

УДК 316.662-055.2(497.1)"1945/..."
305-055.2(497.1)"1945/..."

DOI <https://doi.org/10.31212/tokovi.2021.3.gud.199-228>

Оригинални научни рад

Примљен: 30. 4. 2021.

Прихваћен: 12. 11. 2021.

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Gender Policies of the Yugoslav State in the Context of Socialism*

ABSTRACT: This paper examines official gender policies in the Yugoslav socialist context, primarily through the egalitarian socialist legislation, the prevailing discourse on the equality of men and women on which they relied, the projected values around which the social identity of women was constructed, the pillars recognized as central points of emancipation, but also through the means of their realization, the intertwining of gender policies and existing cultural practices as well as the (dis)continuity of female subordination in gender relations in socialist everyday life. In the same context, the paper discusses socialist women's organizations, as well as the emergence of neo-feminism. The paper summarizes our previous research and draws on it, refers to other pertinent works and research, and documentation, shaping the picture of gender policies of the socialist Yugoslav state.

KEY WORDS: Gender policies, socialist context, emancipation, socialist everyday life, Yugoslavia

In the neoliberal context, gender policies of the Yugoslav state¹ are interpreted in different ways: on the one hand with a clear renunciation

* This paper was written as a result of the work at the Institute for Recent History of Serbia, funded by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, through the Agreement on Realization and Funding of Scientific Research NIO in 2021 no. 451-03-9/2021-14/200016 of February 5, 2021.

1 The policies of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia are interpreted as solving the so-called "women's issue" within the socialist state project and Marxist discourse, and in this paper we define them as gender policies of socialism.

of the socialist past in which everything was oppressive, policies contrary to women's interests, and limitations of emancipation seen as a new patriarchy, this time in the form of a new socialist everyday life; and on the other hand, by recognizing the scope of women's emancipation affirmed by these policies. The effects of socialism and its contribution to women's emancipation can be problematized based on different factors and different perspectives of thinking and interpreting the socialist everyday life.

In the world of post-socialism, and not only in it, ideological limitations in understanding reality, often related to the humanities, sometimes appear as obstacles in perceiving one's past. Some researchers emphasize: "Believing in neutrality and objectivity of the scientific position, dependent only on changes in theoretical paradigms, few authors were willing to accept the thesis that in the humanities there are no politically, ideologically or gender-neutral topics, approaches or research questions."²

In order to understand the gender policies of the Yugoslav state, the values they promoted and the reality they produced, the analysis needs to include existing women's practices encountered by the socialist government. We contextualize socialist gender policies in the time when they were created, observing them through the prevailing mood and spirit of the time, the overall strategy of development and modernization of the entire society, which are important coordinates for their understanding.

The Context of the First Yugoslavia

Interpretation of gender policies in socialist Yugoslavia is, among other things, determined by the context of the earlier omnipresent patriarchy that defined social relations in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Interwar Yugoslavia, with its pronounced differences – unequal economic and social development of different parts of the country, the contradictions of everyday life of rural and urban population, simultaneous validity of different laws in different parts of the country – was predominantly an agrarian country, characterized by small land ownership.³ The overwhelming majority of women lived in the countryside. An uneducated, illiterate peasant woman who works from sunlight to sundown to feed her family, with only a small surplus to take to the market, was the

2 Sanja Đurin, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Tea Škokić, „Od antropologije žene do rodne ideologije“, *Гласник Етнографског института САНУ* 67 (2), 2019, 238.

3 In 1931, two-thirds of land holdings (67.8%) were farms up to 12 acres. Mijo Mirković, *Ekonomska historija Jugoslavije*, (Zagreb: Ekonomski pregled, 1958), 352.

dominant image of a woman at that time. These were the relations upon which everyday social life was built, with gender roles shaped by a deeply patriarchal pattern of relations between men and women, heritage and patriarchal tradition.

A new political regime was introduced in a backward, poor country. Catastrophic sanitary and health conditions, especially in rural areas, very unfavorable attitude towards pregnant women and mothers, devastating conditions in which women gave birth, all of this frequently led to women dying in childbirth or immediately after, but also to extremely high infant mortality. Except in larger urban centers, there were no maternity hospitals. The husband's brutality to his wife is seen in many "proverbs" that originated among the people.⁴ The illiteracy of the female population was massive, but uneven in different parts of Yugoslavia, in rural and urban areas. Discrimination against women, resulting from the patriarchal milieu, was visible in various aspects of life. A common feature of women's position in interwar Yugoslavia was disenfranchisement in many civic and political rights, subordination to men, and a marginal presence in public life. The strength, depth and cruelty of patriarchy expressed itself in various ways.

Women did not attain suffrage in the Kingdom, and subordination of women was enshrined in law. Despite the fact that in the new state different laws were in force in its different parts,⁵ stemming from different historical heritage, they more or less legalized the woman's subordinate position, or limited her rights. The unification of legislation in interwar Yugoslavia was not fully realized.

The particularly unfavorable legal position of a married woman, regulated by the Serbian Civil Code, which codified civil law for a long time, from as far back as 1844, was one of many indicators of women's

4 "A man should beat his wife so she knows who's the boss", "You beat your wife so she doesn't get a big head", "Swing at the ox but strike your wife on the head" ... these are just some of the sayings that reflect the all-pervasive violence against women in everyday life. Vera Erlich, *Jugoslovenska porodica u transformaciji*, (Zagreb: Liber, 1971), 221.

5 The new state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was characterized by different legal systems operating concurrently in different territories: Serbia, Vojvodina, Montenegro, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia-Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The division was made in accordance with the laws and regulations that used to be in place in a certain territory, and depending on judicial-administrative jurisdiction. Gordana Drakić, „Formiranje pravnog sistema u međuratnoj jugoslovenskoj državi“, *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* 1–2/2008, 645–646.

social inequality in Serbia.⁶ A married woman's subordinate position and her subservience to her husband were reflected in many domains, in her general legal capacity, her marital and parental rights. Discrimination against women was especially apparent in inheritance law.⁷ Legal discrimination went together with other restrictions in various aspects of women's everyday life.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, women could get an education and be enrolled in schools at all levels, and compulsory elementary education for all children was legally instituted. In reality, many girls of primary school age did not attend school.⁸ At the same time, young women attended universities, but in relation to the entire female population, their rate was relatively low.⁹ Women's employment was limited, not all occupations were available to them, women's wages were lower than men's for the same jobs.¹⁰ Cheap female labor was concentrated in the textile and tobacco industry, women often worked as domestic servants, but also as teachers... The contributing factor to the differences among women was their economic and social background.¹¹

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia had movements for the emancipation of women, feminist organizations, various women's societies and associations, newspapers and magazines, and it also had prominent, ed-

6 If we focus our research on those parts of Serbia where the Serbian Civil Code was in place, the legal position of a married woman seems even more unfavorable.

7 The inheritance went to male children, that is, the inheritance was passed down through the male line. Female children could inherit property only if there were no male descendants. *Грађански законик Краљевине Србије*, (Београд, 1934).

8 The Law on Public Schools in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929 stipulates that attending public schools is universal and obligatory. However, the law was not consistently implemented, many children were not enrolled in school. Момчило Исић, *Писменост у Србији између два светска рата*, (Београд: ИНИС, 2001), 66–68.

9 Out of 17,734 students in universities in the Kingdom in 1939, 3,987 were women. *Статистички годишњак Краљевине Југославије за 1938/1939*, (Београд, 1940), 352–353.

10 Interwar Yugoslavia had laws that prohibited night work for women and children, as well as particularly physically demanding jobs, and allowed maternity leave for six weeks before and after childbirth. These rights arose from the Workers' Protection Act and the Workers' Insurance Act (1922). Milica Milenković, „Žene radnice u privredi Srbije“, *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka*, 2, ur. Latinka Perović, (Београд: INIS, 1998), 224.

11 Andja Srdić Srebro, „La représentation cinématographique de la femme en Yougoslavie de l'après-guerre“, *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain. Figures de femmes dans les cultures européennes* 24/2021, access date 12. 4. 2021, <https://journals.openedition.org/mimmoc/>

ucated women who pushed the boundaries imposed on women, defied female subordination and demonstrated by personal example how freedom can be won. Women's movements in the Kingdom included ideologically diverse associations, both bourgeois and those with leftist and socialist leanings (women workers' movement). There were women's associations engaged in humanitarian work, but also conservative, clerical women's organizations, etc.¹²

Indeed, there were women who made remarkable achievements, paving the way for women's emancipation in many segments of social life, and various movements who shared the fight for women's rights. This, however, does not change the fact that the overwhelming majority of women lived beyond any space of freedom, and that to many of them the very idea of women's emancipation was distant.

Gender Policies in a Socialist Context

The policies of the Yugoslav state towards women¹³ were grounded in and formulated by socialist legislation. The official ideology of women's equality was articulated in legislation, implemented through the basic principles and legal provisions of the entire legal system. The supreme law of the land, the Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, adopted in 1946,¹⁴ as well as the laws and regulations that accompanied it,¹⁵ formed the legal framework that facilitated the processes

12 Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku*, (Beograd: Devedesetčetvrti, Žene u crnom, 1996), 66–70; Jelena Petrović, „Društveno političke paradigme prvog talasa jugoslovenskih feminizama”, *ProFemina*, 2011, 59–81.

13 The foundations of the approach to the women's issue were laid out by Vida Tomšič in 1940 at the CPY 5th National Conference in Zagreb. In shaping the policies of early socialism, the Yugoslav state found an ideological model in the Soviet Union.

14 The 1936 Soviet Constitution greatly influenced the wording of the 1946 Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Other early socialist laws that followed it were also modeled on Soviet laws. On Soviet influence on Yugoslav gender policies see: Ivan Simić, *Soviet Influences on Yugoslav Gender Policies, 1945–1955*, (Doctoral thesis, University College London, 2016), access date 20. 1. 2021, discovery.ucl.ac.uk.

15 Constitutional principles were concretized and further elaborated in numerous laws regulating different spheres of life: family law, marriage law, parental law... A number of laws completed the legal system in early socialism: The Marriage Law (1946); The Law on Social Insurance of Workers, State Employees and Civil Servants (1946); Basic Law on Parent-Child Relationship (1947); The Decree on the Protection of Employed Pregnant and Nursing Women (1949); The Basic Law on Guardianship; Regulation on paid maternity leave; The Inheritance Law (1955), a number of decrees which regulate the right to pregnancy termination... Вера Гудац Додић, *Жена у социјализму*, (Београд: ИНИС, 2006), 9–26.

of women's emancipation. Tendencies towards the abolition of legal discrimination against women were affirmed already in the early post-war years, when in a very short time equality between men and women in law was introduced. The strong advance of socialism towards the emancipation of women was underscored precisely in the domain of legal regulation, i.e. at the level of law.

Egalitarian socialist legislation introduced the principle of equality between men and women, women won numerous rights that they did not have: political rights, the right to work and the right to equal pay for equal work, equality in marital,¹⁶ family and inheritance law, social security rights; reproductive rights... Equal legal standing was an essential prerequisite and it encouraged further processes of women's emancipation.¹⁷

In the Yugoslav context, abortion rights,¹⁸ introduced in the early 1950s¹⁹ and liberalized on social and not only medical grounds by a 1960 regulation,²⁰ were primarily conceived as a way to prevent illegal abortions that were dangerous to women's health and life.²¹ Regardless of the approach to legalizing abortion, Yugoslav women were able to terminate unwanted pregnancies long before women in most European countries (Great Britain in 1967; France in 1975; Italy in 1977) and the United States,²² and even decades before some other countries. In 1974, Yugoslavia elevated this right to the level of constitutional principle and, as a rare example among the countries of the world, decided to incorporate it into

16 The laws guaranteed equal rights for married couples, civil marriage was the only legally recognized form of matrimony, and the right to divorce was increasingly liberalized over time.

17 The emancipation of women in Yugoslavia was seen as part of universal human emancipation.

18 In the modern context, the right to abortion is the most frequently disputed right of women in many countries, and efforts to limit it are partly characteristic of the former Yugoslavia.

19 Uredba o postupku za vršenje dozvoljenog pobačaja, *Službeni list FNRJ*, broj 4, 1952. The regulation allowed abortion on medical, but in certain cases socio-medical grounds as well.

20 Uredba o uslovima i postupku za dozvoljavanje pobačaja, *Službeni list FNRJ*, br. 9, 1960.

21 Illegal abortions were epidemic in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić, „Između nebrige i neznanja. Žene, seksualnost i reproduktivno zdravlje u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji“, *Род и ред. Родни режими у култури кроз историју и данас, Гласник Етнографског института САНУ* 67, (2), 315. Apart from illegal abortions, there were also infanticides. Arhiv Jugoslavije, (Archives of Yugoslavia - AJ), Fond 141, Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije, 1942–1955, Izveštaj o stanju dečije zaštite u FNRJ, 1948.

22 Gizela Bok, *Žena u istoriji Evrope*, (Beograd: Clio, 2005), 372.

the foundations of its legal system, defining it as a human right.²³ This has brought Yugoslavia closer to the narrative in which the right to abortion is understood within the framework of personal freedoms. The right to choose, to freely decide whether to have children or not, was accompanied by various activities of the state related to family planning.²⁴ A different question is to what extent the socialist state, by popularizing contraception and sexual education, managed not only to legitimize family planning²⁵ as a strategy of the socialist state, but also to realize it in practice.²⁶

Yugoslavia's intervention in legislature opened the possibility for overcoming the practice of discrimination against women and regulated reality in a new manner, at least in legal relations. However, the encounter of official policies and traditional norms, existing cultural practices, and strongly rooted customary law, in some segments led to the relativization of the legislator's intentions, which revealed the complexity of policies and processes of women's emancipation in Yugoslav socialism.

The dominant discourse greatly influenced the construction of different social representations and social identities of women in the early socialist years. The idea of work outside the home was encouraged as a basic aspect of women's social identity, one of the supreme values. Promoting the image of a working woman shaped a different kind of everyday life. Women's inclusion in the workforce was one of the crucial points of socialist gender policy, and the ideal of the woman shock worker was inscribed in socialist ideological discourse. Paradigmatic images of the

23 Article 191, *Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije sa ustavnim zakonom za sprovođenje ustava Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, (Beograd: Službeni list, 1974).

24 The state founded various institutions for family planning, institutes, counseling centers, coordination committees for family planning, the Federal Council for Family Planning, republic and city councils. Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju socijalističke samoupravne Jugoslavije*, (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1981), 143.

25 In 1969, the National Assembly passed a resolution on family planning. Istorijiski arhiv Beograda (Historical Archives of Belgrade - IAB), Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Beograd (2245), k. 8, Iskustva, rezultati i problemi u dosadašnjem radu na planiranju porodice u Beogradu, nesređena građa.

26 Dobrovojević suggests that official policy on family planning was not successful, because in family planning abortion was the method of choice, and the number of abortions equaled the number of births as early as 1983. Ivana Dobrovojević Tomić, „Trajnost i promena. Abortusna kultura, liberalizacija propisa i pokušaji seksualne edukacije stanovništva Jugoslavije (1918–1991)“, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* LVIX – 3/2019, 129. In 1989, at the federal level, there were 131 abortions per 100 births. *The Worlds Women 2000, Trends and Statistic*, (New York: United Nation, 2000), 34.

heroine of labor and female labor glorification were central points of the official narrative of equality between women and men, and were publicly promoted in different ways, especially in the early postwar years and the period of post-war reconstruction. Social expectations and goals which socialism offered to women were propelled by ideological and economic reasons, as well as political circumstances. Women's labor was necessary not only in the reconstruction, but also during the intensive, fast-tracked industrialization, articulated as the basic path to progress and radical modernization of an agrarian, deeply patriarchal society.

The press and its presentation of women was one of the ways to promote the socially desirable image of the woman and encourage her new roles, which reflected the official state ideology.

The socialist-realist ideal of the woman shock worker was gradually abandoned in the early 1950s, when other trends started to emerge, and the public image of a woman gradually came to include different content. Over time, the print media began opening up for "traditional women's themes" such as the home, kitchen, fashion and clothing, beauty, and similar attributes of femininity, suppressed after the war.²⁷

Work was not the only domain in which the identity of women in socialism was constructed. The promotion of the working woman did not understate the role of the woman as a mother. Motherhood was never marginalized and unimportant for the socialist state, neither immediately after the war, nor in the years of reconstruction. The media representation of the desirable figure of the mother and the values glorified by the post-war society, "inscribing motherhood into the female collective identity",²⁸ is revealed in the first post-war issue of the magazine *Naša žena*. It carried a photograph of Vida Tomšič in a partisan uniform holding a child,

27 Reading the daily *Politika* one can trace the representation of women in the socialist press in the first post-war years. Articles on women accentuate heroines of labor, women brigadiers, collective farmers, they point out the legal equality of women, their participation in public life, as well as socialist motherhood. The cult of women's beauty, the culture of clothing and fashion, were rejected in post-war issues, and they begin discreetly sneaking in by the early fifties. On the pages of *Politika*, until 1951 when a picture of a woman wearing a ring accompanied by a single sentence, in the section "All Around the World" (*Politika*, January 28, 1951), almost nothing was written about fashion. The following year, a section called "For our woman" was introduced (*Politika*, February 24, 1952), which began promoting such content, as well as tips for running a household, recipes, etc.

28 Ksenija Vidmar Horvat, *Imaginarna majka. Rod i nacionalizam u kulturi 20. stoleća*, (Zagreb: Sandorf, Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, 2017), 53.

portraying the celebrated revolutionary in the context of motherhood. The photo was not accompanied by a text that would reveal whether the child was hers or some other woman's, which "semiotically allows the introduction of new content: motherhood is not a matter of private femininity, but a political position that symbolically links a woman with caring for all children of the new social order."²⁹ Motherhood and child care were important parts of the socialist project and social interest. The affirmation of socially engaged working women and their contribution to the "people's community" included caring for the youngest generation. "No one can ever consider to have given one's all to the community, if he or she is physically and mentally able capable of doing more... I don't include women burdened with child-care, because that is also social work."³⁰ Early socialism encouraged efforts to educate young people and children in the spirit of the new Yugoslavia, following the values and ideals of the new social order, under the auspices of the socialist state. "Take care of our children and watch over them so that they can truly become worthy citizens of our new Yugoslavia, citizens of the new country of socialism. That is one of your most important tasks", Josip Broz Tito advised women.³¹ Socialist upbringing implied social care for the young, control and intervention to eliminate the "negative impact of home upbringing if it is negative."³² The social identity of women in socialist Yugoslavia was defined primarily through motherhood and work.

Educational emancipation of women and their economic independence, that is to say free education and mass employment of women, were the foundation of women's emancipation in socialism. With social protection provided by the state, social rights, social security and the policies it implemented, the success of socialist gender policy had visible effects.

The gender chart of education was gradually changing, female graduation rates increased at all education levels, women's enrolment reached men's, there were more and more female college students. Education opened the way to social mobility for many women. By the time socialism ended, women exceeded men both in enrolment and graduation rates.³³

29 *Ibid.*

30 AJ, 836, II-3/f-1-1, Govor Josipa Broza Tita na Drugom kongresu AFŽ-a, 1948.

31 *Ibid.*

32 IAB, 2245, k. 1, Plan rada Sekcije majka dete za 1949.

33 Гудац-Додић, *Жена у социјализму*, 27-52.

As a prerequisite of all other forms of independence and women's freedom, socialist society affirmed the economic independence of women, and it established employment and professional work as a cornerstone of women's emancipation. By implementing the principle of equal pay for equal work in the legal framework of socialist everyday life, the state directed women towards paid work. Experiences of professional work outside the home in socialism became a reality for many women.³⁴ Strong female participation in the construction and economy of the country in the early post-war years and in the reconstruction began declining in the early 1950s, with the introduction of self-management. In the mid-fifties, the trend of continuous increase in women's employment was restored, the growth rate of women's employment was constantly exceeding the overall employment growth rate.³⁵ Strong social and legal mechanisms for preventing discrimination, the principle of equal pay for equal work for women and men, which the Yugoslav state promoted as a constitutional principle in defining gender policies, in practice failed to prevent the effects of other factors on the gender wage gap. Women were often placed in lower-paid positions and jobs,³⁶ mainly employed in industries with lower average incomes. The gender division of labor persisted, despite the positions and proclamations of the state, and the feminization of many activities marked the socialist period. Female workforce dominated in healthcare, education, culture, where they occupied mostly low-level and mid-level positions. Massive women's employment was not mirrored by the share of women in managerial positions, and throughout the socialist period there were few female directors and chairwomen of governing bodies.³⁷

34 Blagojević interprets that the employment of women in socialism should be viewed in the context of tradition and continuity of women's labor in agrarian societies. Marina Blagojević Hjuson, *Sutra je bilo juče: prilog društvenoj istoriji žena u drugoj polovini 20. veka u Jugoslaviji*, (Novi Sad: Zavod za ravnopravnost polova, 2015), 64.

35 The share of women among all employees increased, so that by the end of the 1980s it reached around 39% in Yugoslavia as a whole, the highest percentage being in Slovenia at 45.7%, and the lowest in Kosovo at 22.9%. Dragana Stjepanović Zaharijevski, *Moć i nemoć žene*, (Niš: Prosveta, 1999) 125–126. In 1989, the share women among all employees in the Republic of Serbia was 37.76%, or 38.84% not counting the provinces. Figures are based on data by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. *Статистички годишњак Србије 1996*, (Београд: Републички завод за статистику, 1997), 78.

36 Despite educational policies, working women had lower qualifications.

37 The share of women in management positions in Yugoslavia did not exceed 15%. Stjepanović Zaharijevski, *Moć i nemoć*, 134.

The socially glorified ideal of a working mother in the projections of the socialist state, but also in Yugoslav everyday life, was made possible by the socialization of child care. The institutionalization of social care for the youngest, founded, among other things, by establishing and developing state institutions for the care and upbringing of children, was meant to enable mothers to work professionally and alleviate the conflicting nature of those roles. In the socialist period, state nurseries and kindergartens were built all over the country, and over time their number only grew. Their development was uneven, both in terms of number of kindergartens and their age eligibility; the network of institutions was not equally developed,³⁸ not even within the republics, municipalities, an especially not between urban and rural areas. The number of state kindergartens reached its peak in the 1980s,³⁹ but their capacities were insufficient and they lagged behind the needs. Kindergartens were attended mainly by children of working mothers, with preferred enrollment for children with both parents working and children of single mothers.⁴⁰ Partly due to the lack of places in kindergartens, in the fifties and sixties it was not uncommon for employed parents to send their children to relatives in the countryside. Child care was assigned to grandparents or older siblings, children were taken to the neighbors, and parents only rarely paid for outside help or left the children alone at home.⁴¹

The state offered other benefits to employed mothers as well, such as social protection policies, 90-day paid maternity leave, later extended

38 IAB, 2245, k. 8, Broj predškolskih ustanova i obuhvat dece 1971.

39 In Yugoslavia, in 1980, almost 30% of children were enrolled in kindergartens or nurseries, of which about 15% in nurseries. Marina Simić, Ivan Simić, „Država i materinstvo: (dis)kontinuiteti u politikama javne brige o deci u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji i savremenoj Srbiji”, *Feministička teorija je za sve*, ur. Adriana Zaharijević, Katarina Lončarević, (Beograd: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, Fakultet političkih nauka, 2018), 229.

40 According to a 1956 survey by the Council for Social Welfare of Zagreb, which included 202 single mothers, those who worked during that time are often left younger children at home with their older siblings, with a quarter of children left alone at home without supervision. Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb, (Croatian State Archives - HR-HDA-1234), Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Hrvatske 1943–1990, Savjet za socijalnu zaštitu narodnog odbora grada Zagreba, Suradnja organa javnog tužništva i sudova u rješavanju problema porodica samohranih majki, 2. 7. 1957.

41 In addition to information that the children often stayed alone at home, the documents reveal the case of an “Oktobarska sloboda” worker who left the children alone by “tying the older child to the bed and the younger in bed”. IAB, 2245, k. 2, Izveštaj o obilasku preduzeća i ustanova po pitanju problema žene radnice; Гудац Додић, *Жена у социјализму*, 118–119.

several times to finally reach a period until the child turns one, free health care, relatively high child allowance, a one-time cash assistance, shortening the weekly working hours.

Women's entrance into public and social spheres and the world of professional work was not followed by the transformation of gender relations within the home and family. The employed woman continued to do most of the household duties, caring for the children and other family members. Unpaid housework, which was left to the woman after all government interventions, despite her new roles, was a persistent source of gender inequality. Various research conducted in the socialist period on the husband's participation in household chores and parental duties, revealed not only low engagement of men in unpaid housework, but also that fathers spent incomparably less time with children than their mothers. They show a clear disproportion and unequal participation of men and women in reproductive work. The everyday life of husbands and working mothers in socialism revealed the twofold burden of women, conflicting roles and numerous difficulties they encountered in trying to balance them.

The strategy of the Yugoslav state, in accordance with the Marxist worldview,⁴² was directed towards the socialization⁴³ of domestic labor, which should "turn into a social industry".⁴³ Socialization of housework or the transference of part of domestic work to public services and social institutions was in the foreground, while the division of household labor among partners was secondary.⁴⁴ Attempts at socialization of domestic labor, its transformation into "branches of public social work", failed to significantly alleviate the conflict among the roles of working women. The introduction of household services was one of the measures and ways of transferring household work from the family to public services and institutions. The first public household services were introduced in Belgrade in the early fifties, and soon there would be more and more of them.⁴⁵ They

42 Even Engels wrote about turning the private household into a social industry and public child care. Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*; Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy.

43 AJ, 837, II-2-16, k. 39.

44 Such views were still present as late as the 1970s. "The basic course is to turn most of these jobs into branches of public social work." AJ, 837, II-3-Φ, k. 161, Deseti međunarodni seminar Konferencije za pitanja društvenog položaja žena Jugoslavije, Ljubljana 1977.

45 In the early 1960s, 54 different household assistance services were opened in the Belgrade municipality of Vračar. IAB, 2245, k. 3, Dokumentacija o poslovanju servisa za usluge domaćinstvima na području Beograda, 1957. Housing associations were conceived as a kind of "extended family" organization and a way to relieve women

offered various services and different kinds of work, cleaning apartments, washing and ironing, there were services for sewing, cooking meals and preserves, services for milk and bread delivery...⁴⁶ Public household services never fully took off, with their offers relatively expensive for many workers and their quality poor. And although they were available not only in cities but also in smaller towns, they did not have major effects.⁴⁷ The establishment of social catering restaurants⁴⁸ with subsidized prices, within companies, factories, canteens and school kitchens⁴⁹ was also consistent with the official tendency of housework socialization and support for working women.

The government lacked the economic strength to push the entire project in which the society, i.e. the state, would share the burden of women's reproductive work by socializing it. Consequently, the measures were not comprehensive, but limited, and most unpaid work at home continued to rest on women's shoulders. The double burden of the working woman continued to permeate socialist everyday life. Over time, with the living standard rising, the modernization of household duties and availability of household appliances and devices reduced the time needed for

of household duties. Various public services were supposed to develop within their framework, with "payment for services on a do-it-yourself basis", and different communal service institutions, children's institutions... AJ, Fond Savez sindikata Jugoslavije (117), Stenografske beleške sa konferencije za štampu organizacionog odbora izložbe Porodica i domaćinstvo, 1958.

- 46 In the late 1950s, the fixed assets for household assistance services in Belgrade (e.g. washing machines) were provided mainly by the municipality's people's committee, and their managing boards consisted of representatives of women's societies and worker's collectives. According to this document, the salaries of their employees were lower than those in firms. IAB, 2245, k. 3, Dokumentacija o poslovanju servisa za usluge domaćinstvima na području Beograda, 1957.
- 47 Not many women used the assistance services; according to some surveys, their user were more often clerks, and rarely workers. Гудац-Додић, *Жена у социјализму*, 106–108. A survey of single mothers in Zagreb in late 1956 found that none of these women used the assistance services, because they found them expensive. HR-HDA-1234, Savjet za socijalnu zaštitu narodnog odbora grada Zagreba.
- 48 Social catering restaurants were started during the post-war restoration, and by 1950 their number had grown significantly. In 1950, over 600,000 subscribers ate in canteens and workers' restaurants in Yugoslavia. Since 1951, the transition to the "new economic system" led to an increase in subscription price and a decrease in the number of subscribers. AJ, 117, Društvena ishrana, 1954.
- 49 According to a 1961 survey, which included 74.5% of all schools in Belgrade proper, more than half of the students, 67.2%, ate in school canteens. The problems in many canteens included hygiene, equipment, and even unqualified staff. IAB, 2245, k. 4, Školske kuhinje, 1961.

housework, shaping yet another segment of policies and socialist practices in everyday life.

Working women in socialist Yugoslavia were exhausted, torn apart by their various roles, they had so many responsibilities that they often lacked enough free time, or sometimes did not have it at all, spending it on daily (paid and unpaid) work. If a woman had any help in family affairs, it was usually the help of another woman, mother her mother-in-law. The division of labor between partners and the participation of husbands in household labor was extremely rare, reduced only to certain activities. The conflict between the dual roles of working women, and the double burden they carried, was a problem that was never fully solved in socialism.⁵⁰ The double work of women was integrated into socialism.

Chiara Bonfiglioli argues that the issue of women's double burden was raised and discussed in various ways in socialist Yugoslavia, from women's organizations to factory publications, and although the double burden was publicly recognized "at the same time it was also normalized in popular culture, with women being hailed as resilient and hard-working outside and inside the home."⁵¹

Retaining traditional gender roles in the family and family relations was not the only limitation to women's emancipation in Yugoslav practice.

Gender equality policies have long been opposed by rural everyday life. The different lifestyle of a peasant woman living off the land and a city dweller was determined not only by their different occupations, living and housing conditions, accessibility of schools and clinics, but also different by understandings and attitudes towards traditional values, customs and heritage. At the same time, prominent differences among the republics and regions, uneven economic development of the country, differences in culture, tradition, but also the spatial distribution of villages, their proximity to cities, also affected the differences in lifestyle.

The life practices of peasant women were shaped by the culture of patriarchal society, traditional gender relations and roles, and the Yugoslav emancipatory policies reached them slowly. Gender equal legisla-

50 The activities of women's societies were often aimed at establishing "institutions for relieving women of household chores, children's institutions". Arhiv Srbije (Archives of Serbia - AS), Ђ-75, Ф-92, Izveštaj o delatnosti Saveza ženskih društava NR Srbije u razdoblju od Osnivačke skupštine do danas (1955–1961) podnesen Konferenciji žena Srbije.

51 Chiara Bonfiglioli, „A Working Day that has no End. The Double Burden in Socialist Yugoslavia”, Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, 2017, access date 30. 3. 2021, www.europa.clío-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1705.

tion slowly breached the resistance of the rural community. Modernization processes were gradual, and many of the limitations of women's emancipation were the feature of rural areas. The culture of peasant life and the unmovable, inherited rules of conduct established gender relations primarily in the rural family, but they also permeated other aspects of life.

Patriarchy was apparent on various levels, continuously defining women's everyday life and was eradicated only slowly. Arranged marriages were not uncommon in many rural areas in the decades after the liberation.⁵² The institution of dowry survived in the villages for a long time, despite official proclamations and was typical for communists as well.⁵³ Despite socialist legislation and its provisions, rural community values meant that unmarried mothers were condemned and met with disapproving reactions of the community; their parents no longer wanted them in the house and illegitimate children were stigmatized in various ways.⁵⁴ Divorces were frequent because the husband would leave the village and the family,⁵⁵ but also when the marriage was childless. After the divorce, the women were mostly left with no property or income.

A striking example of the inability of socialist legislation to completely suppress customary law were the dominant inheritance practices in the villages. The inheritance system, which limited the inheritance rights of women, was sustained. The house, real estate, property and land continued to be inherited by sons, while daughters gave up their share of property in favor of their brother or brothers, or received a much smaller part of the property than that to which they were legally entitled.⁵⁶ In the countryside, women mostly lived in joint households with their extended family. The reality of peasant women was fieldwork, attending the cattle; they took part in other agricultural work along with their husbands, from dawn to dusk. Most often they had no land or property to their name. At

52 In the villages, parents were much more likely to choose a spouse for their son or daughter than in the cities. HR-HDA-1234, KDAŽH, Patrijarhalni i savremeni vidovi izbora bračnog druga na području uže Srbije.

53 Over time, forms of dowry have changed and modernized. AS, Ђ-75, Ф-92, Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Srbije, Neki aktuelni problemi u vezi sa društvenim položajem žena na selu, 1962.

54 Socialist legislation ensured equal rights for children born in and out of wedlock.

55 The increase in the number of divorces in the countryside was primarily a result of husbands leaving the village and the family. AS, Ђ-75, Ф-92, Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Srbije, Neki aktuelni problemi u vezi sa društvenim položajem žena na selu, 1962.

56 Вера Гудац Додић, „Жене и праксе наслеђивања на селу у Србији“, *Токови историје* 2/2018, 205–211.

the same time, the woman's duty was housework and child care, washing and ironing the laundry, cooking and other household chores. Women lived in the complete shadow of their husband's authority. The position of peasant women was further aggravated by the fact that they had no social benefits like other working women.

Many peasant girls who lived in remote, poor, mountainous regions, did not attend school, despite the regulations on mandatory eight-year education.⁵⁷ In addition to the inaccessibility of schools in the remote rural areas, parents did not support any schooling of girls, because they thought that school was not needed for work in the field or at home. Despite numerous literacy courses organized in the villages in the early post-war years, the greatest stronghold of illiteracy was still among older women in the countryside. Health conditions changed slowly,⁵⁸ often with no indoor water supply, sewage or bathrooms,⁵⁹ the level of general and personal hygiene, and the health culture of women in the countryside, was very low.

The fast-tracked industrialization of Yugoslav society was accompanied by urbanization processes, which led to changes in the way of life. Migrations from the countryside to the cities in the second half of the 20th century were massive. Rural flight took place in just a few decades. Women who came to the cities from the countryside gradually accepted different, urban patterns of life.⁶⁰

Despite the publicly proclaimed importance of women's participation in the social and political life of the country, the constant dominance of men in politics and at every level of political decision-making revealed another limitation of emancipation. In the socialist period, the share of women did never exceed 30% in institutions of state power, with distinct

57 One example is the 1958–59 school year, when 90% of cases that of the Eight-year Mandatory Education Law related to female children. AS, Ђ-75, Ф-92, Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Srbije, Položaj i uloga ženske omladine u društvenom životu, 1961.

58 In the 1980s, almost a quarter of women in the countryside still gave birth at home, and infant mortality was higher than in cities. AJ, Zadrudni savez Jugoslavije, Beograd, 3. 4. 1980.

59 Many rural households to this day have no water supply, sewerage, or an indoor bathroom. Љубица М. Рајковић, *Друштвени положај села, сеоских породица и сеоских жена у централној Србији*, (Београд: Географски факултет, 2014), 181–185.

60 Vera Gudac Dodić, *Life in Serbia, Through the Eyes of Women*, (Beograd: INIS, 2014) 41–89.

oscillations over the years.⁶¹ Within the Party, the participation of women in governing bodies was also significantly lower.

Socialist Women's Organizations

In early socialism, state policies towards women followed the activities of the most massive women's organization that ever existed in this area, the Anti-Fascist Women's Front (AFŽ) [1942–1953].⁶² Through various forms of work and activities, the AFŽ included hundreds of thousands, even millions of women, all over the country. In the early post-war years, the processes of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia could not be understood without the AFŽ, and without recognizing the strong emancipatory potential that it carried.⁶³ The emphasis the AFŽ placed on certain activities depended on specific circumstances in different years of socialist development. This women's socio-political organization introduced or participated in countless mass campaigns among women, literacy campaigns, health courses and women's "enlightenment" courses in the countryside, hygiene and health campaigns in villages, health care for pregnant women, mothers and children, orphan care, creation of nurseries, the mobilization of women for volunteer work in brigades, the inclusion of women in cooperatives, campaigns for removing the burqa and the veil... The AFŽ organized countless meetings, lectures, seminars, courses, reading groups, and published magazines. The organization's activities also included campaigns for women's employment, founding social institutions for helping women, and promoting and interpreting the provisions of gender equality legislation among women. The party leadership and the heads of the organization decided to abolish the AFŽ in 1953, and with its folding, the activities of women in public life faded.⁶⁴

61 The Federal Assembly had the highest number of female representatives in 1963 (19.6%), in the Assembly of Serbia this was 1982 (27.6%) and in the Provincial Assembly of Vojvodina 29.8%. *Žena u društvu i privredi Jugoslavije*, Statistički bilten 788, (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1973) 62.

62 The Women's Anti-Fascist Front was founded in World War II, at the First National Conference of Yugoslav Women, in December 1942.

63 The AFŽ, as a collective member, was part of the Popular Front, despite the fact that it articulated specific women's issues and being focused on problems related to the position, practices and everyday experiences of women.

64 There are different interpretations of the reasons why the AFŽ was abolished and the social context around this decision. Vera Gudac Dodić, "Frauen im Sozialismus: Von der Antifaschistischen Frauenfront Jugoslawiens zu feministischen Organisationen", *Schwimmen gegen den Strom? Diskurse weiblicher Autorschaft im postjugoslawischen*

After the AFŽ was abolished, other official socialist women's organizations were founded: the Association of Women's Societies, and later, the Conference for Women's Social Activity. The Association of Women's Societies of Yugoslavia (1953–1961) was founded within the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia. The activities of women's societies focused on the protection of mothers and children, the "enlightenment" of rural women, family problems, helping working women cope with daily household chores. Many societies were founded to address specific problems that were notice in practice in the local context; problems in rural and urban areas were often dissimilar.⁶⁵ By 1959, there were more than 1,000 different women's societies⁶⁶ throughout the country, with 472 societies and 350 "actives" in Serbia.⁶⁷ The type of work women's societies were engaged in determined their name: *Žena i dom* (Woman and Home), *Savremena žena* (Modern Woman), *Naše dete* (Our Child)...⁶⁸

At the founding meeting of the Association of Women's Societies of Serbia (March 1955), it was noted that the Association "should not be a uniform and rigid organization neither in terms of its structure nor its methods of work",⁶⁹ so in practice it was characterized by a looser organizational structure. The Association organized conferences, consultations on various topics depending on the situation and problems in different regions, and provided assistance to women's societies.⁷⁰ Various events were

Kontex, Hgs Angela Richter, Tijana Matijević, Eva Kowollik, (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2018), 27–52.

65 In the cities, the societies were focused on relieving employed women from household chores, founding children's kindergartens, building playgrounds... In the countryside, the focus was on "women's enlightenment", infant care, opening school kitchens, health stations, bathrooms. AS, Ђ-75, ф-92, Izveštaj o delatnosti Saveza ženskih društava NR Srbije u razdoblju od Osnivačke skupštine do danas (1955–1961) podnesen Konferenciji žena Srbije. Women's societies also worked on opening institutes and centers for the improvement of the household. IAB, 2245, k. 3, Savez ženskih društva, 1959. At the Founding Meeting of SŽD Croatia, the basic tasks of the leading committee were helping working families and working women, easing the burden on workers. Jelena Tesija, *The End of the AFŽ – The End of Meaningful Women's Activism? Rethinking the History of Women's Organizations in Croatia, 1953–1961*, access date 4. 1. 2021, <https://www.academia.edu/>

66 Božinović, *Žensko pitanje*, 171.

67 AS, Ђ-75, ф-92, Izveštaj o delatnosti Saveza ženskih društava NR Srbije. In subsequent years, the number of women's societies decreased.

68 IAB, Savez ženskih društava, 1959.

69 AS, Ђ-75, ф-92, Izveštaj o delatnosti Saveza ženskih društava NR Srbije.

70 District and municipal associations of women's societies were formed. The General Committee of the Association of Women's Societies through its plenums, conferences, meetings of various commissions gathered "not only members of the

organized. One of them was the international exhibition called *Porodica i domaćinstvo* (Family and Household), organized at the Zagreb Fair by the General Committee of the Association of Women's Societies and the Federation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia.

Another reorganization of women's official organizations was effected in 1961, when the Association of Women's Societies was replaced by the Conference for Women's Social Activity (CWSA) was established (renamed the Conference for Women's Social Position in 1975), which "became the main organ in charge of implementing state feminism along the official line of the League of Communist..."⁷¹ The Conference dealt with and raised a number of issues: mother and child health care, child upbringing, children's institutions, social nutrition, the position of rural women, women's socio-political activity, family planning and others. The Rules of the Conference stated that the organization espouses the goals of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia (SSRNJ), but that the municipal, provincial, republican and federal conferences which constitute it are independent in their work. The Assembly was its supreme authority. It was formed by delegates of women's societies, representatives of various institutions, economic and other organizations.⁷² Such an organizational form of CWSA was established with the aim of "activating all social forces in solving women's problems as a general social problem, and in particular activating the strength of women themselves in addressing their specific problems."⁷³ Over time, the Conference became one of the bodies of the SSRNJ, focusing in its work exclusively on issues that it re-

General Committee and other activists of women's organizations, but also a much wider circle of social and political activists, various experts, numerous institutions, institutions and social organizations." AS, Ђ-75, ф-92, Izveštaj o delatnosti Saveza ženskih društava NR Srbije.

71 Chiara Bonfiglioli, Belgrade, 1978 Remembering the conference „Drugarica Žena. Žensko pitanje – Novi pristup?“ / „Comrade Woman. The Women's Question: A New Approach?“ thirty years after. Utrecht University, Faculty of Arts - Womens Studies, Research Master "Gender and Ethnicity", Year 2007/2008, Utrecht, August 2008. Available at: Theses Archive - University Library Utrecht - Student Theses, 39.

72 The CWSA did not have "individual membership". Representatives of social organizations, women's societies, administrative organs, firms, social, public health and other institutions met to discuss different objectives at meetings, assemblies and conferences. IAB, 2245, k. 4, Referat o zadacima Konferencije za društvenu aktivnost žena, 1961.

73 IAB, Referat o zadacima Konferencije za društvenu aktivnost žena.

garded crucial.⁷⁴ After 1969, the Conference acted as a forum of the Socialist Alliance.⁷⁵

Official women's organizations in socialism⁷⁶ worked to improve women's everyday life and address the many problems they encountered in different contexts.⁷⁷

Neo-feminism and State Policies

Official women's organizations pointed out women's experiences of inequality in socialism, and they continuously followed the practices of women's subordination and individual experiences of women, discussed various "negative phenomena" in socialist everyday life, considering them deviations from the socialist project of women's emancipation, "relics of the patriarchal mentality" and traditionalist dated consciousness. However, for many limitations of women's social affirmation, the former president of AFŽ, Vida Tomšič, also blamed the power structure framework, and perceived them as "a symptom of the weakness of socio-political organizations themselves."⁷⁸

The most significant criticism of the way in which the "women's issue was addressed" in Yugoslav socialism, the criticism of state policies towards women, dates back to 1978 and is articulated in neo-feminist fashion. That year saw the first feminist conference⁷⁹ ever to be held in a

74 Gudac Dodić, "Frauen im Sozialismus".

75 Božinović, *Žensko pitanje*, 185, 192.

76 J. Tesija argues that researchers write and start with the AFŽ, and then continue with the feminist movement of the 70's, as if there nothing historically important had occurred between these two points, and that women's organizations that inherited the AFŽ remained unexplored, invisible in the works on contemporary Yugoslav history... In her study, she demonstrates that the Association of Women's Societies continued the efforts of the AFŽ, but in a different way. Tesija, *The End of the AFŽ*, 68.

77 In addition to the AFŽ material, the documentation of the Conference for Women's Social Activity, thanks to the engagement of women in these organizations, is a valuable source for learning about the life, work, problems and practices of women in socialism.

78 Tomšič also emphasized this problem, pointing to low representation of women in self-management bodies, political bodies and other managerial positions. Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju*, 84.

79 The organizers of the conference, along with SKC director Dunja Blažević, were Žarana Papić and Nada Ler Sofronić. It was attended by intellectuals, scientists and public figures from all over Yugoslavia, but also foreign participants from Great Britain, France, Poland, Italy, Germany...

socialist country, organized at the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade”⁸⁰ under the headline “The Women’s Question: A New Approach?” This international conference inspired neo-feminism in Yugoslavia, which would continue to grow in the 1980s and especially the 1990s, in a different context and with different contents. As the headline itself indicated, it challenged the approach to resolving the women’s question in socialist Yugoslavia. Despite the official discourse according to which the emancipation of women was undisputed, the participants pointed out discrepancies between the promoted values and socialist reality, criticized the “socialist patriarchy and the socialist concept of women’s fate”.⁸¹ The Yugoslav participants were not against the system,⁸² but they emphasized the problems that deviated from the proclaimed social values.⁸³ The conference, among other things, aimed to acquaint the Yugoslav public with the phenomenon of feminism.⁸⁴ “We do not have a single theory for addressing specific feminist questions, but we have a general view that we can ask feminist questions by searching for Marxist answers.”⁸⁵ Among the topics discussed at the event were women’s privacy in socialism, gender relations in the family, and unpaid housework as a universal global female experience.

According to Žarana Papić, this international event provoked objections from the Conference for Women’s Social Activity, which saw it as a gathering that “promotes the war of the sexes”. Despite that, she adds,

80 The fact that such an international gathering was held in Yugoslavia was not a coincidence, having in mind the country’s openness to Europe and the world, and other features of Yugoslav socialism that made it “softer”, and in many respects closer to the West, compared to other countries of the socialist bloc.

81 „Ženski pokret u bivšoj Jugoslaviji: sedamdesete i osamdesete”, *Žarana Papić, Tekstovi 1977–2002*, ur. Adriana Zaharijević, Zorica Ivanović, Daša Duhaček, (Beograd: Centar za studije roda i politike, Rekonstrukcija Ženski fond, Žene u crnom, 2012), 281–282.

82 The organizers of the meeting tried to show that the issue of women’s liberation was not anti-socialist, but was part of the universal-ist socialist ideal, and of the struggle against bourgeois and conservative tendencies“. Chiara Bonfiglioli, „Social equality is not enough, we want pleasure!: Italian feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 ‘Comrade woman’ Conference“, *Profemina, Jugoslovenski feminizmi 2*, 2011, 116.

83 Marijana Stojčić, „Proleter i svih zemalja ko vam pere čarape? Feministički pokret u Jugoslaviji 1978–1989“, *Društvo u pokretu. Novi društveni pokreti u Jugoslaviji od 1968 do danas*, zbornik radova, ur. Đorđe Tomić, Petar Atanacković, (Novi Sad: Cenzura, 2009), 116.

84 Young female intellectuals, the participants of the conference, had access to foreign literature, spoke foreign languages, traveled to Western Europe and the United States, some of them were educated abroad, could understand “the Western view” and become familiar with feminist attitudes.

85 Arhiva Studentskog kulturnog centra, Beograd, Nada Ler Sofronić, Transkript konferencije Drug-ca žena. Žensko pitanje novi pristup? 29. 10. 1978, 27.

the participants were not “excessively attacked for this feminist conference”.⁸⁶ Part of the Yugoslav press also criticized the conference. As Dunja Blažević, then director of SKC recalls, she was asked to resign, as the responsible person for organizing the event, but in the end she kept her position until her term ended. At the same time the Conference was taking place, a TV show called *Female sex, male sex* was aired, with positive interpretations of the event and everything that was happening at it.⁸⁷ Yugoslav neo-feminists have different recollections of how the Conference for Women’s Social Activity reacted, from those saying the organization constantly criticized them in the media, but helped them later, in 1990, even giving them a small financial assistance for the Belgrade conference (Sonja Drljević), to those that remember the support that individual members of CWSA offered (Vera Smiljanić).⁸⁸

Zsófia Lóránd’s in her analysis argues that it was characteristic of Yugoslav feminists that “they tried to engage the state into a dialogue, instead of rejecting it on their own, as dissidents most often do.”⁸⁹

In the 1980s, neo-feminists introduced into public space new subjects that were not discussed in socialism, that were not part of state gender policies, like domestic violence and marital rape, and by opening these subjects they “made a fundamental shift in relation to state policy.”⁹⁰ The activists established crisis hotlines for women and children suffering abuse, and telephone counseling lines that provided legal assistance and psychological support to victims of domestic violence. These hotlines were opened in Zagreb (1988), Ljubljana (1989) and Belgrade (1990), which some authors define as “the most important achievement of feminists in Yugoslavia at that time”.⁹¹

86 *Žarana Papić, Tekstovi*, 281.

87 Вера Гудац Додић, „Конференција Друг-ца жена. Женско питање – нови приступ? Транснационална секвенца у историји феминистичког покрета у Југославији“, *Транснационална искуства југословенске историје*, ур. Олга Манојловић Пинтар, Вера Гудац Додић, (Београд: ИНИС, 2019), 260–261.

88 Zsófia Lóránd, *Feministički izazov socijalističkoj državi u Jugoslaviji*, (Zagreb: Fraktura, 2020) 60.

89 *Ibid.*, 25.

90 Sandra Prlenda, “Breaking the Waves, Feminism in Socialism”, *ProFemina 2, Journal of Women’s Literature and Culture, Yugoslav Feminisms*, 2011, eds J. Petrović, D. Arsenijević, 164. In addition to violence against women, she emphasizes some other topics that neo-feminism introduced into the public space: sexism in the media and textbooks, androcentrism of science and lesbian organizing.

91 Lorand, *Feministički izazov*, 225.

In Yugoslav self-governing socialism,⁹² in addition to theoretical positioning and development of feminist theories, neo-feminists organized their own groups, initiated various activities and initiatives, and regardless of their “semi-marginal position”⁹³, the presence of feminism, “even if it was micro-political – cannot be disputed.”⁹⁴ Although it never reached broader social attention, it was not only possible, but also “allowed” in socialist Yugoslavia. Some authors emphasize that academic feminism was possible because space was opened for discussion and exchange of theoretical and professional views “on women’s issues within socialist structures.”⁹⁵

Conclusion

Efforts to deny the emancipatory potential of gender policies of the Yugoslav state, shaped through its laws, institutions, dominant discourse, values promoted and measures adopted, ignore its socio-historical context, as do the attempts to completely deny it by pointing out unresolved problems of women’s emancipation (whether this was emancipation for all women), and the numerous cracks and limitations in the emancipatory processes that socialist everyday life has opened up. Interpretations that these policies were harmful to women because they passivized them, preventing autonomous women’s mobilization, discredit the importance of an era in which women in a very short time obtained numerous rights, some of which were at the time inaccessible to women in much more developed parts of the world. These narratives relativize and downplay the reality that from a legal status equal to that of “the feebleminded, scoundrels or derelicts”, to which a married woman had been chained for a cen-

92 The UN International Women’s Year in 1975, followed by the “Decade for Women” (1976–1975), was important for the international positioning of the Yugoslav CWSA, the promotion of gender policies and Yugoslav experiences, but also for learning the experiences of others. International relations were advancing, especially with developing countries. The UN International Women’s Year was an occasion to analyze the Yugoslav results in improving the social position of women.

93 Lorand, *Feministički izazov*, 63.

94 Adriana Zaharijević, „Fus nota u globalnoj istoriji: Kako se može čitati istorija jugoslovenskog feminizma?” *Sociologija. Časopis za sociologiju, socijalnu psihologiju i socijalnu antropologiju* 1/2015 (LVII), 85.

95 Biljana Kašić, Sandra Prlenda, “Yugoslav Feminists in Socialism: Disrupting the Mainstream Narrative”, *Genero* 19, 2015, 42–43. - Despite accusations that neo-feminism was bourgeois and imported from the West, it was allowed all the same, and this led to important “theoretical studies about women’s question and Marxism, which culminated in the works of Blaženka Despot”. *Ibid.*

turey (Serbian Civil Code), in a socialist context she became legally equal to a man. Or that for ending pregnancy, instead of piercing the uterus with a spindle, inserting a pessary with ground hellebore root, placing hot bricks on the abdomen or visiting a backstreet abortionist, and only for a chosen few visiting a doctor in secret, women could now go a hospital and get a legal abortion... Reading gender policies in a historical context means reflecting on the contribution of socialism to women's emancipation and the meaning of Yugoslav practices by situating them in the period and under social circumstances in which they were created and realized. The emancipation of Yugoslav women was articulated as a road to progress, modernization of society and was part of the socialist state project. This does not mean that women were excluded from it. Despite the fact that official women's organizations in socialism were not autonomous, a growing number of authors are problematizing the narrative that substantive female action in those organizations was not possible, suggesting instead that it should be viewed in accordance with the reality and context of the society in which they lived and "defined their own practices according to their own rules" (Bonfiglioli). At the same time, recognizing the importance of the state that worked for women, expressed through the statements of Kristen R. Ghodsee and Julia Mead "the state intervened and did some good things on behalf of women, things that markedly changed their lives",⁹⁶ is also relevant for the consideration of Yugoslav socialism. The Yugoslav experience of women's emancipation in the socialist context speaks of the intertwining of gender policies and traditional social and cultural practices, the collision and overlapping of patriarchy and modernity, the continuities or discontinuities and the departure of female subordination, ambivalent practices, and different ranges of policies towards women in different spheres of life.

Summary

Three decades have passed since the Yugoslav state was ruined and disappeared in blood, together with self-governing socialism. However, the beginning of the process of emancipation of women in these parts and the rights they achieved are significantly tied to the period of the second Yugoslav state. Under its auspices, women were closer to equality; ac-

96 Kristen R. Ghodsee, Julia Mead, "What has socialism ever done for women?" *Catalyst*, Vol. 2 no 2, 2018, access date 2. 4. 2021, https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/soc_fem/files/ghodsee_mead_2018.pdf, 131

cepting new roles, they created new experiences and conquered public spaces. The gender equal legislation, reproductive rights, free and available education, and the affirmation of women's employment are the basic ranges of Yugoslav politics and emancipation practices in socialism. With the system of social protection which the government provided, social rights, social security, and wider healthcare, the socialist gender politics have more visible effects. Those rights often created crucial changes in the lives of women. Simultaneously, gender politics of the socialist state did not eradicate the inherited patterns and patriarchal relations in the family, and thus the double burden and conflicted role of the working woman had never been greater. The socially organised care of children was partially successful due to the stressed disproportion of the network of these institutions in different parts of Yugoslavia, while the measures of housework socialization – transferring a part of housework to public services and institutions, were of limited range in practice and had modest effects. In spite of this, the dual work of the woman was integrated into socialism. The female liberation in socialist Yugoslavia and the social affirmation of the woman were also limited by the continued domination of men in politics and other levels of decision-making, as well as women's experiences of subordination in different segments of life. With a force that emphasised the diversity in local contexts, the everyday life of women in the countryside fought the policies that promoted political, social, cultural emancipation and gender equality for a long time.

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Резиме

Вера Гудац Додић

Родне политике југословенске државе у контексту социјализма

АПСТРАКТ: Државне родне политике у контексту југословенског социјализма у раду интерпретирамо првенствено кроз егалитарно социјалистичко законодавство, владајући дискурс о равноправности мушкарца и жене на који су се оне наслањале, пројектоване вредности око којих је грађен и конструисан друштвени идентитет жене, упоришта која су препозната као централне тачке еманципације, али и кроз начин њихове реализације, испреплетаност родних политика и постојећих културних пракси, те (дис)континуитете женске подређености у родним односима у социјалистичкој свакодневици. У том склопу приказане су и социјалистичке женске организације, као и појава неофеминизма.

Кључне речи: родне политике, социјалистички контекст, еманципација, социјалистичка свакодневица, Југославија

Протекле су три деценије од када је југословенска држава урушена и нестала у крви, а самоуправни социјализам заједно са њом, али отварање процеса еманципације жена на овим просторима и права која су стекле значајним делом су везана за раздобље друге Југославије. Жене су под њеним окриљем биле ближе равноправности прихватајући нове улоге, креирале нова искуства, освајале јавне просторе. Родно равноправно законодавство, репродуктивна права, бесплатно и доступно школовање, афирмација запошљавања жене, основни су домети југословенских политика и еманципаторских пракси у социјализму. Уз систем социјалне заштите коју је држава пружала, социјалних права, социјалне сигурности и шире здравствене заштите, социјалистичка политика рода има видљивије ефекте. Та права су често произвођила круцијалне промене у животу жена. Истовремено, родне политике југословенске државе нису искорениле наслеђене обрасце и патријархалне односе у породици, а двострука оптерећеност и конфликтност улога запослене жене никада

није била превазиђена. Друштвено организована брига о деци, због наглашене неуједначености мреже ових установа у различитим деловима Југославије, била је делимично успешна, а мере социјализације кућног рада, преношења дела домаћих послова на јавне службе и установе, у пракси су биле ограниченог домета и имале су скромније ефекте. Упркос њима, двоструки рад жена интегрисан је у социјализам. Женско ослобађање у социјалистичкој Југославији и друштвену афирмацију жена ограничавала је и континуирана доминација мушкараца у политици и на свим нивоима одлучивања, али и женска искуства подређености у различитим сегментима живота. Политикама које су промовисале политичку, друштвену, културну еманципацију и родну равноправност дуго се одупирала свакодневица живота жене на селу, снагом коју је наглашавала различитост у локалним контекстима.