kirin, Renata, *Dom i svijet: o ženskoj kulturi pamćenja* (Zagreb: Centar za Ženske Studije, 2008).
- Jancar-Webster, Barbara, *Women & revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Denver, Colo., Arden Press, 1998).

- Jancar-Webster, Barbara, "Women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement" in Sabrina P. Ramet (ed.) *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans. Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
- Kecman, Jovanka, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941* (Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1978).
- Lagator, Špiro Lagator and Milorad Čukić, *Partizanke Prve proleterske* (Beograd, Exportpress, 1978).
- Lukić, Dragoje, *Rat i djeca Kozare* (Beograd, Narodna Knjiga, 1984).
- Lutz, Helma, Vivar, Maria Teresa Herrera, and Linda Supik (eds.), *Framing intersectionality: debates on a multi-faceted concept in gender studies* (Burlington, Ashgate, 2011).
- Maglajlić-Hadžihalilović, Himka, *Zapisi o Vahidi Maglajlić* (Banjaluka, Glas, 1973)
- Maglajlić-Hadžihalilović, Himka, *Rođena za burno doba: životni put narodnog heroja Vahide Maglajlić* (Kragujevac, Decje Novine, 1977).
- Malešević, Miroslava, *Didara. Životna priča jedne Prizrenke* (Beograd, Srpski genealoški centar, 2004).
- Marjanovic, Sida, *Na Neretvi...* (Sarajevo, 1950).
- Mesarić, Andrea, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo. Dress Practices and the Islamic Revival in Post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina", *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, 22(2), 2013: 12-34.
- Mlinarević, Gorana and Lamija Kosović, "Women's Movements and Gender Studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Aspasia*, Vol. 5, 2011.
- Sklevicky, Lydia, "Emancipated integration or integrated emancipation: the case of post-revolutionary Yugoslavia" In: Angerman, A., Binnema, G., Keunen, A., Poels, V. & Zirkzee, J. (eds.) *Current Issues in Women's History*. (London and New York, Routledge, 1989).
- Sklevicky, Lydia, *Konji, Žene, Ratovi*, (Zagreb, Ženska Infoteka, 1996).
- Tesija, Jelena, *The End of the AFŽ – The End of Meaningful Women's Activism? Rethinking the History of Women's Organizations in Croatia, 1953 – 1961*, Master thesis, Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest, 2014.
- Zaharijević, Adriana, "Pawning and Challenging in Concert: Engagement as a Field of Study", *Filozofija i Društvo*, XXVII (2), 2016.
- Stojaković, Gordana, *Mapa AFŽ-a Vojvodine 1942-1953* (Novi Sad, 2007), http://www.zenskestudije.org.rs/01_o_nama/gordana_stojakovic/AFZ/afz_licnosti.pdf

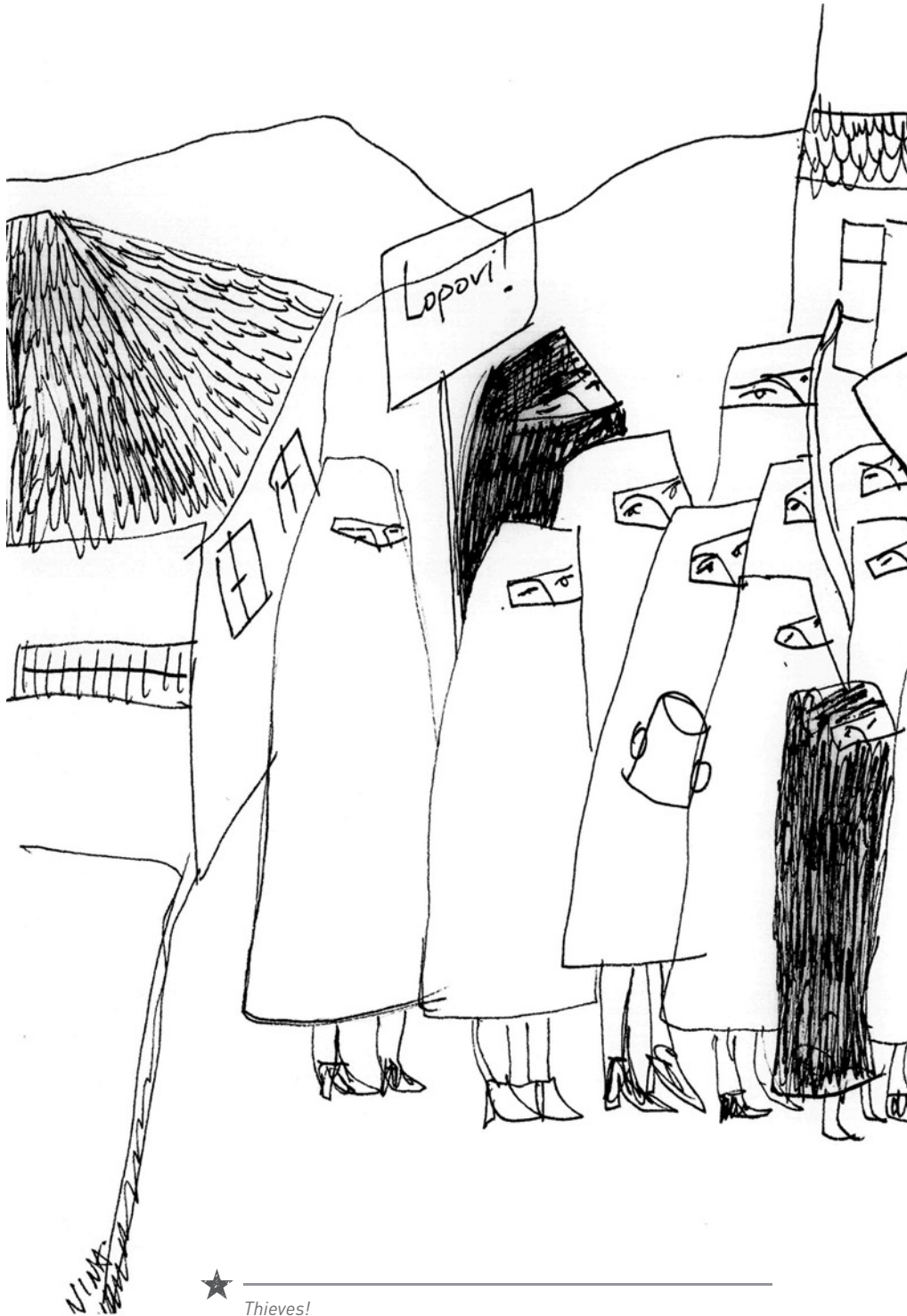






VIKTORIYA





Thieves!



—
We want bread!



ROSES ARE RED,
VIOLETS ARE BLUE, ME LUVLY
TEACHER, I BELIEVE IN YOU¹:
THE ROLE AND THE
POSITION OF THE PEOPLE'S
(PROGRESSIVE) TEACHER
IN THE CRUCIAL YEARS FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION OF A
NEW SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



AJLA
DEMIRAGIĆ

¹ Letter by a girl named Vojka Beaković. This short letter by a war orphan who was transported from BiH to Slovenia for respite over the winter, testifies, amongst other things, to the ability of teachers to organise instruction successfully even in wartime, and to build rapport with their pupils. Here I quote it in its entirety: "Hello comrade teacher, first of all one should ask if you've started teaching year three. Me dear teacher, please let me know who has made it into year three, and who hasn't. Have Milanka and Dana passed, they were doing quite well while I was there. I haven't started over here yet, they say we'll start this winter, and in summer I'm coming over again for you to teach me. Roses are red, violets are blue, me luvly teacher I believe in you. Dear teacher are you almost married yet? Because there is no time to waste, I beg of this letter to make haste. On a wooden bench I'm sat, in me right hand I've got a pen, in me left a kerchief white, I'm shedding tears as these words I write. Dear teacher reach out your hand to shake my own before the break of dawn, blossom ye roses, sprout tiny seed, do you teacher still remember me. I would give anything to be a bird on the wing and fly over to you. Long live comrades Tito and Stalin." The letter was published in the section titled "Letters from the Children in Slovenia" in the magazine *Nova žena* 8 (1945), 12. The same issue features a detailed account of the departure of the first group of orphans for wintering in Slovenia. I thank Danijela Majstorović for bringing this letter to my attention.

1. Introduction

Early debates on the invisibility of women in Yugoslav history were initiated as late as the mid-1980s,² and the greatest contribution to the promotion and strengthening of feminist historical research of autonomous women's organisations and associations was made by the late Lydia Sklevicky, the feminist theorist who left us too soon.³ In her work⁴ she consistently criticised the traditional approach to the 'grand topics' of political, military and diplomatic history, and stood up for the research and analysis of historical change in everyday life, the relationship between sex and gender, and the writing of a (new social) history of women.⁵

Although the second half of the 1980s was marked by feminist-orientated works⁶ and a renewed interest in women's issues,⁷ this positive trend in research was brought to a halt by wartime⁸ as well as post-war socio-political developments

² This research was preceded by philosophical debates aiming to shed light on the position of women in socialism. Cf. Nadežda Čačinović-Puhovski, „Ravnopravnost ili oslobođenje. Teze o teorijskoj relevantnosti suvremenog feminizma“, *Žena* 3 (1976): 125–128; Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, „Moć žene u patrijarhalnoj i suvremenoj kulturi“, *Žena* 4–5 (1980); Blaženka Despot, „Žena i samoupravljanje“, *Delo* 4 (1981): 112–116; Nada Ler-Sofronić, „Subordinacija žene – sadašnjost i prošlost“, *Marksistička misao* 4 (1981): 73–80. In addition to these works, one of the first feminist-orientated studies, authored by the sociologist Vjeran Katunarić, should also be mentioned; it also points to the problem of reducing 'the Woman Question' to the status of a general social issue, which avoids active opposition to those who maintain domination'. Cf. Vjeran Katunarić, *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1984), 239. Also, a matter of exceptional importance is the international conference "Drugarica žena. Žensko pitanje-novi pristup?" organised in Belgrade in 1978, where the inequality of women in socialism in different social and political spheres was publicly discussed for the first time.

³ Died in a traffic accident in 1990, aged 39.

⁴ Sklevicky, Lydia. "Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žena u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do drugog svjetskog rata", *Polja* 308 (1984); and "Žene i moć – povijesna geneza jednog interesa", *Polja* 309 (1984). Here I reference the versions from the posthumous volume of Lydia Sklevicky's works titled *Konji, žene i ratovi*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996., edited by Dunja Rihtman Auguštin.

⁵ Cf. Sklevicky, *Konji, žene*, op. cit. p. 15.

⁶ Cf. edited book *Žena i društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloga*, Zagreb: Sociološko društvo, 1987, featuring papers by distinguished feminist theorists of the day: Rada Iveković, Žarana Papić, Blaženka Despot, Lydia Sklevicky, Andrea Feldman, Vesna Pusić, Željka Šporer, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vera Tadić, Vjeran Katunarića, Đurđa Milanović, Jelena Zuppa, Ingrid Šafranek, Slavenka Drakulić.

⁷ Senija Milišić made a pioneering contribution to Bosnian-Herzegovinian historiography of the day by researching the processes of emancipation of Muslim women in BiH. Cf. Senija Milišić „*Emancipacija muslimanske žene u Bosni i Hercegovini nakon oslobođenja 1947 – 1952 (Poseban osvrt na skidanje zara i feredžel)*“. Master's thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, 1986.

⁸ According to Ines Prica, war yet again "postponed the tasks and the closing of planned gaps which certain periods leave behind in scholarly records or scholarly conscience, for times of peace." Ines Prica, "ETNOLOGIJA POSTSOCIJALIZMA I PRIJE. ili: Dvanaest godina nakon „Etnologije socijalizma

and cultural and educational policies. The questions of the Women's Antifascist Front's (henceforth AFŽ) legacy and/or the emancipation of women in the People's Liberation Struggle (henceforth NOB) and during the socialist period were considered anew from a feminist point of view as late as the beginning of the new millennium.⁹ In this regard, a phenomenon of particular import is the emergence of a new generation of women scholars, in the region and beyond, who have explored, for their master's and doctoral theses, certain aspects of women's engagement in the NOB and the AFŽ.¹⁰

Although Bosnian-Herzegovinian historiography still does not indicate that an institutional framework for the systematic study of the modern history of women will be established in the foreseeable future,¹¹ it should be pointed out that

i postlije", in: Lada Feldman Čale and Ines Prica, eds. *Devijacije i promašaji. Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma*, Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2006, p. 21.

⁹ See, among other things: Slapšak, Svetlana, *Ženske ikone XX veka*, Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek – Čigoja Štampa, 2001.; Jambrešić Kirin, Renata. *Dom i svijet. O ženskoj kulturi pamćenja*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008.; Bosanac, Gordana. *Visoko čelo: ogled o humanističkim perspektivama feminizma*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2010; Jambrešić Kirin, Renata and Senjković, Reana, *Aspasia: International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History*, 4, 2010; 71–96; Pantelić, Ivana. *Partizanke kao građanke*, Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju – Evoluta, 2011.; Jambrešić Kirin, Renata. „Žena u formativnom socijalizmu“, in: *Refleksije vremena 1945-1955* Zagreb: Galerija Klovičevi dvori, 2013.

¹⁰ Cf. Batinić, Jelena. "Proud to have trod in men's footsteps: Mobilizing Peasant Women into the Yugoslav Partisan Army in World War II", (MA thesis, Ohio State University, 2001), and idem, "Gender, Revolution, War: The Mobilization of Women in the Yugoslav Partisan movement in World War II" (PhD thesis, Stanford University 2009); Stojaković, Gordana. „Rodna perspektiva u novinama Antifašističkog fronta žena u periodu 1945-1953“, (PhD thesis, University of Novi Sad, 2011), Bonfiglioli, Chiara. *Revolutionary Networks. Women's Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945-1957)* (PhD thesis, Utrecht University, 2012), and Jelušić, Iva. *Founding Narratives on the Participation of Women in the People NOB in Yugoslavia* (MA thesis, Central European University, 2015). Some of these research papers were based on the first studies of the participation of women in the NOB conducted at American universities. Cf. Reed, Mary Elizabeth. *Croatian women in the Yugoslav Partisan resistance, 1941-1945* (PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1980.) and Webster, Barbara Jancar. *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*, Denver: Arden Press, 1990. Most of these works were subsequently published as monographs.

¹¹ Studies about women in the post-war period are more often sponsored by NGOs and civic associations then by official institutions or history departments. Cases in point would be the books by Tanja Lazić, Ljubinka Vukašinić and Radmila Žigić, *Žene u istoriji Semberije* Bijeljina: Organizacija žena Lara, 2012, and by Aida Spahić et al., *Zabilježene – Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Fondacija CURE, 2014. For instance, only one BA thesis of that kind was defended at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo: Emira Muhić, *Žena u socijalizmu u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1945. do 1971. godine prema časopisu 'Nova žena.'* (BA thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, 2012.)

the establishment of the online Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia¹² has been a significant step forward in the archiving of materials¹³ pertaining to the engagement of women in the NOB and the AFŽ,¹⁴ if nothing else. The archive makes it possible for new generations of female scholars and researchers as well as artists and cultural operators to conduct research¹⁵ and offer new answers to questions related to the unfinished processes of emancipation and participation of women in the political, cultural and educational life of the community.

Thanks to the invitation extended to me to participate in the production of a publication which aims, among other things, to affirm the Online Archive, I received the opportunity to explore, to an extent at least, a prominent revolutionary figure – the progressive people's teacher, or more precisely, her role and tasks in the revolutionary activities and the establishment and construction of the new social order. Despite the fact that people's teachers garnered enormous respect and admiration in BH society, they mostly remained timeless heroines, symbolical figures, "anonymous accomplices, fellow travellers, fellow fighters, associates", most of whom have yet to go down in history "with their full names and surnames, with their roles, functions, thoughts, feelings, hopes and fears".¹⁶

¹² The archive was created in the course of the activities of the association for culture and the arts "Crvena", Sarajevo. More about the archive and the project at <http://www.afzarhiv.org/o-nama>

¹³ For more details on the state of archivalia on WWII, the incompleteness of the fonds and the collections, see: Kujović, Mina. "Stanje arhivske građe o Drugom svjetskom ratu u Bosni i Hercegovini" in: *Šezdeset godina od završetka Drugog svjetskog rata: kako se sjećati 1945. godine. Proceedings*, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2006, pp. 217–235.

¹⁴ As early as 1953, the first systematic triennial gathering of archivalia or records on women's wartime was started. For more on the launching of this archive and its scope in its initial phase see: Jambrešić Kirin, Renata. *Dom i svijet*, pp. 31–33.

¹⁵ With due awareness of the numerous difficulties in creating female history through archivalia, press clippings, recorded accounts and oral sources. For more on certain challenges facing research see: Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "Povratak u Beograd 1978. godine: Istraživanje feminističkog sjećanja" in: *Glasom do feminističkih promjena*, eds. R. J. Kirin and S. Prlenda, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2009, pp. 120–131.

¹⁶ Milić, Anđelka. "Patrijarhalni poredak, revolucija i saznanje o položaju žene, Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka", *Položaj žene kao merilo modernizacije: naučni skup*, Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1998. Quoted in: Petrović, Jelena. "Društveno-političke paradigme prvog talasa jugoslavenskih feminizama", *ProFemina* special issue (2011): 59–81, 62–3. The author explains that the purpose of female history is not to fill the gaps in the existing historiographical canon, but to transmit the knowledge based on the female historical experience and everything that had been systematically left out. This approach makes it possible finally to break "the endless circle of discovering and forgetting female history, emancipation and resubjugation, from the infinite renewal of the patriarchal order of values and relations which returns with a vengeance with every new historical episode." Ibid.

To demand that they be recorded in history, together with all the other forgotten, neglected or erased figures of women workers and revolutionaries from BiH, is the only way to break the “endless circle of discovering and forgetting women’s history, emancipation and oppression, from the endless restoration of the patriarchal order of values and relations which becomes more and more ruthless in every subsequent historical episode.”¹⁷

1.1. The Framework and the Aim of the Paper

Even though many researchers¹⁸ in our historiography have explored the topic of the historical development of BiH school system from the Ottoman period to the end of WWII, relatively little¹⁹ has been written about the characteristics of the teachers’ professional activities and their contribution to the social and cultural development of the community. Although there had been trained teachers in BiH as early as the end of the 18 century, and even though they left a deep mark on the development of culture as such, Mitar Papić notes that “this was written about only sporadically [...] and we still do not have a single synthesis which would show

¹⁷ Milić, in: Petrović, “Socio-Political Paradigms”, op. cit. 63.

¹⁸ Including: Pejanović, Đorđe, *Historija srednjih i stručnih škola u BiH*, Sarajevo, 1953.; Esad Peco, *Osnovno školstvo u Hercegovini od 1878. do 1918.*, Sarajevo 1971; Mitar Papić, *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske okupacije (1878-1918)*, Sarajevo, 1972, *Istorija srpskih škola u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. godine*, Sarajevo 1978.; *Hrvatsko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. godine*, Sarajevo 1982., *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini (1918 – 1941)*, Sarajevo, 1984., Hajrudin Ćurić, *Muslimansko školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1918. Godine (Muslim Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1918)*, Sarajevo, 1983, and Azem Kožar, “Osnovno školstvo u toku Drugog svjetskog rata (1941-1945)” and : *Osnovno školstvo u Tuzli (istorijski pregled)* Tuzla, 1988.

¹⁹ In addition to the works which appeared in publications such as “Zbornik sjećanja treće poslijeratne generacije učiteljske škole u Derventi juni 1951. godine” or “Zbornik radova 100 godina učiteljstva u Bosni i Hercegovini” and the papers presented at a symposium organised in Sarajevo in 1987 to mark the centennial of the first school of education in the country, the role of the teacher was examined in more detail by Mitar Papić in his books *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1941. do 1955. godine*, Sarajevo, 1981, and *Učitelji u kulturnoj i političkoj istoriji BiH*, Sarajevo (Svjetlost, 1987) and, to an extent, by Mato Zaninović in his study titled *Kulturno-prosvjetni rad u NOB-u (1941 – 1945)*, Sarajevo, 1968, and Snježana Šušnjara, “Učiteljstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme Austro-Ugarske”, *Anali za povijest odgoja* 12 (2013): 55–74. An MA thesis was defended at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo in 2014, titled „Uloga učitelja u prosvjetnim, političkim i kulturnim promjenama u BiH od 1945. do 1951. godine”. The author Ademir Jerković examines the material conditions of teaching during and after the war and looks at teachers’ contribution to the general cultural and educational progress in BiH; a BA thesis on the position of teachers during the Austro-Hungarian occupation was also defended. See: Anđa Bandić, *Društveni položaj učitelja u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme Austro-Ugarske* (BA thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, 2011.)

that we have never had a profession in BiH whose contribution could bear comparison to that of the teaching profession".²⁰

However, none of these sporadic notes written before the 1990s specifically examined the status and the social role of female teachers or their contribution to the development of the school system in BiH. Moreover, although it was precisely the teachers who championed the establishment of professional associations (as early as 1896, Marija Jambrišak and Jagoda Truhelka called on teachers to unite along class lines, which was realised with the formation of the Teachers' Club in the reading room of the Croatian Teachers' Hall in Zagreb in 1900²¹), Jovanka Kecman, in a study devoted to working and professional women's associations, deals with the status of progressive teachers in the 1930s by examining their activities solely as part of the progressive teachers' movement and the activities of the Communist Party.²² That is to say, the information on specific aspects of the teachers' activities remained rather fragmentary, and was mentioned in passing in papers which treated the broader topic of education, or the teachers' movement. The trend continued after the 1990s war, with only a handful of papers dealing to an extent with the education of women in the BiH school system or with prominent female educators and cultural figures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²³

²⁰ Papić, Mitar. *Učitelji u kulturnoj i političkoj istoriji Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987, p. 3.

²¹ Quoted in: Suzana Jagić, "Jer kad žene budu žene prave: Uloga i položaj žena u obrazovnoj politici Banske Hrvatske na prijelazu u XX. stoljeće", *Povijest u nastavi* 11 (2008): 77–100, 83–4.

²² The author justifies this bias by citing the fact that progressive female teachers in the interwar period did not form separate professional associations. Cf. Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941*, Belgrade, 1978, p. 373.

²³ Cf. Kujović, Mina. "Muslimanska osnovna i viša djevojačka škola sa produženim tečajem (1894-1925) – prilog historiji muslimanskog školstva u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Novi Muallim* 41 (2010): 72–79; and idem, "Hasnija Berberović – zaboravljena učiteljica – prilog historiji muslimanskog školstva u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Novi Muallim* 40 (2009): 114–118; Šušnjara, Snježana. "Jagoda Truhelka", *Hrvatski narodni godišnjak* 53 (2006): 239–256.; idem, "Jelica Belović Bernadrikowska", *Hrvatski narodni godišnjak* 54 (2006): 66–76.; idem, "Školovanje ženske djece u BiH u vrijeme osmanske okupacije 1463.-1878.", *Školski vjesnik* 4. (2011); and idem, "Školovanje ženske djece u Bosni i Hercegovini u doba Austro-Ugarske (1878.-1918.)", *Napredak* 155 (4) (2014): 453–466. In her comprehensive study on the position of women in society in 19th- and 20th-century Serbia, Neda Božinović also offers a general overview of the social status of teachers in the lands which made up the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as well as a short overview of the circumstances in BiH during the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule. Cf. Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji: u XIX i XX veku*, (Belgrade: "Devedesetčetvrta" and "Žene u crnom", 1996). It should be pointed out that most of these works do not engage critically with the traditional historiography and move towards filling the gaps in the existing historical models (markedly ethno-national in character after the last war). The focus is on the effort to fit distinguished female figures into the existing canon,

Like most topics related to the socialist heritage, the topic of the progressive teachers' movement is either neglected or mentioned only in passing in general overviews of the development of the teaching profession in BiH, and not a single monograph on progressive women teachers has been published hitherto. But, as I attempt to demonstrate in this paper, it is precisely in the figure of the woman teacher that all the contradictions of becoming the new working woman in socialism are inscribed. At the same time, having become the possessor of an *aversive excess of memory*²⁴ of socialism and anti-fascist struggle in the aftermath of the war in BiH, the figure of the (progressive) people's teacher can also point to possible alternative models of thinking the present moment, marked by processes of faux emancipation and aggressive repatriarchisation of women.

The paper examines the role and position of the (progressive) people's teacher from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, considering this to have been a crucial period of comprehensive transformation of the state-operated system of mass primary education in which the new type of teacher was constructed. The figure of the woman teacher is especially indicative in this regard. The process of the formation of a new type of teacher builds on the effort to completely change the social position of women²⁵ and create a new type of woman²⁶ in BiH²⁷ first via Party edicts during the NOB, and subsequently via constitutional and legal solutions.

and there is almost no discussion of how and why one of the most popular female professions remained historically unrepresented, and no discussion of the still-pressing issues of educational systems and education of girls and women. More on the concept of gender as a "societal organisation of sexual difference" in historical research in: Joan W. Scott, *Rod i politika povijesti (Gender and the Politics of History)*, Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1988, 2003, and *Feminism and History*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996.

²⁴ Jambrešić-Kirin, Renata. "Politike sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat u doba medijske reprodukcije socijalističke kulture", Lada Feldman Čale and Ines Prica eds., *Devijacije i promašaji. Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma*, Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2006. p. 157.

²⁵ Cf. Katz, Vera. "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953.", *Prilozi* 40 (2011): 135–155.

²⁶ In her speech at the Second Session of ZAVNOBiH, Danica Perović pointed out that the new figure of the woman was "was a female combatant who has grown and matured politically during the struggle, emancipated herself and is able to lead and make decisions on every issue pertaining to the struggle and the life of the people." Cf. *Govor Danice Perović na Drugom zasjedanju ZAVNOBiH-a u Dokumenti 1943-1944*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1968, p. 200.

²⁷ These changes affected all of Yugoslavia, yet several papers point out the substantial differences between the previous economic and socio-cultural circumstances in different parts of this former state. The countries which comprised the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and subsequently the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, had somewhat different social orders, and substantially different demographic make-ups. This necessarily meant substantial differences and specificities regarding

Assuming that the educational system can be seen as a tangle of discourses, knowledge, legal and institutional arrangements of the ruling regimes and social structures that for a long time had ensured and legitimised first the exclusion, then the discrimination of women in education and teaching, this period is interesting because it was precisely during those twenty years that the number of primary school women teachers soared. At the same time, female teachers were officially made equal to their male colleagues; the new government provided equal living and working conditions and – nominally, at least – strove to improve the traditionally unfavourable financial circumstances of teachers.

The intention behind this paper is to outline the numerous social duties of the teachers during the NOB, first and foremost in spreading literacy and educating women to meet the needs of the general mobilisation during the NOB, and their selfless, committed work on raising and educating children and spreading literacy among adults over the first few years following the liberation of the country as part of the five-year reconstruction plan. The main goal of the paper is to trace the trajectory of the progressive teacher from a revolutionary figure forged in the struggle for a new, more equitable social order to a figure that is gradually depoliticised and rendered passive, as part of a wider process of *feminisation* of the teaching profession.

2. Material Conditions of Work and the Administrative and Legal status of Female Teachers During the Austro-Hungarian Occupation and the Interwar Period

Ever since the beginning of the development of a (state-operated) school system in BiH,²⁸ which dates from the early days of Austro-Hungarian rule in this country, female teachers, as civil servants, had to work in accordance with markedly discriminatory public service laws and by-laws which greatly contributed to the deterioration of the working conditions and advancement opportunities for female teachers.

the position of women in these countries – from marital status and access to education to the right to act in the public sphere. Examining this question in a separate Bosnian-Herzegovinian context seems justified precisely because of those differences and specificities.

²⁸ During the Ottoman rule in BiH, education was private and religious only. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austro-Hungarian authorities opened more and more state schools, the so-called "People's Primaries", which operated alongside the existing private religious schools, and their curricula, textbooks and reading lists were mandated by the state. At the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of BiH, 535 so-called *sybian-mekteb* schools were active in the

In spite of the increase, compared to the Ottoman period,²⁹ in the number of female primary schools, as well as female teacher training schools,³⁰ the Austro-Hungarian authorities did not actually strengthen the processes of female emancipation, nor did they think it was in their interests to increase the number of women in public service. As Suzana Jagić writes, in the Austro-Hungarian period, alleged bodily and spiritual differences between the sexes were used as a pretext for different approaches to the education³¹ of women and men, and for their dif-

country (this is to be taken with a grain of salt; a paper by Snježana Šušnjara claims that in 1876 there were 917 mektebs), 54 Catholic schools and 56 Serb Orthodox schools; towards the end of the Austro-Hungarian rule in BiH, in the school year 1912/13, there were 331 state schools in addition to the religious schools. Taken from: Mitar Papić, *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske okupacije 1878-1918*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. 1972.

²⁹ The first girls' school in the Ottoman period was opened in Sarajevo, as late as the school year 1857/58, thanks to the tenacity, selflessness and dedication of the teacher Staka Skenderova, the first woman in Bosnia and Herzegovina to write a book (*Ljetopis Bosne 1825—1856*). The second girls' primary was established in 1866 by the Protestant suffragette Miss Adelina Paulina Irby. Both schools were boarding schools, and both were attended by girls of all faiths. Seeing that some of the pupils became teachers after graduation, we may treat these schools as the first girls' schools of education in BiH. Five years after Miss Irby opened her school, nuns from Zagreb opened the first Catholic girls' school in Sarajevo. The Sisters of Charity of St Vincent De Paul soon opened schools in Mostar (1872), Dolac near Travnik (1872), Banja Luka and Livno (1874). Muslim girls, as a rule, attended religious schools (mektebs). The data on the schools comes from the studies by Mitar Papić, *Istorija srpskih škola u BiH (A History of Serb Schools in BiH)*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978; and Snježana Šušnjara "Školovanje ženske djece u Bosni i Hercegovini u doba Austro-Ugarske", op. cit.

³⁰ In 1884, alongside a separate department of Miss Irby's Institute for Teacher Education, the congregation of the Daughters of Divine Charity was given the permit to start a private school for female teachers in a monastery in Sarajevo which would use Austro-Hungarian curricula. Only towards the end of the Austro-Hungarian administration, in 1913, did the primary and secondary school for Muslim girls in Sarajevo launch a three-year teacher education course for Muslim secondary girls' school graduates. In 1914, the Serb secondary school for girls obtained the status of a public school, but it closed that same year when WWI broke out. From 1911 onwards, in addition to the religious schools, teacher education was also provided at the state-run school for female teachers in Sarajevo, known as the female *preparandija* (*Germ. Präparandenschule*). In addition to Sarajevo, secondary schools for girls were established in Mostar (1893) and Banja Luka (1898), but in spite of the increase in the number of female primaries the number of pupils stayed very low, which is best illustrated by the fact that in BiH in 1910, 88.05% of the population was illiterate – 83.86% of Croat women, 95% of Serb Women and 99.68% of Muslim women. Data taken from Papić, Mitar, *Školstvo u Bosni (Education in Bosnia)*, and Božinović, Neda, *Žensko pitanje*, op. cit.

³¹ As Dinko Župan relates, pedagogical discourse in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy supported sex policies by producing knowledge on different traits exhibited by sexes on which gender roles were based. It was precisely in the secondary schools that the desirable female identities were shaped. Župan writes: "The main traits the female students were to develop at the secondary school for girls were piety, sincerity, chastity, meekness, shyness, modesty and taciturnity." A female identity developed along these lines was represented as natural and immutable. But this identity was only

ferent positioning in society.³² Thus in this markedly patriarchal society,³³ women, as “lesser beings”, were not only assigned different roles and tasks, but their freedom to operate in the public sphere was limited too. The public service, as a potential arena for the engagement of women, did not approve of the hiring of women, as it was considered that women belonged in the private realm of the home where their chief roles included those of homemakers, wives and mothers. Thus women were hired as public servants almost exclusively in the field of education.

Although the number of female teachers was constantly rising, Austro-Hungarian authorities did nothing to create a legal framework which would ensure the improvement of the professional and material conditions for women teachers. On the contrary, the Act on the Rights and Relations in the Teaching Profession subjected women teachers to multiple discrimination. In addition to their salaries being lower than those of their male colleagues, and their advancement made more difficult by the so-called pay grades, they were not allowed to marry; that is, if they did marry, they would be permanently banned from teaching. An exception was made for marriages to male teachers, in which case the female teacher's salary would be halved and she would lose the right to paid accommodation and other employment benefits.³⁴

All female teachers graduated from teacher training schools before they turned seventeen, but many would start working as teaching assistants at fifteen or sixteen. As a rule, after graduation, they would be posted to female primaries. They were allowed to work at male primaries only if there was a shortage of male teachers, and could only teach junior years. They would win the right to teach at secondary schools only in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. As for advancement

seemingly universal, because the female identity was criss-crossed by a web of other identities (class, religious, ethnic). Thus, for instance, every class had a unique way of implementing the universal determinants of womanhood. The desirable behaviour of a mother, wife and a homemaker varied across classes. Cf. Župan, Dinko. “Viša djevojačka škola u Osijeku (1882-1900)”, *Scrinia slavonsica* 5 (2005), 366–383.

³² Cf. Jagić, “Jer kad žene”, p. 80. The author points out that women were educated with the sole purpose of becoming good wives and mothers, because only an *educated* mother and wife was able to “lay the religious and moral groundwork for the kind of upbringing on which the well-being of the homeland would depend.” Ibid.

³³ Given that patriarchy can be thought in various ways today, and that it is not a self-explanatory system, I am taking my cue from Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, who lists “the domination of men in the workplace, decision-making and property relations [...] as well as the separation of women from the public sphere and their subordination” as the basic features of patriarchy. Rihtman-Auguštin, Dunja. *Etnologija naše svakodnevice*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1988. p. 193.

³⁴ Cf. Božinović, Neda. *Žensko pitanje*, op. cit. p. 80.

and pay grades, the process was very slow, and women would, at best, reach pay grade three towards the end of their careers. Thus, for instance, teacher Hasnija Berberović took her first teachers' oath in 1909, and her last in 1934. She spent 29 years teaching, and was retired in 1939 for health reasons, but, as Mina Kujović points out, it is questionable whether this hard-working teacher was able to enjoy her well-deserved pension of 1475 dinars, seeing that she was committed to a mental hospital, and her pension was deposited with the court.³⁵

Even after the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), there was no significant improvement in the financial circumstances and working conditions of women teachers. The problems faced by teachers remained the same in the newly-formed kingdom; teachers still lived in financial hardship, which is best illustrated by their excessive debts due to extremely low salaries³⁶ recorded in some banates, as well as a large number of resolutions on the issue adopted all over the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.³⁷

Teachers who championed the cause of progressive education³⁸ and were active in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia,³⁹ or openly supported the Party were

³⁵ Cf. Kujović, "Hasnija Berberović – zaboravljena", p. 116.

³⁶ While other civil servants had salaries ranging from 2,900 to 7,500 dinars, teachers were paid 705 to 2,500 dinars. *Reč istine* br. 1 (1940), 6. Quoted in: Rade Vuković, *Napredni učiteljski pokret između dva rata* Beograd: Pedagoški muzej, 1968, p. 109.

³⁷ The resolutions regularly demanded matching remuneration to the prices of essential items, matching the salaries of married female teachers to those of male teachers ("equal pay for equal work"), abolishing the III price grade, the rejection of group V just as with other civil servants, etc. Cf. Vuković, *Napredni učiteljski*, p. 93.

³⁸ Progressive schooling is understood as schooling based on socialist ideas. As early as 1873, Serbian teachers in Zemun launched the socialist teachers' *Učitelj* which gathered progressive teachers from the Vojvodina region; in Serbia proper, a social democratic teachers' club was established in 1907 and it stood for free compulsory universal education at all schools, i.e. for the idea that the state should build and maintain people's schools. Cf. Vuković, *Napredni učiteljski*, 10. As early as 1908, the pedagogic book series *Budućnost* served as a platform for progressive pedagogy and had an increasingly strong influence on the teaching profession. However, whereas a certain percentage of the teaching cadre in Serbia and Croatia belonged to various social-democratic organisations, teachers from BiH, as a rule, did not enter political life openly during the Austro-Hungarian rule, and were therefore less in touch with revolutionary pedagogic ideas. It was only after 1920, and the Congress of Teachers of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that the number of progressive teachers in BiH rose. Mitar Trifunović Učo especially distinguished himself as one of the first active members of the workers' movement and a Communist Party of Yugoslavia MP. Cf. Papić, *Učitelji*, pp. 45, 46.

³⁹ After the Protection of Security and Social Order Act was passed and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia banned (by a decree known as "Obznana") in 1921, the party went underground. The decree also banned the Communist Teachers' Club, as well as the party and union press. The 6

at best transferred to other banates or subjected to frequent controls, arrests and protracted trials; some spent years in prison, including a number of female teachers. For instance, teacher Lepa Perović, a distinguished Party activist, was arrested for revolutionary activities and transferred from Bosnia to Serbia, only to be fired from public service in 1937. Teacher Draginja Savković spent three months in remand before she was arraigned and charged with spreading communist ideas and propaganda, but the charge was dropped due to a lack of evidence. After the trial she remained under constant police surveillance, and was transferred to another county.⁴⁰ Persecution and arrests continued during World War II. Ilinka Obrenović-Milošević, known as the Red Teacher, was pregnant when she was arrested for collecting food and clothes for Partisan fighters and deported to the Banjica concentration camp. A similar fate befell the progressive teacher Živka Vujinović-Bula, who spent eleven months in the Banjica camp, and was fired from her post upon release.⁴¹

In addition to the legally mandated rights and obligations, the profession faced specific problems in the teaching process itself as well as in extracurricular activities in the community, especially where the population was largely illiterate. This was usually the case in rural areas. Working in the country was much more difficult because rural school buildings often did not meet the most basic of requirements for work, and instruction was, as a rule, organised in a single classroom. Jovanka Kecman notes that female teachers were mostly employed in the country after they graduated from teacher training schools. In addition to their work at school, they had the obligation to participate in the activities of all cultural organisations and charities operating in their counties, as well as to organise literacy courses and housekeeping courses which educated women on the importance of hygiene, a healthy diet and household economy. In spite of their much greater workload, female teachers were underpaid – in some cases their salaries were up to 50% lower than those of their male colleagues.⁴²

January Dictatorship abolished permanent employment for teachers and put them under police surveillance, while it continued to persecute, fire and imprison them. More in: Vuković, *Napredni učiteljski*, 14, 15.

⁴⁰ In: Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, op. cit. pp. 381, 82.

⁴¹ Quoted in: Radisav S. Nedović, *Čačanski kraj u NOB 1941-1945: žene borci i saradnici*, Čačak: Okružni odbor SUBNOR-a, 2010., pp. 59–63.

⁴² In: Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, op. cit. 373.

3. The Development of the Progressive People's Teacher on the Eve of World War II and During the People'NOB

On account of their social engagement in the country, women teachers enjoyed a good reputation among the villagers and were influential in the community, all the more so because they respected local customs, lived by the village rules and were therefore treated as full members of the community. For this reason, the Communist Party, having strengthened and massified the progressive teachers' movement, would lay particular stress on training female teachers for so-called political work in the rural areas.⁴³ Since young teachers received their first posts in villages and towns as a rule, the political mission of the progressive teachers' movement focused almost exclusively on these rural areas.

Seeing that the CPY operated illegally from 1921 to 1936, their legal activities among teachers took the form of starting culture and publishing collectives. The progressive teachers of BiH started their own "Petar Kočić" collective as late as August 1939, at the Teachers' Congress⁴⁴ held in Banja Luka, having previously operated through the "Vuk Karadžić" and "Ivan Filipović" collectives. These collectives organised gatherings of teachers, where the so-called Pedagogy Weeks, organised during winter holidays between 1938 and 1941, were especially important, as political and ideological lectures were held and discussions on important issues and problems of the profession.⁴⁵ From 1936 onwards, the activities of these collectives, and their work with progressive female teachers were especially intensified.⁴⁶ In addition to these gatherings, progressive teach-

⁴³ Ibid. p. 375.

⁴⁴ At this congress, i.e. at the Nineteenth Annual Supreme Session, the representatives of political groups submitted three candidate lists for the executive, steering and other committees and organs of the Yugoslav Teachers' Association. Three political groups were active within this umbrella organisation – the Yugoslav Radical Union (YRU) or the New Teachers' Movement, a group built round the so-called class line of bourgeois democrats, and a group gathered round the *Učiteljska straža* journal including the teachers' co-operative "Vuk Karadžić", which gathered communists and other progressive teachers, male and female. At the congress, the communists submitted a list which represented the interests of the third group of teachers. Seeing that it was third in succession, this group was subsequently called *Treća učiteljska grupa* (Teachers' Group Three). More in: Rade Vuković, *Napredni učitelji*, pp. 74–88. The congress was notable for gathering female teachers from all over the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in a separate meeting, to discuss the legal and financial status of female teachers. On that occasion the female teachers motioned again to create female departments within regional teachers' association. Cf. Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, n.dj., p. 381.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, op.cit. p. 375.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 374.

ers developed their political, cultural and educational activities through people's libraries and reading rooms.⁴⁷ Of the several magazines they published, *Učiteljska straža* (Teachers' Guard) was of particular note.

Since progressive teachers were mostly assigned to villages, they became the core membership of the Communist Party in rural areas; more specifically, in Bosnia, we are talking about villages in Bosanska Krajina, areas around Sarajevo, Mt Romanija, Semberija, and East Herzegovina. It was in these areas that most teacher-WW2 volunteers, recipients of the 1941 Partisan Commemorative Medal, lived and worked.⁴⁸ Whilst the authorities in the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina administrated by the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) were committed to creating a new state-run education system, Croatian in character, by endeavouring to "[...] breathe into its first laws the 'ustasha spirit and the Croatian national spirit' [...] in the spirit of anti-Semitic policies accompanied by racial laws",⁴⁹ the leadership of the People's Liberation Movement (NOP) endeavoured to implement the CPY programme and the NOP Platform from the very beginning of the uprising, and worked on developing and improving popular enlightenment schemes by running literacy programmes on a massive scale and renewing and developing the regular education system in the aforementioned (free) territories.⁵⁰

According to a report by the teacher Mica Krpić, organised work in education commenced as early as April 1942 in villages around the town of Drvar, where the first cultural and educational committees were established along with literacy courses with classes three times a week.⁵¹ Cultural and educational work spread over Mt Kozara and the villages of the Podgrmeč region, where literacy

⁴⁷ An article titled *Vrijeme zrenja* published in a volume of testimonies about the engagement of women of Mostar in the pre-war period describes various activities of women which took place at the library and reading room. More in: Mahmud Konjhodžić, *Mostarke, fragmenti o revolucionarnoj djelatnosti i patriotskoj opredjeljenosti žena Mostara, o njihovoj borbi za slobodu i socijalizam*, Mostar: Opštinski odbor SUBNOR-a, 1981., pp. 36–38.

⁴⁸ Cf. Papić, *Učitelji u kulturnoj*, 67. Teacher recipients of the 1941 Commemorative Medal are: Vera Babić, Mila Bajalica, Jela Bičanić, Milka Čaldarović, Dušanka Ilić, Milica Krpić, Danica Pavić, Jela Perović, Lepa Perović, Nada Prica, Mica Vrhovac and Zaga Umićević. Ibid, p. 82.

⁴⁹ Gladanac, Sanja. "Uspostava državnog školstva na području Velike župe Vrhbosna", Husnija Kamberović ed., *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: Novi pogledi. Zbornik radova*. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju u Sarajevu, 2012: 67–97, 74, 75.

⁵⁰ Cf. Kožar, Azem. "O nekim aspektima obrazovno-odgojne politike Narodnooslobodilačkog pokreta na području Bosne i Hercegovine 1941-1945", *Šezdeset godina od završetka Drugog svjetskog rata: kako se sjećati 1945. godine. Zbornik radova*, Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2006, pp. 235–248, 236 and 237.

⁵¹ Zaninović, *Kulturno posvjetni rad*, p. 20.

courses were led by, among others, teachers Mica Vrhovec, Ivanka Čanković, Jela Perović and Anka Kulenović.⁵² After that, educational departments were established to organise courses preparing young people for work in schools and literacy courses. In addition, teachers Nijaz Alikadić and Cecilija Čebo wrote the first textbook for pupils, the *Primer of Livno (Livanjski bukvar)*.⁵³

After the First Session of the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije – AVNOJ) which took place in Bihać in late November 1942, the Educational Department of the Executive Committee of the AVNOJ was tasked with organising educational activities in the liberated territories. The Department adopted a series of regulations, including the Instruction on Primary School Work, along with a number of requests and instructions to Narodno-oslobodilački odbori (NOO) to open new primary schools and literacy courses, as well as syllabi for primary schools, courses and the people's university.⁵⁴ Kožar argues that these documents of the Educational Department are "an historically significant clue for the reform of education in the spirit of the ideology of the NOP's forces. They mark a new era in the development of schools".⁵⁵

From late 1942 onwards, conditions for organising literacy courses in the free territories as well as in the Partisan units were improving, largely thanks to the empowerment of the AFŽ as a mass political organisation.⁵⁶ In addition to the courses for literacy course leaders, the AFŽ also organised political education courses for women, regionally and nation-wide. Lectures were given by, among others, Mara Radić, Nata Hadžić-Todorović (in the region of Bosanska Krajina) and Radmila Begović and Milka Čaldarević (in Eastern Bosnia). The AFŽ also set up culture groups comprising poetry recitation sections, event organisation sections, and sections for reading radio news and Partisan press.

⁵² Zaninović, *op. cit.* p. 21.

⁵³ This textbook had only 44 pages and was a cross between a primer and an exercise book. It is notable because, among other things, it represents an historical document which features, for the first time, content promoting different educational, pedagogic and ideological values. Cf. Mihailo Ogrizović (1962). Quoted in Papić, *Učitelji u kulturnoj*, p. 74.

⁵⁴ In: Kožar, "O nekim aspektima", *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Kožar, "O nekim aspektima", *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ The first national conference of the AFŽ Yugoslavia was held from 6–8 December 1942 in Bosanski Petrovac. The tasks defined during the conference preparations were agreed upon, and two basic sets of tasks which the AFŽ was to carry out during the war were confirmed: assisting the armed forces and ensuring the normalisation of life in the liberated territories, and achieving political and cultural emancipation of women and their integration as equals into the NOB and the fight for a new society. Cf. Sklevicky, *Konji, žene*, *op. cit.* pp. 25–26.

In November 1943, the AFŽ organised the First Educators' Conference in the free territories on the topic of literacy courses and drafting a comprehensive primary school primer.⁵⁷ Zaninović notes that a new groundwork was laid for the organisation of literacy courses with the liberation of large tracts of territory, while from 1944 onward it was compulsory for the courses to last 30 days with classes four times a week.⁵⁸ The end of 1944 saw the beginning of a large-scale process of setting up new schools in the liberated territories.

However, the spreading of the network of primary schools and the rise of other forms of educational activities put the issue of staffing on the agenda. Just before the war, there were 1043 primary schools in BiH employing 2,321 teachers instructing 150,783 pupils, that is, 65 pupils per teacher.⁵⁹ At the end of the 1944/45 school year there were 577 schools with 82,705 pupils, 359 male teachers and 741 female teachers.⁶⁰ Given that, according to incomplete data, 173 male teachers and 80 female teachers were killed during the war,⁶¹ it is clear why restaffing was to become one of the key challenges of the new educational policies.

As a temporary solution, the decision was made to start training temporary teaching staff while the war was still on, to have them fully trained after the war. Teaching courses were set up and all young people who had completed at least two years of secondary school were invited to enrol. The first course was carried out in Sanski Most in May 1943. Another was then held in Lipnik, and by the end of the war courses with the same syllabus were organised in several other towns in BiH. Most attendees graduated from teaching schools and universities after the war and became the vanguard of new educational policies in BiH.⁶² It should be pointed out that seminars were organised for new teachers and those who joined the movement and the NOB at a later stage, in which they were acquainted with the goals of the NOB and the educational policies implemented by the People's liberation committees, as well as with the basic ideas of the progressive teachers' movement.⁶³

⁵⁷ In: Papić, *Učitelji u*, pp. 78, 79.

⁵⁸ Zaninović, *Kulturno prosvjetni rad*, 158, 159.

⁵⁹ In: Papić, Mitar. *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini 1941-1945*, pp. 4–11.

⁶⁰ Zaninović, *op. cit.* p. 176.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp. 187, 190.

⁶² For more on these courses see: Zaninović, *Kulturno prosvjetni*, n. dj., pp. 124, 180–184.

⁶³ Zaninović, *op. cit.* p. 185.

Thus, in addition to the progressive female teachers who started their revolutionary struggle in the interwar period and became prominent political and revolutionary figures,⁶⁴ another type of people's teacher emerged during the war: a young woman who had completed a few years of secondary school and had voluntarily joined the struggle, or had become a fellow traveller. These women were trained for teaching in courses started during the war. As a rule, they went on to graduate from teacher training colleges and continued to work in education until retirement.

3.1. Five Year Reconstruction Plan: New Challenges and Old Burdens for the Teachers

Educational policies of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia led to an illiteracy rate of around 75% in BiH in 1941. This undesirable situation was exacerbated by terrifying material and human losses, and thus after the war BiH faced enormous illiteracy rates, especially among women,⁶⁵ as well as a lack of professionals, especially in education, and a large number of destroyed or damaged school buildings.⁶⁶ This slowed down the planned tempo of the reconstruction of the

⁶⁴ A good example is the career of Rada Miljković, who started out as a progressive teacher, became a successful agitator and finally a soldier killed in action in 1942 near Bugojno; in 1953 she was posthumously awarded the Order of the People's Hero of Yugoslavia. A detailed account of her revolutionary path is available here: http://www.savezboraca.autentik.net/licnosti_rada_miljkovic.php

⁶⁵ In her article titled *Narodno prosvjećivanje (The People's Enlightenment)*, Danica Pavić points out that the new people's government, unlike the previous unpopular one, set the enlightenment of the masses as a priority. Referring to the data gathered by the educational arm of the G.N.O. (People's City Committee) she states that 13,591 illiterate persons were recorded in Sarajevo after liberation, 10,765 of them women, mostly Muslims (9,072) and homemakers (9,563), and argues that women were obviously the greatest victims of a lack of education. With great enthusiasm, she relates how 118 literacy courses were launched in Sarajevo, and how women, many of them over 50 years of age, "impress with their eagerness and thirst for knowledge", in spite of the material hardship. In her opinion, the extent to which women were excluded from public and cultural life in the pre-war Sarajevo is best illustrated by the fact that many of them, although born and raised in Sarajevo, went to the cinema for the first time as part of their literacy courses and saw two films (*Days and Nights* and *PE Parade in Moscow*) which left such a deep impression on them that they discussed them on several occasions during the course. In the last part of her article, the author makes an assessment of the AFŽ courses, and thinks that the course teachers, mostly regular teachers from Sarajevan primary schools, organisationally assisted by the AFŽ and youth, successfully realised the course activities, and that "during this winter campaign alone, the people's government managed to teach more people to read and write than the previous unpopular regime managed in decades." In: Nova žena: list Antifašističkog fronta žena Bosne i Hercegovine, Year 2, issue 13 (1946), 9.

⁶⁶ Just after the war, there were 684 primary schools in BiH, 1,288 teaching staff, and 97,116 pupils. Quoted in: *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije, Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina*, separat uz II izdanje Zagreb, LZ, 1983., p. 230.

country set down in the Five-Year Plan,⁶⁷ which is why the improvement of education was one of the priorities of the new Yugoslav and Bosnian-Herzegovinian government. It was necessary to reconstruct damaged schools and build new ones, as well as educate new teachers.

At the same time, the newly-formed socialist state and the CPY had specific expectations from teachers.⁶⁸ Among other things, in the first years after the war, the process of construction or reconstruction of institutions of culture went in parallel with the construction and reconstruction of schools. Libraries and reading halls were opened, along with co-operative halls and culture halls. All these institutions were mainly managed by teachers, often without any kind of compensation. All of this made the teacher's job extremely difficult in the first post-war years. However, in this period primary schools were in the focus of the state and socio-political organisations, which fired the teachers' enthusiasm.⁶⁹

I will now make use of the testimonials quoted below to try to roughly sketch the extremely difficult working conditions the people's teachers were facing, but also their unquestionable enthusiasm.

First, one should mention the literacy courses, that is, one of the most important, most massified social actions of the day – the so-called literacy campaign. In five popular enlightenment actions carried out from 1945 to 1 October 1950, 42,196 literacy courses were organised and 670,874 people were taught

⁶⁷ The 1947–1951 five-year plan provided for the development of new industrial branches, restoration of old companies, mechanisation of mining, improvement of agricultural production, construction of new roads, extension of the network of cultural and educational institutions and development of healthcare and social care institutions.

⁶⁸ Cvijetin Mijatović, minister of education in the first post-war government of the People's Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pointed out when he opened a course for teacher trainers: "The basic task of a teacher at our school is upbringing, not in a general sense, but in the spirit of the NOB. [...] Instruction and appropriate relations with schoolchildren should be abuzz with the spirit of the new instruction, and the glorious past of our peoples, their desires and goals they sought to attain [...] We want free, bald, energetic people, not minions." In the countryside, "a teacher is not the teacher of children alone. In a situation where he is the only intellectual in his village, he has to bear the brunt of socially committed work, strive primarily to elevate the area in which he resides. A village teacher, who works in difficult conditions, must not separate himself from the village, but he also must not accept the backwardness; instead, he should drive the village forward. Tasks outside of school in which teachers should participate are work in village co-operatives, literacy courses and reading rooms, and other tasks related to cultural elevation." Cf. Cvijetin Mijatović, "Govor na otvaranju kursa za prosvjetne instruktore održanog u Sarajevu u ljeto 1946", *Prosvjetni radnik* 7 (1946), 6.

⁶⁹ Cf. Papić, *Učitelji u*, n. dj. 88.

to read and write.⁷⁰ The people's teachers' contribution was enormous,⁷¹ since the courses ran under their supervision. Teachers taught 3,099 courses along with regular monthly or fortnightly counselling with course leaders to ensure highest-quality work. As Papić stresses, "enormous effort and overtime work were woven into [this undertaking], because every teacher taught, in addition to the courses, one or two classes at a regular school. The work started early in the morning and finished at night."⁷² This is how teacher Slavica Bureković from Sarajevo, who served in the village of Pokrajčiči near Travnik, described her experience of organising and leading literacy courses:

Teachers were tasked with spreading literacy, that was one of the biggest steps society was to take. There were very many illiterate people indeed, among them great numbers of young men and women. We teachers organised literacy courses even at come-togethers. The instruction usually took place late at night, when the teachers were free, after their classes at the regular school. I brought many women to literacy, I reckon seventy per-cent of attendees were women. I organised these courses not only in my home, but also in hamlets. On a few occasions I was remunerated for my work.⁷³

Krunoslava Lovrenović, a teacher from the village of Ričice near Zenica, recounted that the courses were organised in winter months, from late October to late March or early April. They were mostly

organised late at night, because we teachers worked with regular pupils during the day. At times we didn't have enough paraffin [for the lamps] and we had to be extremely economical, watch the consumption. I've had a mother and daughter or a father and son sharing a desk. An exam had to be sat at the end of the course. Our attitude was clear – ignorance is our arch nemesis, the sooner we vanquish it the sooner we will get out of poverty.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Quoted in: Jerković, *Uloga učitelja u prosvjetnim*, p. 20.

⁷¹ However, this does not necessarily mean that the support of female teachers was unconditional and that there were no obstructions to the many tasks. Thus, for instance, the monthly report of the Sarajevo County Committee of the AFŽ, no.1/48, relates that female teachers at first agreed to organise lectures and a general knowledge course, but, when it was launched, they sent word that they were too busy and unable to teach the course. Sreski odbor AFŽ-a za srez Sarajevski, 'Izveštaj o stanju radu organizacije za decembar 1947, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 4, folder 5, 1948.

⁷² Papić, *Učitelji u*, 88.

⁷³ Statement made by Slavica Bureković to Admir Jerković. Cf. Jerković, "Uloga učitelja u", op. cit. p. 21.

⁷⁴ Jerković, "Uloga učitelja u prosvjetnim", op. cit. 28.

Working in rural areas after the war remained the most demanding form of teacher engagement, just as it was before the war, and the new state continued the practice of assigning young female teachers to the country. The hardness of the teachers' work was reflected by the fact that they were burdened with extracurricular activities and they had to perform several functions at the same time. In rural schools, teachers also managed and administrated their schools and had to submit performance reports on a regular basis. At the same time they were saddled with great teaching loads and had to work in crammed classrooms.

Pupils attended combined classes. In rural schools, teachers often had to work with over a hundred pupils at the same time.⁷⁵ In addition, the material conditions of work and life in rural schools were exceedingly difficult. Village teachers were entitled to free lodging and heating fuel.⁷⁶ However, as most villages could not provide these entitlements, teachers either had no place to stay, or were given one to two rooms in the school itself, mostly in disrepair, without running water and sanitation. There are many eloquent testimonials from the day. When in 1951 teacher Krunoslava Lovrenović came to the village of Moščanica near Zenica, she found the school in dire condition. This is how she describes it:

The school had two classrooms and a hall, and we also had a school kitchen. I don't know if it even had bread at the time. There was a stove in the middle of the classroom. Both Muslim and Orthodox children went to my class together. When teacher Ljepša Džamonja and I first arrived, there weren't even any locks on the doors. We taught so-called combined classes. First and third grade, or second and fourth, all together in one classroom in which instruction took place. First you teach one grade, then the other. As you work with the group you have to talk to, you assign the other group to draw something, to keep them still. The children were nice, well-behaved and tidy. Orthodox girls wore blouses with long black skirts and always plaited their hair, while Muslim girls wore Turkish trousers and blouses. Each wore whatever footwear they had – woollen socks, hide shoes or galoshes. There were shelves in the hall for coats. In winter, they would come to school wading through deep snow [...]. Nobody provided firewood for the school, each child would bring a split log in the morning.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Teacher Slavica Bureković taught combined classes at the school in the village of Pokrajčiči near Bila attended by 110 pupils, while teacher Olga Kurilić from Vrbljani worked with 220 children at her school and successfully managed fourteen courses. In: Jerković, "Uloga učitelja u", pp. 28–29.

⁷⁶ Cf. Uredba o pravu na besplatan stan i ogrjev, 56/46–626 – Uredba o pravu na besplatan stan i ogrjev učitelja narodnih osnovnih škola u selima, 46/48, 488.

⁷⁷ In: Jerković, "Uloga učitelja u", p. 35.

Seeing that literacy courses in the country were organised in winter, teachers were often unable to exercise their right to holidays, and they worked hard during the school winter break. Yet, in spite of the exceedingly difficult material conditions of work, it seems that teachers, as a rule, carried out their tasks enthusiastically. This can be seen from the many testimonies and recorded interviews with teachers. Thus, for instance, in the *Nova žena* magazine, teacher Mileva Grubač from Višegrad went into raptures about working with women in her literacy course in the village of Dušća. She first relates how she was asked by the women from that village to “come and teach them, too” and promised to come on Sundays, as she was busy working at school or at the literacy courses in Višegrad. This is how she describes her first visit to the village, and the first class:

On Sunday, they sent a boy to fetch me lest I got lost and wandered about trying to find the village. I went up the Drina, thinking about that wonderful river, celebrated in song, bloodied. She flows quiet and blue, as though she remembers no evil. Steep hills tower above her banks, and on the patches of flatlands traces of aerial bombs can be seen. Here and there, the steel frame of a building juts out from the ground, loomed over by a factory chimney. These are the remnants of “Varda”, the erstwhile saw mill. I finally arrive in the village. I am welcomed by women with primers and writing tablets. Merry was our first class, when our grow-up pupils, with great patience and determination, began to write their first letters in unsteady strokes.⁷⁸

With their enormous enthusiasm and engagement, progressive people’s teachers laid an important cornerstone for the building of a new state. Together with their colleagues, female teachers organised schools across the country and created new educational policies. In their struggle for new schools they not only changed the curricula, but also established completely new relations with their pupils. Rigid classroom hierarchy was abolished, and new learning and work practices were introduced, based on mutual trust and respect. The teachers were often full of parental concern for their pupils. Instead of corporal punishment they reasoned with pupils, nurtured a competitive spirit and camaraderie.⁷⁹ This earned teachers a reputation, as well as the recognition and respect of the whole community, especially children and their parents. In addition, they organised cultural events in the areas where they served, and often worked at cultural institutions, from libraries and public reading rooms to amateur theatres and athletics societies.

⁷⁸ *Nova žena*: list Antifašističkog fronta žena Bosne i Hercegovine, year 2, no. 13, 1946, p. 20.

⁷⁹ Cf. Zaninović, *Kulturno prosvjetni*, op. cit. p. 186.

One such exemplary teaching career is that of people's teacher Nasiha Porobić.⁸⁰ She was born in 1928 in Derventa. When the Partisans were in Derventa for a day in 1944, she joined the movement as a sixth-former. She was wholly unprepared when she joined the Partisans; at first she served as a nurse in Teslić, then she was elected to act as a delegate at a congress in Sarajevo, and after the war she went to the village of Korače, where she taught 146 pupils. First she completed a teacher training course in Banja Luka, and went on to study to be a teacher of Serbo-Croat. She worked during her studies. She organised all extracurricular activities at school, took part in all competitions for pupils and organised events. She stressed that she loved her calling and her pupils more than anything, and that she even neglected her family, two children and husband because of work. She received several awards and honours, including the Order of People's Merit With a Silver Star.

I repeatedly listened to the recording of the interview with Nasiha Porobić, attempting to work out what it is in her voice and the way in which she answered the questions that has an unsettling effect, why her answers rouse a vague feeling of unease. No, her account is not a testimony of the futility of the struggle which, in her own words, gave her what she was able to receive. Her life was not without purpose, and there is no remorse. Nasiha claims that, if she could do it all again, she would not change anything, but this time she would join the struggle "with a bit more caution and better preparation. I'd take at least two changes of clothes. I wouldn't just plunge headlong into it."

What is unsettling is not the resignation in her voice, or her conciliatory tone – these are probably just the distance that comes with old age, or perhaps even a wisdom with which we assess our own decisions at the end of our lives. What is disturbing is the passive voice in the narration which suggests that Nasiha accomplished so much in her rich, fulfilling life, but had too little time actually to *live* this rich life. What is unsettling is the fact that she, like most women who participated in revolutionary struggle, uncritically agreed to support the myth of the woman who gladly gives up her life in favour of building the state and society of the future.⁸¹

However, that is one side of the coin. It is important to keep in mind that, in spite of the fact that great masses of women accepted the role of self-sacrificing her-

⁸⁰ Interview with Nasiha Porobić conducted by Elvira Jahić in January 2016. The interview is stored in the Audio Collection of the Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/415>.

⁸¹ Cf. Jambrešić-Kirin, *Dom i svijet*, 27.

oines, modern-day Iphigenias, there existed systemic gaps, or conscious strategies of dealing with women, in this case people's teachers, strategies that saw to it that the process of transformation from the oppressed to the progressive teacher remained unfinished.

3.2. Between the Emancipation and the Feminisation of the Teaching Profession

If we are talking about the specificities of female socio-political organising in WWII, the massive scale of association, as well as the participation of large numbers of rural women and women of all social and ethnic backgrounds, are brought up as a rule.⁸² Ivana Pantelić⁸³ argues that the mass mobilisation of women and their decision to join the Partisans was influenced by the mass arrival of female teachers to rural areas after 1918. In various ways, these teachers worked towards the emancipation and empowerment of women.

Although people's teachers, along with nurses and female fighters, were distinguished activists of the anti-fascist movement and the NOB, they were not invited to participate in the executive bodies of the government and the highest bodies of the party during and after the war.⁸⁴ On the contrary, the emancipatory figure of the teacher-fighter from the NOB gradually transformed into the figure of the great selfless mother who is supposed to raise a new generation through the process of compulsory primary education.

As noted by Amila Ždralović, the mass participation of women in combat units during the war

⁸² Cf. Dušanka Kovačević et al. *Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije*, Belgrade: Leksikografski zavod Sveznanje, 1972, pp. 209–210. Available at <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/71>

⁸³ Pantelić, Ivana. "Yugoslav female partisans in World War II", *Cahiers balkaniques* 41 (2013), 3. Available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/files/original/f47c848c2d081c22905ba11a9d869fd3.pdf>

⁸⁴ This was the case not only with people's teachers, but with all women who participated in the revolution. Although women's accomplishments in the NOB were much spoken of, their service was not adequately rewarded, that is, when the new government was formed, women were not given an opportunity to participate in its legislative and executive bodies. In her comparative analysis of data on women on the battlefield and women as delegates to ZAVNOBiH and AVNOJ, Vera Katz shows that the representation of women in political bodies was not commensurate with their participation in the NOB. For instance, there were no women ministers in the first post-war government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cf. Katz, "O društvenom položaju", pp. 139, 141. This trend continued in the post-war period; thus, for instance, there were only 4.7% of women at the Constituent Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1948, as well as on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

also meant the beginning of struggle against the traditional notions of the woman's role and place in society, in their families as well as in the units they were joining. From the stories about female partisans it may be concluded that in their units many of them were in charge of patriarchally defined female tasks, such as cooking and sewing. However, at the same time they do tasks patriarchally defined as male, and they often volunteer for the most difficult assignments. In this way they helped break traditional notions and stereotypes of the woman's place and role in society.⁸⁵

Thus was popularised the figure of the woman-mother, oppressed and kept in a state of ignorance by the patriarchal bourgeois order, who not only manages to bring herself to literacy in the revolutionary struggle by attending a literacy course, but also enters the educational process from the anonymity of the private sphere and teaches others. In *Mi se borimo i učimo* (*We Fight and We Learn*), a regular section in the AFŽ magazine *Žena kroz borbu* (*Fighting Woman*), one such transformation of a woman was described in an article about a celebration organised by the 16th Muslim Brigade in June 1944 at which distinguished fighters were decorated:

A mere year ago, Zumreta was hauling heavy ewers of water, scrubbing cobbles in courtyards, labouring in other people's houses, far from books and any semblance of cultural life and work. Today she is being honoured as the best educator and cultural worker in her brigade [...] Zumreta has acquired so much knowledge that she has been able to lead and teach others.⁸⁶

However, from the mid-1950s onward, it was precisely these attempts by women to ensure equality and new positions and social roles through selfless commitment, caring for others, volunteering and doing the hardest jobs that led to the loss of their hard-earn positions, after they had borne the brunt of the effort to rebuild the country which lay in ruins.⁸⁷ In other words, they returned (more precisely: they were returned) to the confines of the traditional patriarchal roles. Thus, as Vjeran Katunarić puts it, the new socialist woman slipped from the heroic figure of the woman-fighter to the figure of the tame homemaker and 'fashion-conscious' woman:

⁸⁵ Ždralović, Amila, "Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena", *Zabilježene*, 76.

⁸⁶ *Žena kroz borbu*: list Antifašističkog fronta žena istočne Bosne, year 2, no. 3/ 8, 1945.

⁸⁷ According to Ivana Pantelić, from the mid-fifties onwards, lay-offs of women workers in the industrial and state sectors were on the rise. Cf. Pantelić, Ivana. *Partizanke kao*, op. cit. 124–25.

Immediately after the war, [the figure of the woman-fighter] was supplanted by the woman from the socialist poster, the woman-builder in the factory, at the construction site, at sporting events, etc. That figure reflected the revolutionary zeal of the young people of both sexes, as well as the spontaneous assimilation of women into male activities. A strong flash of light gradually faded from culture and was overwhelmed by the evolution of standard patriarchal culture. Women were pushed into the private sphere, and as the living standard of the family rose, the patterns of petty bourgeois life were renewed [...]. The tabloid press exploded in the 1960s as a consequence of the strengthening of the role of the market in the Yugoslav economy. The female press, focused on fashion and make-up, faithfully copies the Western model of the female body, the female inner life and sentimentality. Jacqueline Onasis and similar characters overshadowed the emancipating figures of female social-realist culture, female fighters, workers and athletes.⁸⁸

In the post-revolutionary period, the figure of the progressive teacher follows the same path of transformation previously taken by all revolutionary female figures. Thus the people's teacher, on the wings of the ideals of labour, first became a shock worker who, working more and more to meet the needs of her great metaphoric⁸⁹ family, only to gradually put on (or be thrown into) the chains of patriarchy and tradition of the previous regimes. Her performing of the traditional and 'natural' female roles of the nanny of the nation, the caring mother of all pupils and their mostly illiterate parents, left the people's teacher, like other working women in socialism, with less and less "time for self-management". Not having time meant "being outside of time, outside of history, being left with your biological nature"⁹⁰ permanently stuck in the state of becoming⁹¹ a progressive teacher.

⁸⁸ Katunarić, Vjeran, *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti*, Zagreb: Naprijed, 1984, pp. 236, 237

⁸⁹ According to L. Sklevicky, during the revolution and the construction of the new woman, the proper family was perceived as contradictory, given that it was necessary on the one hand, but represented an obstacle for the new social roles of women. As a solution, she offers something she calls the "metaphorical family", in which the attributes of a true community of humans are ascribed to the movement and the NOB. Cf. Sklevicky, *Konji, žene*, 48.

⁹⁰ Despot, Blaženka, "Žena i samoupravljanje", *Delo 4* (1981): 112-117, p. 115; see more in: Blaženka Despot, 'Žensko pitanje' u socijalističkom samoupravljanju in: Lydia Sklevicky, ed., *Žena i društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloga*. Zagreb: Sociološko društvo, 1987; and idem, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje*, Zagreb: Cekode, 1987.

⁹¹ Tatjana Jukić thinks it is "indicative that communism shows structural affinity for women in places where for Deleuze the woman is also a platform for becoming, the *devenir femme*, where for Deleuze the woman signifies the logic and the dynamics of becoming which lies in the background of every subsequent identity and identification. Such a woman, a *devenir-femme*, much like the spectre from

However, it would be false to suggest that the struggle of the progressive teacher for full emancipation, independence, better material conditions of work and appropriate remuneration⁹² was left unfinished⁹³ just because teachers obediently agreed to play the imposed roles and operate under unfavourable circumstances. We are dealing with a different, more complex phenomenon. Relying on Bloch's claim about the women's movement being obsolete or supplanted or delayed, and his hypothesis that after revolution it is the movement's turn as a self-realisation of femininity, Nadežda Čačinović⁹⁴ examines the quality of being delayed as a new element within the classical doctrine of the workers' movement, and, among other things, she notes that the possibility of a different self-realisation of femininity in post-revolutionary societies is still delayed, and that femininity reappears as an old greatness.⁹⁵ Čačinović explains that the very effort to include everyone in the work process, especially in the division of managing duties, is considered positive progress. In principle, it is acknowledged that 'the New Woman' is human and capable of superior achievements whilst performing all the traditional female roles (consoler, feeder, healer). However, she concludes, "the inner unsustainability of that role is acknowledged as 'overburdening', a euphemism which conceals the draining of women and a complete lack of improvement regarding the male role".⁹⁶

the opening line of the Communist Manifesto, haunts then everything which subsequently develops as the gender politics of socialism. By the same token, this would mean that the gender politics of socialism is always and a priori inadequate, because it necessarily fails to grasp that structural affinity between the woman and communism". See: Jukić, Tatjana. "Žena kao revolucija: od Garbo do Tita." *ProFemina* Special Issue (2011): 33–39, p. 34.

⁹² Renata Jambrešić-Kirin talks about the conflicting simultaneity and stratification of female roles "which produced the triply burdened 'super-woman': a worker, a mother/homemaker and a public-spirited citizen who sought role models in at least three different ideospheres". Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, "O konfliktnoj komplementarnosti ženskog pamćenja: Između moralne revizije i feminističke intervencije" *ProFemina* Special Issue (2011): 39–53, p. 47.

⁹³ In her new critical reading of the position of the working woman in socialism, Vlasta Jalušič argues that the newly attained emancipation which reduced the woman to a worker actually prevented women from transforming into a complete political being. Cf. Jalušič, Vlasta, "Women in Post-Socialist Slovenia: Socially Adapted, Politically Marginalized", Sabrina Ramet ed., *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1999, p. 112.

⁹⁴ Nadežda Čačinović, "Odgovor na pitanje: kakva je sudbina ženstvenosti s obzirom na emancipaciju" was originally published in the magazine *Žena* in 1978. Cit. Čačinović, Nadežda, *U ženskom ključu: ogledi u teoriji kulture*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2000.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 14–15.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 15.

This process, from the emancipation to the feminisation of the teaching profession, should first and foremost be seen from a wider ideological level of operation within which the hijacking and the abuse of traditional values in a new context takes place.⁹⁷ Thus, even during the preparations for the mass agitation of women and the broad masses and their inclusion in the NOB, the leadership of the movement and its chief ideologues concluded that the existing tradition should not be openly questioned, because "respecting the tradition is a better/more expedient form of propaganda and a way to expand the movement".⁹⁸ As Lydia Sklevicky shows, neither the Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCCP) nor any other governing body of the NOP was trying to change traditional values; instead, the focus was on trying to modify them to suit the new historical moment. Therefore, "traditional 'female values' are not questioned or integrated into some new value system, but their emancipatory charge is reflected by their utility in spreading and strengthening the NOP."⁹⁹

In the case of the progressive teachers' movement and the position of the progressive female teacher in the NOB, emancipatory values were insisted on only to the extent that this insistence was conducive to the successful achievement of the general goals of the struggle. This is why, Sklevicky explains, a pragmatic approach to traditional cultural values was developed, especially patriarchal 'female' values of reverence, selflessness, honour and honesty,¹⁰⁰ the values which had become the cornerstone of all the social functions women had in the war. Thus it was believed that motherhood and its socialising role helps lay the groundwork for, among other things, brotherhood and unity.¹⁰¹ Hence the figure of the progressive teacher was modelled on the figure of the caring mother who raises generations of pupils – children – in the new spirit of the times.

⁹⁷ Pointing out the fact that normative and operative ideology formulate the essential values of a political system differently, and that they diverge the most in the spheres of culture and nation, Siniša Malešević; in a case study of post-war Yugoslavia, analyses dominant ideologies, their form, content and the ways in which they attain legitimacy, and shows that it is possible to spot significant differences in the articulation of the new 'socialist consciousness' within these two types of ideology. "Whereas normative ideology poses [the socialist consciousness] in the context of universal liberation and the emancipation of human beings from tradition, authority and exploitation, operative ideology uses and appeals to familiar images of the morally superior and purified community, images derived from the popularly well-known and recognisable religious tradition". Malešević, Siniša, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 142.

⁹⁸ Sklevicky, *Konji, žene*, p. 46. Through an analysis of particular narratives Sklevicky shows that propaganda used folk literature formulas, even liturgical language. *Ibid*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*. 47.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*. 56.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*. 43.

However, this trend continued during the post-war construction of a new socialist society. Although the authorities, in principle, made it possible for women to realise their political rights, the right to work, education and the protection of motherhood, and publicly promoted the idea of gender equality in all the spheres of activity, in the words of Renata Jambrešić-Kirin

Yugoslav ideologues did not practise a radical break with the cultural forms of pre-revolutionary society based on the idea of gender differences and compatibility [...] Yugoslav politicians eagerly resorted to the traditional repertoire of gender roles and symbols.¹⁰²

The process of feminisation¹⁰³ of the teaching profession and the degradation of its social status (and, therefore the disempowering of women) began with the insistence on the figure of the teacher as a caring mother who sacrifices herself for the good of the community as a whole, and the claims that women manage to get things done and are better at teaching, which is 'merely' an extension of their 'natural' roles and a honing of their 'innate capabilities'. As some feminist research¹⁰⁴ has shown, gender stereotypes and gendered professional structures largely came about thanks to the rhetoric of a 'proper/natural female profession' which showed teachers as objects of knowledge, not active agents/subjects. Similarly, their professional activities and their work as educators were not seen as the practising professional skills based on their education, which led to the gradual abandonment of progressive ideas about permanently honing pedagogical methods and improving classroom activities. Thus the concept of feminisation of the teaching profession meant not only an increase in the number of female teachers, but also low status and inadequate remuneration, which necessarily led to the profession's loss of social significance and a radical reduction of its power.

¹⁰² Jambrešić-Kirin, *Žene i dom*, op. cit. pp. 20, 21.

¹⁰³ The *feminisation* of the teaching profession has been a global phenomenon since the 1960s; many sociologists argue that the drastic increase in the number of women among teaching staff in primary schools indicates that the role of the mother and homemaker extends into paid professional posts. Cf. Šime Pilić, *Knjiga o nastavnica*. Split: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu, 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Inter alia: M. Grumet, "Pedagogy for patriarchy: the feminization of teaching", *Interchange*, 12 (2-3) 1981, pp. 165-184; Acker, ed. *Teachers, Gender and Careers*, Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989; P. Munro, *Subject to fiction: Women teacher's life history narratives and the cultural politics of resistance*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1989.

4. In Lieu of a Conclusion

The initial premise of this paper is that the figure of the progressive teacher reflects the limits of the professional emancipation of women as well as the consequences of the incompleteness of the process of construction and/or transformation of the woman as a new, independent, liberated and equal subject in a better, more humane society.

As the paper points out, in spite of the fact that women have made up the bulk of the teaching cadre since the end of WWII, research has so far paid little attention to the gender dimension of teaching. From 1918 to the beginning of WWII there was a rise in rural education and an increase in the number of young professional female teachers who joined the progressive teachers' movement. Because female teachers were still in an exceptionally unfavourable financial position at the time and were subject to a law which discriminated against them by stipulating that they were to be paid less than men and by prohibiting marriage, except to other teachers, progressive female teachers fought for equal working conditions, equal rights and equal pay.

New socio-cultural revolutionary policies which were promoted and spread during the war led to radical changes in the status of female teachers. Many progressive female teachers, especially in the countryside and in the free territories in BiH, actively participated in these changes as well as in the implementation of educational reforms and the introduction of a new social order. Although the figure of the peoples' progressive teacher was constructed as a distinguished female revolutionary figure by the new government and the new official ideology, after the war they were less and less politically active and intellectually committed to further empowerment and professional independence. Such development of the figure of the female teacher and the practice of female teaching is partly the result of the fact that the professional skills were treated as innate rather than acquired skills that required additional learning and honing. The teachers' profession was increasingly feminised until the 1980s, when what was left of the teachers' revolutionary efforts was a limited amount of cultural capital and a symbolic role.

Thus the transformation of the figure of the people's progressive teacher could be ironically and succinctly represented in three images: from a teacher with a gun in one hand and a primer in the other, to a teacher with a red carnation tucked in her lapel, to a mid-eighties teacher who expected her pupils to give her a #16 lipstick on International Women's Day.

Unfortunately, in the tumultuous post-war years of transition to a market economy, female teachers have lost even this symbolical importance and standing. In the tempestuous sea of educational reforms and the continued reorganisation of primary education, the female teacher is no longer seen as a strong figure who shapes new generations and inculcates positive values in them. The teaching profession is further marginalised and devalued, and the rights and freedoms teachers enjoy in their work with pupils are limited and checked. Thus, it seems to me, one should advocate the establishment and empowering of a professional organisation of female teachers which would find a way to act and formulate new progressive teaching policies, in spite of all the imposed divisions and segregation in the BiH education system.¹⁰⁵ Feminism teaches us that for any kind of female professional association we need to find authentic figures from the past, predecessors we can rely on and build a more just, more responsible society. In that regard, this paper also pleads for research of the teaching profession and the status of female teachers conducted from a feminist and historical standpoint, research that would take a gender perspective and draw attention to the history of the development of this profession in BiH, in order to identify the structures which have continually oppressed female teachers and still keep them in an unfavourable position.

Translated by Mirza Purić

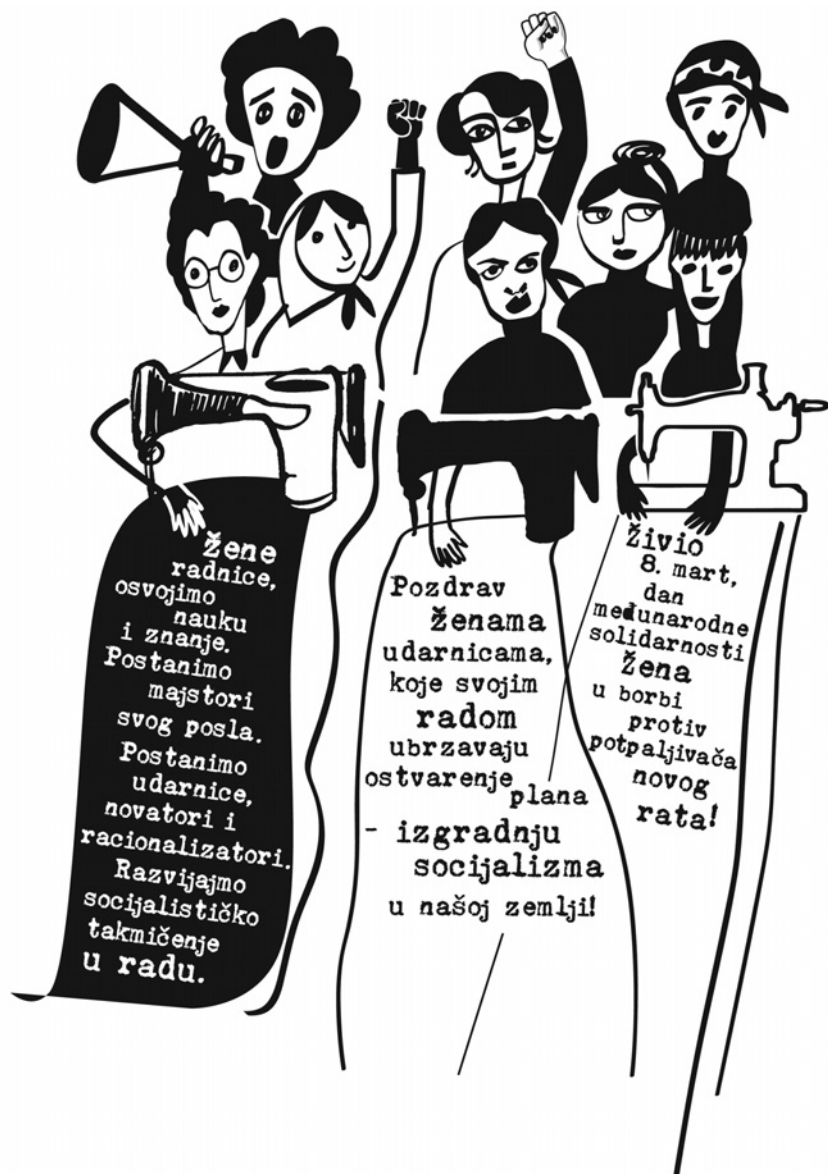
¹⁰⁵ More on this issue in: *Dvije škole pod jednim krovom. Studija o segregaciji u obrazovanju*. Sarajevo: Centar za ljudska prava i ACIPS, 2012. Study available at: http://www.shl.ba/images/brosure/Dvije_skole_pod_jednim_krovom.pdf

Bibliography:

- Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "Povratak u Beograd 1978. godine: Istraživanje feminističkog sjećanja," in: *Glasom do feminističkih promjena*, R. J. Kirin i S. Prlenda, eds. Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2009, 120–131.
- Božinović, Neda. *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji: u XIX i XX veku*. Beograd: "Devedesetčetvrta" and "Žene u crnom", 1996.
- Čačinović-Puhovski, Nadežda. "Ravnopravnost ili oslobođenje. Teze o teorijskoj relevantnosti suvremenog feminizma." *Žena* 3 (1976): 125–128.
- Čečinović, Nadežda "Odgovor na pitanje: kakva je sudbina ženstvenosti s obzirom na emancipaciju." in: Nadežda Čečinović, *U ženskom ključu: ogledi u teoriji kulture*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2000.
- Despot, Blaženka. "Žena i samoupravljanje," *Delo* 4 (1981): 112–117.
- . *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje*, (Zagreb: Cekode, 1987).
- . "'Žensko pitanje' u socijalističkom samoupravljanju," in: Lydia Sklevicky, ed., *Žena i društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloga*. Zagreb: Sociološko društvo, 1987.
- Enciklopedija Jugoslavije, Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina* separat uz II izdanje. Zagreb, LZ, 1983.
- Gladanac, Sanja. "Uspostava državnog školstva na području Velike župe Vrhbosna", Husnija Kamberović ed., *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: Novi pogledi. Zbornik radova*. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju u Sarajevu, 2012: 67-97.
- Jagić, Suzana. „Jer kad žene budu žene prave: Uloga i položaj žena u obrazovnoj politici Banske Hrvatske na prijelazu u XX. Stoljeće,” *Povijest u nastavi* 11 (2008):77-100.
- Jalušič, Vlasta. „Women in Post-Socialist Slovenia: Socially Adapted, Politically Marginalized”, Sabrina Ramet ed., *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1999.
- Jambrešić-Kirin, Renata. "Politike sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat u doba medijske reprodukcije socijalističke kulture," in: Lada Feldman-Čale and Ines Prca eds., *Devijacije i promašaji. Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma*. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2006.
- Dom i svijet. O ženskoj kulturi pamćenja*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008.
- „O konfliktnoj komplementarnosti ženskog pamćenja: Između moralne revizije i feminističke intervencije” *ProFemina* Specijalni broj (2011): 39-53, 47.
- „Žena u formativnom socijalizmu,” in: *Refleksije vremena 1945.-1955*. Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2013.
- Jerković, Ademir. „Uloga učitelja u prosvjetnim, političkim i kulturnim promjenama u BiH od 1945. do 1951. godine,” Magistarski rad, Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu, 2014.

- Jukić, Tatjana. „Žena kao revolucija: od Garbo do Tita.” *ProFemina*, Specijalni broj (2011): 33-39.
- Katunarić, Vjeran. *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti*. Zagreb: Naprijed, 1984.
- Katz, Vera. „O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953.” *Prilozi* 40 (2011): 135-155.
- Kecman, Jovanka. *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941*. Belgrade, 1978., 373.
- Konjhodžić, Mahmud. *Mostarke, fragmenti o revolucionarnoj djelatnosti i patriotskoj opredjeljenosti žena Mostara, o njihovoj borbi za slobodu i socijalizam*. Mostar: Opštinski odbor SUBNOR-, 1981., 36-38.
- Kožar, Azem. „O nekim aspektima obrazovno-odgojne politike Narodnooslobodilačkog pokreta na području Bosne i Hercegovine (1941-1945),” *Šezdeset godina od završetka Drugog svjetskog rata: kako se sjećati 1945. godine. Zbornik radova*. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2006., 235-248.
- Kujović, Mina. “Hasnija Berberović – zaboravljena učiteljica – prilog historiji muslimanskog školstva u Bosni i Hercegovini.” *Novi Muallim* 40 (2009): 114-118.
- Malešević, Siniša. *Ideologija, legitimnost i nova država*. Trans. Slobodanka Glišić. Zagreb, Beograd; Jesenskii Turk i Edicija Reč, 2004.
- Mijatović, Cvijetin. “Govor na otvaranju kursa za prosvjetne instruktore održanog u Sarajevu u ljeto 1946.” *Prosvjetni radnik* 7 (1946).
- Milišić, Senija. “*Emancipacija muslimanske žene u Bosni i Hercegovini nakon oslobođenja 1947 – 1952 (Poseban osvrt na skidanje zara i feredže)*” Magistarski rad, Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu, 1986.
- Nedović, Radisav S. *Čačanski kraj u NOB 1941–1945: žene borci i saradnici.* Čačak: Okružni odbor SUBNOR-a, 2010.
- Pantelić, Ivana. *Partizanke kao građanke*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju – Evoluta, 2011.
- “Yugoslav female partisans in World War II,” *Cahiersbalkaniques* 41(2013.)
<http://www.afzarhiv.org/files/original/f47c848c2d081c22905ba11a9d869fd3.pdf>
- Papić, Mitar. *Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme Austrougarske okupacije 1878-1918*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1972.
- Istorija srpskih škola u BiH*. (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978.)
- Školstvo u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1941. do 1955. godine*. (Sarajevo, 1981)
- Učitelji u kulturnoj i političkoj istoriji Bosne i Hercegovine*. (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987.).
- Petrović, Jelena. “Društveno-političke paradigme prvog talasa jugoslavenskih feminizama” *ProFemina* Specijalni broj, (2011):59-81.

- Pilić, Šime. *Knjiga o nastavnicima*. Split: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu, 2008.
- Prica, Ines. "Etnologija postsocijalizma i prije ili dvanaest godina nakon" Etnologije socijalizma i poslije," in: Lada Feldman Čale and Ines Prica, eds., *Devijacije i promašaji. Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma*. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2006.
- Rihtman-Auguštin, Dunja. *Etnologija naše svakodnevice*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1988.
- Scott, Joan W. *Rod i politika povijesti*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1988 i 2003.
- Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene i ratovi*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.
- Slapšak, Svetlana. *Ženske ikone XX veka*. Belgrade, Biblioteka XX vek – Čigoja Štampa, 2001.
- Šušnjara, Snježana. "Školovanje ženske djece u Bosni i Hercegovini u doba Austro-Ugarske (1878. – 1918.)." *Napredak* 155 (4) (2014) : 453 – 466.
- Vuković, Rade. *Napredni učiteljski pokret između dva rata*. Belgrade, Pedagoški muzej, 1968.
- Zaninović, Mato. *Kulturno-prosvjetni rad u NOB-u (1941–1945)* Sarajevo, 1968
- Ždralović, Amila. "Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena." in: Aida Spahić et al., *Zabilježene – Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*. Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Fondacija CURE, 2014.
- Župan, Dinko. "Viša djevojačka škola u Osijeku (188.-1900.)" *Scrinia slavonica* 5 (2005.), 366-383.



Working women, let us conquer knowledge and learning. Let us become masters of our trades. Let us become shock workers, innovators and rationalisers. Let us develop socialist labour competition.

Red salute to women shock workers whose efforts help speed up the realisation of the plan – building socialism in our country!

Long live 8th March, international day of solidarity of women in the struggle against warmongers!



*Long live the unity of the democratic movement of women – a strong factor at the peace front!
Women of Yugoslavia reject the defamation of our beloved country, our Central Committee and Comrade Tito, under whose leadership we are building socialism!
People's teachers – live up to your name and help raise the new socialist man!
AFŽ*



**ene seljanke,
radimo na unaprijeđenju
privrede, učvrstimo zadruge
i stvorimo nove.
Budimo borci za veći
prinos sa zemlje.
Živio socijalistički
preobražaj sela!**



Peasant women, let us strive to improve our economy, let us strengthen the existing co-operatives and start new ones. Let us fight for greater yields. Long live the socialist transformation of the village!



Red salute to the women of China, who stand together with their people on the brink of the final victory over the enemy in their struggle for freedom and independence and for new social relations.

THE CREATION OF THE
NEW YUGOSLAV WOMAN –
EMANCIPATORY
ELEMENTS OF MEDIA
DISCOURSE FROM THE
END OF WORLD WAR II



DANIJELA
MAJSTORVIĆ

The end of WWII is the period of construction of the new Yugoslav woman who actively participates in the war, educates herself and enters the world of work, whilst the emancipation of women from the shackles of patriarchal culture was one of the “undisputable tasks of the Women’s Antifascist Front (henceforth AFŽ)”.¹ In that period, which saw an historical breakaway from predominantly agrarian economics and a society in which education was mostly reserved for women from the upper social strata, the conditions were met for the education of women on a scale never seen before, and for the launching of a process of modernisation, which could not have taken place without a serious disruption of patriarchal culture.²

This emancipation did not put an end to patriarchy, far from it; but if we look at the women’s media from that period (*Naša žena*, *Glas*, *Žena u borbi*), we see that women are represented and equal subjects: they are combatants, nurses, workers, People’s Heroes (narodni heroji), etc., rather than passive on-lookers. A Yugoslav woman was to be modern and educated, dedicated and determined, “neither a Serb, nor Croat, nor a Muslim,” but rather all three, a Yugoslav. The aim of this chapter is to look at the issues of the magazine *Nova žena* from 1945–1946 available in the AFŽ archive, and describe the main emancipatory discourses addressing women, outline the argumentative and rhetorical strategies, metaphors and lexical and grammatical elements used to constitute this new Yugoslav woman, as well as to establish links between these historiographic insights and today’s so-called post-socialist moment in history.

1. Entering the Archive

In Yugoslav post-socialism, after all the wars, the plundering of the commons, the ethnic cleansing, rape and the associated historical revisionism, the regime of gender inequality still contests the affixation of feminine suffixes to words denoting occupations, for instance, fighter–fighteress.³ By way of response, the Banja Luka poet Dragan Studen titled his collection of poems *Borkinje* (Fighteresses), as early as 1982. In the opening poem he speaks through a woman, a fighter, warrior who is addressing us in the future:

¹ Sklevicky, Lydija. *Konji, žene, ratovi*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996. pp. 25.

² *Ibid.* pp. 135.

³ <http://www.blic.rs/kultura/kako- reci- zena- borac- ili- borkinja/ k7r6r7e>



We shall write it down in coal
We shall fan the fire
And be remembered
If we step into the picture
Hanging on the wall
Only ourselves we will resemble

We shall never stop
Tossing the soil out of the trench
Lest it smother us

Thickened time
We shall slice into slices
And the hopeless knife
Shall burn in the core

If we step into the picture hanging on the wall
We will remain there
Forever and for evermore

Writing about the experience of women in WWII, some forty years after the fact, he reminds us that “in harm’s way [...] is our way out [...] in our doom is our survival”, hinting that in the decisive moments of world history people went to fight and die to be able to live. This collection is part of a larger archive on women in the Narodno-oslobodilačka borba (henceforth NOB), and it inspired me to write about the AFŽ archive today, on the semi-periphery of Europe in late-stage capitalism, in post-war, post-socialist countries like today’s Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thanks for the great step forward made by women – peasants and workers, first and foremost – are owed to female organising under the auspices of the AFŽ. The AFŽ was active from 1943 to 1953, first in the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ) and subsequently in the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ) and it made possible a wide participation of women in all spheres of People’s liberation struggle. Although the AFŽ initially was not focused on female issues, but rather on harnessing the volunteer energy of millions of women to ensure victory in the struggle against fascism⁴, it was an organisation which, during WWII and the Yugoslav socialist revolution, undoubtedly influenced the modernising change that women fought for and won.

⁴ Jancar-Webster, Barbara. *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia: 1941–1945*. Denver: Arden Press, 1990. pp. 122.

If the point of archival research is to find a lived experience in the past in order to demonstrate that what we know and the way we speak and act have not been around since the beginning of time and will not be around till the end of time, and are therefore subject to change, then the archive is not the sum of all the documents it preserves, but an historical framework for the conditions of a statement.⁵ A reactivation of past statements may offer guidelines on how to set ourselves free from our own archive, “impossible for us to describe”,⁶ to be able to think and act differently today. The intention is not to “try to restore what has been thought, wished, aimed at, experienced, desired by men in the very moment at which they expressed it in discourse” but to “join [analysed discourse] in its identity” by understanding it through “a rewriting [...] a regulated transformation of what has already been written.”⁷

The meeting of female struggles from two different historical moments, the present one and that from seventy-odd years ago, is necessary not only for the fight against historical revisionism, but also for thinking of a new kind of political action aimed towards achieving equality for all. The crisis in which we live resembles the one from the 1930s and 1940s, given that the processes of the res-taur-ation and rehabilitation of these crises are yet again connecting capitalism, fascism and rising inequality. As we learn from the report by Cana Babović presented at the First State Anti-Fascist Conference of the AFŽ held on 8 December 1942, it was precisely the anti-fascist struggle during the Spanish Civil War, and the position of women in the USSR, where women enjoyed “full equality” and “participation in the economic and political life of the country” that inspired Yugoslav anti-fascist women to start publishing as early as the 1930s:

During the bloody events in Spain in 1936, when our women began their struggle against war and fascism, we saw the emergence of “Žena danas”, a gazette of young anti-fascist women, in Belgrade. The journal had an enormous role to play in the gathering and organising of women. It reached every corner of our country, showed women what fascism had in store for them, raised their political awareness, deepened their hatred of fascism and gave them strength in their struggle for equality. The same role was played by the gazette of Croatian anti-fascist women “Ženski svijet”.⁸

⁵ Foucault, Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books. 1972. pp. 128–129

⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁸ Babović, Cana. “Organizaciono pitanje AFŽ” report presented at the First State Conference of the AFŽ, 8 December 1942, Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/231>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

Although I relied on all kinds of documents available in the digital AFŽ archive, the basis of this research is formed by the journal *Nova žena*⁹ as the first gazette of the AFŽ BiH, the first issue of which was published in February 1945, and the last issue available in the archive, issue 20, in November 1946. As a propaganda tool of the AFŽ and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), in addition to the subscriptions and membership fees, it was financed through the “selling of collected rags to the ironworks.”^{10 11} The journal was distributed to women in villages and towns to help bring them to literacy and attract them to the tasks and the work of the organisation. In early 1946, the journal had a circulation of 10,000 copies, and by July 1947 it had reached 22,000.¹²

Although it focuses on a short period of time at the very end of the war or the beginning of peacetime, the analysis presented in this chapter examines the fifteen issues of the magazine published in the period 1945–1946, describes how this “new” Yugoslav woman was constituted through media discourse and establishes links between such historical insights and today’s life in the so-called “desert of post-socialism.”¹³ I was primarily interested in the emancipatory elements of media discourse promised to women by the new socialist era in which the new woman was made. I see these elements, in the broadest possible sense, as the largest scale inclusion of women in the social and political life of the new Yugoslavia and BiH, entering the world of work, gaining rights, learning to read and write, etc.¹⁴

What is the relationship between modernisation, emancipation and patriarchy in this context? Modernisation was brought to BiH precisely by socialism after 1945,¹⁵ through the largest scale education of everyone, especially women, as its precondition. *Nova žena* unabashedly addresses women as equal subjects and

⁹ The magazine *Nova žena* was mostly published in Sarajevo, but several issues were published in Belgrade. The first issue was set and printed in Cyrillic, whilst the subsequent issues used both Cyrillic and Latin alphabet. It was the official gazette of anti-fascist women of BiH. Issues 7, 11, 15, 16 and 19 are unavailable and were not included in the analysis.

¹⁰ Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, “Okružni Odbor AFŽ Sarajevo Zemaljskom Odboru AFŽ-a – Zapisnik sa sastanka Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Sarajevo održanog 24. i 25.11. 1945” Arhiv BiH, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 13/6, 1945.

¹¹ What was probably meant is “scrap iron” (translator).

¹² Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, “Materijali sa Drugog Kongresa AFŽ-a BiH održanog 12 – 13 jula 1947”, Arhiv BiH, Kutija 3, 1543/109, 1947.

¹³ Horvat Srećko and Štiks Igor, *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism*. London: Verso, 2015.

¹⁴ Pantelić, Ivana. *Partizanke kao građanke: društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji, 1945-1953*, Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Evoluta, 2011.

¹⁵ Sklevicky, Lidija. *Konji, žene, ratovi*, Zagreb: Ženska infoteka. 1996. pp. 134.

represents them as such: they are fighters, nurses, workers, people's heroes, etc., not passive onlookers. The entry of women to the labour market because of the demands of urbanisation, industrialisation, reconstruction and construction itself meant a serious disruption to patriarchal culture,¹⁶ and one can talk about women's emancipation from the shackles of patriarchy in BiH and Yugoslavia only in the context of the socialist state.

As for the relationship between the emancipatory and modernising on the one hand and the patriarchal on the other, I see the Balkan patriarchy as a complex of hierarchical values engraved into the social structure of pre-modern, agrarian, pastoral economies and culturally traditional, religious societies in which the dominant role is played by men while women are subjugated in the context of the protective family and household.¹⁷ In the early days of the NOB, women started to fill "vacant positions of power" through their participation in the fight, the work of the CPY and the People's Front (Narodni front, henceforth NF), and through organised work in the AFŽ in the rear.¹⁸ In this sense, we can tentatively talk about temporary depatriarchalisation or *depatriarchalising potential* as a temporary loosening of patriarchal regimentation brought about by a mass organisation of women ready to fight and ready for change, free education, access to the world of work¹⁹ and social mobility within a generation for all, especially for women.

With all this in mind, based on the *Nova žena* corpus available in the archive, I analyse the role of the AFŽ under the following aspects:

- a. The role of the AFŽ in an international context
- b. The role of the AFŽ in the struggle against fascism and the struggle for equality (depatriarchalising potential)
- c. The role of the AFŽ in the creation of the new Yugoslav woman through joint struggle and sisterhood of Croat, Muslim and Serb women, and
- d. The role of the AFŽ in the process of the largest-scale literacy drive in the history of BiH

¹⁶ Ibid., 135.

¹⁷ Halpern, Joes, Kaser Karl, and Wagner, A.Richard. "Patriarchy in the Balkans: Temporal and Cross-Cultural Approaches" in: *Household and the Family in the Balkans*, ed. Karl Kaser. Graz: University of Gratz Lit Verlag, 2012, pp. 49.

¹⁸ Dugandžić, Andreja and Jušić, Adela "Intervju sa Stanom Nastić," Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, accessed on 21 November 2016, <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/285>.

¹⁹ This was the case with my parents, who were born in BiH in the early 1950s in rural poverty, but were able to study in Novi Sad and Sarajevo, find appropriate jobs in Bihać and become middle class in Yugoslav socialism.

and in reference to the present moment in the underdeveloped and impoverished post-Dayton BiH, possibly the largest “desert of post-socialism” in which the possibility of social change is hardly discernible, excepting the short-lived protests of February 2014. This can be seen from:

1. The peripheral status of BiH society in relation to the EU countries, and the lack of internationalisation which affects the comparability and visibility of the social demands and struggles in the centre and on the periphery
2. Insufficient collective mobilisation of women in the new post-socialist state, in spite of the proliferation of identity politics and gender mainstreaming which promotes liberal ideas of female human rights, individualism and entrepreneurship and disregards, for instance, the rights of women workers and the unemployed.
3. The lack of a definite relation to fascistoid policies due to the nationalisms enshrined in the Dayton constitution stoked by anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist sentiments which mask the relations of inequality contingent on authoritarian capitalism of the new post-socialist state and are “natural allies” of the Balkan patriarchy (post-socialist repatriarchisation)
4. The rise of illiteracy, inaccessibility of education for the broad masses, and generally bad and corrupt education in the country.

2. Why the Archive? Some Theoretical and Methodological Insights

The Discourse-Historical Approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) is politically committed to social change,²⁰ and it sees identities as contextually contingent and dynamic moments which are constructed, perpetuated and deconstructed within a discourse, and therefore assume different forms.²¹ Considering the historical and political context, as well as the earlier research on the AFŽ, I approached the texts via an analysis of the topics as hierarchicalised semantic textual macrostructures,²² topoi as basic argumentative structures of discourse,²³ as well as standard tropes such as metaphors and similes. In addi-

²⁰ Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. London: Longman, 1989

²¹ Wodak, Ruth, De Cillia, Rudolph, Reisigl Martin and Liebhart, Karl. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: EUP, 1999, pp. 3–4.

²² Van Dijk, Teun. *Elite Discourse and Racism*. London: Sage, 1993, pp. 33.

²³ Žagar, Igor. “Topoi in critical discourse analysis”. *Školsko polje* Vol. 20 (5/6) (2009), 47–75.

tion, I attempted to establish the relevance of the emancipatory potential of the day for the present moment in BiH through an analysis of these problems and the discourses attached to them.

In a methodological sense, I see Discourse-Historical Analysis (DHA)²⁴ as a way to show how a reinvented tradition and past are doctored to fit the present moment: the AFŽ propaganda from 1945–1946 responded to the actual needs of women, but that could not have been discerned by reading *Nova žena* only, it was necessary to read archived minutes of AFŽ meetings too. Our present persistently appeals to tradition, but the AFŽ is omitted from that tradition. Useful in that regard is the cultural-materialist insight that tradition is an element which makes possible the continuity of past and present, but also an

intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social cultural definition and identification. [...] From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded.²⁵

In researching women's discourse and discourse about women at a given historical moment, another particularly useful insight is provided by Gadamer's²⁶ observation that the more complicated the content we need to understand, the more individual elements become relevant, which in turn necessarily makes our *horizon of understanding* richer and broader. Entering an archive from WWII is important for gaining transgenerational insights into the past of Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Yugoslav women from that period, as well as for examining its interpretative productivity in relation to the problems women in BiH are facing today. Only then can we (tentatively) speak of a fusion of these horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) which makes possible the actualisation of Benjamin'sque

²⁴ The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) tries to minimise the risk of excessive subjectivity on the part of the researcher. This subjectivity is also subject to inclusion or exclusion, and to act through triangulation, its fundamental constitutive principle, on the basis of the widest possible variety of information, methods, theories, background information, etc. In this regard, DHA attempts to "integrate much available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive "events" are embedded" (Wodak 2011, 65) in order to "denaturalize the role discourses play in the (re)production of noninclusive and nonegalitarian structures under certain social circumstances" (Wodak 2015, 2). In doing so, this Critical Discourse Analysis or Critical Discourse Studies method sees discourse as connected with other semiotic structures and material institutions which jointly reproduce society through semiosis as the process of signification.

²⁵ Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. pp. 115.

²⁶ Gadamer, Hans, Georg. *Istina i metoda*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978.

historiography of the oppressed where, acting in the light of "experience with the past", a "battling, oppressed class" is the "subject of historical cognition."²⁷

It is precisely this oppression that remains constant when it comes to thinking and acting after experiencing war and its aftermath, which brought loss, poverty and peripherality, nationalism, unemployment and precarity, and illiteracy, all of which survive to this day. All this together makes it more difficult for women, but also for men, to organise and change their social position, by contributing to the creation of such an oppressed class which loses its combativeness due to its inability to articulate its own position as the subordinated class. In this regard, knowledge about the AFŽ is crucial for a transhistoric fusion of the horizons because it carries the potential to imagine struggle and a different world, precisely because they articulated this position and tried to solve the problems in an organised manner. I attempt to show this through critical analysis of the elements I have recognised as having been emancipatory at the time, and to address them in relation to the present moment.

The task of the historical materialist is to constructively attempt to (re)articulate the historiographic form without returning nostalgically to a past story, recognising it instead as "a mark, a trace."²⁸ Only in a rupture, "[w]here thinking suddenly halts in a constellation overflowing with tensions, [and] yields a shock" lies "a revolutionary chance in the struggle for the suppressed past."²⁹ In addition, archival research is never just "the question of a concept dealing with the past which might already be at our disposal or not at our disposal, *an archivable concept of the archive*. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow" because the meta-archive and the original of any text exist only "in the times to come." If we wish to find out what the archive means, "we will only know in the times to come. Perhaps. Not tomorrow but in the times to come, later on or perhaps never."³⁰ At any rate, the first step is the interpretation of archivalia which "illuminate[s], read[s], interpret[s], establish[es] its object, namely a given inheritance, by inscribing itself in it, that is to say by opening it and by enriching it enough to have a rightful place in it."³¹

²⁷ Benjamin, Walter. *On the Concept of History*.
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>

²⁸ Chowdhury, Aniruddha. "Memory, Modernity, Repetition: Walter Benjamin's History". *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary* 2008 (143), 36.

²⁹ Benjamin, op.cit.

³⁰ Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. pp. 27.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

3. The AFŽ and the New Woman

3.1. The AFŽ and the International Context

The peripheral status of BiH society in relation to Europe is the consequence of internal strife in BiH itself, a country in which the only manifestation of internationalism is geopolitical loyalty to Russia, Croatia or Turkey. This is exacerbated by exclusivist, sometimes fascist political practices of Western Europe and North America, such as the control of the increasing numbers of migrants and workers from BiH and other peripheral countries, the rigorous visa policy, the volatility of the conditions for EU accession and the treatment of the Balkans and BiH as a “case”. Today there are virtually no forums in which women from the so-called first and the third world participate and make decisions on an equal footing, whilst the Europeanisation in BiH, conducted via the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) is nothing but colonisation of an underdeveloped Other via the introduction of liberal democracy, privatisation of public companies, the so-called free market, economic reforms and austerity. This Europeanisation is negotiated with ethnonational political elites only.³²

Nova žena in the period 1945–1946 was characterised by a strong internationalist spirit brought to bear on the issues regarding the “East” as well as the “West”. There was quite casual talk of the “brotherhood of Bulgarian people and our people”³³ and the “role played by the women of Albania in the struggle for the freedom of their homeland” (*Nova žena* 8: 17–18, 1945). In May 1946 we learn that 3,000 apprentices from all over Yugoslavia, “[of whom] 150 [were] from BiH” were accepted for apprenticeships in “the brotherly Czechoslovakia” in order to receive their vocational training over three to four years (*Nova žena* 14:12, 1946). Many issues featured social-realist narratives, mostly from the Soviet context, which described work enthusiasm, shockworkership and the self-sacrificing nature of the “fair-complected” Russian woman as an embodiment of the partisan promise of post-war life.³⁴ In the August issue (*Nova žena* 5:6, 1945), we read about the visit of a delegation of Soviet women to Sarajevo referred to as “the joy and happiness we dreamed of for years”:

³² Majstorović, Danijela, Vučković, Zoran and Pepić, Andela, “From Dayton to Brussels via Tuzla: Post-2014 Economic Restructuring as Europeanization Discourse/Practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15(4) (2015), 661–682.

³³ *Nova žena*, Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, 8: 5, 1945., <http://afzarhiv.org/files/original/c130e1fc9258a352e2e949767c6990e9.pdf>
Note – due to the large number of citations from the Nova Žena magazine, they are integrated in the running text and contain issue number, page number and the year of publication. The issues of Nova žena referred to here are available online at www.afzarhiv.org in the category Periodicals.

³⁴ Jancar-Webster, op. cit., pp. 119.

The raptures peaked when Evgeniya “Zhenya” Zhigulenko – a pilot and Hero of the Soviet Union who flew the aeroplane the delegation arrived on showed up on the balcony. She is an approachable and agreeable woman whom we met a long time ago through Polina Osipenko, Valentina Grizodubova and other brave women pilots we read about and admired even as they were just training for the great feats they were to accomplish in the war of people’s liberation. Zhenya greeted us on behalf of the Red Army fighters, on behalf of the women who are now returning from the army to work in fields and factories, to carry out the task of reconstructing the country with as much success as they had in fighting fascism.

Although the purpose of such reporting was to raise international antifascist consciousness and boost morale, such pieces valorised courage, female togetherness and solidarity. Homage to the heroism of a woman who fought in the war and flew an aeroplane to Sarajevo, even though she had to “return from the army to work in fields and factories”, is not something that can be found in today’s media. If she is mentioned at all, it is as a pilot of an airline, not a Red Army pilot. This Stakhanovitesque promise of social mobility achieved by going from a peasant to a kolkhoz leader or a state official, and social care provided to pregnant workers whereby “the future mother feels the care of the collective” is not recognised as newsworthy by today’s media. Joint international mobilisation is present in humanitarian efforts, such as cancer prevention or domestic violence prevention, but joint antifascist fight is and remains a blind spot of today’s media. Work, partnership and motherhood are treated in an individualist, consumerist manner, with frequent appeals to the topos of the “super woman”³⁵ who is always dolled up, has a fantastic job and education, three kids and a husband, and is able to do (and buy) anything.

When it comes to the participation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian women in international female organisations, we see that they were zealously preparing for the First International Congress of Women, convened on 26 November 1945 on the motion by “comrade Cotton”, the founder and president of the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF). The WIDF and Eugénie Cotton are to a great extent absent from Western feminist historiography,³⁷ although the

³⁵ Majstorović, Danijela and Mandić, Maja. “What It Means to Be a Bosnian Woman: Analyzing Women’s Talk Between Patriarchy and Emancipation” in *Living With Patriarchy—Discursive Constructions of Gendered Subjects Across Public Spheres*, ed. Danijela Majstorović i Inger Lassen (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 97.

³⁶ Majstorović, Danijela. “[Un]Doing Feminism in Post-Yugoslav Media Spaces”. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(6) (2016), 1093–1108.

³⁷ De Hahn, Francisca “The Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF): History, Main Agenda, and Contributions, 1945–1991.” http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com/help/view/the_womens_

WIDF was the biggest and most influential international female organisation after 1945. From its beginnings the WIDF developed a profile of a leftist and feminist organisation which gathered communist women but also progressive non-communists from all over the world, including the US, Soviet Union and China.³⁸

When we entered Palais de la mutualite on 2 November, many of us saw the trappings of a great international conference for the first time: long desks at which delegations sat and went through documents and notes, on every desk plates with inscriptions such as China, India, Latin America, the USSR, Yugoslavia, Romania – the names of forty countries, forty nations that want the eradication of fascism, democracy and peace; then there are loudspeakers, spotlights, interpreters who make announcements in three different languages; above the podium a great emblem of the Congress – a dove with an olive branch and a globe. Just before the opening, the hall was echoing with nervous hubbub in several dozen different languages. (*Nova žena* 12:5, 1946)

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian delegates participated in these congresses on equal footing and reported about them, which further points to a strong internationalist drive of female organisations and movements with a wider political agenda, female organisations from the so-called Third World, as well as those with a socialist, socialist-feminist or pro-communist orientation. As cold war attacks on the WIDF had a “negative impact on the state and location of, and access to, the WIDF archive and the possibility of gathering materials through oral histories”, the accomplishments of this organisation were not inscribed in the collective feminist memory. Because a searchable, digitalised AFŽ archive was not available until recently, the organisation, being part of a socialist state structure, saw its feminist potential denied by Western feminists,³⁹ while historians and anthropologists who recognised feminism in female socialist organisations in Eastern and South-eastern Europe were labelled revisionists.^{40 41} Thus Lepa Perović re-

international_democratic_federation_widf_history_main_agenda_and_contributions_19451991, accessed on 20 September 2016.

³⁸ Writing about some of the reasons for such exclusion, de Haan lists the accusations of pro-Soviet activities made by the U.S. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1949, when the influence of the WIDF started to weaken, and the focus of Western feminist historiography shifted mostly to liberal feminism and gender (author).

³⁹ Funk, Nanette. “A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women’s Organizations, Women’s Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism”. *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21(4) (2014), 344–360.

⁴⁰ Bonfiglioli, Chiara. “Revolutionary Networks. Women’s Political and Social Activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945–1957)”, PhD thesis, University of Utrecht, 2012).

⁴¹ Ghodsee, Kristen. “Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk”. *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015), 248–252.

lates that the preparatory committee of the Congress “included delegates from England, America, Soviet Union, China, France, Spain, Yugoslavia, Italy, Hungary [sic], Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, Brazil, Portugal, Australia, Catalonia [sic], Belgium, Greece, Czechoslovakia and Sweden” and that it decided to “include delegates from the countries which are still not represented” and that “colonies, too, may have their representatives who will be completely independent” (*Nova žena* 8:5–6, 1945).

3.2. The Fight against Fascism and Attaining Equality

The goals of the Paris congress of women were to achieve co-operation of women worldwide on the following, rather progressive programme, which outlines the same issues the AFŽ insisted on during and after the war:

1. Destroy fascism and ensure democracy
2. Prepare a bright future for new generations
3. Give women the rights listed in the International Charter of Women.

As mothers: the right to bear children in a world free from horrors, poverty and war, in which every government will provide them with necessary social and health protection and appropriate housing.

As workers: the right to work in all branches of industry and practise all professions, to receive equal pay for equal work, the right to access vocational education on an equal footing with men, the right to be appointed to responsible positions; the ending of exploitation of women as a cheap labour force and the improvement of working conditions.

As citizens: equality with men before the law and full democratic freedom of expression, the right to vote and sit on judicial councils and participate in government and international institutions (*Nova žena* 8: 5–6, 1945).

Anti-fascist struggle and the attainment of equality such as suffrage were among the goals in Yugoslavia even before the congress, thanks to the influence of the anti-fascist struggle in Spain and the attainment of equality by Soviet women. According to Cana Babović, who spoke at the State Conference of the AFŽ on 8 December 1942, these two demands represented a key difference between bourgeois feminists and Yugoslav anti-fascists who were jointly active in the “female movement” of the day even before the war broke out in 1941, and eventually led to a schism:

Progressive women of Yugoslavia, that is, anti-fascists, thought that the struggle of women against fascism and war was best led by gathering and connecting women in a single organisation. Anti-fascists joined exist-

ing feminist organisations and started the work of all women of Yugoslavia against war and fascism. Among the actions taken by women in their struggle for equality, the most notable was the drive for suffrage which was organised in the entire country, led by anti-fascists and had at the time, in 1939, a distinct anti-war and anti-fascist character. [...] The leadership of the bourgeois feminist organisations disgracefully betrayed the women's struggle, renouncing their own anti-war programme so that they would not have to fight fascism too, the two being inseparable. During the great struggle for the right to vote, they were not only passive, they also sabotaged the struggle of the anti-fascists.⁴²

War was close at hand and great numbers of women were left unorganised, so the CPY needed to "mobilise women through the AFŽ to ensure victory in the war as well as to convince women that the victory of the Partisans will mean a brighter future for them."⁴³ In that regard, the AFŽ was "the most fascinating example of a relatively small group of communists working meticulously on the ground, in wartime conditions, and quickly succeeding in convincing great masses of women to help in partisan warfare in exchange for new rights after the war."⁴⁴ Still, the relation of equality between men and women was ambivalent the whole time. On the one hand, it was undeniable that the top echelons of the Party were male-dominated and steeped in patriarchal tradition, as female partisans were wont to say that they "were sent" and "allowed" to do things.⁴⁵ Such "male politics" were connected with the strict military and political discipline necessary to win the war, which is corroborated by the fact that, in spite of the lip service paid to the equality of women to men in political life and all areas of social activity, at the First Session of the Country Anti-Fascist Council for the People's Liberation of BiH (henceforth ZAVNOBiH) there were only four women out of 247 delegates: Mevla Jakupović, a worker from Tuzla, Zora Nikolić, a worker from Sarajevo, captain Danica Perović from Banja Luka, head of the XI Division hospital and Rada Vranješević, a student and member of the Central Committee of the AFŽ.⁴⁶

On the other hand, according to Milka Kufrin, "equality of men and women existed only at the platoon level",⁴⁷ which was confirmed in earlier interviews by the few surviving female Partisans in BiH, Stana Nastić from Sarajevo and Milica

⁴² Babović, "Organizaciono pitanje AFŽ".

⁴³ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–116.

⁴⁴ Katz, Vera. "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953." *Prilozi* 40 (2011), 138.

⁴⁵ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁴⁶ ZAVNOBiH, *dokumenti 1943-1944, vol. I*, [Sarajevo: IP Veselin Masleša, 1968], 58–63.

⁴⁷ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

Stanarević from Banja Luka. By fighting alongside men in the anti-fascist struggle, women won freedom they never knew before and started to actively work on their enlightenment and the improvement of their social position. "Those who quietly put up with all the hardship before the war", "have been elevated to the rank of valiant freedom fighters (*Nova žena* 1:6, 1945)" determined to never go back "to the old ways". It is precisely the relation between "the old ways" and "the new" which was changed during the anti-fascist struggle that makes up the dominant topos in *Nova žena*, whereby it is observed of the old ways:

Let us remember the old ways. In our peasant households it was important for a woman to be strong and obedient. We had to do the hardest work, without any recognition. [...] We were illiterate, we had no idea what was happening in the world and what was upon us. They said it was not a woman's business. It is no wonder then that we are so firmly attached to the struggle. [...] That is why we are all united in our struggle for the old ways to never return. (Soja Ćopić, *Nova žena* 1:7, 1945).

When it comes to family rights – the "new ways" that were sweeping through social and political life – as early as 1942 the Regulations of Foča ("Fočanski propisi") were drafted as the first legal act of socialist Yugoslavia, and the Yugoslav woman won the right to vote and run for office, civil marriage and divorce were introduced, as well as equality before the law, recognition of the rights of children born out of wedlock, equal pay for equal work, and access to hospitals and kindergartens, all typical socialist demands. It is precisely in *Nova žena* 1946 9 and 1946 10 1–3 that we read that "children born out of wedlock [had] equal rights as the children born in wedlock", which had previously been unimaginable, as if "marriage and family, in comrade Kardelj's words, were too serious institutions for the state to leave them to some other organisations", and the state organised kindergartens for mothers to be able to work.

The state of female workers' rights where few women make their living in non-agrarian economy in a country which had just emerged from a war is best illustrated by the 1931 census data. According to the Census, BiH had 1,138,515 women (around 46 percent) and 1,185,040 men, while "84.1 percent of the population [was] made up of peasants living from agriculture, forestry and fishing".⁴⁸ On the other hand, Dobrojević⁴⁹ claims that "in 1951, according to the official statistics,

⁴⁸ Brkljača, Seka. "Bosna i Hercegovina u prvim godinama Drugog svjetskog rata od 1939. do 1941. godine," in: *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: novi pogledi: zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2012), 16.

⁴⁹ Ivana Dobrojević, "Od ruralnog ka urbanom: modernizacija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine u FNRJ 1945–1955" in: *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz historiju: zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011), 19.

the number of female workers was 90 percent higher than in 1939”, while “the most dramatic rise was recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the number of women in work increased two and a half times.” The post-revolutionary period represented an historical break with the agrarian economy and capitalism of “the old Yugoslavia” and created jobs for everyone, especially women, but it was not without its contradictions. Still, this shift in valorisation of work carried the promise of a new way life never before seen. This is what Vida Tomšić, the first chairwoman of the AFŽ, in her report titled “O radu i zadacima žena na socijalnom staranju” (“On the Work and the Tasks of Women in Social Care”):

As we are trying to build a strong Yugoslavia that could stand on its own feet economically we are facing the great task of creating better life conditions for the broadest working masses [...] This is not just about renewing the old Yugoslavia, we are aiming higher. We are trying to create a way of life that never existed in Yugoslavia before. (*Nova žena*, 5:4, 1945).

Although the emancipation of women in socialist Yugoslavia did not mean the end of patriarchy or jobs for all women, it did have an enormous positive impact on the attainment of equality and made it possible for masses of women to enter the world of work⁵⁰ by “aligning the interests of women with the interests of the proletariat”⁵¹ during WW II. In addition, the combativeness, anti-fascism, internationalism and political enlightenment working in conjunction helped women organised in the AFŽ, especially in its early years, until 1947, “to think like statesmen first and foremost”, which essentially laid the groundwork for the realisation of all the equal rights won in battle.⁵²

3.3. Common Struggle: National Sisterhood and Unity

In her two poems titled “Uz mangal” (“By the Hot Coal Pan”) and “Žena s transparentom” (“The Woman With a Protest Sign”) (*Nova žena* 12:27, 1946) Razija Handžić talks about “Muslim women old and new”. Describing the way they move, in the former poem she says: “In grim garbs and black veils as though in a dream they glide away, like blinded birds, like vestals accurs’d, on they glide on a sunny day”, and in the latter: “to reach the women at the congress, swaying like heavy seas, the one in the veil holding a sign would wade through blood, it seems”.

⁵⁰ Jancar-Webster, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵¹ Ibid., 122.

⁵² Ibid. 117.

Revolutionary ardour, struggle, unity and literacy drives were highlighted through “the new”, while the valorisation of individual suffering and sacrifice in the struggle against fascism was transformed into a matter of national importance.⁵³ Of national importance for the new Yugoslavia were also “equality and co-operation between all the nations and Croat-Serb sisterhood”, while “for the tradition-bound Muslim women [...] joining and working for the AFŽ meant a new life.”⁵⁴ Still, an analysis of *Nova žena* indicates that it was upper-class Muslim women like Vahida Maglajlić, “the only Muslim (Bosniak) People’s Hero”, her mother Ćamila (*kadi’s* wife) and her whole family in Banja Luka who led the way in spreading the ideas of the NOB and the AFŽ among women of all faiths.⁵⁵ The interpellation into the modern and educated “Yugoslav” woman was conducted through the ZAVNOBiH ideology, according to which she was “neither a Serb, nor a Croat, nor a Muslim” but all three at the same time as a Yugoslav, and all three groups were fighting fascism together. Zealous work on building the unity of women in BiH regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation during the NOB was necessary to massify the AFŽ to two million members not only through discourse but through unified anti-fascist praxis as well.

Through the prism of today’s ethnically divided BiH, this simultaneous interpellation of Serb, Croat and Bosniak (Muslim) women seems nothing short of incredible, as do the words of Dušanka Kovačević, who legitimised this unity by invoking their joint struggle for freedom:

For the lives of our children, for the peace of our homes, to make sure killing and slaughtering should never return, we joined hands. The unity of Serb, Muslim and Croat women shall explain to the world where our strength to fight and our belief in triumph comes from. At the Congress, Serb, Muslim and Croat women will talk about their children who are liberating the country together, about the work they do together. About Serb women who collected seed for a burnt Muslim village, about Muslim women who brought gifts to hospitals and died for freedom in concentration camps. Our unity will be the women’s most beautiful gift to the Congress, to our young country, her happiness and future (*Nova žena*, 1:6, 1945).

In the same issue, a piece by Jela Bićanić “Muslimanke u borbi” (“Muslim Women in the Struggle”) touchingly describes the suffering of Mrs Maglajlić, the *kadi’s*

⁵³ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 117.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁵ Dugažić, Andreja and Jušić, Adela. “Intervju sa Alijom Maglajlićem,” *Arhiv antifašističke borbe žena Bosne i Hercegovine i Jugoslavije*, accessed on 21 November 2016., <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/16>.

wife and the mother of the people's heroine Vahida Maglajlić, whom "they locked up, furious about being unable to catch her son. But nothing could break this mother whose three children fell in combat, and the fourth is now in a concentration camp. She is still cheerful and believes in our victory. 'When we come to Banja Luka, I shall lead the celebratory *kolo*', she often says, 'and I'll be wearing three red stars by my heart!'"

"During the first autumn of our people's struggle Ajša Karabegović left her hometown. In the free territories she displayed exemplary commitment in nursing our fighters at the hospital in Jošavac. Chetnik criminals have cut her wonderful spirited life short."

"At the same time, a mass action to help the Partisans was underway. Raifa Čorbegović smuggled hand grenades in a pram, under her baby."

"The mother of the Sarač sisters had to see her daughters shackled by the fascist, yet she kept smuggling leaflets and ammunition in and out of Banja Luka."

In these quotes we see the rise of a new Muslim woman who subverts patriarchal culture by smuggling leaflets under her veil⁵⁶ or grenades in her pram in order to build a new BiH in Yugoslavia. Just like her neighbours, she proudly sent her children to war, relishing the newly-forged brotherhood and unity of our peoples. The topos of sacrifice and courage is intertwined with love, which serves as a justification of the sacrifice:

"As long as we love one another so!" [Mrs Maglajlić] said directly. "That is why we have no regrets. Five of my children are fighting. Three of my fighters have fallen. And I am not crying. Mothers of heroes do not cry."

In the article "One su pale za slobodu" (They Fell for Freedom) in the same issue it is stated that Vahida Maglajlić "gathers women, brings Muslim, Serb and Croat women together in a common struggle. Vahida's sincere and proven love of people opens up the hearts of bereaved Serb mothers, who accept her as one of their own." (*Nova žena* 1:14, 1945). Anti-fascism, both professed and lived, has always been averse to nationalisms, which now employ historical revisionism to rehabilitate former fascists and collaborationists in the cultural and political mainstream after the wars of the 1990s.^{57 58} at the Congress of Serbian Women

⁵⁶ Rada Vranješević also used a veil to smuggle illegal post although she was not a Muslim.

⁵⁷ Radanović, Milan. *Kazna i zločin: snage kolaboracije u Srbiji: odgovornost za ratne zločine (1941-1944) i vojni gubici (1944-1945)* (Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2015).

⁵⁸ Čović, Bartul. "Povijest pišu gubitnici". *Novosti*, <http://www.portalnovosti.com/povijest-pisugubitnici>, accessed on 10 September 2016.

alone, these women “indicted those who, in the name of ‘Serbness’, have killed tens of thousands of Serbs in concentration camps and dungeons”, who “have killed the finest sons of Serbia or turned them over to Germans” and “stoked hatred and killing among the fraternal peoples of Yugoslavia” (*Nova žena* 1:14, 1945). By condemning these practices in the strongest possible terms, *Nova žena* purposely created an ideological matrix for building a new unity on the experience of suffering on all sides:

The women of Bosnia and Herzegovina have put in great effort and made great sacrifices. The enemy spared no one. [...] Ustašas slaughtered Serb children, chetniks found their “revenge” in the blood and screams of Croat and Muslim civilians. (*Nova žena* 1:6, 1945)

At the first county conference of the AFŽ held in the county of Bihać it was said that “after the presentations, many women, old and young, Muslims, Serbs and Croats, talked about their labour, their struggle, their suffering, about the crimes of the occupiers, of ustashas and chetniks”, that they were “meeting freely for the first time in [their] lives to decide their own fate” and that they were “happy to participate in the political life of their people.” (*Nova žena* 1:19, 1945)

Joint labour also strengthened the unity of women of different ethnic backgrounds:

The property of A. Mešić, the enemy of the people, has been planted with maize for our poor. A hundred acres of land is to be hoed and moulded! Serb, Muslim and Croat women are stepping up one by one, old and young, peasants and city women. (*Nova žena* 5:13, 1945)

The strengthening of the unity of people, as the new political Yugoslavness, on the wings of the struggle against fascism, went hand in hand with the recognition of all ethnic and religious particularities through which unity was built on the basis of the pain and horrors of the war in which women, too, participated actively. The article “Hrvatice Bosne i Hercegovine” (Croat Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina) (*Nova žena* 1945 2:3–4) states that “Croat women must realise that the NOB is the fulfilment of the centuries-old aspirations of Croats” and draws a parallel between the struggle of Matija Gubec, “the immortal leader of Croat peasantry”, against the nobility in the Peasants Uprising of 1573 and the NOB, as both conflicts had elements of class struggle. In this strategy of recontextualising or equating the struggles of the Croatian people in the last five centuries with the NOB, the NOB becomes a reflection of “the centuries-old aspirations of Croats”, something “the finest Croat patriots have given their lives for throughout the glorious Croatian history” (*Nova žena* 1945 2:3). Thus the Croatian goals are equated with the Yu-

goslav goals, as opposed to the ISC (Independent State of Croatia) ones, because the ISC is “a monstrous criminal creation.” The biblical metaphor of a blind man in the dark whom Jesus bade see, quite easy for the broadest masses to understand, was used to say that the (Croatian) people “has been blind so far”, meaning in the ISC period, but “has come to see now” through the NOB (*ibid.*).

Yet, such reports of unity were actually addressing the lingering problem of nationalism, about which we can find out more not so much from the magazine itself, but rather from the minutes of meetings of the AFŽ’s Sarajevo and Banja Luka county-regional (*sreski, regionalni*) committees. *Nova žena* wrote, in cushioned language, about priests “openly hostile to the NOB” who nonetheless had “great influence” on women as one of the reasons why many Croat men and women remained outside of the NOB (*Nova žena* 1945 2:3-4). But from the minutes of the AFŽ meetings we learn that the situation on the ground was far more severe and that the magazine served as a tool of propaganda that responded directly to the problem of nationalism and religious divisions. From the minutes of the Okružni Odbor of the AFŽ Sarajevo held on 25 November 1945 we find out that the influence of the clergy among Croats was extremely strong, that “nuns rip down Narodni Front’s posters” and that “in the Croat village of Čajdaš, many balls were cast into the blind box” which the priests refer to as “the faith box”. We also learn that “few Serb women in the municipality of Zaborac turn out for meetings” and that they “do not want to mingle with Muslims at all, especially those from across the Drina”, but also that “chetniks obstruct the women’s work” – just before the elections they “distributed flyers and opened fire, so that women are afraid to engage in work.” From the minutes of meetings of the Okružni Odbor of the AFŽ Banja Luka we also learn about chetniks threatening to “cut off the hair of women who go to vote”, and that “this is what happened in the districts of Piskavica, Prnjavor and Srbac.”⁵⁹

It was clear that 1945 was a crucial year; these articles were published in February, when the war was yet to end officially, but it was obvious enough that the Narodni Front with Josip Broz at its helm would emerge the victor. Because there is no research from 1945 about it, it is thankless work speculating about how common people felt at the time and whether they sidelined their ethnic background and affiliation in favour of the new Yugoslavness. Yet, in these articles we glean significant ideological interpellation of common people into Yugoslavness, buttressed by the common experience of suffering under fascists, and by the desire to build a new, better life.

⁵⁹ Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, ‘Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Banja Luka - Izvještaj o radu Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Banja Luka od 26.11.1945.’ Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 118/1, 1945.

3.4. Mass Literacy Campaigns

When it comes to features that distinguished BiH from other republics of the SFRY, it must be said that BiH had the highest rate of female illiteracy at the time, second only to that of Kosovo and Macedonia. Due to the customs and traditions of the Ottoman Empire, women in BiH, especially Muslims, but also rural Christians, were much more isolated from public life, including education.^{60 61} A wide range of rights and the visibility of female fighters may have played the most important role in the mobilisation of young, educated women and workers. Still, they cannot take all the credit for the movement's massive two-million membership. According to Mitra Mitrović,⁶² "for the first time in their lives, peasant women were appreciated for their everyday work – stitching, cooking, planting, grinding the grain for more people than just their family." With this cohort, which comprised the majority of women at the time, education and literacy drives played a major role in their mobilisation.

The People's Liberation Movement (NOP) created a new figure of a woman in BiH, bold, combative and determined. Those who quietly put up with all the hardship before the war, have been elevated to the rank of valiant freedom fighters. The doors of people's government, schools and courses have been opened to women. Thirsty for knowledge, they have started to learn (*Nova žena* 1:6, 1945)

In a society in which education was reserved for women from higher social strata, conditions were met for mass education of women as a precondition for modernisation.

"We should launch a proper campaign against illiteracy", said comrade Olga Kovačić. "Not a single child in our villages, towns and cities, not a single woman shall remain illiterate." (*Nova žena* 5:5, 1945)

On page 20 of the first issue of *Nova žena*, just before the masthead which reveals that the issue was printed in Sanski Most, there is an editor's note: "Dear comrade, you are holding the first issue of the gazette of women of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Broad masses of our women wish to learn, to become enlightened. They demand the press, they demand answers to the many questions which interest them." Here – and in subsequent issues, too – we see insistence on mass literacy, especially female literacy, which followed other emancipatory efforts.

⁶⁰ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–31.

⁶¹ Popov Momčinović, Zlatiborka, Giomi, Fabio and Delić, Zlatan. "Uvod: period austrougarske uprave" u *Zabilježene – žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, ed. Jasmina Čaušević. Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar and Fondacija Cure, 2014., pp. 24–26.

⁶² Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 142.

The second issue is dominated by an article titled “Bosna i Hercegovina neće ostati nepismena” (“Bosnia and Herzegovina Will Not Remain Illiterate”) (*Nova žena* 2:7, 1945) from which we find out that the occupation found the country in a state of great backwardness, to which people were “until recently, mostly resigned.” In the same issue it is stated that “according to 1931 data, the state of literacy was as follows: in Bosnia, 31 percent are literate, and 69 percent illiterate. In Herzegovina, 34 percent are literate, 66 percent illiterate. The illiteracy rate is disproportionately higher among womenfolk. In Bosnia, 39 percent of men are literate, in Herzegovina 55 percent, whilst in Bosnia and Herzegovina only 15 percent of women are literate.” (*Nova žena* 2:7, 1945). It is also stated that 12,500 adults learnt to read and write behind the front lines during the struggle. The magazine writes about this enthusiasm and the idea of progress for all walks of life using lyrical yet folksy language:

The force of the uprising filled the masses with an enthusiasm for culture. Until recently mostly resigned to their backwardness, the young and old, women and children all wished to learn to read and write. Pen and paper have become part of our fighters’ combat kit. [...] A girl knits socks, sings songs of struggle straining to embroider letters on a towel, kerchief and socks. A little shepherd tends to his flock, engraves his first letters into a spindle and a water bottle, asks every fighter he meets for a pen and paper, to teach himself to write. Girls and women keep their favourite book of songs and stories of struggle in their bosom. Literacy becomes mandatory, at the front and in the rear. An illiterate nurse, writing her first letters, shouts: “I thought this was much harder, I thought I was never going to learn ...” A woman from Podgrmeč teaches herself to write using her son’s tablet. Even old women in the region of Podgrmeč are wont to say: “It is a sin to remain illiterate in this day and age.”

The credit for spreading literacy primarily goes to the popular movement which “took illiterate Serb, Muslim and Croat women to a literacy course, so that together they may learn to read and write.” (ibid.) The alarming illiteracy rates necessitated that those who were able to read and write teach those who were unable. Bringing people to literacy was a volunteering effort, and every woman shockworker engaged in reconstruction was expected to “find a comrade who will devote her free time, strength and love to introduce her to books.” (*Nova žena* 5:13, 1945). In the same article, young members of the AFŽ and Young Communist League say that “we must learn if we want to teach,” because “pen and paper will teach us to appreciate the rights we have won and help us understand our freedom and equality, to learn the duties of a free, upstanding citizen” and also “put us at liberty, as new mothers, to raise our children for a rich, happy life in a new, born-again Yugoslavia.” (*Nova žena*, 5:13, 1945). From the minutes of the

first meeting of the educational arm of the Central Committee of the AFŽ, held on 23 November 1945, we learn that in the interest of effectiveness four sub-sections were formed: a sub-section for the liquidation of illiteracy, a sub-section for political education, a sub-section for general education and a sub-section for courses.

"Illiteracy" is a metaphorical enemy, and as such needs to be "liquidated", a "campaign should be launched" against it (*ibid.*), and we need to "arm ourselves with knowledge". Literacy courses and press readings were organised at get-togethers in each hamlet and village where "the press is read in groups", "the radio is listened to collectively", and there were "mobile libraries" as well as "NF reading groups".⁶³ In addition to the AFŽ's social affairs section, in charge of children's homes and homes for the disabled, a propaganda section in charge of campaigns, radio and press, as well as an education section in charge of bringing youth and adults to literacy were growing stronger in BiH, which made literacy a precondition for the construction of the "new" woman:

Then the 60-year-old Zlata Halić signed up for the course and sent a message to other women: "Shame on all the young women who aren't signing up. I'll be the first to go, though I've got one foot in the grave, I want to die literate." Darinka Tasić from the village of Bijela [...] learnt all the letters in eight days. This is a wonderful example which show how new free women amaze with their work, just as they amazed with their heroism in battle. (*Nova žena* 5:13, 1945).

4. The Significance of the AFŽ Today: Ethno-Capitalism, Repatriarchisation, Illiteracy

Although subjective, as becomes a qualitative analysis, what has been crucial for me is reading the archive as an exercise in critical literacy. It is important especially because of the generations for whom historical revisionism by ethno-national-capitalist elites has literally blocked all socialist and anti-fascist horizons. After the destruction of the SFRY and the emergence of new nation-states, the knowledge and experiences of the Yugoslav NOB, in spite of their contradictions, have been completely neglected and revised through neoliberal, anti-communist narratives. I will try to unpack these claims by describing their interaction.

⁶³ Glavni Odbor of the AFŽ BiH, 'Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a - zapisnik sa sastanka Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Sarajevo održanog 24. i 25.11. 1945', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 13/*nedostaje broj stranice*, 1945.

In spite of the proliferation of identity politics and twenty years of so-called gender mainstreaming, which promoted liberal ideas of women's human rights,⁶⁴ individualism and entrepreneurship, today there is very little "basis for collective mobilisation of women",⁶⁵ unlike in the period of creation of the new Yugoslav woman. In spite of all the limitations and stages of Yugoslav modernity, it must be said that patriarchy survived in the SFRY, especially in the private sphere⁶⁶ where, for instance, domestic violence remained a taboo into the 1980s.⁶⁷ This was never completely solved, in spite of the efforts undertaken by feminists in the 1970s,⁶⁸ and the representation of women in Yugoslav film in the late 1980s was such that it recontextualised the women's demand for the benefits of socialist modernity, such as employment, as insufficient motherhood.⁶⁹ "Killing the actual woman was preferable to letting the traditional ideal of the woman as a mother die",⁷⁰ and Badema, the "bad mother" from Ademir Kenović's film *Kuduz* was ultimately killed by an ethnically conscious man who kills "for our cause", who is "a hero, not a criminal", which, according to Jovanović, foreshadows the 1990s wars that brought ethnic homogenisation and spelt the end of socialism, for which they needed repatriarchisation.

The post-socialist period saw a stricter division between two "seemingly separate, but in reality networked and interdependent spheres of productive and re-

⁶⁴ Helms, Elissa. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.

⁶⁵ Kaneva, Nadia. "Mediating Post-socialist Femininities: Contested Histories and visibilities". *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (1) (2015), 12.

⁶⁶ Dunja Rihtman Auguštin, *Etnologija naše svakodnevnice*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1998.

⁶⁷ Majstorović, "(Un)Doing Feminism in Post-Yugoslav Media Spaces", 1096.

⁶⁸ In the 1970s, Yugoslavia saw the arrival of the second wave of feminism, encouraged by the student protests of 1968. In 1978, the international conference "Drug-ca – Žensko pitanje. Novi pristup?". [Tovarish/Tovarka – the Woman Question: New Approach?] The conference was the first tumultuous appearance of feminists on the public scene in the socialist Yugoslavia. The focus on the woman question and the problem of the sexual division of labour was highlighted by the prominent slogan of the confederation: "Proleterci svih zemalja – ko vam pere čarape?" (Workers of the world – who washes your socks?). The topics included patriarchy, the intersection of feminism and Marxism, feminism and psychoanalysis, as well as identity, sexuality, language and the invisibility of women in culture and scholarship. Also discussed were the everyday lives of women, discrimination in the public and private sphere, women's double burden, violence and the survival of traditional patriarchal roles. (Čaušević 2014)

⁶⁹ Nebojša, Jovanović, "Bosanski psiho: Kuduz, rat spolova i kraj socijalizma". *Sarajevske sveske: Da li je Balkan muškog roda* 39/40 (2013), 156–175.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 167.

productive labour” which have been “hierarchically reorganised.”⁷¹ Reproductive work was naturalised through repatriarchisation as exclusively women’s, whilst ethno-nationalism and the Dayton division of the country as desirable affiliations in the new capitalist society further galvanised these relations. According to Močnik:⁷²

In tightening the control and discipline, whatever tools are at hand will do: religious ideology, ethnic loyalty, traditional values, the renewal of the patriarchal family, the resurrection of traditional patterns, “retraditionalisation” – all of these are new modes of socialness coerced by contemporary capitalism.

The contemporary capitalism which we have in BiH today as a species of the so-called authoritarian capitalism⁷³ typical of all ex-Yugoslav countries whose captains are mostly profiteers of the 1992–1995 war ensured the division of assets through ethnic cleansing and subsequent privatisation. It ensured the return of patriarchy, which established continuity with the legacy of the colonial, agrarian, pre-socialist era. As was the case before WWII, the collusion of institutionalised religion and ruling elites in the new post-socialist era in which power is evenly distributed between the clergy and ethno-capitalists, society has been retraditionalised^{74 75} and gender roles and relations repatriarchised, which goes hand in hand with the rising poverty and unemployment.

I base the repatriarchisation hypothesis on the *depatriarchising potential* of the socialist period, which is at odds with the present rise of misogyny, discrimination, exploitation and violence⁷⁶ as integral parts of the process of restoration of capitalist relations. Within these relations, social reproductive labour is “classi-

⁷¹ Burcar, Lilijana “Iz socijalizma natrag u kapitalizam: repatrijarhalizacija društva i re-domestifikacija žena”. *Dva desetljeća poslije kraja socijalizma*. Zagreb: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014, pp. 114.

⁷² Močnik, Rastko. “Dvije vrste fašistoidnih politika”. *Novosti*, no. 677 (2012). <http://arhiva.portalnovosti.com/2012/12/dvije-vrste-fasistoidnih-politika1/>, accessed on 20 August 2016.

⁷³ Dolenc, Danijela. “Prema reartikulaciji otpora ekonomskom liberalizmu”. <http://slobodnifilozofski.com/2016/09/prema-reartikulaciji-otpora-ekonomskom-liberalizmu.html> (2016), accessed on 10 October 2016.

⁷⁴ Popov-Momčinović, Zlatiborka. *Ženski pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini: artikulacija jedne kontrakulture*. Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Fondacija CURE and Centar za empirijska istraživanja religije u BiH, 2013.

⁷⁵ Leinert Novosel, Smiljana. *Žena na pragu 21. stoljeća – između majčinstva i profesije* (Zagreb: Ženska grupa TOD, EDAC, 1999), 18.

⁷⁶ Marina Blagojević, “Mizoginija: nevidljivi uzroci, bolne posledice” in *Mapiranje mizoginije u Srbiji: diskursi i prakse, drugo izdanje*, ed. Marina Blagojević (Belgrade: AŽIN, 2002), 31–55.

fied as non-labour, not worth a mention”,⁷⁷ which endangers women’s economic self-sufficiency and puts them “in a position of complete or partial dependence on their families [...] reducing them to the level of socially and politically disenfranchised subjects, that is, second class citizens”,⁷⁸ which says something about intergenerational solidarity as opposed to state intervention in the field of care. Today, it is precisely this type of unpaid labour that the feminist critique of the so-called care economy⁷⁹ sees as further facilitating the exploitation and devaluation through the hidden “sexual contract”⁸⁰ of patriarchal capitalism.

“Anti-communist revisionism has become the dominant way of remembering socialist Yugoslavia”, which in turn “conveniently coincides with the neoliberal economic measures of the new political elites.”⁸¹ Theorists today speak about the so-called post-fascism of the elites in contemporary practices of the new liberal capitalist states reflected in racism, homophobia, the abolition of workers’ rights, media manipulations, bureaucratic apparatuses which crush dissent within institutions and hate-mongering campaigns against dissident groups and individuals. In such a world, a woman solves problems by “buying the product”, while unpaid domestic labour and motherhood, ideologised as “natural”, in fact create invisible surplus value for capitalism. While class inequality within all groups deepens, especially among women, an organisational effort is missing because the left cannot articulate these contradictions and the struggles attached to them.

Discourse after the 1992–1995 war in BiH has permanently broken up the former sense of togetherness among women by producing solely Bosniak, Serb and Croat victims, and there has been little effort to turn the experience of war into a common experience of suffering on all sides. This wartime suffering has been exacerbated by post-war suffering embodied in the experience of transition and the precariousness of life in what used to be a common economic and political space, and is now two entities and a district in BiH. Except for the handful of left-leaning feminists with a class consciousness, who do not merely follow the liberal agendas of the numerous women’s and human rights organisations, we do

⁷⁷ Burcar, “Iz socijalizma natrag u kapitalizam: repatrijarhalizacija društva i re-domestifikacija žena”, 114.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁹ Folbre, Nancy. *Who Cares? A Feminist Critique of the Care Economy*. New York: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014.

⁸⁰ Pateman, Carol. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

⁸¹ Krašovec, Primož. “Svi anti-komunisti su tigrovi od papira”. <http://slobodnifilozofski.com/2010/06/primož-krašovec-svi-antikomunisti-su.html>, accessed on 20 September 2016.

not have a single political voice attempting to gain the trust of masses of women by simultaneously calling on Serb, Bosniak and Croat women to stand up for their rights as enemies of the rising ethnonationalist fascism. Such interpellations inherent in referring to all women in BiH, Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks, as Bosnian and Herzegovinian (just as they were once referred to as new Yugoslavs), remain, unfortunately, marginal and unorganised. Seeing that they are not articulated in the programme of any political party, they remain outside of discursive practice, as their introduction is considered too risky for the ruling Dayton order.

Last but not least, when it comes to education, the results of the 2013 census indicate that, 70 years after WWII, not only has illiteracy in BiH not been eradicated, at 2.82 percent it is also highest in the region, compared to 1.9 percent in Serbia and 0.8 in Croatia⁸². Of the 89,794 illiterate persons in our country, 77,557 are women. The living experience of the Dayton order, which has been furthering ethnic exclusion and isolation for over twenty years (this is also shown by the census results – both entities are to a great extent ethnically homogeneous),⁸³ renders impossible any large-scale effort to organise women that would work towards a state-sanctioned policy of promoting literacy and education for women, especially those from rural areas, and those of advanced age.⁸⁴

With all of this in mind, we see that the changes and efforts made by the AFŽ during WWII were emancipatory, especially for the women who had previously never enjoyed any kind of privileges – peasants, workers, youth. Whilst most of this legacy has been completely destroyed, some remnants of it can still be barely discerned, smothered under the wave of robbery and privatisation. In a patriarchal ethno-capitalist hegemony that is today's BiH, led by nationalist parties as the main political actors backed by EU agencies, tradition cherry-picks a past to match the manufactured present, in order to create a sense of continuity. Rada Vranješević and Vahida Maglajlić do not figure in this past, especially not at the same time. The AFŽ Archive represents, if nothing, a counter-hegemony

⁸² Arnautović, Marija. "Popis u BiH: Nacionalnost važnija od pismenosti", 30 June 2016. <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/popis-bih-nacionalnost-vaznija-od-pismenosti/27831061.html>, accessed on 13 September 2016.

⁸³ As for the ethnic structure by entity, there are 74 percent of Bosniaks in the Federation of BiH, 22.4 percent of Croats and 3.60 percent of Serbs. In the Republika Srpska there are 81.51 percent of Serbs, 2.41 percent of Croats and 13.99 percent of Bosniaks. In Brčko District there are 42.36 percent of Bosniaks, 20.66 of Croats and 34.58 percent of Serbs (Arnautović 2016). More at: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/popisni-rezultatinakon-25-godina-u-federaciji-vecina-bosnjaci-u-rs-srbi/27830387.html>.

⁸⁴ <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/u-bih-gotovo-90000-nepismenih>

in response to these regimes by introducing into discourse powerful actors, women of all social and ethno-national backgrounds, who organise, charge at the enemy, work and build and change the existing social relations.

5. For Some Future “Grand Times”

How to “write down in charcoal” to “fan the fire”, to remember these struggles not as a “picture hanging on the wall” in which we are stuck “forever and forevermore”, but as fuel for the active mobilisation of today’s women, now that most female veterans and *fronties* (AFŽ members) are deceased, and the knowledge of the struggles is absent from the public sphere, as well as everyday life. Insights into transgenerational, suppressed knowledge shed light on the battles won by the women of the day riding on a wave of revolution, but these discourses need to be reactivated by placing them in “a homogenous and empty time” into a time “which is fulfilled by the here-and-now”, otherwise “not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious.”⁸⁵

Writing about the great organisation and movement that is the AFŽ requires great effort, first and foremost because of the unavailability of the main actors and archives, as well as because of the complexity of the relations within and around it. The AFŽ’s influence was greatly weakened, especially after the directive of the Central Committee of CPY from January 1944 when the CPY dissolved its internal hierarchy.⁸⁶ In the article titled “Za čvršću povezanost među odborima AFŽ-a” (“For a Closer Connection Between the AFŽ’s Committees”) (*Nova žena* 6:9-10, 1945) we see a trend of abolishing the organisations internal hierarchical structure and submitting to the Narodni Front, that is, people’s liberation committees joined by the so-called “progressive women”.⁸⁷ The article begins with a generalisation that it is “natural that every organisation made up of living beings should expand and develop”, heralding the end of the AFŽ and its marginalisation in relation to the NF.^{88 89} The decision is legitimised in the article via claims that the “strict submission of the lower-level [AFŽ] committee to the higher-level one has started to separate women from the people’s movement as a whole” and that the organisation had become “too cramped to receive new female anti-fascists” so “instead of closed, cliquish AFŽ committees, broad *people’s committees* (NO) are being created now.”

⁸⁵ Benjamin, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁸⁷ Sklevicky, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Jancar-Webster, *op. cit.*

It was precisely Sklevicky⁹⁰ who wrote in most detail about the vertical mobility of women, the ambiguity of the AFŽ's tasks in relation to the NF and the phasing out of direct work with women; in the latter two she saw the end of this organisation in 1953, after which the AFŽ remained "at the margins of the text of history."⁹¹ With the women's organisation evidently lacking "autonomy of the goal" and the "latent fear" of "feminist deviations" in parts of the Party ranks, it was clear that the revolutionary zeal of the AFŽ and its depatriarchalising potential,⁹² discernible from *Nova žena*, would not last long enough to carry out total depatriarchisation of either Bosnian-Herzegovinian or Yugoslav society, both of which, in fact, needed "more socialism."

Today there is no broad-based participation of women in everyday political, social and economic life in BiH, and nobody articulates why female engagement would be necessary in the first place. We see similar observations in the closing speech given at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the AFŽ Croatia by the chair-woman Cana Babović, who said "that we have got nothing in particular, nothing specific, some issue to fight for as women, is a different matter."⁹³

Women fighters recognised the meaning of Yugoslav national unity forged in the anti-fascist struggle. They had won the battles for literacy, education and equal pay, putting socialist and feminist ideals in practice as much as they could. The Yugoslav woman, who had won her emancipation, equality and access to the world of work by fighting Nazi Germany and traitors shoulder to shoulder with her comrades-in-arms, knew that she was the backbone of the struggle, and that she must be the backbone of the new society forged in battle:

So Croatian, Slovenian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, Dalmatian, Macedonian, Voivodinian and Serbian women parted ways, each went to her homeland overcome by the joy of living in such grand times, working on the large part of the effort to build a new life. And in each of their souls a decision was solidifying, unshakeable as a vow: we, women, have been the backbone of the NOB, the backbone of the superhuman effort of our peoples to free their motherland, but from now on we will be the backbone of her magnificent reconstruction, of her happy future. (*Nova žena* 5:5, 1945)

⁹⁰ Sklevicky, *op. cit.*, 121

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁹² Although they had rights, women in the SFRY started to exercise them only in the 1960s. Katz (2011, 154) argues that "the equality of men and women [...] rested more on the laws than on some crucial change of relations in everyday life. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian woman started to exercise her rights won in the 1940s only in the 1960s, when society started to achieve more substantial economic progress." In this regard we may also talk of some thirty years of depatriarchalising potential.

⁹³ Sklevicky, *op. cit.*, pp. 122.

This cache of the AFŽ media texts from the end of WWII reveals a promise of a socialist revolution with a profusion of emancipatory opportunities for women of all classes, ages and ethnic backgrounds, especially for the great majority of unemployed, poor women who can only be further exploited by capitalism. To write about that which cannot be suppressed in the AFŽ's experience is to reclaim it through contemporary socialist and feminist political practices as the Blochian principle of hope in which social utopia creates awareness of and abolishes human and female misery. It is to reject and resist the status quo in which feigned nationalism laced with patriarchy has been masking mass exploitation under ethno-capitalists for two decades now by producing kids for war and unpaid labour. To "fuse the horizons" from an historical distance is to repoliticise the status quo by providing a "meeting point" for some future grand times where we will be able to organise for struggle. The knowledge about these horizons represents an alternative history crucial for understanding future social struggles for a more egalitarian society, for resisting not only the capitalist mode of production but also the production of "kids for war" which reverberates in the verses of the contemporary Sarajevo poet Dijala Hasanbegović:⁹⁴

I'm not giving you kids
for war:
I'm telling you with my palms facing upwards
palms sticky from the acrid yellow cords
which the cutthroats shall never cut.

Translated by Mirza Purić

⁹⁴ Dijala Hasanbegović, "Djeca za rat", <http://darkocvijetic.blogspot.ba/2014/01/veliki-odmor-dijalahasanbegovic.html>, accessed on 10 September 2016.

Archival Materials:

- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH 'Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ – Zapisnik sa sastanka Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Sarajevo održanog 24. i 25.11. 1945.' Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 13/6, 1945.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Materijali Drugog kongresa AFŽa BiH održanog 12 – 13. Jula 1947', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, 1543/109, 1947.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Banja Luka - Izvještaj o radu Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Banja Luka od 26.11.1945.' Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 118/1, 1945.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 'Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a - zapisnik sa sastanka Okružnog odbora AFŽ-a Sarajevo održanog 24. i 25.11. 1945', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 13/*nedostaje broj stranice*, 1945.

Bibliography:

- Arnautović, Marija. "Popis u BiH: Nacionalnost važnija od pismenosti". 30. 6. 2016. <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/popis-bih-nacionalnost-vaznija-odpismenosti/27831061.html>
- Babović, Cana. "Organizaciono pitanje AFŽ" referat predstavljen na I Zemaljskoj konferenciji AFŽ, 08.12.1942. Arhiv antifašističke borbe žena Bosne i Hercegovine i Jugoslavije, <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/231>
- Benjamin, Walter. On the Concept of History. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>
- Blagojević, Marina. "Mizoginija: nevidljivi uzroci, bolne posledice". U *Mapiranje mizoginije u Srbiji: diskursi i prakse, drugo izdanje*, 31-55. ed. Marina Blagojević. Belgrade: AŽIN, 2002.
- Bonfiglioli, Chiara. "Revolutionary Networks. Women's Political and social activism in Cold War Italy and Yugoslavia (1945–1957)". Doctoral dissertation. University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, 2012
- Brkljača, Seka. 2012. "Bosna i Hercegovina u prvim godinama Drugog svjetskog rata od 1939. do 1941. godine", 9–29. In: *Bosna i Hercegovina 1941: novi pogledi : zbornik radova*. Ed. Husnija Kamberović. Sarajevo : Institut za istoriju, 2012.
- Burcar, Ljiljana. "Iz socijalizma natrag u kapitalizam: repatrijarhalizacija društva i redomestifikacija žena", 112–150. *Dva desetljeća poslije kraja socijalizma*. Zagreb: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014.
- Chowdhury, Aniruddha. "Memory, Modernity, Repetition: Walter Benjamin's History." *Telos* 143.2 (2008): 22–46.
- Čović, Bartul. 2015. "Povijest pišu gubitnici". *Novosti*. <http://www.portalnovosti.com/povijest-pisu-gubitnici>.

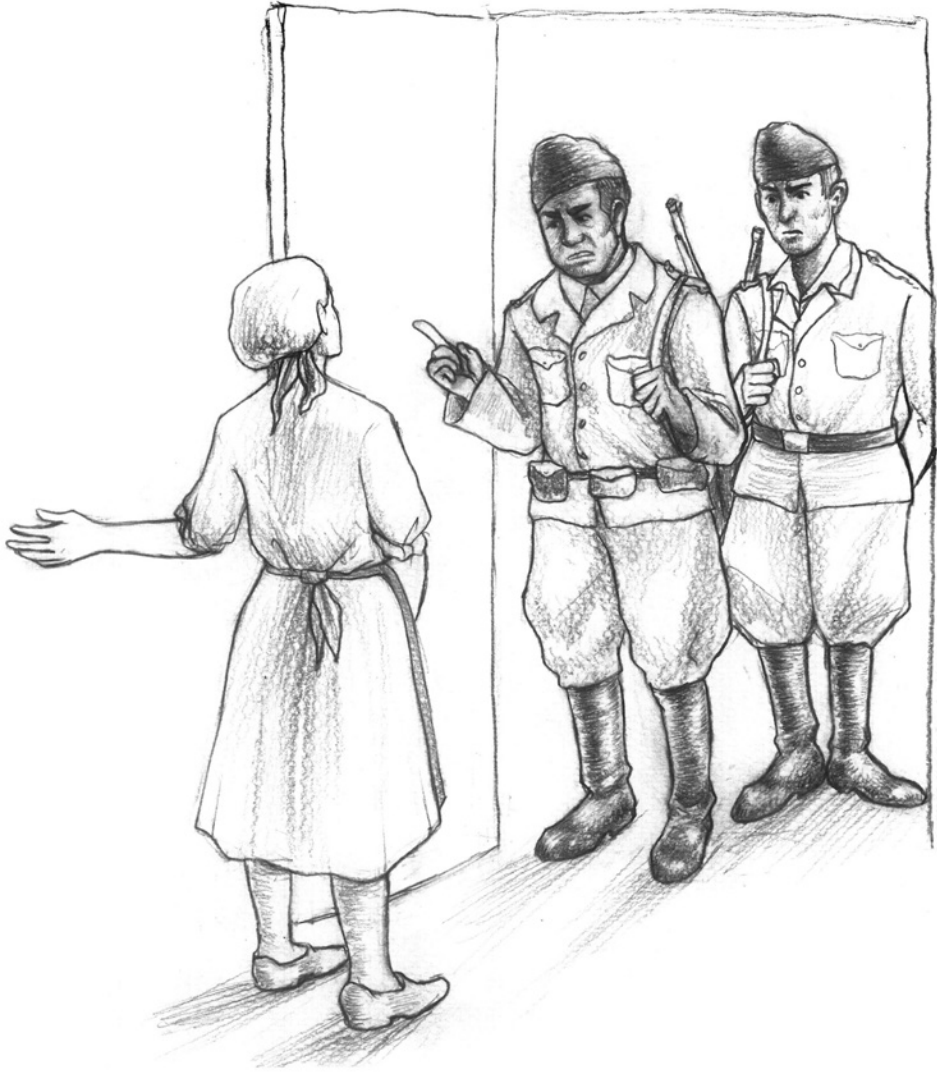
- De Haan, Francisca. 2016. "The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF): History, Main Agenda, and Contributions, 1945–1991". http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com/help/view/the_womens_international_democraticffederation_widf_history_main_agenda_and_contributions_19451991, 2016.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Dobrivojević, Ivana. 2011. "Od ruralnog ka urbanom: modernizacija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine u FNRJ 1945–1955, 7–26. In: *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz historiju: zbornik radova*, Ed. Husnija Kamberović. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011.
- Dolenec, Danijela. "Prema reartikulaciji otpora ekonomskom liberalizmu". *Slobodni Filozofski*, avgust 2016., <http://slobodnifilozofski.com/2016/09/premareartikulaciji-otpora-ekonomskom-liberalizmu.html>.
- Dugandžić, Andreja and Adela Jušić. "Intervju sa Stanom Nastić," *Arhiv antifašističke borbe žena Bosne i Hercegovine i Jugoslavije*. <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/285>
- Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. London: Longman, 1989.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- Fuko, Mišel. *Arheologija znanja*. Belgrade: Plato, 1998.
- Folbre, Nancy. *Who Cares? A Feminist Critique of the Care Economy*. New York: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014.
- Funk, Nanette. "A Very Tangled Knot: Official State Socialist Women's Organizations, Women's Agency and Feminism in Eastern European State Socialism". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 344–360.
- Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Istina i metoda*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978.
- Ghodsee, Kristen. 2015. "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 248–252.
- Halpern, Joel, Kaser, Karl i Richard A. Wagner. "Patriarchy in the Balkans: Temporal and Cross-Cultural Approaches". In: *Household and the Family in the Balkans*. Ed. Karl Kaser, 47–64. University of Graz. Graz: Lit Verlag, 2012.
- Hasanbegović, Dijala. 2013. "Ne dam djecu za rat". (<http://darkocvijetic.blogspot.ba/2014/01/veliki-odmor-dijala-hasanbegovic.html>)
- Helms, Elissa. *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.
- Horvat, Srećko and Igor Štiks. *Welcome to the Dessert of Postsocialism*. London: Verso, 2015.
- Jancar-Webster, Barbara. *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945*. Denver: Arden Press Inc., 1990.
- Jovanović, Nebojša. 2013. "Bosanski psiho: Kuduz, rat spolova i kraj socijalizma. *Sarajevske sveske: Da li je Balkan muškog roda.*" 39–40 (2013): 156–175

- Kaneva, Nadia. "Mediating Post-socialist Femininities: Contested Histories and visibilities." *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (1) (2015): 1-17
- Katz, Vera. "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953.". *Prilozi* 40 (2011), 135-155.
- Krašovec, Primož. 2010. "Svi anti-komunisti su tigrovi od papira". *Slobodni Filozofski*. Juni 2010. <http://slobodnifilozofski.com/2010/06/primoz-krasovec-svi-antikomunistisu.html>.
- Leinert Novosel, Smiljana. *Žena na pragu 21.stoljeća - između majčinstva i profesije*. Zagreb: Ženska grupa TOD, EDAC, 1999.
- Majstorović, Danijela. "Femininity, Patriarchy and resistance in the Postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina." *International Review of Sociology* 21 (2) (2011): 277-299
- Majstorović, Danijela, and Mandić, Maja. "What It Means to Be a Bosnian Woman: Analyzing Women's Talk Between Patriarchy and Emancipation." In *Living With Patriarchy—Discursive Constructions of Gendered Subjects Across Public Spheres*, 81-109. Eds. Danijela Majstorović and Inger Lassen. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011
- Majstorović, D. "(Un)Doing Feminism in Post-Yugoslav Media Spaces". *Feminist Media Studies* 16 (6) (2016): 1093-1108.
- Majstorović, Danijela, Zoran Vučković and Anđela Pepić. 2015. "From Dayton to Brussels via Tuzla: Post-2014 Economic Restructuring as Europeanization Discourse/ Practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina". *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15(4) (2015): 661-682
- Močnik, Rastko. "Dvije vrste fašistoidnih politika". *Novosti*, br. 677. Decembar 2012. <http://arhiva.portalnovosti.com/2012/12/dvije-vrste-fasistoidnih-politika/>
- Nova žena - list Antifašističkog fronta žena Bosne i Hercegovine, Arhiv antifašističke borbe žena Bosne i Hercegovine i Jugoslavije, *Periodika*, <http://afzarhiv.org/items/browse?collection=5>
- Pantelić, Ivana. *Partizanke kao građanke: društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji, 1945-1953*. Velgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Evoluta, 2011.
- Pateman, Carol. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988
- Popov-Momčinović, Zlatiborka. *Ženski pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini: artikulacija jedne kontrakulture*. Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Fondacija CURE i Centar za empirijska istraživanja religije u BiH, 2013.
- Popov Momčinović, Zlatiborka, Giomi, Fabio and Zlatan Delić. "Uvod: period austrougarske uprave". U, *Zabilježene - žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku*, 16-38. Ur. Jasmina Čaušević. Sarajevo : Sarajevski otvoreni centar : Fondacija Cure, 2014.
- Radanović, Milan. *Kazna i zločin: snage kolaboracije u Srbiji: odgovornost za ratne zločine (1941-1944) i vojni gubici (1944-1945)*. Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2015
- Rihtman Auguštin, Dunja. *Etnologija naše svakodnevnice*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1998.

- Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi*. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.
- Studen, Dragan. *Borkinje*. Belgrade: Obeležja, 1982.
- Van Dijk, Teun. *Elite discourse and Racism*. Sage, 1993
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997
- Wodak, Ruth., De Cillia, Rudolph., Reisigl, Martin. and Liebhart, Karl. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh: EUP, 1999
- Wodak, Ruth. *Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual* (2nd. Ed.). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2011
- Wodak, Ruth. *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. London: Sage, 2015
- ZAVNOBiH, *dokumenti 1943-1944, knj. I*, Sarajevo: IP Veselin Masleša, 1968, 58–63
- <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/u-bih-gotovo-90000-nepismenih>
- Žagar, Igor. "Topoi in critical discourse analysis". *Školsko polje* Vol. 20 (5/6), (2009): 47–75







HEROISM OF LABOR
THE WOMEN'S ANTIFASCIST
FRONT AND THE SOCIALIST
DISPOSITIVE 1945–1953



BORIŠA
MRAOVIĆ

1. Introduction

Any attempt to understand and valorize the rise and decline of the Women's Antifascist Front in Yugoslavia (AFŽ) today is faced with the question of how to read and comprehend the organization's archive. The problem is broader, however, and has to do not only with the AFŽ archive, but also with the archive as an institution that enables contemporaneity through a critical view into the past, as it appears precisely in the archives (where they exist) that constitute history as such.¹ The AFŽ was formed in 1942 during the Second World War [and is the result of long-term attempts to mobilize and organize women within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), when the leaders of the people and the nascent state were faced with difficult and urgent organizational and political questions. The AFŽ integrated itself into the tradition of the international socialist movement, which, from the 1930s onwards, developed the idea of a Popular front as a response to the fascist mobilization and rise to power. Tremendous physical effort is imbued into the AFŽ's history, first and foremost in organizing the resistance against the local collaborators and the foreign occupation forces, followed by the post-war reconstruction of the country and the formation of the state structures. The history of the AFŽ, however, bears witness to the dynamic convergence between strong social organizations and ideas and masses of 'common' and 'small' women, who together with their male comrades created Yugoslav history. Though this history continues to live as a memory of the few, the reconstruction of such a convergence is made rather difficult by the intricate historical developments, the mutation of our political glossary and the abandonment of previous socio-political formations.

Some of the basic insights of the more recent critical and feminist insights into the women's history (especially those relating to the questions of patriarchy's historic character and the effect of such a construct on the writing of history) can help with the reconstruction. The pioneering return to this unwritten history undertaken by Lydia Sklevicky is based precisely on this perspective insisting on the fundamental importance of the content of the women's question.² Analysing different understandings of the idea of continuity within historiography and history, anthropologist Svetlana Slapšak notes that the idea of "continuity which in historiography does not have a very good position given that it is often used as

¹ Parikka, Jussi. "Archival Media Theory An Introduction to Wolfgang Ernst's Media Archaeology" in Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, ed. Jussi Parikka, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013., p. 7.

² Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi*, ed. Dunja Rihtman Auguštin. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.

a tool of nationalist imaginaries, in women's history means something else. It is inscribed into a socio-cultural formation which we know for a long time now, whose real origins are almost unknown, and which still cannot be classified as the past – the patriarchy". The present and the AFŽ are thus related precisely by this particular continuity, given that "it has no connection to ethnic mapping, it cannot be aligned with a religious conglomerate or an ideology".³ From this perspective, the AFŽ's organizational history, its internal relations as well as relations toward other elements of the nascent society can be reconstructed as a reconstitution of patriarchal culture. This leaves us with the question of how to understand the history of the abovementioned continuity despite the AFŽ.

More recent debates on the AFŽ analyze the way and the extent to which the traditions of socialism and feminism collide and are expressed and combined in the history of the organization. Maca Gržetić, in her speech at the first Congress of the AFŽ Croatia in July of 1945, emphasized that women were "doubly unfree and as twice as oppressed until the victory of the People's Liberation Movement (NOP) in our country". Although it is hard to pinpoint what exactly she was referring to, we can assume that she had important questions regarding the two traditions in mind. Unfortunately, the idea of double unfreedom, as a criterion that could serve as an indicator of the real freedom of women, was never examined seriously, hence there was no plan for a double liberation.⁴ After the war, the AFŽ is strongly integrated into the new order led by the Party as the ruling societal power which considers the woman question as subordinate to the general goals of the Party.⁵ Thus the Party, at least in principle, considered that the woman question would be solved through a progressive realization of the popular socialist rule. Given that even the AFŽ, almost without exception, advocated this position, the important question arises as to how one of the two constituent intellectual traditions embodied in the movement was eliminated and whether the archive can tell us something about that.

On the other hand, if we leave this question aside for now, we can say that the AFŽ was undoubtedly an exceptional organizational societal formation which, as Adrijana Zaharijević notes, gave the woman question "a singular and auto-

³ Slapšak, Svetlana. "Balkanske žene: rod, epistemologija i istorijska antropologija", ed. Babić-Avdispahić, Jasminka, Bakšić-Muftić, Jasna, and Vlaisavljević, Ugo. Sarajevo: Centar za interdisciplinarnu postdiplomske studije, 2009. p. 63.

⁴ Sklevicky, 98, 107-108.

⁵ Jancar-Webster, Barbara. *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia: 1941 – 1945*, Denver: Arden Press, 1990. p. 20.

mous status that emerged in the spirit of a specifically socialist arrangement of governance”.⁶ Over a relatively unique and long historical period, the AFŽ was ensuring, in a most direct way, the social and economic reproduction of society and the new social order through constant reproductive work and unpaid public work on a massive scale. This leads us to the second, fundamental question: what is to be gained from returning to this organization and its epoch today when our participation in society is reduced more and more to individual labor on the market valorized in monetary terms only, while patriarchal oppression remains deeply structured in hybrid physical, transitional and digitally mediated spaces? Can it point us to some significant questions and can it teach us anything? In order to at least touch upon some of these questions, in this paper I focus on the post-war period until the abolition of the AFŽ (1953). My ambition is to at least partially reconstruct the dynamics of the creation of the *heroic figure*. My thesis (and my hope) here is that a return to this path – a return to the female in constructing the heroic – can outline a new heroic figure that could intervene into the present as an emancipatory figure. Something of this “figure that is coming” can be discovered through an open, critical and creative return to collective action, which has already been exemplified in our history.

There are three basic theoretical concepts I rely on here. The first is Foucault's concept of the *dispositive*. I understand the dispositive as a wide institutional and conceptual framework and circuit which directs societal activity in general. It is within this framework that the figure (relatively productive in symbolic terms) that intrigues me most is constituted, i.e. the heroic figure. In this sense, the second important theoretical concept I lean on is related to the reflections of Alain Badiou, who seeks to point out the theoretical and political path towards the reconstitution of the heroic as a figure that could extricate humanity from the quagmire of the present.⁷ Last but not least, I rely on the concept of *anthro-*

⁶ Zaharijević, Adriana. “Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji: Kako se može čitati istorija jugoslovenskog feminizma?” *Sociologija* 57:1 (2015), 76. However, Zaharijević adds: “Yet it was within that same order, in the moment when the socialist arrangement based itself self-consciously on an even more fundamental equality in self-management, that the independence of the woman question was abolished. From that moment onwards it was treated as an integral part of the class question, which is a key issue of society, an issue that all other issues could be reduced to.” See the debate initiated by Nanette Funk's text: ‘A very tangled knot: Official state socialist women's organizations, women's agency and feminism in Eastern European state socialism’, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 21, No. 4 (2014): 344-360; and the response to this text in *Aspasia, The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History: Is 'Communist Feminism' a Contradictio in Terminis?* 1 (2007); *Ten Years After: Communism and Feminism Revisited*, 10, 2016.

⁷ Badiou, Alain. *Philosophy for Militants*, New York/London: Verso, 2012., p. 42 – 47.

potechology – a historically constructed set of basic epistemological assumptions about the technological construction of society through “proper upbringing” – which Ugo Vlaisavljević suggested as one of the imperative tools for the analysis of Yugoslav socialism.⁸ When about it comes to the AFŽ itself, my basic theoretical and empirical reference is the work of Lydia Sklevicky, to whom we owe not only the renewed interest in the AFŽ, but also some important methodological and theoretical insights. The primary materials I use for illustrating the dynamics of the construction and articulation of the heroic are the materials from the Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia.⁹

2. The Socialist Dispositive, Heroism and the Education of Society

The dispositive is a useful analytical tool as it enables us to have an all-encompassing view of the set of social and political relations that play a constitutive role in the formation of a society. In a general sense we can understand it as a strategic formation that responds to small or large scale needs. Foucault defines the dispositive as a “heterogeneous collection consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic attitudes, in short that which is said as well as that which is left unsaid [...] the dispositive is a system of relations that can be established among these elements.”¹⁰ Relying on Foucault’s definition, Giorgio Agamben defines the dispositive as “a set of practices and mechanisms (both linguistic and non-linguistic, juridical, technical and military) aiming to face an urgent need and to obtain an effect that is more or less immediate”.¹¹ The dispositive thus at the same time encompasses a set of practices and a set of institutions and their respective discourses as

⁸ Vlaisavljević, Ugo. *Lepoglava i univerzitet – Ogledi iz političke epistemologije*, Sarajevo: Centar za interdisciplinarnu postdiplomske studije, 2003.

⁹ The Archival corpus is part of the Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. The Archive was digitized between 2013 and 2015 by Crvena, while part of the archive was made available at: www.afzarhiv.org.

¹⁰ We can find this “definition” in the translator’s note in the Serbian edition of Michel Foucault’s *The Will to Knowledge – History of Sexuality* (Mišel Fuko, *Volja za znanjem – Istorija seksualnosti II*). Transl. Jelena Stakić: Karpos, 2006, p30. Also see: Jefferey Bussolini, “What is a Dispositive?” *Foucault Studies* 10, 2010, pp. 85-107.

¹¹ Agamben, Giorgio. *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, p.8. For a critical review see: Pasquinelli, Matteo, “What an Apparatus is Not: On the Archeology of the Norm in Foucault, Cangulihem and Goldstein,” *Parrhesia Journal* 22, 2015: 79-89. Available at: www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia22/parrhesia22_pasquinelli.pdf

well as their linkages that structure the relations within each individual sphere of action. It includes biological and bodily, conceptual, material and institutional efforts to construct a socialist world as a new world, which in practice are realized as the work of organizations and institutions committed to structuring the relations of material construction of society, and its conceptual foundation. Thus we can interpret the project of creating socialist Yugoslavia as a dynamic construction of the socialist dispositive whose task it is to organize the newly established labor, political, and production relations. It is within this strategic space that the AFŽ is developed as a distinct element that, in a given historical moment, articulates itself as a response to a specific and urgent need for the creation of a new society. The general process of dispositive construction operates, from its very beginning, with one significant figure around which it seeks to organize societal energy: the figure of the hero. Historically, the figure of the hero was usually associated with the imaginary and praxis of war, although some traditions developed on somewhat different principles. Up until the French Revolution, the figure of the hero as an individual “warrior” predominated, but was replaced by the democratic and collective figure of the soldier in the revolution.¹² Badiou believes that “our task is to find a new heroic figure, which is neither the return of the old figure of religious or national sacrifice, nor the nihilistic figure of the last man” which should be a “paradigm of heroism from beyond war, a figure that would be neither that of the warrior nor that of the soldier.”¹³ All socialist projects, to a lesser or greater degree, were attempts to connect the figure of the hero with labor as a process, and thus establish heroism of labor as the most important societal value.

Yugoslavia's history, especially the early years of the second Yugoslavia, is a history of one such attempt. During this period, a demand was repeatedly made for heroism as a unifying signifier that should direct the efforts to create a new society. It was an important element of “anthropotechnology”, the general task of which is to educate in a predefined manner. The economic model was simple: “electrification and industrialization”, however, Vlasisavljević claims that things were much subtler. According to him, the basic element of the transformation upon which a new society was built was in fact an epistemological revolution that was realized as a “technological revolution which in its ‘real essence’ was an industrial revolution”, and even though it was realized “with power-lines and columns reaching to the remotest villages”, in another sense it was actualized as a discourse “that described a new human and technological reality, while having

¹² Badiou, Alain. *Philosophy for Militants*, New York/London: Verso, 2012

¹³ *Ibid.*

an educational effect".¹⁴ Anthropotechnology, as the knowledge of "technology of liberation", as a technological solution to *societal labor* as the basic mechanism of the *production of people*, in a general sense includes material construction of the human world, as well as the processes of proper upbringing of humans. Here one must seek an explanation for the relatively quick abandonment of mass-organizational forms – especially in the case of women's organizing – which then determined the general character of the political and economic development of the new state in a period of tumultuous post-war consolidation.

3. A Society of the People

How was the dispositive established immediately after the war? In the public political dictionary, words and phrases such as "socialism", "communism", the "dictatorship of the proletariat" or the "socialist state" were mostly omitted. The figure of the people constructed in the Narodno-oslobodilački rat (NOR) emerged victorious from the war, hence the political discourse is dominated by the peoples' democratic terminology: "the peoples' rule", "the peoples' democracy", "the rule of the working people", "the peoples' state", etc. The Constitution of 1946 does not mention the word "socialism" but rather formulates "the principle of the rule of the people through their representative bodies – peoples' councils and peoples' assemblies".¹⁵ The state-crafting ideology was the continuation of the People's Liberation War (NOR) tradition, the core cadre of which consisted of *frontmen* within the CPY. In August 1945, the People's Front of Yugoslavia (Narodni front, henceforth NF/NFJ) was established as a coalition of different groups and political parties lead by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.¹⁶ Even though it initially consisted of a number of weak political organizations, the NF was quickly homogenized by "assimilation of bourgeois groups, that adopted the program and lost their earlier individuality, or by the departure of the groups that could not keep up with the development inspired by the CPY".¹⁷ The forces outside of the NF submitted to the political pressure and were removed.¹⁸ The

¹⁴ Vlasisavljević, p. 50.

¹⁵ Babić, Nikola. *Na putevima revolucije*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972., p. 125.

¹⁶ Bilandžić, Dušan. *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije – Glavni procesi 1918. – 1985.*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga 1985. P. 110.

¹⁷ In Tito's opinion, as noted by Bilandžić, the opposition "did not put forth a single idea that would be better than what we put forth in the program of the Narodni Front. They [the opposition] have no program at all. It is that old camp of enemies of the people pulling the wheel of history back, while the wheel spins them around itself and will, of course, eventually crush them." Bilandžić, *History*, 103.

¹⁸ Petranović notes: "Narodni Front Jugoslavije (NFJ) also comprised bourgeois parties that approached it at the end of the war. Formally speaking, the NFJ's principles provided for a multi-

main force of the NF consisted of “mass organizations” – the United Alliance of Anti-Fascist Youth, the AFŽ, United Trade Unions of Workers and Employees of Yugoslavia. The Party’s ideas and its political platform “found their formal and public expression in the programs of the mass organizations it created”¹⁹, while the real control of decision-making posts in the newly formed bodies enabled the Party to dominate all levels of social organization. Thus, as early as 1947, the NF, through progressive industrialization, became “an apparatus for the execution of specific state tasks and economic operation, losing its markers as a political organization”.²⁰

Building up on the foundations of the heroic popular armed resistance, the mass inclusion of the people in work during the reconstruction project, was constructed as an important social value and duty, and this task was given to mass organizations. The Fifth Congress of the CPY emphasized the mobilization of the masses “in the struggle for socialism” and highlights the problem of bureaucratization as a large obstacle to attracting the masses. Political work with the masses was defined as the Party’s main task, whereas the NF was tasked with “explaining the tasks and paths of our socialist development, the fight against the remnants of the reaction, the interpretation of concrete measures of the popular government in the construction of socialism”, while developing “new relations between

party structure that would maintain party particularities within the organization and its steering bodies – which was an expression of internationalist tendencies and aspirations to involve all patriotic and democratically inclined citizens in the program of further revolutionary-democratic development – but the significance of such multi-party structure was diminished by other provisions. First and foremost, the existing parties had to accept the NFJ’s program, while their members had to join the NFJ’s local councils. There were some minor elements of coalition, with some exceptions, in the governing structures of the NFJ. The real existing political relations were far more important than the formal aspects of this issue. Ever since its founding, the NFJ built itself as a unique organization of masses that accepted and acknowledged the CPY’s rule. The existing bourgeois groups could not endanger the political solidity of the organization without an external intervention, as they were small and weak. The path toward democratic development, according to the NFJ, did not lead through a multi-party organization, but rather its negation.” Cf. Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918.–1988.: Treća knjiga: Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945.–1988.*, Belgrade: Nolit, 1988, 43. Mass organizations made an effort to isolate the “non-communist” aspects of their own traditions such as “old trade-unionism” among workers or “feminist deviations” in the AFŽ. The election preparations during the summer and fall of 1945 included “political cleansing” during which “those opposing revolutionary measures were out, and those who would implement these measures more consistently entered government bodies.” Bilandžić, *op. cit.* p. 104.

¹⁹ Skleivcky, *op. cit.* p.108; Čupulo Dalibor. “Razvoj političkog i pravnog sistema Jugoslavije u poslijeratnom periodu, 1945.–1968. – Pristup istraživanju i litetatura” PP 7, 1988: 203-204.

²⁰ Petranović, *op. cit.* p.57.

the working class and the working masses towards labor in organizing socialist competition and elevate shock work” was a separate task.²¹

Through the NF, the people issued a general demand to the people to take up work on a voluntary basis and to push themselves to the limit. Here it is important to point to the ambiguous position of the Narodni Front of Yugoslavia and the AFŽ, which, according to Lydia Sklevicky, unites the positions of the order in *whose name* it acts. Organizational discourse was deeply integrated into the regime's narrative structures, and at the same time it discovered their clash with the social reality of the position of women, which articulated itself through the *real* connections inherent in movements, especially those movements whose main aim is massification. This dual position points to a very specific configuration of power and control. It consists of societal forces that consolidated the leading role of the Party and the real political experience of countrywide mobilization of the movement. The Party eliminated the basic political question of the structure of governance and took on the task of directing general social development as economic, while removing the question of power from the equation of the new social contract.²² Although the history of Yugoslavia would still be marked by various articulations of the national and workers' question, the “economic base” remained the main focus of the efforts to create social and political structures.

In 1946, general competition was introduced, that was transformed into a “mass movement, comprising 60% of workers and civil servants”.²³ Although today it is difficult to understand the scope and character of such a mass mobilization, it represented a turning point in the creation of Yugoslav society. The majority of the population was rural, while workers made up a much smaller portion of the population. The country received limited influx of funds and donations in goods; however “in a devastated country, facing general shortages and extinguished foreign trade – the mobilization of the masses [was] the only means of reconstruction”.²⁴ An important example is the mass mobilization of youth. The

²¹ Resolution of the Fifth Congress of the CPY on the basic upcoming organizational tasks of the CPY. Available at: http://www.znaci.net/00001/138_77.pdf

²² Bilandžić, p. 111.

²³ Petranović, p. 79.

²⁴ Bilandžić writes: “The formation of the modern working class mainly from the ranks of peasantry had actually just begun. Due to its fewness, youth and inadequate involvement in the armed revolution, the great turn of the tide was the direct accomplishment of the working class, but of the Communist Party – its political leadership. However, the working class recognized in this a new revolutionary step that would prevent it from being reduced to a tool of economic power and the political rule of the bureaucratic and technocratic class, which is the direction the revolution

youth movement emerged from the war with a vast legacy of direct participation in combat, and thanks to this a considerable number of leadership positions were occupied by young people. Continuity was established between fighting in the war and the reconstruction of the country; the reconstruction was “an essential [...] part of the great fight on the battlefield where tens of thousands of young men and women lost their lives”. With the formal post-war establishment of the youth movement at the First Congress of the United Alliance of the Anti-Fascist Youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina held in Sarajevo from April 6-9 1945 the youth joined the competition.

The peak of mass mobilization of youth were the Youth Work Actions that existed as a movement and an organization until 1988 – although their impact was significant only in the late 1940s.²⁵ Data shows that until 1947, almost 85% of the youth participated in the labor actions. By 1948, the model of mass voluntary engagement of the youth typical of the first post-war years points towards a productive convergence of impulses emitted by the social order, staged through a mass organization with the sense that the only possible way was forward. During this period, Petranović claims, “volunteering not only made up for the missing financial resources and machinery, but expressed a new attitude toward labor”²⁶, which is clearly illustrated by the phenomenon of work actions. These actions, however, were not mere labor drives, but also an anthropotechnological element of the new regime. They had a particular political and educational character as they “forged and hardened new people with a new understanding of labor. A new working collective is formed that is proud of its labor, of that which its members create with their own hands.”²⁷

would have necessarily taken had it remained based on the old, received ideas and theories.” Bilandžić, p. 207.; Petranović notes: “For ‘selfless work’, one would receive the title of a shock worker. In 1946, labor competition turned into a mass movement that included 60% of workers and civil servants. The press popularized the Stakhanovite movement in the USSR, which in Yugoslavia will bring about heroes of labor such as Alija Sirotanović and his successors. Masses of workers, peasants and especially youth gave breadth to voluntary labor and infused it with enthusiasm.” Petranović, p. 207.

²⁵ Vejzagić, Saša. The Importance of Youth Labour Actions in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1948-1950: The Case study of the Motorway “Brotherhood-Unity”. Master’s Thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2013). 4. The fact is that almost 60 years of this organization (1941-1988) still remains under-researched. See also: Muhamed Nametak “Uloga omladinskih radnih akcija u stvaranju socijalističkoga društva u Bosni i Hercegovini 1945. – 1952. godine”, *Časopis za Savremenu Povijest*3 [2014]: 437-452.

²⁶ Petranović, *op. cit.* p. 81, my italic.

²⁷ Erak, Zoran, ed. *Tito i mladi*, Belgrade: Mladost 1980., p. 19. Actions also function as immediate spaces of education and upbringing, even in the most literal sense: during only two actions,

Soon, however, voluntary mass labor was gradually replaced by paid industrial labor, for technical reasons and in accordance with "the technological" paradigm upon which the new regime rested. By 1948, the mass model of social engagement became symbolically less effective and started to lose its real mobilizing power. However, as late as 1949, the Party leadership maintained its position that only the broad masses can be the bearers of the revolution. Edvard Kardelj, a long-standing high-ranking official of the CPY said

Socialism can only grow out of the initiative of the million-strong masses, with the adequate role of the proletarian party, that is, the most advanced socialist forces. Therefore, the development of socialism cannot follow any path other than that of constant deepening of socialist democracy in the sense of ever-greater self-management of the masses, and drawing them to the state apparatus – from the lowest bodies to the highest, in the sense of participating in the managing of every single company, institution, etc.²⁸

Here we can still see a very firmly articulated idea of mass socialism, as well as hints of something we may call the *idea of the mass state* along with a somewhat limited role of the Party. The developments, however, took a different direction: after the transformation of 1950, when the economy was organized on more and more original and newly-established principles, mass organization started to fade as the basic element of social development.

4. The Paradigm of Production

The dispositive is never a homogenous field, but is rather constructed at the intersection of societal forces that affirm and question it. This is particularly visible in Yugoslavia after the Second World War where Chetnik and Ustasha forces were still operational, individual's participation in the war was being checked and verified, the figure of the people was strengthened and the basic institutional structure of the new state was built. The flipside of this process were the objective circumstances in which an attempt was made to realize certain material and symbolic goals. The construction of Yugoslav socialism, until June 1948, was based on close practical and theoretical relations with the USSR headed by Stalin. Thus the early post-war period mainly consisted of practical activities aimed at establishing a Soviet model with two basic aspects: state-ownership and cen-

Brčko-Banovići railroad and Šamac-Sarajevo railroad, in 1946 and 1947 respectively, almost 22.000 young people were brought to literacy. Nametak, *op. cit.* p. 446.

²⁸ Kardelj, Edvard. Quoted from Vladimir Barakić's speech at a commemoration in February 1979 in Josip Arnautović et al. ed. *Edvard Kardelj, 1910-1979*, Belgrade: News Agency Tanjug, 1979, p. 29.

tral planning, which was to be effected by a range of economic and administrative measures such as price control, limitations on free trade, fixed rent and wages, organized supply system, etc.

As a follow-up, in 1945, gradual nationalization was introduced, starting with the redistribution of large landowners' agricultural resources and the estates of col-laborators. In 1946, private capital in mining, industry, banking, wholesale, and transport was nationalized, followed by the nationalization of retail and service industries. Planning was codified with the adoption of the 1946 Constitution, and as early as the following year a basic planning apparatus was established. In 1947, the first five-year plan was elevated to "the level of a national patriotic goal".²⁹ By eliminating the influence of private capital and transitioning to state-ownership, the new order succeeded in establishing what was considered the basis of the socialist project. The initial results were very good. In 1947, with great effort, the pre-war production levels were reached. Through the growth of investment and a large number of new jobs, mass urbanization and industrialization were accelerated and promoted.³⁰

The *Cominform Bureau Resolution* of June 28 1948, thoroughly shook up the ideological identification of the Yugoslav communist leadership and considerably influenced the transformation of the socio-economic model. Soon after the *Resolution* was passed, the CPY leadership at its fifth congress, although still confused, maintained its allegiance to the Soviet line and decides to answer the Soviet accusations by accelerating and widening collectivization and nationalization efforts.³¹ Economic consequences were felt soon after. Agreements with the USSR and other countries of the Eastern Bloc were terminated, loans were terminated as well, and economic boycott ensued, forcing Yugoslavia to establish new import and export relations. Under such conditions, mass mobilization became an essential political and economic strategy. In December 1948, the state introduced a system of special acknowledgements, "moral stimula-

²⁹ Vera Katz, *Social and Economic Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1945-1953*. Sarajevo: Institute for History, 2011, p. 14. On the goals of the five-year plan also see: Babić, p. 131.

³⁰ For investment, cf. Branko Horvat, *Privredni sistem i ekonomska politika Jugoslavije*, Belgrade: Institute for Economics, 1970, p. 34; In terms of employment, in 1945 there were 461.000 workers; in 1946, 721.000, that is, 260.000 new workers; in 1947, 1.167.000, i.e. 446.000 new workers; in 1958, 1.1517.000, i.e. 350.000 new workers, and in 1949 1.990.000, i.e. 473.000 new workers and civil servants.

³¹ Dedijer, Vladimir. *Izgubljena bitka Josifa Visarionoviča Staljina*, Belgrade: Rad, 1978, p. 186. Collectivization slowed down only at the end of 1949, following the decisions passed at the CPY Plenum on December 29 and 30 of the same year.

tions", and emphasized the symbolic figure of the shock worker, the champion and the hero of labor, as well as a range of other particularly valuable forms of labor in agriculture, which was supposed to stimulate zealous labor.³² Heroism of labor was thus institutionalized as an officially recognized status incentive. Despite these efforts, morale began to dwindle. In 1950, the country was hit by a severe draught, which drastically reduced the revenue from agriculture. That same year, the enormous growth in employment also started to lose momentum, with just a little over 15,000 new workers being employed in the following three years.³³

As a response to the ideological clash and economic deadlock, a critique of bureaucratization and the fundamental Soviet ideas about the relation between ownership and management was developed. The notion that "socialist social relations cannot be actualized on the basis of state-ownership and state management of the economy, as this leads to the bureaucratization of the entire political system"³⁴, soon became prevalent and was adopted as the programmatic stance of the Party. In this we find the basis of the revolution within the revolution that would actualize itself through an original model of management of economic activity. In 1950, the groundwork for self-management was laid with the adoption

³² Bilandžić notes: "To ensure greater commitment of workers and civil servants in the workplace, it was decided to pass federal regulations in order to try to introduce norms for all labor, therefore the regulations laid down the amount of remuneration in proportion with the norm. Federal regulations also instituted a system of moral stimulation. The Law on Honorary Titles for Toilers from December 8, 1948, introduces the following honorary titles: shock worker, champion of socialist labor, meritorious agricultural worker, distinguished cooperating agricultural worker; and for worker collectives: shock collective, champion collective of socialist labor; for cooperatives: cooperative striving for high yields, meritorious cooperative, champion cooperative of the people's republic, champion cooperative of the FNRJ (People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)." Bilandžić, *op. cit.* p. 123. The Law on Decorations and Distinctions (November 14, 1955) classified the Order of the Hero of Socialist Labor as a decoration for distinguished service by a citizen, ranked second, after the Medal of the Great Star of Yugoslavia and before the Order of People's Liberation. According to this law, the Order of the Hero of Socialist Labor was awarded to: "...individuals, military units, institutions, economic and social organizations that achieve exceptional work achievements or results, thus earning special credit for the economic, social, scientific or cultural development of the country". The content and scope of the formal acknowledgements were amended several times by 1976, after which they remained unchanged; see: <http://www.hrvatskanumizmatika.net/>

³³ In the first three years of the five-year plan 1.269.000 new workers were employed. The following year registers a considerable decrease. Between 1950 and 1954, only 15.000 new workers were employed, while between 1964 and 1967 the number of employed drops from 3.608.000 in 1964 to 3.561.000 in 1967. Bilandžić, p.114; Horvat, *Privredni sistem*, p. 27.

³⁴ Babić, *op. cit.* p. 134; Bilandžić, *op. cit.* p. 208.

of the Basic Law on Managing State-Owned Companies and Higher-Level Economic Associations by Worker Collectives. The following year, the first five-year plan was extended by a year, but its goals were never accomplished, nor was a final report on it ever published. Soon, "the economic system was completely changed, and by the end of 1951 centrally planned economy became a thing of the past".³⁵

5. The AFŽ, the Great Turn of the Tide and the Woman Question

What was happening with the organization of women during these turbulent times? After its foundation in 1942, the AFŽ focused on organizing women activists, whose tasks mainly had to do with war-related activities. The AFŽ "sprang up from the people's anti-fascist movement organized and led by the CPY"; its edifying work "in the spirit of the Anti-Fascist Front's program" put "thousands and thousands of women in the vanguard of the fight against fascism".³⁶ As of 1944, the organization focused on recruiting new members on a mass scale, abandoning its original activist orientation. Thus the AFŽ, along with other large voluntary associations, joined the mass voluntary movement to reconstruct post-war Yugoslavia and puts in thousands of hours of voluntary labor.

The activities and directions of the AFŽ are deeply integrated in the NF. In her closing address to the First Congress of the AFŽ of Croatia, in July 1945, Kata Pejnović summarized the basic tasks of this organization (in: Sklevicky): 1) strengthening brotherhood and unity, cleansing the country from the remnants of fascism, 2) strengthening the people's rule, 3) reconstruction of the homeland through the development of a broad initiative, through discovery of new forms of shock work, the change of relationships towards labor, 4) edification of the young, caring for children, assisting medical services and the Yugoslav army and 5) combating illiteracy.³⁷

³⁵ Horvat, *op. cit.* p. 11. The new economic system was established in 1952, by replacing central planning with planning of the so-called "basic proportions" (e.g. accumulation rate and distribution of investments), the devaluation of the Dinar, introduction of the market mechanism as the price regulator in most production and commerce spheres, and giving some companies independence, which meant the creation of conditions for the decentralization of the economy. After that, until 1956, work was based on annual plans.

³⁶ Centralni Odbor of the AFŽ "Postavke o AFŽ-u", Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 63/4, 1949.

³⁷ Sklevicky, *op.cit.* p. 97.

Lydia Sklevicky places the first three into the category of “frontline goals”, whereas the other two she labels as specifically women’s tasks, as they consist of “the socialization of [women’s] reproductive labor”.³⁸ However, one must not overlook the fact that the general goals, in the long-term, were only achievable if the specifically women’s goals were achieved. How else could one secure the intergenerational transmission of the changed attitude towards labor and the lesson of brotherhood and unity – which was supposed to secure the people’s rule? Here we see the complexity of the women’s task. New shock work was to complete difficult specific tasks, care for a large population of children, bring society to literacy, but also mobilize the masses without losing sight of the basic edification goals.

5.1. The Woman Question and the Question of the *Heroic*

In 1944, Vladimir Nator stated: “The woman question, as far as we are concerned, has been resolved”. His historical metaphor of this resolution was illustratively built into the title of his “From Amazon to Partisan” lecture, which outlined the heroic history of women as fighters, politicians and rulers, and resolved it in the figure of the female partisan. In her discourse analysis of the AFŽ Conference in Sinj in 1944, Lydia Sklevicky notes: “Only the phrase ‘comrades, women fighters’ acknowledges the identity of women commensurate with their own achievements”³⁹, or: the heroic ability of the woman was proven in war, which rendered the women’s question resolved. The resolution, however leaves the “patriarchal prefix of traditional culture untouched by doubt”, and instead of trying to “change the traditional values”, they are “modified according to the new context/historical moment”, which creates the framework within which the “emancipatory charge” is used for the “widening and strengthening of the Narodno-oslobodilački pokret (NOP)”.⁴⁰

Although the CPY felt, as a matter of principle, that the woman question was resolved, the Party leadership considered the organization of women necessary. In the fall of 1945, the CPY ordered “the Party’s managing bodies to pay closer attention to the development and advancement of the AFŽ’s work”.⁴¹ The specif-

³⁸ Ibid. 97. On reproductive work in general and on some of its contemporary characteristics and linkages to international processes of capital circulation and the restructuring of labor relations see: Frederici, Silvia. *Revolution at the Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012.

³⁹ Sklevicky, *op.cit.* p. 50.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 47-51.

⁴¹ Petranović, *op.cit.* p. 53.

ically female part of the task of creating a new society was not laid down beforehand, but was to be defined “when the gunfire dies down, when the ruins are cleaned up, when the new home is built”.⁴² However, before the specific tasks were defined, within the AFŽ itself an open call for shock work was issued. In a letter by the Central Committee of the AFŽY to the Republican Committee of the AFŽBiH (June 4 1945), a call was issued to women stating that they should apply themselves to “shock work in their everyday tasks” during the preparations of the First Congress and “take on new obligations before the congress”.⁴³ There was no time for organizing competition, but it was “precisely because of this [that] it is necessary to intensify women’s activity in all organizations, everywhere, in all lines of work, and this must continue after the congress”.⁴⁴ At the AFŽ BiH’s second congress, Tito referred to women comrades who “distinguished themselves during the war, but now, in peacetime, they do not participate in public life, or in the political or creative work in the community.” In this way they “become alienated from the vast majority of our women who have understood their duties and the spirit of the new Yugoslavia.” What was that spirit like, and what were the duties? Tito answered these questions quite succinctly, on the same occasion, making a remark that falls under the domain of work ethic: “No one can ever claim that they have given enough of themselves to society if they are still capable of physical and mental labor”.⁴⁵ There it is, a direct call to heroic engagement that gives to society the greatest possible gift, the gift of heroism, the gift of life. It establishes a paradigm that needs to be infused with different content, one that transcends its origin in the heroic war sacrifice and establishes something different.

Heroic labor was to be actualized as part of the general efforts of society as a whole, and in April 1947, it was cast in the form of a five-year economic development plan. The general goals of this plan were: 1) Overcoming economic and technological backwardness, 2) strengthening the country’s economic and military might, 3) strengthening and developing a socialist economic sector, 4) increasing the general well-being of the population. Although this plan did not contain specifically women’s tasks, the AFŽ used it as a measure of its own gen-

⁴² Sklevicky, *op. cit.* p. 55.

⁴³ Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a “Pismo Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH”. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 1/12, 1945.

⁴⁴ Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a “Pismo Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH”

⁴⁵ II kongres Antifašističkog fronta žena Jugoslavije: održan u Beogradu 25, 26, 27 januara 1948. Sarajevo: Glavni odbor AFŽ-a Bosne i Hercegovine, 1948, Kutija 6; available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/files/original/00d53e25cc67684ddcbf27af4ff8d839.pdf>

eral contribution to society. A “battle” was fought over the plan and it “places the task of mobilizing the women’s workforce with the organization”.⁴⁶ A part of the AFŽ Archive contains a multitude of reports on women comrades who “completed” the goals of the five-year plan, and on many who did not, as well as on the necessity to always to more. The effort to realize the plan becomes the framework within which it is possible to work *heroically*. This, in accordance with the inclusion paradigm and the basic interpretative framework, meant volunteering a certain amount of work hours thus “saving the state money”. After the adoption of the plan, tasks were discovered that were described and understood as explicitly heroic:

Our women will set out as a tight-knit army of labor comprising fraternal Serb, Muslim, and Croat women into the fray for the triumph of the reconstruction and rebuilding of our country. By working to elevate the masses culturally and intellectually, helping to realize the economic plan, and by investing the utmost enthusiasm into our work, we will create a new form of heroism, the HEROISM OF LABOR [...]⁴⁷

Determined to do the best they can, women created a “new form of heroism”. It was a heroism that was not like a “rank” that could have been awarded to one woman or one man who could carry it like a medal. It was an effort for the community, a collective heroism built on a mass effort of voluntary labor that worked thousands of bodies to exhaustion before it faced the fact that the set goals were unattainable precisely because they were of heroic proportions, because they implied that one could always work more, harder. Only in a mass effort was it possible to produce the super-human, the *heroic* – as only the *heroic* was worthy of the heroically fallen heroes. Here we find the basic lesson of the dispositive as the technology of the social: labor will transform society, and in order to truly transform it, we need to work heroically.

The construction of the heroic past, that is, the continuity of the *heroic*, started immediately after the war. In 1945, an instruction to “gather materials, specific data, photographs, etc.” was distributed. This testifies to the attempt to record the baseline for unification and take stock of women’s immediate engagement in warfare up to that point, which included the heroic wartime sacrifices, but

⁴⁶ Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a ‘Centralni odbor AFŽ-a Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a Bosne i Hercegovine – o vođenju evidencije raspoložive ženske radne snage’. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 2 711/1, 1947.

⁴⁷ Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, ‘Referat- Plenarni sastanak Sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Bosanski Brod’, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, 1554/4, 1947.

also the “traditional victims” of the atrocities committed “against women and children by the enemy” or “mothers who have lost their sons in combat” who “distinguish themselves with their bravery”.⁴⁸ Such activities would continue, but the focus would shift somewhat. For example, in a letter from February 1949, the Central Committee of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia, as part of the preparations for a March 8 exhibition, asked the Republican Committee of the AFŽ Bosnia and Herzegovina to gather data including “various documents on women’s labor before the war/strikes, photographs of strikes, manifestos, resolutions of the Party on women’s labor[...]” and other documents illustrating the life of women in cooperatives and other areas of activity at the time.⁴⁹ In her address to the Second Congress of the AFŽY, Mitra Mitrović-Đilas points out that the set of female characteristics defined in the war, “now must be further edified and nurtured in a spirit of a conscious relationship toward labor [...] in the spirit of work discipline and responsibility, in the spirit of readiness for new efforts and overcoming of all obstacles”. The motive of the *heroic* had a deep presence and the transition from the wartime *heroic* to its new form was obvious: “Let the new figure of the woman who builds socialism, like the figure of women war heroes, grow out from these characteristics. Let the nurturing these characteristics be our task [...]”⁵⁰ In this example we see how the relationship with the wartime *heroic* is maintained as constitutive, making heroes and heroic names the guarantors of socialization of children and adults alike.⁵¹

5.2. The AFŽ in Transition

How was the AFŽ affected by the wider socio-economic transformation that started with the conflict with the Soviet Union and the opening towards the West that would later considerably influence the foreign policy position as well as the position within the international economic relations⁵²? In the internal CPY discussions on the AFŽ (during 1947/48), the opinion that a unique women’s organi-

⁴⁸ Centralni Odbor AFŽ, “Pismo Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH”, 1945.

⁴⁹ Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, “Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH – povodom organizacije 8. martovske izložbe” Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 6, 137/1, 1949.

⁵⁰ *II Congress of the Women’s Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia: Belgrade, January 25–27, 1948*, 15.

⁵¹ On the *socialization of adults* see: Ugo Vlasisavljević, *Rat kao najveći kulturni događaj: ka semiotici etnonacionalizma*, Sarajevo: Meuna-fe Publishing, 2007, pp. 35–50.

⁵² For a historical analysis of these processes and their consequences today see: Živković, Andreja. “From the Market... to the Market: The Debt Economy After Yugoslavia” in *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia*, eds. Horvat, Srećko, Štikš, Igor. London/New York: Verso. 2015. pp. 45–64.

zation was needed prevailed, but the question of “how and through which organizational forms [to] connect the revolutionary power of women with the power of the working class and the people as a whole, with the aim of their complete liberation”⁵³ was also raised. The CPY defined the NF as the main political power, transferring the woman question to the NF, while within the CPY committees for work with women were abolished. In practice, the NF was, for the most part, never too concerned with the woman question, which created an open space for the political work of the AFŽ.

The AFŽ, along with other organizations, entered the general social competition for the reconstruction of the country early on, but toward the end of the 1940s, the physical and practical limits of shock work started to show. The AFŽ's organizational structure underwent several changes, which ultimately sapped the strength of its organizational structures.⁵⁴ At an AFŽ meeting in March 1949 in Sarajevo, it was concluded that “not all tasks of the NF are our tasks”, but that “the most important task during the elections is to bring out all women to the polls”. The basic task was to bring 100% of women to the elections.⁵⁵ There were still signs that the tasks of this organization were being internally redefined and that there was still dissatisfaction among active women from time to time with the fact that there were almost no women in governmental bodies.⁵⁶ Previous work was critically evaluated: “We have degraded the woman activists to the level of an errand girl, when we should have elevated her to the role of a political leader”.⁵⁷ And there we have it, a yardstick of the organization's success: a woman as a political leader.

⁵³ Božinović, Neda. *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku*, Belgrade: Pinkpress, 1996, p. 161.

⁵⁴ Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a 'Sreski odbor AFŽ-a Bosanska Gradiška Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – izvještaj o radu organizacije žena za mjesec august', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 2, 838/1, 1947. “When the Narodni Odbori were being fused together, we failed to fuse the local AFŽ committees, so our organization dispersed considerably...”

⁵⁵ Oblasni Odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevska oblast – najava takmičenja u čast izbora za Narodne izbore,, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 4/1, 1949.

⁵⁶ In a letter from September 1947, the County Committee of the AFŽ Doboj, notes that the NF did not help with the larger political engagement of women and mentions the dissatisfaction of the female comrades which they expressed thus “if we can labor voluntarily shoulder to shoulder with our male comrades, then we can also be appointed to the councils.” Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, “Sreski odbor AFŽ-a Doboj Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – izvještaj o radu organizacije za mjesec august”. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Box 2, 842/1, 1947.

⁵⁷ Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, Zapisnik sa savjetovanja rukovodioca reonskih odbora AFŽ-a grada Sarajeva – 30.- 31. mart, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 6, 776/6, 1949.

The third Congress of the AFŽ Yugoslavia was held in October 1950. According to the conclusions of the congress, the AFŽ was integrated into the NF, which from that moment on was in charge of the AFŽ's political and educational work. The focus of the AFŽ shifts towards more particular women's issues, mother and child protection, maintenance of children's institutions, etc.⁵⁸ The AFŽ archive holds hundreds of reports that testify to the work of the "mother and child" division and the almost complete cessation of political work. It was insisted on employment as the main condition for equality. On the other hand, the majority of women still lived in the rural areas, and only a few were employed in the cities; the conservative stance towards the inclusion of women in industrial relations still had a firm hold over society.⁵⁹ However, even before these points of view were articulated, the scope of action was considerably narrowed. At the first plenum of the Sarajevo region in February 1950, there were only two items on the agenda: 1) the question of the elections for the Assembly of the FNRJ; and 2) the AFŽ's work on youth education. Both items were accepted unanimously.⁶⁰

These examples of organizational speech suggest a decisive effect of societal change on the AFŽ's work. Steps towards decentralization, in the cessation of collectivization efforts after the unrest in 1950 and the general course of action in the fight against bureaucratization inevitably pressured the work and the structure of the women's organization. All socio-political organizations redefined their own identity and form, after the Party did so in November of 1952 at the Sixth Congress, when it changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, breaking away from the Soviet model of a classic centralized party. During the congress, "the new concept of the CPY was more clearly defined, rejecting the path to state socialism, and accepting the struggle for the construction of a self-managing society in Yugoslavia". At the time, there was still insistence on working toward women's emancipation. Tito espoused this viewpoint and emphasized the need to leave the old views on the societal role of women. In January of the following year, the NF changed its name to the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, thus the socialist workers pushed the people to the end of the line of representation.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Božinović, *op. cit.* p. 154.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 154.

⁶⁰ Oblasni Odbor AFŽ-a, 'I Plenum AFŽ-a Sarajevske oblasti održan 22.02.1950. godine – zapisnik' Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 422/1, 1950.

⁶¹ Božinović, *op. cit.* pp. 166–167. In other words, well before the Constitution of 1974, the people were replaced with the working man, the only real subject of the socialist project; cf. Zaharijević, *op. cit.* p. 75.

The critique here is much more pronounced. The NF believed that “the AFŽ did not change their content and methodology fast enough, working people grew into builders of socialism much faster”; as a result “separate political work with women either became superfluous, or required substantial changes”.⁶² The NF did not ask for the AFŽ to be abolished, but believed that, in keeping with the socio-economic changes, the AFŽ also had to take measures towards decentralization. At the AFŽ’s Fourth Congress, Milovan Đilas, then a member of the Politburo of the CCCPY, advocated that – due to the change of circumstances – the existence of this organization had become undesirable. On that note, even the AFŽ leadership believed that the AFŽ “became an obstacle for work among women” and that “changes are necessary in the organization of women themselves, and in the forms of political work among them”. Accordingly, a resolution declared that a separate organization would “separate women from the common effort to solve societal problems, encourage the false thinking that the question of women’s position is somehow a separate one and not a question that concerns our entire society, all fighters for socialism.”⁶³

On the basis of these resolutions, the AFŽ was formally abolished and transformed into the Alliance of Women Associations. There was a substantial change in the semantic content: the words *front* and *anti-fascism* were removed – the symbols of women’s participation in the people’s revolution. Although socialism was “formally introduced” into the name of the basic social organization, there was no place for it in the name of the organization that formally succeeded the AFŽ. It was the real and the symbolic end of that which the AFŽ represented.⁶⁴ The AFŽ, like central planning a few years prior, was consigned to history, marking the end of an era. How did the base react? There are few sources that can tell us about this. Neda Božinović notes that, long after the abolition of the AFŽ’s, women, especially in rural areas, often asked leading women in the organization “why did you abolish our AFŽ”, as this rearranged the relationship with the male part of the population, who “gloated”, telling women: “enough of your shenani-

⁶² Božinović, *op. cit.* p. 165.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Vera Katz summarizes the evolution of the organization’s work as: “a relatively small group of communists managed, through meticulous work on the ground, in wartime conditions and in a very short period of time, to convince large masses of women to aid the partisan war, so they could attain new rights after the war. The program succeeded completely, so much so that the women’s political organizing became a danger to communists soon after the war and the AFŽ was abolished. After that, the ideological turn would survive a peculiar combination of a consumerist-patriarchal model imposed on women, while a majority of the promised rights survived.” See: Vera Katz, “O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953.” *Prilozi* 40 (2011), p. 138.

gans”; or “it’s over, it’s over!”; or “no more!” Men had “their bars, football and even the Narodni Front”, while an initiative that gathered women “eager to hear and talk about their female things” disappeared.⁶⁵

This points to the character of the loss the end of this organization represented. It is a known fact that the bulk of the AFŽ’s work was directed towards rural areas, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which remained predominantly rural long after the war. In rural areas, the AFŽ undoubtedly presented an avant-garde platform that offered for the first time in the (women’s) history of this region a possibility to imagine something like a collective women’s political subject formed through “gathering” and talking about “[women’s]” things. Once this platform, the space for gathering and opening up possibilities’ to speak about creative possibilities of self-definition and collective action was lost as well.

6. Labor, Heroism, and the Woman Question a Thousand Years Later

The problems of practical and technical organizational structures of the self-managed production and consumption system would become a lasting challenge of the Yugoslav socialist project. The dispositive was supposed to receive its definitive legal expression when the Yugoslav socialist project’s avant-garde process saw its culmination in the introduction of the *Law on Associated Labor*. During this period, many “honestly believed that the transformation towards self-management would lead to a ‘Republic of associated labor’”.⁶⁶ Ivan Stojanović believes that such a narrative was a mythologization that saw in the legislation related to self-management “*programs of the epoch and the future*, not laws needed to regulate the behavior of social subjects and economic operators of today” which in turn made it possible for “hyper-normativism” and “hyperinstitutionalization” to eliminate the basis of self-management, the “self-initiative and self-organizing of people and their work collectives.”⁶⁷

Thus the form that women’s organizing took after the war should be viewed as an attempt to answer the urgent call to organize society by reformulating labor and gender relations in a specific historical moment. In the earliest stages of

⁶⁵ Božinović, *op. cit.* p. 170.

⁶⁶ Petranović, *op. cit.* p. 468.

⁶⁷ Stojanović, Ivan. *Kuda i kako dalje? Zapisi o odnosima i protivrečnostima ekonomije i politike*, Belgrade: Ekonomika, 1989, pp. 15–16.

the effort to build socialism, the AFŽ, along with other organizations that were part of the NOM, was established as an element of a broad, general struggle headed by the CPY. In the post-war period, its edifying role came to the fore. Faced with a demand for heroism, the women's organization took on the general educational and edifying role, as well as the general task of organizing work with women, on the ground of the mass social mobilization. Some materials point to a particular dimension of autonomy that did not belong to the organization as a structure made up of *committees*, but rather to the women who, with the help of the organization, created a space that made possible at least a fragile path towards emancipation, if not true emancipation itself. This is certainly one of the farthest-reaching consequences of the organization's dissolution, as it led to the disappearance of an open space for women's political organizing that contained the possibility of a double liberation. The dissolution also led to the disappearance of the only possible arena and the only possible form of women's activity. A partial insight into this historical era of the women's movement can help us better understand the convoluted *web of instructions* that contain today's labor and gender policies.

The *Heroic* remained an important signifier of socialism for a long time. It would be necessary to trace its construction even after 1953 and describe the transition, completely expected from the point of view of socialism's technological paradigm and the theoretical evolution of its bearers and leaders, from mass-heroism to the next form of the *heroic*, in which the collective effort of the masses is substituted with biotechnological labor of self-managed companies and corporations.⁶⁸ It should be determined if the connection with the original heroic acts was maintained, and if so, how. The practice of naming factories and institutions after people's heroes indicates that it was, and that there was an effort to homogenize the material progress and transition are within the same horizon. It can be assumed that *heroism* was supposed to act as binding tissue connecting the *heroic* of the (woman) soldier, the *heroic* of the masses, and modern industrial collectives. The question remains how effective this binding was, and for how long. It points to the fact that socialism in the second Yugoslavia failed to emancipate the *heroic* from the soldier-warrior figure. The heroic figure that witnessed the dissolution of Yugoslavia was already spent. In a certain sense, when it comes to industrial heroism, worthy of the *heroic* were ultimately only

⁶⁸ In addition to this highest honor, the Order of the Red Banner of Labor was instituted late in 1968, and was awarded to 245 collectives by the end of 1980. These collectives included teaching, learning and research institutions, as well as self-managed industrial enterprises as well as construction companies. See: *Heroji rada Jugoslavije*, Belgrade: Zavod za informacione sisteme, 1981, p. 4.

those self-managed collectives that “employ and do good business”. Here we find ourselves faced with a completely transfigured picture of individual heroes whose acts and deeds are no longer in their hands. Instead, the heroic intention must adapt to the powers of the market, successes and failures in the market competition.

Today, this figure, too, is a thing of the past; successful companies are respected, but not as collective projects of hundreds of thousands of workers, but rather as manifestations of the entrepreneurial vision of owners and managers. Heroes constructed after the bloody and complicated dissolution of Yugoslavia are again exclusively heroes of war, heroes of defeats and victories on the battlefield, not heroes of agriculture or industry. The end of Yugoslavia brought about total privatization of labor and production relations, the privatization of ownership and management, executed as the adoption and institutionalization of the Western model, and the process is still ongoing. This transformation was (and still is) accompanied by a discursive superstructure that reinterprets labor as a means for producing a society into labor as a disciplinary technique of bodies, a mechanism transforming us individually into capital, forcing us to adopt the changed conditions and means of labor, supply and demand, as well as organizational innovations.

Is it then possible, under such conditions, at least roughly to outline some new heroic figure? What kind of heroic labor would it entail? Work collectives are less and less sources of pride, and dynamic elements of one's identity, and are increasingly seen as despised places of everyday exploitation (unless they are former giant state-owned companies that were destroyed or split up leaving behind not only misery and decay, but also complex identity-related consequences which are yet to be analyzed). There is no doubt that the *heroic*, that which can respond to the urgent challenges of today that threaten to consume not only human life, but also the conditions for it, must be created through a collective effort – for which we lack a name and a format. This reveals the difficulty of the task faced by all who dream of liberation. Undoubtedly, liberation must include the liberation of women, which may be the only thing that can make possible for us to name and initiate a project of universal liberation. The name and description of such a project, along with the outlines of a new heroic figure can only come from the future, to paraphrase Marx's famous words, but a collective effort of the future can only be launched as an act of facing up to the forces of the present.

Translated by Emin Eminagić

Archival Materials:

- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a "Postavke o AFŽ-u", Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Box 8, 63/4, 1949.
- Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH "Pismo Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH". Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 1/12, 1945.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, "Pismo Centralnog odbora AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH", 1945.
- II Congress of the Women's Antifascist Front of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgrade, January 25-27 1948, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 6; available at: <http://www.afzarchive.org/files/original/00d53e25cc6768ddcbf27af4ff8d839.pdf>
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a 'Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ Bosne i Hercegovine – o vođenju evidencije raspoložive ženske radne snage'. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 2 711/1, 1947.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a 'Referat- Plenarni sastanak Sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Bosanski Brod', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 3, 1554/4, 1947.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, "Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije Glavnom odboru AFŽ BiH – povodom organizacije 8. martovske izložbe" Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 6, 137/1, 1949.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a 'Sreski odbor AFŽ-a Bosanska Gradiška Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – izvještaj o radu organizacije žena za mjesec august', Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 2, 838/1, 1947.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevska oblast – najava takmičenja u čast izbora za Narodne izbore,, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 4/1, 1949.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, "Sreski odbor AFŽ-a Doboj Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a – izvještaj o radu organizacije za mjesec august". Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 2, 842/1, 1947.
- Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a, Zapisnik sa savjetovanja rukovodioca reonskih odbora AFŽ-a grada Sarajeva – 30.-31. mart, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 6, 776/6, 1949.
- Sreski Odbor AFŽ-a, 'I Plenum AFŽ-a Sarajevske oblasti održan 22.02.1950. godine – zapisnik' Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija 8, 422/1, 1950.

Bibliography:

- Agamben, Giorgio. *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Arnautović, Josip et al. ed. *Edvard Kardelj, 1910-1979*. Belgrade: Novinska agencija Tanjug, 1979.

- Babić, Nikola. *Na putevima revolucije*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972.
- Badiou, Alain. *Philosophy for Militants*. New York/London: Verso, 2012.
- Bilandžić, Dušan. *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije – Glavni procesi 1918. – 1985*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1985.
- Božinović, Neda. *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku*. Beograda: Pinkpress, 1996.
- Bussolini, Jeffrey. „What is a Dispositive?” *Foucault Studies* 10 (2010) 85-107.
- Čupulo, Dalibor. „Razvoj političkog i pravnog sistema Jugoslavije u poslijeratnom periodu (1945-1968) – Pristup istraživanju i literatura”. *Povijesni prilozi* 7:1 (1988): 203–248
- Dedijer, Vladimir. *Izgubljena bitka Josifa Visarionoviča Staljina*. Belgrade: Rad, 1978.
- Erak, Zoran. ed. *Tito i mladi*. Beograd: Mladost, 1980.
- Ernst, Wolfgang. *Digital Memory and the Archive*. ed.: Jussi Parikka. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Federici, Silvia. *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012.
- Fuko, Mišel. *Volja za znanjem – Istorija seksualnosti I*. trans. Jelena Stakić. Loznica: Karpos, 2006.
- Kecman, Milorad. ed. *Heroji rada Jugoslavije*. Belgrade: Zavod za informacione sisteme, 1981.
- Horvat, Branko. *Privredni sistem i ekonomska politika Jugoslavije*. Belgrade: Institut ekonomskih nauka, 1970.
- Katz, Vera. *Društveni i ekonomski razvoj Bosne i Hercegovine 1945-1953*. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011.
- Katz, Vera. „O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1953”, *Prilozi* 40 (2011), 135-155.
- Jancar-Webster, Brabara. *Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia: 1941 – 1945*. Denver: Arden Press, 1990.
- Nametak, Muhamed. „Uloga omladinskih radnih akcija u stvaranju socijalističkoga društva u Bosni i Hercegovini 1945. – 1952. godine”, *Časopis za savremenu povijest* 3 (2014): 437-452.
- Pasquinelli, Matteo. „What an Apparatus is Not: On the Archeology of the Norm in Foucault, Canguilhem, and Goldstein.” *Parrhesia Journal* 22 (2015) 79-89. available at: www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia22/parrhesia22_pasquinelli.pdf
- Petranović, Branko. *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918 – 1988 - Treća knjiga: Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945 – 1988*. Beograd: Nolit, 1988.
- Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi*. Ed. Dunja Rihtman Auguštin. Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.

- Slapšak, Svetlana. „Balkanske žene: Rod epistemologija i istorijska antropologija“ in: *Rod i nauka*. Eds. Jasminka Babić-Avdispahić, Jasna Bakšić Muftić and Ugo Vlaisavljević, 57-73. Sarajevo: Centar za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije, 2009.
- Stojanović, Ivan. *Kuda i kako dalje? Zapisi o odnosima i protivrečnostima ekonomije i politike*. Beograd: Ekonomika, 1989.
- Vejzagić, Saša. *The importance of Youth Labour Actions in Socialist Yugoslavia (1948-1950): The case study of the Motorway „Brotherhood-Unity.“* MA thesis. Budimpešta: Central European University, 2013.
- Vlaisavljević, Ugo. *Lepoglava i univerzitet – Ogledi iz političke epistemologije*. Sarajevo: Centar za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije, 2003.
- Vlaisavljević, Ugo. *Rat kao najveći kulturni događaj: ka semiotici etnonacionalizma*. Sarajevo: Meuna-fe Publishing, 2007.
- Zaharijević, Adriana. „Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji: Kako se može čitati istorija jugoslavenskog feminizma?“ *Sociologija*, Vol. 57:1 (2015), 72-89.
- Živković, Andreja. „From the Market...to the Market: The Debt Economy after Yugoslavia“ in *Welcome to the Desert of Post-socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia*. Eds. Horvat, Srećko and Štiks, Igor. 45-64. London/New York: Verso, 2015.





★ SUNITA FIŠIČ
Ink drawings



FROM REVOLUTIONARY TO
PRODUCTIVE SUBJECT:
AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY
OF THE WOMEN'S
ANTIFASCIST FRONT



TIJANA
OKIĆ

But you, when the time comes
Where man can help his fellow man
Remember us
With forbearance.

Brecht

1. Introduction, or Beginning After the End of History – Thinking the Women's Antifascist Front Again and Anew

Thinking the Women's Antifascist Front (henceforth AFŽ) today, 74 years after its formation and 63 years after its "dissolution", requires a lot more than merely knowing the (archival) facts. Although the facts cannot and should not be neglected, it is our duty to put them in their, and then in our, historical context. But what is the relation between these two contexts and should we persevere with this problem, insisting on political continuities? And which and what kind of continuities would these be? Is it not precisely the alleged closure of the revolutionary horizon, a rupture in historical memory expressed in various ideologies of "transition" and the "end of history", which separates our time from that of the AFŽ? In such a balance of forces, thinking the AFŽ would mean using the old language in new circumstances to rewrite and imagine anew the possibility of action, a space where, to begin with, we could, by ourselves, once again think our own history. This is exactly why we will proceed from the question posed by Daniel Bensaïd: "What conceivable politics is there without history...and what imaginable history without a political invention of the possible"¹ If there is no politics without history, then neither is there any history without politics, and standing between them is precisely the space of the possible. How to rise up and endure after the experience of defeat, which the alleged end of history proclaims as the beginning and the end of every thought of possible utopias and/or strategies? Contemporary historiography, in the wake of a wave of historical revisionism lasting already more than fifty years, routinely minimizes and negates any experience that offers even a shred of political resistance to the dominant revisionist image of the age.

This is where problem areas appear and this is what I want to consider here in relation to the history of the AFŽ in Yugoslavia and today. In other words, to avoid the monumental and antiquarian² portrayal of our own history, we need to think

¹ Bensaïd, Daniel. *Éloge de la politique profane*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2008. p. 355

² Nietzsche, Friedrich. *O koristi i šteti istorije za život*. Belgrade: Grafos, 1977.

Yugoslavia critically, which means that, as feminists, we must speak of the first and the second death of the AFŽ. Writing about these *two deaths* does not mean *facing up* to the past, as the revisionists of today demand – nor does it mean *imprisoning* oneself in the past, since our relation to the past is always anchored in place, time and, in Foucauldian terms, the body from which we write: thus it is mediated by both accumulated experience and interpretations of the past, and equally by the burden of the present. Writing about the two deaths of the AFŽ simply means reading the past not from the resignation of the present moment – the misery and despair of a transition where the desire to see a better tomorrow, in the midst of today's poverty, is read back into the past – but from tomorrow's future. To read the AFŽ's past in this manner means not denying its emancipatory character or doing away with its utopian impulse. It means to recognize it, embrace it, and precisely to act from a present that gazes towards the future.

Eppur si muove – despite repression, hopelessness, and poverty. I write the following pages in the belief that the only trace worth following is precisely the “principle of hope”. To paraphrase Ernst Bloch, I would like read the AFŽ archive as the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous (die *Ungleichzeitigkeit*). However, this sort of reading entails certain consequences. Namely, it must necessarily proceed from an analysis of the contradictions inherent to the Yugoslav conception of the ‘woman question’ if it is ever to arrive at the problems and contradictions of today. In this sense, the specter haunting this work is the specter of Marxism. All of our analyses on the post-Yugoslavia left/lefts have failed miserably in the attempt to apply basic Marxist categories of production and reproduction to Yugoslavia, while at the same time we are taught to list all the institutions of the Yugoslav *welfare state*, as if they represented the socialisation of family and everyday life, without making clear that we are not dealing with the same things. More importantly, we do not emphasize that social services were paid for on the basis of value produced on the market, and paid twice over: by male and female workers who serviced the market. That is why the dissolution of the AFŽ should be seen as Yugoslavia's failure to establish a socialist-communist social order, despite proclaiming socialism as the ruling and foundational idea of society. The first death of the AFŽ already occurred in Yugoslavia, not only with its formal “self-abolition” in 1953, but also much earlier, in 1944, as Lydia Sklevicky suggests. The second death occurred after 1989, drowned by a wave of historical revisionism in which women's history could only be rewritten/erased through an “invention of tradition”, where there was and is no place either for the figure of the *afežeovka* (member and activist of the AFŽ) or that of the *partizanka* (women Partisan soldiers). For these reasons, the left should not take the assumptions imposed by historical revisionism as the starting point of its own historical

understanding. It should not be a mirror image of revisionism. Enzo Traverso states that we must resist “the temptation...of certain communists, historians, and political scientists [specifically, Domenico Losurdo] who turn [Ernst] Nolte’s revisionist scheme on its head and represent Stalinism as a product of a grave fascist threat: exaggerated and pitiable, criminal in its final outcome, but nevertheless derivative and reactive”.³ In this sense, Daniel Bensaïd warns us to reject the juridical (“tribunalisation”) function of history, without renouncing historical judgment.⁴

This essay is greatly inspired by Darko Suvin’s last book, *Splendour, Misery and Possibilities, An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia*, but with two important additions: the first being that it continues exactly where Suvin left off – from the problem of the organisation and position of women. I share Suvin’s opinion that “there existed a strong emancipatory sense...although always threatened and later betrayed”.⁵ The second is that I date this betrayal to a somewhat earlier period than Suvin. Additionally, but no less importantly, I would like to emphasize that I rely on the pioneering studies of the work and activities of the AFŽ written by Lydia Sklevicky, Gordana Stojaković, and Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, women responsible for some of the most important steps in this field, and this work is a contribution to the critique they commenced. It is impossible to fully acknowledge the profound impact of their work on mine. Reading them, I have come to the conclusion that history of the AFŽ sections of the different federal republics can be taken *pars pro toto*. Hence, I focus on other elements, which, through their work, opened up the space for mine. I refer the reader to their work should they wish to learn something of their own (women’s) history.

There are three important issues in understanding the history and then the dissolution, i.e. the so-called self-abolition of the AFŽ: a) the historical forgetting of some political continuities, especially on the left; b) the relations the public and private in postwar Yugoslavia; c) the issue of market reform and the relationship between production, subsistence, and reproduction in relation to the family and household. When it comes to the family, my views on patriarchy are to an extent influenced by Göran Therborn⁶ and his understanding of the dynamics of family

³ Traverso, Enzo, De l’anticommunisme. L’histoire du xxe siècle relue par Nolte, Furet et Courtois, *L’Homme et la société*, 2001/2: 169–194, p.189.

⁴ Bensaïd, Daniel, *Qui est le juge? Pour en finir avec le tribunal de l’Histoire*. Paris: Fayard, 1999, p. 127

⁵ Suvin, Darko, *Samo jednom se ljubi. Radiografija SFR Jugoslavije*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014, p. 23. [English edition: *Splendour, Misery, and Potentialities: An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Leiden: Brill, 2016, p11].

⁶ Therborn, Göran, *Between Sex and Power, Family in the World 1900–2000*. London: Routledge, 2004.

relations. Namely, he shows that the family in and of itself does not have any internal dynamic of change until it is influenced by external factors. These external factors are the subject of this text.

2. On the Prehistory of the AFŽ

Attempts to think the AFŽ historically are often characterized precisely by a lack of historical consciousness. The AFŽ is mostly portrayed, especially on the left, as an organisation that came into existence without any prior influences, as something *sui generis*. Such a view is part of a general historical forgetting – present in an especially questionable form on the post-Yugoslav left – where we remember the past either selectively or reactively. Historical amnesia has disastrous consequences. One of the most disastrous is an ahistorical understanding of what became of ‘the woman question’ and the position of women in the first, and then in the second Yugoslavia. Bearing in mind that the AFŽ was a unique and unprecedented organisation, but by no means the first women’s revolutionary movement in Yugoslavia, it is necessary to recall *forgotten* and *forbidden* models. A minimum of historical consciousness and intellectual honesty demands that we do not forget the activities of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) between the two world wars, or the activities of the women’s civic associations and movements preceding the AFŽ. This is necessary if we are not to “read our own history as a mistaken footnote”⁷. Not reading our “own history as a mistaken footnote” in the case of AFŽ means talking about some continuities in women’s organising. Precisely for this reason, I would like to offer one *possible* historical analogy, fully aware of the dangers of reasoning by analogy. By way of analogy, to the extent that it allows, I will follow the development of the AFŽ in section 2.3, indicating some important differences in comparison with the Soviet *Zhenotdel*, and thus, if nothing else, open a space for future thought and research.

The aim of the following section is precisely, in opposition to historical forgetting, to establish a theoretical framework which considers the formation of the AFŽ as the final outcome of at least three sources, currents, and tendencies preceding it. We are referring primarily to women’s organising within the Socialist and subsequently Communist Party of Yugoslavia, to women’s and feminist movements between the two world wars, to the youth sections of the women’s movements which played a crucial role in the subsequent front politics of the CPY, and finally, to the *Zhenotdel* as a forbidden model.

⁷ Adriana Zaharijević, Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji: kako se može čitati istorija jugoslovenskog feminizma. “*Sociologija*” Vol. LVII: 72-89, 2015. p. 86

2.1. Women's Organisation within the Workers' Movement

The women's sections of the communist movement, the methods and goals of their work, are the direct heritage of the Second International (the Socialist International, 1889–1916) and particularly of the decisive role of Clara Zetkin in imposing the practice of the women's organisation of the Social Democratic Party of Germany on the entire International. Clara Zetkin is responsible for two fundamental innovations.⁸ The first is related not only to questions of politics but also to those of the organisation: the woman question cannot be separated from the question of class. The second is even more important: the idea that women, although exploited as workers, are subjected to a specific type of oppression which implies specific, historically conditioned methods of organisation and political activity of women and women workers. Following the resolutions of the Second International, every socialist (then known as *social-democratic*) party was obliged to incorporate women's sections and committees in its work, and publish magazines covering women and women's issues. Thus, in years preceding the formal establishment of the AFŽ, the activity of the pre-World War I socialist movement in the region, and thus that of the later CPY, was directed towards organising women workers and founding women's sections and committees. Although few in number, women socialists (and communists) organised activities within their ranks. Thus, to take one of many examples, in March 1919 the Regional Secretariat of Women Socialists of Bosnia and Herzegovina organised literacy and other classes for women.⁹ In April of that same year, the Unification Congress of the Socialist Workers' Party of Yugoslavia (Communists) was held in Belgrade, where a Central Secretariat of Women Socialists (Communists) was elected. Its statute states that the Secretariat "considers itself a part of the Party whole...rules out any separate women's organisation, and considers itself a technical-executive committee for agitation and organising women".¹⁰ The relationship between the women's secretariat and the Central Party Council was such that "according to instructions issued by the Central Party Council of the Socialist Workers' Party of Yugoslavia, the Central Secretariat of Women Socialists (Communists) issues directives for women's activities in general"¹¹. The "Theses on methods and forms

⁸ What follows is my reading of Zetkin's articles collected in the edited volume *Clara Zetkin, Selected Writings*, New York: International Publishers. Ed. Philip S. Foner, foreword by Angela Davis. I would like to thank Ajla Demiragić for this book.

⁹ Kecman, Jovanka, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941*. Belgrade: Modern History Institute, 1978, p. 93.

¹⁰ Historijski Arhiv KPJ, Vol. 2, *Kongresi i Zemaljske konferencije 1919-1937*. Belgrade: History department of the CPY, 1949, pp. 24–26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

of work of the Communist Parties among women” adopted in 1921 at the Third Congress of the Comintern (the Communist International, 1919–1943), later also adopted by the CPY, arguably did not represent a significant innovation in existing socialist practice other than in the fact of demanding, in more explicit terms, the involvement of women as equal members in the work of communist parties and other proletarian organisations. This continuity was embodied by Clara Zetkin, the former Secretary of the International Women’s Bureau of the Second International, who in 1920 became Secretary of the International Women’s Secretariat of the Communist International.

The second part of the Statute of Women Socialists (Communists), adopted at the Belgrade Unification Congress in 1919, states that work with youth is one of the special tasks of the women’s movement: “because women are, by nature, the most suited for and competent in this work [...] and it should be carried out according to contemporary pedagogical principles and, from a purely practical point of view, lead to an overall education”.¹² The purpose of the work was to prepare the youth to be “loyal members of the proletarian movement”.¹³ In those days, rarely did any socialist movement question the fundamental and primary social role of women, that is, the role of women as mothers and primary carers responsible for the education and upbringing of new generations. Later on we will see that Tito, like Stalin, insisted that the primary task of the “new woman” was bound up with her specific biological function as mother, but we will also see how Alexandra Kollontai, and the avant-garde of the Bolshevik Revolution, maintained that the socialist revolution had to grow over into a sexual one. Thinking the AFŽ historically enables us to once again question different models of women’s emancipation on the left, bearing in mind its importance for us today. On the one hand, we have the model of economic emancipation which follows the argument that economic independence will necessarily, by mathematical progression, result in the emancipation of women through wage-labour. On the other hand, there is the model of Alexandra Kollontai and the *Zhenotdel*, for whom the socialisation of care work is not merely the first prerequisite for women’s entry into wage-labour, but is considered an end in itself, one of the objectives of communism as the self-management of the direct producers.

While CPY leaders, from Tito to Vida Tomšić, Mitra Mitrović, and Cana Babović, also affirmed a certain continuity of work among women as the foundation for the later activity of the AFŽ, from an historical point of view it is also important to insist on specific ruptures. It is necessary to differentiate periods of activity and

¹² Ibid. p. 26.

¹³ Ibid. p. 26

the political perspectives that conditioned them. In the so-called “revolutionary period”, i.e. the period of the painful birth of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, characterized by strikes, peasant uprisings, and nationalist guerilla resistance to Belgrade, the women’s work of the Party came down to organising working women. Following the so-called “Proclamation” of 30 December 1920, the CPY was formally proscribed, but operated under various semi-legal fronts, and work with women was transferred to the trade unions. From the 30s onwards, there was a tendency to extend the influence of the CPY to mass organisations like the women’s movements. In 1935, with the definitive imposition of the Comintern policy of the Popular Front in the struggle against fascism, the final rupture occurred.¹⁴ From that point onwards, participation and *entrism* in bourgeois women’s organisations, in order to form special (front) organisations, became the starting point and model for creating an all-class women’s alliance in a progressive struggle for the equality of women, against war and fascism. This approach represents a break with the model of Clara Zetkin, who refused any kind of cooperation between the labour movement and “bourgeois feminists” (*Frauenrechtlerinnen* or ‘women’s righters’), for example in the struggle for female suffrage, or civil rights and equality, as well as with her opposition to the creation of separate non-party women’s organisations. This example shows us how the Yugoslav communist movement reshaped itself according to Stalinist models in the direction of limiting the struggle for the emancipation of women to a democratic phase whose key task was defeating fascism and defending the Soviet Union. From the beginning of the Second World War, the struggle to realise the democratic perspective of national liberation and women’s equality collided with a political problem, i.e. a barrier: the alliance between Stalin and the Allies. Although we cannot discuss this policy in detail here, it is important to emphasize that Yugoslavia and China were the only states in which the revolutionary and democratic forces managed to overcome these barriers, unite the people in antifascist struggle against the *ancien régime*, and open up the horizon of social revolution. From revolutionary Spain to the French Popular Front, to the Italian and Greek resistance movements, blind obedience to Stalin’s dictate meant the downfall of the revolution. Historically, we would also have to take into consideration the presence of a paradoxical and creative synthesis and enrichment of bourgeois feminism and Yugoslav communism, the organisational, moral, and political precondition for one of the biggest mass movements of women ever seen in Europe: the AFŽ.

¹⁴ Sklevicky, Lydia, *Organizirana djelatnost žena Hrvatske za vrijeme NOB-e 1941-1945*. Available at: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/158396>

2.2. "Elective Affinities": the Women's Movement and Communism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

The feminist and women's civic associations of Yugoslavia initiated some of the first campaigns for women's literacy, gave literacy classes, worked on raising consciousness of the woman question and women's rights, and engaged in propaganda work by publishing newspapers. From the 1920s right up to the end of the 1930s, one of the most important of these was the Feminist Alliance, which in 1926 changed its name to the Alliance of Women's Movements. In *Notes on the feminist history of the city of Zagreb, 1919–1940*, Gordana Stojaković lists the long-forgotten names of all the important representatives of the feminist and women's movements of the day, whose personal commitment and agitation represented first steps enabling women to come out of the invisibility of the private sphere into the public realm.¹⁵ Although these were all women from rich families, literate, often university educated, their demands aimed at the equality of all women. In her history, *The Woman Question in Serbia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, written more than half a century after the dissolution of the AFŽ and in the teeth of the bloody collapse of the second Yugoslavia, Neda Božinović, a former activist in the Serbian section of the AFŽ, goes out of her way to underline and reaffirm the legacy of the pre-1945 women's movement in which she was formed:

[...] already from the time - before the Second World War - I became involved in the women's movement, I was impressed by the women who founded and developed it. I have no less regard for the women of my generation who, especially during the war, did not spare themselves, but laid down their lives, giving their all to realise the fundamental preconditions for women's liberation. It is my profound belief that women of all generations, in their own times, with all its and their own limitations, did all that could be done. This work is [...] an attempt to present in one place the history of the women's movement in Serbia, to point out the efforts and the resolve of women themselves to contribute to change, to transform their status, and both the support and resistance they encountered. For they are largely forgotten - history has hardly anything to say about them.¹⁶

For this reason, it is not enough to simply say that we need to take into consideration the historical context, and all the limitations and obstacles that feminists encountered, to grasp just how progressive their demands were. In fact, a revolu-

¹⁵ The text is available at: <http://pravonarad.info/?p=350>

¹⁶ *Ženski pokret*, January/February, 1937, pp. 5–6. I am thankful to Gordana Stojaković for forwarding me these two issues of the review.

tion and a further 20 years were needed for these demands to be met, and even then only partially! Neda Božinović confirms that the feminist programs of the interwar period were not only adopted by socialist Yugoslavia, but also served as the basis for its laws and legislative practice all the way up to the mid-1960s.¹⁷ It is worth underlining the two most important contributions (innovations) of the feminist and women's movement, which were of paramount importance for the later development of the woman question. One of the most important demands was for the reform of civil law and the unification of all the legal codes valid in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In fact, it is often forgotten today that there was no uniform legal system in the Kingdom. According to the *Alliance* magazine *Ženski pokret* (*Women's Movement*), there were six legal territories with six different codes of civil law.¹⁸ But one thing they all shared: women were in a legally subordinate position, completely dependent, both physically and materially, on male family members. The Alliance put forward two highly important reforms to civil law: a) *the jurisdiction of secular, civil courts in all matters, the abolition of the father's and husband's authority*, b) *the recognition of the equal rights of women to dispose of themselves and their property, introducing the concept of acquired property and equal right to inheritance*. The second element refers to social legislation where the Alliance offered the following solutions:

[that] employers strictly enforce the ban on night shifts for women, on women working before and after childbirth, make sure to provide children's shelters according to their legal obligations, where children would be looked after by trained female personnel, to ensure hygienic conditions at work, especially proper ventilation, setting up kitchens, separate wash rooms for men and women, changing rooms etc.; with a view to establishing the most effective maternity protection for women employed in industry, crafts, the home and in agriculture, we propose: that the Employee Insurance Act be extended to cover the agricultural workforce; that the 1922 Employee Insurance Act be amended to regulate the insurance period for obtaining the right to maternity allowance, the duration of maternity leave, the right to maternity support, child accessories and breastfeeding support [...]¹⁹

The Alliance of Women's Movements also called for the introduction of female labour inspectors to enforce the implementation of both the above demands and

¹⁷ Božinović, Neda, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku*, Beograd: Žene u crnom, 1996. p. 262.

¹⁸ *Ženski pokret*, op.cit.

¹⁹ Ibid.

already existing laws. The same demands are to be found in the socialist women's journal *Equality* (Die Gleichheit, 1892–1923), founded and edited by Clara Zetkin. The claim of the historian Lidia Sklevicky that the AFŽ “was and remains the only legitimate heir of this movement”²⁰ concurs with that of the former AFŽ militant Neda Božinović.

Although the majority of histories present narrative accounts of the women's movement, or concern themselves with prominent figures, conference resolutions, or descriptions of organisations, thus far not a single comprehensive *social* history of women in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia has been written. In the absence of such a history, I would like to emphasize a few important elements. The emergence and proliferation of prominent and important women's movements, from the left-leaning to the religious and charitable, is the result of what, in Bloch's terms, we could call the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, or more simply, in Lenin's words, uneven development. Whilst from a legal perspective, women basically remained minors, immature, and subordinated principally to the authority of elder men, and secondarily to their sons, while every second woman was illiterate, the inter-war period was nevertheless, according to the anthropologist Vera Erlich, “a time of crisis [...] of general unrest and conflict in the family”.²¹ The traditional forms of the patriarchal family (the extended family, *zadruga*, and multigenerational households) began to disintegrate – but not in Macedonia or among Muslim populations – with the further penetration of the money economy into subsistence agriculture. Fathers could no longer command in the old way, and the relations between young men and women became freer. Losing the real protection of patriarchal custom, peasant women found themselves caught between, on the one hand, the patriarchal legal order, and on the other, the freedom of unlimited exploitation in the market.

Women's employment trends, often meaning in reality the replacement of male workers by women and children, were conditioned not only by male deaths in the First World War, but also by the sharp demographic changes that followed. For example, in 1921, 40% of the population of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was under the age of 14.²² In addition, the fragmentation of landholdings continued in the already impoverished countryside, increasingly forcing the rural population to seek additional sources of income. The rising class of worker-peasants, and of

²⁰ Sklevicky, p. 81.

²¹ Erlich, Vera S. “*Das Erschütternd Gleichgewicht in der Familie, aus eine Jugoslawischen Studie*”. Quoted in: Holm Sundhaussen, *Historija Srbije od 19. do 21. veka*, p. 296. Belgrade: Clio, 2009.

²² Čalić, Žanin-Mari. *Socijalna istorija Srbije 1815.-1941*. Belgrade: Clio, 2004, pp. 253–254.

female and child labour, represented a reserve army of the unemployed, enabling employers to reduce both the cost of labour and wages.

The new era of total war, with its erasure of boundaries between front and rear, also called into question the gendered boundaries between the private and the public. Thus, it was during the First World War that, due to the absence of men, women were able to occupy important social functions, which they managed to keep (at least in the cities) even after demobilisation.²³ In the cities, under the influence of Western trends, women attended schools, universities and fought for greater political rights. Around 20% of the overall university population were women, who under the strong influence of liberal and socialist ideas of gender equality turned against sexual double standards. It was not simply a question of rejecting of outmoded customs, but also, according to the Youth Section of the Women's Movement of Serbia, of the fact that the "dictatorship and its reactionary forces [...] had implemented their regressive measures against women and threatened them with taking away the few rights they have acquired."²⁴

The above processes were decisive as they conditioned and enabled the formation of a CPY core and AFŽ cadre on the very eve of war. The cadre mostly consisted of a young group of female village school teachers and workers who, having acquired education or work experience in the cities, brought back liberal and progressive ideas to the countryside, and university-educated, young bourgeois women, who under the influence of communist ideals, in a Turgenevian drama of mothers and daughters, clashed with the "ladies" from the feminist movement. By the mid-1930s a new generation of young women, female students and female workers joined the existing women's and feminist organisations. Faced with the menacing shadows of war and fascism, the youth sections of the women's movement strove, under communist influence, to unite the feminist with the antifascist movements. For example, in the struggle for the right to vote in 1939 in Serbia, "for the first time a broad social movement accepted the idea that freedom and democracy could be applied to the oppressed half of society – women".²⁵ In 1941, following the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia, former members of youth sections of the women's movement, members of the Movement of University-Educated Women and other women's organisations all participated in preparations for an armed uprising, and spontaneously founded women's antifascist committees – the forerunners of the AFŽ.

²³ Čalić, Žanin-Mari. *Historija Jugoslavije u XX veku*. Belgrade: Clio, 2013, p. 123.

²⁴ Bilten "Ženski pokret kroz omladinsku sekciju", izveštaj br. 2. Januar 1940, in: Bosa Cvetić (ed.), *Žene Srbije u NOB-i*, pp. 56-9.

²⁵ Božinović, Neda, *Položaj Žene u Srbiji u XiX i XX veku*, Belgrade: Žene u crnom, 1996, p. 260.

A national pre-congress conference of the CPY held in May 1939, on the eve of war, debated the incorporation of women as equal members in the activities of the Party and other labour organisations, an issue that had been on the party agenda since its very foundation two decades before. Fearing that mobilisation and repression would decimate the party leadership, Tito now saw women as potential leading cadre that was “unknown to the class enemy”. This was precisely the source of the idea that “there must not be a single forum without female members. If the majority of members have thus far underestimated the importance of involving women in the CP – they must now realise that forming female Party cadre is our most important organisational task”.²⁶ If the chronic habit of male comrades to consider work with women as *women's work* was roundly criticised then, in the wake of the moral collapse of the leadership of the women's movement in the face war and repression, feminism was the greater danger. As Vida Tomšič argued in 1940, in a speech delivered to the party congress: “Feminism presents the common demands of women of all classes separate from the demands of working people. By emphasizing the common demands of women, in opposition to and in struggle against men, feminism hides the class basis of the woman question, and in so doing, deflects the female masses from fighting capitalism and class society in general.”²⁷ This could have been said, and with equal justice, by Clara Zetkin circa 1890. But the party, under the auspices of the Popular Front, was itself separating general democratic questions from the struggle against capital: it was the hour of the democratic antifascist alliance.

2.3. The AFŽ as a Revolutionary Movement

According to official figures, some two million women participated in the People's Liberation Struggle (henceforth NOB), certainly one of the largest organised movements of women anywhere during the Second World War. 100,000 women fought as *partizanke*, while 2000 achieved officer's rank. 25,000 *partizanke* were killed and over 40,000 were wounded in battle. If we remember the all-embracing conditions of fascist terror and genocide, inter-communal massacres orchestrated by collaborationist forces, and the total collapse of social and economic life, then the achievement of the AFŽ, the organised, multinational, mass antifascist movement of peasant women, is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

²⁶ See: *Proleter*, no. 1–2, January/February, 1940, p. 6.

²⁷ Vida Tomšič, quoted in: Šolja Marija (ed.), *Žene Hrvatske u NOB-u*, Vol. I, pp. 1–8.

From the very beginning of the uprising, with the establishment of the People's Liberation Army (NOV) and expansion of liberated territories, elections were held to the new organs of revolutionary struggle, the People's Liberation Committees (henceforth NOO), in which all citizens over the age of 18, regardless of religion, gender or nationality, could vote. Women's suffrage was born of their participation in the struggle for a new constituent power, the People's Liberation Movement (NOP). The AFŽ mobilised women to vote in the first elections based on universal suffrage in the Yugoslav lands and encouraged them to put themselves forward as candidates for election. By the end of the war, 3000 women had been elected to village and municipal NOOs in Bosnia alone. However, as in the CPY, far fewer women were elected to higher bodies. Five women were elected to the revolutionary government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the State Antifascist Council for the People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBIH), four times fewer than to the equivalent State Antifascist Council for the People's Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH), where the AFŽ section was by far the strongest. There was only one woman delegate to the historic first session of the Antifascist Council for the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) in Jajce, where the NOOs declared themselves the legitimate and sovereign government of Yugoslavia – Kata Pejnović, President of the Central Committee of the AFŽ, who was elected to the Presidency of AVNOJ. At the second session of AVNOJ in Bihać, female delegates made up only 4% of the total, and only two women were elected to the Presidency, Spasenija Babović and Maca Gržetić, both members of the Central Committee of the AFŽ.

One of the first founding documents of the AFŽ, in which the objectives and methods of the organisation are outlined, is Circular Letter number 4 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia of 1941. The letter speaks of the formation of the AFŽ and its role in “activating and connecting the broad layers of women and involving them in the People's Liberation Struggle”; it was to include “all women...regardless of their political, national, or religious affiliation.” The AFŽ's future organisational structure was first sketched here. Like the Party, it too was territorial and electoral, rising from a series of neighbourhood, city, county and regional groups up to the Republican Committee; and centralised, with lower committees being subordinated to higher ones. The AFŽ's primary task was to ensure support for the Partisan units, and the AFŽ itself became a component of the People's Front (Narodni Front, henceforth NF).²⁸ The struggle for equality between the sexes appears in a list of further political tasks. It was to become the second core concern of the AFŽ.²⁹

²⁸ Bakarić-Šoljan, Marija (ed.), *Žene Hrvatske u NOB-u*, Vol I, str. 57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

At the First Congress of the AFŽ in Bosananski Petrovac in 1942, the organisational continuity of the AFŽ was confirmed by Tito himself: "and finally I would also like to say that the AFŽ, which exists for some time now, and has finally obtained its organisational form, is truly one of the organisations that have sprung up from below".³⁰ Two other important documents from the First Congress attest to the fact that the AFŽ is a women's organisation but not separate from other organisations of the NOB. These are the reports given by Cana Babović and Mitra Mitrović, who was the Secretary of the Youth section of the Women's Movement of Serbia and one of the leading women in the Party.³¹ They give an overview of the prewar work of the organisation and confirm that its formation was the result of many years of activity and struggle by the women of Yugoslavia for a more just world. Both should be read as programmatic, especially given the fact the AFŽ adopted its statutes much later, but also because the CPY is presented as the bearer of the struggle against fascism and for the equality of all. The emphasis on the importance of the CPY represents a subtle shift from the politics of the Popular Front, which once again confirms the aforementioned fact that the CPY at the same time followed but also deviated from the hard line of the Popular Front.

From the very beginning, the CPY understood that (to paraphrase Mitra Mitrović) it was waging a struggle and war in which the distinction between front and rear had been erased. It was no longer possible to consider the front as male and the rear as female domains. Hence, without the support of women and total mobilisation the popular uprising could not have grown over into a nation-wide struggle and insurrection. Women had to be mobilised for the struggle, but more importantly for the work in the rear, vital for supplying the army and the NF, for relaying messages, and facilitating communication between higher- and lower-level committees of the Party, as well as between the AFŽ committees. The peasantry represented a major problem in this regard. Since peasants made up the majority of the population, the course of the struggle depended on the degree of their mobilisation into Partisan ranks. Just as important was the proclamation of equality between men and women, the promise of a better future and social justice on which the entire revolutionary undertaking rested: destroying the old and creating the new.

³⁰ 'Tito to Women of Yugoslavia, available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/92>

³¹ Cana Babović, Organizaciono pitanje AFŽ-a, available at <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/231>
Mitra Mitrović, Antifašistički pokret žena u okviru Narodno-oslobodilačke-borbe, available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/232>

The struggle of the Partisans drew upon guerilla strategies, but also on the local traditions of peasant rebels, the *uskoks* and the *hajduks*, the First and the Second Serbian Uprisings (1804–1817), the 19th century peasant revolts against the Ottoman Empire in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Women's Revolutionary Army Committees of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) which participated in the Ilinden Uprising of 1903, the women guerilla fighters of the Montenegrin resistance to Austro-Hungarian occupation from 1916 to 1918, as well as other insurgencies against earlier occupiers. In his memoirs, Milovan Djilas recalls that the Party consciously used „ancient traditions and myths“ in order to present the NOB as the continuation of „the centuries-old struggle of our freedom-loving peoples“. ³² Jelena Batinić ³³ shows how the CPY constructed the figure of a new woman, linking it to epic figures of South Slav folklore. Partisan femininity rested on two pillars: the noble heroine who proves her honor and worth (i.e. equality) in battle, and the mother demanding that her dead children be avenged. The embodiment of the latter was Kata Pejnović, known among the people as “Mother Kata”, who called for revenge at the First National Congress of the AFŽ. The first figure is comparable to the role of young peasant women as fighters and nurses, and the second with the role of older peasant women, mothers who carried out traditional women's jobs in the rear. Together, they had an enormous mobilising potential among the peasantry since they contained elements of tradition that aroused patriotic feelings and prompted people to join the fight.

These figures of the new woman were united on front cover of the very first issue of *Žena u Borbi* (Woman in Struggle), the journal of the AFŽ Croatia, in the image of a woman, babe in arm, gun in hand. Fusing the traditional with the new and modern, the CPY took an entirely legitimate step, creating the conditions for a possibility of a revolutionary overthrow. Although neither Chetniks nor Ustashas underestimated the importance of women, in their propaganda women remained inferior and were tied to church, home, and children. ³⁴ Clearly differentiating itself on this issue, the CPY gained a strategic advantage over the forces of occupation and collaboration.

³² Đilas, Milovan, *Wartime*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, p. 227.

³³ Batinić, Jelena, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans. A history of World War II Resistance*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

³⁴ On women and the Ustashas, see: Bitunjac, Martina, *Le donne e il movimento ustascia*. Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2013; Jambrešić-Kirin, Renata and Senjković, Reana, Puno puta bi vas bili..., *Narodna umjetnost*, 42/2, 2005, pp. 109–126.

In her Report on the Organisational Question, Cana Babović emphasised that the struggle the AFŽ was leading was the struggle of the CPY, hence the main task that lay before the movement was “*total support for our army*”. She fiercely attacked “bourgeois” feminist movements to drive home the point that the goal of equality was subordinate to the general aims of the NOB.

The second important task was publishing magazines to help mobilise women and thus also assist the army. The magazines were supposed to promote the *political education of women*, which was also stated as one of the aims of the organisation itself. Internal party and archive documents repeatedly complain that women, even many AFŽ activists, were ignorant not only of their role in the NOB, but even that this struggle was being fought for their own rights. Only through the *political education* of women was it possible to ensure that all women understood the importance of the struggle and the necessity of uniting all women antifascists (regardless of class, religion, and nationality) for the struggle against fascism. But in order to “raise [political] consciousness”, the overwhelming illiteracy of peasant women first had to be eradicated, and so literacy classes, covering also hygiene, housekeeping, and the political objectives of the NOB were organised on liberated territories by the Party cadres that led the AFŽ.

The third important element was activities in the liberated territories aimed at strengthening the people’s government and supporting the People’s Committees. Mitra Mitrović posed the aim of equality within these broader objectives, stating in her report that “orphanages and kindergardens are being built in the liberated territories”. One of the points of interest of her speech is the description of the way women transformed themselves in struggle and through struggle, taking on the same positions as men. Women proudly pointed out how they took over men’s roles and proved their “heroism, courage, and competence” in the struggle. And while one of the most important contributions was undoubtedly that, in a moment of crisis, women - as Partisans - through a transgression of traditional gender roles - were at all allowed to enter the political arena, this act of joining the struggle for a more just society never in essence questioned gender relations and norms, but rather repeated and perpetuated them (which is also confirmed by both congress reports).

Although CPY strategy largely depended on successfully mobilising women into the movement and struggle, the mobilisation of women into the AFŽ coexisted with traditional attitudes, and the women who contributed to the Partisan cause did so, as a rule, by performing traditional women’s tasks and chores: cleaning, washing, looking after and caring for others. Thus, from the outset, the work of the AFŽ was conceived strictly as women’s work, largely resting on the tradi-

tional model of “feminine” nature and “female” qualities. And while this strategic concession brought the Partisans a significant advantage during the war and enabled women to also affirm themselves as revolutionary subjects, in the postwar period the contradictions of gender roles took on a different trajectory.

Problems in the work of the AFŽ already arose in its initial phase. Although Lydia Sklevicky³⁵ speaks of the initial phase as the phase of autonomy, basing herself on Mitra Mitrović's report to the First Congress of the AFŽ, I do not find any evidence of it there. It is more likely that she confused the reports of Cana Babović and Mitra Mitrović, because the former explicitly states that the “Central Committee of the AFŽ will *strive* to make our organisations independent over time”. On the basis of the available archival evidence, I conclude that these *strivings* remained on paper. The AFŽ never was nor did it ever become an autonomous organisation. From the outset, the work of the AFŽ was subordinated to the NF, and the latter was directly subordinated to the CPY. Although the AFŽ had limited operational autonomy, it never had full organisational autonomy. Operational autonomy was more prevalent in the occupied territories; since the flow of the information from the CC CPY and the NF to the committees of the AFŽ was much more difficult, it meant that AFŽ committee members had to find a way to act on their own. Therefore, I consider the repeated claims on the left concerning the autonomy of the AFŽ to be completely unjustified, as is demonstrated by numerous archive documents. To attribute the AFŽ the autonomy it never had means not to historicise but rather to mythologize it. The main aim of the autonomy myth is to legitimise the liberal or second wave feminist thesis that the women's movement should be politically and organisationally independent of the left. From this follows a metaphysical dualism, first posited in the work of Sklevicky, between a largely heroic phase of the AFŽ and a diabolic phase of increasing subordination to the Party, culminating in dissolution in 1953. But, even if this were true, it would not explain the limits to women's emancipation either during or after the war. The autonomy thesis evacuates the central political stakes, that is, the question of political strategy in relation to the general goals of the revolution and to the meaning of emancipation: the conflict noted above between the model of economic emancipation and that of the abolition and withering away of the family, classes and the state in communism, which will be dealt with later.

The Central Committee of the CPY's letter of January 1944 represents the first step towards an even greater centralisation of the AFŽ, is confirmed as policy

³⁵ Sklevicky, *Organizirana djelatnost žena Hrvatske za vrijeme NOB-e 1941-1945*, p. 108.

at the Fifth Congress of the CPY when a second redistribution of tasks between the NF and the AFŽ occurred, and the AFŽ becomes an administrative organ of the NF and is no longer concerned with the political education of women. The archives also testify to problems that surfaced after the war. Internal reports repeatedly mention that wives of the officials and members of the People's Front did not participate at all in the work of the AFŽ.³⁶ This presented a problem for many women, and some took it as a sign that they too should not participate in the work of the committees. The reports also state that male comrades did not allow female comrades to attend courses or that the wives of officials "proudly stated" that they did not want to work in the organisation.³⁷ It would not be wrong to say that in the midst of the revolution the very idea that women were equal to men was revolutionary. The very idea had already met with resistance from the outset, and it was precisely because of this that women had to find ways to prove they were not backward and ignorant. All this affected the AFŽ's work. Thirty years later, Dušanka Kovačević, one of the leading members of the AFŽ of Bosnia and Herzegovina, described it thus:

by turning their back on tradition, which weighed them down, women became [...] morally, physically, and psychologically different, not in the sense that they acquired male traits as it is often thought, but that they were becoming what was necessary for the freedom of the people and the revolution. Women and girls found their place in the revolution, which is more important than the personal destiny written in the history of women, but they instinctively sought to escape the fate of their mothers and grandmothers. Perhaps for the first time in history, women were creating their own ideal of womanhood, regardless of what men wanted. That ideal was built on the standard of revolution and triumph over the enemy. Values such as loyalty to the people, courage, knowledge, and initiative suppressed the age-old standards that required women be obedient, not interfere in the affairs of men, to stay at home, etc. *Men changed less. Many of them accepted this new woman, a comrade, as a necessary, but also temporary feature of the war, part of the harsh realities of war.*³⁸

³⁶ Republican Committee of the AFŽ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dopis sreskog odbor AFŽ-a Velika Kladuša, Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

³⁷ For instance: Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Zapisnik plenarnog sastanka Sreskog odbora AFŽ- održan 26.9.1948. godine" Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 5, 84/48, 1948. Oblasni Odbor, "Zapisnik Plenarnog sastanka AFŽ-a u Bihaću održanog u prostorijama u vjećnici G.N.O dana 9.2.1950. godine", p. 2. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 1061/5, 1950. Oblasni Odbor AFŽ-a, "Zapisnik sa sastanka sekretarijata Oblasnog odbora za oblast sarajevsku koji se održaje 10.1.1950. godine", Arhiv BiH, Kutija 9, 1053/4, 1950.

³⁸ Žene BiH u NOB-u, Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1977, pp. 38–38, my emphasis.

However, in the existing archive documents the struggle of the CPY is nowhere bound up with the struggle against capitalism, which is a function of the aforementioned question of revolutionary strategy and greatly conditioned the reaction that in turn largely shaped the later policy of the CPY. The fact that from 1935 onwards the program of the CPY balanced between an independent revolutionary policy and the politics of the Popular Front, produced two significant results: on the one hand, the revolutionary policy secured the opening of the revolutionary field and created conditions for the possibility of revolution; but on the other, pursuing the politics of the Popular Front prevented the CPY from relating the struggle against fascism, which was its number one goal, to the struggle against capital and capitalism. This is especially important for understanding the position of women in Yugoslavia and the relationship between production and reproduction, as well as the form this relation took in the 1950s, as can be seen in the archive documents.

2.4. Of what is “Zhenotdel” [not] the name?

I have stated above that I will try to examine the limits of a *possible historical analogy*. In the AFŽ archive, in later female Partisan biographies, and in most of the works of Yugoslav historiography dealing with “the woman question”, one sees something that for the purposes of this paper I will call a *symptomatic absence*. Namely, the literature on the Yugoslav communist movement and the AFŽ does not even mention the Soviet *Zhenotdel* (Женотдел), or its main protagonists Alexandra Kollontai, Inessa Armand, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Konkordiya Samoilova, and Klavdiia Nikolayeva. Even a random Google search barely provides any results in Serbo-Croatian, and the few positive results are connected solely with the name of Alexandra Kollontai. The fact that there is barely any mention of the Zhenotdel is surely the result of the erasure of its history – firstly from Soviet, and then necessarily from all the other Eastern Bloc historiographies, including the Yugoslav. This absence necessarily gives rise to the following questions: at the time of the formal establishment of AFŽ was it forbidden to speak in Yugoslavia of the Zhenotdel, which by then had ceased to exist? Was the model of the Zhenotdel one that had to be forgotten and was not to be referred to or remembered? And finally, the main question: what is the difference between the AFŽ and the Zhenotdel? The structure of the AFŽ greatly – but not entirely – imitated that of the Zhenotdel.³⁹ This alone is enough to talk about the Zhenotdel as an absent model, and – in the period of the AFŽ’s formal establishment – also as a forbid-

³⁹ See: Stites, Richard, Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women, 1917-1930, *Russian History*, Vol. 3, no. 2, p. 182.

den model, since Yugoslavia at that time entirely followed Stalin's politics of the Popular Front.⁴⁰

Today, it is a commonplace in Soviet historiography that the October Revolution introduced one of the most progressive bodies of legislation ever to be enacted. It is a well-known fact that the February Revolution of 1917 – led by women demanding an end to a war that deprived them of the most basic necessities – was a catalyst and a trigger for later revolutionary events. Shortly after February, and after a great deal of pressure and demonstrations led by women and supported by Bolshevik and bourgeois feminist agitation, the Provisional government granted universal suffrage. Following the establishment of the first Soviet government in December 1917, divorce was legalised, marriages and civil partnerships were made equal in the eyes of the law, thereby recognising the rights of children regardless of whether born in or out of wedlock. In November 1920, abortion was legalised for the first time in history, while backstreet abortions now carried heavy sentences. This was followed (on 30 December 1922) by the New Land Code, which represented the most profound and systematic *legislative* attempt to break traditional patriarchal, cultural and legal-property relations and norms.

The attempt to change traditional patriarchal relations, affecting the greatest part of the population, was obliged to grasp the problem at its root and hence caused the most resistance. This law made possible the equality of men and women in the *Dvor* [the peasant homestead]; the management of the household became equally the affair and obligation of both partners, and women were granted equal inheritance rights to the property of the *Dvor*.⁴¹ All the above laws were the outcome of the drive and determination of Alexandra Kollontai, who after the revolution became People's Commissar for Social Welfare.⁴² The abolition of the family,

⁴⁰ Supplementary evidence that Soviet models were never far from the minds of the leaders of the AFŽ may be seen in the frequent use of Soviet jargon, for example the significant reference to *besprizorniki*, that is, the millions of orphans of the Civil War whose care and accommodation were given over to the Zhenotdel. See: Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 2, 149–147, as well as "Zapisnik sa održanog savjetovanja žena iz grada i sreza Zenice po pitanju formiranja raznih društava a u vezi zaključka sjednice Izvršnog odbora C.O. AFŽ-a"

⁴¹ On the laws of the early post-revolutionary period, as well as later Stalinist counter-revolutionary measures see: Schlesinger, Rudolf (ed.), *The Family in the U.S.S.R., Documents and Readings*, Routledge, 2000.

⁴² While historians disagree as to the precise contribution of Alexandra Kollontai to drafting Soviet family law and the formation of the Zhenotdel, Carol Eubanks Hayden is convinced that without her individual efforts many things would have remained on paper. See her doctoral dissertation: *Feminism and Bolshevism: The Zhenotdel and the Politics of Women's Emancipation in Russia 1917–1930*. University of California, Berkeley, 1979.

inconceivable without a complete and radical overturning of gender and patriarchal norms, was one of the key characteristics of Bolshevik revolutionary theory which drew "upon accepted Marxist theory (Engels, Bebel) and on the work of native Russian Marxists, such as Kollontai and Krupskaya".⁴³

The conception of gender roles as fluid and fluctuating is one of the basic ideas behind the idea of communal living, the attempts (only partially successful) to fulfill the utopian dream of creating institutions for the socialisation of housework, the sharing of household chores and obligations, and the "withering away" of the family as a unit of social reproduction, together with the state and classes.⁴⁴ The ideas that guided the leaders of the October Revolution represent the only attempt thus far to realise communism not only in the ownership of the means of production but also in the abolition of the family, which they considered no less a part of the revolutionary transformation of society. By deconstructing and overturning the rigidity of gender markers and categories, which had held women in a subordinate position for centuries and bound them to housework - which, in the words of Lenin, "dulls, stultifies and enslaves"⁴⁵ - they strove to realise these ideals. That is precisely why, as early as 1905 and 1909 respectively, Kollontai and Krupskaya voiced the importance and necessity of organising proletarian and peasant women through special groups, committees, or sections. However, the idea of founding a separate women's organisation within the party remained unrealised until 1917. In that year, the prewar Bolshevik newspaper for women workers, *Rabotnica*,⁴⁶ was revived, serving as one of the main propaganda tools for agitation and work amongst women. The story of the Zhenotdel is a story of how a specifically women's organisation was formed despite internal Party resistance. The diversity of positions amongst the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution is perhaps best portrayed by the fact that both male and female party members opposed its foundation. On this basis a conflict arose between Alexandra Kollontai and Klaudia Nikolaeva⁴⁷ during the First Conference

⁴³ Carol Eubanks Hayden, *The Zhenotdel and the Bolshevik Party*, *Russian History*, Vol, no. 2, 1976, pp.150-173.

⁴⁴ Stites, Richard, *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1989. It is interesting that Stites dates these aspirations to the period from 1917 to 1930, which coincides with the establishment and the activities of the Zhenotdel.

⁴⁵ Lenin gave unreserved support to the work and activities of the Zhenotdel and spoke on several occasions at women's congresses organised by the Zhenotdel. See: Stites, 1989, op. cit.; Hayden, 1976 op. cit.

⁴⁶ See Hayden, 1976, op. cit.; Stites, 1976, op. cit. It is important to note that *Rabotnica* was launched following the International Socialist Women's Congresses held concurrently with the conferences of the Second International in Stuttgart in 1907 and Copenhagen in 1910.

⁴⁷ Nikolaevna would later become the director of the Zhenotdel.

of Petrograd Women Workers held on 6 November 1917, where Nikolaeva along with Konkordiya Samoilova opposed the formation of a women's section within the Party.⁴⁸ At the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Bolsheviks held in April 1917, Alexandra Kollontai motioned that a meeting of female delegates be held to form a women's department within the Bolshevik Party. In September that same year a women's section was established, but it would only obtain the status of a Party department (*otdel*) in 1919 after considerable political pressure and mobilisation.

The decisive event was the First All-Russian Congress of Working Women organised by Kollontai and Armand in November 1918 with the help of workers, peasants and other delegates from all over Russia who came to Moscow in the teeth of the perils and hardships of the civil war. Carol E. Hayden points out that the organisation of women in a separate department (*Zhen-otdel*) in the midst of civil war was all the more significant because it was necessary to defend and consolidate the revolutionary government to enable the enactment of its laws and decrees. The Bolsheviks thus found themselves in the contradictory position of having to "appeal to women as a separate group in order to convince them that they were not a separate group".⁴⁹ In its work, the Party was acutely aware of both the inadequacy of formal legal equality and the pressing need to strengthen and enforce the law.

Armand and Kollontai worked to the limits of endurance, traveling all over the country, organising women factory workers and peasants, involving them in the work of the *Zhenotdel* and the revolutionary wave in general. They agitated not only among women factory workers and peasants, but also the unemployed, wives of military personnel, etc. It is in this particular context that Carol E. Hayden talks about an important principle of the *Zhenotdel*, "agitation by deeds, not words", while Richard Stites points out that the true context of the *Zhenotdel* is that the "formal, legislative program of emancipation (the only one usually noted by historians) had to be given meaning in the social revolution from below".⁵⁰ One of the main mechanisms for accomplishing "agitation by deeds" was the system of delegates (*delegatki*). The essence of this system was that the women workers and peasants elected delegates who would spend three to six months as apprentices (*praktikantki*) at *Zhenotdel* headquarters, visit and acquaint themselves with the work of courts, Party departments, hospitals, and other institutions, getting to know their rights in order to be able to expose irregularities in the application of

⁴⁸ Hayden, 1976, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Stites, 1976, op. cit., p. 176.

laws and regulations in their factories, homes, and villages. According to Stites, the *delegatki* "as a rule, saw much, and reported honestly". The goal was clear: training female personnel to achieve more thorough and comprehensive changes in everyday life and the socialisation of housework. Wendy Zeva Goldman remarks that membership in the Zhenotdel forever changed the lives of thousands of women workers, peasants, housewives, and domestic servants who gained experience through the apprenticeship system and passed it on to others.⁵¹ In spite of its enormous influence, and importance for the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of women, the work of the Zhenotdel was from the start weighed down with prejudice and problems. Male and female party members of all ranks opposed the establishment and work of the Zhenotdel, accusing it of feminist deviations, forcing its female members to constantly justify themselves and explain that their work had nothing to do with such deviations. Conflicts broke out, with presidents of provincial committees in Central Asia committing acts of violence against women involved in the work of the Zhenotdel, and there was even a case of a Zhenotdel office being burned down, as well as cases of domestic violence where husbands beat their wives for daring to go to "women's" meetings.⁵² In a letter from 1920, Konkordiya Samoilova wrote that their colleagues gave them sexist nicknames such as 'granny center' (Tsentro-baba) or 'commisariat of grannies' (*bab-kom*). Many high-ranking female members of the Party refused to work in the Zhenotdel, considering it inferior and unbecoming, and sought recognition in the affairs of men.⁵³ Enormous problems arose in the work of the Zhenotdel in the aftermath of the Civil War, with the demobilisation of the Red Army and the introduction of the market mechanisms of the New Economic Policy. Soviet enterprises were obliged to adhere to profit criteria and women bore the brunt of the resulting wave of layoffs. In 1922, although representing approximately a quarter of the labour force women accounted for some 60% of the unemployed. There was less and less money in the budget for the Zhenotdel and its tasks while the mass unemployment of men and women merely exacerbated the financial squeeze on the organisation.

After the death of Inessa Armand, the first director of the Zhenotdel, and the removal of Alexandra Kollontai (who joined the Workers' Opposition against the

⁵¹ Goldman, Wendy Zeva, *Women, the State and Revolution, Soviet Family Policy and Social Life 1917–1936*. Cambridge University Press, 1993. On the changes the Zhenotdel brought about, see also: Stites, Richard: *Did the Bolshevik Revolution Improve the Lives of Soviet Women* – available at: http://faculty.sfhs.com/lesleymuller/ap_euro/Debates/debate_soviet_women.pdf

⁵² Hayden, 1976, op. cit., p. 161.

⁵³ Clements, Evans, Barbara, *The Bolshevik Women*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

emerging one-party state), there followed a series of female directors whose work became more and more difficult under the glare of the Stalinist apparatus. From 1924 and the doctrine of "socialism in one country", little by little the Stalinist counterrevolution began to hollow out the heritage of the October Revolution. In 1930 the Zhenotdel was abolished by Party decree under the pretext that equality between men and women had been achieved, "that women had been 'advanced' to the level of men",⁵⁴ and the activities of the Zhenotdel were transferred to the AgitProp section of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In 1936, the counterrevolution was finally able to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the cultural gains of the revolution, reinstating tsarist laws against abortion and homosexuality, and making divorce practically impossible through various legal impediments. In this way the emancipatory potential of the October Revolution was erased, and the idea of the abolition (withering away) of the family and the elimination of patriarchal and gender roles and norms was forever thrown into the dustbin of history.

We have seen that the Zhenotdel arose from the previous revolutionary mobilisation of women in order to defend the Soviet government and the achievements of the revolution from counterrevolutionary attack during the Civil War, while the AFŽ, even before the fascist invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia, was conceived as an organisation for mobilising women for a war of national liberation, based on alliances with both the Yugoslav Government in Exile and the Allies. If we compare the Zhenotdel and the AFŽ as women's organisations in countries where revolutionary overthrows took place, one of the most important differences lies in the fact that in the case of the Zhenotdel the function of political mobilisation became more important over time, while in the case of the AFŽ less so. The AFŽ focused less and less on political mobilisation and more on the distribution of goods, the work of the mother-child section and social issues in general. These two organisations faced similar, if not exactly the same, difficulties, ones necessarily faced by any attempt to change centuries-old relations, traditions and beliefs. Both the Zhenotdel and the AFŽ radically changed the lives

⁵⁴ Wood, Elizabeth A., *The Baba and the Comrade. Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. Although Elizabeth Wood's research is extraordinary, I disagree with her (revisionist) assessment that women were "the reserve army of the revolution, a group to be drawn to the labour pool and into the political struggle when needed and to be dismissed when no longer needed". It is precisely the Zhenotdel, the subject of her book, that embodies the attempt to make the struggle universal, because without the joint efforts of both women and men there could be no material realisation of revolutionary principles. For the same reasons, I disagree with the analysis of Jelena Batinić, which follows Wood and sees Soviet politics as undifferentiated top-down emancipation.

of the women who participated in their work. However, the fact remains that different means were used for different ends. Namely, the Bolsheviks, and therefore also the Zhenotdel, fought against capitalism from the outset, and therefore against the bourgeois form of the family. In the case of the CPY and the AFŽ, the struggle against capitalism, for communism, was not a constituent part of the struggle, but was presented as the real objective only after the CPY assumed power. Because of this, the Yugoslav revolution never declared, even for a moment, the abolition of the family. Today the aspirations of the Zhenotdel exist only in a specialised historical literature, and no longer have a name or a place. The abolition of the family, the specter announced in the *Communist Manifesto*, no longer haunts anyone or anything.⁵⁵

3. From Revolutionary Subjects to the Productive Subject

By the 30s, the Soviet model of women's emancipation came down, as Barbara Clements wittily puts it, to the „emancipated worker and the happy homemaker.”⁵⁶ For Stalin, they formed the two pillars of the female *productive subject*: “women make up half the population of our country [...] they constitute a great army of labour and are fit to raise our children”.⁵⁷ In theory, the economic independence of women in a socialist economy would lead to their full emancipation. Eric Hobsbawm notes:

For while major changes, such as the massive entry of married women into the labour market might be expected to produce concomitant or consequential changes, they need not do so - as witness the USSR where (after the initial utopian-revolutionary aspirations of the 1920s had been abandoned) married women generally found themselves carrying the double load of old household responsibilities and new wage earning responsibilities without any change in relations between the sexes or in the public or private spheres.⁵⁸

In all economies based on free wage-labour, the status of the “emancipated female worker” is subordinate to her social function of mother. Such a vision of

⁵⁵ Marx, Karl, Engels, Friedrich, *Manifest komunističke partije* (Manifesto of the Communist Party), available at: http://staro.rifin.com/root/tekstovi/casopis_pdf/ek_ec_586.pdf

⁵⁶ Clements, E. Barbara, *A History of Women in Russia, from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012, p. 429.

⁵⁷ Cited in: Filipova, Jelena, Iz USSR, Šta je dala ženi velika Oktobarska socijalistička revolucija, in *Nova žena*, year 2, no. 20, November, 1946, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, London: Abacus, p.313

the new woman was also present in Yugoslav practice. At the Third Congress of the AFŽ in 1950, Tito declared: "I think, comrades, that you should primarily carry out, with all your strength and enthusiasm, duties proper to your specific obligations, such as, for example, caring for women, mothers, caring for children's hygiene and for children in general, health, and the education of women in Yugoslavia".⁵⁹ We find no evidence in the archives that the idea of abolishing the family ever existed in Yugoslavia, as we saw by contrast in the case of the Russian revolution.

No such steps were ever taken in Yugoslavia. During the war, the AFŽ journal, *Žena u Borbi* (Woman in Struggle), proselytised the Soviet formula of wage-labour and motherhood, introducing its readers to a new productive subject, "the free and equal citizen of a socialist country", whose achievements as tractor driver, shock worker and chemist were commended as models to be emulated. Hence we should not be surprised that the first constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1946) was almost identical to that of the USSR of 1936. For example, abortion continued to be illegal under the new constitution, it was only later (in the early 60s) that it was liberalised, and made legal by the Constitution of 1974. Where Yugoslav and Soviet practice were to differ was in the degree to which the new woman depended on mechanisms of state or market accumulation for her reproduction.

All revolutions may be essentially defined by their approach to women. In form, they can be modernising-emancipatory or patriarchal. The difference is that the former aim at the emancipation of women, emphasizing equality, while the latter bind women to the family and emphasize sex (therefore also gender) differences.⁶⁰ All great revolutions proclaimed a new type of woman. Yugoslavia, as we have seen, was no exception. If we know that "the position of women in any society depends on how that society organizes basic human functions, such as reproduction, subsistence and production",⁶¹ then it is important to examine all the contradictions present from the outset in the manner in which the organisation of these basic functions is approached. Here, when we address the Yugoslav past and future, we must discuss the mutual interpenetration of the modernising-

⁵⁹ From Tito's speech at the Third Congress of the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia, 1950., available at: <http://afzarhiv.org/items/show/481>

⁶⁰ Moghadam, Valentine M., Gender and Revolutionary Transformation, Iran 1979 and Eastern Central Europe 1989, *Gender & Society*, June 1995, pp. 328–356.

⁶¹ Woodward, Susan L., The Rights of Women: Ideology, Policy and Social Change in Yugoslavia, in: Susan L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Mayer (eds.), *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, Duke University Press, Durham. 1985, pp. 576–636.

emancipatory and the patriarchal conceptions of the position and role of women in revolution, or more precisely in the post-revolutionary period. To talk about this interpenetration is precisely to remain true to the AFŽ, i.e. to understand the historical trajectory of its development and dissolution as deeply antagonistic. Only in this way can we understand the fundamental antagonism that existed and exists when it comes to the position of women in society.

While in the context of postwar Yugoslavia the creation of a new woman was, on the one hand, rhetorically emphasized as one of the main goals and tasks of the new government, on the other hand, we can observe how the reality became divorced from the militant ideals in which women had confirmed themselves as subjects of revolutionary struggle. The end of the war meant a fresh start in building a new country and new society. The old order was demolished and the new one was on the agenda, which required the unification of all available forces and resources for the renovation and reconstruction of the country, but also the introduction of a whole series of political-legal acts and new mobilising strategies.

Maxine Molyneux⁶² points out that one of the main tasks of every post-revolutionary government in Third World countries or those ruled by an *ancien régime* is the progressive replacement of the old by the new, for the sake of accelerated economic development and social change. This entails "creating a centralised, secular, and more egalitarian social order". Creating such an order depends on implementing laws that are also valid in rural areas where customary law predominates. Following the adoption of the 1946 Constitution, a gradual enactment of new, standardized legal regulations followed.⁶³ One of the most important achievements for women was the abolition of legal differences existing in the six legal territories of the former Kingdom. For instance, Susan Woodward⁶⁴ points out that the authority of fathers in Yugoslavia was substituted by the authority of the state, which did indeed displace the predominantly patriarchal and patrilocal structure of society. With the 1946 Constitution,⁶⁵ the CPY took the first step in creating the conditions for bettering the lot of women. Subsequently, uniform legislation and civil court jurisdiction were introduced in matters of marital, fam-

⁶² Molyneux, Maxine, *Socialist Societies Old and New: Progress Towards Women's Emancipation*, *Feminist Review*, Summer 1981, pp. 1–34.

⁶³ Božinović, 1996, op- cit., pp. 157–158.

⁶⁴ Woodward, 1985, op. cit.

⁶⁵ The AFŽ was mobilised in discussing the issues of the Constitution, as seen in for example: Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a Jugoslavije, Glavni Odbor AFŽ BiH, 10. Decembar 1945, and Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Kutija, , 1/ 135, 1945.

ily, labour and criminal law, thus fulfilling the demands of the women's movement from the 1930s. In this way, what women had achieved by force of arms was given formal legal sanction.

But what had they achieved by force of arms? Equality or equality of rights, to use Marx's distinction? Already in the first (wartime) phase of the AFŽ's activities, there was mostly talk of "equal civil and social rights", but not of equality. If equality was mentioned, it was in the context of equality with men, which once again brings back to equal rights and making men's and women's rights equal. The unquestionable, enormous, and indescribable historical merit of the CPY remains that, for the first time in history, women in Yugoslavia became, legally speaking, *persons*. That is, as Ivana Pantelić⁶⁶ splendidly observes, women became citizens – which the archival documents confirm. Women fought for and won the right to vote, to education, employment, and equal pay for equal work (at least nominally); there was a public healthcare system, maternity and child protection, maternity leave, etc. This overturning of a patriarchal legal order of rule by fathers shook social relations from top to bottom and ensured a greater degree of autonomy and independence for women. Even today, exposed as we are to ever more powerful and violent assaults by conservative and neoliberal policies, we stand on the ground and heritage of these victories.

Many feminists and theorists⁶⁷ have already pointed out that the Yugoslav political project ran into problems as early as the late 1940s and early 1950s. All these writers recognise that the revolutionary heroine, the new woman, had to remain her old self, i.e. the question of general social emancipation (and with it the emancipation of women) was increasingly seen as secondary. Since Yugoslav politics was conditioned by both internal and external factors, which in turn determined the trajectory of social and economic relations, this primarily affected the aforementioned organisation of production, reproduction, and subsistence. What interests me here is, taking Marxist and feminist analyses into consideration and following the archival evidence, to show how these conditions affected the position of women.

To understand this it is first necessary to grasp the incommensurability of the concepts of modernity and of revolution – revolution as the destruction of a state order and the establishment of a new one. These concepts are not identical although they both imply a radical rupture with the past, the idea of historical

⁶⁶ Pantelić, Ivana, *Partizanke, građanke*, Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Evoluta, 2011.

⁶⁷ For instance: Lydia Sklevicky, Gordana Stojaković, Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, Susan Woodward, and Svetlana Slapšak. See bibliography below.

progress, and a vision of the future as open horizon. Moreover they are radically opposed to one another. As Perry Anderson reminds us, each has a distinct temporality: "The characteristic time of 'modernity' is continuous, and all encompassing, like the process of industrialisation itself: at its most extended, nothing less than the totality of the epoch itself. The time of revolution is discontinuous, and delimited: a finite rupture in the reproduction of the established order, by definition starting at one conjuncture and ending at another."⁶⁸ Modernity is characterized by Benjamin's empty, linear time "in which each moment is perpetually different from every other by virtue of being next, but – by the same token – is also the same, as an interchangeable unit in a process of indefinite recurrence."⁶⁹ The time of capitalist reproduction is a time that finds its purest ideological expression in the teleological concept of modernisation. By contrast, the act of revolution is broken, discontinuous, a moment of condensed political transformations that opens up a revolutionary space. But this also necessarily means opening a new, different temporality, which cannot be reduced to the linear time and linear unfolding of events characteristic of the capitalist mode of production, i.e. the endless production of commodity relations.

Socialist revolutions entail three discontinuous and contradictory conjugations of the revolutionary event and processes in time: a sudden transition from democratic to social revolution, a prolonged transition from political revolution (transformation of the legal-political order) to cultural revolution (transformation of customs), and finally a transition from national to world revolution.⁷⁰ Thus, we have here discontinuities, broken and differential temporalities and rhythms of class struggle, i.e. revolution and counterrevolution, economic experiment, cultural revolution, and social emancipation, in which neither events nor processes in time proceed in a straight line; we cannot know them in advance, nor can we be sure of the outcome. It is precisely for this reason that Antonio Gramsci emphasized that we should not confuse "the explosion of political passions [...] with cultural transformations which are slow and gradual" because "changes in ways of thinking do not occur through fast, simultaneous, and generalised explosions".⁷¹

Thus we see the defeat of the utopian and fragmented temporality opened up by the Russian Revolution, the defeat of the time of the Zhenotdel, of the revolution

⁶⁸ Anderson, Perry, *A Zone of Engagement*, London: Verso, 1992. pp. 46–47.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷⁰ Bensaïd, Daniel, *Le pari mélancolique*, Paris: Fayard, 1997. p. 73.

⁷¹ Gramsci, Antonio, Quaderno 24, *Giornalismo*, §3, in: *Quaderni del carcere*, Vol III, Torino: Einaudi, 1975, p.2269; cited in: Anderson, 1992, op., cit.

in everyday life (*byt*) and the abolition of the family, and their replacement by the temporality of the "Soviet new class", "socialism in one country", "Thermidor in the family", and the formation of the modern, nuclear family. And I think it is precisely here that we should look for the reasons and causes of the slowing down of the emancipation process in Yugoslavia. If patriarchy is more than just a set of social values but also has something to do with the mode of production, then we can say that in the Yugoslav case modernisation as the reproduction of market relations is precisely the key element bridging the reproduction of patriarchy. The moment a gradual self-limitation set in there also appeared an apologetics that denied the existence of relations of domination and subordination, their systemic causes, and the fact that – precisely because they are systemic – they reproduce themselves automatically over time. The reproduction of patriarchy takes the form of modernity through the legal and political division between the private and the public and is best seen in the distinction between equality of rights and equality.

Therefore, following the young Marx, we will distinguish between equality of rights and equality.⁷² From the perspective of the Marxist theory of emancipation as disalienation, and of demands for (radical) equality, these concepts should not be reduced to one another. As the young Marx already demonstrated, equality of rights does not imply equality, other than in the formal sense. Formal, i.e. juridical equality presents real social relations in a mystified form, concealing the real material inequalities existing between formally free and equal citizens. At the same time, the separation of economic from political power represents their production as two separate spheres, the "economic" and the "political", i.e., the sphere of civil society as a sphere of free, private contracts between owners-possessors, and the sphere of the political as one in which we, as citizens, enjoy universal legal-political rights. As G.M.Tamás reminds us, the very production of the private-public distinction means precisely that the sphere of free exchange between free owners of labour-power is also the sphere of limitless domination and exploitation of wage-labour. The freedom peculiar to free labour also tells us something about the formal equality of gendered labour. *Within* the modern, nuclear family there is no exchange of values, and men and women enter into contract as free and equal in order to reproduce their own labour-power and the labour-power of future generations.

Since the woman is responsible for social reproduction, her free choice to enter into family relations is an expression of the fact that owners of labour-power

⁷² Marx, Karl, Prilog kritici Hegelove filozofije prava, Beograd: Kultura, 1957.

can access the means of subsistence only through the market. Given that the market continues to value private labour as socially necessary labour, the formal equality of the male and the female worker is the precondition for the division of the bourgeois subject into bourgeois and citizen, male and female genders, the private and the public, the economic and the political, and all other possible separations and alienations characteristic of commodity fetishism.

Thus we can also apply Marx's critique of formal equality to the contradictions which, immediately after the war, led to the first difficulties in realising socialist ideals in Yugoslavia. From subjects of revolution and revolutionary subjects, women became citizen-owners (of their own labour-power). With this, the revolution was effectively stopped, processes of general social emancipation slowed down, and the question of the emancipation of women was postponed to some distant future time.

The majority of documents in the archives from this period testify to the emancipation of women being increasingly understood *exclusively* as an *economic* category, to an insistence on the greater usage of female labour (with the constant problem of a lack of institutions that would socialise the burden of reproduction, especially conspicuous in less developed areas/republics), thereby reducing emancipation to the contractual, wage-labour form.

In the archives we find testimonies to the new progressive measures whose goal was to increase the participation of women in public life, production processes, and economic activities, but we also find field reports that tell a somewhat different story. It is logical to ask why and how was it possible that after the revolution, despite legal equality and exceptionally progressive laws, women still remained unequal. The answer is offered by the aforementioned distinction between the private and the public, based on the Marxian category of free wage-labour. According to Maxine Molyneux, it is often overlooked, although it is of the utmost importance, that the formal equality (equal of rights) obtained by women only after revolution, and the fact that women sometimes perform "non-female" work, in no way contradict a persistent sexual-gender division of labour, and the failure to diminish or eradicate the burden of housework and responsibility between the sexes.⁷³ In what follows, relying on documentary evidence, I will try to demonstrate how these contradictions were manifested in the Socialist Federal Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SRBiH), but also in Yugoslavia as a whole.

⁷³ Molyneux, 1981, op. cit.

In the first postwar years, the AFŽ entered a phase oriented, in the words of Gordana Stojaković,⁷⁴ toward “consolidation, renovation, and reconstruction”. In addition, it was important that other structures, like the NF, continue their work unhindered. Hamdija Čemerlić, representing the NF, stated at the Congress of the AFŽ of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFŽBiH) on 8 June 1945:

Through their efforts and accomplishments, our women have forever earned their political rights and forever become equal to our men. There is no sowing and no harvest without the great efforts of our women. Caring for invalids, tending our wounded soldiers, looking after orphans – these are all your achievements. *This is what you have done until now, and this is what you will continue to do.*⁷⁵

This example illustrates the tendency to expect women to accept the “biological and natural” roles they had played throughout history, but now under new circumstances – as equals enjoying all rights attached to the status of formal-legal equality. In this phase, the AFŽ’s work was organised through the work of sections: mother-child, cultural-educational, and social-health. The archives contain detailed information about the extent of women’s involvement in the renovation and reconstruction of the country; in organising and preparing elections, constructing infrastructure and new buildings, painting walls, running literacy courses in villages and hamlets, running lectures on domestic science, house-keeping, hygiene, prevention of infectious diseases, approved methods of child-care and upkeep of the home, superstition, and midwifery courses, etc.⁷⁶ They

⁷⁴ Gordana Stojaković argues that there were three phases of AFŽ activity. Although her focus is the AFŽ of Vojvodina, the same argument can be applied to the AFŽBiH. The first phase of supporting the NOB lasted from 1942–1945; the second phase, in which the remit was expanded to post-war consolidation, renovation and reconstruction, lasted from 1946–1949; and the third phase of dissolution, involving a shift to the provision of social services and care work, lasted from 1949–1953. See: Partizanke, žene u narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi, in: Duško Milinović and Zoran Petakov (eds.), *Partizanke, žene u narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi*, Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2010, p. 13.

⁷⁵ Welcoming speech of dr. Hamdije Čemerlića at the First Congress of the AFŽ BiH on June 8, 1945, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, 1945, Kutija 1, available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/272>

⁷⁶ For instance: Glavni Odbor AFŽBiH, Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, “Sreski izvještaj AFŽ-a za srez sarajevski Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH (elections, building a children’s summer camp, national education, literacy courses), Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 4, 1137/48, 1948. Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, “Dopis Sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Doboj Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a za BiH, 7.2.1947. godine” (report on the work of the health section, literacy courses) Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 2, 199/47, 1947. Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Sreski Odbor AFŽ-a Bijeljina, Zapisnik sa sastanka Sekretarijata Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a BiH (organising women for construction of the Bijeljina-Rača railway). Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 5, 1182, 1948.

prove that the tasks assigned to AFŽ members were nearly always related to their biological perception as women, mothers, sisters, and comrades, who were expected to fulfil all norms and requirements inherent in their "natural" roles.

The plenary session of the Republican Committee of the AFŽBiH in 1946 reaffirmed these tasks, as well as the importance of voting.⁷⁷ However, it quickly became clear that the AFŽ's work in the second phase was linked to modernisation – mass shock working, construction and industrialisation – together with all the other obligations arising from the gender division of labour and its perpetuation. After political work was transferred to the NF, the AFŽ became an organisation with exclusively social functions, in cooperation with the Front and the ministries.

The year 1948 was a turning point: the break with Stalin and conflict with the Cominform, the turn toward market mechanisms, and accordingly, with the introduction of self-management, the first economic reforms. Fearing attack and invasion, the state initially mobilised the masses for labour and non-stop production. After 1949 and Yugoslavia's admission to the UN Security Council the threat of war receded. Yugoslavia turned to self-management, which was, in its first phase, supposed to increase profitability in investments and production, thus accelerating the accumulation of capital. Under the logic of production, women became the first "suspects". In the words of Vida Tomšić, the first postwar president of the AFŽ, "they were regarded as unprofitable labour due to maternity".⁷⁸ However her argument nevertheless assumes that women, as free and autonomous wage-labourers, were in reality labour-power that produced value and surplus value.

Field reports preserved in the archives illustrate how the country turned to the market and how this affected women and the AFŽ's work. This period would prove to be paradigmatic since it conditioned the later approach toward women and the system of social production, reproduction, and subsistence. With the coming to power and gradual demobilisation of the mass antifascist movement, the AFŽ became less and less a revolutionary organisation, and more and more an administrative body of the NF. The AFŽ performed background functions related to the social preconditions for the mass entry of peasant women into the

⁷⁷ Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, "Zapisnik sa plenuma Glavnog odbora AFŽ-a BiH održanog 05. i 06.06.1946." Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, 116/46, 1946. Available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/332>

⁷⁸ Quoted in: Stojaković, Gordana: "Vida Tomšić – zašto je ukinut AFŽ", 2014b; available at: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/353>

industrial workforce, while at the time of (failed) collectivization one of its tasks was to organise the entry of women into the cooperatives. We find numerous reports describing the organisation of 8th March Women's Day celebrations, which always culminated in competitions between women workers from different counties to see who could fulfil production norms "more closely, better, faster" and produce more goods.

Although cooperatives and agro-industrial combines were introduced after 1945, the state never fully carried through the formal expropriation of landed property, so the category of rural private ownership never disappeared. Susan Woodward⁷⁹ argues that the progressive laws explicitly relating to the protection of women, children, and family, taken separately, are merely logical means to an end. However, as she notes with such brilliance, we only see the real picture when all these laws are taken as a whole:

in fact the new policies prepared what was a compromise between the commitment to prohibit wholesale all those customs and laws seen to demean women on the one hand, and the need for families to take responsibility for tasks the government was not ready to assume, on the other, with a vision of relations between men and women as equal, nurturing, voluntary, and free (that is "private").⁸⁰

In other words, Susan Woodward observes the same thing in Yugoslavia as does G. M. Tamás in the case of the Soviet Bloc, namely that the distinction characteristic of market society between the private and the public persists despite the fact that the East Bloc countries were indeed more egalitarian. Tamás emphasises that truly socialist societies are societies in transition to a social order without wage-labour, the production of commodities, money, a strict gender division of labour, material, social and cultural inequalities, without a state in the sense of superiority, institutions of the repressive state apparatus like the army, the police, prisons, camps, churches, compulsory doctrines, and oppressions of all kinds.⁸¹ Taking into account the discontinuous and unequal temporality of revolutionary change noted above, this is the measure of Yugoslav and any other possible and imaginable socialism (let alone communism) – this, and not the greater equality that existed in Yugoslavia and other Eastern Bloc societies.

⁷⁹ Woodward speaks of the feminisation of agricultural labour, one of the consequences of introducing market mechanisms. See Woodward, 1985, op. cit.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.430–431.

⁸¹ G. M. Tamás, Normative orders; available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZyKxnPUrVo>

Tamás's analysis is outstanding because it shows that what is posited by classical liberal philosophy – labour as a private act entered into of one's own (private, autonomous) will, which therefore does not belong to the public, political sphere – also survived in really-existing socialism. Therefore, in 'really-existing socialism' (and this also applies to Yugoslav socialism), labour is in its essence free wage-labour which, regardless of the institutions of workers' self-management and associated labour, falls within the rule of exchange value. Given that the nature of labour remained private, so remained the reproduction of systemic exploitation and domination, i.e. market exchange motivated by profit, leading to what we find in the archives from 1950 onwards: mass lay-offs of women workers, pregnant women, and female labour in general (despite legal prohibitions and extremely progressive measures protecting mothers and children⁸²). In other words, the moment when respecting the law became too expensive, and profit had to be made, women were the first to suffer. Thus, reports from the field contradicted the laws adopted the year before and AFŽ members were evidently deeply disorientated. In a memo to the Information Department of the Central Committee of the CPBiH, the Republican Committee of the AFŽ wrote,⁸³: "credits worth 1,700,000 dinars were earmarked for the construction of a kindergarten in Brezničani, but nothing so far has been done about this [...] out of a total of 75 workers, *the enterprises have sacked 50 women, some of whom are on sick*

⁸² Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Izvještaj Centralnog odbora Beograd sa sastanka socijalno-zdravstvenog saveta pri Komitetu za socijalno staranje pri Vladi FNRJ Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 3, no. 1124-47, 1947: A set of laws and directives on the protection of pregnant women and mothers with newborn babies was adopted, giving women in employment the right to maternal leave *six weeks prior to and six weeks after childbirth*. These laws entitled *them to take breaks from work in order to breastfeed* every three hours during the first six months after childbirth. In 1949 these directives were amended to include additional relief for mothers and came as the result of more favorable economic conditions in the country as a whole. The new amendments granted shorter working hours to pregnant women and mothers who lived far from their place of work. For these women, the working day was 4 hours long during the first six months after childbirth, and this particular arrangement could be prolonged for up to three years if there was valid reason. During that time, the mother received 75% of her salary for six months, 50% after that. Women were entitled to a vacation after three months of maternity leave. The directives prohibited assigning pregnant woman tasks that required overtime work, *night shifts*, and provided for the transfer of women to easier jobs. *The directive on establishing crèches and kindergartens obliged every company with over 200 female employees* (there were over 100 such companies in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) *to open a crèche with their own funds to provide working mothers with a place for their children*. In the journal *Ženski pokret* (Women's Movement) from 1937 we read almost identical proposals for the protection of pregnant women and maternity rights as were to become law in socialist Yugoslavia. See: *Ženski pokret*, 1937, op. cit., pp. 10–11.

⁸³ Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, "Dopis glavnog odbora AFŽ CK KP BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine", Kutija 9, 497/50, 1950.

leave and some pregnant". With the introduction of self-management, reports come back with a mass of information regarding layoffs of women, budget cuts, a lack of crèches and nurseries, and hence the impossibility for women to advance themselves politically because they had no one to whom they could leave their children. All this hit women in more ways than one, so that the decisions adopted by a consultation meeting of leaders of county and regional branches of the AFŽBiH⁸⁴ state as one of the main tasks of the organisation: "In addition to carrying out agitation for the involvement of women in the economy, our organisation has to provide housing for women, oversee the living and working conditions of women in the economy. *To make sure that firms do not reduce the number of workers at the expense of pregnant women and women with children*".

If we place this in a wider perspective, it becomes clearer that the emancipation of women was increasingly thought of as the "emancipation from the constraints of the traditional social order, rather than the broader meaning of liberation from all forms of oppression".⁸⁵ Consequently, the 1950s generally represent a regression in relation to the proclaimed equality. The dominant role of women was increasingly bound up with motherhood, a virtually Fordist model of the nuclear family was promoted, together with monogamous relationships and the consolidation of the gender division of labour in both the home and industry. Women's employment now began to decline, the trend continuing in the following decades. Barbara Jančar-Webster points out that the process of industrialisation already entailed the feminisation of certain sectors and professions in the inter-war period, and the same trend persisted in the second Yugoslavia.⁸⁶ In the Kingdom, industry (textile, tobacco, services) employed approximately 200,000 women

⁸⁴ Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Zaključci sa savjetovanja rukovodilaca sreskih i oblasnih organizacija AFŽ-a Arhiv BiH, Kutija 9, 422/50; Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Zapisnik plenuma oblasnog odbora AFŽ-a za Mostarsku oblast održanog 18.5.1950. godine, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, 1071/6, 1950. The information in this document also points to the same trend. In a meeting between activists from Sarajevo and Mostar, Ševala Tanović, a committee member from Gacko, stated: "The entire work of our organisation relies on full-timers. Women are opposed to kindergartens. *Three heavily pregnant comrades were fired a month ago.* The Secretariat of the AFŽ asked for them to be rehired, pointing to the improper attitude toward pregnant women. The effort to have them rehired failed. When an explanation was requested as to why they were not fit for work, the following was stated of one of the female comrades: *she has three children, and is about to have a fourth. We do not need that kind of employee, and in her place we will hire a man.*" (My emphasis.) The mass layoffs of the 50s are also documented by Ivana Pantelić: see, Pantelić, 2011, op. cit.

⁸⁵ Molyneux, Maxine, Family Reform in Socialist States: a Hidden Agenda, *Feminist Review*, 1985, 47–64, p. 52.

⁸⁶ Jančar-Webster, Barbara, Women and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945. Arden Press: Colorado, 1990, p. 17, 165.

workers, while in 1939 domestic servants comprised the largest group of workers outside agriculture. In the second Yugoslavia, women also constituted a less skilled workforce: they were employed in industrial sectors with lower pay, were generally more likely to be unemployed and represented a reserve army of labour. In my opinion, Susan Woodward has successfully exploded the myths of women's equality in Yugoslavia, which have today attained the status of legend:

the pressures on women to enter the labour force that are familiar in the rest of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were never present in Yugoslavia. The share of women in the social sector labour force actually declined during the 1950s and has grown only gradually since 1957 to reach, by the late 1970s, those levels associated with Western European averages (about 33 percent), rather than those of high participation countries of Scandinavia or Eastern Europe. On the other hand, women have been disproportionately subject to unemployment since the government began gathering unemployment data in the early 1950s.⁸⁷

Only on the basis of uneven market development can we understand the astonishing data presented by Tea Petrin and Jane Humphries: „the share of women workers in the total active labour force and the gross female labour force participation rate are little different in the post-war period as compared with the 1920s and 1930s. Especially egregious is the fact that in 1931 women represented 33.5% of the total labour force, and the number barely rose to 36% in 1971”.⁸⁸ From the 1950s, documents in the archives display what in later years and decades would become and remain a chronic problem for Bosnia and Herzegovina, only worsening over time due to increasing inequality between the federal republics. Thus we read that, “the budget did not approve the building of day care centers”;⁸⁹ while a woman from the Ukrina enterprise stated that, “the company needs a daycare facility, but there is no building to house one. Women with young children are sent home to feed them, while other women leave their children with their neighbors because there is nowhere else to leave them”.⁹⁰

Self-management gave enterprises and economic actors greater freedom to decide about their work, while the consequences of market-based decision-making

⁸⁷ Woodward, 1985, op.cit., p. 549. See also: Tea Petrin and Jane Humphries, *Women in the Self-Managed Economy of Yugoslavia, Economic Analyses and Workers' Management*, 1, XIV, 1980, p. 77.

⁸⁸ Petrin and Humphries, 1980, op. cit., pp. 71–73.

⁸⁹ Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Zapisnik sa savjetovanja s rukovodiocima srezova održanog 24. i 25. januara 1950.” Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, str. 2 Kutija 8, no. of document unknown 1950.

⁹⁰ Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, „Zapisnik sa OoAFŽ-a održanog u Tuzli 14.2.1950.” Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 276, 1949-1950

only exacerbated the position of women as a whole. All the problems observed in the capitalist West at the time were also present in Yugoslavia: the feminisation of certain industries and professions, which is to say that women always worked in low pay sectors, there was a gender pay gap, almost no women in managerial positions, whilst in the Yugoslav case the gender pay gap in the poorer republics stood out even more due to structural differences. The end result for poorer parts of the country, like Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, could only be even greater inequalities in development. Thus, from 1959 to 1979 the coverage (of children up to seven years of age) of nurseries and kindergartens rose from 2.4% to 10% in Yugoslavia as a whole. Of course, they were mostly children of skilled and semi-skilled workers, with a large number of middle class children as well. This followed the same trend as in the West: middle class parents benefited most from the institutions of the welfare state. However, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, between 1959 and 1979 the number of crèches, kindergartens and nurseries reached 137, but only 3.2% of children found places. If we compare this to Slovenia, the most developed republic, where 616 such institutions were established in the same period, covering 27.7% of children, the consequences of unequal market development are crystal clear.⁹¹

4. After the End, a Beginning instead of a Conclusion

It was my intention in this work to reconstruct a historical event and through such a reconstruction trace the history of the AFŽ. The AFŽ was formally dissolved in 1953 and its then President, Vida Tomšić, gave the reason that, “we have fulfilled one of our tasks to a considerable degree, if such a thing can be said of a country [...] in a certain sense, in some parts of our country, and especially in the cities, we have achieved equality”.⁹² In this, she was merely repeating what was said in the Soviet Union when the Zhenotdel was dissolved in 1930. But the fact that in Serbia, for instance, a law on equal inheritance was only adopted in 1955⁹³ is sufficient proof that her claim was plainly false. At the point of the dissolution

⁹¹ Milić, Anđelka, Berković, Eva and Petrović Ruža, *Domaćinstvo, porodica i brak u Jugoslaviji*.

Belgrade: Institute for Sociological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, 1981, p. 102. The data contained in this work confirms that the same trends existed in Yugoslavia as in the Western countries at the time, and, more importantly, that since the 1950s we can observe greater inequalities between poorer and richer republics and their consequences for the structure of education, healthcare, and society in general.

⁹² Cited in: Stojaković, 2014b, op. cit.

⁹³ Gudac-Dodić, Vera, Under the Aegis of Family, Women in Serbia, *The Journal of International Social Research*, Vol. 3 no. 13, 2010. p. 112.

of the AFŽ, many laws that were gradually implemented in the 1960s and 1970s had not yet been adopted, so we cannot even speak of equal civil rights. Already by the mid-1950s, the narrative of the AFŽ disintegrated and was dissolved into that of the NOB, which became the centerpiece and the ideological pillar of the state apparatus. The AFŽ collective was supplanted by individual heroines who had their very own names and surnames, words and deeds. Thus was the history of the AFŽ first revised and the division between the private and the public institutionalised. If Svetlana Slapšak⁹⁴, in her analysis of the film *Slavica* (1947), talked of the death of the figure of the *partizanka*, perhaps we should say that it was preceded by the death of the *afežeovka*, even though the AFŽ was only officially dissolved five years later. In death, the *partizanka* lives on and recedes into a glorious past, becoming a symbol of postwar socialist Yugoslavia. She is the subject of officially sanctioned historical memory as promoted by state commemorations, historiography, and memorials. She becomes part of the glorious past, while female citizens as productive subjects become figures of the present and the future.

The fact that there is no historical overview of the engagement of Yugoslav women as a whole in the AFŽ, while there exist many histories of women's participation in the NOB, suggests that the AFŽ started to disappear from public memory as early as the mid-1950s when the first, Croatian work on the role of women in the NOB was published. It would take *three whole decades after the end of the war* for the first Bosnian work to appear. In that time much had changed. The memories of the AFŽ survivors, the very nature of the revolution, the country and its laws – all were changed. But, one thing remained the same. Women were still unequal and did not enjoy equal rights. That is why Lydia Sklevicky's gender analysis of school textbooks is timeless. Women became or remained invisible citizens, while references to horses and men continued to govern the dominant historical and educational narratives⁹⁵. It is impossible to see Vida Tomšić's statement that women "turned to fashion and antiquated modes of behaviour [...] as witnessed in the daily newspapers", as anything other than moralising because it completely disregards the class differences which started to appear in Yugoslav society, not just between classes, but also within the working class. They started to appear due to the denial of the simple fact that the division between the public and the private, the economic and the political, still existed. Women still produced labour-power, yet the burden of reproduction remained in

⁹⁴ Slapšak, Svetlana. *Ženske ikone XX veka*. Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2001.

⁹⁵ Sklevicky shows that references to horses (and men) far supercede references to women in school textbooks. See: *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Horses, women, wars), op.cit.

the private sphere. The peculiarity of labour-power is that it not only produces value but is also the only commodity that is not produced in the direct process of production. Since the private reproduction of labour-power in the family does not produce value, i.e. it produces it only indirectly, it has as such no exchange value. Hence female labour-power has less value on the market because it is considered, more or less, as a temporary supplement to family income. Such was also the case in Yugoslavia. The progressive measures implemented by the state in fact shifted responsibilities from traditionally male preserves and professions, so that from the outset a growing burden of private and privatised reproduction fell to women. That is precisely why women oscillated between "profitable" and "non-profitable" labour-power – and that is why the end of the AFŽ initiates the forgetting of the fact that without the socialisation of the burden of reproduction there can be no socialist society. Today, when formal rights and freedoms – won through hard struggle – collapse like a house of cards under the onslaught of political reaction and its economic assaults, the domination of the market (and fathers, priests, and leaders) becomes increasingly without limit. The entire burden of social reproduction is transferred to the working class in general and to women in particular.

What then would the AFŽ mean today? What political lessons can we draw? First and foremost, the left's response to contemporary historical revisionism cannot and must not be revisionist. The second lesson has already been indicated: Marx and Fourier's claim that the position of women is the measure of humanity's progress, meaning here that the defeat of women's emancipation was at the same time necessarily the defeat of the revolution. As Lenin used to say, the longevity of a revolution depends on the extent to which women are actively involved. The third, but no less important lesson is that the halting of the revolution does not mean it is impossible. On the contrary, the AFŽ demonstrates that although we cannot repeat the past we can learn from it that only through joint political struggle – which is also always a struggle for (but not only for) rights – can we emancipate ourselves and the conditions in which we live. Emancipation can only come from collective efforts, which, paraphrasing Bensaïd, must never abandon itself to the idea that revolution is impossible. That is the final and most important lesson of the history of the AFŽ and of Yugoslavia.

Translated by: Tijana Okić

Archival Materials:

- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Dopis sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Velika Kladuša, Arhiv BiH, Kutija 2, 901/47, 1947.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Izvještaj Centralnog odbora Beograd sa sastanka socijalno-zdravstvenog saveta pri Komitetu za socijalno staranje pri Vladi FNRJ Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine Kutija 3, br. 1124-47, 1947.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Zapisnik sa savjetovanja predsjednica i sekretara sreskih odbora AFŽ održan u Sarajevu 20.1.1949. godine, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, "Kutija 7a, ? 1949.,
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Zapisnik s plenuma za oblast Bihać, ? Arhiv BiH, Kutija 9, br. dokumenta nepoznat, 1950.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Zapisnik plenarnog sastanka Sreskog odbora AFŽ-a održan 26.9.1948. godine, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 5, 84/48, 1948.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a, Zapisnik Plenarnog sastanka AFŽ-a u Bihaću održanog u prostorijama u vjećnici G.N.O dana 9.2.1950. godine, str. 2. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 1061/5, 1950.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Zapisnik sa sastanka sekretarijata Oblasnog odbora za oblast sarajevsku koji se održaje 10.1.1950. godine, 1950.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 1082/4, 1950.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ BiH, Pozdravna riječ dr. Hamdije Čemerlića sa Prvog kongresa AFŽ-a BiH od 08.06.1945, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, 1945, Kutija 1, 1945.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Sreski izvještaj AFŽ-a za srez sarajevski Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 4, 1137/48, 1948.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Dopis Sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Doboj Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a za BiH, 7.2.1947. godine (izvještaj o radu zdravstvene sekcije, analfabetiski tečajevi), Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 2, 199/47, 1947.,
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a BiH, Zapisnik sa sastanka Sekretarijata sreskog odbora AFŽ-a Bijeljina Zemaljskom odboru AFŽ-a BiH (organiziranje žena za rad na izgradnji pruge Bijeljina-Rača), 1948. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 5, 1182, 1948.
- Glavni odbor AFŽ-a, Zapisnik sa plenuma Glavnog odbora AFŽ-a BiH održanog 05. i 06.06. 1946., Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine Sarajevo, Kutija 1, 116/46., 1946. Plenum je održan u Napretkovoj čitaonici, a pored članica AFŽ ispred NF-a bio je prisutan Ljubo Babić. dostupan na: <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/332>
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevo, Dopis glavnog odbora AFŽ CK KP BiH, Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Kutija 9, 497/50, 1950.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevo, Zaključci sa savjetovanja iz rukovodilaca sreskih i oblasnih organizacija AFŽ-a Arhiv BiH, Kutija 9, 422/50
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, Zapisnik s plenuma oblasnog odbora AFŽ-a za Mostarsku oblast održan 18.5.1950.

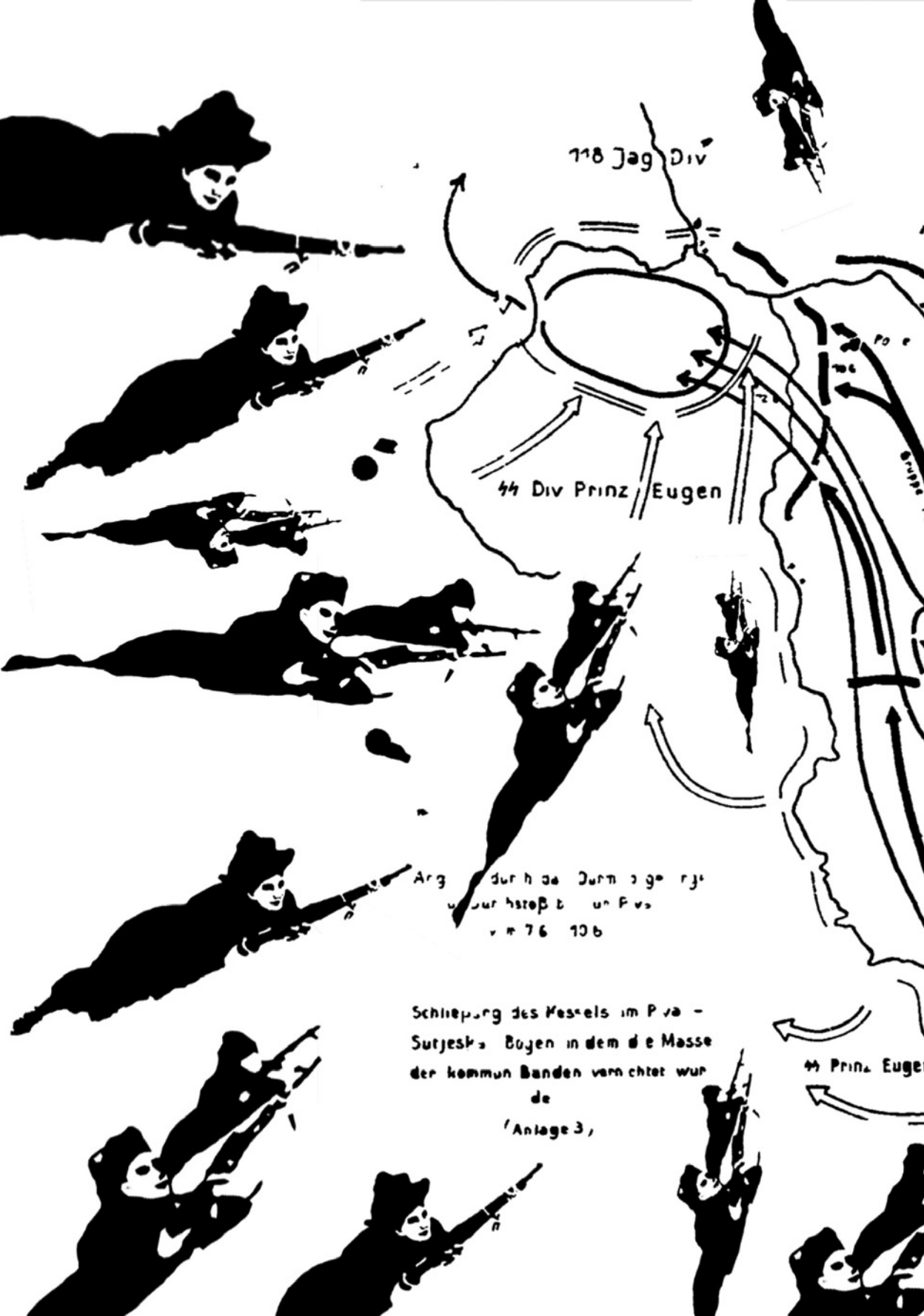
- Glavni odbor AFŽ BiH, Zapisnik sa savjetovanja sa rukovodiocima srezova koji se održaje 24. i 25. januara 1950. Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, str. 2 Kutija 8, ? 1950.
- Oblasni odbor AFŽ Sarajevo, Zapisnik sa OOAFŽ-a održan u Tuzli dana 14.2.1950., Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine Sarajevo, Kutija 9, br. 276. 1949-1950
- Časopis Alijanse ženskih pokreta, Ženski pokret, br. 1-2, 1937. godina.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Perry, *A Zone of Engagement*, London: Verso, 1992.
- Babović, Spasenija *Organizaciono pitanje* (Organisational Question). Pristupljeno: 10. 7. 2016. <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/231>.
- Batinić, Jelena. *Women and Yugoslav Partisans*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Bensaïd, Daniel, *Le pari mélancolique*. Pariz: Fayard, 1997.
— *Qui est le juge? Pour en finir avec le tribunal de l'Histoire*. Paris: Fayard, 1999.
— *Éloge de la politique profane*. Pariz: Albin Michel, 2008.
- Bitunjac, Martina. *Le donne e il movimento ustascia* (Women and the Ustasha Movement). Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2013.
- Božinović, Neda. *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* (Women's question in Serbia in XIX and XX Century). Beograd: Žene u Crnom, 1996.
- Broz, Tito Josip. *Tito ženama Jugoslavije* (Tito to Women of Yugoslavia). Pristupljeno: 8. 8., 2016. <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/92>.
- Burcar, Lilijana. *Restauracija kapitalizma: repatriarhalizacija društva* (Restoration of Capitalism: Repatriarchalisation of Society). Ljubljana : Sophia, 2105.
- Cazi, Nada. *Društveni položaj žene* (The Social Position of Women). Zagreb: Društvenozdavačka kuća Pregled, 1976.
- Clements, Evans Barbara, *The Bolshevik Women*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
— *A History of Women in Russia, from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Cvetić, Bosa Ed., *Žene Srbije u NOB* (Women of Serbia in the People's Liberation Struggle), Beograd: Nolit, 1975.
- Čalić Žanin, Mari. *Historija Jugoslavije u XX veku* (A History of Yugoslavia in XX Century). Beograd: Clío, 2013.
— *Socijalna istorija Srbije 1815-1941* (A Social History of Serbia 1815-1941). Beograd: Clío, 2004.
- Djilas, Milovan, *Wartime*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.
- Eubanks Hayden, Carol. „The Zhenotdel and the Politics of Women's Emancipation in Russia 1917-1930.” *Russian History* (Vol 2.), 1976: 150-173.

- Feminism and Bolshevism: The *Zhenotdel* and the Politics of Women's Emancipation in Russia 1917-1930. University of California, Berkley, 1979.
- Gudac-Dodić, Vera. „Under the Aegis of Family, Women in Serbia.” *The Journal of International Social Research* 3. 2010: 110-119.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*, Abacus; New Edition, 1995.
- Jambrešić Kirin, Renata i Senjković, Reana, Puno puta bi vas izbacili kroz vrata, biste bila išla kroz prozor nutra: preispisivanje povijesti žena u Drugom svjetskom ratu, (When you would be kicked out the door, you'd climb back through the window: Re-writing women's war histories in Croatia) *Narodna umjetnost* 42/2, 2005: 109-126.
- Jančar-Webster, Barbara. *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945*. Colorado: Arden Press 1990.
- Kecman, Jovanka. *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941*. (Women of Yugoslavia in Labour Movement and women's organisations 1918-1941) Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1978.
- Kovačević, Dušanka. „Značaj programskog načela o ravnopravnosti žena i njihovo okupljanje i učešće u ustanku BiH 1941. godine.” (The Importance of the Programmatic Principle on the Equality of Women and their Gathering and Participation in the Uprising in BiH in 1941), Institut za istoriju Sarajevo, 34-45. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977.
- Milić, Anđelka, Berković, Eva i Petrović Ruža, *Domaćinstvo, porodica i brak u Jugoslaviji*. (Household, Family and Marriage in Yugoslavia) Beograd: Institut za sociološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, 1981.
- Marx, Karl, *Prilog kritici Hegelove filozofije prava*, (Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right). Beograd: Kultura, 1957.
- Marx, Karl i Engels Friederich, *Manifest komunističke partije* (Manifesto of the Communist Party), available at: http://staro.rifin.com/root/tekstovi/casopis_pdf/ek_ec_586.pdf
- Mitrović, Mitra. *AFŽ u okviru NOB-e*. (Women in the People's Liberation Struggle) Accessed: 2.10.2016. <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/232>.
- Mogadham, Valentine M. „Gender and Revolutionary Transformation, Iran 1979 and Eastern Europe 1989.” *Gender & Society* 328-356, 1995.
- Molyneux, Maxine. „Women in Socialist Societies Old and New. Progress Towards Women's Emancipation.” *Feminist Review* 1981: 1-34.
- „Family Reform in Socialist States: The Hidden Agenda.” *Feminist Review*, 1985: 47-64.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *O koristi i šteti istorije za život* (*On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*). Beograd: Grafos, 1977.
- Pantelić, Ivana, *Partizanke kao građanke* (The Female Partizans as Citizens), Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Evoluta, 2011.
- Petrin Tea and Humphries Jane, Women in the Self-Managed Economy of Yugoslavia, *Economic Analyses and Workers's management*, 1, XIV, 1980: 69-91

- Schlessinger, Rudolf. *The Family in the U.S.S.R. Documents and Readings*. Oxon: Routledge, 2000.
- Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Horses, Women, Wars). Zagreb: Ženska infoteka. 1996.
- Sklevicky, Lydia. „Organizirana djelatnost žena Hrvatske za vrijeme NOB-e 1941-1945.” *PP 3*, 1984: 85-127.
- Stites, Richard. *Revolutionary Dreams. Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- „Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women 1917-1930.” *Russian History* 1976: 174-193.
- Slapšak, Svetlana. *Ženske ikone XX veka* (Female Icons of the XX Century). Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek. 2001.
- Stojaković, Gordana. u: Ur: Duško Milinović i Zoran Petakov, Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2010.
- Ženski mirovni aktivizam u Jugoslaviji (Women's Peace Activism in Yugoslavia), 2014a. *Pristupljeno*: August. 2016. <http://pravonarad.info/?p=20>.
- Vida Tomšič- zašto je ukinut AFŽ (Vida Tomšič, Why was the AFŽ Dissolved), 2014b. *Accessed*: Septembar. 2016. <http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/show/353>
- Critica o feminističkoj istoriji grada Zagreba 1919-1940 (A Note on the Feminist History of Zagreb 1919-1940). *Accessed*: September 2016. <http://pravonarad.info/?p=350>
- Suvin, Darko. *Samo jednom se ljubi: radiografija SFR Jugoslavije*. Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014. (Splendour, Misery, and Possibilities: An X-Ray of Socialist Yugoslavia, Brill, 2016.)
- Šoljan, Marija, ur. *Žene Hrvatske u Narodno-oslobodilačkoj borbi* (Women of Croatia in the People's Liberation Struggle). Zagreb: Savez ženskih društava Hrvatske, 1955.
- Tamás, G. M. *A Post Capitalist Order, Normative Ideas versus History*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZyKxnPUrVo>
- Therborn, Göran, *Between Sex and Power, Family in the World 1900-2000*, London: Routledge, 2004.
- Traverso, Enzo. De l'anticommunisme. L'histoire du xxe siècle relue par Nolte, Furet et Courtois, *L'Homme et la société* 2001/2: 169-194.
- Wood, Elizabeth A. *The Baba and the Comrade*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Woodward, Susan L. „The Rights of Women: Ideology, Policy and Social Change in Yugoslavia .” In *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, ur. Susan L i Mayer, G. Alfred Wolchik, 417-459. Durham: Duke University, 1985.
- Zaharijević, Adriana. „Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji: kako se može čitati istorija jugoslovenskog feminizma.” (A Footnote in Global History: on how we can read the history of Yugoslav Feminism) *Soiologija* Vol. LVII, 2015: 72-89.
- Zeva Goldman, Wendy. *Women, the State and Revolution. Soviet Family Policy and Social Life 1917-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.



118 Jag Div

44 Div Prinz Eugen

44 Prinz Eugen

Arg durch die Sturmgegriffe
durchstoßte und Pva
von 76 10b

Schießung des Messels im Pva -
Sutjeska Bogen in dem die Masse
der kommunisten vernichtet wurde

(Anlage 3)



tal Div

Taurinense

Pjeterja

Grupa

Neod

Grupp

Zabljak

Arg

Grupa

tal D v Ferrara

Grupp

Amer

Sarnik

★ ADELA JUŠIĆ
Combined technique

Map scale 1:200 000

GRME TOPOVI, PUŠKE,
OKO MENE HAOS,
A MENI SE SPAVA...
I JA TI ODSPAVAM,
OSVJEŽIM SE
I POSLIJE DALJE.
ZATO SAM I PREŽIVJELA.

MITRA
MITROVIĆ





BIOS



CHIARA BONFIGLIOLI

AJLA DEMIRAGIĆ

DANIJELA MAJSTOROVIĆ

BORIŠA MRAOVIĆ

TIJANA OKIĆ

NARDINA ZUBANOVIĆ

ALEKSANDRA NINA KNEŽEVIĆ

SUNITA FIŠIĆ

KASJA JERLAGIĆ

ADELA JUŠIĆ

- ★ **CHIARA BONFIGLIOLI** currently works as a EURIAS Junior Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, and also works with the Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism in Pula on the NEWFELPRO programme. She graduated in political science in Bologna and completed her postgraduate and doctoral studies in Gender Studies at the Culture and History Institute in Utrecht. From 2012 to 2014 she worked at the University of Edinburgh as a post-doc and associate at the CITSEE project. In her thesis she examined women's social and political engagement in Italy and Yugoslavia (1945–1957). She has published a number of papers on the history of women in a European context. In recent years she has been researching the effects of post-socialist transition and deindustrialisation on gender relations in the former Yugoslavia, with a focus on textile workers.
- ★ **AJLA DEMIRAGIĆ** is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo. At the Department of Comparative Literature and Librarianship she teaches Introduction to the Study of Literature, Introduction to Narratology, and Feminist Literary Theories. She has also worked as an associate at the Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Gender Studies Programme at the University of Sarajevo. She received her PhD from the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo; the topic of her thesis was *Prikaz rata u tekstovima bosanskohercegovačkih spisateljica: žensko ratno pismo 1992.-1995. (Representation of War in Texts by Bosnian-Herzegovinian Women Writers: Women Writing War 1992–1995.)* Her research focuses on feminist theories, theories of narration and literary-theoretical research on war literature.
- ★ **DANIJELA MAJSTOROVIĆ** is a reader in English linguistics and cultural studies at the Faculty of Philology, University of Banja Luka. She has published over thirty articles on representation, ethnicity, gender, discourse analysis, media and film, as well as three monographs: *Diskurs, moć i međunarodna zajednica (Discourse, Power and the International Community)* (2007, Filozofski fakultet, Banja Luka), *Youth Ethnic and National Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Social Science Approaches* (2013, Palgrave, London) and *Diskursi periferije (Discourses of the Periphery)* (2013, Biblioteka XX vek, Belgrade). She has edited three conference proceedings: *Living with Patriarchy: Discursive Constructions of Gendered Subjects Across Cultures* (2011, John Benjamins, Amsterdam), *U okrilju nacije: konstruisanje nacionalnog i državnog identiteta kod mladih u Bosni i Hercegovini (Under the Wing of the Nation: the Construction of National and State Identity in Bosnian-Herzegovinian Youth)* (2011, CKSP, Banja Luka), and *Kritičke kulturološke studije u post-jugoslovenskom prostoru (Critical Cultural Studies in a Post-Yugoslav Space)* (2012, Filološki fakultet, Banja Luka). She has produced

and directed two documentary films: *Kontrapunkt za nju (Counterpoint for Her)* (2004) and *Posao snova (Dream Job)* (2006). She has taught at and visited many institutions of higher education at home and abroad, co-founded the BASOC (Banja Luka Social Centre) and as an activist she fights against nationalism and historical revisionism, for social justice and workers' issues. She tries to live her life and raise her son in line with the principles of feminism.

- ★ **BORIŠA MRAOVIĆ** is a researcher, editor and a member of the operations team at the Association for the Arts and Culture "Crvena", where he researches the political economy of the urban question, management of urban resources, and urban mobilisation. He is currently preparing extensive research on rave culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1996–2006. He has published articles in international journals and proceedings, and has edited the volume *Šta da napišem na zidu? (What Shall I Write on the Wall)* published by "Crvena". He has won the Open Society Fund Research Fellowship (2013–2014), the ERSTE Foundation Social Research Fellowship (2015–2016), and in September and October 2013 he was guest researcher at the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau, Switzerland. He has worked with a number of local and international organisations and academic institutions researching migration, electoral systems, local governance and political theory.
- ★ **TIJANA OKIĆ** was born in Sarajevo in 1986. She read philosophy and sociology and obtained a Master's degree in philosophy in Sarajevo, where she subsequently worked as an assistant lecturer-instructor. Since 2015 she is enrolled in PhD programme in philosophy at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Italy. She has published several philosophical texts. Tijana organised and participated in the Plenums after the 2014 riots in Sarajevo. She is a contributing editor of the *Viewpoint magazine*. She translates from several languages, enjoys poetry and fiction. She currently lives between Sarajevo and Pisa.
- ★ **NARDINA ZUBANOVIĆ** was born in Sarajevo in 1987. In 2014 she graduated from the Department of Sculpture, Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, where she is currently pursuing post-graduate studies. She uses different media, from sculpture to spatial intervention/installation, performance, photography and video. In 2009 she established the informal cultural organisation "Kolektiv Kreaktiva", which has produced over 30 art events (exhibitions, workshops, concerts and performances) and has co-operated with over 100 cultural workers from all over the world. In addition to co-ordinating and programming for "Kolektiv Kreaktiva", Nardina Zubanović has curated and participated at numerous solo and group exhibitions and art workshops in the region and be-

yond, in co-operation with institutions and associations such as the Historical Museum of BiH, (Exhibition *ZID 2015*), The National Gallery of BiH, (*Sara Art Fair*, 2015), The Seventh Art Club, (*Bahanalije*), Sarajevo, BiH, 2014, La Kultur Centre, (*Dani otvorenog ateljea*), Sarajevo BiH, 2015 and 2016, *Land Art Colony*, Javorwood Festival, Jahorina, BiH, 2016, *Factory of Memories*, Tirana, Albanija and Sarajevo, BiH, 2015, *Actopolis*, Crvena, Sarajevo, BiH, 2016, etc.

★ **ALEKSANDRA NINA KNEŽEVIĆ** was born in Sarajevo in 1973. She graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cetinje, Montenegro, Department of Graphic Design. Her playful typography and illustration work is marked by a pure, modern idea, and it communicates easily in an international visual language. She has received numerous international prizes and honours, and her work has been featured in many specialised art and design magazines (*Communication Arts*, *Luezers Archive*, *Print*, *Typo*, *Fontmagazine* ...). In 2010 she featured in the *Lürzer's Archive 200 Best Illustrators Worldwide 09–10 list*. In the period between 2006 and 2010 she was Head of the Association of Applied Artists and Designers BiH (ULUPUBiH). She works as a freelance designer and in-house designer and illustrator at the publishing house Buybook in Sarajevo. Her project *Sarajevo Dingbats* won the 2014 annual prize of the Collegium Artisticum group.

★ **SUNITA FIŠIĆ** was born in Livno in 1989. She lives and works in Sarajevo, where she studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. Besides other artistic media, she is works with forms such as illustration, painting and street art. She has participated in numerous exhibitions around the world, including: *Wall Painting*, LAB-1, Eindhoven, Hollang, 2016; *Painting workshop, Grassroots project*, Kolektiv Kreativa, LA Kultur, Sarajevo, BiH, 2015; *Split 3D Street Art Festival*, Split, Croatia, 2015; *Beton IV Festival 3D street art*, Sarajevo, BiH, 2015; *Mostar Street Art Festival*, decorating the walls in the city of Mostar, BiH, 2015; *Individual Exhibition and Wall Painting*, LAB 1, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, Holland 2014; *Pecha Kucha art presentation*, SOS Design Festival, Kriterion, Sarajevo, 2014; *Individual exhibition of digital works*, Bitola Open City Festival, Macedonia, 2014; *Wall painting workshop, entrance of the Zetra Olympic Hall*, Kids festival, Sarajevo, 2014; *Mostar Street Art Festival*, decorating the walls in the city of Mostar, 2014; *Collective exhibition Inicijacija*, Yage, Collegium Artisticum, 2014, etc.

- ★ **KASJA JERLAGIĆ** was born in Sarajevo in 1996, where she lives and works. She studies at the Printmaking Department, Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo. She has just begun her career as an artist, and has so far participated in only one collective exhibition – *Kupujmo domaće* at the Duplex100m2 gallery in Sarajevo in 2016. She volunteers at Duplex100m2 and the 11/07/95 gallery, and works at the Charlama gallery in Sarajevo, led by the artist Jusuf Hadžifežović.
- ★ **ADELA JUŠIĆ (1982)** was born in Sarajevo, where she lives and works. She took a Master's degree in printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Sarajevo, in 2007, and holds another Master's degree in human rights and democracy at the University of Sarajevo and the University of Bologna. She co-founded the Association for Culture and the Arts "Crvena", where she has worked since 2010. Adela Jušić has exhibited at nearly 100 international exhibitions, including the *Manifesta 8 biennial*, Murcia, Španija; *Videonale*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany; *Image Counter Image*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany; *Balkan Inisight*, Pompidou Center, Paris, France, etc. She has participated in several residential programmes for artists umjetnike/ce (ISCP, New York; Kulturkontakt, Vienna; i.a.a.b. Basel, etc). She won the 2010 Young Visual Artist Award for the best young Bosnian artist, Henkel Young Artist Prize CEE 2011, and the special prize of the October Salon, Belgrade, 2013. She has participated in a number of panels, workshops and conferences (London School of Economics, Royal College of Art, London, UK, etc.).

Glossary, Acronyms and Periodicals

AVNOJ	Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Yugoslavia
AFŽ	Women's Antifascist Front
<i>afežeovke</i>	members and activists of the Women's Antifascist Front
CC CPY	Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia
<i>chetniks</i>	Serb-nationalist rebels, in particular members of Draža Mihailović's 'Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland'
DFJ	Democratic Federal Yugoslavia
<i>feredža</i>	burka, a veil covering the face and body worn by Muslim women
FNRJ	Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia
<i>hajduci</i>	Christian anti-Ottoman rebel or outlaw
<i>kadija</i>	judge in the Ottoman period
<i>kadinica</i>	wife of the judge in the Ottoman period
CPBiH	Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CPH	Communist Party of Croatia
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
NDH	Independent State of Croatia, Axis puppet-state established in Occupied Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1941
NF	People's Front
NOB	People's Liberation Struggle
NOF	People's Liberation Front
NOO	People's Liberation Committees
NO	People's Committees
NOP	People's Liberation Movement
NOR	People's Liberation War
NOV	People's Liberation Army
<i>partizanke</i>	Female Partisan soldiers

SFRJ	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, SFRY
SKOJ	League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia, the CPY's youth organisation
<i>udarnice</i>	female shock workers
<i>ustasha</i>	'Insurgent', a Croat fascist
<i>uskoci</i>	Croatian anti-Ottoman naval irregulars or pirate
WIDF	Women's International Democratic Federation
ZAVNOBiH	State Anti-fascist Council for the People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
ZAVNOH	State Anti-fascist Council for the People's Liberation of Croatia

Organisational Structure of the AWF/AFŽ¹:

Centralni Odbor AFŽ-a	Central Committee of the AFŽ of Yugoslavia
Glavni Odbor AFŽ-a	Republican Committee of AFŽ (each of the republican organisations of the AFŽ was led by a Republican Committee)
Mjesni Odbor AFŽ-a	Local Committee of the AFŽ
Okružni Odbor AFŽ-a	District Committee of the AFŽ
Regionalni Odbor AFŽ-a	Regional Committee of the AFŽ
Sreski Odbor AFŽ-a	County Committee of the AFŽ
Zemaljski Odbor AFŽ-a	Country Committee of the AFŽ

List of Periodicals and Newspapers

Ženski pokret
Nova Žena
Žena u borbi
Naša žena
Glas

¹ As the word 'councils' is normally used in English translations of AVNOJ, ZAVNOBiH and ZAVNOH, we have rendered the '*odbori*' of the AFŽ as 'committees'. The structure of AFŽ Committees was hierarchical, that is they were organised on the top-down principle.



Acknowledgments: We would like to thank everyone, from Burma to Beijing, from Sweden to Texas, who contributed to the crowdfunding campaign which raised the initial funds for the digitisation of archival materials as part of the *Šta je nama naša borba dala? (What Has Our Struggle Given Us?)* project. We also wish to thank the staff of the Historical Museum and the Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, without whose help the Archive of the Anti-Fascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be possible. Also, we wish to thank the numerous organisations and persons who have supported our work and enriched the Archive: the Museum of the Second Session of the AVNOJ, UABNOR Centre Sarajevo, the Association of Anti-Fascists and Veterans of the National Liberation War of Tuzla canton, the Mediterranean Women's Fund, Eve Enslar, Nina Karač, Feđa Kulenović, Boro Jurišić, Elvira Jahić, Stana Nastić, Lucija Mravić, Šemsa Galijašević, Alija Maglajlić, Nasiha Porobić, Milka Jakšić, Miholjka Reljić, Jelena Lazić, Anika Đurić, members of "CRVENA" and many others.

