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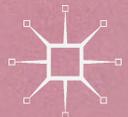


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The Feminist Challenge to
the Socialist State in Yugoslavia

ZSÓFIA LÓRÁND

skc Beograd



Genders and Sexualities in History

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Palgrave Macmillan's series, *Genders and Sexualities in History*, aims to accommodate and foster new approaches to historical research in the fields of genders and sexualities. The series will promote world-class scholarship that concentrates upon the interconnected themes of genders, sexualities, religions/religiosity, civil society, class formations, politics and war.

Historical studies of gender and sexuality have often been treated as disconnected fields, while in recent years historical analyses in these two areas have synthesized, creating new departures in historiography. By linking genders and sexualities with questions of religion, civil society, politics and the contexts of war and conflict, this series will reflect recent developments in scholarship, moving away from the previously dominant and narrow histories of science, scientific thought and legal processes. The result brings together scholarship from contemporary, modern, early modern, medieval, classical and non-Western history to provide a diachronic forum for scholarship that incorporates new approaches to genders and sexualities in history.

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Zsófia Lóránd

The Feminist
Challenge to the
Socialist State in
Yugoslavia

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Genders and Sexualities in History

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*To Enikő Szalontai and Edit Lóránd, and to the memory
of Terézia Vértesi and Erika Harmath, this book
is gratefully dedicated*

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

Palgrave Macmillan's series, *Genders and Sexualities in History*, aims to accommodate and foster new approaches to historical research in the fields of genders and sexualities. The series promotes world-class scholarship that concentrates upon the interconnected themes of genders, sexualities, religions/religiosity, civil society, class formations, politics and war. Historical studies of gender and sexuality have often been treated as disconnected fields, while in recent years historical analyses in these two areas have synthesised, creating new departures in historiography. By linking genders and sexualities with questions of religion, civil society, politics and the contexts of war and conflict, this series will reflect recent developments in scholarship, moving away from the previously dominant and narrow histories of science, scientific thought and legal processes. The result brings together scholarship from contemporary, modern, early modern, medieval, classical and non-Western history to provide a diachronic forum for scholarship that incorporates new approaches to genders and sexualities in history.

The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia is a groundbreaking study of the challenges posed in the 1970s and 1980s to the Yugoslav state by new Yugoslav feminist organisations and activism. This fascinating and highly original book explores how the new Yugoslav feminism, or *neofeminizam*, began to rethink the socialist project of women's emancipation. New Yugoslav feminism took a critical, dissenting stance within the Yugoslav state system and promoted achievement of the unfulfilled promise of women's equality in Yugoslavia.

Language, concepts and ideology were key elements in the new Yugoslav feminism, which drew inspiration from critical Marxism, post-structuralist French feminism, psychology, anthropology and sociology, and built upon the Yugoslav partisan tradition as an emancipatory ideology for women. The former Yugoslavia had the longest and most active and critically incisive feminist history in Eastern Europe between the end of the World War II and the fall of state socialism in 1989. In this timely and compelling book, Zsófia Lóránd analyses one of Yugoslavia's greatest promises, the equality of women and the ways in which new Yugoslav feminism strove to challenge the state to achieve women's equality in reality. In common with all volumes in the *Genders and Sexualities in History* series, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* presents a multifaceted and meticulously researched scholarly study and is a sophisticated contribution to our understanding of the past.

John Arnold
Joanna Bourke
Sean Brady

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This book would not exist and certainly would not be the same without the help and support of many people. First and foremost, this book would not exist without the women who made new Yugoslav feminism in the 1970s and 1980s possible, many of whom generously talked to me at length about their lives. It is partly in respect for their openness that I will make my acknowledgements here personal. I was deeply impressed when some 15 years ago, I learned about the existence of such a rich history of feminism in Yugoslavia as early as 1970s and 1980s. I'm writing this story, so that we, feminists in East Central Europe and beyond, can have it and share it.

I cannot find words sufficient to express my appreciation of those women who took the time to share their memories with me. These conversations often went far beyond the exchange of information. I felt that I received not only material for this book, but care and precious lessons for life. Many of you kept on standing by my side and helping me with contacts, advice, materials, giving all this unconditionally, without knowing what the outcome of this book would be. I can only hope that you will like it. You have my gratitude forever, dearest Dunja Blažević, Nadežda Čačinovič, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Mojca Dobnikar, Slavenka Drakulić, Andrea Feldman, Vlasta Jalušič, Biljana Kašić, Vesna Kesić, Vera Litričin, Lepa Mladenović, Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Nada Popović Perišić, Tanja Rener, Biljana Tomić (for our coffee talk), Neda Todorović, Sofija Trivunac, Dubravka Ugrešić, Dragica Vukadinović, Lina Vušković and Sonja Drljević, who left us just a couple of weeks before I finished this manuscript.

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Feminist friendships are so special that one day I will write a book about the subject. Until then, I can only say that it has been most empowering, entertaining and enriching to have all these years conversing with and learning from my smart, innovative and sensitive activist friends, first and foremost Mariann Dósa and someone who for me, redefined the concept of best friend: Éva Cserhádi.

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The poster on the cover of this book was designed by Lepa Mladenović with the help of Dragan Stojanovski. The Serbo-Croatian script says:

“I, you, they ... for us”

“women’s solidarity now”

“women against violence against women”

Third Yugoslav Feminist Meeting [or gathering], feminist group Woman and Society, from 30 March till 1 April 1990. SKC Belgrade.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFŽ	<i>Antifašistički front žena</i> /Anti-Fascist Front of Women
JNA	<i>Jugoslavenska narodna armija</i> /Yugoslav People's Army
KDAŽ	<i>Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena</i> /Conference for the Social Activity of Women
NOB	<i>Narodna oslobodilačka borba</i> /People's Liberation Struggle
SC	<i>Studentski Centar</i> /Students' Centre
SFRJ (SFRY)	<i>Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija</i> /Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SKC	<i>Studentski Kulturni Centar</i> /Students' Cultural Centre
SKJ	<i>Savez komunista Jugoslavije</i> /League of Communists of Yugoslavia
ŠKUC	<i>Študentski kulturno-umetniški center</i> /Students' Cultural and Art Centre
SRH	<i>Socijalistička Republika Hrvatska</i> /Socialist Republic of Croatia
SSRNJ	<i>Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije</i> /Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“We were learning a feminist language. At the beginning, I was always rethinking my sentences, asking myself the question: ‘what would this mean in the vocabulary of feminism?’ It was not just words we were translating, it was thoughts”. This is how Vera Litričin, an ophthalmologist, summarised her experience of her first encounter with the feminist group taking its first steps in Belgrade.¹ Language, concepts and ideology were the key elements to a new feminism emerging in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s. The late 1960s were boiling with women wanting to speak up, to influence politics and to take charge of their lives. By no means should this suggest that there was nothing between the 1960s and the first moments of feminism in the nineteenth century, but the protest spirit of the 1960s and the feminist disappointment with these movements of the 1960s mobilised feminist thought and feminist activism.² In Yugoslavia, it was a couple of decades into socialism when a handful of intellectual women out in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb began to rethink and challenge the socialist project of women’s emancipation.

In the mid-1970s, the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana and the students’ cultural centres in Belgrade and Ljubljana offered space for the groups which were called *Žena i društvo* [Woman and Society]. The group had a “very traditional name, but still, we were feminists from the beginning”—said Biljana Kašić, a sociologist member of the group from Zagreb, who studied earlier in Belgrade and later taught at the University

of Rijeka. This name itself tells us a lot about the place of this group within the Yugoslav political and intellectual scene. The phenomenon which is referred to here mostly as the *new Yugoslav feminism*—sometimes called by the members *neofeminizam*, that is “new feminism”, a name, however, not acknowledged by all the members of the group—took a critical, counter-discursive, dissenting stance within the Yugoslav system. The new Yugoslav feminism targeted the proclaimed, yet to them, unfulfilled equality of women in Yugoslavia. They argued from a feminist base, inspired and infused by critical Marxism, post-structuralist French feminism, new theories in psychology, anthropology and sociology, but also referring to the Yugoslav partisan tradition as an emancipatory ideology for women. The arguments took shape first in academic work, the arts and literature, relatively quickly reaching the popular mass media and turning into activism.

This research places itself within the scholarship which treats feminism, similar to the artistic counterculture in Western capitalisms from the 1960s on, as dissent. While acknowledging that dissidence in the oppressive regimes of the Soviet Bloc had different stakes and different limitations, one cannot think of East European socialisms in terms of the pure binaries of state vs. individual, collaboration and resistance. Reading through the history of these movements and the theoretical implications arising from that, I base my analysis on the questioning of the binary and focus on the tensions and balance within the new Yugoslav feminist discourse. Therefore, my claim is that through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from “Western” feminisms and through transfer creating their own version, new Yugoslav feminism was cooperating with the state and criticising it at the same time.

With the longest feminist history in Eastern Europe between the Second World War (hereinafter WWII) and the fall of state socialism, Yugoslavia offers a case study where the socialist state was challenged based on one of its biggest promises, the equality of women. It was exactly this promise that placed new Yugoslav feminism at the crossroads of discourses. In contrast to Western capitalist societies, where feminism directly clashed with the state about women’s emancipation and therefore clearly appeared as dissent, in Eastern Europe the state guaranteed many of the rights which the North American and West European feminist groups were fighting for.³ In the meantime, new Yugoslav feminism was a counter-discourse vis-à-vis the newly emerging oppositional

discourses in Yugoslavia too. The oppositional groups either refused to discuss women's rights in search of an agenda of liberal democracy which disregards difference or, with a bio/ethno-nationalistic agenda, propagated the reversal of the supposedly "unnatural" and forced emancipation of women.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE EVENTS, FORUMS AND MEMBERS OF THE NEW YUGOSLAV FEMINISM

The story begins in the early 1970s: at this point, what we find in the open are journal publications, and what we find backstage are a handful of young women and a few university professors following the Western feminist movement, beginning to compare the situation in their own country and looking for ways in which their insights could be communicated resulting in change and not punishment. As we can see from the interviews and from their biographies, these women came from a relatively homogeneous social background and, with a few exceptions, were from the same generation. It was a generation born after the war, from mothers who had a first-hand war experience and very often were themselves active participants of the partisan movement. Unlike their mothers, these women were puzzled by the contradiction between the promise of the regime and their own experience of their "emancipation", the lives of their mothers who were supposedly equal to their fathers and the women around them, who on the level of discourse were equal to men.⁴ Academia seemed to be a relatively safe space for the first tentative publications about "what is happening to American women".⁵ Also, because of the influence of some professors and the openness of some women officials in the state women's organisation, the *Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena* [Conference for the Social Participation of Women], that is the KDAŽ, some of the young women and men could participate in the conferences and editorial work of the journal *Žena* [Woman].

The array of journals accepting feminist pieces expanded relatively quickly. From 1975 on, it included *Pitanja* [Questions], *Naše teme* [Our topics], *Argumenti* [Arguments], *Ideje* [Ideas], *Socijalizam u svetu* [Socialism in the world], *Dometi* [Scopes], *Republika* [Republic], *Književnost* [Literature], and in the 1980s, *Problemi* [Problems] in Slovenia. The student journals, *Mladina* [Youth] in Ljubljana and *Student* and *Vidici* [Views] in Belgrade, also provided important forums for new

feminist discussions, which is not by accident: the youth organisations enjoyed relative freedom from state control in their activities.⁶

With time, the feminist articles reached a wider audience through newspapers and weeklies, such as *NIN* [*Nedjeljne informativne novine*—Weekly informative news], *Danas* [Today], *Start*, as well as women's magazines, such as *Bazar* published in Belgrade, *Svijet* [World] in Zagreb and *Jana* in Ljubljana. *Naša žena* [Our woman], another print medium in Ljubljana, was a magazine between the more serious *Žena* and the popular women's magazines. The journalist, writer and sociologist Slavenka Drakulić, the sociologist Vesna Pusić, the journalist (sociologist and psychologist by training) Vesna Kesić and Sofija Trivunac, a psychologist from Belgrade, were frequent authors of these popularised articles about serious feminist issues. Helping the spread and exchange of feminist ideas, the media space was open for contributors from all of Yugoslavia and the main papers were also accessible throughout the territory of the whole country.

The institutional framework was provided partly by the youth organisations also publishing *Student* and *Vidici*, and partly by the universities in Zagreb and Ljubljana: the groups called *Žena i društvo* were part of the sociology departments of these universities. In Belgrade, the most important stronghold of new feminism was the SKC, the Students' Cultural Centre, where the director of the Gallery of the SKC, later the director of the whole institution, was Dunja Blažević. A group of young and talented curators, such as Biljana Tomić and Bojana Pejić, met here with university students and later scholars and professionals such as the sociologist Žarana Papić, the psychologist Sofija Trivunac, the construction engineer Sonja Drljević and the journalist Lina Vušković. Under the auspices of the SKC, Papić, Blažević, the writer and film-maker Jasmina Tešanović and Nada Ler-Sofronić, the only member of the new Yugoslav feminist circles from Sarajevo, arranged the first international feminist conference in Yugoslavia in 1978. Many women joined the feminist circles after they had attended the conference. The programme organiser of the SKC, Dragica Vukadinović, helped with the conference and made many other feminist events at the SKC possible. This famous and canonical conference, however, was preceded by many publications (since 1972), a lot of brainstorming, as well as events including public forums, open discussions, exhibitions and literary readings, and even feminist presentations at KDAŽ organised conferences, starting in 1976 in Portorož.⁷

At the beginning, Belgrade and Zagreb were the most active venues, but the only participant from Sarajevo, Ler-Sofronić, became one of the most prolific and creative authors of scholarly work. The Ljubljana scene joined the other two *Žena i društvo* groups later, in the early 1980s. Perhaps because of the later awakening of the group, it was more complex in the sense that it found a niche both at the university and at the ŠKUC, the students' centre in Ljubljana.

The intense interpersonal exchange throughout the member states and the connections with the international feminist scene were possible partly due to the fact that many women studied and worked in different cities. For example, Rada Iveković, Biljana Kašić and Dunja Blažević studied both in Zagreb and Belgrade. Silva Mežnarić taught at both the University of Zagreb and the University of Ljubljana. The women in the group were friends, who visited and hosted each other in the other cities. Nada Popović-Perišić's dissertation about the *écriture féminine* was refused for defence in Belgrade and was highly praised and defended in Zagreb.⁸ Also, due to the different attitudes of the local KDAŽs, some actions or events were possible rather in one city than the other: as an example, the Zagreb KDAŽ gave funding to the Zagreb women to travel to the 1978 conference to Belgrade, while the event was harshly criticised by the KDAŽ there.

The history of the new Yugoslav feminism has its own periodisation, while it was running parallel with the new or second-wave feminisms in the "West". After the beginnings in the early 1970s, 1978 was a milestone for having made feminism visible in Yugoslavia and attracting members who did not know about the groups before. After this phase, there was a turn, to many, a "second wave" around 1985–1986, when many women wanted a change in the work of the groups, focusing more on activism and consciousness-raising in small, women-only groups. The next phase in their story started around 1990, when new, increasingly diverse groups were born out of the *Žena i društvo* circles, going in different directions: from political and soon, anti-war activism through a more developed LGBT activism and anti-violence activism to institutionalising feminist knowledge by the creation of women's studies or gender studies centres and departments at the universities or as parallel institutions. The phase after 1990 is so different from the times before that this is the time when my analysis ends.

The events themselves can also be categorised. In the early times, the meetings were highly informal, taking place in kitchens, cafés or pubs,

and due to their size were between a consciousness-raising group and a seminar. For example, there were talks about psychoanalysis at Vera Smiljanić's apartment, which Sofija Trivunac remembers not only as professional, but also as "consciousness-raising meetings". These grew into university seminars or talks, to which invitations were sent out; such events took place mostly in Ljubljana and Zagreb. In Belgrade, the SKC offered a series of discussions, the *tribina*. These were open to the public, but the organisers and those more interested in the topic of the discussion often went out for a drink for more casual discussions. The venue was the Marjež kafana, which "we never left in a bad mood", says Lina Vušković. The women were growing together, changing together and sharing the experience of realising what being a feminist means. Lina Vušković puts it in these words: "To give up on traditional gender roles and to start living a feminist life is a very painful process. What you gain, however, is self-respect, the most precious human sentiment".⁹

The conferences (the 1978 international conference in Belgrade, and then the Yugoslav feminist conferences in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990) and the summer schools at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik from 1987 on were attracting the largest audiences and opened up to women who would otherwise not have attended the feminist meetings. After 1985, the small group meetings returned, this time out of the intention of the group members. Both the consciousness-raising groups, where personal experiences were worked on, and the training groups for the SOS helplines for abused women and victims of domestic violence, required the closed format. At the same time, because of the SOS helpline and the activities around it, the feminists reached a much wider audience, which could have served even as a basis for a wider grass-roots movement, had the war not come. The three groups in the three cities cooperated very closely in the creation of these helplines, sharing knowledge and experience. This was also the time when the Zagreb scene was enriched by the joining of the key figures of anti-violence activists such as Vesna Mimica, Katarina Vidović and Nela Pamuković.

The phases in the history of new Yugoslav feminism also mean different phases in which a certain discipline or discourse was more dominant than the others, attracting different audiences and creating different languages. These factors define the ways criticism can be expressed, and therefore, this book is structured along disciplines or mediums, from academia through art and literature, popular mass media to activism.

THE THEORETICAL CONSEQUENCES AND THE PLACE OF THIS PROJECT IN THE EXISTING HISTORIOGRAPHY

The histories of socialist Eastern Europe are still, as Alexei Yurchak points out, written in what he calls binary metaphors, which subscribe to a post-socialist master narrative “in the history of socialism that implicitly and explicitly reproduce binary categories of the Cold War and the opposition between ‘first world’ and ‘second world’”, thus ignoring the ethical and aesthetic complexities of socialist life.¹⁰ Within this, Yugoslavia is seen as the exception,¹¹ which in the meantime leads to a predominant focus on its nationalist dissidents, changing the binary opposition to that between mildly oppressive regime and diverse range of nationalist dissidents at the time I examine here.¹² This exceptionality of the regime is highlighted in books about the complexity of socialist everyday life in Yugoslavia,¹³ which confirm the idea that everyday practices during state socialism “do not constitute a new binary. They are not in an either-or relationship; rather, they are indivisible and mutually productive”.¹⁴ The same theory may apply not only to the everyday experience of the citizens of state-socialist countries, but also to the intellectuals and the intellectual discourse produced by these intellectuals.

For various reasons, new Yugoslav feminism is a case par excellence of the productive encounter of discourses. Engaging in a dialogue with the state, building on its promise of gender equality, the new Yugoslav feminists did not oppose directly the Yugoslav state, but saw women’s place there as constant opposition: as Nada Ler-Sofronić puts it

throughout the thousand-year long oppression of women, women could maintain a relatively autonomous position (...) [while they] had to obey those in power, fit into the system and the existing order. While doing so, they remained in opposition and they managed to preserve an inner, a different sociability [*društvenost*] in themselves with the help of psychological resistance and by constantly reminding themselves of their dissatisfactory position.¹⁵

The state admitted the lack of full emancipation of women and that the “patriarchal consciousness” remained present in Yugoslav socialism, as we can see in the statements of state representatives at public events about the status of women.¹⁶ In the meantime, what they offered, was not enough from the new feminist perspective. The disappointment of this new generation of young women is similar to the

experience of the feminists in the USA and Western Europe, and this aspect should be constantly kept in mind when we discuss the difference between the so-called East and the so-called West.¹⁷ Despite the differences in the economic and political systems, the new feminist movement and ideology were born out of a disappointment with the promises of the Left.¹⁸

The new Yugoslav feminists learned about the West and the criticism of existing democracies through the inner, feminist dissidence¹⁹; thus, they were inspired and critical of Western capitalist democracies at the same time, unlike for example the liberal dissident groups in Central Europe. The new Yugoslav feminism, as we shall see, posed strict criticism by pointing out the systemic nature of the oppression of women, thematising new sexualities, and most importantly, being the first to thematise the violence women endure. Their claim was that the state did not change the *status quo*, one of their conclusions being that once the regime was built on patriarchy, it became ideologically impossible for women to achieve real equality there.²⁰ Joan W. Scott warns that feminism should dispute “those histories of democracy that attribute earlier exclusions to temporary glitches in a perfectible, ever-expansive pluralist system and that take the extension of the vote, outside its necessarily consistent indicator of the absence of inequality in a society”.²¹ The rights provided by the party state were exactly the extensions of the already existing political system. To change the structures, a new approach (see the title of the 1978 conference: “Comrade-ess woman, a new approach”), a new vocabulary was needed. In the meantime, the framework of the socialist Yugoslav state itself was not a target of attack by the new Yugoslav feminists, which can be explained not just through strategic considerations, but also by the state’s however imperfect engagement with women’s emancipation, as well as by the feminists’ critical assessment of the situation of women in other contexts. As we shall see, the depth and radicalism of criticism towards the state depended on the medium or publicity, the time and the theme as well.

The new Yugoslav feminist criticism of the state helps us to understand dissent throughout the region of East Central Europe. It is useful to compare the new Yugoslav feminist critique both to other countries, which had similar state projects of women’s emancipation with little or no feminist critique, as well as to other forms of dissent, such as liberal or national dissidence. Here, it is important to recognize the pluralistic nature of dissent in the region, as well as the contested meanings of terms. For example, in his text from 1988, Tony Judt cuts through the abundance

of terms (opposition, dissent, anti-politics, resistance) and chooses dissidence and opposition, opting rather for the latter, saying: “my interest is in people and movements that function as opponents of the Party and the state, and which occupy that role in novel ways”.²² I call the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia a critical discourse and a form of dissent, rather than dissidence. Despite the commonalities between new Yugoslav feminism and Central European dissidents in strategies and in their critical discourse, there are prevailing differences in their circumstances, theories and approaches; hence, the concept of dissidence in my text will be reserved for the dissident circles in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A key difference is that Yugoslav feminists attempted to engage the state in a dialogue rather than refusing it per se, as most dissidence does. In the meantime, it makes sense to look at this new feminism in the light of dissenting discourses, because of the dissenting status of feminism elsewhere and because of the windows the self-definition of dissidents themselves offer for this.²³ Yurchak’s approach is rather useful for the history of Yugoslav feminism, and he is critical of the Czechoslovak dissident intellectual Václav Havel for his repeating binaries.²⁴ At the same time, Havel’s famous idea of dissidence, in my reading, has the potential of opening up the concept of dissidence (which does not fit the Yugoslav feminists) to one of dissent, which is rather productive:

writers who write as they wish without regard for censorship or official demands and who issue their work –when official publishers refuse to print it – as samizdat. They may be philosophers, historians, sociologists, and all those who practice independent scholarship and, if it is impossible through official or semi-official channels, who also circulate their work in samizdat or who organize private discussions, lectures, and seminars. They may be teachers who privately teach young people things that are kept from them in the state schools; clergymen who [...] try to carry on a free religious life; painters, musicians, and singers who practice their work regardless of how it is looked upon by official institutions; everyone who shares this independent culture and helps to spread it.²⁵

The new feminists in Yugoslavia did not publish in samizdat; neither were they imprisoned for their writings. However, what I will show throughout this book is that they were in search of critical or oppositional positions within the state’s mainstream. They created a micro-space where nonconformist ideas could be discussed, critical thoughts were disseminated outside the official classroom space, and new research was done despite the resistance of the institutions.

Importantly enough, this happened in a country where there was no pre-publication censorship, journals were controlled through funding and where, adhering to a few rules, one could even express criticism of the regime. These few rules are well summed-up in the list of themes Jasna Dragović-Soso provides. Issues that could not be questioned were the “inherently positive value of Yugoslav unification”, the negative nature of the Yugoslav regime between the two world wars and finally the official interpretation of the “war of national liberation” and the communist revolution.²⁶ Many of my interviewees would add to this list, or simplify it to the untouchable status of Tito, the SKJ and the unquestionability of the existence of Yugoslavia.

Looking at “possibilities of dissent” in Yugoslavia, Sharon Zukin argues that “[i]n states that claim to operate on the basis of a Marxist ideology, there is an enormous vulnerability to dissent because of the gap between theory and practice. In capitalist states, dissent arises in more limited institutional contexts, notably over the excesses of administrative agencies or the dishonesty of executive authorities”.²⁷ She claims that due to the framework, the activity of Đilas or the Praxis group is closer to “whistle-blowing” in the USA than to East European dissidence. In the meantime, she also debates the “liberalism” of the Yugoslav state, and she suggests rather discussing different strategies of control, such as creating a controlled space within the state: “neither self-management nor market socialism is as central to Yugoslav development as the relatively noncoercive strategies of labour mobilization and capital accumulation that the leadership established in response to internal and external pressures beginning in 1947 and 1948. And it is wrong to characterize these strategies as liberalism”.²⁸ Even for critical intellectual positions, there could be severe consequences of a publication in a scholarly journal or in the form of poetry.²⁹ Editors of journals could also be dismissed by the “publisher” of the journal, i.e. the associations, companies, social, political, educational and other specialised professional institutions,³⁰ which were working under the umbrella of the SSRNJ (Socijalistička savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije—Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia).³¹ Nick Miller describes the path of dissent in Yugoslavia starting with a move from Marxism to Marxist revisionism, followed by a more oppositional stream demanding democracy (or at least freedom of expression, irrespective of nationalist claims, that follow later), and the ethno-nationalist opposition (which ideologically is hardly a bearer of the previous waves, even if there were personal overlaps between these).³²

In other countries, such as Hungary, Poland and then Czechoslovakia, dissidents by the 1980s gave up on Marxism, and few maintained a left-orientation and expressed their reservations about the introduction of capitalism after 1989.³³ Another element of the shift within which the “Marxist opposition turned into a more general search for standard liberal goals: the right to speak, the right to gather, the right to open critique of their political, social, economic, and cultural system”,³⁴ was a focus on human rights,³⁵ which also became part of the feminist discourse in Yugoslavia with the activist turn in the mid-1980s. The ambivalent emancipation of women offered by the state socialist regimes made it impossible for liberal or nationalist dissidents, who by the 1980s had almost entirely given up on Marxism, to relate to a feminism, which relied on Marxian ideas in some of its argumentation and at least partly acknowledged the improvements in women’s situation in socialist countries. This underscores both the plurality of dissidence in the region, and points to one of the reasons why feminism and feminist ideas were marginalised by liberal and nationalist dissidents during and post-transition.

The perception of a certain group by the regime they criticise also defines their actions: the political scientists Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, within the frames of further binaries, delineate the concepts of “ethical civil society” and “political society”,³⁶ and the significance of these categories in Central European dissent is analysed in detail by Alan Renwick.³⁷ The most important difference between the two positions is that whereas the basis of action for the ethical civil society is the “ethics of truth (...), political society is interest-based”.³⁸ The former has the capacity to be anti-political, whereas the latter necessarily involves compromise, through, for example, entering the political arena. In the case of the Central European dissidents, this arena is the state. Further options are to ignore the state. This is what happens in anti-politics and political secession, or to engage the state from the outside. These strategic and ideological choices serve as analytical categories too,³⁹ and they help in pointing out the difference between new Yugoslav feminism, which engaged with the state from the outside and therefore more closely approached a “political civil society”, and the anti-politics of the dissidents of the 1980s.

When looking at feminist activism in the UK and Sweden around the issue of domestic violence, Lesley McMillan analyses possibilities for the feminists in their relations to the state. Her analysis warns of the power any state has over influencing the outcomes of a movement. Quite importantly, McMillan specifies the two, often contradictory ways in which the feminists working against domestic violence had to relate to the state: on

the level of practical policies, the second-wave of feminism wanted response from the state in the form of policy changes, while the movement considered the state “responsible for upholding oppressive gender relations”.⁴⁰ To achieve these goals, Linda Briskin delineates two main lines of strategies, those of “mainstreaming” and of “disengagement”,⁴¹ which is very similar to the Linz-Stepan model of civil societies. Although Briskin and McMillan draw their models and conclusions about the examples of liberal democratic states, comparison is possible: the Yugoslav state is similar to the one which “offers relatively safe environments for change but threaten deliberation through a lack of clear opposition”.⁴² When it comes to women’s rights, while offering a state implemented programme of women’s emancipation, the Yugoslav state also attempted to eliminate the critique and opposition to such policies through the dissolution of the independent women’s organisations in 1953. Pointing out the dangers of focusing on the state, McMillan quotes Charles Tilly, who writes in his *From Mobilisation to Revolution*: “If the state is in the focus of demands, it has the ability to facilitate or repress movements by making collective actions more or less costly”.⁴³

This book is at the crossroads of various fields of historiography. The history of new Yugoslav feminism in the 1970s and 1980s is covered in part in the articles of Barbara Jancar, Sabrina Ramet, Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac. The Slovenian part of the story is told in detail, albeit from a different angle, by Vlasta Jalušič in her introduction and through the interviews in the volume *Kako smo hodile v feministično gimnazijo* [How We Attended Feminist High School].⁴⁴ Interviews commemorate these times in the volume *Aktivistkinje* [Activist women] as well.⁴⁵ The 1978 conference is commemorated and analysed in detail in the MA thesis of Chiara Bonfiglioli—later published as an article as well. Some important aspects of the Dubrovnik summer schools are covered in the MA thesis of Marijana Mitrović, later also published as an article and in the personal recollections of the participants of the events of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik.⁴⁶ The story of the LGBT movements is presented in Slovenian by Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan.⁴⁷ There is much more literature available on the post-1991 era in terms of both women’s and LGBT activism, and here, I would mention the work of Bojan Aleksov, Bojan Bilić, Elissa Helms, Ana Miškovska Kajevska and Dubravka Žarkov.⁴⁸ The histories of women and socialism reflect and tell the stories of the changes of women’s position under socialism. About the partisan experience of women, there is the work of Ivana Pantelić, Jelena Batinić and Barbara Wiesinger,⁴⁹ also Chiara Bonfiglioli and Barbara Jancar.⁵⁰ About the situation of women in Yugoslavia, the work of Vera Gudac-Dodić and

the edited volume by Latinka Perović,⁵¹ about violence and oppression in women's lives, the writings of Renata Jambrešić Kirin provide crucial information.⁵² The debates about the role of state socialism in women's emancipation, together with the historical works assessing the results of the state's emancipatory politics and the new research on the role and agency of women under socialism, were also influential for the approach and position of my work.⁵³ The critique of the feminists in Yugoslavia, however, shed a new light on the assessment of the state-socialist achievements regarding gender equality, as their critique of the state and debates with the state show that despite the dedication of several women and organisations within the state structure, state-socialist regimes remained highly patriarchal.⁵⁴

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This book, first and foremost, intends to do what Quentin Skinner beautifully calls the “humanist project of interpreting texts”,⁵⁵ while it also intends to tell a story. My analysis relies on and hopes to successfully and creatively combine different feminist authors and their way of reading history, from Gerda Lerner to Joan W. Scott, and the linguistic contextualism of the Cambridge School, especially J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner, some achievements of Reinhart Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte* and a conceptual-contextual approach to ideologies as done by Michael Freeden. While conceptual history focuses on the meanings of the texts through a contextual reading, for feminist historiography, there always is an explicit political stake in recovering events of the past. In my reading, the two support each other in the sense that it is the interest of feminist historiography to have meanings of concepts central to certain ideologies recovered, while intellectual history's contextualism implicitly and often even explicitly subscribes to the importance of the personal within the political. The strategies behind feminist movements always necessarily involve an intervention with language and a struggle for meanings, the reconstruction of which is the primary aim of conceptual and intellectual history, which at the very same time respects the importance of the role of the personal and the individual too.

Since we speak about a group of intellectuals, their textual interventions into the discourse of the state are among their earliest and most important achievements, which later provided a foundation for the first activist steps, leading to the establishment of the first SOS hotlines for victims of domestic and gender-based violence in Eastern Europe. In reaction to the still present “patriarchal consciousness”, they offered a new language, a language created through transfers and translations,⁵⁶ or, in Lucy Delap's

phrasing, through various interactions and interchanges.⁵⁷ I find Delap's analytical frame especially useful for my own work, because the framework she borrows from Daniel Rodgers⁵⁸ includes the political actions as well as transnational political association arising from the shared texts. Delap sees feminism as a "shared conversation", which, nonetheless, is "not simply about ideas, but also about creative experimentation" (39). The meanings of shared languages change in different contexts and "commence with the diffusion and sharing of key texts, and deepen via the construction of friendship and professional networks". This leads to the sharing of techniques and practices, including the *sharing of a language* and the creation of "*semantic resources previously not available*" (66–67). My interest is in the new ideologies and new concepts, the new meanings produced through the sharing of languages. Ideologies not only are based on concepts, but there always is a struggle for the meanings of those concepts. In order to understand concepts, ideas or ideologies, in order to give my protagonists or "their thought a history, we have to provide an activity or a continuity of action".⁵⁹

In my own analysis, I use ideology and discourse alternately throughout the text, being aware that feminist authors and activists are often cautious with the term *ideology* itself. I find ideology a more clear-cut term than the overused term discourse, and more useful when speaking about the encounter of feminism with other ideologies, such as Marxism, Marxist revisionism and socialism. Christine Stansell, for example, admits the unease of many feminists, herself as well, with the word ideology: "Ideology, of connotations of dogma, is too strong a description".⁶⁰ In the meantime, she herself emphasises the importance of the changing vocabulary within a certain ideology, such as feminism, across time: for example, the 1920s brought along a change in the feminist movement in the Anglo-American world through a new vocabulary: "These newest New Women spoke not so much about women's rights but about the human race, labor, democracy and 'feminism,' the latter a French word gaining currency in the English lexicon".⁶¹ Maren Lockwood Carden, when writing a very-very early history in 1974 of the new feminist movement in the USA emerging in the 1960s, is more relaxed about a professional use of the word ideology. She explains ideology as "a set of ideas, arguments and principles which make up the rationale for the movement's existence".⁶² Her definition is taken from social movement theories, which, as she reminds the readers, unlike Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*, treat ideology as a neutral term in the description of social and intellectual phenomena.

"Ideologies are at the heart of political process", claims Michael Freedman in the introduction of his edited volume, *Reassessing Political*

Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent.⁶³ He also refers to Mannheim as the one who “identified ideologies as systems that endorsed the status quo, in the face of the status quo defenders” (3). In the meantime, Freedman claims what is also the position of this book, that ideologies are “normal and extensive forms of thought” (1). In his seminal work, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, he bases the interpretation of ideologies on the interpretation of concepts within ideologies, stating that it is the ideologies which select the meaning and establish networks of meaning.⁶⁴ Within the networks, meanings also influence each other and depending on the ideology, some of them take a more central place than other concepts. Freedman calls these the core concepts and peripheral concepts within each ideology.⁶⁵ The difference between concepts and words, in the words of the founder of conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck, is that “[s]ocial and political concepts possess a substantial claim to generality and always have meanings [...] in modalities other than words”,⁶⁶ they are “thus the concentrate of substantial meanings” (84). Koselleck warns us that without common concepts “there is no political field of action” (74), justifying the conceptual analysis of feminist phenomena.

In *Ideologies and Political Theory*, Freedman applies his approach to feminism, as a new ideology with a certain agenda but which, together with “green ideology”, are “trying to escape the morphological and interpretative constraints of the older established ideologies”.⁶⁷ The attempt to escape these constraints is faced by Stansell and Carden and is reaffirmed by Delap. Delap adds a footnote: feminism “should remain understood as a term in transition, indicating no accepted and clearly bound set of ideas or political agenda”.⁶⁸ This reluctance to set the boundaries of an ideology, even in a marvellously well-argued and researched study of an ideology, as that of Delap’s, indicates the prevalence of the Mannheimian fear of the Marx-Engelsian concept of ideology as dogma and as one which necessarily brings along repression on behalf of those with more power.⁶⁹ Diana Coole elegantly cuts through this dilemma, when she writes that over the history of feminism in the twentieth century, “the kind of interventions at each stage were those appropriate to the specific situation they engaged, rather than phases of one continuous project”.⁷⁰

The writing of feminist intellectual histories is crucial in order to place feminism in dialogue with other schools of thought, other ideologies, what I attempt to do here. The field of feminist intellectual history itself, however, has much less representative texts than the history of the movement. Apart from Delap and Coole, there are two works I would use

as examples. Ute Gerhard's *Desiring Revolution* is the intellectual history of the sexual revolution, read from a critical feminist perspective.⁷¹ Rosalind Rosenberg's 1982 book is another example, one which explores the intellectual roots of modern feminism from the late nineteenth century on.⁷² Joan W. Scott's *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, the history of French feminism from 1792 to 1944 through the work of four feminist thinkers, claims to make an attempt to move feminist history out of the tradition it stands in since the nineteenth century. She sees this history of feminism as "the history of women who have only had paradoxes to offer [...] because [...] historically modern Western feminism is constituted by the discursive practices of democratic politics that have equated individuality with masculinity".⁷³ Instead of a search for "strategies of opposition" of the movement, Scott wants "to understand feminism in terms of the discursive processes – epistemologies, institutions, and practices – that produce political subjects, that make agency (in this case the agency of the feminists) possible even when it is forbidden or denied" (16). In my interpretation, the "strategies of opposition" are born out of these discursive processes.

One of the groundbreaking authors in women's history, Gerda Lerner's historical writing was highly influenced by her work in the women's movement and her own work with poor, unskilled women. Her experience with consciousness-raising leads her to the writing of her seminal essay on women's consciousness, which became instructive for the next generations of feminist historians, including those in this book, such as Barbara Jancar and Lydia Sklevicky.⁷⁴ Lerner is an excellent example of how a discourse, an ideological position, builds up from personal experience, activist knowledge and academic knowledge. This is important in light of the debate whether ideologies are born from movements or movements from ideologies.

Therefore, while my research in its methodology mostly focuses on published sources, I closely read these with the aim of understanding how a feminist ideology is shaped. I do so with keeping in mind the significance of the individual authors and the way meanings disseminate in their writings. The Cambridge School scholars, as well as Freeden, emphasise the focus on individual texts instead of creating a grand narrative which does not fit into any historical context. Freeden refers to two authors from the 1960s, Robert Lane and Philip Converse, who both worked to expand ideology to the grass-roots or individual positions of the common people, against the association of ideology with

high politics and the ruling class, as it has earlier been done.⁷⁵ The consequence of the focus on a multitude of authors and positions is the “unpacking” of the internal complexity of the major ideological families. Unlike Freedon, I would not call these ideologies “democratically produced”, but through the multitude of voices, these ideologies reveal themselves as what Bakhtin calls polyphonic. The search for coherence, entanglements as much as for difference and complexity is behind the recent gigantic enterprise of the history of political thought in East Central Europe by Balázs Trencsényi and his team.⁷⁶ My work was inspired both by the broad range of sources and the way the story about the region talks to the histories of political thought of the “West”, as well as to recent attempts to write global intellectual history.

My work is based predominantly on published materials (journal and newspaper articles, journal special issues, edited volumes and books, works of literature, art exhibition catalogues, TV shows), which have a set readership and, via the very publication process, a certain authoritative status. I also relied on semi-published archival sources, such as exhibition documentations, programme reports of institutions to their donors, press clippings, minutes of meetings and correspondences as archived by organisations. For my library research, I have relied on various bibliographies on feminism and the women’s movement in Yugoslavia, as well as the references of my interviewees.⁷⁷ The Students’ Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade has excellent holdings of the materials of the feminist meetings and press clippings. I also rely on the material from the Društvo Vita Activa, Ljubljana. The RTS Belgrade’s Archive and its archivists were very helpful with finding the relevant television recordings.

In order to be able to write the story of new Yugoslav feminism as a story and to fill in the gaps between the texts, I interviewed 20 participants of the feminist groups of the time.⁷⁸ The interviews were semi-structured, where I asked the interviewees about their experience of the feminist group at the time, their intellectual influences, their relationship to the other members of the group, the official women’s organisations and other intellectual circles. Rather than using the interviews to write an oral history, explicitly evaluating the interview statements in light of written sources, elements of the interviews stand as mottos of the chapters and as elements which make this text a narrative, between the analytical parts.⁷⁹ This way I hope to let the reader get a glimpse of the lives of

the protagonists whose work I analyse in detail and provide space for the personal voices of these protagonists 30–40 years later.⁸⁰

FEMINISM: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Once we speak about concepts, ideologies and meanings, I shall give a working definition of what I consider feminism, bearing in mind that the meaning varies from context to context and from author to author. The working definition is from Sara Ruddick, stating that feminism is the acknowledgement that “gender divisions of work, pleasure, power, and sensibility are socially created, detrimental to women, and, to a lesser degree, to men, and therefore can and should be changed”.⁸¹ The proposals for the exact ways these divisions are created and the ways they can be changed are those which differentiate the currents of feminism. What Ruddick does not emphasise in her definition, but what should be added to the definition of feminism, in my reading and especially in a state-socialist context, is the importance of women’s agency. Feminism is a form of humanism which is defined by respect and responsibility—responsibility both as the responsibility of feminists and feminism towards their community and identifying what and who holds the responsibility for the status quo. Calling oneself a feminist is also a performative act by which one is willing to associate herself or himself with feminism.

I use the term feminism in the singular, being aware of the multiplicity of meanings, definitions, streams, waves and currents attributed to it. Feminism already implies a complex set of thought varying through time, space and its own goals in a certain context, but its diverging forms are connected by the definition above. These streams, waves and currents of feminism may be contemporaneous and diachronic, while we should try to avoid the “rigid segregation between feminisms”.⁸² Linda Briskin criticises Alison Jaggar for the categorisation of contemporaneous feminisms as liberal, radical or socialist, which Jaggar does by locating the roots of feminism in “the mainstream political tradition”. Feminism is indeed in dialogue with other political ideologies; however, a too rigid segregation hides that there are more overlaps between the currents than differences. The periodisation of feminism should also be treated with caution. This ideological dialogue, diachronic and contemporaneous engagement and polyphonic critique, central to understanding much of feminism, is also central to the story of the next chapter, when a new generation of feminists in 1970s and 80s Yugoslavia recovered the story

of their predecessors after the seeming caesura of WWII and state-imposed emancipation policies and began to assess those policies, which provided many of the rights feminism demands, even as feminism provided avenues to critique the shortcomings of the state's emancipatory project.

NOTES

1. Interview with Vera Litričin (Belgrade, 31 May 2011). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. The “wave metaphor” was the invention of the “second wave”, that is the 1960s, first found in a 1968 publication, which then led to “lumping all [feminist] foremothers into a ‘first wave’ that stretched back to the 1840s”. Nancy A. Hewitt, “Introduction”, in *No Permanent Waves. Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. idem. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 1–14, 1–2.
3. Scandinavia was an exception, see “Scandinavian state feminism”. Interestingly and similarly to Eastern Europe, the state-offered equality slowed down the development of women's independent organising and the appearance of radical feminism. See Lesley McMillan, *Feminists Organizing Against Gendered Violence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
4. See Sharon Zukin about Praxis: “For several older members of this group, the collective odyssey in dissent began in an unlikely way, in teenage heroism with the Partisans during World War II. [...] They were still party members and, unlike Đilas, remained in the party until the late 1960s”. Sharon Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, in *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, ed. Jane Leftwich Curry (New York: Praeger, 1983), 117–137, 131.
5. Silva Mežnarić, “Što se događa s američkom ženom?” [What is Happening to the American Woman?], *Žena*, Vol. 30. No. 6 (1972): 57–62.
6. The reasons and explanations behind this widely repeated statement are explored in detail in the work of Marko Zubak, *The Yugoslav Youth Press (1968–1980): Student Movements, Subcultures and Communist Alternative Media*. PhD Diss. (Budapest: Central European University, Budapest College, 2013). Also see: Ljubica Spaskovska, *The Last Yugoslav Generation: The Rethinking of Youth Politics and Cultures in Late Socialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).
7. As early as 1976, there was a summer school about the “women's question” at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik. Marijana Mitrović,

- “Genealogy of the Conferences on Women’s Writing at the Inter University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue No. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011): 157–166, 167.
8. Interview with Nada Popović-Perišić (Belgrade, 1 February 2011).
 9. Lina Vučković, “Usamljena među’bližnjima’. O feminizmu” [Lonely Among “Close Ones”. About Feminism], *Dvoje* 28 December 1983, 26–27, 27.
 10. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, c.2006), 9.
 11. From the abundant literature on Yugoslav self-management, see Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Yugoslavia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971) (esp. from p. 175); John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: C. Hurst, 2000); Stevan Mezei, et al. *Samoupravni socijalizam* [Self-Managing Socialism] (Beograd: Savremena administracija, 1976).
 12. Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Co., 2002); Stevo Đurašković, *The Politics of History in Croatia and Slovakia in the 1990s* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2016); Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944–1991* (New York: Central European University Press, 2007); Nebojša Popov, ed. *The Road to War in Serbia. Trauma and Catharsis*. English version ed. Drinka Gojković (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000); Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002).
 13. Maria Todorova, ed. *Remembering Communism: Genres of Representation* (New York: Social Science Research Council, c.2009); Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor, eds., *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)* (Budapest: Central European University Press, c.2010); esp. see Igor Duda, “What To Do at the Weekend? Leisure for Happy Consumers, Refreshed Workers, and Good Citizens”, 303–334; Radina Vučetić *Koka-kola socijalizam* [Coca-cola Socialism] (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012); Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: New Academia Pub., 2010).
 14. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 23.
 15. Nada Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene” [The Odyssey of the Human Identity of Women], *Pitanja*, No. 7–8 (1978): 11–28, 21.
 16. See later in the book, regarding the analysis of the statements about the status of women by state representatives.
 17. See Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain. The Women’s Movement in America Since 1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000*

- (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry, *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014).
18. Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union", in *Feminist Frameworks. Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations Between Men and Women*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993), 172–189, and Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, c.1981). Hartmann's text was published in Yugoslavia too: Heidi Hartmann, "Nesrećni brak marksizma i feminizma: ka progresivnijem za jedništvu", *Marksizam u svetu*, Vol. 9. No. 3 (1983): 179–217.
 19. Holloway Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship: Democratic Theory, Political Courage, and Activist Women", *Hypatia*, Vol. 12. No. 4 (November 1997): 74–110; Regina Graycar, ed., *Dissenting Opinions: Feminist Explorations in Law and Society* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990). Also, see Thomas Crow, *The Rise of the Sixties: American and European Art in the Era of Dissent*, 2nd ed. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004).
 20. Francisca de Haan, ed., "Gendering the Cold War. An Email Conversation Between Malgorzata (Gosia) Fidelis, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Jill Massino, and Libora Oates-Indruchova", *Aspasia*, Vol. 8 (2014): 162–190.
 21. Joan W. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer. French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 18.
 22. Tony Judt, "The Dilemmas of Dissidence: The Politics of Opposition in East-Central Europe", *East European Politics & Societies*, Vol. 2. No. 2 (Spring 1988): 185–240, 186–187.
 23. The political scientist Tihomir Cipek and the historian Katarina Spehnyak provide a list of all the unresearched possible forms of "opposition", "dissent", "antipolitics" and "resistance" in the former Yugoslav member state of Croatia, and in their categorisation, new Yugoslav feminism belongs under these labels. Tihomir Cipek and Katarina Spehnyak, "Croatia", in *Dissent and Opposition in Communist Eastern Europe*, ed. Detlef Pollack and Jan Wielgohs (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, c.2004), 185–206.
 24. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 17.
 25. Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless", trans. Paul Wilson, http://vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=eseje&val=2_aj_eseje.html&-typ=HTML (accessed 15 August 2014).
 26. Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?* 71.
 27. Sharon Zukin, "Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia", in *Dissent in Eastern Europe*, ed. Jane Leftwich Curry (New York: Praeger, 1983), 117–137, 119.

28. Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, 120.
29. Cf. the dismissal of the Praxis professors, and 1971, in the era of the so-called liberalisation, the cases of Ignjatović, Gojko Đogo, Janez Janša. Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation*; Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists*; Orsolya Gállos, *Szlovéniai változások* [Changes in Slovenia] (Pécs: Pro Pannonia, 2012).
30. Zukin, “Sources of Dissent and Nondissent in Yugoslavia”, 122.
31. Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19. International Centre Against Censorship, 1994), 13.
32. Nick Miller, “Where Was the Serbian Havel?”, in *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, 363–379 (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2012), 370.
33. Judt, “The Dilemmas of Dissidence”, 200.
34. Miller, “Where Was the Serbian Havel?”, 370.
35. Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights Facing a National Past. Dissident ‘Civic Patriotism’ and the Return of History in East Central Europe, 1968–1989”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Vol. 38. No. 4 (2012): 573–602.
36. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
37. Alan Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist? Varieties of Dissidence in East-Central Europe and Their Implications for the Development of Political Society”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 20. No. 2 (2006 Spring): 286–318, 287.
38. Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist?”, 303.
39. *Ibid.*, 288.
40. Lesley McMillan, *Feminists Organising Against Gendered Violence* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 17.
41. Linda Briskin, “Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy”, in *Women and Social Change. Feminist Activism in Canada*, ed. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1991), 24–40.
42. McMillan, *Feminists Organising*, 47.
43. *Ibid.*, 39.
44. Vlasta Jalušić, *Kako smo hodile v feministično gimnazijo* [How We Attended Feminist High School] (Ljubljana:/*cf, 2002); Barbara Jancar, “The New Feminism in Yugoslavia”, in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 200–223; *idem.*, “Neofeminism in Yugoslavia. A Closer Look”, *Women & Politics*, Vol. 8.

- No. 1 (1988): 1–30; Sabrina P. Ramet, “Feminism in Yugoslavia”, in *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: the Sources and Meaning of the Great Transformation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), 197–211; idem., “In Tito’s Time”, in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans*, 89–105; Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac, “Feministička grupa Žena i društvo” [The Feminist Group Woman and Society], in Marina Blagojević, ed. *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji: ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih*, 47–62; A selection of articles throughout the histories of feminism in Yugoslavia: Jelena Petrović and Damir Arsenijević, eds., *Jugoslovenski feminizmi* [Yugoslav Feminisms], *ProFemina*, Special Issue No. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011).
45. *Aktivistkinje. Kako “opismeniti” teoriju* [Activist Women. How to Make Theory Literacy], ed. Vesna Barliar (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2000).
46. Chiara Bonfiglioli, ““Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!”: Italian Feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 ‘Comrade Woman’ Conference”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue No. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011): 115–123; Marijana Mitrović, “Genealogy of the Conferences on Women’s Writing at the Inter-University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990”. Berta Dragičević and Oerjar Oeyen, eds., *Fragments of Memories of Life and Work at Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik 1971–2007* (Dubrovnik: Inter University Centre Dubrovnik and Zagreb: Durieux, 2009).
47. Suzana Tratnik and Nataša S. Segan, eds., *L: Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984–1995* [L: An Anthology of the Lesbian Movement in Slovenia 1984–1995] (Ljubljana: ŠKUC, 1995).
48. Dubravka Žarkov, *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-Up of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Bojan Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and its Legacy* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Bojan Aleksov, “Resisting the Wars in the Former Yugoslavia: An Autoethnography”, in Bilić and Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*, 105–126; Elissa Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); Ana Miškovska-Kajevska, *Feminist Activism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb Feminists in the 1990s*, (New York: Routledge, 2017) *(Post-)Yugoslav Wars and Each Other (1991–2000)*.
49. Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke. Društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji, 1945–1953* [Partisan Women as Citizens. Social Emancipation of Partisan Women in Serbia, 1945–1953] (Belgrade:

- Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011); Barbara Wiesinger, *Partisaninnen: Widerstand in Jugoslawien, 1941–1945* [Partisan Women: Resistance in Yugoslavia 1941–1945] (Wien: Böhlau, 2008); Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans. A History of World War II Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
50. Bonfiglioli, *Revolutionary Networks*; Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945*.
 51. Vera Gudac-Dodić, *Žena u socijalizmu. Položaj žene u Srbiji u drugoj polovini 20. veka* [Women in Socialism. The Position of Women in Serbia in the Second Half of the 20th Century] (Beograd: INIS, 2006); Latinka Perović, ed., *Žene i deca 4. Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XIX i XX veka* [Women and Children 4. Serbia in the Modernisation Processes of the 19th and 20th Centuries] (Beograd: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006).
 52. Renata Jambrešić Kirin, “Komunističko totalitarno nasilje: žene na Golom otoku i sv. Grguru” [Communist Totalitarian Violence: Women on Goli otok and St. Grgur], in *Sjećanja žena žrtava nacizma i nedemokratskih režima* [The Memories of Women Victims of Nazism and Non/Democratic Regimes], ed. Sandra Prleđa (Centar za ženske studije Zagreb 2009), 47–67; idem., “Žene u formativnom socijalizmu” [Women in Formative Socialism], in *Refleksije vremena: 1945–1955* [Reflections of the Time: 1945/1955], ed. Jasmina Bavoľjak (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2012), 182–201; idem., *Dom i svijet: o ženskoj kulturi pamćenja* [Home and the World: On Women’s Cultural Memory] (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008).
 53. de Haan, ed., “Gendering the Cold War”; Kristen Ghodsee, *The Left Side of History: World War II and the Unfulfilled Promise of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Malgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).
 54. Melissa Feinberg’s history about the destruction of the pre-WWII women’s movement in Czechoslovakia shows the results of the animosity of the communists towards an influential and successful feminist movement. Melissa Feinberg, *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1950* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006). About the story of Czechoslovak feminism as another exception in terms of women’s rights in the interwar period, see Libora Oates-Indruchová, “Unraveling a Tradition, or Spinning a Myth? Gender Critique in Czech Society and Culture”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 75. No. 4 (Winter 2016): 919–943.
 55. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics I. Regarding Method* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 90.

56. László Kontler, “Translation and Comparison, Translation as Comparison: Aspects of the Reception in the History of Ideas”, *East Central Europe*, Vol. 36. No. 2 (2009): 171–199.
57. Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
58. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998).
59. J.G.A. Pocock, “The Concept of a Language and the Métier D’Historien: Some Considerations on Practice”, in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19–38, 19–20. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
60. Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010), 426.
61. Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, 149.
62. Maren Lockwood Carden, *The New Feminist Movement* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1974), 10 and n1, 183.
63. Michael Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method. Appraising a Transformation”, in *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*, ed. idem (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1–12, 1.
64. Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 54.
65. Michael Freeden, “Concepts, Ideology and Political Theory”, in *Herausforderungen der Begriffsgeschichte* [Challenging the History of Concepts] ed. Carsten Dutt (Heidelberg: Winter, c.2003), 57–58.
66. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, c.1985), 83. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
67. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 485.
68. Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, n1, 11.
69. Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method”, 3
70. Diana Coole, “Unfinished Plaits or Threads? Feminism(s) Through the 20th Century”, in *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*, ed. Michael Freeden (New York: Routledge, 2001), 154–174, 156.
71. Ute Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution. Second-Wave Feminism and the Writing of American Sexual Thought 1920–1982* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
72. Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1982).

73. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 5. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
74. Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges”, *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3. No. 1–2 (Autumn 1975): 5–14. Later reprinted in idem, *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [1979] c.2005) and see: Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
75. Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method”, 4–5.
76. Balázs Trencsényi, Maciej Janowski, Monika Baár, Maria Falina and Michal Kopeček, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe. Volume I, Negotiating Modernity in the ‘Long Nineteenth Century’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Trencsényi et al., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006–2014).
77. Dimitar Mirčev and Nada Češnovar, *Žena u samoupravnom društvu: bibliografija radova 1970–1983* [Woman in the Self-Managing Society: Bibliography of Works 1970–1983] (Ljubljana: Jugoslovenski centar za teoriju i praksu samoupravljanja, Edvard Kardelj”, 1985); Lydia Sklevicky, “Bibliografski prilog” [Bibliographical Appendix], *Marksizam u svetu* No. 8–9 (1981): 487–500; Jasminka Pešut, *Ženska perspektiva – odabrana bibliografija: Radovi autorica 1968–1997* [Women’s Perspectives—Selected Bibliography. Works by (woman) Authors 1968–1997] (Zagreb: Centar za ženske Studije, 1998); Biljana Dojčinović-Nesić, *Odabrana bibliografija radova iz feminističke teorije - ženskih studija: 1974–1996* [A Selected Bibliography of Works from Feminist Theory and Women’s Studies] (Beograd: Centar za ženske studije, 1996); Tomislav Murati and Davor Topolčić, “Položaj žene u društvu: odabrana bibliografija (1974–1994.)” [The Position of Women in Society: A Selected Bibliography 1974–1994], *Društvena istraživanja*, Vol. 6. No. 1 (1997): 127–161.
78. And Nanette Funk at the NYU, who was not a group member, but was in contact with them.
79. Bonnie G. Smith’s *Confessions of a Concierge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) is another not so usual attempt to cross-read the archives and a personal narrative. Smith chooses another technique, writing the story twice, allowing the reader to enjoy the dialogue between the two different narratives.
80. While I focus on the intellectual history of Eastern Europe after 1945, especially those about the left-wing criticisms of the state, the book methodologically very helpful for my own work was Martin Jay’s *The Dialectical Imagination*. Jay writes not only a history of the Frankfurt

School through their texts, but also the history of the Institute of Social Research and the individual stories of these intellectuals. Through talking to his subjects, the personal and the biographical are written into the story of a school of thought. At the time of the writing of the book, he was also a young scholar, like myself, who, again, like myself, was influenced by the writings of his subjects. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

81. Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston, MA: The Women's Press, 1989), 234–235.
82. Briskin, “Feminist Practice”, 26.



“Neither Class, nor Nature”— (Re)Turning to Feminism in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Vesna Kesić: *“This is what I call ‘a click’ in my own life. Something you always felt was a problem, suddenly had a name. I did read all the books before, but that was all socialist ‘feminism’, unfortunately. It was difficult for us to find a niche to revolt, since this problem, our problem was officially resolved. (...) We wanted to bring feminism into the radical leftist ideas. The reactions from big institutions were very bad. (...) Our feminism was one of the first initiatives to reclaim the civil society, even if we were not completely aware of it. We aimed at autonomy within the state.”*

Sofija Trivunac: *“If you want to change things, first you have to search in yourself. I found communism short-lived, it was imposing on others. Instead of that, I wanted a small group where we can discuss as equals, in the spirit of ‘the private is political’. This was the space where women learned to speak publicly. First many of us were very shy.”*

Slavenka Drakulić: *“What became the Žena i društvo group, first was just a circle in which we, friends who were studying sociology together, Lydia Sklevicky, Vesna Pusić, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vesna Kesić, Rada Iveković, could sit down and talk to each other. We were reading, it was like self-education, Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, whatever we could. This made us look at the position of women in Yugoslavia with different eyes, we started seeing the pitfalls of this emancipation from above. In the meantime, women members of the party fought in the war, and it was because of their participation that they could become members of the government and enter public life.”*

Tanja Renner: “I joined the feminist group in the late 1970s. It was for me much rather a political than a personal choice. I mean, I didn’t join feminism because of some sort of personal experience of discrimination, but rather because of the social and political justice I was striving for. I was surprised though by the post-1968 atmosphere, I was disappointed by the gender insensitivity and the very few women in the students’ revolutionary circles. I went to Ljubljana from a small village, at the end of the 1970s, by then there was a feminist group already. First there was Mirjana Ule, who was connected to the famous Zagreb feminist group. Then we had our first, ‘kitchen phase’. Vlasta [Jalušič] was there, she said: ‘we have to exist, we have so much to do [as a feminist group].’”¹

As many of the new feminists sitting at the kitchen tables, students’ cultural centres, pubs and clubs discussing new feminist ideas came from the university both as students and as professors, it was academia itself which proved to be an important discursive space for the new feminist endeavours. In their discussions and in their writing, they were pushing for a reassessment of substantial issues: the political of the private–public division, the concept of gender in societal analysis, the division of labour, women’s place in a society as such. Looking at all this necessarily means the critique of the perseverance of injustice in that society which promises *općeljudske* [a general human] equality to all its citizens, irrespective of their gender. This chapter is about the first inquiries of the new Yugoslav feminists into different approaches to the allegedly already solved “women’s question” in academic texts, from the fields of the humanities and social sciences.

By their textual interventions, the new Yugoslav feminists stretched the boundaries of the ways academia thought of itself and the ways the state presented the position of women in Yugoslavia. Through the reading of new feminist texts from the USA and Western Europe, as well as critical Marxist texts from different schools of thought, and sometimes even philosophy from India, the new feminist discourse in Yugoslavia attributed new meanings to the concept of feminism itself. Their political action in the academic discussions was rather a discursive one: balancing between disengagement and mainstreaming,² they tried to create a new language in the Skinnerian sense,³ to talk about women’s emancipation and the relations between men and women. This involves not only redefining what *feminism* means, but also the reconceptualisation of *consciousness, women’s universal experience, patriarchy, family, work,*

“*homosexuality*”, the relationship between the *private* and the *public*, as well as the introduction of the concept of *gender*. I analyse these concepts and the ideational transfers which shaped their meanings. The historiographical reassessment of the role of feminism in Yugoslavia was one of the strongest points where the new feminists challenged the regime, in search of their place. To show the position of the new feminists within the state’s discourse, we also need to look at the state’s position and how through the declaration the “women’s question” being solved, the state assumed a post-feminist position.

Most debates and arguments, especially in the 1970s, aimed at negotiating between feminism and socialism, with the aim to prove the legitimacy of feminism vis-à-vis the socialist approach to the “women’s question” [*žensko pitanje*]. The new Yugoslav feminists had their own Marxist base in their education, which helped them find a language that their local intellectual audience could understand. The left-wing, Marxist and socialist feminisms from all over the world also prevailed in the new Yugoslav feminist intertexts. This always linked the feminist discussions to the broader frame of Yugoslav state-socialist ideology. In several introductions of journal special issues, the editors openly admitted that their quest was aiming at learning from the feminists elsewhere. Therefore, it was not only Zarana Papić in the more independent youth journal, *Student* in 1976 (see below), but also several articles in *Žena* and other journals, such as *Argumenti* (publishing a documentation of the legendary 1978 *Drug-ca žena* conference) that gave voice the opinion framed by Mirjana Oklobdžija in *Dometi* “that even today, in all societies, to a smaller or greater extent, women are ‘second-rate citizens’”.⁴

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF INSTITUTIONS

Already in the early 1970s, as early as 1972, there were texts written by the new Yugoslav feminists in different journals, and these found a stronghold by the mid-1970s. The two earliest centres for discussing and organising were a group of women at the University of Zagreb and another group at the Students’ Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade, who knew each other: some of them studied in both cities and therefore had personal contacts, they read each other in the journals, and they followed the events in the students’ venues. The third important scene, joining a bit later but a source of innovation with growing importance was

Ljubljana. Before the seminal conference in 1978, which attracted even more members to join the groups, the academic publications were even more important, as ones triggering a new way of thinking of feminism.

It was Lydia Sklevicky, Vesna Pusić, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Vesna Kesić, Rada Iveković, Nadežda Čaćinovič who were talking and writing about feminism in Zagreb. Looking back, Biljana Kašić (who joined the group later) and Kesić both emphasised the support they received from the Praxis professors, such as Ivan Kuvačić, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek. The professors had their *Čovjek i sistem* [Man and the system] research group, which also had a talk series, where there was a session about feminism. It was also their support which allowed for the formation of the *Žena i društvo* section within the framework of the *Sociološko društvo* [Sociology Association]. Andrea Feldman, who joined the group 1979, for a while as coordinator of their events, added that the new feminist group could later use the space of the Association of University Professors, in today's Hebrangova ulica. Sometimes they had financial support from the Italian and Austrian Cultural Centres, and this allowed them to invite the Italian feminist Dacia Mariani to Zagreb. As the group was becoming more active, there were 100 invitation letters sent out for each event, which were then attended by some 30–40 women.⁵

The relationship with the Praxis professors was very encouraging for the Zagreb women. Slavenka Drakulić remembers Kuvačić as a “wonderful professor”, who gave them books off the official reading lists. Later, they started to get hold of readings on their own: Rada Iveković went to study to Italy, and “Vesna Pusić I think went to the US and she brought us books”. (Drakulić) Nadežda Čaćinovič was also part of the *Čovjek i sistem* group, and she was attending the Korčula summer schools of Praxis and was publishing in the journal too: “We were discussing possibilities of change, the economic and legal frameworks of socialism. Rudi Supek and Eugen Pusić were there and the group held its meetings on the island of Vis”. Praxis therefore had quite some influence on the beginnings of the new feminism in Yugoslavia, even though the relationship was not always as smooth as these accounts suggest. Biljana Kašić, while emphasising the support from Supek and Kuvačić, also added: “the Praxis philosophers did not take feminism seriously, and at the meetings women did not comment much”. Vesna Kesić remembers “a very bad encounter with Mihajlo Marković, who said it is OK that we come and talk about feminism, but asked us: ‘could you please look more feminine’”.

Anđelka Milić, a sociologist who at the time of the formation of the feminist group was a bit more advanced in her career than the other women Kesić mentioned, was very important for the Belgrade group too, which, however, found its base camp in the SKC, rather than the university. The SKC was also the space for the development of a new art scene in Yugoslavia, where feminist woman artists were invited already in 1975. It was the director of the gallery of the SKC, Dunja Blažević, who initiated the organisation of the 1978 conference. The sociologist Žarana Papić—who was among the most inspiring feminists of her time, many of the women remember her as a mentor—her partner, Ivan Vejvoda, Jasmina Tešanović and many others worked on bringing the conference together. Dragica Vukadinović, who worked as a programme organiser at the SKC, remembered the input from women from different countries as eye-opening:

At that time, I thought that the laws of the SFRJ were great. I wasn't aware that the praxis was different. When the 1978 conference was organized I was thinking: why would we need feminism? To entertain women? Women here already have all the rights, they just need to exercise them. However, during and after the conference I began to understand that the situation was not so great.⁶

Slavenka Drakulić, who was already active in Zagreb before the conference, said: “And then came the *Drug-ca* conference, I really think it was a trigger, for me for sure. We stayed in touch with many of the women who were there”.⁷ The 1978 conference meant the official beginning of the *Žena i društvo* group in Belgrade. The “Tribina” [Forum] series involved a line of academic and activist themes, from women's writing through women's political participation to women's health (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

The group in Ljubljana organised itself a bit later than the ones in Zagreb and Belgrade. The formalisation of the group, however, was preceded by “a kitchen table phase”, the scene of which was mostly the sociology professor Mirjana Ule's kitchen, as the other sociologist, Tanja Renner remembers it. It was mostly women from sociology and, like Ule, from social psychology. Silva Mežnarić, also a sociologist, was a very important connection between Zagreb and Ljubljana. Vlasta Jalušič, a student of social and political studies, later a professor herself, and Mojca Dobnikar, translator and editor, were also there. As Jalušič remembers

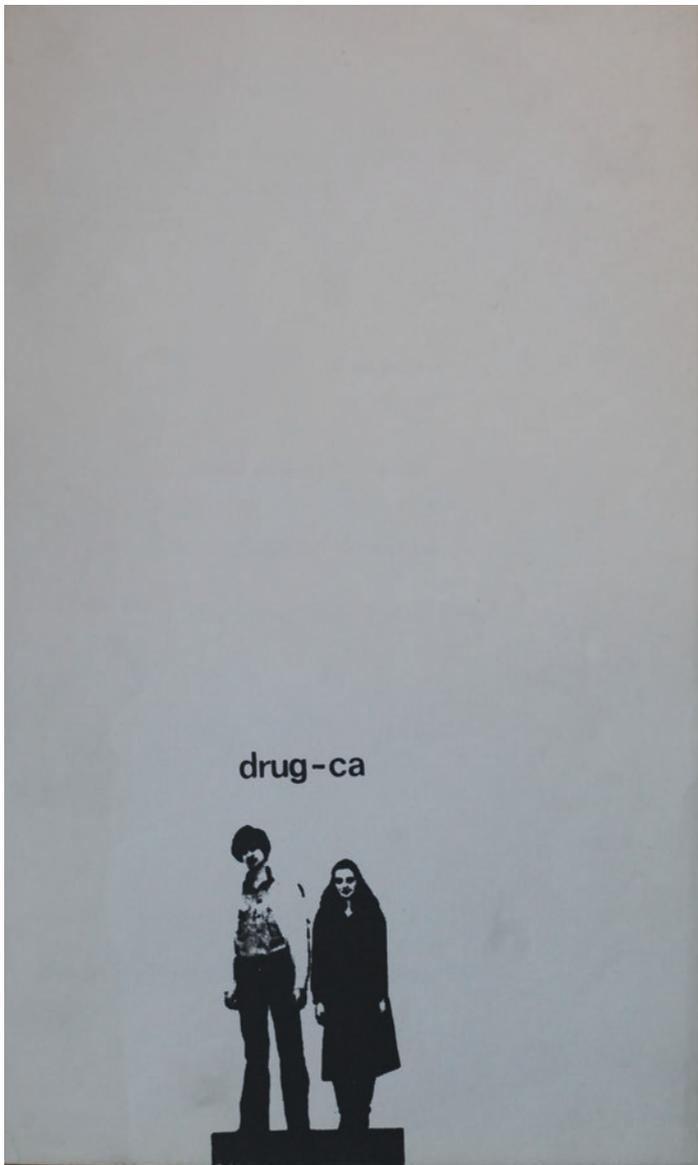


Fig. 2.1 The cover of the bulletin of the *Drug-ca* conference in Belgrade in 1978, designed by Dragan Stojanovski, a graphic designer who worked with the SKC (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

(a)



(b)



Fig. 2.2 The *Drug-ca* conference in Belgrade in 1978 (Courtesy of the SKC Archives. Photographer of the SKC events: Nebojsa Čanković)

meeting Dobnikar for the first time: “We met, shook hands, and we thought: OK, with this woman, it will work”. After years of discussions and several public events, the first feminist journal special issue in Slovenia was published in 1985 in the journal *Mladina*, followed by other journals, for example, *Problemi*.

The Ljubljana women were in touch with several other activist groups from the colourful social movements’ scene of the city. Their first event, a women-only party with 250–300 guests at the K4 club (which later hosted their lectures too) “was followed by a huge negative response. Actually, not from the party, but from the subculture circles which we were also part of. The young women in the punk movement, with whom we later established much better relations, were rather arrogantly telling us they didn’t understand why we didn’t like men. In the intellectual circles, they made fun of us for many year to follow” (Rener).

Despite this mocking on behalf of some intellectuals, university professors such as Tomaž Mastnak, Pavle Gantar supported the formation of a feminist group within the *Sociološko društvo*, similar to the *Žena i društvo* groups in Zagreb and Belgrade. The *Ženska sekcija pri Sociološkem društvu* [The Women’s Section of the Society of Sociology] was established in autumn 1984. In 1985, it was followed by the Lilit group, with its first event—a discussion on woman’s *sexuality and* women-only political parties. The first lesbian group in Yugoslavia was formed within Lilit as its lesbian section in 1987. Later on, the feminists also used the spaces in the Galerija ŠKUC, and due to the presence of the other activist groups, they opened up their discussions into several directions. Their most important connections were the ecological movement and the peace movement, and many feminists were members of these groups too. The “latecomer” Slovenian women therefore had a stronghold both in the academia and the students’ circles, despite their difficulties with certain members of these institutions, and had a lesbian stream developing together with the main feminist line (Fig. 2.3).

The connections with both Western and non-Western countries meant a basic influence for the intellectual development of the Yugoslav feminists. Other feminists came to Yugoslavia, but the Yugoslav women also studied and travelled abroad. To mention a few of these trajectories with important intellectual input: Rada Iveković, a philosopher who was, for many women in the group, the most important source of intellectual influence, studied in Italy and France and did her PhD in New Delhi, India. Dunja Blažević and Anđelka Milić were among the several women



Fig. 2.3 The poster of the first Lilit event in the discotheque called K4 in Ljubljana, 3rd April 1985

who had fellowships at US universities. Nadežda Čačinovič studied in Germany, the Belgrade-based literary scholar Nada Popović-Perišić in Utrecht and Paris. Young professional women at the time had the financial means to make low-budget trips abroad. Lepa Mladenović, a psychologist and one of the leading activists of the 1980s hitchhiked with a friend in summer 1976 to Paris and London, and en route stopped in Zagreb to meet Rada Iveković, whose publications she already knew. Iveković lived in Italy that year, and Mladenović travelled on to London.

Vlasta Jalušič spent 6 months in West Berlin in 1986–1987, she was studying the fin-de-siècle German proletarian and bourgeois women’s movements. She got in touch with the *Frauen für den Frieden* group in East Berlin (Ulrike Poppe and Baerbel Bohley) and got acquainted with important West German feminists. She also went to the meetings of the War Resistance International’s women-only meetings. Due to the German connections of Jalušič and Dobnikar, the Slovenian publications

were the forum where input from the German feminists was shared, balancing out the predominance of Anglo-American, French and Italian authors.⁸ To Mojca Dobnikar, a holiday in Berlin was a formative experience: she met feminist activists, with whom she did non-traditional research about women's activism in Berlin, for example explored the shelters. This visit inspired her to organise a more open event in Ljubljana too, which eventually was the party at K4.

A travel of Slavenka Drakulić to Rhode Island in 1982 was a moment the new Yugoslav feminists' "going global", with all the inherent controversies that implies. She attended the *Sisterhood is Global* conference,⁹ where she met a lot of women from the "second wave" feminist movement. Drakulić told me about the conference: "There were only a very few East European women, I mostly remember Polish women. We were interesting to the organisers, they thought that we lived in emancipation". *Sisterhood is Global* and *Sisterhood is Powerful* are two, interrelated projects of the feminism of the 1970s in the USA and organised and edited by Robin Morgan. Drakulić emphasised that to her, Morgan "is a pioneer of international feminism". Morgan's *Sisterhood*-project is characterised by the well-intended aim to connect all women in the world and build a worldwide feminist movement. The good intentions and the problems of such a project show well from Drakulić's comment, as the size of the project necessarily meant superficiality too. The presence in the network meant a representative text by Drakulić and Rada Iveković in the *Sisterhood is Global* volume, and founding texts of the new feminism in the USA meant a source of inspiration for the early feminist issue of the youth journal *Student* in 1976.¹⁰

Feminist activism was closely connected with publishing. Especially Ljubljana was a forerunner in this respect. Mojca Dobnikar worked for the publisher Krt (*Knjižnica revolucionarne teorije*, i.e. Library of Revolutionary Theory), who asked her to translate Aleksandra Kollontai into Slovenian, a cooperation followed by several volumes. The journals accessible for publication all over Yugoslavia varied from the student journals, such as *Student* and *Vidici* (both in Belgrade), to independent academic ones such as *Argumenti* based in Rijeka and *Pitanje* based in Zagreb, *Mladina* in Ljubljana, *Polja* in Novi Sad and the Sarajevo based *Opredjelenje*. In the field of academic publications, the most controversial one is *Žena*, a publication of the KDAŽ (*Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena*—Conference for the Social Activity of Women). *Žena*, born out of the women's movement within the partisan revolution,

became an academic journal about “women in society, women in the family”. *Žena*’s approach to women was predominantly through their role in the family and their place in the social reality of Yugoslavia. The articles were of high quality and the editorial board strived to follow the latest discussions on the women’s issues, even feminism. Not with the most positive overtone, of course:

We in *Žena* write about feminism with the aim to show its ideas and concepts, but also the unsustainability of the methods of its struggles. [...] We know, and it was proven in Mexico as well, that the progressive organisations of women and the feminist movement, according to their ideological orientation and those goals and forms of struggle, cannot be equated.¹¹

These are the sentences of Marija Šoljan Bakarić, one of the most prominent women in the Yugoslav nomenclature. As we shall see, feminism is most often presented as both bourgeois and too wild, too radical. Šoljan even refers to the “war cries” of the feminists. Nonetheless, some of the young feminists became authors, even editors of *Žena* and several crucial feminist publications appeared on the pages of this journal. Nadežda Čačinović ended up in the editorial board almost by accident, when as a young scholar applied for an essay prize which she won, and they offered her a job. Through her and Gordana Cerjan-Letica, a lot of feminist material found its place in the journal.

The new Yugoslav feminists have miscellaneous memories of the women in KDAŽ. Vera Smiljanić in the documentary *Dosije XX* recalls the support from Marija Šoljan Bakarić,¹² whereas Sonja Drljević, a bridge engineer and activist from the early times, has much worse memories of the Belgrade section, who “decided that we were elitist and we refuse to deal with women’s problems. They were always harsher in criticising us in the media though. Then in 1990 I asked them for some small money for the Belgrade conference, which they gave us, I was surprised”. Indeed, as nationalism was growing, the lines of alliances were shifting towards a growing mutual understanding. As Vesna Kesić remembers: “there were some women in the KDAŽ or in parliament who started to understand and support the new feminist ideas, realising that the ‘woman’s question’ cannot be solved through the class question. Jelena Cukrov, Morana Palinković, for example. Also, when the war broke out, in the 1990s I finally started to appreciate even what these women did for us” (Fig. 2.4).



Fig. 2.4 Sonja Drljević in 1981 (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

Women from the old organisation even changed their stance towards feminism: Mojca Dobnikar mentioned Maca Jogan, who is “an interesting person. She was socialist, I found her pro-regime, I always thought back then that what she was doing was very bla-bla, without a substance. And later she became more radical, now she is clearly a feminist, one of the few people here who really speak up against androcentrism and misogyny”. Some of the new Yugoslav feminists themselves, on the other hand, started their careers in the KDAŽ. Their idea was to use the organisation as a background. Neda Todorović, a journalist who shaped the women’s magazine *Bazar* along feminist lines, said they contacted her when she started to work for *NIN*. “I saw their limits, there were many, but it helped me pushing certain issues. I travelled to the World Congress in Berlin with them”.

The state’s discourse in the 1970s was reinvigorated by the commemoration of the UN’s “Year of Women” in 1975, which was followed by the “Decade of Women”, lasting until 1985. While the power imbalance between geographical regions was reproduced within the meetings,¹³ as well as in the scholarship which mostly only recognises “women from the global North” and “women from the global South”, which categories on the one hand help “transgressing the ‘East’/‘West’ divisions, but it also has the curious effect of further writing out East European women from international activism”.¹⁴ The KDAŽ of Yugoslavia made significant efforts to be represented and to represent the programme of the Year at home,¹⁵ and as recent research by Celia Donert and Francisca de Haan shows, East European women’s organisations made an important contribution to the agenda.¹⁶

The UN Year events confronted the Yugoslav women from official organisations with the growing “Western second wave”. Jasna Gardun and Marija Šoljan acknowledged that women were still left alone with the care for the family. Both of them agreed that Yugoslavia had a good legal framework for women’s equality; Gardun called it a “revolutionary constitution”,¹⁷ Šoljan “the most developed, most humane constitutional system” in the world.¹⁸ Another author in the journal *Žena*, Vaska Duganova argued that the UN Year should be a possibility to make a list of their achievements, “which are not little”, and present them to the world.¹⁹ While she added that the achievements of other *countries* should also be presented to the Yugoslav public, none of them made mention of the achievements of non-governmental new feminism in any

other country. When thinking about the UN Year, they maintained the standpoint that the women's question still shall be treated as part of the class question,²⁰ that "the liberation of women has a class-character [...] it is the conditions of work and the working man [*čovjek*] that has to be changed".²¹ The argument continued with establishing that due to the fact that the women's question is a class question, it belongs to the entire Yugoslav society. However, the responsibility to be shared is not that between men and women, but between the family and society. Equally, the most burning questions should be handled within one organisation, the KDAŽ, "this is why already the AFŽ was abolished", all OOURs (*Osnovna organizacija udruženog rada*—Basic Organisation of Associated Labour) and DPO (*Društveno političke organizacije*—Sociopolitical Organisations) should participate in achieving the goals of the International Year of Women in Yugoslavia.²²

Feminism in academia held a semi-marginal position which meant a simultaneous inside and outside position both within the academia and the Yugoslav political discursive space. We speak about students or academics at the beginning of their careers, first sitting in kitchens and living rooms and then conversing in the relatively small and barely funded *Žena i društvo* groups. The position came with more freedom and furthered the rereading of women's position in Yugoslav society through theory from abroad. These transferred, translated or in other ways presented texts were often used as a "disguise" of dissenting feminist ideas of the Yugoslav authors. The small circulation of journals, thus the supposedly relatively small audience, ensured by the lower accessibility for a non-intellectual audience, meant that the academia provided a safe ground for dissenting feminism. In a semi-open society, such as Yugoslavia, starting a grass roots, mass-based feminist movement would have been impossible, and this academic discourse became the starting point for new feminism.

STRATEGIC TRANSFERS AND SELF-DEFINITION: FEMINISM FROM ABROAD, *ŽENSKO PITANJE KOD NAS*

The UN Year opened up the discourse about feminism in the Yugoslav intellectual scene and the new Yugoslav feminists were curious about this phenomenon. Reporting about and analysing feminist movements and ideas elsewhere made it also easier to discuss feminism, even though

reading these early texts, the Yugoslav feminists had their own opinions about the feminism *they* wanted. Writing about “the new feminist movement” in the USA and Western Europe, from time to time even South America and Asia, allowed young scholars such as Rada Iveković, Žarana Papić, Gordana Cerjan-Letica, Nada Ler-Šofronić or established professors like Blaženka Despot and Gordana Bosanac to discuss their own ideas about the relevance of feminism in and for the Yugoslav context.²³

The text from the 1970s made efforts to understand the types of feminism arising in the region and aimed at creating categories that help towards an understanding of the place of feminism in contemporaneous Yugoslavia. The authors were most interested in the radical, revolutionary women’s movements, especially those with Marxist inspirations, and were more cautious with those which they saw as “bourgeois”. This differentiation was a gesture towards the Yugoslav communist position that deemed all forms of feminism bourgeois but also made the discussion about feminism more subtle.

The 1972 article had the title “What is happening to the American woman?”.²⁴ Its author was Silva Mežnarić, a sociologist and editor of the journal *Žena*, who lived between Zagreb and Ljubljana and was a member of the KDAŽ Croatia in 1972, as well as an editor of *Žena* for a while. She later joined the feminist group *Žena i društvo*. By writing about feminism, she wanted to demystify this “socially-ideationally relevant phenomenon” (57), and concluded that women’s situation in both modernised societies (capitalist and socialist ones) legitimises feminist claims. Comparing women’s situation in socialist and capitalist societies was a common feature of the Yugoslav feminist writings: while the authors always emphasised that state socialism provided several crucial rights for women, they also realised that despite these, women shared a lot in terms of their oppression.

Around the time of these early publication, the feminists engaged in dialogues with the state representatives. They participated in 1976 at conference in Portorož, organised by the editors of the journal *Žena*. Although this event was significantly more elite and less public than the 1978 *Drug-ca* conference, and it certainly is not considered that important, looking at the documentation of the debate,²⁵ we find most of the most important ideas of the new Yugoslav feminists there. Vesna Pusić, who was a young sociologist at the time, argued for the relevance of feminism facing a less then interested audience:

if we approach feminism as a manifestation of one broad, global theory, we will much more easily get the dimension of the universality it contains. In other words, even if it is not a theory in itself, it presents a manifestation and is integral part of one broad theory of social change and dialectical development of society.²⁶

Despite the interest on behalf of the KDAŽ in the UN Year and women's rights, politicians and intellectuals persistently referred the *žensko pitanje* back to the realisation of *općeljudske emancipacije*.

In contrast, the feminist authors realised the shared experiences and were sympathetic towards texts written in a capitalist context. Gordana Cerjan-Letica emphasised that to her, the new American feminists questioned and attacked the “American way of life”, including bourgeois democracy and capitalism, and therefore, it was to be appreciated from a Yugoslav perspective.²⁷ In a 1978-issue, “Women, or about freedom” of *Pitanja*, a selection of texts by the members of the *Žena i društvo* group was published. Here, the Sarajevo-based social scientist, Nada Ler-Sofronić comes to similar conclusions as Cerjan-Letica, pointing out that whereas Betty Friedan was often criticised by left-wing feminists in the USA as well as elsewhere for her bourgeois lens of analysis, when speaking of the lives of bourgeois women, Friedan in fact criticised bourgeois values.²⁸ In a similar fashion, Vjeran Katunarić described three possible modalities, Marxist feminism, feminist Marxism and moderate new feminism [*umjerenački neofeminizam*],²⁹ and emphasised that Marxism and feminism in the USA and Western Europe shared their refusal of positivism and objectivism. (43) Rada Iveković agreed on this and emphasised in 1980 already that many ideas of American feminism fell onto a fertile ground among intellectual women in Western Europe. For example, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* was one of the milestones of post-WWII feminist thought: “a practical and theoretical elaboration on the women's question within the criticism of contemporary American capitalism”.³⁰

Looking at the French context, the new wave of French feminism born in the aftermath of May 1968 was also understood as a phenomenon relevant for Yugoslavia. Jasna Tkalec in her 1977 article, “The arrival and happening of feminism” welcomed “the radical demands of the equality of sexual morals for men and women, loudly seeking rehabilitation, from a Freudian position, of women's erotica, the sexuality of children and adolescents and even of homosexuality”.³¹

Radicalism, understood as a revolutionary approach, was viewed as positive in Mežnarić’s 1972 writing too, and in analysing the differences between the “reformist” National Organisation of Women (NOW) and the “radical” Women’s Liberation groups in the USA, Cerjan-Letica located the radical current of new feminism in the USA as “part of the world revolution of human rights which is happening inside and outside our national borders”. She noticed that radical feminists, “in the track of the sensibility of the New Left” politicised “the most human and most hidden spheres of human life – such as the family, marriage, sexuality”.³²

Another early publication, an issue of *Student*, edited by Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda in 1976 included texts from Robin Morgan’s *Sisterhood is Powerful* by Pat Mainardi (from the Redstockings group, which belonged to the above mentioned “radical” Women’s Liberation groups) and Zoe Moss, as well as an interview with Luce Irigaray by Cathérine Clément originally in *La Nouvelle Critique*, one text by Marie-Thérèse Baudrillard from *Politique Hebdo* and an excerpt from Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex*. In their introduction, the editors legitimised feminism though argument that some of women’s shared experiences were universal:

It is interesting to get acquainted with insights of the new thinking of the ‘problem’ of women, her speech [*govor*], agency [*delanje*] and living [*življenje*], and this through a mosaic of broad elements, from analytical-theoretical approaches to personal statements. Though here it is seemingly only about ‘a foreign experience’, a lot of this experience of women is universal.³³

They argued relying on the interview with Irigaray,³⁴ discussing the social use of theories, writings, artworks. Irigaray in her work identified the need for radical (down to the roots) change in the discourse, which to her was the means of changing power relations at its roots. In its Yugoslav interpretation, Irigaray’s approach was surprisingly close to the radicalism of the American second wave.

The influence of Irigaray and Julia Kristeva was part of Rada Iveković reassessment of Western thought, pointing out its relevance and its other meanings in the light of Indian philosophy. The Indologist philosopher wrote a critique of Hegel through an already critical reading of the Vedas, which reading was based on Marx.³⁵ Her work followed the train of thought which investigated the othering of nature, women and those cultures which were seen as inferior, as “less developed” in their difference.

This perspective was similar to that of the phallogocentric order, which saw women as “less developed”. Kristeva’s concept of the abject³⁶ and Irigaray’s *Le Speculum* allowed Iveković to read through the othering of India as well as the, in varying forms omnipresent, oppression of women. Her two books, *Druga Indija* [The other India], *Indija—Fragmenti osamdesetih* [India—Fragments from the eighties], supported by two edited volumes with texts from Indian philosophy,³⁷ helped to broaden the scope and even, if not “to provincialize Europe”,³⁸ at least to make the transfer not one-directional. Moreover, her writing reveals more of the complexity of the place of Yugoslavia in the non-aligned context.³⁹

Even if the concept of radicalism assumed different meanings in the original contexts of French theory, the US movement and again, something else the British context,⁴⁰ the new Yugoslav feminists recognised the closeness of the goals of these movements to their own goals. The journalist and sociologist Vesna Kesić compared the feminist movement to the workers’ movement, claiming that feminist radicalism had its place in a “revolutionary context” (a reference to post-partisan revolution contemporaneous Yugoslavia): “this is as if the workers on strike would be advised not to choose such a ‘militant’ way of fighting”, “fighting” being the “re-vindication of one’s rights”.⁴¹ Thinking about class, Luce Irigaray in the translated interview turned the question around and suggested that class be translated into “men and women”, adding: “Or, we should admit that today’s praxis of Marxism is not willing to acknowledge this difference and the exploitation of women”.⁴²

The texts analysed above, tentatively but with a growing self-confidence seeking new meanings of feminism, were followed by a more and more conceptually organised academic corpus of texts on feminism. For the conference *Drug-ca žena: Novi pristup* [Comrade-ess woman: a new approach, thereafter: *Drug-ca* conference] in 1978 in Belgrade. The organisers had a selected list of texts translated, making the conference literally a canonising event for new Yugoslav feminism.⁴³ Most of the women I interviewed, even if they had been actively dealing with feminism for quite a few years by 1978, think of 1978 as the time “when it all started”. In its conciseness, the conference indeed represented a lot of what new Yugoslav feminism was later on, throughout the next decade (Fig. 2.5).



Fig. 2.5 Dunja Blažević and Rada Iveković at the *Drug-ca* conference in Belgrade in 1978 (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

Themes and arguments of the post-New Left feminism (Marxist or socialist feminism) of the 1960s, represented here by Juliet Mitchell, Sheila Rowbotham and Evelyne Reed, were discussed together with French post-structuralist feminists (the usual suspect Kristeva and Irigaray, the former with her book *About Chinese Women* though) and those radical feminists who, even if they were inspired by Marxism, rather belonged to a new English language line of radical feminism, such as Germaine Greer and Shulamith Firestone. Apart from the texts, the interactions between the guests from Italy, England and Germany also had some cleavages recurring later on: the understanding of the local situations on behalf of the guests, for example about the role of the male group members (which was revised later by the Yugoslav members too), or different understandings of where the limits of sexism lay. Partly due to the conference, partly thanks to the work before, in the aftermath of the conference a more systematic publishing process started.

CRITICAL MARXISM, THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL
AND THE NEW YUGOSLAV FEMINISTS: INSPIRATION
AND A CRITIQUE OF ESSENTIALISM

Feminists in different economic and political systems had their reasons for a deep disappointment with leftist political ideologies, be it the New Left in Western capitalism or the state's distorted Marxist agenda in Eastern Europe. Because of this, or despite, there were constant efforts to reformulate feminism's relation to these systems of thought. In Yugoslavia, the articles and speeches by the representatives of the state and especially the KDAŽ were full of the references to Marx, Bebel, Engels's *About the Origin of the Family*, all of these subsuming women's emancipation to the class question. Marija Šoljan Bakarić emphasised that “[d]espite the fact that Marx and Engels did not write *specifically* about the ‘women’s question’, they did write and tell a lot *about it*” when writing about the general human emancipation.⁴⁴ Returning to the concept of *općeljudske emancipacije* was one of the core reactions on behalf of state representatives. As opposed to that, the position of the *Žena i društvo* group was that the women's question should precede the class question, or alternately, should be treated differently from that, as it has different characteristics and a different mode of functioning. This is the key moment of the Irigaray-interview in *Student*, when she suggests: “we have to admit that about this difference and this specificity of the exploitation of women, the current praxis of Marxism does not want to know” (7). Their allies in their criticism were thinkers who were invested in rethinking or further advancing Marxian arguments, as well as feminist thinkers whose work was largely motivated by their disappointment with Leftist ideas lacking a feminist angle.

The authors most extensively writing about the new readings of women's situation from the direction of other Marxist schools were Blaženka Despot, Nada Ler-Sofronić, Vjeran Katunarić and Nadežda Čačinović. While Yugoslavia was one of the East European countries with a strong Marxist revisionist discourse⁴⁵ and the some of the Praxis professors supported the feminists, the feminists were relatively little inspired by the *Praxis* authors. Not only because the heyday of Praxis was a decade earlier and the group suffered some severe repercussions in the aftermath of 1968 and 1971,⁴⁶ rather since the horizon of these women was opening towards something new, which still offered perspectives beyond the Yugoslavia of the 1960s.

Other critical Marxist intellectual schools were discussed and cited more often by the new feminists. Besides the Frankfurt School, it was the Lukács's Budapest School,⁴⁷ especially the work of Mária Márkus

and Ágnes Heller that the new feminists relied on. Heller’s article, co-authored with Mihály Vajda,⁴⁸ criticising the existing socialism in Hungary for the maintenance of the bourgeois family and suggesting a system of family relations not be based on ownership, was published in *Žena* as early as 1974, which shows yet again the mixed position of the journal in relation to patriarchy’s survival in socialism.⁴⁹ In the 1970s articles from these different Marxist traditions, the Frankfurt School being the most frequent one, appeared in the journal *Žena*, and later scattered in many academic journals, such as *Pitanja, Dometi, Argumenti*.

The psychologically invested Marxian thinkers such as the Frankfurt School and Ernst Bloch reappear in the work of Čaćinovič, Blaženka Despot, Nada Ler-Sofronić and Vjeran Katunarić. Čaćinovič, reading Marcuse’s work, especially his “Marxism and feminism”, emphasised the revolutionary potential in feminism, acknowledging its potential as a new movement.⁵⁰ Both Marcuse and Ernst Bloch saw potential in the women’s movement, which Bloch identified as a partial or specialised utopia. As he emphasised in the excerpt taken from *The Principle of Hope*, elements of these specialised utopias were even included in Marxism, which did not happen with any bourgeois full-scale utopia after Marx.⁵¹

At the Portorož conference in 1976, Čaćinovič used Bloch to point out the problem with the generalising concept of *equality*, in this case as it was promoted by the bourgeois women’s movement: This early feminist concept of equality is not sufficient, as it does not provide for the possible use of the rights it achieves. Čaćinovič envisioned a “feminine socialism, socialist feminism” that takes several social categories into consideration, that is besides gender, class too. While she maintained that the theoretical relevance of contemporary feminism cannot be separated from Marxism,⁵² Čaćinovič went beyond the traditional Marxian terms. She furthered Bloch’s idea of the change in women’s subjectivity, projecting that “the development and reassurance of the quality of a liberated and self-conscious woman turns into a precondition of change in contemporary society” (129). That is, women’s equality is not only not ensured by the achievements of the class struggle, the change should take place on several levels, not only on that of social categories but on the level of the personal too.

Arguing for the prevalence of women’s emancipation over *općeljudske emancipacije*, Nada Ler-Sofronić relied on Marcuse and the French sociologist Alain Touraine.⁵³ Both of these authors “speak about the feminisation of society in the sense of the humanisation of society”. She was not uncritical, though: she denounced “the new mystification of the sexual

essence of women” (21), including the way it was presented in the new discourse on the sexual revolution and in radical feminist writings. The reinterpreted humanism was important to Ler-Sofronić, who questioned the need to nurture or emphasise women’s humane character as a uniform and fixed category. Instead, she recommended a Gramscian historical analysis of women’s position (21–22). This text is an intelligent rethematization of women’s unachieved equality with a critical eye on “bio-essentialist” arguments. Blaženka Despot was equally critical of these, revisiting the idea of women’s nature [*ženska priroda*] through a whole apparatus from the rereading of Hegel and Marx, as well as Lukács and Marcuse.⁵⁴ Vjeran Katunarić, giving a comprehensive reading of the Frankfurt School, praised the scrutiny of feminism, presented for instance in the critical approach of the feminists to Marcuse’s “stereotypical” approach to women.⁵⁵

The readings of Marxist texts with a psychological perspective strengthened the possibilities to reconsider the role of consciousness in the new feminist discourse and in new feminist politics. The concept of consciousness returned into the Yugoslav feminist discussions from a detour: the radical new feminists in the USA borrowed a Marxian concept for their grass roots groups, giving the concept a feminist meaning.⁵⁶ This was the moment when the feminists in socialist Yugoslavia took it over, or rather, back. In 1981, Nada Ler-Sofronić located “the radicalisation of women’s consciousness [*svijest*] in their awareness [*svijest*] of their own subordination and exploitation in private life and in their interpersonal relations”.⁵⁷ The emphasis here is on the possibilities of reaching and developing women’s consciousness, based on the acknowledgement that there are different types of oppression, which may require different qualities and depths of a “revolutionary praxis”. For a discourse on consciousness and alienation, Ler-Sofronić turned to the psychological aspects in the critical Marxist theory of Lukács and Lefebvre. She connected this to her argument that since patriarchy existed before capitalism, women’s inequality cannot be resolved by the mere dissolution of capitalism and class difference. The two arguments were combined through Fromm’s research on “primitive” societies, which concluded that there is a direct connection between less hierarchy, aggression and authoritarianism within the society itself on the one hand and the equality and individual freedom of women, on the other hand. It is a well-defined, strong female subjectivity that leads to a new radical movement, claimed Ler-Sofronić.

Changing the landscape of the “class or gender first” debate could revolutionise the worker’s movement as well as a further consequence of women’s independence in the argumentation of Ler-Sofronić: “there

is no equality among unequal parties (...) and understanding women’s subordination leads to a deeper quality of class consciousness”. The discussion of consciousness from a psychological direction, instead of a socio-economic one, organically moves the text towards the role of the personal: Ler-Sofronić would take “the questions about the ‘personal’, the ‘intimate’ or human happiness” back into a socialist discussion of women’s place in society. As she reminds us, those days are not far when these “were qualified as bourgeois and counterrevolutionary, and still today, the significant question about the relationship between socialism and the sexual revolution invokes uneasiness, ridicule and often even aggression”.⁵⁸ While she is promoting radical societal change, she also politicises the personal, disagreeing with it being a bourgeois matter.

*The Feminist-Marxist Alliance as a Source of Dissent Between
Yugoslavia and the “West”*

With an awareness of the tradition of feminist ideas in the history of socialist thought, the new Yugoslav feminists related the explications of the two schools of thought to the dissent of feminism in its own context. Importantly, an apt criticism of the state’s approach to the women’s question was supported not only by critical Marxism, but also the critical stance of Anglo-American feminism towards capitalism.

Blaženka Despot suggested a “feminised [more feminist] Marxism” on the pages of *NIN*,⁵⁹ while Vlasta Jalušič criticised Marxism for various shortcomings, deriving from the lack of a feminist “lens” to the world.⁶⁰ The issue of the journal *Problemi*, where her introduction was published, was also an exemplary case of exchange of ideas by the new feminists in the three cities, with texts by Despot, Rada Iveković, Sklevicky and Renner. “Feminist questions and Marxist answers” (Juliet Mitchell’s phrase) were formulated through translations and interpretations of the work of Mitchell, Sheila Rowbotham, Michèle Barrett and Evelyne Reed.⁶¹

Gordana Cerjan-Letica wrote an introductory text to the translations of Mitchell and Rowbotham for *Naše teme* in 1980, where she argues that feminism could be of use for contemporary Marxism for many reasons:

1. as a movement, it pushes a theoretical problematisation of new emancipatory (revolutionary) powers;
2. as a critical position (towards Marxism), it enables the perception of the actuality of Marx’s model method for an analysis of contemporary [*građansko*] society;

3. the feminist theoretical penetration into the sphere of the “private” reveals to Marxism a multitude of new and not insignificant elements of social relation in the family and in smaller communities of contemporary capitalism.⁶²

Cerjan-Letica’s arguments exemplify the new Yugoslav feminists’ walk on a tightrope between contextualising the role of feminism in Yugoslavia by referring to its role in capitalism in order to make way for feminism to provoke and reframe the official version of Marxism in the Yugoslav context.

In Lydia Sklevicky and Žarana Papić’s edited volume, *Antropologija žene*, Ann J. Lane questioned Engels’s idea in his famous *The Origins of the Family*, “that in non-wealth producing societies, when women’s work was as important for survival as men’s, that is when, in Engels’s terms, both were equally involved in the production of process, equality between men and women prevailed”.⁶³ Lane used research highly critical of Engels’s weak reference to “ancient societies” (Lewis Henry Morgan’s book from 1877), which was later questioned by many authors, to direct our attention to the class or gender issue, again. What Lane’s text in the volume by Papić and Sklevicky’s shows us is that the very basic problem with the argument that women’s equality should be subsumed to the class question and to *općeljudske emancipacije* is that it ignores the claim of the feminist texts that through the equality of men and women, a higher level of human freedom, both of men’s and women’s, can be achieved. Abiding by texts such as Engels’s made it impossible to talk about women’s real equality, as the feminist rereadings of Marxism in *Antropologija žene* emphasise (Fig. 2.6).

The rereadings of Marxism from a feminist perspective were inspired by and enabled the research into women’s position in society and the reconsideration of concepts. Already Lane in the critique of Engels relied, to a large extent, on the relevance of power relations. Gayle Rubin’s text about the “sex/gender systems” was also part of the *Antropologija žene* volume,⁶⁴ where the basis of the essentialism debates, the nature–culture opposition, was thematised together with the private–public division, which necessarily involved a discussion of the gender-based division of labour in society. The editors of the volume, Papić and Sklevicky warned of the danger of the acceptance of the gendered division of labour as “natural or pre-social”. If we think of it as such, then sex [*pol*]⁶⁵ is excluded from the analysis of the *social* division of



Fig. 2.6 Lydia Sklevicky and Žarana Papić (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

labour and that leads to the refusal of sex [*pol*] to be considered a social question, argued Papić and Sklevicky, based on Ann Oakley’s sociology of housework.⁶⁶ It was in this volume that the division of sex and gender, (*s*)*pol* and *rod*, was introduced into the social sciences.⁶⁷

There were arguments already from before *Antropologija žene*, which is the strongest moment of the introduction of the *spol-rod* division into the Yugoslav discourse, aiming to dispel the illusion that the biological difference can potentially explain oppression. The new Yugoslav feminists relied on the early second wave socialist feminist authors in the “West” for inspiration. It is there as early as 1976 in Cerjan-Letica’s reference to Kate Millett’s categories of the biological as opposed to the social, which in fact explains oppression.⁶⁸ The entire feminist issue of *Pitanja* in 1978 was edited around the question of the social construction of “sexual difference”. Here, Papić differentiates between biology and the “socio-historical process of the formation of the sexes [*pol*]”.⁶⁹

Nada Ler-Sofronić asks a more provocative question in the same journal issue: “If women are naturally subordinate, why is there all the socialisation to keep them in this position?” The process that places and keeps women in subordination, Ler-Sofronić calls “sexual socialisation” [*polna socijalizacija*].⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the use of the term *spol* remained prevalent in the publications till 1991, even Papić talk about *rod* in her 1989 book.⁷¹ The emphasis on the social, despite the conceptual confusion, makes sociology and anthropology essential for the new Yugoslav feminism. This leads to the appraisal of the work of the ethnologist and leading intellectual of the interwar period, Vera Stein Erlich (1897–1980).⁷² Her work and the detection of the non-biological reasons behind women’s situation led to more research about the family and work, involving a criticism of patriarchy as something still present. Such research was had high stakes especially since, as Rada Iveković wrote: “The criticism of the family and marriage (...) is already the criticism of the state itself”.⁷³

Stepping beyond heterosexuality as the norm supports the discourse on gender/*rod* as a concept. LGBT issues became more visible in the activist discourses as well as in popular mass media, but there were traces of them in the new Yugoslav feminist scholarship too. For example, Rada Iveković in her article in *Dometi* wrote critically about Proudhon’s fear of homosexuality, which she saw as petit bourgeois and as originating from Proudhon’s prejudice against women. This article realised and critically admitted that homophobia and patriarchy were interrelated, which Iveković found especially problematic in the case of socialist thinkers.⁷⁴ Rajka Polić, on the pages of *Žena* in 1988, discussed the ways in which transsexuality could be of use for gender emancipation.⁷⁵ The widespread discussion of the *écriture féminine* in literary scholarship was extended by an article on lesbian literature by Slađana Marković—though this was published in the journal *Potkulture* [Subcultures] in 1987. In Slovenia, the lesbian movement meant a source of inspiration for the radicalisation of feminism, as the volume *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About the women and the women’s movement], edited by Mojca Dobnikar shows⁷⁶ (Fig. 2.7).

Together with the opening up towards non-heterosexual sexuality and the feminist self-positioning against homophobia, the criticism of sexism appeared too. As Iveković noticed it on the example of Proudhon, the two walk hand in hand. Sexism is a new concept which needs explanation in the Yugoslav context: “sexism is discrimination based on sex, just like racism is discrimination based on race”, says Iveković.⁷⁷ Blaženka Despot



Fig. 2.7 Mojca Dobnikar and Lydia Sklevicky in 1986 at the ŠKUC Gallery

and Gordana Bosanac called it simply “spolni rasizam”, that is “sex-based racism”. Sexism as a concept was also explained and criticised in the theoretical texts of Papić. In her definition, it is segregation by sex, where women are almost always underprivileged. In this sense, it is similar to racism, as it explains the difference between human beings on biological arguments.⁷⁸ The circle from the detection that the biological arguments are meant to cover up social problems, to the concept of gender [*rod*] and an opening up towards a criticism of heteronormativity and homophobia, closes with the rejection of sexism as an idea or attitude relying on the biological arguments.

It is these biological arguments that structure the division of labour and the meaning of work in human society. The shift in focus when the division of labour was discussed towards gender was certainly a breakthrough, especially since even the state representatives and the new feminists in Yugoslavia agreed that the burdens on women through domestic work was one of the biggest problems women face in socialist Yugoslavia.⁷⁹ The topic is there in the early *Student* issue already, in the article by

Pat Mainardi from the Redstockings group in the USA about the “politics of housework”.⁸⁰ Blaženka Despot approached the concept of work from a Marxist-theoretical perspective, reconceptualising the neglected concept of domestic work through Marx’s concepts of abstract and concrete work.⁸¹ Silva Mežnarić argued that work is a crucial theme and a widely discussed concept, in the intersection of socialism and feminism. From different theoretical but similar ideological background, they both argued for a redefinition of the concept of work.⁸²

In relation to the difference in the approach of feminism and socialism to the private and the public sphere, Gordana Cerjan-Letica quoted Eli Zaretsky saying that “[a]s the socialists in the 19th century challenged the legitimacy of bourgeois politics, so did the feminists introduce into the arena of political struggle the private life of the family”.⁸³ Therefore, role and position of work as a concept are changed in feminism, the second wave bringing along “the politicisation of the sphere of life which in a bourgeois society is solely viewed as private”.⁸⁴ Cerjan-Letica was aware that the attitude “is characteristic of the whole leftist movement of the 1960s”, but the emphasis on women and work came with the second wave of feminism. Even Vida Tomšič, in her article about the advancement of both men and women in socialism (which is more important, than the “women’s question”, she claims), admitted that there is a lot to do about the family-related duties of women. However, to her, this is not for the sake of helping women, but is help provided for the whole family.⁸⁵

Gordana Cerjan-Letica emphasised the ideological framing of the family, which is based on the precondition that the private and the public are separated and thus much of the work indispensable for the survival of society is done for free, invisibly, in the private.⁸⁶ By bringing the private into the discursive arena, the gendered nature of the private-public division could be approached too. On the one hand, the division is seen as spacial, on the other hand, as social, as determining the social division of labour. The spatial aspect, the different standards for using the public space was already there in the MT Baudrillard text in *Student* in 1976 stating that women cannot freely use public spaces, for example they face sexual harassment in the street.⁸⁷ This angle becomes all the more important in the anti-violence activist phase of new Yugoslav feminism.

Jasna Tkalec’s essay “Patrijarhat i brak” [Patriarchy and marriage] in *Delo* related the question to Horkheimer’s statement. While Horkheimer acknowledged that family life was full of tyranny, lies and stupidities, he

insisted on it as necessary. Tkalec claimed that marriage was a “masculine institution” and the less it corresponds to human nature, the more regulations it requires. She proposed a new model, which finally would not be based on violence and oppression.⁸⁸ The other aspect, that of labour, directs one’s attention, yet again, to the shortcomings of Marx and Engels in this respect. Interestingly enough, what the new feminist authors discovered was that early Marxism was already and still rather conservative in its conceptualisation of the family. As Žarana Papić wrote in her book, Engels, who was radical when it came to social transformations and the class question, from what he calls “revolution, one of the most radical which people have ever experienced” derived a “simple and peaceful ‘contractual’ change of the family system”.⁸⁹

Papić criticised the existing research about the family, but there was a slowly emerging feminist focus in the subdiscipline of the sociology of the family. Papić found the abundance of funding and institutional support of this field problematic, since while the category of sex [*pol*] is a relevant category of research, instead of confining the focus onto this small field and aspect, there should be a feminist perspective in the whole of social sciences and humanities. In the meantime, in this indeed more traditional field, the sociologist Anđelka Milić explicitly acknowledged and used feminist theories for the work on the family. Milić was a professor of sociology in Belgrade, active in the academic work of the new Yugoslav feminists from the late 1970s on. Later she helped and supervised the doctoral work of such important feminist scholars as Marina Blagojević and Ivana Pantelić. In her edited volume from 1988, *Radanje moderne porodice* [The birth of the modern family] she urged to consider the family as a historically changing, even constructed concept, which could and should be approached from various directions. The list of approaches included the integration of the work on women’s history, which had been written separately of that of the family.⁹⁰ Milić’s aim was to reconcile and combine the two, and she also provided research proving the different loads of unpaid work resting on men and women. Vesna Pusić analysed the differences in employment rates and statuses of women and men,⁹¹ both of which resonated with Despot’s philosophical writing about unpaid labour.

Jasna Tkalec provided a critical reading of the treatment of the “women’s question” and the inequality in the division of labour in “socialist countries of the Eastern bloc”—which is a reference to all the other countries in the region under Soviet influence—in a text based on the work of a Swedish sociologist, Hilda Laas.⁹² Following the abrupt

measurements to enforce the equality of men and women, inequality, such as the imbalance between the domestic work done by men and women prevailed, as well as the feminisation of certain manual labour and the lack of women in decision-making positions. Tkalec praised the Swedish model, while she carefully avoided comparing these models to the Yugoslav one. Ewa Morawska, a Polish sociologist who also participated at the 1978 conference in Belgrade, in her article about Poland analysed the same tensions between equality on paper and inequality in reality.⁹³ Comparing women's lives in capitalism, socialism in the Soviet Bloc and in Yugoslavia, Vjeran Katunarić in his book *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* suggested that the most crucial difference between the Soviet Bloc and Yugoslavia from the perspective of women's situation, was that in Yugoslavia there was a feminist criticism of the regime.⁹⁴ All of these authors find it important to call women's domestic labour obligations on top of their full time employment a double burden. The debates and differences in the evaluation of women's work and domestic labour between the feminists and the state officials and intellectuals became important in the discussion on the pages of the popular press, which I discuss in Chapter 4 in this book.

FEMINIST CHRONOTOPOS: HISTORIOGRAPHY

The two authors with the most innovative feminist historical texts within the new feminist group in Yugoslavia, Andrea Feldman and Lydia Sklevicky, agree that at the beginnings of the new feminist activities, history of women and feminism seemed to fascinate the participants the most.⁹⁵ For the conference in 1978, Dunja Blažević and Žarana Papić proposed various topics, like women and revolution, modern feminist movements, sexuality and identity of women, and women and culture. The only historian by education in the group, joining it years after the first conference, was Andrea Feldman, but two sociologists, Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevicky also worked on historical topics. Eventually, it was Sklevicky who became the most active figure in initiating and pursuing feminist historiography in the 1970s and 1980s. There were articles published on women's history and feminist history from the 1970s on, and under the initiative of Sklevicky, in 1984–1985 women historians from archives, museums and institutes started to meet within the frames of an extra-curricular postgraduate seminar.⁹⁶ This led to the production of many articles about women and history, and this

was the period when the harshest criticism on the party-line interpretation of women’s place and role in Yugoslav historiography emerged.

Sklevicky, in argument for the importance of the “history of forgotten sisters”, described the transition from the “old” feminism to the new wave, which realised that basic rights did not ensure real gender equality and therefore demanded liberation from gender roles.⁹⁷ The feminist modes of criticism of the state-socialist system in Yugoslavia and its failures of creating gender equality can be very well modelled on the example of historiography. However, even more than that, writing their own history was a step in creating feminist identity and a meaningful contribution to the enhancement of feminist consciousness. At a time when feminism was reshaping in Yugoslavia, feminist scholars were right to realise that writing their own story is an essential step in self-definition and in gaining legitimacy, and that in this sense also, history is of crucial importance for the present and future. To quote Karen Offen: “earlier generations of [...] feminists understood that ‘remembrance of things past’ is important for plotting the future”. Offen also points out that these endeavours already appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century feminisms.⁹⁸ For the new Yugoslav feminists, the two major topics of interest were women’s role in the partisan movement during WWII and the story of the interwar period “first wave” of feminism. The two topics are even more interesting if we take into consideration that WWII was rather important for the state-approved historiography, while the interwar non-socialist women’s movement was considered reactionary and therefore erased from the canon of history. However, the single fact that women’s role in one single event (the NOB (*Narodna oslobodilačka borba*—People’s Liberation Struggle) during WWII was commemorated did not mean that women’s role in history received any further attention, as Lydia Sklevicky pointed out in her famous essay, “Horses, women, wars”. By time, the theme in the historical narratives was slowly fading away and there barely was any mention of women in history textbooks apart from this one moment, which at the same time cannot be significant enough, exactly due to its singularity.⁹⁹

As Rada Iveković put it, it was characteristic of “women’s perspective”—which here stands for a conscious, feminist perspective—that “it searches revalorisation and new evaluation of women’s participation in life, such as the history of the individual disciplines”.¹⁰⁰ She also suggested that from a philosophical question of women’s place in history, for example Hegel’s exclusion of women as those belonging to nature, from

history, the real source of empowerment or at least a next step would be the actual writing of women's history. Women's actual place in society can be changed also by changing women's place in the way the history of that society is being told.¹⁰¹ A year earlier she wrote: "Is it possible for us to read women's history (herstory) in history? It is possible, with some efforts, as we are reading it already here in this place. This is one of the tasks of women's creativity".¹⁰² Vesna Kesić supported this in her text from 1979 in the magazine *Start*, in the form of an overview on the history of feminism in the twentieth century in Europe and North America in an article with the title with the title "History has a male gender".¹⁰³

This rewriting of history regards the perception not only of space, but that of time too. For Blaženka Despot, the private–public division in Western political thought permeated the idea of time and therefore our perception of history, from which women were written out. Women have no time to participate in self-management due to the unpaid domestic labour they have to perform in the private, making this time invisible in the public. This idea of Despot recurs as a metadiscourse by sociologist-anthropologists. Time and space were brought together in the historical narratives and the discursive act of writing these narratives, and the reinterpretation and recanonisation of the interwar predecessors created a feminist chronotope in the Yugoslav context.

One of the first feminist historical articles published in Yugoslavia was Sklevicky's essay in 1976 with the title "Od borbe za prava do prave borbe" [From the fight for rights to the real fight]. Here, she emphasised the significance to tell the story "of the forgotten sisters", and introduced the reader to the history of American women's movements, with special emphasis on second wave feminism.¹⁰⁴ Her choice fell on the USA because of the long history of political fight of the country, and since the USA was the venue of feminist "renaissance" [*preporod*] in the 1960s. The years following this article by Sklevicky brought along various articles on women's history. These were the times when Andrea Feldman started to publish, many times on similar topics as Sklevicky, many times together with her.¹⁰⁵ Feldman worked on the non-socialist history of women in the interwar period (which was important in Sklevicky's work too), and her work about the Association of Women with University Education was published in German and Serbo-Croatian in 1986.¹⁰⁶

The first methodologically grounded, systemic work came from Papić and Sklevicky and it meant a foundation for the semi-institutional activity of the new feminists in the field of history. This activity was semi-institutional both in the sense that it was practiced by non-historians and in the sense that it happened outside the institutions of the historical profession.¹⁰⁷ In their article from 1980, a prelude to the 1983 *Antropologija žena*, Papić and Sklevicky gave an extensive overview about the latest ideas in anthropology,¹⁰⁸ being at the same time very critical on the previous male-dominated gender-blindness of the field, which in their view, contributed to the preservation of gender inequality and stereotypes on women. As they wrote, “male anthropologists do the research, they interpret the phenomena [...] the male anthropologist is thus twice as much an outsider: outsider in the new culture and outsider in ‘women’s world’”.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, they presented the latest feminist approaches to anthropology, among them Margaret Mead and Gayle Rubin, which also influenced the historical research in Yugoslavia. Historiography and feminist methodology were also promoted by Lydia Sklevicky, who often referred to Gerda Lerner’s theoretical framework and her writings about women’s feminist consciousness, as well as the work of Natalie Zemon Davis.¹¹⁰

The turning point in the discussion on the topics of women’s participation in the NOB and feminism in interwar Yugoslavia was Sklevicky’s two-part treatise “The characteristics of the organised activity of women in Yugoslavia till the period of the second world war”,¹¹¹ following her anthropological analysis of the AFŽ.¹¹² In *Polja*, Sklevicky openly criticised Jovanka Kecman’s work, re-evaluating the other groups which Kecman dismissed as “bourgeois” and feminist.¹¹³ Sklevicky’s argued that even if the *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* [Alliance of Women’s Movements] did not have a socialist agenda, interwar time feminists played substantial roles in raising women’s consciousness, which role was under no means less significant only because what they worked for was democracy and peace and not communism (454). She also stated that the *Alijansa ženskih pokreta* was by no means marginal, but on the contrary, they were those who made women’s problems public (455), they were not reactionary, but progressive (456). She also argued that socialist and communist women’s organisations were not always openly committed to the women’s question, due to “the omnipresence of patriarchal understanding, which was not an exception even

in the ranks of the proletarians". This attitude changed only during WWII, with Tito's recognition that the partisans did not have a chance without the participation of women (454). (The same is suggested by Jozo Tomasevich in his book on the Chetniks from 1975.)¹¹⁴

The article, Sklevicky's style and argumentation are an eminent example for the balancing between one's own critical feminist agenda and embarking on the partisan emancipatory processes as empowering women. She was committed to the writing of an inclusive women's history: when discussing women's participation in the socialist movement, she appreciatively referred to Anka Berus and other crucial female characters from the partisan movement and later the SKJ.¹¹⁵ However, she was unwilling to accept ready-made mythologies. In the article published in the first joint book project of the Zagreb feminists, the *Žena i društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloga* [Women and Society. Cultivating the Dialogue],¹¹⁶ Sklevicky went even one step further. Here, she referred to the establishment's approach to women in WWII through Hobsbawm's inventing of traditions. She stated that the role of women in the NOB or the parties was manipulated by a system which "*takes pride* in the extraordinary numbers of women in the national liberation army and movement". The invisibility of women would go against their invented tradition, questioning the statement that women were absolutely not hampered by the patriarchal attitude of the leadership to join the NOB, the party or syndicates.¹¹⁷

Whereas the arguments of many feminist historians are to a great extent based on women's invisibility in history,¹¹⁸ the state-socialist Yugoslav case is different. The establishment's version of history builds upon women and their representation and was used as a source of its own legitimacy. What we see clashing here is the feminist emancipatory and the state-socialist ideological aims of representation and interpretation of the role of women in WWII. This clash at the same time, on another level also questioned those principles of Yugoslav historiography, which Dragović-Soso called the "holy cows", but with a completely different message than the nationalist discourses Dragović-Soso analyses.¹¹⁹ The only point where feminists agreed with the state-approved historiography was the positive evaluation of Yugoslav unification. As for the disdain for the interwar regime and the apotheosis of the NOB and the communist revolution, the feminist criticism was rather harsh and became strong by demanding the promises to be kept and by pointing out the places of empty rhetoric considering women's equal status.

Feminists and nationalists many times criticised the same principles, called out for reconsideration of the same periods, but their final arguments were far away from each other, and as the 1990s shows, they could not have agreed less on any principles. We are looking at feminist women who were writing against the system and within the system at the same time, whose position, therefore, was both dissenting and engaging with the regime. They were trying to question the status quo by referring to the principles upon which the status quo was built and they were forming alternative forums for their activity while using the existing institutions for the alternative forums.

POST-FEMINIST SOCIALIST BACKLASH AND THE REFUSAL OF FEMINISM

Whereas after the first publications, and even more so after the 1978 conference, more and more women and men were interested in the new feminist ideas, these were not positively welcomed either by the representatives of official institutions, or by other intellectuals. The tone was set by an edited volume of texts focusing on the “women’s question” from 1975, which is interesting because it already reflects on the latest developments in “Western” feminism.¹²⁰ The editor, Jovan Đorđević, a professor of law in Belgrade, investigated the matter of women’s inequality and the potential answers to “the women’s question”. He saw an organic relationship between women’s liberation and socialism (17), Marxism and the class struggle as essential for women’s emancipation. In his reading, “no one up to now has gone further than Marx in the definition of the essence of the women’s question” (56), obliterating the long history of feminisms before and after Marx. Besides Marx, he focused on what Engels, Bebel and Lenin did for the women’s question, while the role of Emma Goldman and Aleksandra Kollontai was downplayed. Kollontai is dismissed as someone whose work was only relevant in her time but is not any longer (98)—although eventually, the new Yugoslav feminist corpus did rely on the liberating aspects of the writings of Kollontai or Zetkin.¹²¹ Familiarising himself with the later works in feminist writing, Đorđević questioned Simone de Beauvoir’s statement about women’s work as being perceived inferior (106–109) as well as the relevance of the recent writings of Luce Irigaray, Kate Millett, Germaine Greer, together with the “new concepts and terms, such as sexism, machismo, fallocratism, fallocratocetrism [sic], which are all over contemporary

literatures of the most extremist and half-ideological feminist radicalism, which often is not far from lesbianism”. (47)

The 1978 conference, when such ideas were openly discussed, faced resistance in the public. In an article in *Večernji novosti* [Evening news], a reflection by a journalist expressed outrage about the conference, and even made the state organisations responsible for allowing such a conference to take place: “Why the SSRJN and the *Konferencija žena* did not send its representatives and observers?” Due to this “negligence”, “foreigners” and “some ‘modern’, ‘avant-garde’ Yugoslav women” were there speaking about women being raped and harassed in the streets and in bars. The author found these problems non-existent and ridiculous, and believed to have found the real motivations behind the conference, in the form of class betrayal: “these women are mad at the working class for producing ... high heel shoes which torture women”.¹²²

Vesna Kesić interviewed Dunja Blažević, the main organiser of the 1978 conference. Kesić emphasised that “[t]he echo of the conference in the press was not full of good intentions. Dunja had enough ‘problems’ after this conference”. Nevertheless, for Blažević, these reactions had an explanation:

This all way serving another purpose. They wanted to discredit the whole thing and present it as politically suspicious, so they were writing all kinds of things. [...] the woman’s question was not verified as an important social problem, it was rather treated as a cliché. [...] If someone reacts to the public expression of patriarchal mentality and sexism, then these powers silence and label those who would enter into a fight with these expressions. We are not used to, yet, to people acting independently.¹²³

These attacks were rather the expression of anti-feminism and often, misogyny.

The conference organised by *Žena* in 1982, with the participation of even members of the new feminist group, is a good case study for this discourse. The state organisations and their representatives reacted to feminism bearing in mind the importance of women’s equality as a state policy and the convergence between that and the feminist agenda. This meant that the complete refusal or ridicule of feminism would contradict their own position. Stipe Šušvar’s speech reminded the audience that “feminism is another form of conservative social consciousness” and expressed a rather plastic opinion about feminism: “It’s that

Marxism explained that these [independent women’s movements] are not needed, moreover, the final consequences may even prove to be reactionary, some women’s political parties, some women’s organisations, if they are not part of a general political struggle for socialist and communist social ideals”.¹²⁴ Feminism was presented as aggressive and in the meantime, not serious: “Eventually, feminism bases its theses, all of them, on essayistic wittiness about the male chauvinistic pigs, meaning, about the oppressed sex, as a sex related to the sex which oppresses. This is the original sin of all forms of feminism, without consideration which theses it is varying, because it progresses and by it new accents are coming along”.¹²⁵ The quoted lines of Stipe Šušar reflected on Slavenka Drakulić’s essay, “The Mortal Sins of Feminism”, which was published in 1980 in the magazine *Start* and where she points out several shortcomings of the functioning of KDAŽ.¹²⁶ In his argument and many other statements at the 1982 conference, feminism was both characterised as “misguided, damaging”, which Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley identify as strategies of the backlash,¹²⁷ and at the same time, it also got “reduced to a unitary concept”,¹²⁸ while a broader, general framework was offered under which the approved endeavours of feminism are subsumed.

Another non-institutional reaction to mention is an article from 1980 by Slaven Letica, published in *Pitanja*, a journal often giving space to the above-quoted feminist writings too, with the title “A draft (!) to the communist manifest against feminism”.¹²⁹ Letica equally attacked the state’s women organisations and the new feminists, suggesting there was little difference between the two, as they put “sexual emancipation” [*spolna emancipacija*] ahead of social and class-based emancipation. With regard to this, Letica emphasised that the “women’s movement” (and not feminism) had its roots in the “bourgeois democratic” movement aiming at horizontal equality.¹³⁰ In the case of the new generation, however, even the devotion of the “20-30 neofeminists” was questionable, as they only revolted against their fathers and under the circumstances of the “overproduction of the intellectuals today”, they were feminists only for career reasons (56). This argument was supported by various further misogynist statements about “double standards in marital faithfulness” (55). The article’s argumentation was aiming to build a higher moral ground for the statements of its author, to be achieved with discrediting the usefulness and even good intentions of its targets. He even questioned the relevance of Marx’s often referenced early works for the current situation, where

in his opinion, the entire *žensko pitanje* needed to be abandoned. Letica's writing is an interesting case inasmuch it also balances between the ideology approved by the state and the criticism of state policies, in the same forum feminist articles appeared too.

In her recollections of the times, Tanja Renner saw the position of feminism within the state-socialist Yugoslav context as rather complex: "Once a young man from the secret police came into my room, this room where we are sitting now, and told me that they were listening to our meetings, but that they were somehow sympathetic and why don't we cooperate [with them]. I asked a known lawyer for advice how to get rid of this sort of proposals and he said that we can just throw him out of the room". Whereas there was no direct threat from the police, "feminism threatened your career. So, the danger, the direct one, didn't come from the state, but inside academia we were mocked, we were not treated seriously enough". The personal clashes with those higher up in the academic hierarchies made life difficult, just as much as the sensation that their ideas were perceived in a condescending manner: "I gave a talk at an important conference in 1984 with the title 'De imbecillitas sexus', after which Vida Tomšič gave me these very unpleasant words that what I say is a repetition of bourgeois ideologies".¹³¹

The arguments in the debates between the feminists and the state officials and the journalists are very similar to what the concept of *post-feminism* describes. Though the concept does not appear in the feminist literature in Yugoslavia at the time, its strategies are there in the reaction to feminism. While anti-feminism and the backlash refute and attack feminism directly, post-feminism pretends to be the successor of the previously existing feminism, being its better version and proving it unnecessary. Post-feminism suggests that feminism is outdated, since "that everything that women could reasonably want has already been accomplished".¹³² The "post-" prefix to feminism, to Amelia Jones, is the death of feminism, and the process through which this is achieved, she describes as follows: similarly to the *backlash*, feminism gets "reduced to a unitary concept"¹³³ and eventually, other discourses "subsume it under a broad framework".¹³⁴ The main danger of post-feminism, according to Angela McRobbie, lies in the fact "that there is no longer any need for sexual politics,"¹³⁵ which in turn gives licence for such a politics to be undone".¹³⁶ Here, "feminism is taken into account, but only to be shown that it is no longer necessary".¹³⁷ McRobbie and Oakley claim that post-feminism is not much different from anti-feminism. In fact,

what we have here is a refined form of anti-feminism, which walks hand in hand not only with the *backlash*, but also with sexism and misogyny.

Post-feminism becomes a frequent concept in the Anglo-American feminist literature of the 1980s (here, I rely on one interpretation).¹³⁸ Post-feminism is a concept with a longer history though, even Lucy Delap finds a magazine from 1919 which claims to be post-feminist, describing feminism “a constraining, outgrown version of femininity”.¹³⁹ That is, post-feminism already in the early twentieth century denoted something that is “over” feminism. The use of post-feminism runs parallel with the dangers of a strict diachronic periodisation of feminism into “waves”, as if the feminist goals had been achieved in a chronological order, whereas if we take a closer look, the themes are rather recurring from time to time. In this circularity stands post-feminism, as a milder form of anti-feminism, together with the backlashes and anti-feminism itself.

The socialist regimes in Eastern Europe responded to some demands of the women’s movements in their policies, while they also denied the achievements of these movements, presenting the policy changes solely as the programme of the communist parties. And at the same time, by declaring all demands fulfilled, the separate women’s movements lost legitimacy. Interestingly enough, this is what McRobbie describes in the Western post-feminist case as a discourse in which “female freedom is taken for granted, unreliant on any past struggle (an antiquated word), and certainly not requiring any new, fresh political understanding”.¹⁴⁰ Whereas the majority of the East European countries bore a lot in common in this respect, the appearance of new feminism triggered more reactions in Yugoslavia. Here, even the “struggle” aspect [*borbeni*] of the feminist movements was denied, by labelling it bourgeois and therefore, representing only the reactionary interests of a minority. In the meantime, the achievements of the regime with regard to women’s equality was connected to the self-positioning vis-à-vis the West, which again enabled and fed into the argument about the redundancy of the new feminism. Often times, the attacks against feminism turned into misogyny and the questioning women’s basic rights.¹⁴¹ As for sexism, its most common form is to reduce women to their body and present them as inferior, the way “female sexuality is seen and abused in the male-dominated discourse”.¹⁴² This, as we shall see in Chapter 4, is not far from representations of women in Yugoslavia of the time. The strategies of post-feminism, this “refined anti-feminism”, according to Jones, stem

in the postmodern, whereas my sources analysed here suggest that these strategies were also present in the discourse of state socialism. Especially in the discursive act of placing (in)equality into a “general human” framework, with complete disregard to gender, when it comes to dealing with the inequality.

FEMINISM AS A NEW POLITICAL MOVEMENT

The late 1980s and very early 1990s, before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, were a time when the feminists began to talk more openly about politics, which is probably due to both the changing political climate and the activism of the 1980s that I discuss in Chapter 5 in this book. They were fascinated by the appearance of “new social movements”, a phenomenon of the 1960s in the West and becoming relevant in East Central Europe in the late 1980s. Feminism was discussed as part of these not only by the new Yugoslav feminists themselves,¹⁴³ but also by a broader community of social scientists. The 1990 issue of the Novi Sad-based journal *Polja* published a special issue with the title “New political movements. Woman as a political being”. The feminist movement is introduced and analysed by the political scientist Vukašin Pavlović, who relies on the work of Papić, Iveković, Jalušič, Drakulić and Despot, as well as German feminist scholarship represented by Ute Gerhard and Frigga Haug. The special issue has several articles by Allison Jaggar and one by Ann Oakley, signalling a new era of radical feminism reaching Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁴

Another comprehensive, large last gesture to the developments of new Yugoslav feminism, signalling the potential of a new era, is a selection of texts by Daša Duhaček in the journal *Gledišta*. In her introduction, Duhaček offered an overview of the state of the art of feminism in the era at the time. She acknowledged her predecessors and colleagues Nada Popović Perišić, Blaženka Despot, Rada Iveković and Žarana Papić, among others. Duhaček provided a systematic overview of the current state of feminist ideas with the aim of “defining feminism for showing the richness of feminist approaches”, but also, in the footsteps of the ideas of Alison Jaggar, to explicitly define feminism as politics.¹⁴⁵ From liberal, Marxist and radical feminism, there is a new, socialist feminism or new Marxist feminism, which is to a large extent influenced by the criticism of power, focus on sexuality and identity of radical feminism, but which is sensitive to the differences between women themselves (4–5).

For Duhaček, this was a stream to follow. She also directly criticised the “authoritative ideology of socialism”, which in fact, through the formal equality of women, only worked towards “women’s marginalisation” (8). This official ideology even supported the patriarchal value system forced upon people by the church, in Yugoslavia, the Catholic, the Pravoslav (Serbian Orthodox) and Islam. These two institutions sustained the patriarchal oppression an everyday experience for women in Yugoslavia in the past decades, claimed Duhaček, which claim was already a call for improvement in this regard, through the reorganisation of power structures.

By 1990–1991, the stakes of the feminist discussions shifted from the focus on women’s emancipation, its (im)possibility to happen through the class question, and the problems with the division of labour between men and women to the issue of violence against women and women’s political participation. These topics led to conceptual reconsiderations as well as interventions with state institutions in socialist Yugoslavia, but they also forecast the issues raised by feminism in the multi-party systems in the new states and during the war. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the feminists will have to deal with war violence against women and a traditionalist-conservative discourse on the role of women in society, with emphasis on their reproductive rights. The post-1991 feminist agenda largely relied on the agenda from the late 1980s, used its concepts and built itself from its organisational forms.

CONCLUSION

This chapter’s aim was to show how the idea of feminism changed and got more seriously conceptualised from the early tentative questions of “what is happening to women elsewhere?” to the critical readings of Marxist theories from an openly feminist standpoint. In comparison with the state’s stance on the women’s question, the new feminists in Yugoslavia posed different problems and offered different answers. The abolishment of class difference, in their reading, was not an adequate solution to women’s subordination. The dysfunctionality of *općeljudske emancipacije*, which in the mid-1970s defined the state’s position, was proven through the introduction of concepts such as gender and the reinterpretation of other ones, such as consciousness, the private–public difference, work, patriarchy, the family and women’s place within the family. The new Yugoslav feminists started reading feminism against the

post-feminist refusal of feminism by the state, and the more they read, the more clearly they saw the use of this ideology in their country. Their dissent towards the state was formulated in academic texts and through the transfer of the above-mentioned concepts from one context to the other. As a result, there was a discursive space created by the feminists, which made it possible for them to position themselves as feminist and to rewrite the official version of history of feminism in Yugoslavia, thus delineating their own niche in the history of feminism in Yugoslavia and the world. These discursive acts allowed the feminists to further developments, for example in the field of the arts and literature.

NOTES

1. Interview with Vesna Kesić (Zagreb, 6 March 2014), Sofija Trivunac (Belgrade, 3 June 2011), Dubravka Ugrešić (Budapest, 3 December 2012), Tanja Rener (Ljubljana, 7 April 2012). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. Linda Briskin, “Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy”, in *Women and Social Change. Feminist Movements in Canada*, ed. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, 24–40 (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1991), 26, 29.
3. See Skinner in Chapter 1.
4. Mirjana Oklobdžija, “Uvod” [Introduction], *Dometi*, Vol. 13. No. 2 (1980): 4.
5. Intellectuals who later joined the meetings in Zagreb, as Andrea Feldman remembers: Nada Mirković (writing for *Svijet*), Alemka Lisinski, Jasmina Kuzmanović, Željka Jelavić, Ines Sabalić, Mirjana Buljan, who was an editor of the Globus publishing house. Here, many women authors were translated into Serbo-Croatian. Gordana Cerjan-Letica also told me that in the early times, Nadezda Čačinović’s sister, Gabi Čačinović was there too.
6. Interview with Dragica Vukadinović (Belgrade, 27 January 2011).
7. For more details about the 1978 conference, see the article by Chiara Bonfiglioli: Chiara Bonfiglioli, “‘Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!’: Italian Feminists in Belgrade for the 1978 ‘Comrade Woman’ Conference”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue, No. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011): 115–123.
8. For example, Renate Schlesier’s “Die Totgesagte Vagina”, trans. Vlasta Jalušič, *Problemi. Eseji*, No. 9 (1986): 40–46, a feminist critical

- reading of Freud, Susan Zimmerman’s lecture from Bonn about genetic research and feminism “Pravica do samoodločbe pri najemniškem materinstvu” [Right to Self-determination in Surrogate Motherhood] *Problemi. Eseji*, No. 9 (1986): 31–33. Rote Zora, “Odpor je mogoč” [Resistance Is Possible], trans. Milena Mohorič, in *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About Women and Women’s Movements], ed. Mojca Dobnikar, 100–108 (Ljubljana: Univerzitetna konferenca ZSMS—Republiška konferenca ZSMS [1985], 1986) and Christine Thürmer-Rohr, “Stud pred rajem” [Disgust in Front of the Paradise], trans. Mojca Dobnikar, *O ženski in ženskem gibanju*, 109–124.
9. Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women’s Movement Anthology* (New York: Feminist Press, [1984] c.1996); *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women’s Liberation Movement* (New York: Random House, c.1970).
 10. Rada Iveković and Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Yugoslavia: Neofeminism and Its ‘Six Mortal Sins’”, in *Sisterhood Is Global*, 734–738.
 11. Marija Šoljan, “Tajna emancipacija žene” [The Secret Emancipation of Women], *Žena*, Vol. 35. No. 1 (1977): 5–25, 17.
 12. *Dosije XX*, directed by Vesna Tokin (Belgrade: LUNA, HAOS, Nada Sekulić, 2001).
 13. See Jocelyn Olcott, “Globalizing Sisterhood: International Women’s Year and the Politics of Representation”, in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et al., 281–293 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); Devaki Jain, *Women, Development, and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c.2005); Hillka Pietilä, *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations* (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2007).
 14. Raluca Maria Popa, “Translating Equality Between Woman and Men across Cold War Divides: Woman Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of the International Women’s Year”, in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Shana Penn and Jill Massino, 59–74 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, c.2009), 240, n7.
 15. See e.g.: Dragoljub Đurović, *Ravnopravnost, razvoj, mir: odabrani dokumenti Ujedinjenih naroda usvojeni u Međunarodnoj godini žena* [Equality, Development, Peace: Selected Documents of the UN Adopted for the International Year of Women] (Beograd: Sekretarijat za informacije Skupštine SFRJ, 1977); *Žene 1980: priručnik za konferenciju* [Women 1980: Handbook for a Conference] (Beograd: Informacioni centar Ujedinjenih nacija u Beogradu, 1980); Merima Stevanović, ed., *Dekada Ujedinjenih nacija za žene: ravnopravnost,*

- razvoj i mir* [The UN's Decade of Women: Equality, Development and Peace] (Beograd: Jugoslovenska stvarnost, Međunarodna politika, 1981); Polona Končar and Dimitar Mirčev, eds., *Women as Factor of Development in Yugoslav Self-Management Society*, trans. Cica Stele and Marjan Golobič (Ljubljana: Yugoslav centre for theory and practice of self-management "Edvard Kardelj", 1985); *Konvencija o ukidanju svih oblika diskriminacije žena* [Convention for the Abolishment of All Forms of the Discrimination of Women] (Beograd: Informacioni centar Ujedinjenih nacija, 1983).
16. Francisca de Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s. From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York", in *Handbook on the Global Sixties*, ed. Martin Klimke, Mary Nolan, et al. (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2018); Celia Donert, "Women's Rights in Cold War Europe: Disentangling Feminist Histories", *Past & Present*, 218 (2013): 180–202.
 17. Jasna Gardun, "Egalitet ili feminizam?" [Equality or Feminism], *Žena*, Vol. 32. No. 5 (1974): 2–5, 2, 4.
 18. Marija Šoljan, "8. mart. Tridesetogodišnjica pobjede i Međunarodna godina žena" [8th March. Thirty-year Victory and the International Year of Women], *Žena*, Vol. 33. No. 1 (1975): 2–4, 3.
 19. Vaska Duganova, "Proklamiranje Međunarodne godine žena nije bilo slučajno" [The International Year of Women Was Not Declared by Accident], *Žena*, Vol. 33. No. 2 (1975): 2–5.
 20. Gardun, "Egalitet ili feminizam?", 3.
 21. Vida Tomšič, "Zašto se proklamirana ravnopravnost u osnovnim dokumentima Ujedinjenih naroda ostvaruje sporo u praksi?" [Why the Proclaimed Equality in the Founding Documents of the United Nations Is Realising Slowly in Practice?], interview by Marija Erbežnik-Fuks, *Žena*, Vol. 33. No. 3 (1975): 4–11, 9.
 22. Duganova, "Proklamiranje Međunarodne godine žena nije bilo slučajno", 4.
 23. Rada Iveković wrote a short history of Italian feminism, which she published in 1980. This text can be read as a parabolic tale for how the relationship of feminism and the communist party should take shape in Yugoslavia. (Rada Iveković, "Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret" [The Italian Communists and the Women's Movement], *Dometi*, Vol. 13. No. 2 (1980): 31–44.) About this text and the topic, I write in detail here: Zsófia Lóránd, "New Yugoslav Feminism During Socialism Between 'Mainstreaming' and 'Disengagement': The Possibilities of Resistance, Critical Opposition and Dissent", *The Hungarian Historical Review*, Vol. 5. No. 4 (2016): 854–881.
 24. Silva Mežnarić, "Što se događa s američkom ženom?" [What Is Happening to the American Woman?], *Žena*, Vol. 30. No. 6 (1972): 57–62. Further citations to this work are given in the text.

25. “Društveni položaj žene i razvoj porodice u socijalističkom samoupravnom društvu” [The Social Position of Women and the Development of the Family in the Socialist Self-Managing Society], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976).
26. Vesna Pusić, “O nekim aspektima uloge feminizma u suvremenom društvu” [About a Few Aspects of the Position of Feminism in Contemporary Society], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976): 120–124, 121.
27. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina” [Feminism – in the Footprints of the Radicalism of the 1960s], *Pitanja*, Vol. 8. No. 7 (1975): 6–8.
28. Nada Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene” [The Odyssey of the Human Identity of Women], *Pitanja*, No. 7–8 (1978): 21. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
29. Vjeran Katunarić, *Ženski eros i civilizacija smrti* [Female Eros and the Civilisation of Death] (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1984), 38. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
30. Iveković, “Talijanski ženski pokret”, 38
31. Jasna Tkalec, “Dolazak i događaj feminizma” [The Arrival and Happening of Feminism], *Naše teme*, No. 5 (1977): 1160–67, 1161. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
32. Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina”, 6, 8. Also, see Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feministički pokret – organizacija, oblici i sadržaj borbe” [The Feminist Movement – Organisations, Forms and the Content of the Struggle], *Revija za sociologiju*, Vol. 15. No. 3–4 (1985): 56–57.
33. Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda, “Žena je čovek. Umesto uvoda” [Woman Is a Human. Instead of Introduction], *Student*, No. 9 (1976): 7. Žarana Papić’s collected work was published posthumously, a decade after her untimely death in 2002: Žarana Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002* [Texts 1977–2002], ed. Adriana Zaharijević, Zorica Ivanović and Daša Duhaček (Belgrade: Centar za studije roda i politike, Rekonstrukcija Ženski fond, and Žene u crnom, 2012).
34. Her texts were later also published in translation, in thematic journal issues, accompanied by comments and explanation from the new Yugoslav feminist authors: Luce Irigaray, “Ogledao druge žene” [Speculum of the Other Woman], trans. J. V. and R. I., *Marksizam u svetu*, Vol. 8. No. 8–9 (1981): 443–486; Luce Irigaray, “Izlaz iz pećine” [The Way Out of the Cave], trans. Rada Iveković, *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 107–111; Luce Irigaray, “I jedna ne miče, bez druge” [One Does Not Move Without the Other], trans. Lizdek Slobodanka, *Izraz*, Vol. 36. No. 2–3 (Feb–March 1990): 298–304; Luce Irigaray, “Taj pol koji nije jedan” [This Sex Which Is Not One], trans. Aleksandar Zistakis, *Gledišta*, No. 1–2 (1990): 9–16.

35. Rada Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena. Poklici žena” [India Is a Mute Woman. Howls of Women], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981 April): 88–108.
36. See Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* (Paris: Seuil, 1980).
37. Rada Iveković, *Pregled indijske filozofije* [Review of Indian Philosophy] (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultetm and Zavod za filozofiju, 1981); Rada Iveković, ed., *Počeci indijske misli. Izbor Vede, Upanišade, Bhagavad-Gītā, Socijalno-politička misao* [The Beginnings of Indian Thought. A Selection from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gītā, Social-Political Thought] (Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1981).
38. Dipesh Chakrabarty's term. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, c.2000).
39. Nataša Mišković, Harald Fischer-Tiné and Nada Boškowska, eds., *The Non-aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi, Bandung, Belgrade* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2014). About women's activism and the Non-Aligned Movement, see Carolien Stolte, “‘The Asiatic Hour’: New Perspectives on the Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, 1947”, in *The Non-aligned Movement and the Cold War*, 57–75; Devaki Jain and Shubha Chacko, “Walking Together: The Journey of the Non-aligned Movement and the Women's Movement”, *Development in Practice*, Vol. 19. No. 7 (September 2009): 895–905.
40. See Linda Gordon, “‘Intersectionality’, Socialist Feminism and Contemporary Activism: Musings by a Second-Wave Socialist Feminist”, *Gender & History*, Vol. 28. No. 2 (August 2016) 340–357, 355.
41. Vesna Kesić, “Nije li pornografija cinična?” [Isn't Pornography Cynical?], *Start*, No. 355. 28 August 1982, 74–75.
42. Cathérine Clément and Luce Irigaray, “Žena, njen spol i jezik” [Woman, Her Sex and the Language], trans. Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda, *Student*, No. 9 (1976): 7.
43. More about the conference, see Chiara Bonfiglioli, “‘Social Equality is Not Enough, We Want Pleasure!’” and the article by Jasmina Tešanović “Što je žensko pitanje?” [What Is a Women's Question?], *Polet* 6 November 1978, 3–4. Tešanović was also one of the organisers of the conference, a writer and film-maker, who at the time lived in Rome and meant a substantial contact to the Italian feminist scene.
44. Šoljan, “Tajna emancipacije žene”, 7. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
45. David A. Crocker, *Praxis and Democratic Socialism: The Critical Social Theory of Marković and Stojanović* (New Jersey: Humanity and Sussex: Harvester, 1983); James H. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe*

- (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, c.1992); Gerson Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).
46. The picture, however, of the Praxis group was not that simple. Women as a group facing a different kind of oppression did not avoid their attention either. One of the most complex ideas is there in the writings of Mihailo Marković, who, in the 1980s, becomes one of the leading nationalist intellectuals in Serbia. He is one of the authors of the memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts of 1986 and later he became vice president of Milošević in the Socialist Party of Serbia, which position he held until 1995. Marković makes a distinction between group differences stemming from inequalities in economic and political power, like the case is with the classes, the disappearance of which “has only indeed a liberating effect” and between groups with “mere natural differences”, such as nation, race and sex. The former must be abolished, but the latter is part of “the existing wealth of cultures, life styles” (Marković quoted by Crocker, *Praxis and Democratic Socialism*, 130–131). It seems that according to Marković, those factors which make women less equal are not merely “natural”, but also social, and while biological difference is a given, the “sex-linked masculine and feminine social roles” are to be contested. (idem., 132).
 47. Which Jay identifies sarcastically as the “clone” of the Frankfurt School, but which, however, became one of the strongest revisionist Marxist group in a state-socialist country. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), xv; See Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*; Andrew Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx, and the Sources of Critical Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, c.1981). See also Barbara J. Falk, *The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe: Citizen Intellectuals and Philosopher Kings* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002) and Ervin Csizmadia, *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék története* [The History of the Hungarian Democratic Opposition] (Budapest: T-Twins, 1995).
 48. Ágnes Heller and Mihály Vajda, “Struktura obitelji i komunizam” [The Structure of the Family and Communism], *Žena*, Vol. 31. No. 3–4 (1972): 75–84.
 49. It is also there in Gordana Cerjan-Letica’s and other feminists’ writing. E.g. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina”, 29.
 50. Nadežda Čaćinović Puhovski, “Teorijska relevantnost ženskog pokreta. Napomena uz tekst Herberta Marcusea ‘Marksizam i feminizam’”

- [The Theoretical Relevance of the Women's Movement. Remarks to the Text 'Marxism and Feminism' by Herbert Marcuse], *Žena*, Vol. 33. No. 5 (1975): 75–77; Herbert Marcuse, "Marksizam i feminizam" [Marxism and Feminism], trans. Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, *Žena*, Vol. 33. No. 5. (1975): 77–85.
51. Quotes are from the English translation: Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 2., trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1995): 584; Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, "Budućnost žensvenosti, ženskog pokreta koji to još nije" [The Future of Femininity and the Women's Movement, Which It Is Still Not], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 1 (1976): 56–57.
 52. Nadežda Čačinović Puhovski, "Ravnopravnost ili oslobođenje" [Equality or Liberation], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976): 125–128, 127.
 53. Ler-Sofronić, "Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene", 21. Further citations to this work are given in the text. Since there is no reference to the citation of Touraine's writings on the topic, therefore I did not include an analysis of his role in this text. The use of the name of an innovative sociologist is a gesture of Ler-Sofronić's text to notice though. Later, she published a whole book about the relationship between feminism and socialism, containing the texts referenced here: Nada Ler-Sofronić, *Neofeminizam i socijalistička alternativa* [Neofeminism and the Socialist Alternative] (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1986).
 54. Blaženka Despot, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje* [The Woman Question and Socialist Self-Management] (Zagreb: Cekade, 1987), 75.
 55. Vjeran Katunarić, "Marksizam i feministička inteligencija" [Marxism and Feminist Intelligentsia], *Argumenti*, No. 1 (1979): 197–208, 197.
 56. In Christine Stansell's opinion, the radical feminist vocabulary in the USA is rather Marxist, than feminist as such. See Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010), 230, 245.
 57. Nada Ler-Sofronić, "Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest" [The Dialectics of the Relation of the Sexes and Class Consciousness], *Dometi*, Vol. 13. No. 2 (1980): 5–14, 7.
 58. This and the previous quote: Ler-Sofronić, "Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest", 8.
 59. Blaženka Despot, "Feminizirani marksizam" [Feminised Marxism], interview by Dragan Jovanović, *NIN*, Vol. 35. No. 1723, 8 January 1984, 17–18.
 60. Vlasta Jalušić, "'Žensko vprašanje' kot izvržek" [The "Women's Question" as Outcast], *Problemi. Eseji*, No. 9 (1986): 1–8.

61. Even entire books were translated: Michèle Barrett, *Potčinjena žena: problemi marksističke analize feminizma* [Women’s Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist/Feminist Analysis], trans. Mirjana Rajković (Beograd: Radnička štampa and Kragujevac: “Nikola Nikolić”, 1983); Sheila Rowbotham, *Svest žene – svet muškarca* [Woman’s Consciousness, Man’s World] (Beograd: Radionica SIC Studentski izdavački centar UKSSO Beograda, 1983).
62. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feministička pitanja i marksistički odgovori” [Feminist Questions and Marxist Answers], *Naše teme*, Vol. 24. No. 11 (1980): 1970–1974, 1974. The two texts introduced: Sheila Rowbotham, “Dijalektičke smetnje” [Dialectical Disturbances], *Naše teme*, Vol. 24. No. 11 (1980): 1975–1993. [From idem. *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1975)]; Juliet Mitchell, “Položaj žene” [Women’s Estate], *Naše teme*, Vol. 24. No. 11 (1980): 1994–2012. [From idem. *Woman’s Estate* (London: Penguin, 1971)].
63. Quotes are from the English original: Ann J. Lane, “Women in Society: A Critique of Friedrich Engels”, in *Liberating Women’s History. Theoretical and Critical Essays*, ed. Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 4–25, 11. In Serbo-Croatian, it was published in Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevicky, eds., *Antropologija žene. Zbornik* [Women’s Anthropology. An Anthology], trans. Branko Vučićević, 184–214 (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1983).
64. Gayle Rubin, “Trgovina ženama – beleške o ‘političkoj ekonomiji’ polnosti” [The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex], in *Antropologija žene*, ed. Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevicky, 91–151.
65. Today, the analytical category would be “gender”, i.e. *rod*.
66. Papić and Sklevicky “Pregovor”, in *Antropologija žene*, ed. idem, 5–34, 19–20.
67. See Jasmina Kuzmanović, “Rod, a ne spol” [Gender, and Not Sex], *Danas*, No. 113, 16 April 1984, 62.
68. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici” [A Few Dominant Positions of Contemporary Feminism About the Family], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3. (1976): 100–114, 104.
69. Žarana Papić, “Odnos polova – zanemarena protivrečnost” [The Relations of the Sexes – Forgotten Contradiction], *Pitanja*, No. 7–8 (1978): 4–10, 7.
70. Ler-Sofronić, “Odiseja ljudskog identiteta žene”, 16.
71. Žarana Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam: savremeni pokret i misao o oslobođenju žena i njegov uticaj na sociologiju* [Sociology and Feminism: The Contemporary Movement and Thought About the Liberation

- of Women and Its Influence on Sociology] (Beograd: Istraživačko-izdavački centar SSO Srbije, 1989), 41.
72. Lydia Sklevicky, “Odnos spolova u znanstvenom i publicističkom radu Vere Stein Erlich” [The Relation of the Sexes in the Scholarly and Essayistic Work of Vera Stein Erlich], *Žena*, Vol. 42. No. 5–6 (1984): 62–75.
- The other anthropologist-ethnologist who meant spiritual guidance and support for the new feminists was Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1926–2002), a professor from the University of Zadar, who for example presented the book *Antropologija žene* at the book launch event.
- For new literature on Stein Erlich, see Andrea Feldman, “Vera Erlich Stein: Odyssey of a Croatian-Jewish Intellectual”, in *Jewish Intellectual Women in Central Europe 1860–2000: Twelve Biographical Essays*, ed. Judith Szapor, Andrea Petö, Maura Hametz, Marina Calloni, 327–348 (Lewiston and New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2012).
73. Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena. Poklici žena”, 101.
74. Iveković, “Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret”, 24.
75. Milan Polić, “Emancipacijske mogućnosti transseksualnosti”, [Emancipatory Possibilities of Transsexuality], *Žena*, Vol. 46, No. 1–2 (1988): 96–115.
76. Mojca Dobnikar, ed., *O ženski in ženskem gibanju* [About Women and Women’s Movements] (Ljubljana: Univerzitatna konferenca ZSMS—Republiška konferenca ZSMS [1985]), 1986.
77. Rada Iveković, “Objašnjenje uz ženske pokliče” [Explanations to the Howls of Women], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 109–110, 109.
78. Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 78–79.
79. See the article with the provocative title in the journal *Sociologija* from 1979 by the feminist sociologists at the University of Ljubljana: Anuška Ferligoj, Silva Mežnarić and Mirjana Ule, “Raspodjela svakodnevnih uloga u porodici između želje (društva) i stvarnosti (porodice)” [The Division of Everyday Roles in the Family Between the Wish (of Society) and the Reality (of the Family)], *Sociologija*, Vol. 21. No. 4 (1979): 419–439.
80. Pat Mainardi, “Politika domaćeg posla” [The Politics of Housework], *Student*, No. 9 (1976): 7.
81. Despot, *Žensko pitanje i socijalističko samoupravljanje*, 58.
82. Silva Mežnarić, “Emancipacija kroz i pomoću rada” [Ideology Through and with the Help of Work], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976): 115–119.
83. Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi”, 101. Also, see Mirjana Nastran-Ule, “O mogućnosti prevladavnja podjele na javnu i privatnu sferu života” [About the Possibility of Overcoming the Division of the Public and the Private Sphere of Life], *Žena*, Vol. 38. No. 4–5 (1980): 148–152.

84. Cerjan-Letica, “Neki dominantni stavovi suvremenog feminizma o porodici”, 108.
85. Tomšič, “Zašto se proklamirana ravnopravnost...”, 8.
86. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Feminizam – na tragu radikalizma šezdesetih godina”, 32.
87. Marie-Therese Baudrillard, “Ženska logika” [Women’s Logic], trans. Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda, *Student*, No. 9 (1976): 8. As she writes: “nothing will change [improve] if we get satisfied with that little change in her oppression. The *mentality* [emphasis in the original] of men should be changed, it is a condition on which the liberation of women depends”.
88. Jasna Tkalec, “Patrijarhat i brak” [Patriarchy and Marriage], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981 April): 117–122, 119, 122.
89. Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 41.
90. Anđelka Milić, *Rađanje moderne porodice* [The Procreation of the Modern Family], (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1988), 36. Also, see the research of Tanja Rener: “Svjetla i sjene porodičnog rada”, [The Lights and Shade of Family Work], *Žena*, Vol. 46. No. 3 (1988): 50–56.
91. Anđelka Milić, Eva Berković, and Ruža Petrović, *Domaćinstvo, porodica i brak u Jugoslaviji* [Household, Family and Marriage in Yugoslavia], (Beograd: Institut za sociološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, 1981); Vesna Pusić, “Žena i zaposlenje” [Women and Employment], *Sociologija*, No. 3–4 (1981): 34–53.
92. Jasna Tkalec, “O konačnom rješenju ženskog pitanja” [About the Final Solution of the Women’s Question], *Naše teme*, No. 1. (1978): 187–199. The title of the text is rather problematic, which the author seems to fail to take into consideration.
93. Ewa Morawska, “Osvrt na neravnopravnost spolova u današnjoj Poljskoj” [A Review of the Inequality of the Sexes in Today’s Poland], *Argumenti*, No. 1 (1979): 186–196.
94. Katunarić, *Ženski eros*, 233.
95. Andrea Feldman, “Women’s History in Yugoslavia”, in *Writing Women’s History: International Perspective*, ed. Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson and Jane Rendall, 417–421 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 419; Lydia Sklevicky, “More Horses Than Women: On the Difficulties of Founding Women’s History in Yugoslavia”, *Gender and History*, Vol. 1. No. 1 (Spring 1989): 68–75, 73.
96. Feldman, “Women’s History”, 420.
97. Lydia Sklevicky, “Od borbe za prava do prave borbe” [From the Struggle for Rights to the Real Fight], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976): 52–59.

98. Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, c.2000), 6.
99. Sklevicky, “More Horses” and Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, Women, Wars], posthumous edition, ed. Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (Zagreb: Ženska Infoteka, 1996). Also, see: Rajka Polić, “Povijesni sukob mitova o ženskoj emancipaciji”, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 6 (1986): 73–88.
100. Rada Iveković, “Studije o ženi i ženski pokret” [Studies of the Woman and the Women’s Movement], *Marksizam u svetu*, Vol. 8. No. 8–9 (1981): 5–48, 6. Reviewed by Žarana Papić: Papić, *Sociologija i feminizam*, 73.
101. Iveković, “Indija je nijema žena”, 98–99.
102. Rada Iveković, “Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene” [Women’s Creativity and the Creation of Women], *Argumenti*, No. 1 (1979): 139–147, 145.
103. Vesna Kesić, “Povijest je muškog roda” [History Has a Male Gender], *Start*, No. 264 (1979): 40–43; Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, “Feministički novi val” [The Feminist New Wave], *Start*, No. 337 (1981): 50–53.
104. Lydia Sklevicky, “Od borbe za prava do prave borbe” [From the Fight for Rights to the Real Fight], *Žena*, Vol. 34. No. 3 (1976): 92–99.
105. Andrea Feldman, “Visions of History”, *Historijski zbornik*, No. 1 (1985): 304–307; Idem. and Lydia Sklevicky, “U povodu šestog međunarodnog susreta historičarki” [On Occasion of the Sixth International Meeting of Women Historians], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Vol. 17. No. 2 (1985): 139–146.
106. Andrea Feldman, “Prilog istraživanju historija ženskih organizacija – udruženje univezitetskih obrazovanih žena” [Contribution to the Research of Women’s Organisations – The Association of University Educated Women], *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 2–3 (1986): 49–55.; “Der Verband universitätsgebildeter Frauen Jugoslawiens (1927–1939)”, in *Frauenmacht in der Geschichte. Beiträge des Historikerinnentreffens 1985 zur Frauengeschichtsforschung*, ed. Anette Kuhn, 125–133. (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1986).
107. See Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
108. Žarana Papić and Lydia Sklevicky, “K antropologiji žene” [To the Anthropology of Women], *Revija za sociologiju*, Vol. 10. No. 1–2 (1980): 29–45.
109. *Ibid.*, 32.
110. See Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 284, n9 and e.g. Lydia Sklevicky, “Natalie Zemon Davis”, *Gordogan* 22 (1986): 85–91.

111. Lydia Sklevicky, “Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žene u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do drugog svjetskog rata” [Characteristics of the Organised Activity of Women in Yugoslavia in the Period of the Second World War], Parts I and II, *Polja* 308 (Oct 1984): 415–416 and *Polja* 309 (Nov 1984): 454–456. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
112. Lydia Sklevicky, “AFŽ – kulturnom mijenom do žene ‘novog tipa’” [AFŽ – Cultural Changes of the ‘New Type’ of Women], *Gordogan* 15–16 (1984): 73–111.
113. Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918–1941* [Women of Yugoslavia in the Workers’ Movement and in Women’s Organisations 1918–1941], (Beograd: Narodna knjiga i Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1978); Also, see Dragutin Kosorić, ed. *Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije* [The Road of Struggles of the Women of Yugoslavia] (Beograd: Leksikografski zavod Sveznanje, 1972).
114. Jozo Tomashevich, *The Chetniks* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 188–189.
115. Her text about women in NOB: “Der Utopie entgegen. Das Bild der ‘Neuen Frau’ im Befreiungskrieg Jugoslawiens (1941–45)”, in *Frauenmacht in der Geschichte*, 229–236.
116. Rade Kalanj and Željka Šporer, eds., *Žena i Društvo. Kultiviranje dijaloga* [Women and Society. Cultivating the Dialogue] (Zagreb: Sociološko društvo Hrvatske, 1987).
117. Lydia Sklevicky, “Konji, žene, ratovi itd.: Problem utemeljenja historije žena u Jugoslaviji” [Horses, Women, Wars, etc.: The Problems with the Foundation of Women’s History in Yugoslavia], reprint in. idem. *Konji, žene, ratovi*, 13–24, 19. (emphasis mine)
118. See Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past*, 1.
119. Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Co., 2002), 71.
120. Jovan Đorđević, “Marksizam i žene” [Marxism and Women], in *Žensko pitanje: antologija marksističkih tekstova* [The Women’s Question: An Anthology of Marxist Texts], ed. idem., 5–122. (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1975). Further citations to this work are given in the text.
121. E.g. Ler-Sofronić, “Dijalektika odnosa polova i klasna svijest”.
122. *Večernji novosti*, 6 November 1978.
123. Vesna Kesić, “Dunja Blažević: Aktivistkinja avangarde” [Dunja Blažević: The Activist of the Avant-Garde], *Start*, No. 340 (1982): 48–49, 49.
124. Stipe Šušar, “I feminizam je jedan od oblika konzervativne društvene svijesti” [Feminism Is Also a Form of Conservative Social Consciousness], *Žena*, Vol. 40. No. 2–3 (1982): 71–74, 72.

125. Šušvar, "I feminizam je jedan od oblika konzervativne društvene svijesti", 72.
126. Slavenka Drakulić, "Smrtni grijesi feminizma" [Mortal Sins of Feminism], *Danas*, 21 September 1982, 15–23.
127. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, "Introduction", in *Who's Afraid of Feminism? Seeing Through the Backlash*, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley (London: Penguin, 1997), 3–4.
128. Amelia Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated. Reading 'Postfeminism' in an Anti-feminist Age", (1992) in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones, 314–329 (London: Routledge, 2003), 314.
129. Slaven Letica, "Skica (!) za komunistički manifest protiv feminizma" [A Draft (!) to the Communist Manifest Against Feminism], *Pitanja*, Vol. 12. No. 1–2 (1980): 53–57. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
130. It is important to note here that Letica repeats here what is known about the history of the women's movement from the writings of Jovanka Kecman. See above.
131. Interview with Tanja Rener.
132. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, "Introduction", in *Who's Afraid of Feminism? Seeing Through the Backlash*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, 1–12 (London: Penguin, 1997), 4.
133. Amelia Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated. Reading 'Postfeminism' in an Anti-Feminist Age", (1992) in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones, 314–329 (London: Routledge, 2003), 314.
134. Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated", 323.
135. See Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, c.1990 [1970]).
136. Angela McRobbie, "Notes on Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime", in *All about the Girl. Culture, Power and Identity*, ed. Anita Harris, 3–14 (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.
137. McRobbie, "Notes on Postfeminism", 8.
138. A very different approach is there in, for example: Stéphanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon, *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, c.2009).
139. Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 314.
140. McRobbie, "Notes on Postfeminism", 6.
141. Mitchell and Oakley, "Introduction", 1.
142. *Ibid.*, 12.

143. Ljubiša Despotović, “Novi društveni pokreti” [New Social Movements], *Polja*, Vol. 34. No. 333. (1988): 477; Vlasta Jalušič, “Žene, politika, revolucija” [Woman, Politics, Revolution], *Književne novine*, No. 779–780 (1–15 July 1989); Rada Iveković, “Feminizam i emancipacija” [Feminism and Emancipation], *Književna reč*, July 1989.
144. “Novi politički pokreti. Žena kao političko biće” [New Political Movements. Woman as a Political Being], *Polja*, Vol. 36. No. 375–376. (May–June 1990); Milan Podunavac, “Politička kultura i ‘nova politika’”, [Political Culture and a New Politics], 181–183; Ljubiša Despotović, “Pokreti ka politici” [Movement Towards Politics], 184; Radivoj Stepanov, “Zakoni i novi društveni pokreti” [Laws and New Social Movements], 185; Ivan Cifrić, “Subjekti ekološkog angažmana” [Subjects of Ecological Engagement], 186–188; Vukašin Pavlović, “Uspón i iskušenja neo-feminizma” [The Upsurge and the Temptation of Neofeminism], 189–191; En Okli (Ann Oakley), “Politika u muškom svetu” [Politics in a Man’s World], trans. Slobodan Cicmil, 192–197; Blaženka Despot, “Znanje i moć” [Knowledge and Power], 198–199; Valentina Krtinić, “Novi socijalni pokreti” [New Social Movements], 200; Alison M. Džagar (Alison M. Jaggar), “Feminizam kao politička filozofija” [Feminism as political philosophy], trans. V. Krtinić, 201–202; Alison M. Džagar, “Predlozi liberalnog feminizma za promenu društva” [The suggestions of liberal feminism for social transformation], trans. Vesna Knežević, 203–206; Marina Arsenović-Pavlović, “Feminizacija vaspitano-obrazovanog sistema (socijalistički mit o demokraciji obrazovanja)” [The Feminisation of the Educational System (A Socialist Myth About the Democratisation of Education)], 207–210; Alena Hajtlinger (Heitlinger), “Pronatalističke politike stanovništva” [Pronatalist population policy], trans. Slobodan Cicmil, 211–213; Viktorija Vukičević, “Kineskinja između tradicije i savremenosti” [Chinese Women Between Tradition and Contemporariness], 214–217; Alison Džagar, “Problemi u radikalnoj feminističkoj politici” [The problems within radical feminist politics], trans. V. Krtinić, 218–219.
145. Daša Duhaček, “Feministička gledišta i gledišta o feminizmu” [Feminist Viewpoints and Viewpoints about Feminism], *Gledišta*, No. 1–2. (1990): 3–8. 4. In 1988, the issue of *Pogledi* also rethinks what is to be done about feminism, outlining a new movement. *Problemi. Eseji* No. 3 (1988).



CHAPTER 3

Feminist Dissent in Literature and Art: Sisterhood, Motherhood and the Body

Slavenka Drakulić: “*It was Ingrid Šafranek’s writing that made me realise that what I was writing was écriture féminine*”.¹

Vesna Kesić about Dunja Blažević: “*Contemporary art and the women’s question are in similar position, being marginalised, new artistic practice treated as not a valid form of art. So, Dunja’s support of Drug-ca was not merely for professional reasons, but also personal and political.*”²

Dubravka Ugrešić: “*I am not good in groups, any groups, it’s part of my character, this inability to belong to a group and follow the codes and rules.*”³

Marina Abramović: “*I think that all energy, all power is so much in the hands of women and it always has been genetically like that. I feel the complete opposite [to feminists]. I feel I have to help men.*”⁴

“The only positive contribution for the women’s movement from radical feminism is the theory of women’s creativity”, wrote Rada Iveković in one of the earliest collections of feminist articles in the journal *Dometi* in 1979.⁵ At the time, feminists in Yugoslavia were still trying to decide on their attitude towards different feminisms, but it was already clear that

feminist creativity was an integral part of the budding feminist dissent. This chapter focuses on the complex ways feminism entered art and literary theory and how this created an understanding, professional audience for women's art and women's literature. The literature and art that was born out of this fruitful interaction between critics, theorists, artists and writers contributed to the development of new ideas in the feminist discourse in Yugoslavia. In my analysis of the theoretical debates, I show through transfers, reinterpretations and translations how new feminist meanings came into being. Through the theorisation and production of art and literary works, questions of women's subjectivity and women's creativity expanded the possibilities to conceptualise women's lives and experiences in socialism and opened up avenues for subversive dissent.

The ambiguity of the interaction between feminist theory and the art scene, including literature, is a substantial aspect of this chapter. While any text can be subject to equal interpretative scrutiny, it is the very interest of theoretical and analytical texts to make their agenda and their position explicit, as can be seen in the case of the texts and their authors analysed in the previous chapter. In the case of works of art, the aesthetic requirement to keep interpretation open results from a pact between the artist and the interpretative community. I hereby rely on Rita Felski's warning to feminist scholars: to be careful not to impose an agenda on an artwork which the specific work itself does not imply and, moreover, may even resist.⁶ This is the case of at least some of the works I discuss here. At other times, works of art open up to a feminist analysis, even when no explicit feminist claim is put forward. What many of these works do, in Felski's phrasing, is to "engage sympathetically with feminist ideas".⁷ Other pieces, in fact, more than one would expect in an East European post-feminist discursive environment, are even explicitly feminist.

Feminist interpretations of artworks or oeuvres of artists who do not claim to be feminist are, however, substantial in order to understand the ideas and discussions that create the political languages of an era, as these works may well inspire feminist thought around them. In Lucy Delap's reading, it is not only ideas, language acts, but also practices which constitute the meaning of feminism. She finds the role of Isadora Duncan crucial for the early feminist movement, since Duncan's work as a dancer-choreographer achieved creative experimentation, which, to Delap, is another constitutive element of feminism—even if Duncan herself

never claimed to be a feminist.⁸ In the words of a new Yugoslav feminist author, Slavica Jakobović, about their times: “Feminism [...] is not just about feminism any more, but a demand for the acknowledgement of alternative perspectives and alternative forms of expression”.⁹ The focus of Yugoslav feminist theory on the issues of equality, work and a search of the meanings of new feminisms broadened towards the experience and subjectivity of women, towards a more colourful and multi-layered feminism through art and literature, and theories of art and literature.

A sympathetic critical discourse which agrees with the aims of an artists’ group, style or orientation usually contributes to the development and the canonisation of these artistic practices, whereas the interpretation of widely acknowledged and/or already canonised literary and artworks can be a source of legitimacy for a critical discourse, school or group of authors as well. This chapter focuses on works of art and literature from the 1970s and 1980s in Yugoslavia, which in several ways are relevant for my interpretations of feminism in this historical context. The art and literary theories that intertwine with these artworks, predominantly the transfer of certain new theories from French and Anglo-American academia, take up another large part of the chapter.

In introducing this chapter I need to add a note of apology; I necessarily have to limit my analysis of complex and rich works of art in order for them to fit into the frame of my argument. Since my primary interest lies in the contribution of artworks to the meanings of feminism and the possibilities of dissent, I focus the analysis on these.

As for the artworks, I have attempted to select works based on the following criteria:

1. they were written/created by members of the *Žena i društvo* groups;
2. they make explicit feminist claims;
3. the important feminist publications connected to the *Žena i društvo* groups found them relevant;
4. they are important in their relation to the interpretation of the works analysed based on the previous two criteria.

The categories often overlap, as in the case of Rada Iveković, who was a member of the group, made explicit feminist claims and was analysed as an important author by other members, or Dubravka Ugrešić, who was considered important by authors of the *Žena i društvo* groups and

whose work contributed to the theoretical discussions of the groups. Slavenka Drakulić, Sanja Iveković, Rada Iveković and Marina Gržinić were all members of the group and themselves made explicit claims. Irena Vrkljan's work was important to the group members; Abramović and Vlasta Delimar have artworks which are relevant to the themes and ideas of new Yugoslav feminism. Katalin Ladik is a special case; she makes strong statements as a woman artist, but was not closely related to the new Yugoslav feminists; her primary space of activities was the Vojvodina art scene.¹⁰ The writings of Biljana Jovanović and Judita Šalgo stretch the boundaries of expressing women's experience through language.

Besides the authors from the Yugoslav scenes—*scenes* in the plural because of the difference between, and the many faces of, the centres where most of the work was produced—there were works and artists introduced to the local scene, whose work influenced not only artists and writers, but also curators, critics and theoreticians. The SKC's *Aprilski susreti* [April meetings] in 1975 hosted some of the leading new women artists of the “international” (i.e. Western) art scene, such as Iole de Freitas, Gina Pane, Katharina Sieverding, Ulrike Rosenbach. The Polish artist Natalia LL came to the meeting at around the time when her art had an openly feminist turn, which she reflected on in her text “Art and Non-Art” written in the same year. Some of these women artists had a long-lasting contact with the Yugoslav scene. For example Pane, who did not identify herself as a feminist, but was deeply interested in the ways the body, especially the female body, and pain relate to each other, was already a guest in 1972 at the SKC. They had a lasting influence on the SKC curators, who in turn supported the expansion of feminist art in Yugoslavia, while the publications of Erica Jong, Chantal Chawaf and Marguerite Duras in Yugoslavia were encouraged by the interest of the theoreticians in and around the feminist groups. The SKC also offered a rather strong feminist film programme with films from Canada, Germany, France, Britain and the work of a Costa Rican director, Patricia Howell. At one *Tribina*, a public discussion at the SKC in 1977 about “women in literature”, four critics (Ileana Čura, Mirjana Matarić, Vida Marković, Mila Stojnić) talked about the work of Marina Tsvetaeva (Cvetajeva), Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen and Kamala Das (Fig. 3.1).¹¹



Fig. 3.1 At the discussion “Women in Art”, which took place with the participants of the 4th *Aprilski susreti*, the April Meetings—The Expanded Media Festival. From the curators associated with the SKC, Dunja Blažević and Biljana Tomić were present, 9th April 1975 (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

DISSENTING ART, STATE FUNDED GALLERIES

The position of dissent in art and literature is just as complex as feminism in art and literature. Art is often discussed as a free space for dissent in oppressive regimes. The relative liberty of this field in Yugoslavia was also a gesture made by the state, which led to an ambiguous situation.

As Aleš Erjavec points out, in Yugoslavia, the state financed all the avant-garde art practices, which, in his opinion, left very little choice to artists and intellectuals but “taking on the ‘dissident’ and hence basically conservative stance of promoting bourgeois (and often nationalist) ideas and rights instead of genuine social rights arising from the new social order as defined in the ideas of self-management”.¹² In the case of art, Erjavec argues, the subversive act was to dissociate art from politics, to create art “as if politics doesn’t exist”, despite the standards of a socialist realism which “demanded for an apologetic politicization of art and culture”.¹³ In the meantime, with the appearance of the post-avant-garde in Yugoslavia, the aim again was to combine “artistic and political claims”,¹⁴ reflecting even on the change in socialist modernism that made it “neutral and passive in relation to its surrounding reality”, the reason why it was renamed by a circle of art theorists *socialist aestheticism*.¹⁵

The post-avant-garde, postmodernist approaches chose various subversive strategies, even if, as Ješa Denegri suggests “the lack of such a drastic, open opposition on the Yugoslav art scene at the time does not justify identifying the alternative route on the Yugoslav art scene with the phenomena of political and cultural dissidence the way it manifested in other parts of the real-socialist bloc, nor is the alternative route the opposite member in the binomical official/nonofficial art”.¹⁶ The reason in the cases of academia and popular media is that state intervention was always involved, through funding and institutional influence over the appointments of decision-makers. (About this, see Chapter 4 in this book.) This was sometimes more, sometimes less present; in the case of the latter the paradigm was the SKC in Belgrade. Student centres were answerable to the local universities only, which meant remarkably more independence for them than what was accessible to art institutions in the rest of Eastern and Central Europe.

In fact, the first Student Centre was founded in 1961 in Zagreb, and this became the model for the further centres of the SFRJ.¹⁷ If we look at the history of the creation of the student cultural centres (especially that of the SKC Belgrade), “dissidence” should be seen in a broad sense (though *dissent* would be more appropriate). The centres were founded after the student protests in 1968, to tame the protesters and with the intention that the critical and experimental ideas were kept within a controllable frame. The same way the directors representing *novi film* met, self-organised and created in alternative scenes, like Belgrade’s amateur film club “Beograd”,¹⁸ the student cultural centres

became meeting points for young, experimenting artists. In Branislav Dimitrijević's opinion, the Studentski Centar (SC) in Zagreb was already a progressive scene before 1968,¹⁹ still a place of both control and autonomy.

Most participants and observers saw a paradigm shift at the time of the Yugoslav 1968, which led the "dissidents to intellectual horizons beyond Marxism".²⁰ The mediums of communication were similar to the other platforms for the expression and discussion of dissident thought in Eastern Europe, with friends meeting in informal literary and artistic circles, and at the same time, different from these, with the student centres and the youth magazines and journals. The former 1968 activists in Yugoslavia were "gradually mastering a discourse that would tease, fool and irritate authorities".²¹ After the rather apolitical abstract aestheticism, the new neorealist and avant-garde art forms were no longer reluctant to express criticism.²² From the perspective of the post-1968 generation, the pre-1968 period regarding the relation of the state and the art scene was not simply ambiguous, it was hypocritical.

According to Becker, Yugoslavia was the only socialist country that exhibited abstract art as early as 1958, participating in the Venice Biennale from 1950 on, showcasing the open and progressive state of the SFRJ.²³ Whereas authors like Denegri argue against the label "dissidence", Branislav Dimitrijević uses the term "dissident" for those artistic practices and opinions that in any way oppose "the party line" art practices and norms. He is also aware of the ambiguities behind dissidence in Yugoslavia: many artists used "the climate of 'moderate totalitarianism' that characterised the Tito regime" to make a critical stance while enjoying the benefits. For example "the best-known Serbian dissident artist" Mića Popović's show in 1950 was staged as a break with socialist realism. Thus it "became the biggest myth of resistance in Yugoslav art history", whereas Dimitrijević sees it simply as "a way to establish the dissident artist as a person who takes a critical stance towards the political structures", while receiving the first state grant right after the show, in 1950.²⁴ Dimitrijević's broad interpretation of the concept "dissident" is narrowed down here to the generation of the 1968 student protests who, and this cannot be left out of consideration, "wanted more socialism, not less".²⁵ Similarly to the new Yugoslav feminists, the students of 1968 and later in the SKC were making claims towards self-managing socialism about its promises, be these about women's equality or social injustice.

Dissent and dissidence, as we see from the abundance of ambiguities in the socialist regimes themselves, are not clear categories. Film theoretician Nebojša Jovanović claims that the artists, at least the *novi film* filmmakers, should not be forced into “the set of categorical dichotomies characteristic of derogatory descriptions of socialism” with the “‘Artist versus Regime’ cliché”.²⁶ This dichotomy, in Jovanović’s words

conveniently encompasses many of these oppositions, reaching high up the ladder of outworn prejudices about the totalitarian essence of socialism. According to this nostrum, it goes without saying that the Regime is corrupt, tyrannical and vicious, just as it goes without saying that the Artist is guided by an innate sense of freedom and democracy; it goes without saying that the Regime manipulates and deceives and it goes without saying that the Artist knows only the language of truth that simply has to be told.²⁷

This image overromanticises the figure of the artist and contradicts the way the neo-avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes position themselves. What also follows from Jovanović’s argument is that the diversity of the work of the different artists would be jeopardised by forcing them under the umbrella of “dissidence”.

Artists and intellectuals in the focus of this chapter were “poking” the regime in their work with different tools and for different purposes. What they share is the politicisation and polemic that came to the fore in art with the emergence of postmodernism and the post-avant-garde, for which the role of the SKC Belgrade and its Galerija, under the direction of Dunja Blažević, was crucial. The ways in which it was done are far from homogenous, but there obviously was a new stream from Lazar Stojanović and Tomislav Gotovac to Makavejev and Žilnik. The experimentation in literary works in Eastern Europe in the 1970s–1980s, according to Marcel Cornis-Pope, was “dramatizing more or less overtly the struggle of a writer, a narrator, or a whole community to give a truthful vision of life in an age dominated by ideological and cultural clichés”.²⁸ This statement, leaving its romanticised overtones aside (which puts it rather on the side of those works which rely on the “Artist versus Regime” cliché), applies to other artistic disciplines too. It is broad enough to allow for the shades of grey, a non-restrictive interpretation that the art under socialism after 1968 deserves.

The young artists in the SKC Belgrade, or later in ŠKUC Ljubljana, *novi film* filmmakers and the feminists of the *Žena i društvo* circles were

all, if not dramatising, but certainly problematising the lies, shortcomings and hypocrisy of the regime, while they were also part of the system. As Dunja Blažević remembers, “the young people that led and gathered around these centres believed in the subversive, revolutionary power and potential of the arts, which could change not only art and society, but also the world”.²⁹ This characterisation is recurrent when a new generation or the youth in any context is described. The role of youth in art, literature and, also feminism in post-1968 (or post-1971) Yugoslavia was one where this subversion and revolutionary spirit was part of the regime’s ideology and simultaneously questioned it.

Dunja Blažević, the founding director of the Galerija SKC-a [Gallery of the SKC] and a key figure of the new art scene in Yugoslavia at the time, explained that she had the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) London in mind as model institute for the SKC Galerija, a space created in 1946 to host radical art and culture. The artistic ideal for her generation was the Russian avant-garde art, they wanted to “create new art for a new society”, with more socialism, not less. To her personally, self-management should have been “a mixture of socialism and anarchism”—anarchism being a strong inspiration to Sonja Drljević too—,³⁰ and while her role as director obviously defined the profile of the Galerija SKC-a, she emphasised during our talk that this was her personal inspiration which she did not want to impose upon the artists in the gallery. In the meantime, when talking of a generational experience and inspiration, she named the Frankfurt School instead of Praxis and mentioned the influence of Guy Debord. The freedom of the SKC artists gained stemmed from their lack of fear, but it was also supported by the silent pact between the Tito-regime and the students after 1968 in Serbia and following the suppression of the Croatian Spring in 1971. Moreover, the family background of some of the leaders of the SKC, who were related to high-ranking politicians, meant another layer of protection.

The story Blažević recalls from “1974 or 1975”—signalling a “black wave period”—was a conflict with new leadership on the Central Committee. The Committee “cleansed” the arts and humanities institutions and wanted to appoint a new director to the SKC, instead of Petar Ignjatović, its progressive first director. The six programme directors, one of whom was Blažević, protested against the decision based on the lack of professional knowledge of those making the decision: “So, we sent the CC representative away, we were not afraid at all. After this, stories started to circulate. But this is just a story, not important. That was

the way, that you were not afraid. Also, we did not have the knowledge [of the risks involved in not being afraid]”.³¹ The last sentence about the lack of knowledge of the possible consequences, as well as the brave professional arrogance of a generation born in peace time in a country full of promises, reveals at least partly the innovation and motivation of both the artists and the feminists. I discuss publication laws and censorship more in detail in the previous and the following chapters, which is well complemented by Blažević’s emphasis on the importance of working without self-censorship.

It was this environment, entangled with the academic-activist scene at the universities, where feminist art and art theory emerged. As Blažević was in the key position as director of the gallery of the SKC and later on the whole SKC—after which she was the editor and host of a contemporary art TV series (*TV Galerija*)—³² she did indeed play a crucial role, which was confirmed by most of my interviewees. The SKC hosted an early exhibition about sexual harassment of women in 1976 as well as the preparatory workshops for the first SOS helpline for victims of violence against women (Fig. 3.2). There appears to be a consensus on Blažević’s role and personality, what Vesna Kesić in an interview from 1982 describes as “the activist of the avant-garde”. Her role and personality represents the inseparability of the regime and its opposition, so this reflection of hers and others on her family background is interesting here as a par excellence case of how the personal and political are intertwined. It also shows how consciously someone could use their background. Jakov Blažević was a member of the illegal communist party during World War II, and after 1945 a leading SKJ politician. At around the time of the early phase of the SKC Belgrade and his daughter’s career, he was the president of the parliament of the SRH and member of the presidency of the SRH, the presidency of the SKJ and the SFRJ. In 1982, Vesna Kesić, already editor of the magazine *Start* (see Chapter 4), had a conversation with Dunja Blažević about her work over the previous ten years. Blažević highlights the ambiguity of her own position here:

Given that I was privileged, have I done enough in comparison with people who did not have the same opportunities and who, in a way, made a much bigger step? [...] In one moment you understand that you adopted a certain kind of asceticism, about which not even you yourself know where it exactly originates from. On the other hand, you have this immense need to create an image of yourself as *a self-made* person; you take care of other



Fig. 3.2 “Why do women not catcall men?” A poster campaign prepared in 1976 by Žarana Papić and Ivan Vejvoda, designed by Dragan Stojanovski. The posters were installed in the university buildings all over Belgrade (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

people and of your environment, sometimes even more than it would be necessary.

Already in 1982, Blažević made clear the dilemma that comes with her position. Her interpretation explains her reluctance to attribute that great a significance to her role in the movements, new artistic and new feminist alike.

Curators and organisers, also those in other fields, like Andrea Feldman, Lydia Sklevicky and Žarana Papić in academia, activists like Lepa Mlađenović and Mojca Dobnikar, were the motors behind a creation of a rich new feminist discourse. However, there is a gendered hierarchy in the division of labour in the ranks of Yugoslav counterculture too. Branislava Anđelković is right to point out that while many important curators in the new artistic movement circles were women, both the representatives of the “official opportunistic culture” and the “rebellious opposition to this cultural numbness, taking the form of dissident political and artistic action” were men.³³ While there was indeed a male artist dominated canon in formation at the time, the women artists and writers in this chapter prove precisely that the participation of feminist curators and editors, as well as critics and scholars, created a context and a system of cultural production that gives space for women authors able to explore the possibilities of women’s perspective, feminism and dissent with the combination of the former two.³⁴

The SKC Belgrade not only hosted the 1978 *Drug-ca* conference and provided space for the *Žena i društvo tribine*, but also brought the international art scene to Belgrade. As Biljana Tomić explained to me, they really felt that their Yugoslavia of the time was completely on a par with the art scene in Paris or New York. The first memorable encounter happened in 1976 within the frames of the *Aprilski susreti*, which left deep traces in the participants, as Biljana Tomić remembers, since they stayed in contact for a long time after the event. To her, Katharina Sieverding as a phenomenon left a lasting effect, through the powerful femininity she represented. The SKC’s vibrant art scene was in general inspiring: the “group of six” or “Group70” with Raša Todosijević, Gergelj Urkom, Neša Paripović, Zoran Popović, Era Milivojević and Marina Abramović started their careers here. The SKC was where artworks like “Was ist Kunst, Marinela Koželj?” by Todosijević or “Art Must be Beautiful, Artist Must be Beautiful” by Abramović were born, contributing to the understanding of the feminist curators and artists of the role of feminism and gender in art—even if Abramović herself adamantly refused to be considered a feminist artist.

It is not only that important new art from the West came to the big Yugoslav cities: *novi umjetnost* travelled from Yugoslavia too. The group OHO participated in a MoMA exhibition in New York in 1970; Sanja Iveković had her first group exhibitions in 1971 in Paris and Graz, the

first solo (with *Une jour violente* at the Arte Fiera) in Bologna in 1976; Marina Abramović exhibited alone first in 1974 in Naples (*Rhythm 0*) and Milan (*Rhythm 4*), and the next year in Amsterdam (*Role Exchange*). All in all, the *Žena i društvo* event series is worth returning to, as these represented the feminist art project of the time quite well.³⁵ Talks about Virginia Woolf, women's creativity by Dacia Mariani—the Italian feminist and writer, a frequent guest of the Yugoslav feminists—women's literature as “writing of the other” [*Ženska književnost—drugo pismo*], about language and *sex*, about lesbian literature.

ÉCRITURE FÉMININE AND NEW LITERARY AND ARTISTIC CANONS FOR FEMINISM

The two feminist approaches to art and literature in the West during the 1970s–1980s, which later turned out to have been the most influential, both appeared in the Yugoslav discursive space. The *écriture féminine* was interpreted and translated based on a systematic reading of the French literature, while research methods and interpretative strategies which resemble what became known as Anglo-American gynocriticism came about in a more diverse and scattered form. *Écriture féminine* was a key concept of French post-structuralist feminism, developed by Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, experimenting with a specifically feminine way of writing and resisting a final definition of the term. While their concept of the *écriture féminine* concentrated on the text and the process of writing, gynocriticism was author centred: it manifested itself in the rereading of canonised women authors and artists, as well as in the re-evaluation and re-publication of less appreciated and forgotten ones. Translations and the publishing of authors from other countries can be added as another mode of contribution to the “Yugo-gynocritical” approach. However, as it tends to occur in the case of new Yugoslav feminism, the boundaries between the two streams are far from clear-cut. Intrinsically, both gynocriticism and the *écriture féminine* aim at the rewriting of the canon. While the canons of different theoretical schools are not identical, the introduction of new names and new authors to the scene happened from both streams. The other prevailing and fascinating case of gynocriticism and the *écriture féminine* being confused was published in the journal *Republika*. Here, the *écriture féminine*, the *parole de femme* (translated as *riječ žene*) and *Women's Studies* were all mentioned on

the same page, literally and metaphorically.³⁶ The *écriture féminine* and *Women's Studies* are even presented as each other's equivalent.³⁷ The list of these concepts shows how overwhelming and fascinating an experience it was for the Yugoslav feminists to encounter all these theories and movements at once. Gynocriticism was extensively, in a knowledgeable way, explored by Biljana Dojčinović in her *Ginokritika*³⁸ in 1993, which, however, is already beyond the scope of this investigation. Before that, Ljubiša Rajić offered a concept which combines or brings the different approaches under one roof on the pages of the journal *Republika*: "istraživanja ženskog pisma", that is the research of women's writing/feminine writing/*écriture féminine*.³⁹ As another forerunner, Ljiljana Gjurgjan read Virginia Woolf through Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* in the same journal issue.⁴⁰

The feminist theoreticians and artists created pieces of writing and visual art that were in agreement about each other's statements, theory and art practice often converged in their attempt to find a *lieu* for women's voice, perspective or subjectivity in the literary and artistic canon. Ignoring the difference in the initial stance of the two, inasmuch as gynocriticism began its search by locating authors and the *écriture féminine* was in search of new possibilities of writing, the new Yugoslav discourse explored and offered a framework that revealed the emancipatory aspects of both, with the differences strengthening rather than refuting them. In the meantime, eventually both gynocriticism and the *écriture féminine* refrained from a restricting definition of what constitutes "women's writing".

During the discussions, the *écriture féminine* is turned into *žensko pismo*, countering the ideas of *ženska književnost* [women's literature] and *općeljudske emancipacije* [general human emancipation]. The feminist content and intention of the concept *écriture féminine* is necessary to ensure the dissent in these discussions, whereas it is the Yugoslav feminist interpretation which endows it with an explicit political potential. The state contribution to women's emancipation, similarly to what we have seen in the previous chapter, included the support and encouragement of women's participation in the intellectual and artistic sphere, in this case again, as part of the *općeljudske emancipacije*. In *Žena*, an article from 1981 about Slovenian women's poetry enthusiastically heralded that after the partisan revolution, Slovenian poetry opened up towards women's perspective on the world and therefore literary creativity was

no longer a male privilege. However, follows the argument, with the achievement of women's equality even in the field of literature, there is no need for a specific man's or woman's perspective any more, literature can return to speak about the generally human again: "[t]he question of women's lyric poetry and women's art is becoming principally the question of lyric poetry and art, and not of women".⁴¹ In art and literature, as in society, politics and academia too, women's perspective and women's needs are subsumed under the *generally human*. This is a result of the same post-feminist strategies which the state applies in each case, using the claims of general human emancipation and the revolutionary change in society to silence women's demands formulated through feminism.⁴² In the case of literature, moreover, the state's ideological frame is mutually supportive (or permissive) with the formalist-structuralist schools of literary theory present in Yugoslav academia, which opposed the biographical-referential reading of literary texts. This view of literature perceives feminist approaches as promoting precisely referentiality and a biographical reading of texts. Therefore, the referential approach and the formalist approach share a platform when it comes to feminist approaches to literature.

MARXIAN THOUGHT FROM THE ŽENSKO PISMO TO FEMINISM

In the spirit of the time, without necessarily being systematically aware of differences between the various feminist approaches to art and literature, Rada Iveković published an essay in 1979 investigating the possibilities of women's creativity.⁴³ This text is relevant not only because it is among the first publications about women's creativity and women writing, but also, following in the tracks of Luce Irigaray, for its successful combination of Marxian ideas and French post-structuralist feminism, as well as for delineating issues that are crucial for the further discussions of art, literature and feminism. Before the discussion of Anglo-American gynocriticism and the French ideas of the *écriture féminine*, in this text Iveković depicts the framework of the division between the two, in her call to stop searching for the "missing women" and the urge to start an investigation of what "women's creativity" means. The text delineates what we call today *écriture féminine*, based on source texts which conceptualise it. Iveković suggested focusing on the emancipatory element in women's creativity: not only in art, literature or academia, but in society too.

The text, in its argumentation, takes inspiration from a broad spectrum of authors, mostly following the trajectory of the critical reinterpretation of Marx by Irigaray.⁴⁴ Iveković looks at the sources of women's oppression and the way work is distributed within society: the trivial, repetitive, therefore meaningless work is domestic work, performed by women. However, asks Iveković, "isn't this [despised, repetitive techniques of work] despised because the one who uses it [performs it] is despised, is woman?" (142).

Through the example of two textile artists, Milica Zorić and Jagoda Buić, Iveković directs the reader's attention to the potential to "revert the situation" (142). Both of these women artists work with textile, while their work is rather different: the tapestries of Zorić (1909–1989) depict folk themes and often have titles reflecting on folklore traditions, while Buić, who was born two decades later (in 1930) started her career as a costume and stage designer. Her monumental textile installations, with which she immediately got into the circulation of the contemporary art market when she showed it at the Lausanne Biennial of Textile Art in 1965, were inspired by her past in stage design. Both women, in their own ways, use the traditionally female work of weaving in their art. In discovering what I would call today "subversive potential" in women's work, Iveković is inspired by Marx's "A contribution to the critique of Hegel's philosophy of right", whereas in the discovery of the role of the mystified and hysterical for women's expression, she reads Irigaray's *Speculum de l'autre femme* and *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*.⁴⁵ The other Marxian influence in Iveković's text is the statement that women's oppression by men is not a conscious "evil" act of men, neither is it a coincidental correlation, rather, it is "historical necessity [arising from] all class based and other inequalities" (144). In the explorations of the results of women's oppression, she relies on Irigaray: in the men's world, a woman is left to the role of the image in the mirror, "a woman is what is not, her history is empty history, non-history, the history of the other, a history of power of which she is excluded" (143).⁴⁶ When women have no language, they shall try what Milica Zorić and Jagoda Buić and others achieve in their visual artistic work: "to start speaking through (their own) technique, however superseded, conquered, manufactured, utilised, subjugated" (145).

While offering a path of women's emancipation through Irigaray's theory, Iveković urges turning the critique of language into the critique of the class-based, patriarchal language together with the class-based and

patriarchal society. In her analysis, woman is not only excluded from language, literature, philosophy (or art), the question is not only how she enters these spheres, but also how woman turns into an active member of society and how she changes that society. That is, women's agency through changing their own situation in a culture (society), with another expression from the French post-structuralist feminists, is a *phallographic culture* (146).⁴⁷ Through becoming an artist, or through employment outside the household, woman becomes a creator of her own life [*kreatorka vlastitog života*]. The closure of the first text in the new Yugoslav feminist corpus, working around what later returns as the *écriture féminine*, intertwines the political with the artistic and the academic, as well as with the personal. In my reading, this shows that there is always an already political in the concept of the *écriture féminine*, ensured by its subversive potential, easily discovered through a Marxian reading of Irigaray's philosophy which itself was inspired by Marx.

In this early essay, Iveković speaks about two crucial concepts, without naming them: *écriture féminine* and feminism. In the following years, there is a growing community of academic women explicitly placing their texts into the corpus of other texts, reflecting on the possibilities of feminism in literary and art theory and also the meanings of the *écriture féminine*. There are attempts to relate feminism as activism and theory. The literary scholar Ingrid Šafranek admitted in a public discussion in 1983, organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, documented in a special issue edited by Slavica Jakobović in the literary journal *Republika*, that she arrived at feminism from the direction of theory. She regretted not having known more of the movement before her theoretical fascination and was happy when her personal political stance and her theoretical interest reached a common ground.⁴⁸ Šafranek's thorough text, as well as many articles in the special issue of *Republika*, already reflects on not only Irigaray, but also Cixous and Kristeva, the two major authors on the *écriture féminine* in France at the time. The debate, as it is published here, with the participation of Šafranek, Iveković, Jakobović, Vjeran Katunarić and Jelena Zuppa, reveals the major lines of concern about the celebration even of a reinterpreted concept of *écriture féminine*. The fear of the reductionist potential of the concept is expressed (by Ingrid Šafranek), together with a criticism of the refusal of Cixous to give a concrete and fixed definition of the *écriture féminine*.

The literary scholar Jelena Zuppa argues that with the avant-garde women have started to search for linguistic expressions of their presence in

history, and they do so through a search for their own sexuality and imagination.⁴⁹ Sexuality and the body play a crucial role in all interpretations of the *écriture féminine*, where the body shall be more than “a theme, it should be a motivation of writing and a principle of its articulation”, as Šafranek explicates a few years later.⁵⁰ Part of this experience is the detection of the otherness of our subjectivity, a “new presence of women in the written text (and in spoken language), for a new possibility of the symbolism of the female character”.⁵¹ This cannot be a pure theoretical language, Zuppa adds.⁵² Zuppa’s protest against over-theorising the concepts also directs the reader towards texts she reads as manifestations of the concept, therefore what shall come instead of theorising is actual literary examples, while her own definition is also based on a thorough reading of authors from Simone de Beauvoir to Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous.

The difficulty to define *žensko pismo* and what it means to talk about seduction was investigated by the literary scholar Nada Popović Perišić.⁵³ The answer, she argued, lies in the fact that “the intellectual language today is governed by a moralising imperative, which killed all concepts of pleasure. Christian morality, the positivistic, rationalist morale and the Marxist ethics unwarrantedly repressed pleasure” (25). It is from this direction that the concept of *equality* is replaced by those of *difference* and *otherness*, in an attempt to make up for inequality and the oppression of those who are other and different. This is why Toril Moi’s interpretation of the *écriture féminine* is valid here. Moi claims that the theories by Cixous and co. resist the use of the concept of equality seen “as a covert attempt to force women to become like men”,⁵⁴ but in their discursive acts they are in fact feminist. Moi writes about Cixous: “according to accepted English usage, her indubitable commitment to the struggle for women’s liberation in France, as well as her strong critique of patriarchal modes of thought, make her a feminist”.⁵⁵ This tension between the pressing for equality and the otherness of women, the aesthetic in literature and art and the factual nature of biography (from the arts’ perspective, at least), pleasure and seduction on the one hand, positivism and rationalist morale on the other, takes shape in the tension between the concepts of women’s literature and women’s writing. Through the reading of the *écriture féminine*, Popović Perišić is able to see and show the similarities between Christian morality, rationalism and Marxist ethics. That is, similarities between the power relations and values in societies driven by these. Through her observation, Popović Perišić can phrase her criticism of the Yugoslav regime.

EQUALITY, DIFFERENCE AND THE FREEDOM OF WOMEN AND THE FREEDOM OF LITERATURE

In the meantime, resisting essentialism in the theories of *žensko pismo* paved the way to a regime critique. Instead of reducing the issue to the biological sex of the author, Ingrid Šafranek suggested to look at

works in which the authors are more or less aware of their specificities [*specifičnosti*] – which are not only their sex [*spol*] – where they register their own difference [*različnost*], not only at the thematic, but also textual level, in the effort to frame their position as women-subjects-which-write.⁵⁶

The contrast between the two approaches is best described by the two concepts in the title of the essay, *ženska književnost* [women's literature] and *žensko pismo* [women's writing, that is the *écriture féminine*]. The former may refer to anything that was written by women, and is therefore an empty category, similarly to the overused concept of *žensko pitanje* in politics. Moreover, *ženska književnost* undergoes semantic devaluation and is used with reference to an inferior type of literature, written by women and for women and which in the binary system of values is therefore the opposite of the important, serious, artistically relevant literature written by men.

Šafranek detects that not all women write “in women's *gender*” [*u ženskom rodu*], which is a sign of the fact that women are “so embedded into the ‘male’ culture, language and society [...] that instead of expressing and valorising their difference, all until a few days ago, it seemed to them more important to prove their ‘equality’”.⁵⁷ *Žensko pismo* supports women's difference, instead of “equality”; “equality” [*jednakost*] meaning women's emancipation on the surface or on the level of propaganda and laws that are not observed in practice. This is in the sense of women's sameness, their uniformity with men; by reproducing the binaries, “equality” always implies the subordination of “women's” to “men's”, of the feminine qualities to the masculine ones, whereas *žensko pismo* urges women to experience and express their subjectivity. Whether or not there is this difference, the Yugoslav authors not only did not agree, they also pointed out rather meticulously in their fresh reading experience of Cixous, Kristeva, Irigaray, as well as Beatrice Didier, Rosa Rossi and Elisabetta Rasy,⁵⁸ the contradictions in the writing of the individual authors.

While thinking of the *žensko pismo*, reviewing the current feminist approaches to women and literature, Vesna Kesić provides a definition of a desirable feminist literature. Through her formulation of the absence of certain types of authors, she exactly envisions what by time became part of a local discourse and therefore a local canon:

We do not have a single brave spiritual leader like Erica Jong [...] neither a pamphleteer like Esther Vilar, neither someone like Elaine Morgan, who would, from a woman's perspective, discuss the existing 'male' (since they were created by men, so their mark unavoidably remains there) sociological and anthropological theories about the origin and the history of the world and humanity.⁵⁹

She points towards the possibility of a reconstructed canon in a comment in brackets: "something similar we had in the previous century in the Illyrian Dragojla Jarnević". Jarnević (1812–1875) was a prolific writer and poet in nineteenth-century Croatia, dedicated to the pan-South Slavist national cause embraced by Croatian intellectuals. Due to her criticism of patriarchy and since she stood up for women's rights and found a way to write about women's sexuality and desire, the new Yugoslav feminists were fascinated by her as a potential foremother, and she became a crucial figure for feminists in the 2000s. The search for foremothers was pursued by other feminist scholars at the time Kesić wrote her essay. Other authors therefore reconstructed important elements of the oeuvres of not only Dragojla Jarnević, but the Early Modern poetess Cvijeta Zuzorić (1552–1648) who lived most of her life in Dubrovnik and Italy, the popular Croatian author Ivana Brlić Mažunarić (1874–1938) mostly known for her children's books, the Serbian writer and scholar Isidora Sekulić (1877–1958)⁶⁰ and the writer and translator Zdenka Marković (1884–1974).⁶¹ These reconstructive efforts of a Yugoslav women's literary canon happened alongside the discussions and analyses of the work of Virginia Woolf, Marguerite Duras, Chantal Chawaf, Sylvia Plath, Doris Lessing, Marina Tsvetaeva (Cvetajeva), Marguerite Yourcenar in *Žena, Republika* and *Delo*.

The beginnings of a writing of women's literary history and the concept of *žensko pismo* are broadened by Anglo-American linguistic texts, approaching the relationship between women and language mostly from the direction of linguistics, preliminarily semantics and sociolinguistics. Relying on the work of Robin Lakoff and the authors Casey Miller and

Kate Swift, there are descriptive analyses on the differences in the language use of women.⁶² The research on language use is presented parallel with *žensko pismo* and often complemented by writings from the field of social sciences, such as Despot's work on women and self-management and Jasna Tkalec's piece on patriarchy and marriage⁶³ (see Chapter 2). The social position and reality of women authors and artists are not left out of consideration either: on the pages of *Žena*, one can read about the sociological research of Marina Blagojević, presenting the results of research on 100 students and 100 artists. This work is continued from a more contemporary perspective in the work of Jasenka Kodrnja, in her doctoral dissertation published in 2000.⁶⁴

PRACTISING CREATIVITY AS A WOMAN, WRITING FEMINISM, WRITING THE SISTERHOOD

Already before the new feminism in Yugoslavia, artistic work like Danilo Kiš's novel, *Mansarda* (1962), Dušan Makavejev's film, *W.R.: Mysteries of Organism* (1971), Želimir Žilnik's *Rani radovi* (1969), Raša Todosijević's video installation, *Was ist Kunst?* (1978) raised doubts about whether women's emancipation and the ideology around it were indeed a success.⁶⁵ These works mostly scratched the surface of the matter if there was something wrong with gender equality in Yugoslavia, through various strategies of representing female characters and investigating their influence on the course of events. It was art and literature emerging parallel with the new feminism, the two often in dialogue with each other, which could eventually provide more complex answers and pose more complex questions. Works ranged from the search for women in Yugoslav art and literary history to an investigation of the possibilities of women's creativity, questions which were also raised by theory at around this time. In this subchapter, I focus on a selection of works by Sanja Iveković, Irena Vrkljan, Slavenka Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić in relation to the theoretical discussions analysed above.

The young visual artist, Sanja Iveković, prepared a provocative montage, a technique often employed by her, with the title *Women in Art—žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti* [Women in Yugoslav Art] in 1975. The montage, which has not been exhibited up to now but has often appeared in catalogues of the artists' work,⁶⁶ consists of two parts.

The first is a selection of photo-portraits from the art magazine *Flash Art*, of contemporary women artists from all over the world, including Katharina Sieverding and Ulrike Rosenbach. These are the *Women in Art* with capital letters. The other is a set of drawings, ink on paper, of women with schematic, but different, faces made by the artist. The drawings are the handwritten *žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti*, “*jugoslavenskoj*” written with shaky children’s handwriting, in tiny letters. The small letters in the title and the even smaller script in the title drawn on the piece itself enhance the striking contrast between a new, rich pool of women artists coming up elsewhere and the poor situation the artist faces in Yugoslavia. Iveković, an artist trained in Zagreb but also active in Belgrade, and exhibiting internationally from a very early stage of her career, in her recollections of the time often confirms her experience of a male-dominated art scene.

The montage and the disappointment reflected in the childish writing and simple drawings present us with an artist aware of the difficulties of her position. By the act of making the drawing, she formulates her own position, which is a position of quest and precariousness, but still, a position. This is what Joan W. Scott describes as an interaction between creating a subjectivity through “discursive processes – epistemologies, institutions, and practices”.⁶⁷ It confronts the optimistic articles in the journal *Žena* about women artists and writers in Yugoslavia and the re-canonising attempts of art and literary theorists in Yugoslavia and in the West. It also resonates with the endeavours of important internationally known artists, such as Mary Beth Edelman and her *Some Living American Women Artists* (1972), a collage using Leonardo da Vinci’s *The Last Supper* and replacing the faces with portraits of contemporary women artists, in a similar manner as does Iveković in *Women in Art*. Iveković continued her work with reflections on her gender and her body, and her *Women in Art—žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti* functions as a metaphor for this subchapter, as it reflects on the role of the artist as a woman and represents the need for a community of women artists, where, in the meantime, each one of the members of the groups remains an individual, with a name.

Another early work by Sanja Iveković, *Structure*, is a photo-collage of 10 photographs of women, repeated 10 times and arranged as a 10 × 10 crossword. The photographs are matched with 10 sentences, typical slogans for women in the tabloid press: “Completely unknown just a year ago”, “Still waiting for her master’s return”, “Her life is filled

with suffering”, “She will try to become a mother”, “She learned how to become good-looking”, etc. The images and the texts can be read into each other by the viewer, as if they were organised along two axes. There is a reaction to formalism here, the piece speaks the language of Roman Jakobson, as if the “poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination”.⁶⁸ The work in question, however, has a political overtone and is a response to Iveković’s male fellow artists who produced structuralist art in the form of the so-called analytical painting, a type of conceptualism, “a work type that was seen as ‘radical’ and ‘intellectual’ by contemporary audiences. This is where Iveković marks herself apart from most of her male peers: in her ability to demystify, to be simultaneously seriously engaged *and* tongue-in-cheek, to show empathy but also ‘to give the finger’ to her own artistic milieu”.⁶⁹

Personality and gender, together with other social determinants of an artist’s position almost unavoidably lead women artists and writers towards the biographical. Autobiographies and the biographies of other women often appear via one another. The Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia*, as well as an interplay of personal and authorial voices as described by Susan Sniader Lanser, may apply here. This technique of sympathetically reflecting on the lives and fates of other women through one’s own story I call the *writing of sisterhood*. Differently from the *écriture féminine*, which focuses on the self and one’s own body, while reflects on the lack of a coherent self, this technique relies on personal narration with a strong narrative “I”, which, in the meantime, using its authorial faculties, borrows voices and lives of other women to create a polyphonic narrative. Irena Vrkljan’s early trilogy is the best example of writing the sisterhood I have found in the Yugoslav context, while the technique is obviously not an exclusively Yugoslav phenomenon. One of its best examples from the feminist literature of the 1970s may be Marilyn French’s *Women’s Room*, with sources of inspiration from Dostoyevsky to Faulkner. What makes this type of writing particular and different from a heteroglossic novel is the tone and the approach to its characters. The dominant authorial-personal narrative voice is sympathetic towards the women whose voices the text represents and critical towards patriarchy. This critical approach to patriarchy is based on both the social experience of women and the modes of representation of women in canonised, patriarchal art.

Irena Vrkljan, who began and established her career as a poet, was already living in Berlin, more precisely, sharing her time between Berlin

and Zagreb, when she published the first part of her trilogy, with the title *Svila, škare* [*The Silk, the Shears*] in 1984. The novels are written in a subtle and carefully woven, poetic language, sharing several elements of Vrkljan's own biography. Vrkljan builds up a narrative, which is highly personal, while using various narrative techniques to give voice to other women's experience: in the first book, it is the mother and the sisters of the narrator present with an emphatic role, in the second book, *Marina, ili o biografiji* [*Marina, or about Biography*], it is the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva (Cvetajeva),⁷⁰ in the third, the actress Dora.⁷¹ The mother and the sisters of *Svila, škare* are shown through the narrative of the first-person narrator, who writes about her childhood spent in abandonment, with a subordinated mother and a tyrannical father, and two younger twin sisters. The places in the narration are the stations of the narrator's life and career as a poet, from Saint Sava street (Savska ulica) in Belgrade through Istria and Zagreb to Berlin.⁷² The autobiographic personal-authorial narration is shared with the twin sisters through their letters. The sisters, Nada and Vera grew up in the same oppressive family, and until their voice gains space in the narrative, the reader sees them only through the lenses of the narrator. They are either more privileged from the perspective of the older sibling, or with even less agency over their fates than their older sister who, because of her age and courage, left the family house early in her adulthood.

The first book is dedicated to "Virginia Woolf. Charlotte Salomon. Women, who wish to flee from childhood. The call of false submissiveness. For anger. And for recollection".⁷³ The evocation of these creative foremothers finds a deeper fulfilment in the middle novel, choosing Marina Tsvetaeva as a foremother to the writer-narrator. *Marina, or About Biography*, uses both the biography and the writings of the Russian poet as guest texts in the narration. The narrator makes the reader feel Tsvetaeva's feelings through the feelings of the narrator herself, a double mirror of the pain these women felt. It is in this middle novel that Vrkljan poses a self-reflectively ars poetic question, addressed to Marina:

Is there any way of seeking? A woman, women, the world in my head?

Our happiness in splinters, Marina, that life afterward. Shreds, of rationality, of discovery.

We are composed also of lives that have passed. With this realization it is possible to fly away from here, from this grey zone of Berlin. It is

possible to move along other roads, to stand behind the low fences of a suburb of Prague or in Meudon (the sounds of planes and cars here immediately retreat), it is possible calmly to accept predicted losses. And so take up residence in the imagined. Because we must live somewhere.⁷⁴

The women “in the head” of the narrator create the world of the trilogy, where the narrator herself indeed finds herself and her characters, women she reads and women who read her. The narrator grows up with a sense of being an orphan throughout her childhood, despite the presence of her biological parents; she finds a community of women “in her head”, or rather, through writing them into her life.

Vrkljan herself became a foremother of a generation of women writers after her. The next author to be analysed here, whose writings are characterised by a different style and language, Slavenka Drakulić, considers Vrkljan as an example for her own writing. Drakulić’s literary language is closer to her journalistic writing, with sharp remarks about details and precise but short descriptions of characters. Besides her important book of essays *Smrtni grijesi feminizma* [The Mortal Sins of Feminism] and her work for the weeklies *Start* and *NIN*, which are discussed in the other chapters of this book, she published two novels in the late 1980s.⁷⁵ Both novels are interwoven not only with the theme of female creativity, but also with the social and artistic position of the female body and the complexity in the role of motherhood. Motherhood is central in her second novel, *Mramorna koža* [*Marble Skin*], which will be discussed later in this chapter. *Marble Skin* evolves around the story of a sculptor and her mother, and approaches female creativity through the sculpting work of the daughter. In this novel, their relationship, the matter of language and the creativity of the narrator are indivisibly intertwined. The first novel, *Hologrami straha* [*Holograms of Fear*], is the story of a woman, a first-person narrator of Lanser’s personal narrative, who has to face a kidney transplant. The author/narrator tells her story from the bed in the hospital, where she is lying alone, her family far away.⁷⁶ In her vulnerable position she is thinking about her mother and her own almost grown-up daughter, her best friend who committed suicide, her childhood, her family, while other women appear around her as moral and emotional support. This, in Jasmina Lukić’s interpretation, signals “the narrator’s awareness of belonging to the female world”,⁷⁷ and it is this particular style of writing which I would again call the *writing of the sisterhood*. Sisterhood as a concept is another metaphor, this

time of the feminist movements, coming rather from the activist language and standing for solidarity among women. Drakulić's writing is more that of the reporter's, the inner monologues are presented through the often objective lens of the narrator. In comparison with Vrkljan's trilogy, which is more of a poetic dialogue between women who have parallel histories, Drakulić creates a polyphony of female voices.

The writings of Dubravka Ugrešić are also in search of the ways one as a woman can write, and while both her work and her position in the feminist groups differ from the two previous authors, she shares their reflexivity on women's issues and in particular on the gender of the author. Her approach is experimental and playful at the same time, best represented by her short novel (or "patchwork novel") *Štefica Cvek*, in the short stories of *Život je bajka* and in the novel *Forsiranje romane reke*.⁷⁸ Ugrešić did not participate in the feminist discussion on *žensko pismo*, neither was she a regular participant at the meetings of the *Žena i društvo* group. Her literary interests laid in modernism and literary theory, even if not those with a feminist approach: her dissertation was written on three Soviet-Russian male authors, Jurij Trifonov, Valentin Rasputin and Andrej Bitov, all belonging to the 1970s modernist, state-supported stream of prose of the Soviet Union.⁷⁹ Women's issues evolve in her fiction writing, and probably this leads her to the publication of an article, presenting the work of the Russian writer Ludmila Petrushevskaya [Ljudmila Petruševska]. Ugrešić develops a term for Petrushevskaya's writing, calling it "a paradigmatic women's prose". In the argument, this is a first-person narrative close to the Russian *skaz*, a mode of narration basically characterised by the presence of a narrative consciousness, while thematically this new women's prose is limited to the everyday life of women.⁸⁰ This "paradigmatic women's prose" returns in more of her own works of fiction too. The everyday, the trivial are just as important in Ugrešić's early writing as is the magical and the problematisation of matters from literary theory. The texts of Ugrešić tell of a deep and broad knowledge of literary theory and sometimes puzzlingly read like examples of a perfect textbook. The fascination of her texts lies in how she is able to make the reader aware that the gender of the author *does* matter and the strategies to achieve this awareness. While the previously discussed two authors often rely on the personal narration to direct the attention to the gender of the voices, Ugrešić, the author's figure is most often subject to the literary game of the text, through problematising the fictional space and boundaries of the fictive.

Ugrešić's first books are full of intertextual references. Many of these pave the way for feminist readings, like the recurrent allusions to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *Madame Bovary* (both in *Štefica* and *Forsiranje*). She incorporates elements of popular culture from fairy tales to fashion magazines into her writing. We should keep in mind that popular media and culture are both medium and theme of the *Žena i društvo* group: several feminist authors published critical texts on mass culture, especially that addressing primarily women, like magazines or the trivial romance⁸¹ (see Chapter 4). Ugrešić contributes to the debates about the role of popular culture and trivial romance in women's life and the way it should be evaluated in her novel *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* [*Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*]. *Štefica* is a pastiche of the trivial romance, with a two-level narration: we have a first-person self-conscious narrator who is herself an author and who wants to write a novel. Our narrator receives ideas and advice from friends, family (her mother and the friends of the mother), colleagues and acquaintances, which turn more and more into demands impossible to fulfil. Based on the demands of future readers, she decides to write for women, and since for women one writes romantic stories, the author-narrator begins writing the romance of *Štefica Cvek*, a young unhappy typist. The second level of the narration, therefore, tells the story of *Štefica Cvek* in third-person. The hopeless heroine is looking for advice from among her friends and in popular women's magazines for her problems of how to be pretty, successful and most crucially, how to catch a husband. While the author/narrator often resists the clichés prescribed by the rules of the trivial genre and often points out the low value in women's popular literature, she has a sympathetic voice for her heroine. She often addresses her and in their imaginary dialogues the author-narrator attempts to fulfil *Štefica's* dreams of becoming the ideal woman of the magazines, who is pretty, successful and marries well.

This author-narrator is the author of an obviously postmodernist text claiming a place in the literary canon, even though the references are to male authors: Flaubert, Shakespeare, Bruno Schulz. Although for *Štefica*, Shakespeare as well as a contemporary art exhibition is just as useless as are the women's magazines, these all offer her something unachievable. Besides the sympathy of the author-narrator towards *Štefica*, she also makes a stand for the readers of the trivial, those women and genres that are pushed to the margins of the same canon. Eventually, the central character, the "real heroine" of the book is the narrator-author herself. It is her mind that the reader is continuously allowed to look into and it is her

struggles with the “feminine” genre, the trivial romance, which the reader follows from the first ideas till the finished text. It is on the pages of *Štefica* that Ugrešić creates other female voices, who then influence the narrative, either as characters who give comments to the author-narrator about how to write, or as the friends of *Štefica* telling her how to live. The friends of *Štefica*, the relatives and friends at the author-narrator’s mother’s house are like a women’s choir, like women singing Balkans folk songs.⁸² It is again a different, however, still powerful approach to the *writing of the sisterhood*.

Beyond the investigation of the possibilities with a male or female narrator or implied author, Ugrešić’s stories often make fun of the fixed roles of masculinity and the manifestations of patriarchal power. Many of the male characters are punished or caricatured, like in the pastiche of Gogol’s *The Nose*, the lost body part is the penis of a man, who we learn is a womaniser. The problematic nature of patriarchy and its influence on literature takes shape in meta-conflicts between authors, like in the short story *Lend Me Your Character*, and peaks in the story of the novel *Forging the Stream-of-Consciousness*. The three dysfunctional men (the Truck Driver, the He-Man, the Intellectual) in *Štefica Cvek* fit this framework too. Ugrešić uses the absurd and the grotesque to take revenge on those male characters (written by male authors like the character in *Lend Me* and *Forging*) who embody the common heroes of canonised Western literature and who abandon, cheat on and steal from the female characters. Ugrešić uses a conscious voice about her own narration, which goes beyond the self-conscious narrator in the sense of Wayne C. Booth, and by adding an extra, meta-level to her narratives, she always already produces an interpretative frame to the next level of the narrative. This technique foregoes the text’s literary analysis and inscribes her reception of her own writing.

As opposed to the novel, which refrains from references to the existing political context, the film made of the novel becomes overtly critical of the regime. Directed by Rajko Grlić, the script was written by him and Ugrešić, and the film was first broadcast as a television mini series of 3 episodes and then was turned into a movie. In order to keep the generic autoreferences, the plot was changed from the writing of a novel into the making of a film, the main character not being a writer-narrator, but a film director. The cast of characters is complemented by a boyfriend for the main character, Dunja, who is a television literary critic and in his show subserviently bashes new, critical art not following the party line.

Dunja is annoyed by the parvenu attitude of her boyfriend and breaks up with him, as their faltering relationship culminates around the boyfriend's cynicism about Dunja's movie (about Štefica Cvek, the unhappy typist in search of happiness) and his review of a book he has not even read but which he discards. The aspects of gender, high and popular culture and dissent are smartly combined with the introduction of the boyfriend's character. The production of the film, as well as its broadcast on state television meant that the movie was supported by the state, the state which is then criticised in the film. Even though Durbravka Ugrešić, in 2012 in our talk for this book, said that she did not like the result of the movie production. Still, the film connects the writing of Ugrešić and through her, the feminist discussions of women's creativity to mainstream media as well as the critical filmmakers of the time, while it indeed has a different atmosphere and takes the story of Štefica more towards the grotesque and less the sympathetic, taking away much of the most important innovative aspects of Ugrešić's original text.

The reception of Ugrešić's writing by the feminist literary community was not unanimously enthusiastic. Ugrešić herself, as we can already see in her literary interests, was not a regular member of the *Žena i društvo* group. When we talked about her experience of the time, the way she remembers she thought it was a good thing that it existed, sometimes she visited their events, but she did not find it important from the perspective of her own work. Writing about writing, creating art about women's creativity is, however, not the only way of working on feminist issues, questioning the status quo of patriarchy or the legitimacy of the state-socialist regime. Reflections on women's writing and women's creativity oftentimes involve reflection on motherhood, femininity, beauty and the body.

MOTHERHOOD AND/IN WRITING

Motherhood is one of the recurrent tropes of the discussions of *žen-sko pismo* and women's creativity in general. The concept is addressed and discussed in many works from art through literature to sociology, a popular theme offering new approaches to one of the most contested issues of the new feminism emerging in the 1960s. However, it is not only feminism that shows a keen interest in the topic: looking at the socio-political background of the discussion, we see that the reform of childcare was a major concern of the Yugoslav state, which necessarily

meant a reconceptualisation of mothering. As the articles in the journal *Žena* or the health advice books I analyse in Chapter 5 show, however, the state still imagined women primarily as mothers, which view necessarily brought along a rather traditional representation of motherhood as a concept, a significant departure from the writings of such charismatic figures of the feminist thinkers of the early socialist movement as Clara Zetkin and Aleksandra Kollontai. The Yugoslav feminists, recognising the importance of mothering and motherhood for the feminist movement, worked towards a critical reinterpretation of these concepts. The theme of motherhood remains in the centre of feminist interest in the post-Yugoslav space after 1991, as the edited volumes of Biljana Dojčinović (2001) and Ana Vilenica (2013) show.⁸³ Besides the social sciences and feminist theory, it was in artworks where women in and around the new feminist group in Yugoslavia explored the ambiguities in the relationship between motherhood and feminism.

The theme of mothers and daughters has been structuring the history of feminism since the beginning of such histories. The ambiguity arises from the tension between how we interpret sisterhood: as a generational solidarity or as the solidarity of all women with all women, and what Christine Stansell sees as the alternating streams of radicalism and traditionalism of feminist movements in the USA.⁸⁴ Looking at the biographies of the new Yugoslav feminists, their mothers' generation is that of the partisan women, those women who represented the first self-emancipated socialist generation and the success of women's emancipation during state socialism. At the same time, it was exactly the promise of emancipation that the new Yugoslav feminists claimed to have remained only a promise, despite the efforts of the partisan women and the statements of the state. Their way of looking at motherhood got even more complex as many of the *Žena i društvo* group members themselves became mothers, making mothering personally important. Besides the clash with the mothers' generation of partisan women, the personal experience of motherhood involving the experience with the health care system and medicalised birth (which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5), the issues around reproductive rights, there was also the ambiguity of the maternal body, countering the image of the sexualised female body. The interview with Élisabeth Badinter, the author of the taboo-breaking book questioning the myth of the motherly instinct, was on the front page of the popular Yugoslav magazine *Start*.⁸⁵ A mother herself already at the time, Drakulić prepared interviews with Élisabeth Badinter and Erica Jong,

one of the most popular feminist writers in the USA at the time, who not only wrote about the explorations of women's femininity, but also about her relationship with her own mother and her own motherhood. At the very same time, feminism of the time was fighting for women's right to determine their individual way of mothering. The metaphor of motherhood and birth as creativity was reinterpreted and mapped in order to question the small numbers of women in art and literature, while the very search for the artistic foremothers also related to a sense of (inter)generationality of the new feminism.

There is another contested concept in the midst of the discussion of motherhood. "Matriarchy is a myth", writes Rada Iveković in her article about women's creativity. In this article, her strong claim stands in opposition to the fantasy of a matriarchy (often confused with feminism) that existed before, elsewhere. It is important to look at her argument and the political stakes behind it: to talk about this potentially previously existing matriarchy easily leads to a denial of women's subordination by implying that it is women who are in power in fact. In the meantime, the thought that there were alternatives to patriarchy has an empowering feminist potential. Iveković resists the essentialisation and reductionism behind the concept of matriarchy, but she does not dismiss the concept of motherhood in the discussions about femininity and creativity: "Woman as a category is created through birth giving", while birth giving, in another metaphor, is conceived as creativity.⁸⁶ This idea returns in the book of Nada Popović Perišić, a literary scholar who was an expert of the latest trends of postmodern theories of motherhood, quoting Roland Barthes's "all writing is abortion and birth giving".⁸⁷ She, however, turns the metaphor around: "Women's writing gives birth to writing. [...] The woman has to write herself: that the woman writes about the woman, and calls women to write".⁸⁸ Both Popović Perišić and Branka Arsić analyse Julia Kristeva's texts on motherhood and creativity,⁸⁹ Kristeva's famous essay, *Hérétique l'amour*, appeared in translation in the *Žensko pismo* issue of the journal *Republika* in 1983.⁹⁰ The ambiguity of motherhood and writing provides more space to think about women's creativity. Ingrid Šafranek, while investigating the possibilities of *žensko pismo*, also emphasised the importance of mothers and the relationships of mothers and daughters. Šafranek criticised the way psychoanalysis turns motherhood into something "occult", probably in fear of a "recreation of a matriarchy".⁹¹ She was not alone in her critique: the critical psychology from a feminist

angle, as practised by Vera Smiljanić and Lepa Mlađenović, as well as the workshops of Sofija Trivunac and her advice section in the women's magazine *Bazar*, made important contributions to the critical reassessment of the concept (see Chapter 5).

As a literary contribution to these discussions, Slavenka Drakulić's second work of fiction, *Marble Skin* revolves around a mother–daughter relationship. The daughter, the narrator of the novel, is a sculptor. She usually uses clay or wood for her work, except when she makes marble sculptures of female nudes made after her own mother's body. From the narration slowly unfolds the difficult relationship between the mother and the daughter, characterised by silence, the impossibility for them to connect through language and by the taboo of the body, making even intimacy between mother and daughter impossible. The appearance of a man in the mother's life escalates the tension, culminating when the man starts an incestuous affair with the then adolescent narrator, behind the back of the mother. When, at the beginning of the narrative, the daughter meets the mother after a long time, the mother is ill and confined to bed, her illness and passivity opening more space for the narrator to contemplate their relationship. The book begins with a question, posed by the narrator to herself, when she talks to a critic about her sculptures depicting the mother: “How could I tell her, how could I make her understand with words, what a woman's body is?”⁹² It is the words she lacks and the marble she chooses, so that with the help of the sculptures with “marble skin” and hollow space inside she enters into dialogue with her mother. Like the illness in *Holograms*, so the profession of the daughter in this novel ensures a more conscious awareness of the character of her own body. The body, sexuality and the maternal is how *écriture féminine* is circumscribed. Drakulić attempts to access through language the feelings and tensions her women narrators and characters experience.

The search for, and creation of, a new female subjectivity is present in the only pre-war fictional work of Rada Iveković, the novel *Sporost–oporost*. In the book, the reader encounters another mother–daughter relation with all its complicities, told from the daughter's perspective, where the father stands for the authoritarian patriarchy. Iveković explores the ways in which one starts speaking, “how language comes to being”⁹³ and how the relationship between mother and daughter alters when in the narrative and through language it is the mother who is given birth to by the daughter's writing. In the early pages of the novel we read:

There is something I am not certain of: if I came to being from you, in a moment when fissure has not yet separated our pains, which one of us gives this original scream, with the shriek of horror, with this howl of life in face of the misgiving death? Who is the mother of whom then?⁹⁴

Iveković's novel closely experiments with the issues in the theoretical investigations of the *écriture féminine*. The moment of birth is a moment of a cry or shriek, of gaining voice, in becoming and in separation. A mother is born, a baby is born, and then the daughter through writing recreates the mother, and through writing recreated herself as a subject and created herself as a mother, giving birth to a text. The novel *Sporostoporst* is a manifesto on the side of the oppressed mother and against the patriarchal oppression of the father.

The tension between the autonomy of the daughter and the contentious relationship of the parents, where either of them can turn into an oppressor, takes a radical, life-and-death shape in one of Marina Abramović's early projects. Marina Abramović is one of those artists, who are relevant for this book despite her adamant statements about not being a feminist. However, as one of the most famous women artists of our day, who started her career in Belgrade's SKC, under the curatorship of Dunja Blažević and later with the support of Biljana Tomić, we need to talk about her work in the context of Yugoslav feminism and art. Her work focused on the body and control, a deconstruction of control and the limits of endurance and pain, themes crucial for several feminist artists as well. Her refusal of feminism is phrased through statements which unluckily oversimplify feminism, if not even testify to an ignorance of the multi-layered meanings of feminism. These include Abramović's opinion that "in Yugoslavia, Western style feminism never seemed necessary" or "I feel I have to help men", when she is asked about feminism.⁹⁵ Still, she did participate in group exhibitions with a majority of feminist artists like Gina Pane, Iole de Freitas, Katharina Sieverding (whom she knew already as guests of the SKC in Belgrade),⁹⁶ and worked not only with Blažević and the other feminist curators in Belgrade, but also for example Ursula Krinzinger, who apparently was struggling to convince Abramović of the artistic potential feminism offered.⁹⁷

Many of Abramović's works, especially her early work, stretch the boundaries of patriarchy and patriarchal control. She strove towards becoming *strong* as an artist, manifested in the *Rhythm* series, for

example she refused help when she fainted in *Rhythm 5* (67–69). The focus on equality and cooperation in her work with Ulay, in pieces like *Breathing In/Breathing Out* and their performance of a combination of androgyny and sexual organs, is a slap in the face of patriarchal male–female relations. Despite her denial, there is an aspect of solidarity in *Role Exchange*. The theme of art as commodity and women as commodity is also there in *Art Must Be Beautiful*. In my reading these works are in a strong tension with Abramović’s ardent anti-feminism.

Her biography is consciously built into her oeuvre, through own projects, from their departure with Ulay, her partner and co-author for many years, walking the Chinese Great Wall to *Balkan Baroque* and the exhibition in 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (which unquestionably made her world famous and where Sanja Iveković exhibited a couple of years later), through interview books and authorised monographs. This is how the story of the highly ambivalent relationship between her and her mother is known. Abramović’s mother, Danica Rosić Abramović was the director of the Museum of the Revolution and Art, a powerful person, if not in the Yugoslav, then in the Belgrade museum and gallery scene, who looked at her daughter’s artistic work as an embarrassment. Dunja Blažević told me during our discussion that Danica Abramović called Blažević when she heard about her daughter’s project plan of *Rhythm 5* and wanted Blažević to talk Abramović out of her idea.⁹⁸ Blažević did not do so. Abramović’s anger about maternal control led early in her career to a project draft, which, luckily enough, was not realised, but which is described in the documentation of Abramović’s life work.

[I]n 1970 she even submitted a proposal to the Galerija Doma Omladine, Belgrade for a performance (*Untitled Proposal*) in which she planned to dress in the clothes her mother would have chosen for her to wear and then place a gun loaded with one bullet to her temple. For Abramović, this piece has two possible endings, one of which ends with the trigger being pulled and Abramović presumably dying or at the least sustaining a head wound. The alternative ending has the trigger being pulled without fatal or mortal consequences, in which case she would redress the way she wanted to dress and then go her own way. It is as if ‘she would rather kill herself than be bound by the rules of Western civilization.’ (Abramović et al., 1998: 25)⁹⁹

The mother as a representative of the oppression by civilisation is a telling metaphor, while the lack of a discussion of the father’s responsibility signals of one the blank spots in the artist’s work from a feminist

perspective, which perspective considers patriarchal oppression systemic and takes it as a starting point of its analysis. In this story, both mother and daughter betray each other, break the sisterhood they cannot experience together. To return to Rita Felski's categories: Abramović's work calls for feminist interpretation, but as we can see, she herself in her statements resists feminist politics. If we look at many of the concepts and ideas her work evokes and discusses, however, there is an overlap with contemporaneous feminist discussions; her personal-professional relations also put her closeness to the feminist circles themselves.

Compared to Abramović's pieces, in the early writings of Dubravka Ugrešić, mother characters are the transmitters of a social reality outside literature, a reality, which, however, reads and reacts to literature. In the play between the narrative levels and the stretching of the boundaries between the text and "reality" outside the text, there often is a narrator who is an author writing a text, a typical case of a narrative within the narrative, which facilitates self-conscious narration. In *Štefica Cvek* and the short story "Lend Me Your Character" Ugrešić adds implied readers to her story, who, in the frame narrative, tell the writer-narrator about their ideas and demands about the literary text they want to read. In the case of *Štefica Cvek*, one of the implied female readers speaks in the voice of the mother of the writer-narrator. The circle is even broader with the friends and relatives of the mother in *Štefica Cvek*, who disagree about the way the writer character closes Štefica Cvek's story: they demand a more spectacular and more exciting happy ending, closer to kitsch than to the concept of a postmodern intertextual novel full of meta-discourses. The writer leaves the scene with tears in her eyes: "I felt utterly alone. ... I left with a bitter taste in my mouth ... I thought ... about how we are chronically infected by the fairy tale..."¹⁰⁰ As another reader resisting a writer's experimentation with feminist solutions in literature, the mother of the writer in "Lend Me Your Character" bursts out in tears of despair upon learning that her daughter has a secret scholarly project, *A Lexicon of Female Literary Characters*. These mother figures resist the feminist or artistically experimental endeavours of the writer-narrator, posing a conflict; however, their representation is serious in its playfulness. Ugrešić eases up the generational clash, being ironic both about the traditionalism of the mother and about the grandiose plans of the writer-narrator about a "real women's novel" or about the lexicon, which, of course, is also self-irony on her behalf. These mothers are just as caring and supportive, as they are the symbols of what the daughter wants to surpass and change: the patriarchal literary tradition.

REVOLUTIONISING (THROUGH) THE BODY.
ISSUES OF BEAUTY AND FEMININITY

The new assessments of the female body by women and feminist artists have three main aspects; that of sexuality and sexual pleasure, that of female beauty and the construction of femininity, and that of violence. The latter, I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, pointing out its relevant aspects in this part of the book from the perspective of the body and beauty. The re-appropriation of the female body, together with the re-appropriation of motherhood, was a crucial struggle of the new feminism in the West in the 1970s. These carried a high subversive potential vis-à-vis the status quo and while the struggle prevailed in the feminist scenes in North America, Western Europe and in Yugoslavia, many artists and writers refused the labels “feminist” or “woman writer/woman artist”, even if they experimented with new expressions of femininity and female identity, for example as Abramović and Ugrešić do.

As Jasmina Lukić points out, Slavenka Drakulić was the first author in Yugoslav literature to have brought female sexuality from a woman’s point of view into the discourse.¹⁰¹ In the spirit of her essayistic writing, which I discuss in the previous and the following chapter, in her two early novels, *Holograms of Fear* and *Marble Skin*, Drakulić directs the attention to the troubled relationship women have with their bodies, shaped through expectations, discipline and violence, but which is also a surface of desire and appreciation. In her writing, women do not accept with ease the objectification of their bodies, posing a “long war of the naked Venus”.¹⁰² The trope is one well characterising her work and the contemporary women’s art scene: the naked Venus, similarly to Sofija Trivunac’s walking caryatid,¹⁰³ is demanding her moment and her space in art history. These bodies often bear a resemblance to the Venuses and caryatides of the male artists in their appearance, but not in their behaviour. They scream (Katalin Ladik in her performances that experiment with the female body), they speak of their orgasm and their lack of orgasm (Vlasta Delimar in her performance *Jebanje je tužno* [Fucking is sad]), they pretend to masturbate (Sanja Iveković in *Trokut*) or they lie down in the middle of a fire circle and consciously test the limits of pain, and actually, survival (Abramović). Or, their bodies are not beautiful any more: they are ill.

In *Holograms of Fear* we see women represented through their bodies in decay. The emphatic presence of women and the lack of male

characters who would be enabled with either a (voyeuristic) seeing or a(n authoritative) speaking position, that is who are neither focalisers (through the eyes of whom we see) nor narrators (telling the story),¹⁰⁴ protects the narrator from experiencing her own body as an object of someone else's desire. This happens so not only because of the centrality of her illness, but the disease de-sexualises the female body, makes it undesirable and therefore valueless for patriarchy. However, by claiming both the position of the narrator and the focaliser, the narrator takes control of her own body and develops a very conscious relationship to it, protecting it becoming an object. This is further supported by the exploration of the relationship of the own body to other women's bodies, developing a resistance to objectification, a technique which offers a self-liberating possibility to the female readership of the novel.

Similarly to many other feminists all over the world at the time, Drakulić refuted and refused the ideology of the "sexual revolution" as liberating for women;¹⁰⁵ the sociological argumentation of the essays takes another approach to the conflict of alienation and objectification of the female body. Sanja Iveković has a sarcastic drawing of the unfulfilled promises of this revolution, with the title *Čekajući revoluciju (Alice)* ([Waiting for a revolution. Alice] 1982). The simple drawing with a girl looking at a frog, who in each drawing has a different colour is part of many of the artist's catalogues. Expecting a revolution in the supposedly post-revolutionary Yugoslav context, where women were promised equality and still faced discrimination and violence, and where women indeed had more rights than a princess in a fairy tale would ever have dreamt of (e.g. abortion and divorce rights), is already sarcastic. The colours of the frog are the packaging of the promises of a revolution, which may change, but neither the fulfilment of these promises nor the prince will arrive. The drawing is a gesture both to the partisan and the sexual revolutions, which in different colours, but from a woman's perspective, are the very same little frog. It is Iveković and Marina Abramović who most explicitly reflect on the political regime: putting the symbols of the Titoist regime and their own bodies in interaction offers layered interpretations of the place and possibilities of the female body within the system.

One of Sanja Iveković's most famous artworks, *Trokut [Triangle]* was a performance in 1979, turned into a photo-installation afterwards. The performance took place on occasion of the visit of President Tito to Novi Zagreb and the triangle refers to that of the artist, a man on a roof and

a policeman on the street. The artist sits on her balcony when Tito pays his visit to the part of Zagreb where she lives. As the documentation of the video explains, for security reasons, there is a man on the roof of the opposite building, who can see the artist on her own balcony. She reads a book and imitates masturbation, while the car convoy of Tito is welcomed by the masses on the street. The man on the roof notices her and calls the policeman on the street on his walkie-talkie, who then rings the doorbell of the artist and orders that “the persons and objects are to be removed from the balcony”.¹⁰⁶ Bojana Pejić, one of the influential feminist curators from the SKC, interpreting the piece years later, sees it being

‘about’ the *liaison dangereuse* between sight and power, between *voir* and *pouvoir*. [...] This piece is a visual channel in which the exchange of two looks takes place. In saying this, I merely want to suggest that this situation differs slightly from the Panopticon elaborated by [Jeremy] Bentham and Michel Foucault, who deal primarily with surveillance techniques performed in a closed space, where the person knows that he or she is observed, without, however, knowing exactly when this happens. In this performance both male and female subjects are actively involved: the artist sees the security man, and the security man sees her on the balcony. Iveković posits herself in a situation of “women as spectacle” and exposes herself to the active masculine look.¹⁰⁷

In the meantime, she attracts attention by taking her sexual pleasure into her own hands, at once ignoring and mocking the cultic male leader of the country, a symbol of the ambiguity of the fulfilled emancipation of the comrade-ess. Moreover, the population of a country where both the new feminists and the artists of the new students’ centres seemingly enjoyed spiritual freedom was apparently observed and disciplined in their private spaces and lost their privacy by the proximity of the political leader. This work by Iveković involves aspects of her work on the construction of the female body and female beauty through control and norms, but also involves her critical stance towards the political regime.

An even more explicit expression of this position is a collage exhibited at the *Zagrebački salon* of the Croatian Association of Artists in 1979, with the title *Rečenica* [Sentence]. There are photographs of the artist in different poses, each photograph rendered to a word of the sentence (originally in Serbo-Croatian): “The fact that a need for stronger

discipline and responsibility is stressed today tells us that there still exists behaviour that is not in line with our proclaimed goals".¹⁰⁸ This piece uses the dogmatic language and the free moves of the body of the artist, and unlike the collages *Titor album* [Tito's Album] (1980) and *Tito's Dress* from around that time, it was shown at a prestigious public exhibition. If we look at these works in dialogue with the work of Vlasta Delimar, Biljana Jovanović's writing and Slavenka Drakulić's essays and novels about women's sexuality, it is also a reference to the interference of the cult of a leader with a woman's sexual enjoyment and is thus an allusion to the sexual liberation of women and the missing sexual revolution.

During the early phase of her career, Iveković had several pieces that reflect on the connections between the beauty expectations towards women and consumerism: *Dnevnik* [*Diary*] (1975–1976), *Make Up—Make Down* (b/w version 1976, colour version 1978), *Instrukcije br. 1* [*Instructions No. 1*] (1976) place the everyday beauty rituals of women into a politicised context. These were integral part of the feminist discursive space that is being born in Yugoslavia at the time and are easy to put into dialogue with Abramović's 1975 video, *Art Must Be Beautiful*, despite the intentions of Abramović of not being seen as a feminist artist. The artist's more and more intense and aggressive hair-combing of her own hair, a mandatory beauty rite of women, turns into self-hurting and self-disciplining, what fashion often does to women. While it is a critique of the art market and its values that the artist finds mistaken, Abramović's *Art Must Be Beautiful* can also be read as a counter piece to the fellow-artist Raša Todosijević's *Was ist Kunst, Marinela Koželj?* (1978), where a male voice is asking a young woman in front of the camera "Was its Kunst?" and hits her head and face after each question. Abramović, inflicting the violence onto herself, through combing her hair, a seemingly everyday beauty practice, shows the forceful expectations about the female body and takes back the agency from the hands of others, as a last grasp for control.

The political and the violent are the two prevailing motives of Iveković's video with the title *Osobni rezovi* [*Personal Cuts*] (1982). Here, we meet with images from the history of the SFRJ in an unusual format: the images from the state television show, *The History of Yugoslavia*, from the past twenty years flash up between two "personal cuts". The artist has a black stocking pulled over her head, looking like

a terrorist or a bank robber. “The terrorist act that Iveković associates with this takes place in the field of vision in which real violence – the cut in the mask – merges with structural violence – represented by the relationship of the individual and the medium of television, which is political power in the broader sense”¹⁰⁹—writes Silvia Eiblmayer about this work, correctly indicating the interplay between levels of violence and the problems the piece makes us aware of. In the meantime, it is again in accord with the issue of the role of women in Yugoslav history raised by feminist historians, like Andrea Feldman and Lydia Sklevicky just at about the same time this video was produced and broadcast. The history of the SFRJ itself exemplifies how women slowly disappear as fighters and are left as happy housewives or worker women at the conveyor-belt (see Chapter 2 about historiography and Chapter 4 about the changes in popular women’s press). However, the cutting off of a mask can also be seen as a bitter but powerful act of self-liberation: the mask imposed on the individual through media, history or a political regime. The facial expression of the artist, however, is not liberated, but as the film rolls and the cuts are inflicted, is more and more desperate.

The market and a criticism of consumerism are approached from a different perspective in Iveković’s work, in Ugrešić’s play with the genre of popular women’s magazines and women’s literature in *Štefica Cvek*, and Abramović’s *Art Must Be Beautiful* and *Role Exchange*. Women are in a double role in market relations: they are both consumers and products. The environment of these works is worth mentioning, with a short analysis of the role of consumerism in Tito’s Yugoslavia. Branislav Dimitrijević quotes an anecdote, a scene he witnessed in the *kafana* of a small mountain village in Serbia:

Two local people, well-informed guests, discuss the actual international affairs. One of them is prophesising the end of the communist block and the final collapse of its economic policy, while the other defends the traditional trust in the strengths of Russia, what should be joined and could be trusted. These arguments of his Russophile and pro-communist fellow make the first man really angry, he stands up and shouts with his typical South Serbian accent: ‘If this is really your opinion, why are you not drinking *kvas* and put your spare money in rubel, instead of drinking Cola and whiskey and put your money in dollars?’¹¹⁰

Besides being funny, the anecdote shows the atmosphere of self-managing socialist Yugoslavia in the 1970s, where the Volkswagen Golf

was produced from 1972,¹¹¹ Renault 4 from 1973,¹¹² Levi's 501 jeans from 1983 (in the Varteks Factory).¹¹³ As historian Igor Duda argues, the "consumer craze" was rapidly growing from the 1960s till the end of Yugoslav socialism.¹¹⁴

Bojana Pejić summarises the late 1970s as follows: "the age of High Communism in a Yugoslavia characterised by an extreme combination of consumerism-cum-communism, legalised abortion and a one-party system. Levis [sic] jeans and a centralised economy. It was an era of sex (in Yugoslav films), drugs (at home) and rock'n'roll played in public dance halls which as any public room throughout the county displayed a photographic portrait of the President".¹¹⁵ Consumerism was used to maintain the power of a regime, Tito's authoritarian state socialism. Iveković's work cleverly finds the common point in these. So did many of the Yugoslav feminists, like Slavenka Drakulić in her essay on the role of mass media in maintaining a false image of gender equality and sexual revolution,¹¹⁶ or Dunja Blažević on women's magazines, which address women as mothers and wives, but Blažević is also critical of the commodity-fetishism of these magazines¹¹⁷ (see next chapter).

The early Sanja Iveković works represent very well the ambiguities of the beauty industry for women, especially in a socialist/communist society, where the initial and official image and the attempt to eliminate consumerism refused the beauty industry, but actually replaced it with its own version. There is a beauty ideal of state-socialist regimes and women are expected to follow certain fashion lines.¹¹⁸ Iveković's works place question-marks and quotation marks around the products and their commercials, but do not refuse these completely. What she does in her visual work can be put on a par with the early work of Slavenka Drakulić. In the essay "Why do women like fairy tales?" Drakulić argues that despite their simplicity, trivial romance novels mean an escape from the everyday reality of state socialism.¹¹⁹ Her work is not unanimously and only critical towards the phenomenon, her work as a simple anti-consumerist protest would not be very interesting.¹²⁰ I could compare her standpoint to that of Ugrešić in *Štefica Cvek*, where the hopeless heroine is looking for advice among her friends and in these magazines for her problems of how to be beautiful, successful and most importantly: how to catch a man. The critical stance of the author/narrator towards the popular genres is expressed by the refusal of the "fake" ending of the story of Štefica, where she falls in love with a millionaire film director or by the advice of the magazines which do not solve the difficulties in life of the

poor heroine. The way Dubravka Ugrešić works with the genre in the *Štefica Cvek* novel fits into the image of the new feminists supporting, or at least, seeing the potential in the “easy” women’s genres: the novel is mocking and playing with the trivial, however, it has a sympathetic attitude to the genre, which has an ambivalent reception among the new Yugoslav feminists, suspicion mixed with interest, as the edited volume on trivial literature from 1987 by Svetlana Slapšak shows.¹²¹

IN CONCLUSION: FEMINISM AND THE STATUS QUO

The art and literary works analysed in this chapter are hard to categorise under one concept of feminism or one concept of dissent, they reveal and combine aspects of both. The post-socialist reception of Sanja Iveković’s work from the time of socialism is telling about here. In retrospect, Branislava Anđelković sees her as “another manifestation of cultural dissidence”,¹²² whereas Bojana Pejić writes about her that “she was not a dissident artist, but she was the first of her generation to express a clearly feminist attitude”.¹²³ Iveković and the other artists with a feminist agenda, such as Ugrešić, treaded a fine line between dissidence and dissent, which was supported and inspired by their feminism, targeting patriarchy, state socialism and consumerism at the same time. It is interesting to see how their work is in a dialogue with the explicitly non-feminist or only implicitly feminist work of Abramović, Ladik, Delimar or Vrkljan. What we find is a new feminist understandings irrespective of the feminist position of their authors, especially in a discursive environment that already had a feminist vocabulary and a general openness to feminism.

The art and literature around the new Yugoslav feminist circles had much in it that was innovative, one of the most important aspects of this being a solidarity and sympathy for other women, their lives and experience. The new feminist theories of art and literature also urged towards redefining the language in which we can speak and think of women through the *écriture féminine* and its local version, the *žensko pismo*. The art historical corpus and the literary canon offered to women, be they artists and writers, readers (literary scholars), curators and editors, was being rewritten by exactly these women. If needed, through the transfer of good examples, but also through creating a space where new art can find a niche. So it did in reassessing the place of women in canons, the approach to women’s body, and the way motherhood was perceived. In this chapter, my aim was to show some of the lines of

these endeavours, while much remains to be said, for example about the contributions of Katalin Ladik, Marina Gržinić, Radmila Lazić, Biljana Jovanović, Judita Šalgo.

NOTES

1. Interview with Slavenka Drakulić (Zagreb, 12 November 2012). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. Vesna Kesić, “Dunja Blažević: Aktivistkinje avangarde” [Dunja Blažević: The Activist of the Avant-garde], *Start*, No. 340. 13 February 1982, 48–49, 49.
3. Interview with Dubravka Ugrešić (Budapest, 3 December 2012).
4. James Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies. A Biography* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2010), 79.
5. Rada Iveković, “Talijanski komunisti i ženski pokret” [The Italian Communists and the Women’s Movement], *Dometi*, No. 2 (1980): 31–44, 40.
6. Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Hutchinson Radius: 1989), 12.
7. Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*, 12.
8. Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 39.
9. Slavica Jakobović, “Upit(a)nost ženskoga pisma” [The Controversy of Women’s Writing], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 4–6, 5. Quoting Rajner Negele [Nägele], “Modernizam i postmodernizam: granice artikulacije” [Modernism and Postmodernism: The Boundaries of Articulation], *Polja* 291/1983.
10. Ladik about her femininity, the body and beauty in her art: “Intervju” [Interview], *Start*, 9 August 1978.
11. Interestingly enough, their work does not appear later in the publications where the authors from the *Žena i društvo* group publish, and though there is no available transcript of the talk, the choice of the authors discussed and the title suggests that the approach was closer to the one the feminist authors later refer to the terrain of the old approach to *ženska književnost*.
12. Aleš Erjavec, “The Three Avant-Gardes and Their Context”, in *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 36–63 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 58.

13. Mišo Šuvaković, “Conceptual Art”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 210–246, 235.
14. Erjavec, “The Three Avant-Gardes and Their Context”, 59.
15. Ješa Denegri, “Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene. 1950–1970”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 170–209, 176.
16. Denegri, “Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene. 1950–1970”, 177.
17. Lutz Becker, “Art for an Avant-Garde Society. Belgrade in the 1970s”, in *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN, 391–400 (London: Afterall Book, c.2006), 392.
18. Daniel J. Goulding, “Dušan Makavejev”, in *Five Filmmakers*, ed. Idem. 209–263 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 211.
19. Branislav Dimitrijević, “A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948” in *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN, 287–297, 288.
20. Marcel Cornis-Pope, John Neubauer and Svetlana Slapšak et al. “1956/1968. Revolt, suppression, and liberalization in post-Stalinist East-Central Europe”, in *History of The Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Vol. 1.* ed. Marcel Cornis-Pope–John Neubauer (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2004–), 83–106, 100.
 About cultural transfer in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, see: Alfred A. Reisch, *Hot Books in the Cold War: The CIA Funded Secret Western Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2013); Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
21. Cornis-Pope, Neubauer and Slapšak, “1956/1968. Revolt, suppression, and liberalization”, *ibid.*
22. *Ibid.* and see also Dimitrijević, “A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948” and later references to the work of Sanja Iveković.
23. Becker, “Art for an Avant-Garde Society. Belgrade in the 1970s”, 391.
24. Dimitrijević, “A Brief Narrative of Art Events in Serbia after 1948”, 288. About the right-wing turn in Yugoslav dissent, see Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Co., 2002); Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944–1991* (New York: Central European University Press, 2007); Marko Zubak, “The Croatian Spring: Interpreting the Communist Heritage in Post-Communist Croatia”, *East Central Europe* vol. 32 (2005): 191–225; Dubravka Stojanović, “The Traumatic Circle

- of the Serbian Opposition”, in *The Road to War in Serbia. Trauma and Catharsis*, ed. Nebojša Popov, English version ed. Drinka Gojković, 449–478 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2000).
25. About 1968, see Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
 26. Nebojša Jovanović, “Breaking the Wave: A Commentary on ‘Black Wave Polemics: Rhetoric as Aesthetic’ by Greg DeCuir, Jr”, *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, Vol. 2. No. 2 (2011): 161–171, 167–168.
 27. Ibid.
 28. Marcel Cornis-Pope, “From Resistance to Reformulation”, in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, ed. J. Neubauer and M. Cornis-Pope, 39–50, 43.
 29. Dunja Blažević, “Who is That Singing Over There? Art in Yugoslavia and after 1949–1989”, in *Aspects/Positions. 50 Years of Art on Central Europe 1949–1999*, curated by Lóránd Hegyi; in collaboration with Dunja Blažević, Bojana Pejić et al. (Wien: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 1999), 92–93.
 30. Interview with Sonja Drljević.
 31. The unmarked quotes are all from the interview with Dunja Blažević (Sarajevo, 30 March 2012).
 32. About the TV Galerija, see Branka Ćurčić, “Television as a Symbol of Lost Public Space”, <http://transform.eipcp.net/correspondence/1197491434#redir> (accessed 5 April 2018).
 33. Branislava Anđelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?” in *Sanja Iveković. Selected Works*, curated and ed. Nataša Ilić and Kathrin Rhomberg (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2007), 20–25, 20.
 34. And others analysed by other scholars, for example: Vladimir Kopicl, “Writings of Death and Entertainment: Textual Body and (De)composition of Meaning in Yugoslav Neo-avant-garde and Post-Avant-garde Literature, 1968–1991”, in *Impossible Histories*, ed. Djurić and Šuvaković, 96–119. Kopicl works with a different canon of women writers, due to his different perspective, which however also proves that there were enough women writers and artists in the 1970s–1980s to select from according to the perspective of the analysis.
 35. The list of the events see Vušković and Trivunac, “Feministička grupa Žena i društvo”.
 36. Jakobović, “Upit(a)nost ženskoga pisma”, 4.
 37. “Upitnik o ženskom pismu” [Questionnaire About the *écriture féminine*—An Inquiry by Katarina Vidović], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 235.

38. Biljana Dojčinović-Nešić, *Ginokritika. Rod i reprodukcija književnosti koju su pisale žene* [Gynocriticism. Gender and the Reproduction of Literature Written by Women] (Beograd: Književni društvo "Sveti Sava", 1993).
39. Ljubiša Rajić, "Feminologija i književnost na anglo-američkom i skandinavskom području" [Feminology and Literature in the Anglo-American and Scandinavian Areas], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 112–132, 113.
40. The work of Gilbert and Gubar is read in relation to Virginia Woolf: Ljiljana Gjurgjan, "Dvoznačnost funkcije mita 'domaćeg anđela' u romanu V. Woolf 'Ka svjetioniku'" [The Double Meaning of the Function of the Myth of the "Domestic Angel" in the Novel *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 156–162, 156–159.
41. Denis Poniž, "Pitanje 'ženske lirike' u suvremenom slovenskom pjesništvu" [The Question of Women's Poetry in Contemporary Slovenian Poetry], *Žena*, Vol. 39. No. 5–6 (1981): 40–48.
42. This is one of the arguments of Chapter 1 where, based on feminist theories of post-feminism, I claim that the SKJ and the state in the East European socialist systems, and especially in Yugoslavia, applies similar strategies as those which the second wave feminists can detect in the USA and in Western Europe and which they define as post-feminist. In Amelia Jones's interpretation, post-feminism first reduces feminism to a unitary concept, then is discursively and photographically executed as post-feminist in the popular press, which is followed by other discourses accepting some of its aims and then subsuming it under a broad, "generally human" framework. Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated", 314, 323.
43. Iveković, "Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene", 139. Further citations in this section to this work are given in the text.
44. See Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine" [*Pouvoir du discours/subordination du féminin*, 1975]; "Women on the Market" [*Le marché des femmes*, 1978]; "Commodities among Themselves" [*Le marchandises entre elles*, 1975], in *This Sex Which Is Not One* [*Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, 1977] trans. Catherine Porter (Cornell, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 68–85, 170–191, 192–198; Iveković later writes a comprehensive article about Irigaray alone: Rada Iveković, "Filozofija Luce Irigaray" [The Philosophy of Luce Irigaray], *Republika*, No. 7–8 (1985): 80–92.
45. *Speculum de l'autre femme* was originally published in 1974, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* in 1977, these are the copies Iveković references. The parts I think were most influential see in the footnotes above.
46. Without quotation marks, from Irigaray's *Speculum* (Paris, 1974 edition).
47. See Irigaray, *Ce sexe*, Paris, 1977.

48. Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 10.
49. Jelena Zuppa, “Žena pisac i součjenje s vlastitim položajem žene” [The Woman as Author and the Confrontation with Her Position as a Woman], *Žena*, Vol. 38. No. 6 (1980): 50–62, 52.
50. Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 22.
51. Jelena Zuppa, “Novo žensko pismo: da bi se kazalo život” [New Women’s Writing: So that Life Can Show Itself], *Delo*, No. 4 (1981): 15–28, 16.
52. Zuppa, “Novo žensko pismo: da bi se kazalo život”, 16.
53. Nada Popović-Perišić, *Literatura kao zavođenje* [Literature as Seduction] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1986). Further citations to this work are given in the text.
54. Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 96.
55. *Ibid.*, 102.
56. This and the preceding quotation: Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 7.
57. Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 7–8. (Emphasis mine.)
58. See the references to Didier’s *L’écriture-femme* (not *féminine*) in Šafranek’s “‘Ženska književnost’ i žensko pismo’”, 20–21. See also Rosa Ross, “Riječi žena i jezik želje” [The Words of Women and the Language of Desire], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 29–36; Elizabetta [Elisabetta] Rasy, “Neke riječi na jeziku hraniteljke” [A Few Words to the Language of the Woman Breadwinner], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 83–87.
59. Kesić, “Naše žene u svemiru”, 57.
60. In Chapter 4, I write about another Isidora Sekulić, who is a journalist and editor and is alive today.
61. Divna Zečević, “O Dnevniku Dragojle Jarnević” [About the Diary of Dragojla Jarnević], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 163–169; Gabrijela Vidan, “Cvijeta Zuzorić i Dubrovčani” [Cvijeta Zuzorić and the People of Dubrovnik], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 170–181; Nada Popović-Perišić, “Kritički pogledi na delo Isidore Sekulić” [Critical Remarks to the Work of Isidora Sekulić], *Treći program. Radio Beograd*, Vol. 3. No. 70 (1986): 26–27.
62. Virdžinia Valien [Virginia Valian], “Lingvistika i feminizam” [Linguistics and Feminism], trans. Nevena Pantović-Stefanović and Vesna Biljan-Lončarić, *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 1–14; Kejzi Miler and Kejt Swift [Casey Miller–Kate Swift], “Semantička polarizacija” [Semantic Polarisation], trans. Gordana Marković, *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 53–65; Damir Kalogjera, “O jeziku i spolu” [About Language and Sex], *Delo*, Vol. 27. No. 4 (1981): 37–52.
63. Tkalec, “Patrijarhat i brak”.

64. Jasenka Kodrnja, *Društveni položaj žene umjetnice: doktorska radnja* [Social Position of Women Artists: Doctoral dissertation] (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet, 2000).
65. In relation to the recognition of the lacking gender equality and the problematic nature of the Yugoslav new wave cinema, see the text about Živojin Pavlović's film from 1967: Branislav Dimitrijević, "Sufragettes, Easy Lays and Women Faking Pregnancy: Representation of Women in the Film *When I Am Pale and Dead*", in *Gender Check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe. Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. and curated by Bojana Pejić, 46–53 (Wien: MUMOK Stiftung Ludwig Wien and Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2009).
66. Sanja Iveković, *Selected Works* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2008), 43.
67. Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 16.
68. Roman Jakobson, "Nyelvészet és poétika" [Linguistics and Poetics], in idem., *Hang, jel, vers* [Sound, Sign, Poem], ed. Iván Fónagy and György Szépe, 229–244 (Budapest: Gondolat, 1972), 242.
69. Anđelković, "How 'persons and objects' become Political in Sanja Iveković's art?", 23.
70. Irena Vrkljan, *Svila, škare* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1984); *Marina, ili o biografiji* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1986). All English translations are from this edition: Irena Vrkljan, *The Silk, the Shears and Marina, or, About Biography*, trans. Sibelan Forrester and Celia Hawkesworth (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, c.1999).
71. *Dora, ove jeseni* came out in 1991 (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1991), therefore I will not discuss it in greater detail, as the scope of this book does not extend beyond 1990.
72. A separate, heartfelt thank you shall go here to Viktória Radics, with whom I worked as her editor of the Hungarian translation of these novels and whose translations opened up the language of Vrkljan's work in new directions.
73. Vrkljan, *The Silk, the Shears*, 3.
74. Ibid., 130.
75. Slavenka Drakulić, *Hologrami straha*. Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1987; in English: *Holograms of Fear*, trans. Ellen Elias-Bursać (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1992; Idem., *Mramorna koža* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1988); in English: *Marble Skin*, trans. Greg Mosse (New York: Harper Perennial, [1994] 1995); Idem., *Smrtni grijesi feminizma. Ogledi u mudologiji* [Mortal Sins of Feminism. Essays on Testicology] (Zagreb: Znanje, 1984).

76. A later novel, *Kao da me nema* (As if I wasn't there) has a similar beginning, with a heroine starting her narrative while laying on a hospital bed. However, in their innovation and literary merits the two books cannot be compared.
77. Jasmina Lukić, "Women-Centered Narratives in Contemporary Serbian and Croatian Literatures", in *Engendering Slavic Literatures*, ed. Pamela Chester and Sibelan Forrester, 223–243 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 236.
78. Dubravka Ugrešić, *Štefica Cvek u raljama života* ([Štefica Cvek in the Jaws of Life] (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1981) and *Život je bajka* ([Life Is a Fairy Tale] Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1983). In English both published in: Dubravka Ugrešić, *Lend Me Your Character*, trans. Celia Hawkesworth and Michael Henry Heim (London: Dalkey Archiv Press, 2005). Idem. *Forsiranje romana reke* (Zagreb: "August Cesarec", 1988), in English: *Fording the Stream of Consciousness*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (London: Virago Press, 1991).
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85. Élisabeth Badinter, *L'Amour en plus: histoire de l'amour maternel (XVIIe–XXe siècle)* (Paris: Flammarion, DL, 1981).
86. Iveković, "Ženska kreativnost i kreiranje žene", 139.
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89. Branka Arsić, "Mesto majke i mesto oca" [The Place of the Mother and the Place of the Father], *Gledišta*, No. 1–2 (1990): 39–49.

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91. Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’”, 21.
92. Drakulić, *Marble Skin*, 3.
93. Rada Iveković, *Sporost—oporost* [Slowness–Roughness] (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske [Biblioteka Zora], 1988), 7 (my translation).
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95. Westcott, *When Marina Abramović Dies*, 97.
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100. Ugrešić, *Steffie Speck in the Jaws of Life*, in *Lend me Your Character*, 96–97.
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 116. Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Žena i seksualna revolucija” [Women and Sexual Revolution], *Dometi*, Vol. 2. No. 13 (1980): 45–50.
 117. Dunja Blažević, “Idealna žena” (Ideal woman), *Književne novine*, 25 March 1980, 45–48.
 118. About this, see Chapter 3 and also Đurđa Milanović’s recent book about fashion and state socialism: Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).
 119. Drakulić-Ilić, *Smrtni grijesi feminizma*, 33–45.
 120. This is also how Anđelković interprets her work: “her art is neither a moralist criticism of consumerism nor is it a dissident criticism of socialism. Unlike her male peers, she approaches both ideological frameworks with serious caution. She is aware that there is no such thing as objective distance, that there is no way that a non-involvement or some puritan exclusivism can lead to meaningful criticism”. Anđelković, “How ‘persons and objects’ become political in Sanja Iveković’s art?”, 22.
 121. Svetlana Slapšak, ed. *Trivijalna književnost. Zbornik tekstova* [Trivial Literature. Selected Texts] (Beograd: Radionica SIC, 1987).
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CHAPTER 4

Feminism in the Popular Mass Media

Neda Todorović: *“When I became the editor of Bazar , that was a great chance to give a voice to feminism. We had a circulation of 360,000, that means a huge influence. I called Slavenka Drakulić, Vesna Pusić, Sofija Trivunac, Lepa Mlađenović to write for us. Some men were telling me how our feminist articles were outrageous, as Bazar is a family magazine, where these themes are inappropriate. I didn’t care. (...) My baba [grandma] was a suffragette , from Sarajevo , her name is Petra Jovanović. She was a member of the Kolo srpskih sestara there. She is one of the older generation feminists talking in the Ona broadcast about feminism before the second world war.”*

Vesna Kesić: *“Start was a huge niche for liberalism, in the good and in the bad sense. (...) After the Drug-ca conference, I wrote an article about it and gave it to the editors. They were mad. They asked me, what is this now, what are you going to publish this bullshit. All these women, they were just out for a good f***. This editor just projected his own story, his own perspective, it was him who was just going to conferences to womanise. Then a couple of years ago I got my revenge, I told him this a few years later. (...) I was intimidated and I was scared, but I didn’t shut up. This was kind of the male discourse on the editorial side. And I knew I couldn’t start crying, then they wouldn’t take me seriously.*

It was the same when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back at it, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating.”

Slavenka Drakulić: *“Everybody asks this about Start. [What it was like to work there as a feminist.] It had very serious contributors, and there we had space, they gave us space. I published interviews with Gloria Steinem, Noam Chomsky, etc. Well, they published naked women, but it was very soft porn, not everything was shown. It was perceived ideologically as some kind of an opposition to socialist puritanism and hypocrisy. We understood it as some kind of provocation, not that we liked it, of course we didn’t, but we took it that this was the price you had to pay.*

And it had circulation you couldn’t imagine today, 300.000. Many women worked there, Jelena Lovrić, who already then was a very important political journalist, also Maja Miles wrote there about justice and Vesna Kesić. (...) This was something that sells. We found it subversive to publish feminism in such a magazine. You couldn’t be directly oppositional, but through the interviews with Barthes, Foucault, etc., you could write these ideas into the horizon.”¹

By the beginning of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia was increasingly present in the popular mass media, a process which started with one of the initial main forums of feminist ideas, the magazine *Start*. Daily newspapers, weekly and bi-weekly magazines, TV and radio programmes reported on feminist events abroad and in Yugoslavia. Women belonging to the feminist groups in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade were invited to TV and radio discussions, and the very same women extensively published in the very same media. After almost ten years of feminism’s reappearance in Yugoslavia, during which time it was usually present in specialised professional spaces for a specialised public with specialised interpretative skills, like the art and literary scene, theoretical journals, sometimes in the youth press, the growing presence of feminism in the mass media meant the opportunity to reach and involve a much broader audience and scale of recipients.

Based on the popularity, the circulation and distribution, as well as who the authors creating the media were and how extensively feminism was present, this chapter presents four media products to serve as three case studies: two television programmes of the Radio-Televizija Srbija (Radio-Television Serbia, RTS) called *Ona* [She] and *Ženski rod, muški rod* [Female gender, male gender], which I treat as one project, and two magazines, *Bazar*, a glossy women’s magazine with one of the highest circulations, and *Start*, a political-cultural and/or men’s magazine.² The three cases are very different as concerns the topics, the genre and therefore also the context of the feminist articles or themes.

However, all raise the same question: How does the feminism presented in these media differ from the feminism presented in other fields? The criteria are the choice of topics and language; the position of the articles and their authors to the medium: if they are critical, dissenting towards the medium itself; and attitudes of authors and texts towards the political and ideological system.

The media in the focus of this chapter was in many ways influenced by the ideas of the sexual revolution. The concept of the *sexual revolution* serves also as a meta-trope to the story of feminism in socialist Yugoslavia, within the context of popular media and contemporary art promoting new sexuality, and the state promoting itself as having been born out of a revolutionary movement.³ The new sexual revolution discourse of the 1960s, preceded by a long history of sexual revolution starting in the late nineteenth century, was determinedly criticised by feminists in the West, as well as in Yugoslavia. Taking inspirations from the Western developments, but also having been raised in the Yugoslav socialist revolutionary discourse, the new Yugoslav feminists could not but reflect on the *sexual revolution*. Most authors agreed with Vesna Kesić's summary that the *sexual revolution* "did not bring anything new as far as the relations between the sexes is concerned".⁴ Ingrid Šafranek in her writing about the *écriture féminine* and *žensko pismo* sees the feminist-inspired increase of self-consciousness of women also making them aware of their own writing as well as a new relationship to their bodies. Whereas she also finds the sexual revolution harmful to women, through "a general de-tabooisation of sexuality", it nevertheless gave way to a form of women's self-awareness and freedom.⁵ This was "a revolution on the leash", a limited change without broader social effect, the realisation of which prevented a more dangerous and radical change in society. Slavenka Drakulić questions if the phenomenon can be called a revolution with the argument that it did not achieve women's economic independence and that women are still treated as sexual objects.⁶

Based on the three case studies (the two television shows, two women's magazines and the magazine *Start*), this chapter shows how feminism in the Yugoslav popular mass media was accommodating to the medium in which it appeared, while it remained subversive both towards the medium and the wider political context. Regular creators and contributors of the mass media products presenting feminism were the journalist and media scholar Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović. Todorović was the editor of *Bazar* and of the television series *Ona*, Milanović

was the editor of the magazine *Svijet*, and Vesna Kesić and Slavenka Drakulić wrote for *Start*, with later Kesić editing it too. The editors engaged other feminist authors for the magazines. Importantly, the psychologist Sofija Trivunac ran an advice section in *Bazar*, and Vesna Mimica, one of the initiators of the SOS helpline in Zagreb, wrote about violence against women for the same magazine. Vesna Pusić, Lepa Mlađenović, and Žarana Papić, among others, also appeared in these mediums from time to time. What I call “feminist content” here, for the sake of the coherence of this book, shall be reduced to topics discussed in the feminist circles in theoretical texts, research, art, literature and activist projects.

Mass media and popular culture were not only a forum for the feminists, but also material in the focus of their research. There is a self-reflexive relationship between feminist writings in and about the mass media, the authors publishing *in* the mass media often being the very same authors writing *about* the mass media. Therefore, this chapter looks at the feminist analyses *of* mass media, as a point of comparison to the feminists’ writings *for* the mass media. Within the analysis of the three case studies, the TV shows, the women’s magazines and *Start*, I focus on the themes which are also in the centre of feminist activism at the time: violence against women and sexuality. The feminists whose writing dominates this chapter, Slavenka Drakulić, Neda Todorović, Vesna Kesić and Sofija Trivunac all argued for a form of acknowledgement of women’s need for popular media, and through the acknowledgement of their needs, they found a source of subversion and acceptance there.

THE MASS MEDIA IN YUGOSLAVIA IN THE 1970S AND 1980S

In Yugoslavia, the new media law in 1960 explicitly ruled out censorship,⁷ with the exception of eight areas. The law, with some changes, for example as for the division of labour between the federal and the republican levels, was in effect until the collapse of the SFRJ. The eight “taboo” issues were about material (1) “constituting a criminal offence” against the people, the State or the JNA, (2) “revealing or disseminating false reports or allegations causing public alarm and menacing public peace and order”, (3) “revealing military secrets”, (4) revealing economic or official secrets “of special importance to the community”, (5) “propaganda inciting to aggression”, (6) acts which may disturb the relations between Yugoslavia and other countries (the practice showed that this mostly meant the control of the reports on non-aligned countries and

the Soviet Union), (7) “cause harm to the honor and reputation of the peoples, their supreme representative bodies, the President of the Republic, and similar injuries to foreign peoples”, and (8) constituting “a violation of public decency” (41).

It shows from the regulation that various elements of the media law were also codified in other laws. This was reflected by the 1970s in republican-level decisions: when the republics had more authority in regulating their own press, Slovenia removed most of the eight restrictions, with the exact argument that even these points were regulated by state secret and libel laws (60). Apart from the few years following the Croatian Spring in 1971, when censorship became harsher, the devolution of press control continued in the 1980s as well; by then media was, “with scarcely an exception, controlled at the republican level and geared for republican audiences”.⁸

Yugoslavia had a semi-open public sphere, where media did not have pre-publishing censorship. This does not mean that the SKJ had no means to maintain its influence and control. It happened through institutions and funding. The SSRNJ, under the guidance of the SKJ, was in charge of appointing the director, the editor-in-chief and the managing editor of most newspapers, except in the case of the regional and local newspapers, where the municipal authorities were in charge, also subordinated to the SSRNJ.⁹ News magazines and other written media belonged either to newspaper companies or to associations within the SSRNJ, such as youth and student associations.¹⁰ While issues of journals or newspapers could be banned or confiscated,¹¹ this was not common. Control happened either through appointing the right editors, or through funding: in the case of journals or magazines which were funded by the SKJ or the SSRNJ, the end of funding meant the end of the medium as well, the most famous example being the journal *Praxis*.¹²

Funding, however, was not only a controlling force, but a liberating one, too. With the introduction of self-management, the previously exclusively state-financed mass media was in the ownership of autonomous cooperatives (usually under the umbrella of the SSRNJ); media financing was not done by state subsidies, but was based on market demand.¹³ As a result, in the 1950s, newspapers faced a big drop in circulation, and in order to regain the readers’ interest, papers with large circulation started to use “lively makeup, cartoon strips, detective stories, and somewhat spicy love serials to arouse audience interest and provide relaxation and entertainment”, with sports, crimes and disasters gaining

more space on the pages of the press too.¹⁴ Commercialisation and consumerism were well-established by the 1970s.¹⁵

The commercial tendencies in the media were not celebrated by the leadership of the country. The SKJ frequently emphasized the duty of the press in “correctly informing the public and educating public opinion”.¹⁶ The more conservative members of the SKJ accused these newspapers of “degrading public taste for monetary gain”, and the Belgrade Institut za novinarstvo [Institute for Journalism] was commissioned to make a study on the “sensationalism” of the press.¹⁷ The appearance of new genres also characterised the process: afternoon papers, consumer magazines and on television, quizzes and audience participation shows appeared.¹⁸ The afternoon papers were often written more “flamboyantly”, with an “off-hand style and sexier content”,¹⁹ whereas in some cases, for example in the case of the magazine *Start*, the editors were trying to maintain both high-level journalism and high circulation, ensured by the publication of images of naked women in explicitly erotic body postures.

FEMINISTS WRITING ABOUT THE WOMEN’S PRESS

Neda Todorović and Đurđa Milanović were not only editors and journalists, they extensively published feminist analyses about the genre of women’s magazines. Milanović in 1980 suggested to change the existing structures and discourses, so that women’s and mass media cease to serve the maintenance of women’s marginal position.²⁰ Todorović agreed that the current situation was problematic, putting the phenomenon into a historical perspective. She described two main currents in the post-war Yugoslav women’s press: on the one hand, after the war the “fighter-type” women’s magazines were “tamed down” and turned more conventional by the (re)introduction of content about domestic work and fashion,²¹ on the other hand, new magazines targeted a female readership in a “traditionally feminine” manner, with the topics of exactly domestic work and fashion.²²

The fighter-type women’s magazines stemmed from the partisan movement since the late 1930s, mostly with the aim to mobilise women for the movement. Therefore, *Žena u borbi* [Woman in struggle] and *Žena danas* [Woman today] represented a non-traditional image of women, in their contents both politicising their readers through informing the woman fighter about major currents in politics and serving a

crucial pedagogical purpose, teaching women about hygiene and health. These early magazines accepted that women take care of most domestic labour and in order to help women overcome their double burden, gave them advice for performing everyday domestic work.²³

These magazines gradually disappeared from the market and were replaced by the “traditionally feminine” ones. The magazines *Svijet* (published in Zagreb from 1953 till 1992), *Praktična žena* ([Practical woman], Belgrade, from 1956 till 1993), *Bazar* (Belgrade, from 1964 till 1990), *Nada* (Belgrade, from 1975 till 1993, renewed in 2001) and *Una* (Sarajevo, from 1974 till 1994) were those with the highest circulation in Serbo-Croatian.²⁴ They quickly moved from the focus on politics and women’s equal role in society to beauty and fashion. Even the previous advisory sections on domestic work got replaced with recipes and the latest trends in cleaning tools, showing domestic labour as a lucrative consumer product. *Bazar*’s beauty advice sections included a series of articles in 1975 advising on becoming a photograph model and imitating the looks of the English Twiggy: the series entitled “School for models” promoted for young girls a strict diet,²⁵ one which transforms their body into skin and bones. This image of a woman had nothing to do with the “woman—worker—mother” image of the partisan woman.²⁶

Women in the KDAŽ and the *Žena i društvo* group were equally critical of these new tendencies. Two Zagreb-based journals, *Žena* and *Naše teme* organised a conference in 1982, inviting party representatives, academics and members of the feminist groups. Here, the Slovenian sociologist Maca Jogan asked the question whether there is a need of a women’s press at all. Or, she continues, “we have already matured and progressed far enough in the process of women’s emancipation, that this kind of a press we can eliminate”.²⁷ She claims that this kind of press is “for enjoying one’s pleasure, killing time [*razonoda*], is in essence conservative and patriarchal, it helps to maintain women’s historical isolation and partial sociability”. What Jogan proposed here is a return to the pre-war and wartime women’s press. However, as opposed to Todorović’s feminist typology, Jogan’s concern is that even though these magazines offer traditional gender patterns to women, she does not find the push of women into the second shift of work a problem. What she targets is the occupation with domestic work and with the fulfilment of beauty expectations, for example diet, a *razonoda*, a leisure time activity. As opposed to this stance, women’s less access to free time and lack of time to get engaged with political and social issues, to participate in

self-management was addressed from a feminist perspective by several authors, for example in the work of Blaženka Despot which I analyse in this book in the chapter about feminism in academia.

The women in the feminist circles had a different view on the roles women's press offers to women. Neda Todorović's *Ženska štampa* was the most thorough analysis of the situation of women's press in Yugoslavia at the time. Todorović's research is theoretically supported by mostly French literature, making her aware of the latest changes in Western women's press due to the strengthening of new feminism. She was critical of traditional women's press based on the patriarchally constructed notions of femininity. To her, this proved that "conservative spirit" is still present in Yugoslav society. Her take on the existing women's press and media motivated Todorović not to eliminate the genre, but to use it as a tool to influence and change women's lives.

Todorović was critical of the way political issues were presented in the feminine women's press. She calls them "alibi topics", placed on the starting pages and presenting women as sociopolitical beings. In Todorović's opinion, these are only "alibi" for the traditional approach to women in the rest of the magazine,²⁸ it is a reflection of the state's official stance towards women's problems too. Similarly to the short and superficial articles about women and politics in the magazines, the state does not aim at the elimination of women's oppression systematically, but offers short and superficial campaigns from time to time instead (86).²⁹ The other main target of Todorović's critique is the theme of tragedy, destiny, predestination, related to the recurrent topic of violence. What Todorović finds problematic and harmful is that women are most often presented as victims, and when (as most often) they are victims of partnership violence, the violence is presented as women's destiny or as "a reaction to women's disobedience". Moreover, "the logical continuation of the content which cultivates crime and warns the woman that the status quo is her ideal reality, present topics which address unusual, supranatural and unexplainable phenomena" (106). The section on horoscopes and the presentation of unhappy events of one's life as the working of powers we cannot control, combined with the sections on violence against women, maintain and confirm women's passive nature (106–107), she concludes.

Todorović is arguing for a women's press that treats women as active and political subjects, one which is not confirming but challenging the patriarchal concept of femininity. As it is discussed in her historical overview, there used to exist an active, responsible, socially and politically conscious model for women, compared to which the image offered by these

magazines is a regression. Todorović sees this as a remnant of conservatism, however, unlike Jogan, she does not see women's magazines as a sign of women's pursuit of leisure and laziness, rather, as a symptom of the unfulfilled emancipation of women. The state bears responsibility for this, because in Todorović's view, it hides the women's question behind spectacular but empty "resolutions". Therefore, she does not blame women for their position, neither for reading the press produced for them. She ends her book with the claim that women's press is a marker of women's position in society, a consequence of the real phase of women's social emancipation, and it will present women as "one-dimensional" as long as society treats them as such (142). Todorović's proposal is to change women's press and to change women's social status through that.

For scholars like Jogan, these magazines are encouraging women to become more passive and abandon the opportunities socialist self-managing Yugoslavia is offering. Todorović, on the other hand, suggests that as long as the Yugoslav or any society is not advanced enough to change women's positions from the still-existing traditional one, the women's press will remain the same. Slavenka Drakulić offers a third perspective, making claim for women's right to free time and leisure and creating a language about women and the popular which is mostly motivated by sympathy and understanding as the crucial feminist strategy.

The essay "Why do women like fairy tales?" ["Zašto žene vole bajke?"]³⁰ examines the popularity of trivial romances (in Serbo-Croatian: *herz-roman*) available at the news-stands and also published in women's magazines in a sequence. These, together with "erotic" men's magazines started to flourish on the market as a result of the "sexual revolution" and both use traditional and stereotypical images of women, which do not exclude, but complement each other (36), proving the double-faced nature of the "sexual revolution" and how it does not question the logic of patriarchy. Despite the triviality of these romance novels, Drakulić emphasises their social relevance: only one title, *Život* [Life] was sold in 3,600,000 copies in 1978 (34). She prioritises the attitudes of the readers of these, for which she analyses an unpublished survey by the publisher Vjesnik about the readers' habits of reading trivial romances. What Drakulić finds most important is that the majority of the readers are overburdened women who do not have either time or strength to read anything more complexly written, whereas they do notice the poor literary quality of the novels. These readers, adds Drakulić, lack real relationships and long for love—exactly

the dream, the “fairy tale” offered by these booklets. Drakulić claims that simply “by abolishing and stigmatising this kind of a press, we do not abolish the demand/need” of women in Yugoslavia (44).

Similarly to Todorović, Drakulić would not abolish the trivial from women’s magazines. She does not see it as a necessity deriving from societal relations, but as a fulfilment of women’s needs—deriving from the very same societal relations. She quotes Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch*, where Greer claims that the majority of men do not know anything about the world of women’s imagination, due to the gendered division of genres (34). Drakulić here argues for women’s right to their own pleasure and calls out for a respect of their needs—through which she makes the reading of trivial romances a proactive deed, a call for change.³¹

Comparing standpoints on popular women’s press in Yugoslavia, we can conclude that the new feminist agenda, treating women’s press as liberating, make a claim for the significance of women’s pleasure. According to Luce Irigaray, who was well-known and often referenced in the Yugoslav feminist circles, “the refusal of pleasure intersects with the prohibition of female agency and thus has ideological, and explicitly anti-feminist effects”.³² Irigaray’s argument is that in the Western subjectivity, “woman has to remain a body without organs... The geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to. Women are not worth listening to, especially when they try to speak of their pleasure”.³³ The consumption of trivial romances and women’s magazines, from this perspective, can be a step towards women’s expression of their needs and their pleasure, towards women becoming active and assertive.

A famous case of using a mass medium to reach a broader female audience is the *Ms.* magazine, the first commercial feminist magazine in the USA after WWII. *Ms.* magazine is also interesting from a transfer perspective: many of its authors and themes appear both in *Bazaar* and *Start*, and later Drakulić publishes her essays in *Ms.* *Start* publishes an interview with the founding editor of *Ms.*, Gloria Steinem, and both magazines feature the work of leading feminists also present in *Ms.*, such as Germaine Greer, Erica Jong, Catherine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin. Similarly to Steinem’s approach in *Ms.*, the new Yugoslav feminists also use their magazine surfaces as a space for activism.

To learn from this comparison, aspects of the difficulty in popularising feminism, the relations between consumerism and gender, popular genres and gender, and as far as the new recipients are concerned, the

horizon of their expectation [*Erwartungshorizont*] should be examined. In the *Ms.* project, “popular” was understood in the sense of “widespread”, as well as “emerging from the realm of popular culture”, popular culture being “the realm of commercial culture, where ‘images and icons compete for dominance within a multiplicity of discourses’, where the dominant ideology and interests of commercial producers clash with the needs and desires of its consumers but also must ‘engage audiences in active and familial processes.’”³⁴ It was a rather obvious step for *ELLE* or *Vogue* in the West, as well as for the Yugoslav women’s magazines, to report on this “new” approach to the women’s question, to offer some feminist perspectives, to interview feminists, etc. The French *ELLE*’s account on feminism is even cited in *Žena*.³⁵ However, it was an entirely different enterprise for an entirely feminist magazine to survive on the market, which *Ms.* did not manage. This happened mostly due to the confrontations with the advertisers: there were few products and even less advertisements which were not based on the patriarchal gender division of goods and “sex” (the objectified female body) selling products. The case of *Ms.* is an example of how the “[a]ttempts to alter popular consciousness through the mass media [...] greatly underestimated the ability of established order to absorb dissent while offering mere appearance of change”,³⁶ when after a hopeful period with a circulation of 400–500.000 copies, *Ms.* became a specialised feminist magazine for a smaller, engaged audience, financed by a foundation.

FEMINISM BY FEMINISTS IN THE POPULAR PRESS

The probably most ambiguous example of the four media products analysed in this chapter is the magazine *Start*. It began its career in 1969, as a recreational magazine. However, this market was already occupied by the magazine *Vikend*, so the editorial board of *Start* “boosted the subscriptions” with photographs of naked and half-naked women. A shift followed the appointment of a new editor-in-chief in 1973, when the magazine began publishing more extensively about political and cultural topics.³⁷ Indeed, looking at the magazine between 1975 and 1991, it had various important issues discussed on the level of a quality weekly, while the rest of the magazine was full of images of naked women, as well as obscene joke strips, e.g. about gay men and caricaturing domestic violence and rape on its last pages. After the change in profile, the next shift in the history of *Start* was brought along by the appointment of

a young, new editor, Mladen Peše in 1980, when the magazine started to aim at a younger readership with articles on rock music, modern art and fashion. It was then that feminist curators from the SKC in Belgrade, Bojana Pejić and Žarana Papić, were authoring some of these articles. The new editorial continued publishing “daring and sometimes highly controversial interviews with well-known Yugoslav personalities” (ibid.), as well as provocative editorials such as the one in 1983, accusing many party members and leaders of corruption.³⁸ The curious mixture of tabloid-like joke strips, the pornographic images of women, the dissenting reports and interviews and the feminist writings were matched with exceptionally high quality journalism in *Start*. According to one of the editors, *Start* was the “most analytical of periodicals in Yugoslavia” and the other editors and journalists working for other newspapers viewed them as “elitist and too clever”.³⁹

Kesić and Drakulić worked for *Start* from the late 1970s on, and were later joined by Pejić and Papić, and other feminists like Jasenka Kodrnja and Maja Miles. *Start* published their articles on feminism, a topic most often brought in by Kesić. She reported on the “Drug-ca” conference in 1978⁴⁰ and provided overviews on the history of feminism in Europe and North America in the twentieth century in articles such as “The Feminist New Wave” and “History has a male gender”⁴¹ (note that in Serbo-Croatian, history is grammatically female). A similarly popularising-informative article was a translation about the “New feminist wave” by Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, familiarising the reader with the work of Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Erica Jong.⁴² The magazine also published a series of interviews with Gloria Steinem, Erica Jong, Élisabeth Badinter, even one of the last interviews with Simone de Beauvoir, and one with Shere Hite.⁴³ The interviews place the feminist women in the row of well-known and acknowledged male intellectuals like Moravia, Garcia Marquez, Barthes, I. B. Singer, Hobsbawm. The art, literary and theoretical aspects of feminism were also present on the pages of *Start*, in the form of interviews, exhibition and book reviews, reports on new foreign books. From Julia Kristeva through women in Slovenian media hardcore and Yugoslav rock to women authors of domestic science fiction, on the pages of *Start*, the reader also encountered the work of Erica Jong, Dubravka Ugrešić, Biljana Jovanović and Katalin Ladik.

The relations within the editorial board, however, were far from unproblematic. As the interviews quoted by Drakulić and Kesić tell us, the male editors were not supportive of the feminist content. Even when

there were feminist articles published, the editors tried to change their paratexts in order to alter the message: when Kesić wrote her article about the 1978 conference, the editors wanted to give it a title like “Trle babe feminizam”, meaning something like “old, ugly women’s feminism”. As she remembers: “I’m not even sure how I could fight this off. Even the technical editor, who was just responsible for the layout, he got totally mad and threw away the article”, claiming that the presence of feminist ideas offends the (imagined) readers of the magazines. As Kesić recalls: “It was when I made an interview with Shere Hite. She said something ironic about male sexuality in the interview, about which my editor told me: we cannot attack our readership, and our readership is male. So I said, but you attack your female readers all the time. I had to fight for every line. Looking back, it was a funny heroic time, but at that time it was pretty much frustrating”. In the meantime, the circulation of 300.000 copies meant a huge publicity and these articles did reach the readers.

Similarly to *Start*, the women’s magazine *Bazar* had high circulation too, but Neda Todorović has different memories of her work as the editor of *Bazar*. When she started to bring in feminist articles, some men from different positions warned her that since *Bazar* is a “family magazine”, feminist topics on violence and sexuality should not be there. A magazine for women was a family magazine, while the only high circulation political bi-weekly was for men only—in socialist Yugoslavia in the 1970–1980s. Still, *Bazar* was a classic women’s magazine, imagining women within the family, offering fashion advice, recipes, in the 1980s giving lots of space to Jane Fonda, diets and exercise, from time to time reporting on the recent developments in the feminist movement in Western Europe and the USA. It contained the mandatory “alibi-topics”, that is, interviews with famous and successful women or reports on socially relevant topics. It also ran romance serials, not only from the popular register though: besides Danielle Steel, there were writings by Doris Lessing, Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield, I. B. Singer. Among the socially engaged and politically relevant publications there was an abbreviated version of Vesna Pusić’s article on women’s employment, decorated with a colour portrait of the young and beautiful Pusić, taking up one-third of the pages.⁴⁴

The publication of controversial or system-critical opinions was less characteristic of *Bazar*, the political pages were in line with the mainstream of Yugoslav politics, for example they reported on the newly published biography of Tito by Vladimir Dedijer.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, rather importantly, feminist issues were discussed on the pages of the magazine,

in a fashion that accommodated to the genre. There are three series of articles which plastically exemplify the mixture of discourses, combining mostly Western-originated feminist discourse, the local feminist one, and the discourse of the typical women's magazine.

After the appointment of Todorović as editor, *Bazar* had another feminist stronghold, in the person of Sofija Trivunac, a psychologist from Belgrade. As she recalls, her advice was considered quite radical by the general audience, and as her picture was next to the column, readers could recognise her on the streets. It happened that men walked up to her to make an offensive comment for her writing in *Bazar*, which these men considered harmful. She also reflected on how her looks mislead men, because as a petite blond woman, she was often treated as a "blondie", a girl not to be taken seriously, so she could shock people with her clear and devoted feminist opinion quite easily. Her story is not only symbolic as it represents stereotypes and in general, the reception of feminism, it also shows the results of a wider media reach in case of the popular products and the clash between the mild looks (of a magazine or of an author) and the strong content.⁴⁶

If *Start* and *Bazar* meant a wide distribution of feminism throughout Yugoslavia, the TV documentary series *Ona* (in 1980–1981) and *Ženski rod—muški rod* [Female Gender—Male Gender] (in 1978) reached an even wider audience. These shows were on the programme of the TV Beograd's second channel between 18.30 and 21.30. By the late 1970s, watching TV, together with listening to music, became the favourite leisure time activity in Yugoslavia.⁴⁷ As for censorship, it should be noted that television was exposed to significantly more control than either *Start* or the women's magazines: "If anything is to appear on TV it has to pass hundreds of officials and readings. What is permitted in a book cannot be stated on stage. What is not allowed in the theatre can pass in a movie, but what passes in a film cannot be shown on TV".⁴⁸ Television's special role is explained in detail in the article of Maruša Pušnik: whereas at the time of its appearance TV "was condemned as being in conflict with the socialist attitude regarding the possession of commodities", "people as well as the propagating authorities always found ways around their own constraints" and propagated television as "a modernising force, socialist educator, and a symbol of progress".⁴⁹ According to Neda Todorović, she and her colleagues in *Ona* had no difficulties with the authorities, however, the medium defined at large what and how could be said in these programmes.

The two reporters of the two series, Todorović herself and Rada Đuričin both considered themselves feminists. Đuričin is an actress, who, among other things, made a theatre production from Jong's *Fear of Flying*, performing the novel in the form a monologue and was impersonating Aleksandra Kollontai on the stage of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre—she consciously chose these roles, aiming at transmitting feminist messages to her audience.⁵⁰ Besides her theatre roles, she made a 40 minutes long documentary about the 1978 conference.⁵¹ Todorović's show, *Ona*, was about various topics regarding women, and the feminist attitude was as explicit as in Đuričin's series. Todorović and the editors of the series, Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, chose issues like domestic violence, rape, abortion and feminism.⁵²

The most important broadcast of *Ona* was the one with the title "Are you a feminist?", from 1981. It smartly combined interviews with feminists and the "regular citizen" on the streets, therefore providing both professional answers and a snapshot of the public opinion. As for the street-interviews, gender and age show interesting patterns: older women urge young women to *be feminists*, two older women claim that it is high time to take steps as men do nothing in the household, "women serve them from dusk to dawn", whereas a few women express fear that feminists hate men, or that they, unlike the feminists, are "first of all mothers". A peak of the show is a couple where the man claims there was no need for feminism, whereas he does not let his wife speak, even though the woman tries to interrupt him. The scene continues with the man telling Neda Todorović that she herself had more rights than her editor—to which Todorović responds that her editor is a woman as well. This scene makes obvious some of the prejudices against feminism, as well as the controversy of a man with oppressive behaviour questioning the need for feminism.

Episodes of *Ona* showed interviews with women from the *Žena i društvo* groups too, in which they shared important thoughts on feminism, countering the prejudice of the "people of the streets" and the politicians who appeared in other episodes, such as Vida Tomšič (*Stop za rodu*) and Jovan Đorđević.⁵³ Rada Iveković sums up their efforts: "We want to clear the concept from the negative connotations, we need that term [feminism]. [...] Of course, we do not fight for the privileges of women" (episode *Da li ste feministkinja?* ["Are you a feminist?"]). Katunarić, Pusić, Kesić, Sklevicky, Drakulić all speak in the broadcasts, about the double shift, wage gap, the problematic nature of the sexualised representation of women in the media.

Vesna Kesić discusses in detail how sexism is still accepted in Yugoslavia, whereas racism and nationalism are not. This, she says, is surprising as one would think that “racism based on sex” is not tolerated any more.

The TV show was aiming at showing both sides by inviting state representatives to talk about feminism. For example, Jovan Đorđević is presented as the main authority about women’s emancipation in the episode *Glasam za ženu* [I vote for women], and as a gesture of neutrality, Simone Veil’s fight for women’s contraception rights in France is evaluated positively as she was “not fighting as a feminist”.⁵⁴ Todorović is more confrontational with Vida Tomšič, who, in the broadcast of *Ona* called *Stop za rodu* [Stop to the stork], presents her positions known from her other utterances and publications, also the ones analysed in Chapter 1. In the show, she explains why a separate feminist movement is unnecessary and that feminism turns women against men, whereas the aim is to work for the betterment of self-management together. Todorović provokes Tomšič with questions about the role of the AFŽ and the possible continuity between the AFŽ, the *Savez žene*, later KDAŽ, and the new feminists. While Tomšič refutes this statement, in the episode *Are you a feminist?* are two elderly women (one of whom is the grandmother of Neda Todorović) tell about their experience of the women’s movement before WWII and its liberating effects, by which the show presents a certain continuity between the pre-WWII women’s movements (including the conservative organisations, such as the *Kolo srpskih sestara*) and the new feminists.

Despite the empowering and emancipating topics, the show *Ona* also presents scenes where women are treated without respect. An example of the latter is a scene (in the part about abortion), where a female gynaecologist humiliates a visibly lower class patient for having abortions instead of using contraceptives and tells the reporter into the camera: “it’s easier for *them* to come for an abortion than other forms of contraception”. What the viewer understands from the scene is up to their sensibilities: the educated woman, who entered the male-dominated medical profession, talking dismissively to her lower-class patient, in repetition of the patient–doctor hierarchies.

In *Ona*, Neda Todorović interviews politicians who are against both first and second wave feminism, reacts to their statements critically, but eventually a few anti-feminist or anti-women opinions are present in each broadcast of the show. The show is balancing between the general prejudice against feminism (a snapshot of which is presented in the episode “Are you a feminist?”), the state’s post-feminism, and the new feminist positions.

SEXUALITY, PORNOGRAPHY AND VIOLENCE ON TV
AND IN *START*, *BAZAR*, *SVIJET*

Engaged or Cynical: Start

Kesić's question in the title of an article: "Isn't pornography cynical?" could be applied to *Start* itself. Besides the pornographic images of women, *Start* (while publishing feminist articles) identified itself as a version of *Playboy*: they translated articles from *Playboy*, and followed the latest news around the American magazine. A curious incident, where positions collided with each other, was the reportage about Christie Hefner, the daughter of the founder of *Playboy* when she took over the magazine. The report presents Christie Hefner's claims to be a feminist and her goal to convince the readers that *Playboy* itself is a feminist enterprise Hefner insists in the report that her company supports feminist foundations (not all of whom accepts the support, though) and the women who work for *Playboy*—their position at the magazine is not specified—have "great opportunities".⁵⁵ Two even more controversial events in the history of *Start* were a series from the memoir of the once famous porn star, Linda Lovelace and the magazine's treatment of Shere Hite. Lovelace's diary caused a major upheaval in the USA, when the former celebrity published her book about the criminal acts and massive violence by which she was forced into the porn industry. Publishing excerpts from the first person narration in a magazine full of pornographic images turns Kesić's question whether pornography is cynical into a feminist meta-question about *Start* as such. It leads back to the question if the feminist publications in *Start* were dismantling the master's house with the master's tools, or this was another case of mass media "absorbing dissent while offering mere appearance of change".⁵⁶

In the case of Shere Hite, the journalist-sociologist who became famous for her book about women's sexuality is equally dubious.⁵⁷ A few weeks after Kesić's interview with her, the other editors published nude images of Hite, with the following comment: "Hite gave an interview to our magazine only after serious hesitation, because she is perseveringly against magazines which publish female nudes", and then comes the explanation: nude photographs of Hite, taken 13 years earlier, were recovered and now, after Hite's interview to *Start*, the magazine "makes some of these photographs available to its readers".⁵⁸ The same year, *Start* wanted to publish Hite's latest success book as a series of articles and asked for the rights from the author. The agency

representing Hite demanded the magazine to apologise for the publication of the nudes, in that case offering the latest book for free. *Start* placed the following text in front of the article series (which they did publish eventually): “This letter from Shere Hite and her representative leave us no choice. We, therefore, apologise for the publication of the unbecoming pictures, and we will not argue too much either in admitting the sexist nature of the small text which we published next to them”.⁵⁹

It is on the pages of *Start* that the feminist reactions on pornography, through the pornography debate in the USA, enter Yugoslavia, the magazine being the only medium at the time where the subject was discussed. The boundaries between sexuality (and a new, non-patriarchal discussion on women’s sexuality, cf. the debate about *sexual revolution* and the article series in *Bazar*), eroticism (e.g. in art) and pornography were often blended. The two feminists from the USA most often present in *Start*, Hite and Steinem, take stand against any form of pornography. Steinem’s statement is quoted in the article about Hefner, published in *Start*: “When reading *Playboy*, I feel like a Jew reading Nazi literature”.⁶⁰ On the local scene, however, the positions vary: Kesić and Drakulić, the two authors most often writing about pornography, take more flexible stands, both of them in their own ways.

The point in common between Kesić and Drakulić was that pornography is a “male genre” and is harmful to women. However, when there is a choice between liberalisation of pornography and banning it, the latter they considered censorship. The Yugoslav context can be rather enlightening here: the state was equally critical of the pornographic or erotic content, as of the introduction of new social movements and ideologies; therefore, the new feminism fell under the same umbrella of control as pornography. It is telling about the readers of *Start* that Kesić used references to Foucault, de Sade, Henry Miller and Passolini, to support her argument, where she clearly differentiated between erotica and pornography. She concluded with reference to the research from the USA that claimed that the rate of rapes was growing and the cases were becoming more violent due to the growing access to pornography.

Drakulić and Kesić were critical of pornography, but not just of that: they found the bourgeois morality similarly oppressing for women, moreover, they saw the roots of pornography in this morality. It is this morality that needs to disappear first. In the article “Isn’t pornography cynical?” Kesić warns about the danger that speaking out against

pornography can push one into the group of “moralising crusaders” who would ban anything with a sexual content. However, the “liberal stance” is “not any less hypocritical”, portraying pornography as something progressive: “By this logic, porn magazines would be the major training ground [*poligon*] for feminism”.⁶¹ As a further twist in the story of pornography and feminism, with its publication of both, *Start* did serve as a “*poligon*” for feminism. Bourgeois morality and hypocrisy are identified as a problem in Drakulić’s argument too, but she comes to her conclusion through the reading of early Marx and not the liberal idea of freedom of speech. What the two authors agree about is that despite its claims, pornography does not turn women into “subjects”.⁶²

Marxist revisionism helped Kesić to make further contributions to the anti-porn argument. Relying on Marcuse and Foucault, she claimed that pornography achieves exactly the opposite of what its promoters advertise; it oppresses and suppresses, and does not liberate even of taboos and hypocrisy.⁶³ She takes an openly feminist stand in her “Isn’t pornography cynical?” and unfolds her argument in agreement with Western (American and Canadian) authors.⁶⁴ In reflection to the accusation of prudery, Kesić adds that “feminists do not put pornography on trial because it shows sex and the human body, but because it does it in an unscrupulous and dehumanised way, usually combined with psychological and physical violence against women”.⁶⁵ The spread of pornography in Yugoslavia is a danger, she concludes, despite what some journalists and intellectuals claim. For example, a Yugoslav journalist, Igor Mandić, known for his anti-feminist articles and belonging to the mainstream, SKJ-accepted line of authors views pornography as liberating, since it is both condemned by the clergy and contributes to the abolition of “the slavery of sexuality imposed by the class-based society”. Drakulić wrote her sarcastic response about the “polygon” in response to his articles.⁶⁶

Drakulić’s most sensitive article vis-à-vis hypocrisy was the one with the title “Men are something different”.⁶⁷ Here, she detects and criticises the pretentiousness of the Yugoslav press policies, which have double standards for male and female nudity, as well as for the nudity of Yugoslav women and women from elsewhere. This hypocrisy reaches so far, that even serious measures of censorship were taken in its name. The actual case Drakulić used as a starting point is the scandal that resulted in an issue of *Polet* withdrawn and destroyed. The Zagreb based youth journal’s nude photograph of the football goalkeeper Miran Šarović was found unacceptable in post-publication censorship. Drakulić contrasted

this case with another case, the nudes of a young Croatian woman, Moni Kovačić published in *Start*. We learn that most of *Start*'s pornographic photographs were acquired from Western agencies, and as Drakulić remarks: "our girls do not get undressed, they are chaste, only the girls in the rotten West do that". The attitude she calls both "petit bourgeois hypocrisy" and patriarchy, prevailing in Yugoslavia in 1980. She is aware, in the meantime, that representing men in nudes would destroy the power imbalance between men and women: "we cannot say that the photo of a naked man is a contribution to the equality of the sexes. But it is not possible to further maintain the old myths when they are collapsing by themselves [...] This case of *Polet* is not about that photo and 10 cm of naked male meat".⁶⁸

Writing an article based on a tribina at SKC Belgrade organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, Kesić reflected on this subject, stating that is not the "15 cm" which creates men's dominance: it is rather "centuries when men were seizing various forms of power and domination".⁶⁹ The source of such domination Kesić locates in the division of the public and the private, and it can be seen in the long history of the male prerogative to speak in public. It has its symbolism, such as the microphone: "the already proverbial prototype of phallic symbols, one of the most effective tools to maintain [dominant] positions".⁷⁰ The dominant position of men defines whose body can be sexually objectified. Kesić is clear about the interrelatedness of a morality which on the surface refuses rape and perversion, but which creates and enables these at the very same time. Kesić joins Drakulić's argumentation, warning that "the *sexual revolution* didn't bring anything new as far as the relation of the sexes [*spol*] is concerned", "erotic" art and media production is "for the need, the will of men". The situation, therefore, cannot be turned upside down, as "those who do not have their own body, do not have their own language either".⁷¹

Curious as feminist participation in *Start* may seem at first, besides the practical reasons (relative intellectual freedom due to financial independence), there is also a discursive motivation: in a magazine publishing pornographic material, the visual and linguistic space opens up for discussing pornography in various ways. In *Start*, pornography was presented as primary content, and this allows for the secondary level discussion about it. We saw that in the case of women's magazines, Neda Todorović calls the intellectual-political articles "alibi-topics", preceding

the fashion–beauty–cooking sections for which the readers in fact buy these magazines. These are an alibi, for making the magazine and its readers look and feel more politically engaged and intellectual. In the case of *Start*, one might wonder if feminism was an alibi for the pornographic and tabloid-like content, or the other way round, these were indeed the price of the necessary compromise to maintain economic and therefore, relative political independence. Either way, as a result, *Start* became a curious mixture of *Ms.* and *Playboy*, two media products that both influenced the magazine and its authors.

Censorship in pornography is a topic around which Kesić and Drakulić were both critical of the radical feminists in the USA, while both authors opposed pornography in principle. They questioned the anti-porn campaign of Catherine MacKinnon's and Andrea Dworkin's Women Against Pornography (WAP), who were, however, influenced by Millet and Firestone, and supported by Steinem, Hite, Adrienne Rich, authors very much valued by feminists in Yugoslavia, including Kesić and Drakulić. The Yugoslav authors were, however, suspicious about what the anti-porn campaign would do to freedom of speech. Drakulić expressed her surprise that not only supported these fellow feminists censorship, but they even accepted the alliance of conservative republicans, who otherwise opposed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the right to abortion, contraception and the equal rights of "homosexuals".⁷² The allies of WAP were those otherwise against feminism, who also considered communism immoral and criminal, wrote Drakulić.

Instead of sexually explicit images as the source of women's subordination and exploitation, in Drakulić's opinion, it is a cultural–social context that ensures women's subordination. She explicates the sources of subordination through the concept of the consciousness industry⁷³: claiming that there indeed is no freedom of speech, which, however, never is an abstract freedom, it is always dependent on the social and cultural context. Pornography, therefore, is no doubt complementary to other forms of repression, but banning it would not help the cause. As feminists, in their promise, do not want to exchange one hierarchy for another, they want "a revolutionary consciousness, way of life, culture, values". Then, in her conclusion, she asks the question deeply rooted in the Yugoslav context: "Does feminism, like all revolutionary movements up to now, go on the road of justifying the means in the name of the envisioned goal?"

Cautiously Radical: Bazar and Ona

The growing self-awareness of feminists in Yugoslavia was plastically traceable on the pages of *Start*. The general critical attitude of the magazine, which was often indeed cynical as well, combined with the explicit visual representation of sexuality opened up the discourse towards feminist discussions. Women's magazines also opened up to feminism, but the genre prescribed and facilitated different realisations. What happens in *Bazar* and *Svijet*, the two magazines with most feminist content, was a more women-centred discourse on women's sexuality, aiming to dismantle the oppressive myths of women's sexuality, including those suggested by the very images in *Start*. Important actors behind the feminist presence in the popular press, like Todorović and Drakulić believed in its crucial role for the promotion of feminism and women's rights.

In support of women learning more about their sexuality, *Bazar* published an article-series with the title "All You Know and Do Not Know about Sex", prepared by Todorović, and mostly based on the work of American sexologists and other experts, for example Shere Hite, Helene Kaplan and Alfred C. Kinsey.⁷⁴ The opening sentence of the series optimistically announced "the end of the era of male sexual rule [*vladavina*]"⁷⁵ This series, based in this respect also on Hite's ideas, identified the centrality of fertility in the patriarchal mainstream discourses on orgasm and menopause.⁷⁶ According to this discourse, measuring women's value by their reproductive capability, women in or after menopause lose femininity and therefore become valueless, their partners may even leave them for a younger partner. To contradict this, the article brings fact and proof from women's experience and new research, claiming that "menopause is just another phase in women's lives and part of their femininity".⁷⁷ What the series elaborates on the most is the different needs of women to enter sexual encounters and to be able to enjoy these in their own way, ignoring prejudice. It is the last article in the series which raises an equally important issue that is part of one's sexual freedom: women's right to say no.⁷⁸ This connects the entire series on women's sexuality to violence against women, thus entering the terrain of anti-violence activism.⁷⁹

The other two sections of *Bazar* to examine more in detail, one on the women's shelters and the advice sections, are much more based on readers' letters than the article series on sexuality, therefore are closer

to the reality of the Yugoslav readers. Sofija Trivunac's advice section ran between May 1983 and May 1986,⁸⁰ the series on women's shelters between 21 June 1985 and 25 October 1985. Sofija Trivunac is a psychologist, important member of the Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group, and as Neda Todorović said, she wanted to have a feminist advisor for the article series "Between Us" [*U četiri oka*].⁸¹ "Between Us" is a classical advice section (the "agony aunt" section) for the readers, which was first introduced by the Zagreb-based magazine *Svijet* [World] in 1958, with the same title "Between Us", in Todorović's words: "establishing a post-war wave of intimate confessions in front of the eyes of the public". Noticing the shift in relation to what can be said in public, she adds: "by this, *Svijet* [and *Bazar*] was becoming more and more similar to the Western women's magazines".⁸² Indeed, the possibility to speak about intimate problems of individuals (moreover, individual women), without revealing the person behind the story, expands the limits of the public sphere in a semi-open socialist society.

The genre of the advice sections in women's magazines consists of two letters: one written by a reader about their problems in their private life, the other is the response of the journalist or psychologist. It lacks interlocution, and the advisor cannot specify or clarify any of the statements of the reader, who in this situation becomes a co-author of the article or section. In this sense, the reader-author exposes her/his intimate problems to the authority of the advisor and to the other readers of the magazine, while she/he does not have the opportunity to react on how their problem is interpreted and presented through the advice-response. On the one hand, in this originally specifically women's genre, there is an empowering capability, as women's problems become public and this publicity is legitimated by the medium that enables it. On the other hand, by the lack of interlocution, the women sharing their private matters with the public are left without opportunity to voice their opinion on the advice from the authoritative advisor. The third aspect is the nature of the letters: the concept behind the advice sections is that the other readers find themselves in the problems presented in the letters and use the advice in their own lives. Therefore, it was an enterprise with huge responsibility and uncontrollable outcome Trivunac took on.

Regardless of the uneven discursive position between advisor and advice-seeker, Trivunac's answers aimed at dissolving many of the misbelief and prejudice about women's sexuality and behaviour. Instead of a

detailed analysis of the 78 pages of correspondence, I focus on the most common elements. There are many questions about sexuality, which reveal traditional relationship structures at the time. Responding to the letters, Trivunac tries to convince women that they are in charge of their bodies and no one else should have control over them. She suggests to the readers of *Bazar* to listen to their instincts and feelings when their partner presses them to have sexual intercourse: it is not women's duty to satisfy their partners' sexual needs. When one of the letter writers complains that her family would not allow her to have premarital sex, Trivunac encourages her to make decisions about her body. She also urges young girls who do not feel safe or loved in their families to become independent, both from their families and from men. Trivunac tells them that they should study and start their own life, while she warns them against marrying young, emphasising that marriage cannot be a solution to their dependence on someone, and it is just another dependence on another person. All in all, Trivunac always promotes the feminist models vis-à-vis the patriarchal system of values and relations.

Bazar's third series I look at, "SOS for Battered Women" [SOS za pretučene žene] was initiated in the light of the plans of the *Žena i društvo* groups of the opening of the first safe shelters and SOS helplines for battered women. The series features activists who founded the SOS helpline and the shelter, for example the activist Vesna Mimica, a ballet dancer who educated herself to proficiency in the field of violence against women and was one of the initiators of the helpline. The series is set up of a variety of materials, from a call to readers to contribute with their own stories, the presentation of the legal background in Yugoslavia, as well as information from the activists who are also experts in the field of violence against women. To engage the readers, *Bazar* started a poll, where the readers were asked to give their opinion if such a house would be required in Belgrade as well. Readers had to fill out a detailed question sheet, where they were asked to describe their experience of domestic violence, what injuries they suffered and if the perpetrators had to face any legal consequences.⁸³ It is here that one of the Zagreb experts, initiators of the helpline and the shelter, Vesna Mimica clearly condemns domestic partnership violence, while also emphasises that it is serious and widespread, affecting all social strata. Domestic violence is a "social crime", "the most brutal violence, which is happening behind closed

doors”.⁸⁴ The same year, in 1985 *Bazar* also publishes a series of readers’ letters about the topic, mostly by women who live in an abusive relationship. These women confirm the need for new forms of help for domestic violence victims: “there would be experts who know what to do”.⁸⁵

When the three series in *Bazar* (“All That You Know and Do Not Know about Sex”, the shelter-series and “Between Us”) thematise crucial feminist issues, the word “feminism” barely ever appears. In one case, it was from the letter of the battering husband whom the articles about the shelters use as a ‘glimpse into the criminal mind’’: “I see that you started to advocate these ridiculous feminist problems [...] this, your poll, I consider the highest brazenness”.⁸⁶ Feminism is presented here through a double mirror: described as something negative from the perspective of someone who beats his wife, in an article series condemning violence against women. However, since the articles do not use the term feminism otherwise and do not connect it explicitly to the struggle for the elimination of violence against women (which connection, as we shall see in Chapter 5, is a strong one), the concept remains foggy at least for the average reader of *Bazar*.

Sexual- and gender-based violence as a topic was gaining growing attention at the time in Yugoslavia, so even the TV show *Ona* had broadcasts about domestic violence, as well as about women’s beauty and its precarious representations,⁸⁷ rape and abortion.⁸⁸ While the policeman interviewed in the part about violence against women admits that when battered women revoke their report the day after the police was called to their house, it is due to their fear of the abusive partner, he attributes violence to drinking, which idea is not refuted. Todorović presents the new law, which may be protective of the women and children with an abusive man in the household: according to this, the parent who has custody of the children gets the apartment. Reacting to this new law and domestic violence, two men from the Centre for Social Work claim that “this is just a form of quarrel, only physical”, and one of them views the new regulation about apartment ownership as unfair, since a man can lose the apartment he worked for thirty years to a woman “who has never worked”. This position is questioned by Todorović, exposing the state institution to a feministically driven criticism. The clearly positive element from the perspective of the spread of feminist ideas in the TV show is Todorović’s position. She is usually supportive and sympathetic towards the victims of violence she interviews, be them rape or domestic violence survivors, representatives of both groups being presented in the show.

CONCLUSION

By the end of the 1980s, feminism in Yugoslavia has reached a multi-faceted and relatively wide audience. The success in terms of the widespread presence was not always a success in content, still, what was certainly achieved here and not in the other media and forums was the opening up towards the private and the everyday life of ordinary women, who read women's magazines, watch TV and write letters to the editor. Crucial topics managed to get onto the agenda of various publicities and basic messages about crucial feminist issues were transmitted. There can be seen an ambivalence between the genres: from this analysis, it seems that while in *Bazar* feminism was opening up towards the private sphere and thus became the personal political, in *Start* even personal stories and matters had to be presented as political in order to be interesting for the editors. The recurrence of certain authors along certain topics shows how interrelated the actors are, but by the wide presence in popular media suggests that these circles were not that closed and exclusive, after all.

A topic that overarches the different media products I have analysed above is the reflections on women and work. For the new Yugoslav feminists, also inspired by different forms of socialism, women's economic independence achieved through work was a central issue. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the double burden and women's access to free time was an equally crucial topic. At the same time, in the anti-feminist discourses in or about popular media, women not working seem to be a shared concern. Maca Jogan sees women's magazines urging women to engage rather in leisurely activities, while the abusive man in *Bazar* legitimises his wife beating by his wife's laziness. In *Ona*, the policeman claims that domestic violence accusations are just an excuse for women to take the apartment away from the man who worked for it. Jovan Đorđević, who appears in one of the *Ona* broadcasts, calls bourgeois women who work in the home exploiters in his book.⁸⁹

The mid- and late 1970s provide a legal and discursive framework for experimentation and criticism. The feminists criticise and question both the state's discourse on women's equality and that of popular culture and the non-feminist subculture about the achieved *sexual revolution*. Even if the language had to be tamed in the women's magazines and on TV, and was constantly questioned and challenged by the other articles in *Start*, a wide audience was reached and the public presence of feminist ideas was paving the way to the activism that was born in the mid-1980s.

NOTES

1. Interview with Neda Todorović (Belgrade, 1 February 2011), Vesna Kesić (Zagreb, 6 March 2014), Slavenka Drakulić (Zagreb, 12 November 2012). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. Pedro Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, in *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, ed. idem (Boulder and London: Westview, 1985), 100–127, 106. Wikipedia, “Start (magazin)”, http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Start_%28magazin%29 (accessed 7 March 2011).
3. I write in detail about the feminist discourse about the sexual revolution here: Zsófia Lóránd, “‘A Politically Non-Dangerous Revolution Is Not a Revolution’—Critical Readings of the Concept of Sexual Revolution by Yugoslav Feminists in the 1970s”, *European Review of History/revue européenne d’histoire*, Vol. 22. No. 1 (2015): 120–137.
4. Vesna Kesić, “Adam u Evinom kostimu” [Adam in Eve’s Costume], *Start*, No. 319, 11 April 1981, 9.
5. Ingrid Šafranek, “‘Ženska književnost’ i ‘žensko pismo’” [“Women’s Literature” and “Women’s Writing”], *Republika*, No. 11–12 (1983): 7–2819.
6. Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Žena i seksualna revolucija” [Women and the Sexual Revolution], *Dometi*, Vol. 2. No. 13 (1980): 45–50, 46. Jasenka Kodrnja has a profound analysis of the concept in her article “Seksualna revolucija (Marginalije na temu)” [Sexual Revolution (Marginalia to the Topic)], *Revija za sociologiju*, Vol. 5. No. 3 (1975): 46–53.
7. Gertrude Joch Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Yugoslavia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c.1977), 55. Further citations of this work are given in the text.
8. Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19. International Centre Against Censorship, 1994), 5.
9. The former People’s Front, the largest mass organisation in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1990, which was overseeing local and specialised organisations, including the youth and the women’s organisations, and, as we have seen, the publishing and editorial boards.
10. Thompson, *Forging War*, 13.
11. See George Schöpflin, *Censorship and Political Communication in Eastern Europe: A Collection of Documents* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, c.1983).
12. Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, 110.
13. Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media*, 25.

14. Ibid., 33.
15. Igor Duda, “What to Do at the Weekend? Leisure for Happy Consumers, Refreshed Workers, and Good Citizens”, in *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Budapest: Central European University Press, c2010), 303–334, 331.
16. Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media*, 33.
17. Ibid., 51.
18. Ibid. Ramet emphasises that Yugoslavia was the only communist country which had tabloid press. He is referring to a research showing that out of the ten papers with the highest circulation, four papers are tabloids, and another two are sports papers and two religious ones; according to this research, only “one prestigious secular paper – *Politika* – ranks in the top ten”. Ramet, “The Yugoslav Press in Flux”, 108.
19. Robinson, *Tito’s Maverick Media*, 51.
20. Đurđa Milanović, “Teze za drugačiji pristup žene i masovnih medija” [Theses to a New Approach to Women and Mass Media], *Žena*, Vol. 38. No. 6 (1980): 2–12; “Prikaz literature o odnosu žene i masovnih medija” [Literature Review About Women and Mass Media], *Žena*, Vol. 38. No. 6 (1980): 32–40.
21. *Žena u borbi* and *Žena danas* were often identifying with feminist aims, in the 1930s even identifying *themselves* as feminist. In 1936, *Žena danas* was even heralding the arrival of *novi feminizam* [new feminism], the struggle of women for their rights. Marija Đorgović, Ana Panić and Una Popović, *Ženska strana/Women’s Corner*. Exhibition catalogue (Belgrade: Muzej savremene umetnosti—Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2010), 52.
22. Neda Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura žensvenosti* [Women’s Press and the Culture of Femininity] (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1987), 12, 59–73, 75–76. Further citations of this work are given in the text.
23. Đorgović, Panić and Popović, *Ženska strana*, 35.
24. Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 78.
25. *Bazar*, No. 261, 25 January 1975, 57.
26. Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 76.
27. This and the next two quotations are all from Maca Jogan, “Konzervativne vrijednosti kao ‘mučne’ istine” [Conservative Values as the “Disturbing” Truth], *Žena*, Vol. 40. No. 2–3 (1982): 53–56, 55.
28. Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 79. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
29. Most mass media products create boundaries along gender lines in order to ensure their target group, which boosts their selling numbers. Besides the traditional division of cooking, fashion and romance for women, sports, adventure and pornography for men, according to John Fiske’s

- analysis, even news shows, are meant rather for men than for women. John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Routledge, 1987), 179. See also: Anne Cronin, "Advertising Difference: Women, Western Europe and the 'Consumer-Citizenship'", in *All the World and Her Husband: Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture*, ed. Maggie Andrews—Mary M. Talbot (London: Cassell, c.2000), 163–176; Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
30. Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, *Smrtni grijesi feminizma*, *Start*, No. 299, 3 July 1980, 33–45. Further citations to this work are given in the text. The article was later published in the volume Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, *Smrtni grijesi feminizma. Ogleđi u mudologiji* [Mortal Sins of Feminism. Essays on Testicology] (Zagreb: Znanje, 1984).
 31. Janice Radway, at around the same time as Drakulić, comes to a similar conclusion in the USA about reading romances having a liberating potential for women. Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).
 32. Amelia Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated. Reading 'Postfeminism' in an Anti-Feminist Age", in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London: Routledge, 2003), 314–329, 326.
 33. Luce Irigaray, "Cosi Fan Tutti", in *This Sex Which Is Not One* [1975], trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 90. Published in Slovenian in *O ženski in ženskem gibanju*, ed. Mojca Dobnikar, quoted in Jones, "Feminism, Incorporated", 326.
 34. Amy Erdman Farrell, *Yours in Sisterhood: Ms. Magazine and the Promise of Popular Feminism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 5. On the history of Ms. magazine and the controversies of creating a commercial feminist magazine see, also Gloria Steinem, "Sex, Lies, Advertising", *Ms.* (July–August 1990) <http://depts.uwc.edu/wmsts/Faculty/steinem.htm> (accessed 15 March 2011) and Mary Thom, *Inside Ms.: 25 Years of the Magazine and the Feminist Movement* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997).
 35. Jelena Zuppa, "Što kaže anketa časopisa Elle o feminizmu?" [What Does the Survey of the Magazine ELLE Tell us About Feminism?], *Žena*, Vol. 36. No. 5 (1978): 67–78.
 36. Farrell, 6. Quoting: Peter Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: America in the 1970s*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990, 35–36.
 37. Ramet, "The Yugoslav Press in Flux", 108.
 38. *Ibid.*, 117. Cf. articles in *Start*, No. 362, 26 March 1983.
 39. Ramet, "The Yugoslav Press in Flux", 108.

40. Vesna Kesić, “Drug-ca” [Comrade-ess], *Start*, No. 256, 15 November 1978, 45–46.
41. Vesna Kesić, “Povijest je muškog roda” [History Has a Male Gender], *Start*, No. 264, 7 March 1979, 40–43.
42. Rosemarie Wittman Lamb, “Feministički novi val” [The Feminist New Wave], *Start*, No. 337, 19 December 1981, 50–53.
43. Steinem interview (No. 390, 31 December 1983), talk with Jong on motherhood and feminism (No. 342, 13 February 1982), Badinter-interview (No. 457, 26 July 1986), de Beauvoir-interview (No. 460, 6 September 1986), Hite-interview (No. 308, 12 November 1980).
44. Vesna Pusić, “Žena i zaposlenje” [The Woman and Employment], *Bazar*, No. 439, 19 November 1981. From her article in *Sociologija*, Vol. 23. No. 3–4 (1981).
45. On this biography, see: Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst & Co., 2002).
46. Besides *Bazar*, the Zagreb-based magazine *Svijet* and the Slovenian *Jana* should be mentioned. *Svijet*, edited by Đurđa Milanović for many years, also published important articles about violence against women and women’s rights. This was the first place where Vesna Mimica, about whom I write more in detail in the next chapter, shared her experience of partnership violence. *Svijet*, 6 July 1984.
Jana, while it mostly published non-feminist, “traditional feminine” (Todorović) content, is interesting for its crossing of boundaries. Maca Jogan, who otherwise is highly critical of women’s magazines, chooses *Jana* to respond to Blaženka Despot’s statements and argue against the legitimacy of feminism in self-managing socialist Yugoslavia. The case is interesting, since an argument for feminism published in a political paper, is refuted in a women’s magazine. Despot, “Feminizirani marksizam”; Maca Jogan, “Ali je posebna ženska organizacija rešitev?” [Is a separate women’s organisation a solution?], *Jana*, Vol. 13. No. 10, 7 March 1984, 6.
47. Duda, “What to Do at the Weekend?”, 317.
48. Ivo Bresan, in *Vjesnik*, 15 April 1989, quoted by Thompson, *Forging War*, 16.
49. Maruša Pušnik, “Flirting with Television in Socialism. Proletarian Morality and the Lust for Abundance”, in *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (Washington, DC: New Academia, 2010), 227–258, 229.
50. Interview with Rada Đuričin, *TV Revija*, 9 March 1979 (SKC Presarijum); Interview with Rada Đuričin, *Novosti*, 9 April 1987 (SKC Presarijum).

51. *Ženski rod, muški rod*, dir. Branka Bogdanov. RTS Archive reference: 172002.
52. *Ona: Ljubav na silu* [Love by Violence], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archive reference: 177951; *Ona: Brak naš nasušni* [Marriage is our Need], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archive reference: 177885; *Ona: Stop za rodu* [Stop to the Stork], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archive reference: 180411; *Ona: Novi muškarac* [New Man], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archive reference: 181889; *Ona: Da li ste feministkinja* [Are You a Feminist?], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1980. RTS Archive reference: 169912.
53. *Ona: Glasam za ženu* [I Vote for Women], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1982. RTS Archive reference: 180386.
54. *Ona: Priča o nerođenom detetu* [A Tale About the Unborn Child], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1979. RTS Archive reference: 180413.
55. Donna Rogers, "Feministkinja na čelu Playboya" [Feminist as the Head of Playboy], *Start*, No. 351, 3 July 1982, 70–71.
56. Carroll quoted by Farrell.
57. The first "Hite Report", a sociological, content-centred qualitative analysis was about women's sexuality and came out in 1976 in the USA, and was almost immediately reviewed in Yugoslavia, for example in the magazine *Start*. It was followed by a series of other "reports" about male sexuality and the family. Shere Hite, *The Hite Report: A Nationwide Study on Female Sexuality* (New York: Macmillan, c.1976).
58. "Žena bez odjeće" [Woman Without Clothes], *Start*, No. 315, 14 February 1981, 4.
59. "Sve o snošaju. The Hite Report on Male Sexuality" [Everything About Sexuality], *Start*, No. 329, 29 August 1981, 84.
60. Rogers, "Feministkinja na čelu Playboya", 70–71.
61. Slavenka Drakulić, "Dugi rat nage Venere" [The Long War of the Naked Venus], *Start*, No. 303, 3 September 1980, 18–20, 18.
62. Vesna Kesić, "Nije li pornografija cinična?" [Isn't Pornography Cynical?], *Start*, No. 355, 28 August 1982, 74–75.
63. Vesna Kesić, "Kako svući pornografiju" [How to Undress Pornography], *Start*, No. 294, 30 April 1980, 18–19.
64. There are no names mentioned in this article, they are "a group of American authors" and the director of the movie *Not a Love Story*, the Canadian Bonnie Sher Klein.
65. Vesna Kesić, "Nije li pornografija cinična?", 75.
66. Drakulić, "Dugi rat nage Venere", 18.
67. Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, "Muški su nešto drugo" [Men are Something Different], *Start*, No. 293, 16 April 1980, 66–67.

68. Ibid.
69. Vesna Kesić, “Simpoziji o seksu” [Symposium About Sex], *Start*, No. 375, 4 June 1983, 7.
70. Kesić, “Simpoziji o seksu”, 7.
71. Kesić, “Adam u Evinom kostimu”, 9.
72. This and the quotations in this paragraph are all from: Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, “Pornografija u novoj prohibiciji” [Pornography in a New Prohibition], *Start*, No. 419, 9 February 1985, 68–70.
73. See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *The Consciousness Industry: On Literature, Politics and the Media*, trans. Michael Roloff (New York: Continuum Books, Seabury Press, 1974). The crucial text here was first published in German in 1970 with the title “Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien” [Building Blocks to a Media Theory].
74. Lóránd, “A Politically Non-Dangerous Revolution”.
75. “Potrebna je samo ljubav” [All That’s Needed Is Love], *Bazar*, No. 433, 27 August 1981, 60.
76. The research of Alfred C. Kinsey and Masters and Johnson: Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Female* (1953), William G. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (1966) and *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970). These works contributed to the “normalisation” of public discussion about non-procreative acts of sexuality, like homosexuality, premarital sex, masturbation. See also Ute Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution. Second-Wave Feminism and the Writing of American Sexual Thought 1920–1982* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 51–80.
77. “Nikad nije kasno” [It Is Never too Late], *Bazar*, No. 439, 19 November 1981, 58–59.
78. “Ka novoj polnosti” [To the New Sexuality], *Bazar*, No. 440, 8 December 1981, 60–61.
79. See Lydia Sklevicky, “Kad žena kaže ‘NE’ to znači ‘NE!’” [If a Woman Says “No”, It Means “No!”], *Pitanja*, Vol. 9. No. 8 (1977): 15–18.
80. *Bazar*, No. 479, 27 May 1983—No. 557, 23 May 1986. The section was always on inside of the back cover of the magazine.
81. Interview with Neda Todorović, 1 February 2011, Belgrade.
82. Todorović, *Ženska štampa*, 80.
83. Vesna Mimica, “SOS za pretučene žene. Za azil ili ne?” [SOS for Battered Women. For Shelters or Against?], *Bazar*, No. 533, 21 June 1985, 35.
84. “SOS for Battered Women”, *Bazar*, No. 542, 25 October 1985.
85. “SOS for Battered Women”, *Bazar*, No. 536, 2 August 1985.
86. “SOS for Battered Women”, *Bazar*, No. 536, 2 August 1985.
87. *Ona: Žena iz oglasa* [Women from the Advertisement], ed. Isidora Sekulić and Mića Uzelac, 1979. RTS Archive reference: 180410.

88. *Ona: Brak naš nasušni; Ona: Ljubav na silu; Ona: Priča o nerođenom detetu.*
89. Jovan Đorđević, "Marksizam i žene" [Marxism and Women], in *Žensko pitanje: antologija marksističkih tekstova* [The Women's Question: An Anthology of Marxist Texts], ed. idem (Beograd, Radnička štampa, 1975), 5–122, 75.



Reorganising Theory: From Kitchen Tables to the Streets, from Theory to Activism

Biljana Kašić: *“It was a ballet dancer, Vesna Mimica, who gave her first testimony about her abuse. Around 1986 we started a feminist discussion group, which was a completely new thing. It was like a consciousness raising group, but there were also theoretical discussions—I remember that Vlasta Jalušić gave a talk about Hegel and Marxism. (...) Some academic feminists felt obliged to support other women, for example Lydia Sklevicky, Rada Iveković, Andrea Feldman. We were not in the front-line and did not do as much as other members, such as Katarina Vidović, but we were there. It was Vesna Mimica, who did our instruction, since none of us had any idea of how to deal with the SOS hotline, and then we started with a very serious self-education. In order to protect the women victims of male violence, we had very strict rules. This filtered out a lot of women—they either did not agree or the training was too much for them. We also had a debate with the victimologists: we wanted to help the victims or women survivors, and not search for the reasons of their victimisation in them. The other big debate was about men: if we should support men and families on this hotline or not. There was no doubt that women were a central focus for us and it was a clear feminist policy that women were those who deserved our unconditional support and this was a helpline working on feminist principles. With the help and support from the women in Belgrade and Ljubljana, the Zagreb SOS started in March 1988 as the first SOS hotline for women in the socialist/communist countries.”*

Vera Litričin: *“No one thought first that the SOS would bring anything new into this society, people were convinced that beating women and children is just part of the mentality here. (...) I think we succeeded in setting up the*

SOS Hotline, because the politicians thought it was nothing; if they allowed it, then women will leave them alone.”

Gordana Cerjan-Letica: *“First I was approached by women travelling in Europe, from the US; they were Quakers, and they mentioned a woman from the US embassy who organised a consciousness raising group. I asked Lydia [Sklevicky], because we were friends, to come with me so we joined the group. This was a very important personal experience, a first hand feminist experience for both of us. The feminism was more radical in this group, not moderate, but very good for me. We were discussing patriarchy as the enemy, women’s reproductive rights, orgasm, sexuality, and contraception.”*

Mojca Dobnikar: *“Vesna Mimica came to Ljubljana in 1987 to tell her story. The SOS hotline was founded in 1989, the state youth organisation gave us some money, and they also gave us an office. The phone was not free, initially, but then it was. They had a lot of help from the Zagreb women at the beginning. Later even a policewoman and the prosecutor joined them, who were not feminists, but had a lot of legal knowledge. I think it is interesting in Slovenia that many feminist theoreticians were afraid of going in this direction of violence against women, as we would represent women as victims, and they saw a danger in this. They invited all the feminists in Ljubljana for the first meeting of the SOS group in January 1989, but only Milica Antić came. She said she would not work on the helpline, but she was happy to provide research if needed.”*

Lepa Mladenović: *“On the last day of the Yugoslav feminist meeting in Ljubljana, in 1987, we suddenly decided to make a final document. We named the issues to work on – it was our pledge to ourselves, to our feminist community. We didn’t want to accuse anyone and we didn’t ask the state for anything. To me, what mattered was that I gave my word to my group about the feminist political tasks I would take responsibility for.”¹*

As Ingrid Šafranek said in a text I quote in Chapter 3, she was sorry for having encountered feminism first through literature and not through feminist politics. Feminist politics and feminist activism became central in the work of the Yugoslav feminists in the 1980s. The idea that the personal is political took the group(s) and the women and a couple of men in the groups, on a journey to grassroots activism and politics on the streets. By focusing more and more on the experiences of individual women, the new Yugoslav feminists criticised the state’s shortcomings when it came to women’s equality from a new basis. They organised their

work increasingly around the topics of violence against women (VaW) and women's health, which was both inspired by feminist movements and ideas elsewhere and connected the new Yugoslav feminists to several feminist groups and networks worldwide. In this chapter, I reconstruct this transfer of feminist academic knowledge into activism and the influence of the activist work on the academic discourse, and show how this phase of feminist organising is a prelude to the anti-war feminist activism of the 1990s.

The shift towards activism, or as often called by its protagonists, the "second wave" of new Yugoslav feminism, took place around 1985–1986. It shared elements of the emergence of a new civil society in the region, as the political landscape in Yugoslavia and the entire region of Eastern Europe was changing. The languages of human rights and democracy were slowly entering the Yugoslav discourse, and the feminists had their own conceptual input into this. The feminist groups, in the meantime, were taking steps to institutionalise and organise themselves across Yugoslavia in a more effective way, within the frames of "all-Yugoslav" feminist meetings, the first one of which took place in Ljubljana in 1987. While there was an effort to formally tighten the connections between the already interwoven groups in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade, and slowly in Novi Sad, the groups, themselves, were becoming more diverse internally. Finally, the lesbian group members were gaining more and more voice, which led to a significant restructuring of the *Žena i društvo* groups and definitely gave it new energies. In the meantime, work in criminology, psychology and sociology proved to be a discursive foundation for the new and growing activism. As for the sources and the methodology of this chapter, it should be emphasised that as there is a shift in the activities of the feminists towards activism, there also is a shift in the focus on the sources: archival materials and the interviews with the participants are at least as interesting here as are the academic publications.

The meetings of the Yugoslav feminists, who had been in contact with each other from the beginning, as the previous chapters show, happened on the one hand within the framework of the academic intensive courses of the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik and within the framework of the Yugoslav Feminist Meetings. In Dubrovnik, there were courses about the women's question already in 1976, with international and Yugoslav participants, and the first feminist course took place in 1986, followed by three others up until 1990.² The all-Yugoslav feminist meetings came

almost ten years after the *Drug-ca* conference in Belgrade in 1978 and were clearly influenced by the new, more activist way of organisation of the *Žena i društvo* groups. The first took place in Ljubljana in 1987 and the next in Zagreb in 1988, and then, in 1990, there was a meeting in Belgrade and in 1991 again in Ljubljana. The themes of the 2- to 3-day-long meetings focused mostly on the feminist *movement* in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, VaW, health, lesbian identities, the right to abortion and the dangers of population policies.³ This was, moreover, a time for the feminists to travel more to international women's meetings and workshops, emerging in the framework of the globalising women's movement, for example around "women and health" events. The organisational and gender change in the groups was accompanied by a self-periodisation of the Yugoslav feminists: the time of turning to activism was considered the "second wave" of new Yugoslav feminism.

As the most important achievements of the feminists in Yugoslavia at the time, the Zagreb SOS helpline started to work in 1988, followed by the one in Ljubljana in 1989 and eventually, in Belgrade in 1990. While planning and organising the helplines, the Belgrade group also organised an *Akciona anketa* [action research], to gain insight into women's lives in Yugoslavia through experiences which were not previously discussed. The polls in three subsequent years (1986–1988) were organised around three topics, closely related to each other: women's dissatisfaction with men (1986), solidarity among women (1987) and women's health and VaW (1988). The answers provided valuable material for the work thereafter, as new knowledge produced not in academia, but in the activist scene. This new knowledge resulted in a call for more activism. The members of the *Žena i društvo* groups both learned and created knowledge about VaW, as well as founded new organisations to help victims of VaW and to change the circumstances. In the words of Mary E. Hawkesworth about feminist activism becoming global from the 1970s on: "activists who seek to promote change through information politics require knowledge that can challenge factual claims, issue frameworks, moral arguments, and perceptions of political significance. Feminist research centres played a crucial role in transnational activism, producing knowledge that activists can deploy in their work".⁴

In Yugoslavia, organising aimed at reaching out to the broader population meant entering a new level, one which clashed more with the state's sphere of influence and which presented the possibility of a larger scale grassroots organising. Women's health was an important,

even if not the only theme which contributed to the questioning of discourse and the reinterpretation of concepts, and through these gave way to political action. It also helped women rethink the ways they organised. It was also the issue, with its broader field, VaW, around which the feminists could connect, not just in Western countries. So, the new Yugoslav feminists, after having their Western network (the “Sisterhood is Global” network, for example, was still a largely West-centred one, where the other countries seemed rather exotic, see Chapter 1), had a chance for real cooperation, independently from the state, with women from “Third World” countries, including women from the countries within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

THE “SECOND WAVE” OF NEW YUGOSLAV FEMINISM

What took place earlier, in the private or semi-private, such as Mirjana Ule’s kitchen table in Ljubljana, the SKC *tribine* in Belgrade or the *Žena i društvo* Zagreb seminars, prepared the participants for activism in the public sphere. If the academic work was a preparation of a feminist language, the *tribine*, seminars and informal talks were a scene of activist socialisation, and the women-only groups became a nest for explicit political participation. As Vera Litričin remembers it:

We were learning a feminist language. At the beginning, I was always rethinking my sentences, asking myself the question: ‘what would this mean in the vocabulary of feminism?’ It was not just words we were translating, it was thoughts.

As an ophthalmologist, Vera Litričin came from the medical profession, and only when joining the feminist group did she realise the ideological biases of the so-called objective scientific knowledge the medical school endowed her with. Vera Litričin was not the only one in the feminist groups who was confronted with the conflicts between their lives outside the feminist group and the feminist principles they were acquainted with, and which inspired them for further thinking and further action (Fig. 5.1).

Around 1985–1986, the meetings became more focused on the personal experiences and the possibility of translating these into political activism. There was growing interest in activism, and through travels and fellowships, several women in and around the feminist circles were inspired

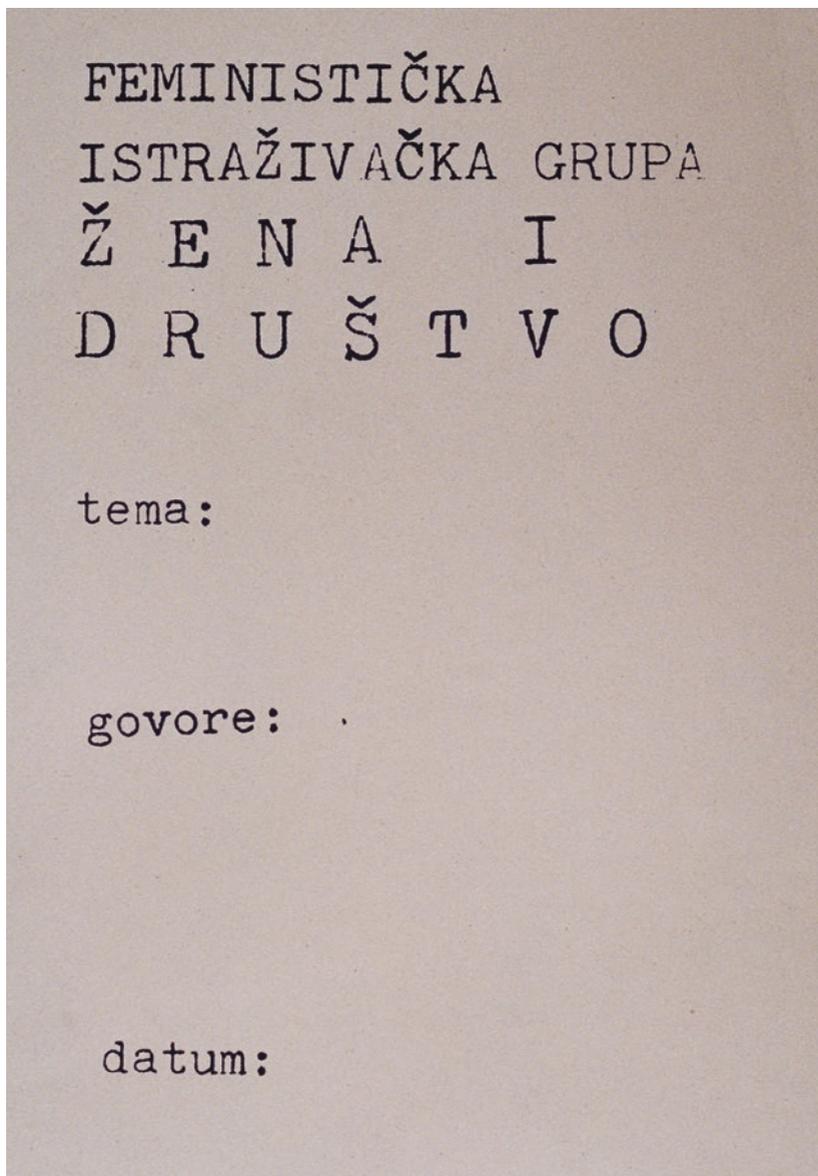


Fig. 5.1 The general poster of the *tribine* in the SKC Belgrade (Courtesy of the SKC Archives)

by the example of Western feminist grassroots organising against VaW and in the field of women's health. One of the major driving forces behind the changes was Lepa Mlađenović from Belgrade, a psychologist by training. She participated in a women's health workshop in 1985, which was her first women-only group experience, and this convinced her that such a format secures the learning environment significantly better than a mixed group.⁵ In the Belgrade group, she suggested sessions for women only, which were also meant to be the core activities for the group. The vote for women-only groups made some women leave, while others joined and some former group members started to voice their opinions more often in the environment they felt to be safer, according to Lina Vušković.⁶ Some of the men who had participated in the meetings before were leftist intellectuals, many of whom were in relationships with the feminist women in the group. Their paths crossed again, when the feminists in Belgrade stepped to the forefront of anti-war activism, as some of these men became important members of the anti-nationalist opposition to Milošević in the 1990s.

The creation of the women-only groups, as much as it pushed forward the feminist thinking and organising, was seen as a rather controversial event. Lina Vušković emphasises that there were some men genuinely interested in feminism attending the meetings, like Ivan Vejvoda and Nebojša Popov. She added that Vejvoda's dissertation was about the changes in the marriage law after the French revolution, and we have seen his work on early feminist issue of *Student* which he edited with Žarana Papić in the previous chapters of this book. However, even men committed to feminism tended to dominate the discussions, as Lepa Mlađenović remembers: "By this time, when I discovered the method 'workshop of experience', I was sick of the repetitiveness of our discussions". The participation of men was a matter of debate between the Ljubljana group members too, as it is recalled by Mojca Dobnikar. As I mention earlier in this book, the Ljubljana group's first big public event was a women-only party, a huge success with hundreds of guests. There was no such change in the Zagreb group. During our interviews, Vesna Kesić and Nadežda Čačinovič talked more in detail about their experience with the men in the group, which was mixed and depended on the individuals. As Kesić says: "This is what I learned from the women who came to *Drug-ca*: don't let men talk in your name".⁷ It should be added that while the Belgrade group created the women-only sessions, there were still several public events at the SKC about feminism that were open to everyone.

These memories about the male critical intellectuals are interesting especially in the wider context of the gender dynamics of East Central European dissent and dissidence. Women and feminism were mostly on the margins of the dissenting and dissident groups (see the Czechoslovak case),⁸ and even women's active roles and importance were silenced for a long time, such as in the case of Solidarność in Poland (see Shana Penn).⁹ In Yugoslavia, besides men not taking feminist concerns seriously or impeding the development of discussions by repeating the same comments over and over again, which Mladenović, Kesić and Vušković all emphasised, sometimes their concerns originated from an "objectively" ideal type of academia and politics. For both men and women, it seemed to have been difficult to give up on the idea that men and women should work together for the *općeljudske emancipacije*, the general human emancipation, promoted by the Yugoslav socialist regime. The creation of the feminist women-only groups was a challenge to this idea in a practical manner, after having challenged it in theory.

THE LESBIAN INFLUENCE WITHIN NEW YUGOSLAV FEMINISM

The lesbian feminist movement became stronger and eventually occupied a crucial space within the feminist organising. The Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group from this point on was a mixed group of lesbian and straight women.¹⁰ In Ljubljana, from the feminist group Lilit (founded in 1985), the LL, Lezbična Lilit was founded in 1987. Lesbians were members of the Lilit group from the beginning: they tried to organise a lesbian subgroup in 1985, but there were not enough lesbians at that time who were ready to expose themselves in this sense, according to Mojca Dobnikar. In Zagreb, the lesbian group founded in 1989 got the name *Lila inicijativa* [Lila Initiative]. In the Slovenian lesbian feminist history, this was the first wave of the lesbian movement, followed by a second one in 1990 with the foundation of the Roza club and the magazine *Revolver*. It should be emphasised that in Ljubljana, there were lesbian events taking place from 1984 on, within the gay festival organised by Magnus, the gay section of ŠKUC. The festival always included lesbian programs, such as talks, films, exhibitions. Another significant difference is that in Slovenia, the lesbian and the feminist movement developed side by side. LL was in touch with the other feminist and lesbian groups, including the feminist group Trešnjevka in Zagreb and had a strong presence at the first all-Yugoslav feminist conference in Ljubljana in 1987.

Lesbianism and LGBT rights have been appearing in the artistic and academic publications and works during the entire history of new Yugoslav feminism. However, this has not been spelled out as clearly as in the second half of the 1980s and has not always been attached to the concepts and ideas central to Yugoslav feminism. It was in Slovenia, on the pages of the critical youth journal *Mladina*, that the first special issue on lesbian identities was published in 1987, connecting lesbian identity and the feminist movement and with a front page portraying two kissing women holding two female signs. However, as early as 1985, the feminist issue of the same supplement of *Mladina*, *Pogledi*, included a translated text by Anne Koedt about the lesbian movement as the radical avant-garde of feminism.¹¹ The new, Belgrade-based journal *Potkulture*, that is “Subcultures”, came out with an issue full of texts about the LGBTQ movements and identities. These were mixed with articles about elderly people as an endangered group (a sign of the problems with the entire social welfare system in socialist Yugoslavia), but also had a report from the feminist polling project *Akciona anketa* I analyse below. The publications also show that the gay movement stood on more solid ground for a bit longer period of time and that the lesbians could rely on them.

In *Potkulture*, Đorđe Čomić created a list of possibilities for advice and advocacy centres for gay men, as well as a list of the gay clubs in Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb.¹² While outing these places, the article asserted that there is growing acknowledgement and legal liberalisation in the SFRJ for LGBTQ people.¹³ In this issue of *Potkulture*, the only article about lesbian identity was a text by Slađana Marković about lesbian literature (see Chapter 2).¹⁴ The entire issue, however, suggested a new language of and about gay men. The Canadian sociology professor and gay rights activist John Allen Lee’s article spoke about the political stakes of choosing between the concept of gay and homosexual, and the French sociologist Michael Pollak about the changes of self-perception and social perception of gay men in the USA and Western Europe.¹⁵ Tomaž Rudolf, a gay rights activist in Slovenia stated later, gays, unlike homosexuals, “are aware of their identity, they cultivate it, they are active on the gay (or ‘their’) scene, they are acquainted with gay culture and approachable”.¹⁶

As for lesbian women, the 1987 *Pogledi* supplement of *Mladina* strove to dispel prejudice against lesbian women. Most of the prejudice they targeted was sexist and misogynic, including that which presupposes

that only men can be “homosexual”, as well as the negation of lesbian sexuality through the claim that it is only ugly women disappointed in men.¹⁷ The authors of the special issue, only marked by first names, countered the prejudice by explaining that lesbianism had always been present in human history, that around 5–10% of women are lesbians, and that neither homosexuality nor lesbianism is a disease. The outdatedness of the concept of “mandatory heterosexuality” is explained.¹⁸ The authors demanded equal rights for lesbian women, the end of discrimination against and criminalisation of homosexuality, the right to sexual education which is not heterosexist (another term which is new in the Yugoslav public discourse) and in general, the right to one’s control over their own bodies, claims shared with the feminist movement. The articles in the special issue relied to a large extent on the knowledge and demands of international feminist networks, such as ILIS (International Lesbian Information Service) and COC Amsterdam (*Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum* [Center for Culture and Leisure]), probably the oldest LGBT organisation in the world, founded in 1946. This is another sign of the growing integration of the Yugoslav feminist and lesbian movement into a globalising movement, while support of Amnesty International, published in the same journal issue, signaled the integration of these into a broader human rights agenda.

WOMEN’S HEALTH IN YUGOSLAV PUBLICATIONS BEFORE THE FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

Socialised medicine in many ways brought progress to the socialist states in post-World War II Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia included. However, similarly to second wave feminists in the West, the Yugoslav feminists in the 1970s–1980s and other East European women’s groups in the 1990s and 2000s increasingly pointed out that state implemented modernisation takes its toll on the patients’ autonomy. The strong hierarchical doctor–patient relationship was not so different in the decentralised and market-oriented, capitalist system and the centralised, command economy, state-socialist systems.¹⁹ What may be important to mention about Yugoslavia, in order for the reader to understand the context with which the Yugoslav feminists argued, is that while it claimed a self-managing stance to socialised medicine too, “despite social ownership, the way the Yugoslav health care system was financed and organised was not much

different from that of countries having a national health care service”, on the one hand.²⁰ On the other hand, the resources were not allocated equally between the member states: there were “significant differences in income, per capita expenditures on health and welfare, and in the distribution of physicians and hospital beds”.²¹ Moreover, according to research in the 1970s and 1980s, the community and the consumers had little influence on health planning.²²

While the authoritarianism of the health care systems in socialist regimes was often associated with “Sovietisation” and the authoritarian nature of these political systems, especially after 1989, the situation is more complex than that. The ideological roots of socialised medicine share several aspects of many Western health care systems.²³ The ideas of the German hygienists of the nineteenth century were just as influential in the socialist systems as Marxism.²⁴ The Marxian influence was about accessibility: “the introduction of socialism, therefore, would permit (in contrast to capitalism) the creation of social and economic conditions that would greatly limit illness and premature mortality”.²⁵ In the light of this, as in many other cases of women’s rights, the feminist critique targeted the shortcomings of the socialist promise and not its principles themselves. However, the aim to create a health care system equally accessible to everyone brought along a centralisation that over rode already existing forms of health care provision. In the Soviet system’s ideational background, this local tradition was identified as “the populist tradition of *zemstvo* (land) medicine”.²⁶ Despite the mixture of “scientific medicine” and “*zemstvo* medicine”, when it came to actors and healing practices, the centralised medical model prevailed over the local knowledge of healers and especially midwives. Midwifery and the way the medicalised approach to childbirth affected women became issues in several feminist discussions in Yugoslavia.²⁷

The socialist modernisation of the health care system and the women’s emancipation policies included advice literature on women’s health, which, however, often turned into advice to women about the health of their families. Therefore, the double burden was reaffirmed and became more and more dominant over the decades in this literature. It aimed to ensure better health conditions for women and was thus empowering, while it also placed women in the traditional position of mothers and housewives. The books I analyse below were preceded by advice sections in the journal *Žena u borbi*, the AFŽ leaflets as well as AFŽ

publications: a booklet by Janja Herak Szabo with the title *Higijena žene u trudnoći, porođaju i babinjama*,²⁸ republished in 1961 and followed by a similar one with the title *Higijena žene sa naročitim osvrtom na higijenu i ishranu za vreme trudnoće* written by Milica Bošković.²⁹ *Higijena žene* from 1959 was written by a man, Blagoje Stambolović,³⁰ and in the 1970s, we have both a Yugoslav publication, *Žena i dom* by Živka Vidojković, and a translated one by Mary Senechal.

Both *Higijena žene* by Stambolović and *Žena i dom* by Vidojković were printed on cheap paper and with almost no illustrations—apart from not very alluring black and white drawings of women’s reproductive organs. Both books follow the line which placed women’s reproductive function in the centre of their health and therefore concluded that this shall define a larger part of their lives. *Žena i dom* dedicated the book to women, that is to: “spouses, mothers and women who care about their health and beauty”. *Higijena žene* defined motherhood as the “main natural task of women” [glavni prirodni zadatak žene, emphasis mine]. Both books had blurbs that emphasised beauty and offered sufficient information on contraception. Stambolović’s *Higijena žene* even provided information about heterosexual sexual intercourse. Neither of the books discussed abortion though, despite the fact that it was legal and widespread in Yugoslavia. The third book, *Guarding Your Family’s Health* by Mary Senechal, was a translation, printed with colour photo illustrations on glossy paper. The idea here, too, was that nothing is more important to a woman than the health of her family. Only the last chapter reminded the reader: “Don’t forget about yourself!” The latter book’s language and design represented a different, more colourful and attractive atmosphere, while the message was probably even more conservative than those of the two other books.

Women’s right to sexual pleasure and fulfilment in these publications was either not discussed at all, or if it was, it was represented as something accessible: in *Higijena žene*, the author quotes statistics of women’s orgasm during sexual intercourse with a man they are married to. The more progressive statements included those that frigidity as lack of orgasm may not be the fault of the woman, but her partner’s lack of ability to please her. Stambolović also provided an overview of women’s orgasm. Meanwhile, the author suggested that “women with normal sexual sensitivity experience orgasm during all, or almost all sexual intercourse”.³¹ This presupposition implied that still, women’s ability

to reach orgasm is a proof of their “normal” sexuality, which excluded non-heterosexual women from the sphere of normality. It also positioned orgasm not as something depending on both partners but as an objective factor of women’s normality.³² Reproduction was another theme where various crucial aspects are left in the dark. Control over reproduction was not presented as a right, and apart from contraception, which was there, almost all other angles are missing: abortion, as I mention above, but also pregnancy and the rights of the pregnant woman who wants to keep her child. This involves one’s right to access health care and sufficient nutrition during the pregnancy, but also the right to have control over one’s body during pregnancy and during labour. The latter is restricted in the medicalised birth model, part of the achievements of socialist modernisation and socialised health care.

THE FEMINIST DEMAND OF A NEW, FAIR PSYCHOLOGY

Neither of these books touches upon women and psychological problems, and even less on the issue of VaW, It was the new Yugoslav feminists who connected these subjects. Vera Smiljanić emphasised the social roots of seemingly psychological differences between men and women,³³ Sofija Trivunac opened a feminist psychology praxis in 1985,³⁴ while Lepa Mladenović was highly influenced by the Democratic Psychiatry movement in Italy and so-called anti-psychiatry in Britain. On the one hand, Mladenović became increasingly aware of the violent nature of psychiatric institutions and how the critical theories of oppression are helpful in challenging these. On the other hand, she realised that women’s health, women’s psychiatric diseases and VaW are deeply interconnected. Both the Democratic Psychiatry movement and anti-psychiatry implied that the institution of psychiatry is totalitarian, violent and it does not heal, but rather, it hurts the mentally different. It is important to emphasise that in relation to the wide and complex set of approaches, schools and texts of the field of anti-psychiatry, Mladenović’s focus was on the more humane treatment of psychiatric patients. The motivation behind this is her personal experience of a friend of hers getting into a mental hospital, where Mladenović, a student of psychology, saw how repressive that system was: “And then you are thinking how is it possible that all these systems are based on the wrong premises”. After this happened, in 1976, she went to Italy, and she volunteered at the alternative

psychiatric centres and the transformed psychiatric hospitals. This was right after the changes introduced in Italy in 1978 by the “Law 180” which abolished psychiatric hospitals in Italy and replaced them with a complex system of mental health units. It was Franco Basiglia, an Italian psychiatrist at the forefront of the changes which Mladenović described in detail in her interview in the students’ newspaper *Glas omladine* in 1987³⁵ and which she remembers later:

To me it was fantastic, a new revolution, here was a social movement that changed the power order of society. I tried to change things here too, so in 1982 I organised a big conference here, with the leading figures from Europe. And then nothing. We couldn’t change the institutions, there was no one with power from the inside. (...) They [the anti-psychiatry groups and people in Italy] were not sensitive to feminist issues, so I also had quarrels with them. The two movements never were together.

The critical attitude against those in power determining who counts as normal and therefore a citizen with full rights, was a motivation behind both her feminism and her work in psychiatry, and the experience with the latter clearly influenced the former (Fig. 5.2).³⁶

Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, whose book about VaW I analyse in detail later in this chapter, gives a critical analysis of psychoanalytical theories by two of the most important figures in the renewal of psychoanalysis from a women’s and feminist perspective.³⁷ She contrasts the Freudian theory of Helene Deutsch about women’s passivity and masochism with the critique of Karen Horney. It is Deutsch’s approach to women as inately masochistic that gets the most criticism, reflecting on which Horney argues that masochism is not biologically determined, women are not masochists “by nature”: it is a result of the expectations and the abuse they face (8–10). Nikolić-Ristanović supports her arguments against blaming women for their abuse on their masochism by referring to Horney’s explanation of women’s victimisation by women’s dependent position: “the emphasis on their physical weakness and inferiority” and the presumption that “it is in their nature that they rely on others and that their life has a meaning only according to others (family, husband children)”. (10) It is the social factors behind women’s oppression, which, Horney identifies as “dependency”, that are crucial for Nikolić-Ristanović’s claim that women are victimised on various levels in society simply for being women.



Fig. 5.2 Lepa Mladenović. Photographer: Haya Shalom

TO THE GLOBAL WOMEN'S HEALTH MOVEMENT THROUGH WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women's health and feminist approaches to psychology were the subject of publications before VaW and served as a preparatory theme to VaW. Leslie Doyal, a professor of health care policies published *The Political Economy of Health* in Slovenian in 1985.³⁸ In her book *What Makes Women Sick*, Doyal saw the potential of "the participation of feminists in a wider, new, global health movement [...] to de-universalise the Western approach",³⁹ that is, to legitimise other approaches to health than

the model of organised medicine and to broaden the meaning of health to include other aspects of the human life. The Western biomedical model (discussed above) not only “separates the individuals from their wider, social environment” (15), it is also organised according to power relations along the lines of gender (16–17).⁴⁰ While women’s “potential for biological reproduction is what separates women’s health needs most clearly from those of men” (24), this difference was subsumed to the patriarchal hierarchies and overshadowed other differences between women and men, precisely due to the exclusion of the social and the mental as crucial factors affecting the health of the individual. Health care issues discussed from a feminist perspective have been one of the major driving forces behind women’s movements from the early times of the movement. Through the matters of health, networks of women’s health opened up for the Yugoslav feminists, and especially for the women in the Belgrade group, which shaped the groups and their focus to a large extent.

In retrospect, Gordana Cerjan-Letica said: “a friend gave me the first copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS). I saw how a women’s movement can be organised along the issue of women’s health, this book was very important to me”. Although she saw the potential, and she herself even participated in a consciousness raising group at the US embassy in Zagreb with Lydia Sklevicky, it took some time for the Yugoslav feminists to share their interest in women’s health. Nevertheless, Cerjan-Letica, during her time as editor of the journal *Žena*, published several translations of feminist articles about women’s health critical of the status quo which were valid in the Yugoslav context too.

That women’s health was a ground for building a movement was not only the idea of Gordana Cerjan-Letica, but also the experience of Lepa Mladenović. Beyond her encounter with anti-psychiatry, the formative momentum was a workshop organised by the feminist group ISIS in Switzerland in 1985. ISIS or Isis International (the group changed its name from time to time, originally taking it from the Egyptian goddess Isis) “began when a group of feminist activists from different countries and regions, working on the burning issues affecting women around the world, started communicating with each other. (...) We began as a small collective of women, gathering information from local groups and the feminist movement and sharing it through the *Isis International Bulletin* and resource guides. We also organized some of the first international

feminist meetings, all of this on a shoestring budget, powered by the energy of women and feminist activists around the world”.⁴¹

Isis started an exchange programme for women activists from different parts of the world in the early 1980s.⁴² The study visit lasted for 3 months. During the first month fifteen women from five continents sat together day by day to talk to each other about their lives. Mladenović recalls this as a life-changing event for her:

This changed my life, it was the first time I could really think about myself. Because usually you don't have time to think about yourself, you can't get rid of this judging eye of patriarchy watching you. And then there you are, for 24 hours a day with women from Nicaragua, South Africa, China, Kenya, Paraguay. In South Africa, there was still apartheid. I think we always wanted to have women—only groups within *Žena i društvo*, we just didn't know how. Here I learned how to facilitate discussions where we exchanged experiences.

In the group in Switzerland, the participants talked a lot about sexuality, violence and health, and came to the conclusion that “health is everything, in a way”. More precisely, in its interconnectedness with other aspects of women's rights and women's oppression in patriarchy.

The issues raised by the women's health movement could gain traction in a more radical and interactive way through the *tribine*, the discussion series in the SKC Belgrade. The events in March-April 1986 were mostly women-only events due to the sensitive topics. Though we lack the transcripts of the meetings, the titles of the talks reveal the main stream of thought of these. To start, Lepa Mladenović talked about “the feminist approach to women's health” in general, followed by Gordana Cerjan-Letica's provocative title, “Medicine or poison: medicine as the tool of social control”, while Sofija Trivunac facilitated a discussion about abortion (“What abortion means to us?”).⁴³ Here, as Mladenović recalls, 25 women came together and shared their experience, and it was surprising how many of them had had an abortion already. She also emphasised that almost everyone came from the Belgrade *Žena i društvo* group, even those who were not supporting the idea of the women-only group in general. Women's health was often discussed together with gynaecology and especially, childbirth. A talk about violence-free childbirth and alternative modes of birth took place with Snežana Simić, Danica Radović-Solomun and Snežana Adašević-Petrović (a topic that

also appears in several publications later on), while another one criticising health care institutions focused on the experience of female patients in psychiatric hospitals, where former patients were invited to share their experience.

On other occasions, health, body image and nutrition were discussed in relation to women themselves eating (and how that affects their health and looks) as well as feeding others (being mothers and housewives). The talk was facilitated by Vesna Dražilović, who later continued to work on the theme of women and the health care system. A further event focused on women and AIDS, led by Sladjana Marković, as well as another one about the myth of women's heterosexuality, presented by Sonja Lončar. To make women more aware of their bodies, a medical doctor, Svetlana Mitraković was asked to hold a talk about hormonal change and menopause.⁴⁴

FEMINIST WRITING ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH

The ideas about women's health, developed in workshops, discussions and debates, soon appeared in publications too. Some of the written contributions were published as early as 1981 and they often pointed beyond the issue of women's health to the issue of VaW. Jasenka Kodrnja published her story of giving birth in the popular bi-weekly *Start*, around the time of the beginning of the re-evaluation of childbirth conditions in the USA and in Western Europe from a feminist perspective.⁴⁵ Kodrnja thematises the violence she experienced during her medicalised delivery:

I imagined giving birth to one's own baby as a joyful deed, in which personnel, for whom this is their profession, help us. After giving birth, I felt as if I had been raped: by some unknown people, institutions, circumstances.⁴⁶

Reinforcing Kodrnja's assessment of what happened to her and Mladenović's critique of institutions, Sofija Trivunac recalled her memories of her birth giving experience. It made Trivunac more aware and focused on the topic:

After I gave birth to my second daughter, I started working more intensely on trauma prevention during childbirth. This was based on my very bad

experience in a socialist hospital. I wasn't participating in the feminist group then any more, but I think that this was serious feminist work; we focused a lot on power relations and stereotypes.

Trivunac began to work with Iva Reich, the daughter of Wilhelm Reich, at this time. She learned and developed a technique to use Reich's body-work to release tension. She promoted the treatment of childbirth as an organic process, helped by baby massage after birth and a fulfilling sex life during pregnancy.

The issues in Kodrnja's writing about birth and Trivunac's practice were highlighted in the article of the journal *Žena*, making further crucial contributions to the feminist scholarly corpus in Yugoslavia and proving again its ambiguous position (about the status of *Žena*, see Chapter 1). It was Gordana Cerjan-Letica, who as editor (and later only author of the journal) compiled sections about women's health in general and with a special focus on reproductive rights and childbirth, with the aim to publicise critical feminist ideas on the subject as much as the framework of *Žena* allowed. The thematic issues related to women's health, representing a feminist approach and critical towards the existing model, were published in the 1980s. They included translations of and references to the grassroots and radical feminist publications from the USA, such as the (*OBOs*) publication,⁴⁷ and the work of Ann Oakley, Barbara Ehrenreich, Sheila Kitzinger and Marsden Wagner.

Cerjan-Letica's introduction to *Žena's* 1986 special issue "Women and Health" addressed the main topics of the women's health movement [*ženski zdravstveni pokret*]: women and medicalisation, women and iatrogenic diseases, the relationship between health and women's employment, the division of labour among health care workers/employees, reproductive health and VaW. The selection of foreign publications is explained by the editor as due to the lack of original research from Yugoslavia: medical sociology, a discipline combining social factors, health and healthcare, was in a very early stage⁴⁸—and it was Cerjan-Letica who became one of the main researchers in the field. (It should be mentioned that in the very same issue, they start an interview series with women who worked as doctors in the partisan movement during World War II, presenting important biographies of women entering a field that was inaccessible to them in larger numbers before.⁴⁹)

The selection of the texts and the choice of concepts in the "Women and Health" special issue not only aimed at institutional criticism, but also claimed new definitions. The mention of iatrogenic diseases, that

is the avoidable harm resulting from treatment in a medical facility or from advice provided by a member of the medical institutions, already hinted at the anti-institutional approach of the selection, and the feminist approach, which Cerjan-Letica openly emphasised, included the gender issues in the organisation of health care labour.⁵⁰ Violence was one of the topics included, “understood here in its broad social context – from its most subtle form hidden in protective paternalism to the most savage forms of violence which are manifested as a form of social pathology”, wrote the editor (23). Reading between the lines, the text suggested that medical intervention against the will or without the informed consent of the patient leading to iatrogenic disease is a form of violence.

Health was redefined by the new scholarship, which had been much needed. “The language about health and illness” was dominated by the biomedical sciences which defined health as the lack of illness and the need to limit it. The new definition, however, took the concept out of this context by broadening it to the whole person, the “preservation of mental and physical integrity and control over one’s body” (23–24). Control over one’s body meant taking it out of the hands of the modern and centralised institutions, which argument in this issue of *Žena* is presented through the writings of women whose unquestionable authority was emphasised in the introduction. Barbara Ehrenreich was presented as “one of the prominent Marxist critics of contemporary medicine”, Marsden Wagner as coming from “a respectable and official institution”, the UN’s World Health Organisation. The other two authors, whose writings I analyse below, are Ilona Kickbush, a German political scientist specialising in health policy who has worked for the WHO for a long time, and Constance Nathanson, a health sociologist who has worked at the University of Chicago as well as Columbia University.

These articles made substantial conceptual interventions, by reinterpreting existing concepts and introducing new terms. What Jasenka Kodrnja described as her own experience in her article in *Start* from 1981, Wagner systematically criticises as part of institutionalised health care: the use of uncontrolled medical technology, unnecessary diagnostic equipment and the neglect of the social aspects, which lead to women’s experience of childbirth as violence, as well as to iatrogenic illnesses.⁵¹ She emphasised women’s right to information and to control. The local author Željka Karalić, relying on *OBOS*, introduced the concept of *hospitalisation of birth* [*hospitalizacija poroda*] together with a new aspect of childbirth, *quality of birth*.⁵² The medical approach defined

by hard science is countered not only by a presentation of the dangers of *medicalised birth* as discussed by Wagner (42), but also by presenting such concepts as *rooming-in* (i.e. the newborn and the mother sharing the same hospital room), *self-regulated feeding* (instead of [breast]feeding the infant according to a prescribed schedule, promoted by the institutionalised medicinal model), the idea of the fathers' presence during birth and *natural birth*, where, as opposed to medicalised birth, in case of a low-risk pregnancy, the woman has a chance to give birth without medical intervention. While as a result of this, the baby is healthier, it is also empowering for the mother, as "women are enabled to get to know their own bodily functions better, which raises their self-confidence, which is the basis for a better prepared motherhood" (43). Karalić claims that while in Yugoslavia, the main reason for the hospitalisation of birth is the lowering of the mortality rates, despite the almost 100 per cent of hospitalisation, there is an inadmissibly high level of infant mortality, which the author attributes to existing, medicalised birth protocols. (43)

The texts of Nathanson and Kickbush questioned the unbiased nature of the health care system from a gendered perspective.⁵³ Nathanson wrote about the so far neglected differences in the morbidity and mortality rates depending on sex [*spol*], while Ilona Kickbush provided an implicit critique of the health advice books, such as the ones I analyse above. One of the points Kickbush made, is that since women are made responsible for the well-being of the family, even in the modern, nuclear family, women keep their traditional role as those closer to the body and to nature. This image is a mixture of the modern (through the small family) and the ancient (through the essentialist and even esoteric assumptions of women being closer to nature), which assigns women the role of the "house doctor" [*kućni liječnik*]. As a further aspect to this, Karalić analysed the power relations between the male doctors and their female patients. She identified all the rituals related to the position of the doctor and patient as part of the patriarchal culture, in a society where women have a marginal position. (44) She is influenced here by the radical feminist texts of Ann Oakley, who provided a thorough and firm critical analysis of these power relations in her writings from the 1970s.

Realising the power hierarchy between women and male doctors, both Kickbush and Cerjan-Letica searched for ways to question the status quo. Women as "the representatives of the lay referral system, lay medical knowledge" have the opportunity to resist, for example by contradicting the "professional" medical system.⁵⁴ It is this liberating effect

that the women's health movement promoted, and it reached the feminists in Yugoslavia through publications and networks.

PROBLEMATISING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

VaW has been on the agenda of the new Yugoslav feminists from the beginning of the group's history. As early as 1977, the dangers to women in public spaces and in the home through domestic violence were analysed by the historian who was one of the main intellectual inspirations for many feminists in the country, Lydia Sklevicky.⁵⁵ Blaženka Despot wrote in a text in 1981:

Besides the question of their participation in the new, historical change of attitude to nature, a participation shared with the entire working class of Yugoslavia, [women] also have a specific problem – a restricted participation in the historical events in the sphere of self-management [...]. *Self-managers beat their wives, too, a proof of the old relationship to nature.* (Despot 1981: 37)

Sanja Iveković's work about violence represented an early, new feminist perspective. For example, in her *Osobni rezovi* (*Personal Cuts*, 1982 – see Chapter 3), or the piece *Crni fascikl* (*The Black File*, 1976) where nudes from sex advertisements are contrasted with the small portraits of missing girls from the dailies, thus pointing towards the connection between prostitution and crime. What gradually took shape in the academic literature, was already understood in Iveković's early work on violence, and there are hints to it in the literary work of Slavenka Drakulić too. A similar understanding is reflected in the article series by Maja Miles in *Start*, the writings of Vesna Mimica in *Bazar* and *Svijet*.

The *Žena i društvo* group members discussed VaW, too, in the *tribina* series, at the same time as the SOS helplines and the polling research (*Akciona anketa*) were being prepared. There was a lecture about victimhood in the *tribina* series, by Vlasta Ilišin and Vesna Marković in 1988, and a year later Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, herself, gave a talk about her book *Žene žrtve kriminaliteta*, in discussion with Slobodanka Konstantinović Vilić and Dafinka Večerina. Večerina was the lawyer in Croatia who contributed substantially to the foundation of the first SOS helplines. Female genital mutilation (FGM), still often called “female

circumcision”, was spotlighted through the showing of a BBC film about FGM in Sudan, followed by a discussion, introduced by Vanda Krajinović, in 1987.⁵⁶

These events and the entire anti-VaW activism were a timely endeavour inasmuch as it was in the 1970s that family violence entered the public discussions not only in the USA and Western Europe, but also in many “third world” countries. The UN Year of Women in 1975 largely contributed to the globalisation of the discussion.⁵⁷ According to Janet Elise Johnson, writing about Russia and basing her analysis largely on Keck and Sikkink’s work on the globalisation of activism, VaW in the 1970s “created solidarity between movements”, united feminist activists worldwide, “from the North and South”.⁵⁸

Importantly enough, in the case of VaW, women’s rights and human rights converge so clearly that women’s issues cannot be treated as economic issues any more. In relation to the role of the UN, Johnson claimed that “violence against women was different from the typical women’s issues raised at the United Nations because the concept’s central assertion was women’s right to bodily integrity”.⁵⁹ The UN played an important role in the internationalisation of the campaign against VaW, while the networks and transfer of ideas happened at much lower, activist levels, as the Yugoslav case demonstrates very well.

TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE: THE SOS TELEPHONES

The foundation of SOS helplines for abused women and children was one of the most important achievements of the new Yugoslav feminists and is a milestone in the history of feminist groups. There is, however, an impressive ease in the way my interviewees talked about it: as the least problematic endeavour they had undertaken. The SOS telephones brought greater visibility to feminist ideas and meant the creation of a parallel institution working on an issue, violence between citizens, that belonged primarily under the sphere of responsibility of the state. At the same time, while domestic violence happening behind closed doors kept the phenomenon hidden, it also meant that offering help to its victims outside state institutions was not a direct clash with the establishment, whereas the demand for change in health care institutions meant a more direct attack on those institutions and thus was more difficult to achieve.

The first SOS hotline was founded in 1988 in Zagreb as *SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja* [SOS telephone for women and children

victims of violence], but the women in Belgrade had started planning it earlier on. Among the founders in Zagreb were Katarina Vidović, Vesna Mimica, Biljana Kašić, and Nela Pamuković. The Zagreb telephone started with 50 volunteers—this number was impressive and signaled the broad reach of the initiative.⁶⁰ Organisation wise, the SOS telephone in Zagreb was a hybrid: the *Opštinske konferencije SSO Trešnjevka* and the *Sekcija za društvenu aktivnost žena*, two local state institutions, supported the initiative of the *Ženska grupa Trešnjevka* [Women’s Group in Trešnjevka, a district of Zagreb] in 1986. The *Ženska grupa Trešnjevka* was founded in 1985 under the auspices of the environmental association SVARUN, an ecological activist group, which they separated from in 1988. The SOS helpline worked 24 hours a day, with 50 volunteers, taking 4 hour shifts.⁶¹ During the first month, they had calls from 500 women and 32 children.⁶² In an apartment in Trešnjevka, they set up a shelter with 3 beds, where one woman could stay for 20 nights. From today’s perspective, the 20 days are not much, however, the mere fact that this option was on the table meant the acknowledgement that women need time away from the threatening vicinity of the abuser in order to be able to make decisions. The SOS hotline in Zagreb reached an agreement with the prosecutor’s office [*Javno tužiteljstvo*] ensuring that children under the age of 3 would automatically be placed with the mother. This measure admits that women who are abused in a relationship are less able to represent their interests facing the abuser.

The women in Belgrade have colourful memories of the foundation of the Zagreb telephone. As Vera Litričin recalls:

The idea came from abroad (...) Nada Četković translated texts from French, and Katarina Jeremić did a master’s degree in the US, where she also attended a course on SOS hotlines. Dafinka Večerina, a lawyer, was also helping. Lepa [Mlađenović] went to a 3-month course on women’s health in Geneva. We were discussing this theme more and more deeply in the all-Yugoslav gatherings. We have always been interested in the topic, but our discussions were becoming more specialised over time. I was very much surprised when the Zagreb women succeeded, they were so young, and we were advising them. It was a big step and a good model, the way they just started it without any hesitation.

Lepa Mlađenović wanted to start the helpline in Belgrade as early as 1985, after her women’s health workshop organised by ISIS. The preparations

for the helpline, with support coming from colleagues in Zagreb, began in 1987, but were interrupted when she travelled again, on a fellowship to Italy to continue her work on anti-psychiatry. This impeded the beginnings of the helpline in Belgrade, but allowed the women from Belgrade to learn from the experiences of the Zagreb helpline instead.⁶³ Then, in 1989, more women came from Zagreb, including Dafinka Večerina and a friend, Katja Jeremić, whose role was emphasised by everyone I interviewed about the helpline.

In Belgrade, the institutional preparations of the SOS helpline are well documented and we can see the long list of state institutions, including the city government, the police, hospitals and social services, contacted by the feminists from FGŽiD for information about raped women.⁶⁴ Eventually, however, it was a woman in the Dom Omladine [House of Youth] of the city of Belgrade who understood very well the significance of the help such a helpline means and offered her office from 6 pm to 10 pm every day for the purposes of the line. They were not even registered, so unlike the Zagreb situation, the unofficial helpline worked in an official building and without any actual official framework. As Mladenović added, later the helpline “changed the society”, especially when they had media coordinators and the topic of DV entered the wider media (see Chapter 4 about popular mass media). The helplines in the three capitals had a reach throughout the respective member states.

“SMRT SEKSIZMU, SLOBODA ŽENAMA”⁶⁵:
ANKETIRANJE AND GOING GRASSROOTS

In the process of establishing the SOS helplines, the Belgrade group initiated a polling, calling it *Akciona anketa* [action research], to gain insight into women’s lives in Yugoslavia through experiences which were not discussed so far, with the exception of a few articles, such as Lina Vušković’s articles about abortion, the maltreatment of single mothers and the issue of poverty (in the magazine *Zum reporter*, which we could call the “Serbian equivalent” of *Start*).⁶⁶ The answers given to the polls provided valuable material for further organising. The polls in three subsequent years (1986–1988) were organised around three topics, closely related to each other: women’s dissatisfaction with men (1986), solidarity among women (1987) and women’s health and VaW (1988). The venues of the polling were the following central spaces in Belgrade: the

Terazije (1986), Kalenić pijaca [Kalenić market] (1987), the main railway station and Knez Mihajlova street, Belgrade's main street (1988) (Fig. 5.3).

The answers were analysed by the group members, who were aware that due to the methodology (or rather, the circumstances), the results might not be generalisable. The most basic issue was selection bias: the location where polling occurred, the women who agreed to answer the difficult questions, and even for those women, an in-depth interview might have resulted in different answers. Still, doing the surveys was one of the first steps to initiate discussions with unknown women on the streets about their views on their own situation in the Yugoslav society. Already the results from this small-scale research provided feedback to the group about what other women in Yugoslavia wanted, and what their realities and problems were.

The institutional support from the SKC probably contributed to the fact that the members of the FGŽiD could do the survey, as a letter was sent to the police announcing this activity.⁶⁷ A similar, important and



Fig. 5.3 Preparing the first *Akciona anketa* at the SKC in 1988, photograph by Lepa Mladenović

almost forgotten attempt to talk with women was made by Vera Litricin, also in Belgrade. Vera Litričin visited the Beko textile factory in Belgrade, employing mostly women, with Sonja Drljević. Litričin recalls:

We talked to the gynaecologist who worked at the factory: she told us that there were many, many miscarriages in the factory, because women were overworked. They often took night shifts to be able to be with their children during the day. This was the first time that they heard about the fact that it is not just exhausting, but also dangerous, since it is unhealthy to exchange the day with the night shift.

Vera Litričin found it very important that it was a woman doctor taking care of the women in the factory. While the work they started with the factory stopped, a few years later it became possible to talk to women in an organised form about their experience living in Yugoslav society.

Lepa Mlađenović played a central role in all three surveys; the questions reflect the experience she had when she started travelling to meet other women's groups working on women's health and VaW. As she mentioned during our interview, they were then already reading the radical feminists' work on rape and VaW, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, and there are references to Mary Daly in Vidović's writings. The three surveys in the three subsequent years have an arch: from the matters of division of labour in the household towards women's solidarity and finally, health and violence. The surveys were always analysed, with the final analysis written by Lepa Mlađenović with the help of other women, for example Sladjana Marković and Žarana Papić. There were many more activists who interviewed women in the street polls. The names of those who worked with the surveys in 1988 are listed in the letter to the police: Jasna Borovnjak, Sladjana Marković, Marija Vojinović, Ljiljana Milovanović, Gordana Obradović, and from another source it appears that Žarana Papić also participated.

The *Akciona anketa* had the underlying aim of building a wider women's movement, both by the act of asking women about these experiences and thus raising their awareness of their immediate situation and by publicising the findings from the surveys. The questionnaires also surveyed women's willingness to organise with other women. For example, the interviewees were asked if they would be

willing to participate “in a strike/demonstration against men who beat and rape women” (1986), in actions where “women organise in a struggle for their rights” (1987) or simply “in feminist actions” (1988). As Lepa Mlađenović and Sladjana Marković summarised it in their analysis of the 1987 survey: “On the one hand women feel uncomfortable to identify with women, on the other hand they would very much want to fight for their rights, which tells about the ambivalence and the great strength which the situation of women generates”.⁶⁸ The answers to the questions prove that women—the ones who were asked—would be interested and willing to organise together with other women: 75% said yes to the question in 1987: “If there was a possibility that women organise in a struggle for their rights, would you participate in these actions?”,⁶⁹ and in 1988, 90% of those answering supported the idea of the creation of an SOS telephone for women who suffered violence.⁷⁰

There was a different understanding of solidarity among women, depending on the formulation of the questions. Women were, for example, reluctant to say “mi, žene” [we, women / us, women], as they read the statement as admitting to their imposed inferiority. In the 1987 survey analysis, which often shifted towards a political pamphlet, the authors emphasised that “[c]hange will only happen if solidarity is understood as a political category”. They saw this as impeded by women’s lack of awareness of the fact that, despite the differences in their economic or social background, they have shared interests. It was after this survey in 1987 where the women from SKC FGŽiD noticed that it was “women in fur coats”, that is, women seemingly from a better economical background, who refused to answer their questions. The report documents the shock and disappointment of the women in the feminist group, facing the class difference standing between women in a socialist state. These early reflections on the class aspect are worth mentioning in light of the later criticism from other activists as well as scholars about the new Yugoslav feminists for their lack of class sensitivity, coming from a middle-class background and from families with a good standing within the establishment.⁷¹

The survey analysis in 1988 reflected on the burdens mandatory heterosexuality put on lesbian women, as well as on women who are single, or live in a relationship with a man out of wedlock, or do not have children. It was as if society wanted to compensate these women for the violence married women experience in their marriage from their husbands,

Mladenović wrote sarcastically. Being an unmarried, especially lesbian, unmarried woman meant being in a vulnerable position, threatening to be pushed to the margins of society. As one of the interviewees of the 1988 *Akciona anketa* said, because she was alone (meaning not in a heterosexual relationship), even though she worked for the factory for 27 years, unlike her married colleagues, she was only given a room in a barracks with unbearable and health-damaging conditions.⁷² Based on the analysis report, at least one woman talked to the interviewers about her sexuality and the difficulty of being lesbian: “nowhere can you even mention that you love a woman, and not a man. As if the whole society was heterosexual, as if there were not lesbians and gays all over the city”.

Another aspect to be emphasised is how the potential of organising had a clear political focus and a critical edge towards the state. In the 1987 survey about women’s solidarity, women are asked what they think of the KDAŽ, the official women’s organisation. Mladenović and Marković concluded from this that “the women asked do not experience the KDAŽ as an organisation which is protecting their interests and through which they can realise their rights, but rather as an institution which serves the system and as such contributes further to gender based discrimination”.⁷³ That women do not trust and are disappointed in the state institutions is further confirmed by the 1988 survey, where women admitted that in cases of violence they received no help from either the police, or the family, or those passing by.⁷⁴

The questionnaire in 1988 originally focused more on women’s health, recognising the strong connection between women’s health and VaW. This version of the questionnaire was not used, as they decided on a simpler one. In the analysis prepared, however, Lepa Mladenović explained that, in the eyes of the institutions, health and violence are rarely related to each other and they conceive women as “reacting to violence in a confused and irregular way”. In fact, violence affected their health in forms of diseases such as depression and migraine, lack of sleep and eating disorders.⁷⁵ The violence and the silence around it, caused by the “patriarchal imperative” of blaming women for being violated, add to the damage violence does on women’s nervous system, wrote Mladenović. The argumentation of this report from 1988 is supported by numerous quotes from radical feminists from the USA, whose theoretical work is deeply rooted in and is in a constant exchange with women’s activism, such as Adrienne Rich, Susan Brownmiller, Andrea Dworkin. The strong moral statements against violence and patriarchy quoted from these authors connected the

local Yugoslav feminists to the radical feminists in other countries, and the transfer of a radical political language contributed to the sharpening of the Yugoslav discourse too, with the Yugoslav feminists reaching a new level of activism, with clear political aims.

NEW LANGUAGE ON VIOLENCE AND HEALTH

Gordana Cerjan-Letica quotes R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash's *Women, Violence, and Social Change* about the relevance of the SOS helplines and the shelters from the perspective of feminist politics. In 1988, the book was still manuscript but Cerjan-Letica got hold of a copy at a conference in Cardiff about VaW. In her review article, Cerjan-Letica explained the basics about the feminist movements' initiative of the struggle against VaW, with special respect to the feminist response to the problem. These are: informing and educating the public; setting up SOS telephones and consultation centres; creating a network of safe houses and shelters.⁷⁶ The Dobash and Dobash quote, as it is in the English language publication today, is quoted in detail:

The refuge stands at the heart of the battered-women's movement and is important for a variety of reasons. For the woman, it serves as a physical space where she can temporarily escape from violence, find safety and make decisions about her own life. Contact with other women helps overcome isolation and a sense of being the only one with a violent partner. For the movement, it provides the physical location from which to organise, and serves as a base for practical and political thought and action. (...) Thus, the refuge itself becomes a fundamental means by which feminist politics is developed, sustained and rekindled within the context of the problem itself and in close contact with the daily lives of its sufferers. (...) The provision of a physical space so thoroughly enmeshed in the problem itself and in the lives of the women and refuge workers is unique for most social movements, and it is doubtful that a movement, rather than just a provision of service, could have developed or been sustained without it.⁷⁷

That is, there was a great relevance of the shelters for the feminist movement, the two are even codependent. It was a big step for feminist politicking, and this was why it was far more than yet another service provided for people with a certain need. It was the "personal is political" coming to life, and the helplines and the shelters played the very same role for feminists in the Yugoslav case.

The journal *Žena* again proved to be a strange bedfellow for the feminists: several of the principles, findings and theoretical basics of the SOS helplines were published here. Kodrnja and Vidović explained the most important principles of the freshly started SOS helpline in Zagreb. The authors found it important to elucidate that the feminism they talked about

is not delimited neither exclusive (...) rather it uses all that's available from the existing discoveries and aspires for syntheses, in the core of which one finds, as constitutive elements, Marxism, existentialism, anti-psychiatry; syntheses which would mean a different lens of looking at and a different pattern of the male–female, individual–society, human community–cosmos relations.⁷⁸

Indeed, the work on VaW called out for a mix of methodologies and the importance of providing definitions of feminism.

The positions of the institutions, which were criticised by the SOS volunteers and the new Yugoslav feminists in general, were spelled out at a conference in 1989, co-organised by the SSRNH, the editorial board of *Žena* and the Zagreb office of the KDAŽ. The conference name had not only women, but the family too: “Konferencija za društveni položaj žene i porodice grada Zagreba” [Conference for the social status of the woman and the family of the city of Zagreb].⁷⁹ The event was organised under the influence of the changes slowly infiltrating the public discourse after the foundation of the first SOS helpline in Zagreb. The “dialogue” was very similar to earlier events, for example the *Žena* conferences, when the representative of the official or state organisations and the feminists met. Each party repeated its own positions, although it was the official side which was expected to react to the criticism of its work (see MacMillan and Briskin about the relations between the state and social movements). What we can see is that the political and social institutions still focused on the family and children, in an attempt to exclude the gender aspect. They preferred not to speak about incest and in general the sexual abuse of children,⁸⁰ or even if they did, the patriarchal power dynamics within the family were not mentioned. Melita Singer, however, from the *Žena* editorial board, called attention to the importance of speaking about women too, following the example of the SOS helplines.⁸¹

Besides the focus on gender, the SOS principles also included a more detailed terminological differentiation between physical, psychological

or emotional, sexual and economic violence, all as sub-cases of DV and VaW. Katarina Vidović claimed that the psychological, social and economic dependence of women on men made the various, yet interrelated types of violence possible; moreover, “VaW generates other forms of violence”.⁸² She also argued for the reconceptualisation of the family. In the terminology of the state institutions, the family was “a priori a harmonic community and an ideal form of human life”.⁸³ She also pointed out that “the oppression of women is conceptually built into the bases of civilisation and throughout human history and in all societies (irrespective of class, ethnicity, race, religion and all other differences), on the negation of women’s individuality, capability and the power of women”. Vidović was highly critical of the state institutions in their treatment of VaW and DV, and several claims of the representatives of state institutions at the conference testified to the divide between these institutions and the new Yugoslav feminists.⁸⁴

CRIMINOLOGY, VICTIMOLOGY AND THE FEMINIST APPROACH TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The academic feminist discourse about VaW was quickly growing within criminology and from victimology, especially due to the work of Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović. The combination of feminism and victimology is not only surprising due to the radically different approach to victims, which Biljana Kašić pointed out in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, but also since the discipline was used extensively in the more and more widespread nationalist ideology, especially in Croatia.⁸⁵ Victimology’s quest of the reasons and sources of victimisation often and easily shifted into victim-blaming, which strongly clashed with the feminist approach, positioning itself firmly within the human rights tradition, claiming that the person responsible for a crime is the person who committed it.

A lawyer by training, Nikolić-Ristanović remembered that her interest in women’s rights came earlier than her interest in victimology. “The rights of women always also meant my own rights, my own fight against stereotypes”. When she began to work on the subject, the ignorance of her professors in the field of VaW and DV worked in her interest: as the professors were not familiar with the topic, they let her do what she wanted to. It became apparent during the presentation of her research at the SKC event organised by the *Žena i društvo* group, how limited

the understanding of her supervisor was of her work, when his comment during the Q&A led to a fierce debate with the feminist participants, who had a much clearer idea of what Nikolić-Ristanović was talking about. At that time (1980's), the Institute of Criminology and Sociology had abundant research materials, including journals from abroad, and through its network, she could travel to conferences and consult with other experts. "The 1990s was just the opposite", she added during our talk. "I didn't find any literature, for example there was nothing available on qualitative methodology in Serbia".

Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović's work was complemented by the work of the activists who set up the SOS helpline, the shelters and the entire anti-violence movement. She was one of the first experts on victimology in Yugoslavia, a discipline which was a novelty all over the world in the 1960s.⁸⁶ Her work was influenced by psychoanalysis (Freud and criticism of Freud) and by new feminist publications, mostly in the field of psychology and sociology. Quite importantly, in 1980s, the volume *Antropologija žene* edited by Papić and Sklevicky was extensively referenced in Nikolić-Ristanović's publications too. In its language, her book "Women as crime victims" [*Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*] from 1989 combined legal terminology and the vocabulary of the new feminism.⁸⁷ Throughout the book, she argued for "the need for a sex [*pol*] specific legislation",⁸⁸ as most laws are gender blind, while this was "crucial for a real protection of women under criminal law" (47).

The feminist concern with victimology was the easy shift into victim-blaming, and Nikolić-Ristanović was very sensitive to this aspect too. She provided a detailed overview of ways in which women became victims of crime, from murder through rape to economic crimes, including the omission to pay alimony and child support (46). In her analysis, she steadily argued that women, when they become crime victims, are not responsible for it. This approach was in synchrony with the basic principles of the SOS helpline, which included that the volunteers on the helpline "do not blame the woman for her problem as this is what is the biggest difference between the SOS and the more established therapeutic methods which one encounters in the social work centres and in the psychiatric practices. Thus women, who are the victims, and who come to the SOS for help, are not burdened any further".⁸⁹ Victim-blaming as a principle was there in the feminist discourse of the time; however, the concept itself was not used extensively until after 1991.

The language and actions of the new Yugoslav feminists fought against the idea that rape victims could prevent rape by resisting their rapist. However, such notions, using often the “emancipation-argument” and the claim that socialism in Yugoslavia achieved women’s full equality, were present extensively. At the conference in 1989, one presenter claimed that “how a woman reacts to the aggression from a man depends on her level of emancipation”.⁹⁰ Importantly, the SOS volunteers and the experts such as Nikolić-Ristanović never failed to emphasise that women from all social standings could become victims of DV.

Establishing forms of VaW (physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and economic violence), several feminist authors paid special attention to rape. Nikolić-Ristanović discusses the most up-to-date normative literature of the time about the assessment of rape as well as good practices. She analysed the existing Yugoslav legislation and made several suggestions as to how to include other forms of sexual violence that was not penetration with genitals into genitals, as well as to move rape out of the sphere of morality and treat it as violence. Her example was the State of Florida, in the USA, where rape was redefined as physical assault instead of an assault on one’s “morality”. The argumentation also relied on articles from *Victimology* and *Crime and Delinquency*, such as Gerald D. Robin’s “Forcible rape: Institutionalised sexism in the criminal justice system”.⁹¹ The position Nikolić-Ristanović held was to remove rape from the semantic space of sexuality and morals and to lift the blame from the victim and shift it onto the perpetrator. She worked towards dispelling the myths about rape which primarily focused on the victims of rape, for example their attractiveness, which idea Nikolić-Ristanović rejected, relying on extensive literature. (150)

Rape was the focus of several levels of feminist discussion, and approaches from fields other than criminology involved different sources and offered new definitions. Already in 1982, Lina Vušković published an article inspired by Brownmiller’s *Against Our Will*, interviewing professors of sociology and psychology in order to dispel myths about rape, emphasising that women who are raped are not responsible for it in any way, as well as the gendered power relations enabling rape.⁹² While Nikolić-Ristanović focused on the legal aspects and her explanations stemmed from a criminological approach, an article in the journal *Gledišta* edited by Daša Duhaček in 1990, written by Nevenka Gruzinov-Milovanović, explored the topic from a cultural and sociological perspective.⁹³ Her work was inspired by the new feminist literature

from the USA, Brownmiller's *Against Our Will*, Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson's *Against Rape*, also, Jennifer Temkin's *Rape and the Legal Process*,⁹⁴ articles from various journals, including ones from the field of criminology and psychology, as well as Nikolić-Ristanović's work. She treated rape as a product of patriarchy and emphasised that the legal prosecution of rape does not replace the achievement of women's sexual autonomy, which in her reading, would be the best way to prevent rape. She listed and criticised the various myths about victims lying about rape, provoking it or that rape is "part of human nature"—another step towards the ideas behind the concept of *victim-blaming*. The article refuted the biological or natural motivation of rape and maintained that it is a social product, ending with the strong claim that "rape, above all, is a form of brutal psychological and physical violence [...] a form of physical violence where sex is just a weapon".⁹⁵

Domestic violence and marital rape, as well as reproductive rights are all present in Nikolić-Ristanović's book and in the SOS helpline publications. The former, which she calls *krivični deo koji ulaze u domen porodičnog nasilja* [criminal acts which enter the domain of family violence] (48), covered all forms of VaW, although it is missing from the Yugoslav legislation, together with one of its forms, *marital rape*. In Serbo-Croatian, *silovanje u braku*, is "rape in the marriage". From Nikolić-Ristanović's critical perspective, it is assessed as a result of "a conservative bourgeois understanding of marriage, where a woman is the property of the man". (38) It is a form of victimisation from which women were unprotected in Yugoslavia (and most of the world), with the exception of Slovenia.

In her complex analysis, the author called "women's right to choose about giving birth to children" as "one of the most important proclamations following the triumph of the socialist revolution" (*idem.*). This was one point in the argumentation of the book where she criticised socialist societies for not abiding by this proclamation when "there is a growing demand for the increase of natality in socialist societies, which leads to more and more restrictions [of women's right to choose] and the growth of 'family ideology' (*idem.*)". Forced abortion and denied abortion are both considered forms of VaW, a violation of their physical integrity.

The most radical and therefore fascinating part of Nikolić-Ristanović's book from the perspective of the relationship of feminism to state socialism is in the historical overview of women's social position in different sociopolitical systems. While the aim of socialism is "the humanisation

of human relations and of the relations between the sexes and the emancipation of women” (23), “the process of socialisation of women in the socialist family has not changed significantly in relation to capitalism”. The “complex social action”⁹⁶ has not taken place, as the persistence of the double burden shows, among other things. Questioning the state narrative on women’s equality, Nikolić-Ristanović claimed that capitalism has also done a lot for women’s equality, to a large extent due to the pressure from the women’s movement. However, she added, “it only went halfway”, which means that we have half-finished processes in both socialist and capitalist societies regarding VaW. The step where the capitalist societies missed out on the improvement of women’s position was the lack of a “revolutionary spirit”, which in itself, however, is not sufficient in the case of the socialist countries either. One crucial step in order to “overcome nature” was the spread of knowledge about VaW, and the other was women’s real economic equality. “Nature” here is the inequality which, according to the author, is at least partly created by women’s dependency caused by their reproductive tasks and alleged physical weakness. As a third step, Nikolić-Ristanović emphasised the importance of legislation, although, she adds, many of the existing laws would be sufficient, were the implementation not impeded by the persevering patriarchal attitudes.

According to the feminist approach, incest and child abuse [*abuzus djeteta, zlostavljanje djeteta*] are symptoms of DV and VaW. Before the feminist contributions, in previous literature, such as the volume *Kriminalitet na štetu maloljetnika* [Crimes harming underage children],⁹⁷ it was still the “negligence approach”, blaming the mother for the abuse the father commits, that dominated. Nikolić-Ristanović worked towards familiarising the readers with the more current scholarship, and at the 1989 *Žena*-conference, some of the SOS helpline volunteers openly confronted the representatives of established institutions about incest and child abuse. While the paediatrician Ivo Švel claimed that in Yugoslavia, “we have a much more humane approach to children than the German, the French or some others. [...] while by us there is also rape of children [*silovanje nad djetetom*], but by us there has never been a sexual abuse of a child [*seksualnog zlostavljanja djeteta*]. We have not seen such a thing yet. An infant with a cracked anus or vagina, that we have not seen yet...”⁹⁸ Proving these ideas wrong, the SOS volunteer and sociologist Biljana Kašić talked explicitly about incest, pointing out

a “negation in terms of the existence of incest”.⁹⁹ Nina Kadić, another SOS volunteer, shared the statistics of the first 10 months of the SOS helpline in Zagreb: 560 children turned to the helpline, of whom 20% told about their incest experience.¹⁰⁰

While incest became more widely discussed in Yugoslav states only after the dissolution of the country, the SOS helplines and shelters were an important first step towards the subject. Vera Litričin got the idea of a separate SOS helpline for young girls, incest and rape victims, when she realised that the shelter originally set up for adult women with their children did not suit the needs of young girls who had to leave their homes because their own parents abused them.¹⁰¹ She started the separate helpline in 1993, and the Incest Trauma Centre was founded a year after.

The work of Nikolić-Ristanović expanded in the post-1991 period. It is due to her efforts that the *Viktimološko društvo*, the Society of Victimology, was founded in Belgrade in 1997, with the aim to help victims of crimes and focus on prevention. Her working relationship with the feminists, not having been a core member of the *Žena i društvo* group, became closer after 1992, mostly around war rape and war mass rape. The late 1980s, however, was a promising time. Based on Nikolić-Ristanović’s research, there were attempts to change the laws about VaW and DV, in cooperation with the SSRNJ. There was a promise on behalf of the organisation that DV would become a criminal offence as would marital rape, too. The war put an end to these negotiations.

IN CONCLUSION: THE IMMEDIATE PRE-WAR YEARS AND THE END OF AN ERA OF YUGOSLAV FEMINISM

“During the work on the SOS we realised that what we were doing was political, not just humanitarian”, said Lepa Mladenović in our interview. It was and should not be simply social work, argued Mojca Dobnikar in an article.¹⁰² From the creation of the forums and semi-institutions for the elimination of the VaW, a new type of politics arose. As the FGŽiD Belgrade claims in an article in *Student*: “Violence is a political problem. The SOS telephone is women helping women, not an obtrusion of feminist ideologies”.¹⁰³ This different approach to the public sphere and a new self-perception was supported by the changing political landscape in the whole of Eastern Europe around the fall of the Berlin wall, leading to new political organising in Yugoslavia too. This not only meant the

strengthening of ethno-nationalism which had been infiltrating the public space for several years by then, but also meant a more explicit feminist reflection on politics, and later the diversification of feminist groups, including the Women's Party [ŽEST, Ženska stranka]. While the multiplication of the feminist groups is the moment when my story ends, the discourses preceding it still belong here.

Through the discourse about VaW, the place of feminism was explicitly rethought in a human rights framework, and the interconnectedness of women's political participation and the concept of democracy received growing attention. Women who took the lead in feminist activism and intellectual intervention against the spread of ethno-nationalism, such as Daša Duhaček and Vlasta Jalušič, but also Lepa Mladenović and Rada Iveković, published articles in the last years before the war which signaled the beginning of a new era. A new era where, as they envisioned it, women's political participation and role in democracies were the focal point, and not anti-war activism, which they were forced to engage in, eventually (Fig. 5.4).

Politics and the political participation of women, in the light of the emerging alternative political entities, make the question relevant again. Women's political participation was not about the insider matters of the



Fig. 5.4 Vlasta Jalušič, Biljana Kašić, Žarana Papić in the early 1990s

SKJ or the KDAŽ, but a chance to influence the public sphere. Since the dissent of the new Yugoslav feminists had its focus on political power, although engaging the state from the outside,¹⁰⁴ balancing between what Linda Briskin calls “mainstreaming” and “disengagement”,¹⁰⁵ the attention was slowly shifting towards the new groups and parties, as their significance became more and more clear and present.

On the pages of the Sarajevo journal *Oslobođenje*, in an article about the Zagreb SOS helpline, the authors demanded change. Nihana Kadić: “Our goal is to achieve the end of the patriarchal system. Our goal is to stop politically empty phrases about the women’s situation, which has, up to now, been reduced to women’s reproductive function”.¹⁰⁶ It was the knowledge the activists gained from the experience of women in Yugoslavia, shared on the SOS helpline, which sharpened their political statements, while it was the political environment which tolerated the statements being published in the media. The growing dissatisfaction with women’s status in Yugoslavia following the anti-VaW work was accompanied by dissatisfaction with the way women were disregarded by the emerging political groups and parties. Feminist political organising was targeting both the patriarchal remnants in the SFRJ and the new conservatism and the ethno-nationalism of the new forces. That politics without women is problematic, that is, that a “democracy without women is not a democracy”, as the slogan from 1993 says, was one of the prevailing messages emerging around the time of the new elections.¹⁰⁷

The *Žena i društvo* group’s aim was to enhance women’s significance as a target group of politics. So the events in 1990 also included a discussion with representatives of political parties, organised by the newly founded *Ženski LOBI* (Women’s lobby), an organisation grown out of the *Žena i društvo* group, about another question: “Who are women going to vote for?”.¹⁰⁸ The *Ženski LOBI* was already active in the Yugoslav legislative processes, especially concerning the laws on family planning and population policy, that is, the planned laws restricting abortion,¹⁰⁹ which became a more burning problem a few years later and mobilised women all over Croatia, Serbia, but especially in Slovenia.¹¹⁰

The struggle against nationalism became one of the main themes of feminism in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia after 1991,¹¹¹ but the *Žena i društvo* group was only slowly integrating the concept of ethnicity and a critique of nationalism into its agenda. As the Yugoslav feminist conferences in 1987, 1988, 1990 and 1991 show, the women in the *Žena i društvo* group had it among their plans to involve more and more

women from all the other member republics, which plan failed due to the wars. There were some attempts though. In 1988, they invited a scholar from Berkeley, Jenet Reineck to give a talk at the *Žena i društvo tribina* session about her research on women in Kosovo.¹¹² The solidarity of the *Žena i društvo* was more clearly spelled out in the article about the helplines, where the women volunteering on the Zagreb helpline called out for the rights of women in Kosovo “to control their own bodies”. Furthermore, connecting to the growing ethnicisation of rape, they emphasised again that rape is primarily a form of VaW, which returned later in the anti-nationalist feminist discourse after 1991.¹¹³ This article also gave voice to a group of women representing Albanian women in Kosovo, who called attention to the oppression of women in Kosovo, also seen in their lack of control of their contraceptive rights.¹¹⁴

NOTES

1. Interviews with Biljana Kašić (Zagreb, 17 December 2007), Vera Litričin (31 May 2011), Gordana Cerjan-Letica (Zagreb, 13 November 2013), Mojca Dobnikar (Ljubljana, 8 April 2012), Lepa Mladenović (Belgrade, 16 April 2014). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. About these, see Marijana Mitrović, “Genealogy of the Conferences on Women’s Writing at the Inter University Center (Dubrovnik) from 1986 to 1990”, *ProFemina*, Special Issue No. 2 (Summer–Autumn 2011): 157–166.
3. Mojca Dobnikar and Nela Pamukovic, eds., *Ja(z), ti, one ... za nas. Dokumenti jugoslovanskih feminističnih srećanj 1987–1991* [I, You, They ... for Us. Documents of the Yugoslav Feminist Meetings 1987–1991] (Ljubljana: Društvo Vita Activa and Zagreb: Centar za žene žrtve rata – ROSA, 2009).
4. Mary E. Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, c.2006), 72.
5. Interview with Lepa Mladenović.
6. Interview with Lina Vušković.
7. Interview with Vesna Kesić (Zagreb, 6 March 2014).
8. Libora Oates-Indruchová, “Unraveling a Tradition, or Spinning a Myth? Gender Critique in Czech Society and Culture”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 75. No. 4 (Winter 2016): 919–943.

9. Shana Penn, *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, c.2005).
10. Relying on the self-identification of the time, I do not use the LGBTQ acronym.
11. Anne Koedt, "Lezbično gibanje in feminizem" [The Lesbian Movement and Feminism], *Mladina, Pogledi*, Vol. 12 Summer, No. 2 (1985): 10–11.
12. Đorđe Čomić, "Strah, mržnja i gej kontrakultura" [Fear, Hate and Gay Counterculture], *Potkulture*, No. 3 (1987): 50–57.
13. About the case of Croatia, see a new dissertation: Franko Dota, *Javna i politička povijest muške homoseksualnosti u socijalističkoj Hrvatskoj (1945–1989)* [The Public and Political History of Male Homosexuals in Socialist Croatia, 1945–1989] (PhD dissertation, Zagreb: University of Zagreb, 2017).
14. Slađana Marković, "Zemlja bez jezika" [A Land Without a Language], *Potkulture*, No. 3 (1987): 58–60.
15. John Alan Lee, "Ne tu reč! Ne gej za homoseksualca!" [Don't Use That Word: Gay Meaning Homosexual], *Potkulture*, No. 3 (1987): 60–69; Mikael Polak [Michael Pollak], "Muška homoseksualnost, ili: sreća u getu?" [Male Homosexuality, or: Happiness in the Ghetto?], *Potkulture*, No. 3 (1987): 70–79.
16. Suzana Tratnik, "Lepotne napake lezbištva" [Beauty Mistakes of Lesbianism], *Revolver*, No. 12 (June–August 1994), reprinted in Tratnik and Segan, eds., *L: Zbornik o lezbičnem gibanju na Slovenskem 1984–1995*, 50–51.
17. See ILIS – COC, "Deset vprašanj lezbičnosti" [Ten Questions About Lesbianism], *Mladina*, No. 37 (October 1987): 26–27; The supplement in *Mladina*: "Nekaj o ljubezni med ženskami" [A Few Things About Women Loving Women], ed. Suzana, Roni, Erika, Nataša, Marjeta, and Davorka. *Pogledi* Summer 14, No. 8, in *Mladina*, No. 37 (October 1987): 21–28.
18. "Problemi vsiljene heteroseksualnosti" [The Problems with Mandatory Heterosexuality], *Mladina*, No. 37 (October 1987): 23.
19. Mark G. Field, "The Soviet Legacy: The Past as Prologue", in *Health Care in Central Asia*, ed. Martin McKee, Judith Healy, and Jane Falkingham, 67–75 (Buckingham–Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2002), 68.
20. Muhamed Saric and Victor G. Rodwin, "The Once and Future Health System in the Former Yugoslavia: Myths and Realities", *Journal of Public Health Policy* (Summer 1993): 220–237, 220.
21. Stephen J. Kunitz, "What Yugoslavia Means: Progress, Nationalism and Health", *Supplement to Health Transition Review* 6 (1996): 253–272, 258.

22. See D. E. Parmelee et al., *User Influence in Health Care: Some Observations on the Yugoslav Experience* (Lund: Scandinavian Institute for Administrative Research, 1979) and idem. "Medicine Under Socialism: Some Observations on Yugoslavia and China", *Social Science and Medicine* 21 (1985): 719–732. Quoted in Saric and Rodwin, "The Once and Future Health System", 221.
23. Even if the access systems are different, see the typologisation: Bismarck system, Semashko system, Beveridge system. See Jörgen Marrée and Peter P. Groenwegen, *Back to Bismarck: Eastern European Health Care Systems in Transition* (Aldershot, Hants, England – Brookfield, VT: Avebury, c.1997), 5–8.
24. See especially Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845).
25. Field, "The Soviet Legacy", 69.
26. *Ibid.*, 68–69.
27. About the targeted attacks on midwifery and policies regarding to women's health in the Soviet Union, see Daniel L. Ransel, *Village Mothers: The Generations of Change in Russia and Tataria* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 48, 49–50; Melanie Ilić, "Women in the Khrushchev Era: An Overview", in *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Melanie Ilić, Susan E. Reid, and Lynne Attwood, 5–28 (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2004), 6.
28. Janja Herak Szabo, *Higijena žene u trudnoći, porođaju i babinjama* [Hygiene of Women in Pregnancy, Birth and Post-birth] (Zagreb: Glavni odbor AFŽ Hrvatske, 1948).
29. Milica Bošković, *Higijena žene sa naročitim osvrtom na higijenu i ishranu za vreme trudnoće* [Hygiene of Women with Special Focus on Hygiene and Nutrition During Pregnancy] (Beograd: Zdravstveni narodni univerzitet, 1958).
30. Blagoje Stambolović, *Higijena žene: kako žena da sačuva svoje zdravlje* [The Hygiene of Women: How to Take Care of Your Health] (Beograd–Zagreb: Medicinska knjiga, 1959); Mary Senechal, *Sačuvajte zdravlje svoje obitelji* [Guarding Your Family's Health] (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1974); Živka Vidojković, *Žena i dom: lečenje lekovitim biljem, ishrana i zdravlje, kozmetika* [Woman and Home: Healing with Herbs, Nutrition and Health, Cosmetics] (Beograd: Dom i porodica – Preševo: Progres, 1973).
31. Stambolović, *Higijena žene*, 112–115
32. For the cultural history of women's orgasm, see the groundbreaking research of Alfred Kinsey, as well as William Masters and Virginia Johnson in the 1950s and 1960s, renewing the discourse on women's sexuality, as analysed by Ute Gerhard. Ute Gerhard, *Desiring*

- Revolution. Second-Wave Feminism and the Writing of American Sexual Thought 1920–1982* (New York: Columbia University Press: 2001), 51–80.
33. Vera Smiljanić, “Socijalno poreklo psiholoških spolnih razlika” [The Social Origin of Psychological Sexual Difference], *Psihološka istraživanja*, No. 3 (1984): 109–129.
 34. Lina Vušković and Sofija Trivunac, “Feministička grupa ‘Žena i društvo’”, in *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji. Ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih* [Towards a Visible Women’s History: The Women’s Movement in Belgrade in the 1990s], ed. Marina Blagojević, 47–61 (Belgrade: Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju, 1998), 61.
 35. Lepa Mladenović, “Menjati odnos prema ljudima koji pate” [To Change Our Attitude Towards People Who Suffer], interviewed by Milka Obradović, *Glas omladine* May 1987.
 36. Lepa Mladenović was also extensively publishing about the topic, until 1991 the following articles: Jasna Borovnjak and Lepa Mladenović, “Ne bavimo se bolešću, nego životom” [New Psychiatry: We Do Not Deal with Diseases, We Deal with Life], *Potkulture*, No. 3 (1987): 117–119; Lepa Mladenović, “Implikacije feminističke terapije”/“The Implications of Feminist Therapy”, *Knjiga rezimea sa 31 sabora psihologa* (Belgrade, 1983), 132; “Proizvodnja majke: nacrt za odnos majke i ćerke” [The Production of Mothers: A Sketch to the Mother-Daughter Relationships], *Vidici*, No. 1–2 (1984): 23–35; et al., eds., *Alternativne psihijatriji: Materijali sa naučnog skupa “Psihijatrija i društvo”* [Alternatives of Psychiatry: Materials from the Scientific Conference “Psychiatry and Society”] (Belgrade: Lila ulica, 1985); with Biljana Branković, “Mreža – Alternativne psihijatriji” [Alternatives to Psychiatry], *Kultura*, No. 68–69 (1985): 170–178.; ed. with Aleksandar Petrović, *Mreža alternativa* [Network of Alternatives] (Kragujevac: Svetlost, 1987).
 37. See Janet Sayers, *Mothers of Psychoanalysis: Helene Deutsch, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991); Jean Strouse, ed. *Women and Analysis: Dialogues on Psychoanalytic Views of Femininity* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 1985, c.1974).
 38. Lesley Doyal, *Politična ekonomija zdravlja* [The Political Economy of Health], trans. Vijolica Neubauer and David Neubauer (Ljubljana: Kresija, 1985).
 39. Lesley Doyal, *What Makes Women Sick: Gender and the Political Economy of Health* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 15. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
 40. See also Ann Oakley, *Essays on Women, Medicine and Health* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, c.1993).

41. Isis International, “Our History”, http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=241 (accessed 5 September 2014).
42. More about ISIS and their role in the global feminist network, see Ana María Portugal, “Isis International: A Latin American Perspective”, in *Developing Power: How Women Transformed International Development*, ed. Arvonne S. Fraser and Irene Tinker, 103–114 (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2004), 105–111. Also Hawkesworth, *Globalization and Feminist Activism*, 71–72.
43. The documentation of the FGŽD in the ŽINDOK Centar and the list of events of the SKC do not always agree on the exact dates. The reason is probably that events sometimes had to be rescheduled. It is for sure, however, that the “Women and Health” series took place March and April 1986. See ŽINDOK D-76/1987. The SKC events are listed in *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji: ženski pokret u Beogradu 90-ih* [Towards a Visible Women’s History: The Women’s Movement in Belgrade in the 1990s], ed. Marina Blagojević, 49–60. (Beograd: Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju, 1998).
44. ŽINDOK D-28/1988.
45. See Bonnie B. O’Connor, “The Home Birth Movement in the United States”, *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Vol. 18. No. 2 (1993 April):147–174 and the early work of the iconic figure of the US home birth movement: Sheila Kitzinger, *The Experience of Childbirth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) and *Birth at Home* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
46. Jasenka Kodrnja, “Dnevnik jedne roditelje” [Diary of a Birth Giving Woman], *Start*, No. 335, 21 November 1981, 56–57.
It reflects the relations between the editorial board and their journalists, however, that the editors do not hesitate to add a short notice to the article: they have removed the name of the hospital from the article, not due to the lack of hard evidence or to make the legal protection of the magazine explicit, but since “it is only one person’s experience”.
47. *OBOS* was eventually published in 2001 by the Autonomni ženski centar [Autonomous Women’s Centre], a feminist NGO in Belgrade, which is a descendant of the SOS helpline and thus also, the *Žena i društvo* group. See *Naša tela, mi* [Our Bodies, Ourselves], ed. Stanislava Otašević, trans. Dušanka Vučinić et al. (Beograd: Autonomni ženski centar protiv seksualnog nasilja, 2001).
48. Cerjan-Letica mentions one research comparing male and female health and chronic illnesses, but that one is without a sociological perspective, 26.
49. “Kazivanja partizanskih liječnica” [Stories of Partisan Woman Doctors], interviews by Eric Špicer. Saša Božović and Cila Albahari, *Žena*, Vol. 44.

- No. 1 (1986): 62–72.; Mira Vrabčić and Zora Steiner, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 4 (1986): 38–49; Ruža Francetić Blau, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 6 (1986): 89–95. These are either complementary, providing a women’s perspective and being critical, or may have been added to balance out the foreign literature and prove that Yugoslavia is a special case which does not have the problems of the West.
50. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Žena i zdravlje” [Woman and Health], *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 1 (1986): 23–26, 23. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
 51. Marsden G. Wagner, “Trudnoća, porod i nakon poroda. Zdravstvene službe u Evropi” [Pregnancy, Birth and After Birth. Health Services in Europe], trans. Anita Kontrec, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 1 (1986): 53–61.
 52. Željka Karalić, “Rađanje u bolnici ili kod kuće?” [Birth Giving in the Hospital or at Home?], *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 5 (1986): 38–45, 40–41.
 53. Ilona Kickbush, “Žene i zdravstvena zaštita u obitelji” [Women and Health Care in the Family], trans. Anita Kontrec, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 1 (1986): 48–52; Constance A. Nathanson, “Bolesti i uloga žene. Teorijski pregled” [Illness and the Feminine Role: A Theoretical Review], trans. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 1 (1985): 39–47.
 54. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, “Bolesne žene iz viših klasa” [The “Sick” Woman of the Upper Classes], trans. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, *Žena*, Vol. 44. No. 1 (1985): 26–38.
 55. Lydia Sklevicky, “Kad žena kaže ‘NE’ to znači ‘NE!’” [If a woman says “no”, it means “no!”], *Pitanja*, Vol. 9. No. 8 (1977): 15–18.
 56. 24 June 1987. ŽINDOK D-73/1987.
 57. See e.g. R. Emerson Dobash – Russell P. Dobash, *Women, Violence, and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 1992); S. Laurel Weldon, *Protest, Policy, and the Problem of Violence Against Women: A Cross-National Comparison* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, c.2002); Julie Peters – Andrea Wolper, eds. *Women’s Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Margaret E. Keck – Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).
 58. Janet Elise Johnson, *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, c.2009), 19–20.
 59. *Ibid.*, 20.
 60. For the sake of comparison, the Autonomni ženski centar, which currently runs the SOS in Belgrade, has 15–20 volunteers at most, and the Hungarian helpline of the NGO NANE is maintained by 10–15 volunteers.

61. Dražena Peranić and Merima Hamulić, “Ko to lomi adamovo rebro” [The One Who Breaks Adam’s Rib], *Oslobođenje*, 6 November 1988 (Presarijum SKC).
62. Vesna Mimica, “Kako smo u Zagrebu počele da se organiziramo protiv nasilja nad ženama. Povodom 20 godina rada skloništa AŽKZ-a – 2011” [How We Started to Organise Against Violence Against in Women in Zagreb. On occasion of 20 years of work of the AŽKZ – 2011], <https://www.facebook.com/autonomna/posts/730171820327934.0> (accessed 6 September 2014).
63. ŽINDOK D-27/1988, ŽINDOK D-28/1988, ŽINDOK D-29/1988.
64. ŽINDOK D-29/1988.
65. “Death to Sexism, Freedom for Women”, paraphrasing the partisan slogan “Death to Fascism, Freedom for the People”. Woman, age 40, from Belgrade. ŽINDOK D-42/1988 “Žene govore o nasilju” [Women Talk About Violence], from the survey “Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama”.
66. Lina Vušković, “Kvalitet ili kvantitet? Deca su sve skuplja: Hoćemo li i dalje žrtvovati one koji su ovde zbog onih koji će možda biti ovde?” [Quality or Quantity? Children Cost More and More: Do We Want Those Who Are Already Here to Suffer for Those Who Could Be Here?], *Zum Reporter*, No. 849. 3–10 March 1983.
67. ŽINDOK D-54-1988 from 4 March 1987.
68. Lepa Mladenović and Sladjana Marković, “Dok stojim za tezgom niko mi ništa ne može. Akciona anketa žena, na Kalenića pijaci” [Until I’m Standing by the Counter, No One Can Do Anything to Me. Action Research by Women at Kalenić Market], ŽINDOK D-66/1987.
69. “Solidarnost između žena” [Solidarity Among Women], ŽINDOK D-66/1987.
70. “Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama” [Women Against the Violence Against Women], ŽINDOK D-41/1988.
71. See Dubravka Žarkov, *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-up of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Ana Miškovska-Kajevska, *Feminist Activism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb Feminists in the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
72. Lepa Mladenović, “‘Odlučile smo da izađemo iz ćutanja.’ Žene protiv nasilja nad ženama” [We Have Decided Not to Be Silent Any Longer. Women Against Violence Against Women], ŽINDOK D-40/1988.
73. Mladenović and Marković, “Dok stojim za tezgom niko mi ništa ne može”.
74. Lepa Mladenović, “‘Odlučile smo da izađemo iz ćutanja’”
75. Ibid.
76. Gordana Cerjan-Letica, “Nasilje prema ženama u obitelji” [Violence Against Women in the Family], *Žena*, Vol. 46. No. 6 (1988): 28–38, 32.

77. Dobash and Dobash, *Women, Violence, and Social Change*, 45.
78. Jasenka Kodrnja and Katarina Vidović, “SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja” [SOS Telephone for Women and Children Violence Victims], *Žena*, Vol. 46. No. 5 (1988): 68–77, 69–70. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
79. “Okrugli stol *Žene*. Nasilje u obitelji” [Roundtable *Žena*. Violence in the Family], *Žena*, Vol. 47. No. 1–2 (1989): 54–83; Mladen Singer, “Poticaji za promjene” [Incentives for Change], 55–58; Zdravka Poldrugać, “Sto pokazuju istraživanja” [What Research Shows], 58–61; Ljiljana Mikšaj-Todorović, “Tamna brojka’ u otkrivanju počinitelja” [“Dark Numbers” in Revealing the Perpetrators], 61–63; Lana Pető Kujundžić, “Kažnavanje i kaznena politika” [Punishment and Penal Politics], 63–65; Katarina Vidović, “Pitanja bez odgovora” [A Question Without Answers], 65–66; Biljana Kašić, “Negacija problema – na primjeru incesta” [Denying the Problem – On the Example of Incest], 66–67; Ivo Švel, “Razgovaramo o vrhu ledenjaka” [We Are Talking About the Peak of the Iceberg], 67–69; Olga Petak, “Patrijarhalni odgoj kao izvor nasilja” [Patriarchal Upbringing as a Source of Violence], 69–70; Jasenka Kodrnja, “SOS – drugačije od institucija” [SOS – Differently from the Institutions], 71–72; Hela Ujević Buljeta, “O mogućim uzrocima i načinu prevencije” [About the Possible Causes and Modes of Prevention], 72–74; Rafael Pejčinović, “Što pokazuju zagrebački podaci” [What the Data from Zagreb Shows Us], 74–76; Melita Singer, “Zašto samo o djeci?” [Why Only About Children?], 76. Nina Kadić, “Najbitnija je ipak prevencija” [The Most Important Is Still Prevention], 76–77; Mira Tecilazić Bašić, “Prijedlozi za izmjenu propisa” [Suggestions for Changing the Regulations], 77–79; Zdenka Pantić, “Nasilje nad djecom pri razvodu brakova” [Violence Against Children During Divorce], 81–83.
80. See Mikšaj-Todorović, “Tamna brojka’ u otkrivanju počinitelja”, 61–63. Pető Kujundžić, “Kažnavanje i kaznena politika”, 63–65.
81. Melita Singer, “Zašto samo o djeci?” [Why Only About Children?], *Žena*, Vol. 47. No. 1–2 (1989): 76.
82. This and the following quotations in this paragraph are all from Vidović, “Pitanja bez odgovora”, 65.
83. Barbara Havelková argues in her article about the Czechoslovak regime that state socialism had family-friendly, but not women-friendly policies and legislation. Barbara Havelková, “The Three Stages of Gender in Law”, in *The Politics of Gender Culture Under State Socialism: An Expropriated Voice*, ed. Hana Havelková and Libora Oates-Indruchová, 31–56 (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014).
84. I provide a much more detailed analysis of this encounter, as well as of the work of Nikolić-Ristanović in my article about the influences

of 1968 on the Yugoslav feminists: Zsófia Lóránd, “Violence against Women, Feminism in Yugoslavia and 1968”, in *Emancipation? Women—Violence—1968*. *Essays Toward a Critical History of the Present*, ed. Sarah Colvin and Katharina Karcher (Routledge Studies in Gender and Global Politics, Expected publication date: 2018 Spring).

85. The scholar who first joined the international organisations of victimology as a discipline was Zvonimir Šeparović. He organised international conferences and publications in the field of victimology, including one in Zagreb in 1985 and another in Dubrovnik in 1988, the latter even focusing on domestic violence. (See Zvonimir Paul Šeparović, ed., *Victimology: International Action and Study of Victims*. 2 Vols. (Zagreb: University of Zagreb and Samobor: “Zagreb”, 1988); Wanda Jamieson and Zvonimir Paul Šeparović, eds., *Domestic Violence: Selected Papers Given at the International Workshop on Domestic Violence 1988 in Dubrovnik* (Dubrovnik and Zagreb: [s.n.] and Samobor: “Zagreb”, 1988). His approach to the topic, however, is problematic, inasmuch as he often repeats prejudice surrounding VaW and DV. In his book where he introduces the discipline, there is a short subchapter with the title “*Nasilje nad supružnicima*” [Violence Between Spouses], where he first and foremost emphasises that women also commit violence against men, despite the new feminist category of *zlostavljena žena* [Battered Woman]. (See Zvonimir Šeparović, *Viktimologija: studije o žrtvama* [Victimology: Studies About the Victims] (Zagreb: Pravni fakultet and Samobor: “Zagreb” radna organizacija za grafičku djelatnost, 1985), 190.) At the same time, he quotes the relevant feminist literature for further inquiries (literature that contradicts his statements) and admits that it is hard for women to leave the abusive partner, which creates a weird tension in his writing. There are similar serious inconsistencies in the edited volumes of the two conferences Šeparović organised. There are papers, such as one about incest by Imogene L. Moyer or another about the crimes against ethnic women workers in Australia by Maartje Bozinovic, as well as writings by Nikolić-Ristanović which represent cutting edge scholarship and are in line with the feminist and essentially, human rights approach refusing victim-blaming. (See Imogene L. Moyer, “Differential Power and the Dynamics of Father-Daughter Incest”, 89–96; Maartje Bozinovic, “Victimisation of Ethnic Women Workers in Melbourne”, in *Victimology: International Action and Study of Victims*, 117–120.) On the other hand, the volume from the 1985 Zagreb conference includes the text “Yugoslavia: Right to Life before Birth” by Vladimir Paleček, who was invited by Šeparović himself, to give a talk about abortion as genocide.

The volumes edited by Šeparović in 1990–1991 engage with the nationalist discourses about political victimhood and responsibility,

feeding into the emerging victimhood discourses which served as justification of the war. Šeparović's new journal, *Viktimologija: Časopis za stradanja ljudi* [Victimology: A Journal to the Question of the Human Suffering], the first issue [Out of Two Altogether] published a wide selection of articles around the theme "minority rights". Some are about "homosexuals as a minority group", whereas we also find statements in the introduction about "the victims of Bleiburg, the suffering of Andrija Hebrang, the victims of Dachau, the suffering of Alojzije Stepinac", "all victims of all crimes, including those of četniks, ustaša, partisans, Russians and Germans [more peoples listed], Albanians and Serbs", and then adds: "the victims of the Croatian Spring in 1971". The unlimited enumeration of victims from every historical period and all over the world, however, has many elements in the centre of controversies of Yugoslavia at the time. The second, last issue of the journal is about Kosovo, with an article: "Deklaracija o kršenju prava pripadnika hrvatskog naroda u Republici Srbiji i pokrajinama Vojvodini i Kosovo" [Declaration About the Violations of the Rights of the Members of the Croatian Nation in the Republic of Serbia and the Independent Provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo].

86. In Yugoslavia, about this see Vladimir Vodinelić, "Kriminalistička viktimologija: novo učenje u kriminalističkoj znanosti" [Criminal Victimology: A New Study in the Criminal Sciences], *Bezbednost i društvena samozaštita* [Safety and Social Self-protection], Vol. 5. No. 1 (1990): 28–34; Vol. 5. No. 3 (1990): 40–49; Zagorka Simić-Jekić, "Razgraničenje viktimologije od drugih krivičnih nauka" [Differentiating Victimology from Other Studies in Criminology], *Pravni život* [Legal Life], Vol. 35. No. 12 (1985): 1181–1194.
87. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta* [Women as Crime Victims] (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1989). Further citations to this work are given in the text.
88. Today, we would use gender, but as the original uses sex [pol], I kept the author's terminology.
89. Jasenka Kodrnja and Katarina Vidović, "SOS telefon za žene i djecu žrtve nasilja" [SOS Telephone for Women and Children Violence Victims], *Žena*, Vol. 46. No. 5 (1988): 68–77, 69–70. Further citations to this work are given in the text.
90. Ujević Buljeta, "O mogućim uzrocima i načinu prevencije", 72. See next footnotes about the *Žena* roundtable. "Okrugli stol *Žene*. Nasilje u obitelji", *Žena*, Vol. 47. No. 1–2 (1989): 54–83.
91. The article referenced: Gerald D. Robin, "Forcible Rape: Institutionalised Sexism in the Criminal Justice System", *Crime and Delinquency*, No. 2 (1977). The same journal issue has two other articles about female offenders too.

92. Lina Vušković, “Kako prići djevojci? Budi dobra da ne budeš silovana!” [How to Talk to Girls? Be Good So That You Will Not Be Raped!], *Zum reporter* No 821, 20–27 May 1982.
93. Nevenka Gruzinov-Milovanović, “Sociološki i kulturni aspekti silovanja” [Sociological and Cultural Aspects of Rape], *Gledišta*, Vol. 1–2 (1990): 170–184.
94. The referenced books: Andra Medea and Kathleen Thompson, *Against Rape* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974); Jennifer Temkin, *Rape and the Legal Process* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1987).
95. Gruzinov-Milovanović, “Sociološki i kulturni aspekti silovanja”, 183.
96. Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju socijalističke samoupravne Jugoslavije* [Woman in the Development of the Socialist Self-managing Yugoslavia] (Beograd: NIRO Jugoslavonska stvarnost, 1981), 86. Quoted in Nikolić-Ristanović, *Žene kao žrtve kriminaliteta*, 23.
97. Mladen Singer, Ljiljana Mikšaj-Todorović and Zdravka Poldrugač, eds., *Kriminalitet na štetu maloljetnika* [Crimes Harming Underage Children] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1989).
98. Švel, “Razgovaramo o vrhu ledenjaka”, 69.
99. Kašić, “Negacija problema - na primjeru incesta”, 67.
100. Kadić, “Najbitnija je ipak prevencija”, 76.
101. Interview with Vera Litričin.
102. Mojca Dobnikar, “‘Feministično socialno delo’? Ne, hvala! Za političnost in proti izgubi spomina” [“Feminist Social Work”? No, Thank You. For the Political and Against the Losing of Memory], *Delta*, Vol. 3. No. 3–4 (1997): 117–130.
103. Feministička grupa “Žena i društvo” SKC Beograd, “Još jednom o SOS-telefonu. Nasilje je politički problem”, *Student*, 29 March 1989 (Presarijum SKC-a).
104. Alan Renwick, “Anti-Political or Just Anti-Communist? Varieties of Dissidence in East-Central Europe and Their Implications for the Development of Political Society”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 20. No. 2 (2006 Spring): 286–318, 288.
105. Linda Briskin, “Feminist Practice: A New Approach to Evaluating Feminist Strategy”, in *Women and Social Change. Feminist Activism in Canada*, ed. Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, 24–40 (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1991).
106. Peranić – Hamulić, “Ko to lomi adamovo rebro” (emphasis mine).
107. Ženski Parlament, “To the Serbian Parliament”, Belgrade, September 1992. *Žene za žene. Vanredni bilten SOS-a* [Women for Women. Special Issue of the SOS Bulletin], No. 5, November 1993, 90–91. See Jim Seroka and Vukašin Pavlović, eds. *The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation*. (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, c.1992).

108. Beogradski ženski lobi, “Pitanje strankama: da li ce žene glasati za vas?” [A Question to the Parties: Are Women Going to Vote for You?], Speakers: Nebojša Popov and Svetlana Slapšak (UJDI), Milosav Jovanović (RSJ), Gordana Marjanović and Tomislav Kresović (NDM), Milan Nikolić and Sonja Liht (SDS - J) and the representatives of the Demokratski forum, Demokratska stranka and the Stranka Jugoslovena, 1 November 1990. See Dragica Vukadinović, “Hronologija feministički orijentisanih programa realizovanih u Studentskom kulturnom centru u Beogradu od 1975 do 1992” [The Chronology of Programs with a Feminist Orientation Realised at the Students’ Cultural Centre in Belgrade from 1979 till 1992], in *Ka vidljivoj ženskoj istoriji*, ed. Marina Blagojević, 47–49 (Beograd: Centar za ženske studije, istraživanja i komunikaciju, 1998).
109. “Sastanak Beogradskog ženskog lobija povodom peticija Skupštini SR Srbije i Društvenom savetu za planiranje porodice” [A Meeting of the Women’s Lobby in Belgrade on Occasion of the Petition to the Parliament of the Socialist Republic Serbia and the Social Committee for Family Planning], 13 June 1990.
 “Beogradski ženski lobi – usvajanje peticije povodom Zakona o braku i porodici i Rezolucije o populacionoj politici” [Women’s Lobby Belgrade – Petition on Occasion of the Law About Marriage and Family and the Resolution About Population Politics], 21 June 1990.
110. See Eva D. Bahovec, ed. *Abortus - pravica do izbire?! Pravni, medicinski, sociološki, moralni in politični vidiki* [Abortion – The Right to Choice?! Legal, Medical, Sociological, Moral and Political Aspects] (Ljubljana: Skupina “Ženske za politiko”, 1991).
111. See Vesna Teršelić, “Širanje našeg civilnog prostora: žene u mirovnim inicijativama” / “Expanding Our Civil Space: Women in Peace Initiatives”, English trans. Renée Franić, in *Žene i politika mira. Prilozi ženskoj kulturi otpora / Women and the Politics of Peace. Contributions to a Culture of Women’s Resistance*, ed. Rada Borić – Željka Jelavić – Biljana Kašić, 19–24 (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, Zagreb, 1997); Vesna Kesić, “Muslim Women, Croatian Women, Serbian Women, Albanian Women”, in *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, ed. Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić, 311–321 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, ed., *Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans*, trans. Borislav Radović (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000); Vesna Kesić, Vesna Janković and Biljana Bijelić, eds., *Women Recollecting Memories: The Center for Women War Victims Ten Years Later* (Zagreb: Center for Women War Victims, 2003).

- About the situation in Bosnia and Hercegovina, see Elissa Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).
112. See Janet Reineck, *The Past as Refuge. Gender, Migration, and Ideology Among the Kosova Albanians* (PhD dissertation, Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley, 1991).
 113. According to the categorisation of Miškovska-Kajevska, there were two major groups of feminists both in Croatia and in Serbia after 1991: anti-nationalist and patriotic feminists. Miškovska-Kajevska, *Feminist Activism at War*. About the ideological position of the anti-nationalist feminists, see: Zsófia Lóránd, "Feminist Criticism of the 'New Democracies' in Serbia and Croatia in the First Half of the 1990s", *Political Thought in Eastern Europe After 1989*, ed. Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014).
 114. Peranić – Hamulić, "Ko to lomi adamovo rebro".



Conclusion

Vera Litričin: *“That this was pionirski rad [pioneering work], I only realised later, when the wars broke out.”*

Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović: *“Despite the hard times in the 1990s, we had a decade before that. So, at least we didn’t start from scratch in the 2000s. We had already the shelters, the SOS, the legal knowledge. We knew what was needed to help women.”¹*

Thinking of the history of feminism in the past two decades, Christine Stansell decides to call it “a feminist promise”. As she explains: “Few feminists sign in for life. [...] I anticipated a quick exit, because the cause seemed so indisputably just and the remedies so obvious. [...] We were after the business of being fully human. And in the late 1960s, achieving full humanity seemed like the most natural thing in the world”.² Stansell faced what the new Yugoslav feminists also had to face: that the feminist project is never done, though small successes can be achieved. The new Yugoslav feminists reflected on the promise of the partisan movement and the emancipation politics of Yugoslav socialism, criticised the state for its betrayal of its promise and hoped to make real change. The greatest change they did achieve was the creation of a feminist form of dissent and a new feminist language, an intervention into the existing discourse on women and women’s rights, thus providing not only a vocabulary, but also new ways of organising, new forms of collectivities and even parallel

institutions that lasted far beyond the existence of Yugoslavia and which became a resource for the times during and after the wars of the 1990s.

As we have seen, there is an arc of the developments of new Yugoslav feminism, marked by different interpretations of concepts and thus constantly contributing new meanings to the ideological set-up of feminism. The first steps, explored in Chapter 2, were taken in academia. The closed circles and small audience enabled a few academic women and men to start thinking about the developments of new feminism in the USA and Western Europe and search for its relevance in Yugoslavia. As I emphasise at several points of this book, the narrative of the partisan movement and women's important role in the independence of socialist Yugoslavia was convincing, and therefore, the new feminists were trying to reconcile feminist ideas with the existing ideology, while they also used these feminist ideas to express dissent.

The investigations into the possibilities of feminism in Yugoslavia, exploring the radical, liberal and revolutionary versions emerging elsewhere, were supported by the rethinking of concepts such as work, family and patriarchy and with the introduction of a new terminology for gender and sexism. The SKJ's discourse on women's emancipation was dominated by the prevalence of the class question and general human emancipation, *općeljudske emancipacije*. The new Yugoslav feminists challenged this position by claiming that women's oppression cannot be solely handled by subsuming it to the class question. They introduced the concept of gender [*rod*] into the social scientific and later, into the public discourse in Yugoslavia (though until the 1990s they used it alternately with the term sex [*(s)pol*]). By the late 1980s, gender was one of the key concepts in the dissenting discourse of the feminists. While developing a markedly feminist critique of state socialism and the success of women's emancipation, they took inspirations from critical Marxist thinkers as well as a broad variety of feminists from all over the world.

One of the influences, French post-structuralist feminist theory was just as important in the academic world as it was in the fields of arts and literature, as I demonstrate in Chapter 3. Arts and literature offered a space for a discussion parallel with the one in academia, where the new Yugoslav feminists argued for the "women's question" to be replaced by the concept of feminism. Similarly, the feminists suggested the replacement of the concept of "women's literature" with *žensko pismo*, the local variant of the French *écriture féminine*. The theoreticians, curators, artists and writers together contributed to a changing landscape of the Yugoslav art scene, which the visual artist Sanja Iveković criticised for its

formalism and patriarchalism in her 1975 “*Women in Art – žene u jugoslavenskoj umjetnosti*” [Women in Yugoslav Art]. The refusal of patriarchy characterised the work of both Rada and Sanja Iveković, the fiction of Slavenka Drakulić, Judita Šalgo and Irena Vrkljan and was combined with a new frame for thinking of the female body and sexuality. However, women’s creativity and women’s writing were not simply theoretical issues, as Drakulić, but also Dubravka Ugrešić and Sanja Iveković extensively reflect on. The appearance of strong women artists and writers happened with the emergence of new feminism in Yugoslavia, despite the claim that women’s equality was ensured and that there was no need for a separate agenda for women in art. The work of these women proved that there was a need for new discussions of women’s creativity, women’s body and motherhood.

Popular mass media, the theme of Chapter 4, published many of the ideas of the intellectuals and artists whose work I analyse in the previous chapters. Several women’s magazines, the political bi-weekly, *Start*, and a handful of TV shows became important forums of the new Yugoslav feminism. These mediums were not only colourful examples of publishing and censorship practices in Yugoslavia, but also offered space for a more explicit language about sexuality and violence. High circulation numbers and audience rates meant access to more people, while the wider audience required the “tuning down” of the use of the terms “feminism” and “feminist”. The chapter emphasises that despite relative independence gained through the high circulation numbers (the magazines could finance themselves from advertisements and subscriptions), there was a steady presence of self-censorship. This stemmed not only from the pressure from the state, but also from the conservatism of the readership and the audience of these mediums. This is telling about the ways the state-proclaimed equality of women and men did (not) reach the population and did not considerably change the patriarchal attitudes to women.

Sexuality and violence were the central themes of the reorganised feminist groups, as we can see in Chapter 5. Supported by the lesbian members of the group and by joining international women’s networks against VaW and to advance women’s health, the women in the *Žena i društvo* groups acquired new knowledge, which influenced not only the feminist language, but the forums too. The women-only groups offered a space for the discussions of intimate issues, which then in the spirit of “the personal is political”, influenced the feminist political agenda as well. Activism reached the streets with a polling project of the SKC Belgrade, and the feminist approach to supporting women

and children victims of domestic and partnership violence reached the wider population of Yugoslavia through the SOS helplines in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade, and the first shelter in Zagreb. Connecting the lack of protection of women and children from violence in the homes to the violence and injustice women face in the health care system, one of the symbols of modernised self-managing socialism, was in itself a direct criticism of the failures of the equality project of the state (Fig. 6.1).

Looking at these two decades of history of new Yugoslav feminism, there is a growing radicalisation in their dissenting position towards a weakening federal state. Through the introduction of a new feminist language, the shortcomings and failures of institutions and policies were targeted. Much of the inspiration came from the “Western second wave”, but there was firm basis provided by the particular heritage of the WWII partisan movement in Yugoslavia, involving hundreds of thousands of women.³ This tradition was a source of strength in the belief of the next generation of young women that they were entitled to equality, since their mothers and grandmothers fought for it themselves. The answer to the question why and how the presence of a strong and coherent form of feminism was possible in Yugoslavia during socialism is manifold. One layer is certainly the partisan heritage, supported by the almost commonplace openness of Yugoslav socialism, characterised, among others, by a relative freedom to travel and the flexible publication laws. Another aspect that we cannot ignore is the contingency of these women who became the core members of the feminist groups and who are the main protagonists of this book—how they got to know each other, the way their friendships were forged and the decisions they made.

The presence of a feminist dissenting discourse in a socialist regime in Eastern Europe highlights the post-feminist attitudes of socialism: feminism was not refused in the name of conservatism or traditionalism, but in the name of progress. In Eastern Europe, in this case, in Yugoslavia, we find women’s emancipation policies without feminism, which still shared many of the demands of feminism in the “West” emerging in the 1960s. While, as rightly pointed out by the Yugoslav feminists, the emancipation politics of state socialism lacked crucial elements which might have led to real equality and emancipation, many of the policies and institutions of the socialist welfare state need to be acknowledged⁴—as was also done by the Yugoslav feminists.



Fig. 6.1 The stall of the Slovenian SOS helpline at the conference of the Slovenian Union of Socialist Youth

The limits of my research are partly the limits of the material in focus. The *Žena i društvo* groups were centred in the big cities of the three most developed republics of the SFRJ, their members were urban intellectual women, and the homogeneity of the group unavoidably led to a sociability problem. Again, as I show at the end of Chapter 5, there was a promise of a more grass-roots and socially diverse movement, which was disrupted by the wars in the 1990s, but it remains an open question if the developments of a pluralist capitalist liberal democracy would have supported class and ethnic diversification of feminism. However, what we know is that the new feminist knowledge did not reach the vast majority of women. As Elissa Helms points out, the women's rights activists of the 1990s in Bosnia-Herzegovina were almost completely unaware of the work of the *Žena i društvo* groups, whereas the feminist language and feminist knowledge created by the group made a lasting effect on feminist thought and practice of the region that was socialist Yugoslavia.⁵

Feminism in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s was no doubt a complex and exciting phenomenon, a gold mine for the intellectual historian. Due to this complexity, there are a few themes that regretfully remained untouched or were only marginally addressed in this book. Religion is there in a few articles with a feminist orientation and would deserve more attention,⁶ as well as the ways feminists conceptualise fascism.⁷ Both themes are fascinating in their positioning vis-a-vis the socialist Yugoslav state and are important predecessors of the burning issues of the 1990s.

My exploration strives to contribute to the diversification of the history of feminism, through a story of new feminist dissent in Yugoslavia, with all the details from the attempts to criticise existing socialism from the direction of critical Marxism through a fascinating variety of work of women artists to anti-violence activism. A story taking place in a country at the time of the Cold War, which was neither “East”, nor “West”, of a feminism which was not the socialist state solving the “women’s question”, not the “Western second wave” and not the postcolonial women’s movement of the Global South, is a contribution to the reconsideration of our categories of post-WWII history. Also, as much as the categories of “normal” (“Western”, “first world”) and “exotic” or “other” (“Eastern”, “Communist”, “Third World”) should be rethought, so should the perception of Yugoslavia as the ultimate exception in the history of post-WWII East European be treated with some reservation. While the coherent and organised feminism emerging in Yugoslavia was

indeed exceptional in the region, much of its intellectual inspirations were part of a shared regional context, and much of the criticism leveled by new Yugoslav feminism against the state could be addressed to any other post-WWII socialism in Eastern Europe. Thus, a history of a feminist group from one country in the region contributes to our understanding of the history of feminism and the history of women's emancipation in the region and beyond.

NOTES

1. Interview with Vera Litričin (Belgrade, 31 May 2011) and Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović (Belgrade, 5 June 2014). The interviews took place in English, Serbo-Croatian or a mixture of both. When there is no translator indicated, the interviews and all quotations in this book are my translation.
2. Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to Present* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010), 395.
3. According to data based on the *Leksikon Narodnooslobodilački rat i revolucija u Jugoslaviji 1941–1945* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1980) quoted by Barbara Jancar, out of the 800,000 partisans fighting in the NOV (People's Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia—*Narodno-oslobodilačka vojska i partizanski odredi Jugoslavije*), 100,000 were women. Those involved in the AFŽ counted around 2,000,000. Out of these, 600,000 were carried off to concentration camps (German, Italian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Ustaše), where around 282,000 of them died. In the course of fighting, 2000 women reached an officer's rank and many of them were elected members of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia. After the war, 91 women were accorded the honour of National Hero. Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941–1945* (Denver, CO: Arden Press Inc., 1990), 205. These numbers from 1980 were used by the regime in every official discussion, but their accuracy is questionable. The demographers Bogoljub Kočović and Vladimir Žerjavić (working with the Victimological Society in Croatia), independently each other, presented proof that the overall number of dead during WWII in Yugoslavia was closer to 1–1.1 million people, as opposed to the 1.7 million declared by the regime. Therefore, the number of women who died in the war may be lower too. However, the numbers here are relevant due to their role in the changing discourse about women's equality. See Bogoljub Kočović, *Žrtve drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji* [Victims of World War II in Yugoslavia] (London: Veritas Foundation Press, 1985); and Vladimir Žerjavić, *Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu* [The

- Losses of the Population of Yugoslavia in the Second World War] (Zagreb: Jugoslavensko viktimološko društvo, 1989).
4. Francisca de Haan, ed., “Gendering the Cold War. An Email Conversation Between Malgorzata (Gosia) Fidelis, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Jill Massino, and Libora Oates-Indruchova”, *Aspasia*, Vol. 8 (2014): 162–190; Raluca Maria Popa, “Translating Equality Between Woman and Men Across Cold War Divides: Woman Activists from Hungary and Romania and the Creation of the International Women’s Year”, in *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Shana Penn and Jill Massino, 59–74 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, c.2009).
 5. Elissa Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women’s Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 51, 65. See also Ana Miškovska Kajevska, *Feminist Activism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb Feminists in the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Bojan Bilić, *We Were Gasping for Air: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and its Legacy* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković, eds., *Resisting the Evil: [Post-]Yugoslav Anti-War Contention* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012); Zsófia Lóránd, “Feminist Criticism of the ‘New Democracies’ in Serbia and Croatia in the early 1990s,” in Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik, eds., *Thinking Through Transition: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989*, 431–461 (New York and Budapest: CEU Press, 2015).
 6. Maca Jogan, “Rastakanje partijarhalnih razumljivosti u feminističkoj teologiji” [The Erosion of the Patriarchal Intelligibilities in Feminist Theology], *Žena*, Vol. 46. No. 1–2 (1988): 90–95.
 7. There is an abundance of references to fascism in the feminist texts, mostly in the writings of Rada Iveković and Nada Ler-Sofronić.

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