CHAPTER 2

The Transfer of Soviet Models

> Women! Women-workers and women-peasants! Follow the example of the Soviet Union! Fight for your liberation under the flag of the Communist Party![1]
>
> Yugoslav Communists' newspaper *Proleter*, January 1933

> Your heroism excited our heroism! Hear us, Soviet women![2]
>
> A magazine for women, *Žena u borbi*, June 1943

> From the papers of the Soviet delegates at the Congress, and in friendly talks with them, our women-antifascists learned the methods of Soviet women's work – and of the tasks we have in this postwar period.[3]
>
> A booklet *Soviet Woman – Our Sister and Our Role Model*, Autumn 1945

The interpretation of Soviet models played a crucial role in the formulation and application of postwar Yugoslav gender policies. Inspired by the Soviet Union, Yugoslav communists often used Soviet texts as practical guidelines for how to change their society. Many Yugoslav communists had been educated in the Soviet Union whilst during the Second World War they had a chance to disseminate Soviet teachings to a large number of recruited Partisan fighters. This chapter explores the rationale behind this reliance upon Soviet models, the mechanics of cultural policy transfer, and the main agents involved in this process. In exploring the Party's pre-war activities, I look at their silence over the gender-related issues in the 1920s, and the change of generation following the Stalinist

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purges, which brought a young, Stalinised generation of communists to the fore. I argue that Soviet gender policies, reshaped over the course of Stalin's rule, found their way to Yugoslavia both through the communist press and through direct contact between Yugoslav and Soviet communists, particularly through Soviet schools for international revolutionaries. For the Yugoslav communists participation in feminist societies was neither genuine nor an acceptable alternative to the Soviet model of gender equality. Yugoslav communists wanted a socialist revolution to make the so-called woman question obsolete, and not to modify the existing capitalist system. The Soviet Union offered solutions and legitimisation to reorganise society as a whole, in which gender policies were an integral part. The Party's first programme for gender policies, written before the Second World War, reflected Stalinist notions about gender and envisioned the application of the Soviet solutions in Yugoslav practice.

Communists' Pre-war Experiences

The examination of the transfer of Soviet models starts with the interwar period when the main agents of transfer were influenced by the ideas dominant from the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav Communist Party was created in April 1919 after the unification of numerous socialist parties that emerged following the First World War. They were initially known as the Socialist Workers' Party of Yugoslavia (Communists), then changed the name to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at the Congress in Vukovar in June 1920. The Party joined the Comintern in the early days, causing splits and conflicts with the social-democrats, who amongst other things insisted on less reliance on the Soviet Union. As a harder Bolshevik line prevailed, the Party proclaimed its intention to become a Soviet republic and to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.[4]

Despite the radical rhetoric, Yugoslav communists achieved significant successes in the elections in 1920, winning a majority in over 30 Serbian municipalities including the major cities of Belgrade, Niš, and Skopje. The monarchist government quickly suspended these municipalities to prevent communists from taking power, yet the communists emerged as the fourth largest party in the following elections for the constitutional assembly in December 1920. Led by general secretaries Filip Filipović and Sima Marković and with over 65,000 members, communists became one of the major political forces. The government

reacted by proclaiming a hasty decree in December 1920, which banned communist press, organisations, and activities. The decree was crafted by an interior minister Milorad Drašković, who was assassinated by a young communist in July next year. The assassination was a pretext for a law that banned the Communist Party. It was followed by confiscation of the Party's properties, communist members of the parliament lost their mandates, and ultimately over 10,000 communists were arrested. With harsh governmental measures and police terror, the Party collapsed and turned into a small conspiratory organisation.[5]

Made illegal and prosecuted, the Party operated underground during next twenty years, in which Yugoslav communists became even more dependent on Soviet aid and advice.[6] Being trained in Moscow, or simply being known as a communist, was so dangerous that the majority of the communists were interrogated, tortured, and imprisoned numerous times by the police. Many were simply murdered. Since the Party was the only political organisation with women amongst its members, many women were also brutally tortured so as to disclose the names of other Party members. For example, one of the leading communist woman of that time Anka Butorac barely survived days of beatings and interrogations, before the Party sent her to the Soviet Union.[7] In such atmosphere, the Soviet Union, as the only socialist country in the interwar period, was a beacon for Yugoslav communists. Furthermore, with its organisation destroyed and always under pressure, few Party members could contribute to a theoretical discussion on Marxism. Many focused on translating and spreading Soviet books, pamphlets, and brochures, often from prisons in which they organised a secret 'Red University.' In the communist underground press, interwar Yugoslav state with its institutions, legislation, and practices, became the main enemy against which their communist identity and policies were defined.[8] The Party sought for solutions that were radically different, disseminating utopian stories about the Soviet Union, presenting it as a state in which women and men were equal, workers were liberated from capitalist exploitation,and people lived happy lives.[9]

The lack of domestic intellectual debate on gender issues amongst the communists contributed to the reliance on the Soviet ideas. The first generation of Yugoslav communists, including their leaders Sima Marković and Filip Filipović never discussed gender relations, patriarchy, or position of women.[10] This silence was reflected in their writings, but also in the Party newspapers of the 1920s. However, many

Yugoslav communists of this older generation did not survive Stalin's purges, those perishing including the leadership of the Party. Only two out of a total of eight of the Party's secretaries survived. Hundreds of other Yugoslav communists disappeared even before the war started, but only a few women were amongst them.[11] These purges also caused a generational shift in the Party in the mid-1930s. Following years of uncertainty and leadership being based outside the country, Tito was sent back from the Soviet Union to reorganise the Party whilst a new generation of communist was very young. For example, amongst communist women in 1936, Mitra Mitrović was only twenty-four years old, Vanda Novosel was twenty-one, Milka Minić was twenty-one, Herta Haas was twenty-two, and Vida Tomšič was twenty-three. Men in the Party were not much older either. If the first generation was *Bolshevised* during the 1920s in terms of organisational practices,[12] this generation was *Stalinised*. As Brigette Studer has pointed out, that stalinisiation was reflected through a system of rules, codes, conventions, and cognitive structures which when combined taught one to speak and see a Stalinist version of Bolshevik.[13] Similar to other international revolutionaries in Europe, Yugoslav communists were disciplined and used as key instruments in promoting Stalinist politics whilst individual deviations from the official party line were not tolerated. Many of these young communists will survive the war and be the crucial agents in changing society on Soviet terms.[14]

Generational changes in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, combined with broader Soviet politics, informed how the Party approached the so-called *woman question*—comprised of the ineligibility of women to vote, discriminating family legislation, the gender pay gap, the closure of many professions to women.[15] The only alternatives to the Soviet solution of the *woman question* (i.e. communist revolution) were raised by interwar Yugoslav feminists and their organisations. They fought for legal changes and the opening of certain professions to women, whilst more radical feminists organised strikes in factories. However, women's organisations were not a unified front with the same goals and methods. Conservative Catholic and Orthodox women's religious societies represented about a third of all organised women's groups during the interwar period, and they focused mostly on teaching domestic skills.[16] As early as 1928, at the Fourth Communist Party Congress in Dresden, these societies were marked as hostile tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The Party was afraid of their popularity, and developed a plan

to denounce feminist groups, and to separate the 'female masses' from them.[17] In subsequent years the Party's central newspaper *Proleter* published numerous articles attacking the feminist societies, accusing them of separating women from broader class struggle.[18] Nevertheless, these societies provided a forum in which women could articulate their interests and try to improve their position, and due to their popularity the Party could not ignore them—particularly as the Party was powerless to abolish them or draw these women in its ranks.[19]

There was a change of attitude as regards women's societies following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in August 1935 when Georgi Dimitrov deemed harmful communists' attempts to abolish the women's organisations as part of the struggle against 'women's separatism.'[20] Dutifully following the Comintern directive, Yugoslav communists changed their strategy, instructing its members—and at that time there was already a handful of women amongst them—to infiltrate those women's societies they considered more progressive.[21] Following orders, the Party's university students were mostly successful in this endeavour. Led by Mitra Mitrović, Milka Kufrin, Neda Božinović and several other communists who would come to hold significant roles during and after the war, they infiltrated the youth section of the Alliance of the Women's Movement, as well as the Yugoslav Association of University-Educated Women. They also influenced the publication of the magazine *Žena danas*, gaining a medium which would later become the official magazine of the Party's women's section.[22] The communists nourished their connections within women's organisations and unions for years, yet their failure to obtain suffrage rights for women, and internal quarrels between communists and feminists, strengthened the idea that women's rights cannot be separated from socialist revolution. During this time, however, many young communists forged friendships which would last for decades. Unsurprisingly, only women who were admitted to the Party or its Youth section before the war had leading Party positions after 1945.[23]

This experience of working with various feminist groups in interwar Yugoslavia was not negligible for rethinking their own gender positionings. For example, Jancar-Webster shows that women's organisations were urban-oriented, but had an agenda of improving the lives of the rural population through organising self-help programmes that included courses on literacy, hygiene, and home economics. This all resembled the Party's women's section efforts during and after the war, particularly

as female village teachers were the main force behind the Party's campaigns.[24] The difference between feminist campaigns in the countryside, and later communist campaigns was in their scale and final aim: The feminist societies wanted to improve the lives of peasant women in sporadic actions, whilst for communists, mass campaigns had an aspect of 'elevating' the consciousness of peasant women on the road to the socialist transformation of the countryside, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.[25]

The first detailed Party statement on gender policies, whose core would remain unchanged over the next few decades, was made in 1940 at the Party's conference in Zagreb. Vida Tomšič and Spasenija Babović were the first women admitted to the Central Committee, with Tomšič presenting the gender programme. She condemned liberal feminism, claiming that feminism separates women from the working class, and turns women against men rather than against the ruling system. Instead, the political struggle for women's rights had to be part of the workers' struggle for a new people's government of workers and peasants. The Soviet Union was declared the sole model for organising future society. As Tomšič explained, in the Soviet Union women were fully equal to men, had equal salaries, could enrol in any school, and become whatever they wanted, whilst they had an equal role as men in public life. She emphasised the maternal care that the Soviet Union provided, claiming that the Soviet Union was the only country in the world where it was joyful to be a mother, and urged Yugoslavs to demand the same rights.[26]

Barbara Jancar-Webster rightly argues that these ideas were not novel in Yugoslav interwar society, as several women's societies propagated them, just without mentioning the Soviet Union.[27] However, this was the key difference. Vida Tomšič's programme envisioned the solution to women's equality as coming through revolution, and the transformation of society as a whole. Only the Soviet Union could serve as model, as Yugoslav communists believed that the gender regime ought to resemble that of the Soviet Union, a goal which had been impossible within the interwar state. If some of the communist political demands appeared similar to the political objectives of feminist activists, the way these ideas were to be implemented in practice was solely based on imagined Soviet terms. Vida Tomšič and the Party established the Soviet Union as the only legitimate source of ideas, whilst the interpretation of these ideas would guide Yugoslav policies in the following decade.

Knowledge that Yugoslav communists had about the Soviet Union was limited, but not insignificant. The Party's magazine *Proleter* regularly

published news and texts from the Soviet Union. More importantly, some of the pre-war Yugoslav communists had significant experiences of time spent in the Soviet Union, where they received a formal education in Marxism, and observed gender relations and official policies. Many of them were trained at the Soviet International Lenin School, designed for foreign revolutionaries. Amongst the Yugoslav disciples, there were a few women who later had prominent roles in the Yugoslav women's organisation and the Party. For example, Anka Butorac was sent to Moscow in 1930 as one of the most active Yugoslav communist women and spent six years training there before returning to Yugoslavia.[28] Spasenija Babović—later the president of the AFŽ and a government minister—was also trained there, where she met Tito, Edvard Kardelj and other leading communists. Together with other trainees, including Zdenka Kidrič, Spasenija Babović survived the war and was able to apply her experiences gained in Moscow to her many important duties in the Party and the state apparatus.[29]

Stalinist Gender Policies

At this point, it is important to briefly revisit gender policies that inspired leading Yugoslav communists during the 1930s, either through numerous publications or from their stay in the Soviet Union. It is hard to imagine that the nuances of Soviet gender policies were known to Yugoslav communists, or that they observed how these policies were implemented in practice outside carefully controlled Comintern circles. However, Yugoslav communists read the Soviet press and literature, and the Soviet gender regime mattered, particularly as it was used as a legitimising device in opposition to the interwar Yugoslav state. Yugoslav communists were undoubtedly aware of the emancipatory Soviet legislature after the revolution, which consisted of the legalisation of abortion, the acceptance of previously illegitimate children and their rights, as well as easier procedures for divorce and the equalisation of the position of women in family relations in both urban and rural areas.

Besides those legal changes, Bolshevik revolutionaries asserted an aim to create a society in which partners were expected to be equal and to become active participants in the socialist project. What such equality meant, and how socialist gender relations would enter households changed over time. How Yugoslavs understood these concepts is analysed in the following chapters. Regarding the Soviet Union, as Wendy

Goldman shows, early gender policies were based on four principles: free union, women's emancipation through wage labour, the socialisation of housework, and the withering away of the bourgeois family. However, through her extensive research she has argued that all these policies failed to live up to their promises. The idea of free union was never established, especially as concerns men's responsibility and respect for the new socialist women's activities. Women's participation in wage labour became even more prominent at the end of the first five-year plan when many progressive laws were abandoned. Housework was never socialised to the promised extent, whilst the family survived.[30]

With Stalin's ascent to power and the advent of industrialisation, Goldman and other social historians such as Susan E. Reid argued, the Party's policy towards women, the family, and reproduction consists of a retreat from their previous revolutionary moment.[31] Family life was promoted once again, women were encouraged to be mothers above all else, sexual freedoms were restrained, and eventually abortion was banned. Normative distinctions between masculinity and femininity sharpened whilst the government applied harsh measures against prostitution and 'deviant' sexual behaviours. Combined, these were the core of Stalinist gender policies.[32] Such a retreat was caused by the Stalin regime's drive to consolidate a political system, together with concerns about a high rate of abortions and a low birth-rate. In addition, the massive industrialisation brought on by the first five-year plan, the inability of the state to provide the promised services that were supposed to replace the bourgeois family, and debate and pressure 'from below' by women seeking stability of divorce policies and the family also contributed.[33]

Nevertheless, several works, most notably those of Elizabeth A. Wood and David L. Hoffmann, have challenged this idea of a retreat.[34] Yugoslav communists also never observed that gender policies underwent drastic changes under Stalinism, and did not argue that Stalinism caused a retreat even after the break with the Soviet Union. Elizabeth A. Wood argues that the Party always reserved a special role for women as mothers of the Republic, besides combining productive labour and supporting the Red Army during the civil war: 'they were to tend to the Red Army soldiers with caring hands and kind hearts.'[35] In her view, the idea of a woman whose primary role is motherhood and care was not purely a Stalinist invention or a Stalinist return to pre-revolutionary traditions. Only a small minority of Soviet leaders had any interest in gender issues, and these leaders had huge problems once they tried to change

old prejudices. Furthermore, opposition to many progressive actions concerning women was not only found amongst ordinary workers and peasants, but also amongst some of the Party leaders. Wood analysed anxieties created by new marriage and family policies, showing that many Bolsheviks were not clear on how the new relations would emerge. For instance, Wood explains the logic behind allowing abortion in the first place. Bolsheviks believed that it was a 'necessary evil' so as to prevent underground abortion s from taking place. They believed that this policy should only remain until the government could provide a decent life for mothers and children. Once communism had been fully built, its workers would not need abortions. Therefore, abortion was never considered being a woman's right, but more likely a product of economic necessity—a remnant of the old, pre-revolutionary world.[36] Such view had a profound effect on Yugoslav case, examined in the following chapter.

As concerns Stalinist pro-natalist policies, Wood made the argument that, due to many economic problems, policymakers were not troubled by human losses; thus the pro-natalist policies were not as quickly implemented as they were in many other European countries.[37] Building on this, David L. Hoffmann argues that Stalinist policies towards reproduction did not result in retraditionalisation. Although the Stalinist state favoured the family as a unit capable of increasing the birth-rate and producing healthy citizens, this was a 'modernist' idea alien to the Tsarist regime and yet common across Western Europe in the twentieth century. One significant difference was that over the period of Stalin's rule parental obligations were enforced, and norms for sexual behaviour and family organisation were officially prescribed. The regime no longer permitted scholarly debate or public discussion about sex whilst sexual behaviour was to be enforced by police measures rather than by education. However, the family was not supposed to be private; instead, it was proclaimed an instrument in the Party's policies to instil collectivist values in children and improve social discipline. Stalinist family policies thus never intended to result in a return to pre-revolutionary family models. In Stalinist terms, the Soviet household was not the property of a family patriarch or protected from the state's interventions.[38] Stalinist policies were not driven by public opinion, although many were in favour of these policies, but instead by the state's interest in population growth and social control. Although the Soviet case has its specificities, Hoffmann shows that it was part of a broader European trend towards the state management of reproduction in which the state's

desire to increase the population was favoured over individual reproductive rights.[39] Both Wood's and Hoffmann's arguments show that, even if Stalinist policies constituted a retreat from some of the revolutionary ideas of the 1920s, they were not necessarily 'conservative' either in intention or effect.

Several authors have argued that it was this conservative version of gender policies that affected Eastern European countries following the war.[40] However, even if one accepts that there was a retreat in gender policies in the Soviet Union, the interpretation of Stalinist gender practices was used as a tool in transforming Yugoslav society that was still very conservative. Even if they might not have been able to grasp nuances of Stalinist gender ideas, Yugoslav communists certainly adopted main features of these policies. Furthermore, they often used argumentation they read in Soviet newspapers and magazines. The character of Soviet policies as understood by Yugoslav communist leadership was crucial. In that sense, their interpretation of Stalinist social policies created new opportunities for women and men to work and invent new identities, whilst the implications of Stalinist gender politics were very broad—from new labour policies to family relations both in urban and rural areas. For Yugoslav communists, the interwar experience of either being educated in Moscow or the Yugoslav prisons formed their worldviews, created bonds between them, and taught them how a Stalinist society should be organised. War offered a chance to try that in practice.

Teaching Soviet Ideas During the War

The Second World War in Yugoslavia started in April 1941, when Germany and its allies invaded and quickly defeated Yugoslavia. Yugoslav army capitulated in just 12 days, and the country was partitioned between Germany, its allies and newly created fascist Independent State of Croatia. The Communist Party engaged in preparing resistance but was waiting for the Moscow's approval to set in motion an armed struggle.[41] Once Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June, Yugoslav communists were ready. Well organised due to being a persecuted underground organisation and equipped with the experience from the Spanish Civil War where many communists volunteered, the Party started guerrilla warfare. It would see four years of brutal struggle against Germans and their allies, and four years of a vicious civil war with the monarchist Chetnik movement, the collaborationist government and different

pro-German paramilitary forces. Contrary to many other European communists who spent the war in Moscow, Yugoslav communist leadership fought in the country, surviving numerous German raids and, ultimately, gaining legitimacy.[42]

From the communist press, it is clear that once the war started many of the most committed Yugoslav communists had clear ideas concerning desirable gender roles and gender policies, for which the Soviet Union was presented as the prime model. Not only that the communist-led partisan movement was inclusive of all Yugoslav nations, but it was open to women as well. However, during the war, the Party lost the majority of its 12,000 pre-war members, but at the same time it gained 130,000 new, mostly young and uneducated people. The vast majority were peasants, who joined the Partisans after fleeing Ustashe and German terror and did not have an awareness of even basic Marxist concepts. Therefore, the Party used every opportunity to spread its ideas, be it through direct political agitating or subtler educational courses. These educational courses actually covered very similar topics to those organised by the pre-war women's groups, dealing with illiteracy, hygiene, and home economics for women. The key difference was that the Party's versions included ideological education. For instance, alphabet books created during the war covered the Party's major terms and taught trainees about Tito, the Party and its massive organisations, as well as about the Soviet Union.[43]

The basic concepts behind the Party's teaching were defined by ideological education in the Soviet Union, which consisted of dialectical materialism read within *The History of the C.P.S.U. (b)*. This was the main book that set the paradigm through which all other questions were discussed, whilst the fourth chapter of this book—written by Stalin—Yugoslav communists considered being a sacred text.[44] Stalin was regarded as a scholar of the highest calibre, on a par with Marx, Engels, and Lenin. *The History of the C.P.S.U. (b)* was also considered a scholarly text, whose theories were proven in practice, and a text which set the standard for other communists to follow. Of course, this book was considered too advanced for newly recruited Partisans, and so their ideological education took place through magazines, pamphlets, and brochures which often comprised translated Soviet texts supplemented with articles by Yugoslav authors. Soviet literature and a book *How the Steel Was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky was particularly popular. Numerous lives were lost in protecting printing machines, whilst the partisan diaries suggest that fighters used every moment of peace to read Soviet literature.

Carefully planned, all these texts provided meanings, ideas, directives, and information about the rapidly changing world.[45]

The education of recruited Partisan women was mostly the same as for the men, but work with women in the liberated areas was rather specific as it was often delegated to the newly established women's section called the Antifascist Women's Front (Antifašistički front žena—AFŽ). There is still a certain amount of scholarly disagreement over the reasons why the Party established the AFŽ. Jancar-Webster suggested that the Party created the AFŽ simply to ensure that women would offer their political and military support. She argued that the 'liberation' of women was a tool which served the regime's authoritarian purposes.[46] Other authors such as Lydia Sklevicky, Neda Božinović, and Jelena Batinić argued that the AFŽ was a continuation of the pre-war tradition of organised feminist societies, insisting on the AFŽ's role in emancipating women.[47] However, it was not only that young communist women joined feminist societies so as to avoid the illegal status of the Party and under the Comintern's directive, but the differences between the AFŽ and any of the pre-war societies were so sharp in terms of objectives, organisational structure, and methods of work, that it is hard to argue for continuity. I argue that the AFŽ, its structure,[48] relation to the Party and goals were different from anything that had ever existed in Yugoslavia and only resembled the Soviet *Zhenotdel*.[49] Furthermore, the establishment of a separate organisation for women speaks volume about gender policies in both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, where respective communist parties saw men as default revolutionaries, which had profound effects on policies discussed in the next chapter.

The Bolshevik Party established the Zhenotdel in August 1919, with the aim of ensuring support during the civil war through organising supplies and addressing problems experienced by women workers and peasants. Similarly, the AFŽ emerged in a time of war, had a very similar organisational form to the Party, and ultimately, the same views about women's role in society. These include their dependence on the Party's largess and attention paid to women's supposedly negative qualities such as backwardness. Equally, women were co-opted to serve as a force for discipline in the regime, whilst the activists, as Wood puts it, acted as 'dutiful daughters,'[50] and not as independent feminists. Their activities both during the war and in peacetime are also comparable, and included organising educational activities for women, drafting legislation, and providing an important centre for ideas and activities promoting women's

interests.[51] For the above reasons, I argue that pre-war feminist associations did not inspire the formation of the AFŽ. Instead, the AFŽ was established to address the Party's need for women's support during the war, thus organising a women's section closely tied to its structure.

The Zhenotdel ceased to exist in 1930 when the Bolshevik Central Committee merged it with other sections within the Party. Lazar Kaganovich explained that the Zhenotdel had achieved its purpose of emancipating women. For this reason, a debate took place within the Partisan movement over the purpose of a separate organisation for women. Some argued that women were already equal in the Partisan units and that separate organisation serves no purpose. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav Communist Party leading ideologist Milovan Djilas argued for the AFŽ's existence in 1943, adding that the AFŽ will continue to exist after the war, but implied that its purpose would end once the Party considers women to be equal in a classless society.[52] Considered together, Djilas' arguments in 1943 did not break with the Soviet experience of the Zhenotdel. The Zhenotdel existed in an immediate post-revolutionary period when there was a need for a stronger emancipatory project amongst women, but it was abolished once the Soviet Union had reached a stage of socialism in which women and men were, supposedly, fully equal. Djilas explained that after the war the AFŽ would have to reform itself into being an organisation that would integrate all women into political and economic life. Just as in the Soviet Union, the crucial idea was not to allow a separation of the *woman question* from other social issues. Gender equality had to be one part of general equality promoted. In fact, Djilas used the same arguments ten years later when his speech marked the end of the AFŽ.[53]

The only difference with the Soviet case was that many notable Soviet women chose not to work in the Zhenotdel. Yugoslav communist women, on the other hand, defended the AFŽ, not only during the war but many years later. Even when they worked on other posts within the government, many prominent women still had strong connections with the AFŽ. They attended internal meetings in order to help in their fields of expertise and genuinely supported the AFŽ initiatives. Many of the most influential women in the Party knew each other before the war, whilst the war experience and the roles they had in the Partisan movement made them close friends. They expressed their mutual bonds through their work in the AFŽ, as even in official correspondence they enquired about each other's personal life and addressed one another

freely.[54] The mutual support these Party women offered one other was visible during an early 1943 debate on the role of the AFŽ, and when the Party abolished the organisation a decade later.

The Party's Central Committee took part in this 1943 debate about the purpose of the AFŽ. They rebuked the AFŽ women for being more loyal to the AFŽ than to the Party, stating that there was a feeling in the AFŽ of separation from the Party's overall struggle.[55] Some of the earlier-mentioned scholars have used this criticism as primary proof of continuity present with the pre-war feminist associations, and of the AFŽ's independence. However, as Jelena Batinić noted, that there is no evidence that anyone in the AFŽ ever wanted such a separation.[56] Anxiety about the AFŽ's independence has emerged possibly because of poor communications in the occupied areas, and the fact that in many rural areas it was simply easier for women to form an attachment to a female organisation. The leading women in the AFŽ quickly took action to address the Party's concerns. Djilas' positive comments on the AFŽ's future came in the late summer of 1943 after the Party had fixed the AFŽ inner structure to resemble the People's Councils. The misunderstanding was solved, and the AFŽ remained one of the Party's sections.[57]

Both the Party and the AFŽ disseminated ideal representations of Soviet women and the Soviet welfare state from the early days of the war onwards. As early as the summer of 1941, the Partisans spread pamphlets and talked to peasants about the comprehensive welfare systems that the Soviet state provides.[58] Partisan women and later AFŽ agitators talked about the better living conditions in the Soviet countryside; they promised tractors, kindergartens, and maternity wards, and impressed peasants when they talked about their struggle against the occupiers.[59] They also talked about the need for other women to join the war efforts, to fight together with men and to liberate the country in the same way as Soviet women had supposedly done. Soviet women were always depicted as brave, and defiant in the face of the Nazis, but also tireless in their work for the front. No less was asked from Yugoslavs.[60]

The first publication of the AFŽ was a small brochure of the AFŽ delegate speeches at the first AFŽ meeting in December 1942. However, the significant part of this brochure was an additional text about Soviet women and their war struggle, presenting a projection of what the Party leadership expected of Yugoslav women, and what women could expect in return after the war. The brochure praised Soviet women for their war efforts, emphasising learning the skills necessary to enter 'male professions'

and help the rearguard with food, supplies, and shelter. In return, the Soviet Bolshevik Party was famous for liberating women from their slavery and exploitation, and for opening up as many opportunities as possible for their professional advancement. The Soviets also guaranteed respect for mothers and placed women and men on an equal footing in a socialist welfare state. In fact, the Party itself solved all problems relating to women: their literacy level, equality with their husbands, the establishment of free services for children, and generous maternity leave.[61] A little whilst later, as the Yugoslav Communist Party established numerous new magazines designed for women, such promises were regularly repeated.

Considering how the Yugoslav press wrote about the Soviet Union there is no evidence of any ideological disparity between Yugoslav communist women and their Soviet counterparts. As Yugoslav communists eagerly translated Soviet newspaper texts and published them in their magazines, Stalinist policies became the official ones. For example, the Stalinist pro-natalist policy had already found its way into the Partisan press during the war. In an attempt to challenge rumours that Bolshevism destroyed traditional family structures, the AFŽ press insisted that the family is the backbone of the Soviet Union, a country where parents love their children more than anything.[62] The AFŽ's magazine also reported that the Soviet Union had introduced an honorary title of 'Mother Heroine,' and medals such as 'the Order of Maternal Glory' and 'the Maternity Medal,' just a few days after these were announced in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*. The AFŽ's article proudly emphasised that in the Soviet Union care for mothers and children, and the strengthening of the family was always one of the most important tasks.[63] The Yugoslav version of the article was entitled 'Let's Glorify the Woman-Mother,' adding that being a mother is the biggest source of joy one can come to achieve, and that 'a woman who did not discover the happiness of motherhood, did not understand the importance of her duty – the duty to have children who will continue to build the socialist life, who will be the bearers of new ideas and morality.'[64] Such writings demonstrate that Yugoslav communists never considered motherhood to be less important than, for instance, warfare or postwar reconstruction, as it was argued previously in the literature.[65] Over the next few years, similar texts appeared in every issue, and their consequences on Yugoslav reproductive policies are examined in the following chapter. Furthermore, as the war drew to an end, articles on the Soviet Union became more prominent in all Party magazines.[66]

In September 1944, the Yugoslav communists enjoyed uninterrupted contact with the Red Army, who helped them liberate the country, and secure power.[67] Of all the Eastern European communist parties, the Yugoslav communists were the fastest to obliterate the opposition and to establish full control over the government. At the end of 1945, they remained the only political force in the country, whilst a Soviet presence was established through military and civil advisors. However, despite the Soviet presence in Yugoslavia, the pressure to implement Soviet standards did not come from the Red Army but rather emerged from internal requirements.

Postwar Soviet Mentorship

After the war, Yugoslav women politicians intended to nourish a close relationship with the most notable Soviet women, hoping that their experiences would help Yugoslav communists in framing their own gender policies. Such relationship would also provide Yugoslav women with additional legitimacy.[68] Already Stalinised, the AFŽ leadership wanted Soviet women to be their mentors, but there was no similar strong women's organisation in the USSR after the dissolution of the Zhenotdel in 1930. The Antifascist Committee of Soviet Women (Антифашистский комитет советских женщин)—established in September 1941—was an organisation that most closely resembled the AFŽ, but its field of work was limited to the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).[69] The Soviet women controlled the WIDF, so Yugoslavs eagerly participated in its early congresses expecting to get Soviet women on their side. This provided Yugoslav communist women with strong legitimacy for their policies, and the chance to travel abroad to participate in the international organisations led by the Soviet Union.

Soviet women were the most honoured guests at the AFŽ's first postwar Congress. Many speeches were interrupted by the audience with their loud chanting of Tito, the Army, Stalin, the Soviet Union, and Soviet women.[70] When the Soviet delegation finally entered the hall, the speech of a Czechoslovakian delegate was interrupted (and quickly forgotten). The Soviet delegates were immediately brought to the stage, promising closer cooperation and help. The Yugoslavs then showered the Soviet delegation with gifts whilst some meetings became very emotional. For example, one disabled woman, wounded in the war, offered hugs and love as a gift as she possessed nothing else. Peasants from

remote areas of the country said they had only come to the Congress to see Tito and the Soviet women. Actually, during this Congress, many Yugoslav women saw Soviet women for the first time.[71]

The leading AFŽ officials, Vida Tomšič, Spasenija Babović, Mitra Mitrović and others, defined how Soviet models were going to fit in with Yugoslav practice. Vida Tomšič reminded the audience that the Soviet Woman was 'a great role model' during the war, and a model they should follow during peacetime. More precisely, Soviet women supposedly played an important role in the reconstruction of the destroyed country, and so should Yugoslavs, whilst as regards legislature, Yugoslavs should implement Soviet policies for childcare and the protection of mothers and female workers. Her speech confirmed the programme she set out at the Party conference before the war. The difference was that now she had Soviet women able to give advice and share their experiences on how to implement these ideas in a practical fashion.[72] These speeches at the congress were published together with a brochure about Soviet women, adequately entitled *Soviet Woman, Our Sister and Our Role Model*.[73]

The transformation of Yugoslav society was planned in terms of a top-down approach, trickling down through the structures of the Communist Party. The policies were planned within a very narrow circle of people, whilst the rest had to follow, and learn from the translated Soviet texts how these ideas might be put into practice. In the process, any experiences the top-level leadership had had in the Soviet Union before the war was valued, whilst at the same time, they encouraged more people to be trained there. Many more were sent to visit the Soviet Union, where they sojourned at special schools and received training, preparing them for careers as the next generation of Party officials. Different delegations visited Soviet industrial centres and some of the most developed collective farms, returning home with amazing stories of Soviet success.[74] Whenever an official travelled to the Soviet Union, they were expected to bring back more books and brochures. They asked Soviet officials to help them, but this was difficult as they also had to refill the libraries in the western parts of the Soviet Union destroyed in the war.[75]

The AFŽ made use of its involvement in the WIDF to remain in regular contact with Soviet women. By investing a lot of effort and money in this organisation, it was a forum where Yugoslav communists could show the rest of the 'advanced world' that Yugoslav women were only behind

the Soviets in their socialism. Yugoslav communists enthusiastically supported every initiative proposed by the Soviet delegation and often published flattering articles about Nina Popova, the head of the Soviet delegation. They also translated many of Popova's articles and brochures for the Yugoslav press.[76] These texts were distributed amongst the activists to study them and use them as guidelines in practice.

The teaching of Soviet models to the Yugoslav cadre was also completed through the Party's special schools for ideological education. These schools were envisioned with the purpose of educating new cadres on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. They were attended by aspiring women and men from all over the country. In practice, it meant that students learned texts written by Stalin, Lenin, Dimitrov, and Yugoslav officials in courses that lasted from three months to a full year depending on the level and complexity. Yet, at all levels of studies, Stalin was the predominant figure, as in every lecture there was at least some material either from or about him. The Party's agitprop was tasked with translating as many Soviet texts as possible. One separate course subject was on the history of the Soviet Bolshevik Party, where students read about the organisation of the Soviet Party, their strategies as regards peasants and collectivisation, industrialisation, the Soviet constitution, Soviet cadres, their education, the leadership, agitation, the unions, youth initiatives, etc. In addition, there was a unit on the Yugoslav Party and women, where students read about the Party's directives for special work by and for women, as well as materials from the AFŽ congresses. The importance of this teaching unit on women lay in the fact that it was taught together with other units, consisting of materials taken from the Soviet Union.[77]

These schools and the texts that the Party disseminated through the press were very important for Yugoslav gender policies, as they offered models that were established in the Soviet Union, mostly in Stalin's time. They set the framework through which Party cadres learned to think about gender issues, and offered available solutions for the country's supposed 'backwardness' in gender relations. The whole idea of this school was to train cadres to deal with real life problems, but to approach them through specific ideological lenses of Stalinism. It was not until the late 1970s and a new wave of feminism when a new generation was able to detach itself from many of the basic principles acquired in this early period. As Jancar-Webster argued, Vida Tomšič and Mitra Mitrović's generation could not relate to this movement and its ideas, particularly if this meant some level of detachment from state socialism.[78]

Bitterness Over the Soviet Women

The leading communist women nourished a close relationship with Soviet women and remained faithful to presenting the Soviet Union as a model for gender policies until the peak of the Tito–Stalin conflict in 1949. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, these models often remained unchanged, even when Yugoslav rhetoric towards the Soviet Union became hostile. The AFŽ did not alter their approach towards changing the society, albeit they offered different ideological explanations. Yet, they were very disappointed with their Soviet counterparts who followed official state policy towards Yugoslavia and used the WIDF to condemn Tito's regime and isolate the AFŽ. The Soviets stopped sending their publications, cut correspondence, and eventually expelled the Yugoslav organisation from the WIDF.[79]

The high expectations that leading Yugoslav communist women had of Soviet women constituted one of the main reasons for the bitterness which emerged, whilst a second reason was the isolation from the international Communist community that the Soviet Union had imposed on them. Yugoslav women were first discriminated against at the WIDF congress, in late 1948, when the Hungarian hosts removed the Yugoslav flag, distributed pamphlets against Tito and decreased the number of Yugoslav delegates. The following year, the AFŽ was finally expelled from the WIDF, severing all ties with Soviet women. The bitter AFŽ activists organised protests in many locations throughout Yugoslavia and had the daunting task of explaining to its membership that the Soviet Union and WIDF had abandoned socialism and any sense of fairness. The sense of betrayal was overwhelming after years of looking at Soviet women as the prime role models.[80]

Even many years later, in 1955 when the AFŽ no longer existed, and when the process of political reconciliation between Tito and Khrushchev began, leading Yugoslav communist women were still resentful as concerns the previous disputes. Bosa Cvetić, at that point president of the Alliance of Women Societies,[81] was invited to Moscow, where she was warmly greeted by Nina Popova and showered with gifts, hugs, and kisses. Nevertheless, she remained cold-hearted. Bosa Cvetić received the best seats at the meetings and, although Soviets supposedly admitted having made mistakes towards Yugoslavia, she was very critical of what she saw there. She criticised

Soviet pro-natalist policies, what she regarded as their false solutions regarding the *woman question*, and the poor situation present in kindergartens, pioneer resorts, and maternity hospitals. At their internal meeting, Bosa Cvetić warned Yugoslavs travelling to the East to be careful, demonstrating how Yugoslav communists had become emancipated from Soviet tutorship in 1955.[82]

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Soviet ideas were, indeed, very important to Yugoslav communists before, during and after the war, and the interpretation of these ideas provided a framework upon which Yugoslav communists aimed to change the society. Stalinist gender policies were an intrinsic part of the Stalinist worldview adopted by the Yugoslav communists, either via the Soviet literature, press and directives or by direct education in Moscow. The programme that the Yugoslav communist party set out as regards the *woman question* in 1940 was only slightly changed over the next several decades. Building upon their interpretation of Soviet gender policies mostly from the 1930s, Yugoslav communists promised Yugoslav women political equality, equal pay for equal work, and the promotion of motherhood through various state-financed services such as kindergartens, crèches, and maternity units. At the same time, they rejected feminism and insisted that equality could only be reached through an all-encompassing socialist revolution. Simultaneously, they increased their propaganda efforts so to persuade Yugoslav women that only the Soviet Union could provide a model for such changes.

During the war, and in the first four years after, Yugoslav communists used all available means to promote the Soviet model. Vida Tomšič's programme and numerous Soviet texts provided a guideline for educational work with hundreds of thousands of Yugoslav men and women. The leadership also maintained close relationships with Soviet women, seeing them as the role models for themselves and their own society. The high expectations present in this relationship became a source of immense bitterness once Soviet women had isolated the AFŽ due to the Tito–Stalin conflict. From that period onwards the Yugoslav leadership changed their rhetoric, but—as will be demonstrated in the following chapters—many of the Stalinist gender policies remained unaltered.

Notes

1. "Jedini put potpunog oslobodjenja žene" [The Only Road to a Full Liberation of Women], *Proleter*, no. 1 (January 1933): 11–12.
2. Marija Kreačić, "Sestrama ste nas nazvale" [We Became Your Sisters], *Žena u borbi*, no. 1 (June 1943): 12.
3. *Sovjetska žena –naša sestra i naš uzor* [Soviet Woman—Our Sister and Our Role Model] (Belgrade: Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije, 1945), 9.
4. Janko Pleterski et al., *Istorija Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Izdavački centar Komunist, Narodna knjiga, and Rad, 1985).
5. Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, vol. 1, 3 vols (Belgrade: Nolit, 1988).
6. Ivo Banac, "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia During the Period of Legality, 1919–21," in *The Effects of World War I: The Class War After the Great War: The Rise of Communist Parties in East Central Europe, 1918–1921*, ed. Ivo Banac, 4 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1983), 188–230.
7. "Izjava drugarice Butorac o zverstvima Zagrebačke policije" [Statement from a She-Comrade Butorac About Brutality of the Zagreb Police], *Proleter*, no. 17 (December 1930): 7.
8. On the Yugoslav Communist Party's policies towards inter-war Yugoslav state, see Ben Fowkes, "To Make the Nation or to Break It: Communist Dilemmas in Two Interwar Multinational States," in *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917–53*, ed. Norman Laporte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley (Houndmills and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 206–25; On the Party's views towards national question and Yugoslavism: Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 130–32.
9. "Jedini put potpunog oslobodjenja žene."
10. For example, Filipović published an article on Yugoslav peasantry in 1935, never mentioning gender relations or women. See Filip Filipović, "Položaj seljaštva u Jugoslaviji" [Position of Peasantry in Yugoslavia], in *Sabrana dela* [Selected Works], vol. 14, 14 vols (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1989), 113–33.
11. Ivan Očak, "Staljinski obračun s jugoslavenskim partijskim rukovodstvom u SSSR-u," *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, no. 21 (1988): 81–106.
12. As argued by: Kosta Nikolić, *Boljševizacija Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije 1919–1929* (Belgrade: Institut za Savremenu Istoriju, 1994).

13. Brigette Studer, "Stalinization: Balance Sheet of a Complex Notion," in *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917–53*, ed. Norman Laporte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley (Houndmills and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 45–65.
14. According to the historian Hermann Weber, the 1930s were a period during which all European communist parties were under heavy pressure from the Comintern. Many communist parties in Europe became fully Stalinised. See his article on the KPD: Hermann Weber, "The Stalinization of the KPD: Old and New Views," in *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917–53*, ed. Norman Laporte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley (Houndmills and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 22–44.
15. This issue was always considered to be of less importance to Yugoslav politicians than, for example, the national question, or economic troubles.
16. See Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (Denver, CO: Arden Press, 1990), 34.
17. Ubavka Vujošević and Žarko Protić eds., *Izvori za istoriju SKJ: Klasna borba* [Sources for the History of SKJ: Class Struggle] (Belgrade: Komunist, 1984), 591.
18. Jelena Nikolić, "Radne žene i Prvi Maj 1932" [Working Women and Mayday 1932], *Proleter*, no. 24 (April 1932): 3.
19. Eager to avoid feminism and separation of women, the Party only approved the work of women's committees within the unions, and planned to make its own committee for women attached to the Central Committee in 1928: Vujošević and Protić, *Izvori za istoriju SKJ: Klasna borba*, 592.
20. This was discussed within the broader idea of the Popular Front against fascism. Georgi Dimitrov, "The United Front and Women," in *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1972), 61.
21. Ivo-Lola Ribar, "Novi zadaci komunista u omladinskom pokretu" [New Tasks for the Communists in the Youth Movement], *Proleter*, no. 13 (December 1937): 5–6.
22. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*, 35.
23. Disagreements also erupted on generational lines, as communist women were very young as compared to leading feminists. "Omladinska produžnica ženskog pokreta" [The Youth Branch of the Women's Movement], 1950, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archives of Yugoslavia; Biographies of almost all leading communists were collected in: Petar Kačavenda and Dušan Živković, eds., *Narodni Heroji Jugoslavije* (Belgrade and Podgorica: Partizanska knjiga, Narodna knjiga, and Pobjeda, 1982).
24. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*, 36.

25. What Yugoslav communists meant by socialist consciousness was often very vague. Usually it referred to the basic understanding of Marxism-Leninism and the Party's policies. Edvard Kardelj, "Za borbeni savez radnika i seljaka" [For a Fighting Alliance Between Workers and Peasants], *Proleter*, no. 5–6 (July 1940): 3–7; Similarly vague after the war: "Teoretsko uzdizanje važan uslov naših pobeda" [Theoretical Elevation Is an Important Prerequisite for Our Victories], *Radnica* 12 (December 1949): 1–2.
26. Vida Tomšič, "Referat na V Zemaljskoj konferenciji" [Report at the Fifth Conference], 1940, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
27. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*, 37.
28. She did not survive the war. "Narodni heroj Anka Butorac" [People's Hero Anka Butorac], *Radnica* 2 (February 1950): 4.
29. The importance of Moscow for Yugoslav revolutionaries can be seen in Spasenija Babović's decision to send her three year old son there. He returned to Yugoslavia eleven years later, at the end of the war. Stanko Mladenović, *Spasenija Cana Babović*, Revolucionari Šumadije (Belgrade and Kragujevac: Rad and Svetlost, 1980).
30. Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
31. This "Great Retreat paradigm" was established soon after the Second World War by Nicholas Timasheff. The book was first published in 1946: Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat; The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*, World Affairs: National and International Viewpoints (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1972); Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*; and Susan E. Reid, "All Stalin's Women: Gender and Power in Soviet Art of the 1930s," *Slavic Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 133–73.
32. All these policies have been widely researched and documented. See Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 97–113; Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*; and Goldman, *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia*.
33. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*, 296–336.
34. Elizabeth A. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003);

Elena Shulman also challenges this paradigm and illustrates the new opportunities brought to women in the Soviet Far East: Elena Shulman, *Stalinism on the Frontier of Empire: Women and State Formation in the Soviet Far East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

35. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, 4.
36. Wood, 106–11; Hoffmann also argues that the top Communist male officials were never very enthusiastic as concerns gender equality. David L. Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 89.
37. Wood also shows, however, that medical experts "viewed abortion as undesirable because of its effects on population growth, on individual and collective health." Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, 107.
38. Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses*, 89.
39. See David L. Hoffmann, "Mothers in the Motherland: Stalinist Pronatalism in Its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 1 (October 1, 2000): 35–54; or: Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses*, 87–117.
40. On the retreat paradigm in Eastern Europe, see Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender, and Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (London and New York, NY: Verso, 1993); Sharon L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Meyer, eds., *Women, State, and Party in Eastern Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985).
41. On the Soviet policies towards the Partisans during the war, see Tommaso Piffer, "Stalin, the Western Allies and Soviet Policy Towards the Yugoslav Partisan Movement, 1941–44," *Journal of Contemporary History*, November 17, 2017.
42. The Second World War in Yugoslavia is well researched. Some recent works include: Alexander Victor Prusin, *Serbia Under the Swastika: A World War II Occupation*, The History of Military Occupation (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Marko Attila Hoare, *The Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013).
43. "O našem zboru" [About Our Gathering], 1942, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
44. Years after the war, the Partisans remembered friends who sacrificed their lives to protect this book. Miladin Oljača, "Partijska literatura" [The Party's Literature], *Žena danas* 59 (April 1949): 25–26.
45. On the importance of the protecting printing machines: K. Otmar, "Uoči dvogodišnjice domovinskog rata" [Prior to the Two-Year Anniversary of the Fatherland War], *Žena u borbi*, no. 1 (June 1943): 8–9; Partisan fighter Dragojlo Dudić reflected on reading of the Soviet literature in every peaceful moment: Dragojlo Dudić, *Dnevnik 1941* [Diary 1941] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1957).

46. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*; Barbara Jancar-Webster, "Women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement," in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women, Society, and Politics in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998), 67–87.
47. Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb: Druga and Ženska infoteka, 1996), 81; Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* (Belgrade: Devedesetčetvrta, 1996); and Jelena Batinić, *Women and Partisan Resistance in Yugoslavia During World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 89–102.
48. The AFŽ's organisational structure resembled the Party, with its own Central Committee (Centralni odbor) at federal level, and Head Committees (Glavni odbori) at the level of the republics. The AFŽ was part of the People's Front, but only directly answered to the Party. All members were women, whilst men were occasionally invited to the AFŽ meetings and to congresses as experts.
49. Barbara Evans Clements, "The Utopianism of the Zhenotdel," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 3 (October 1, 1992): 485–96.
50. Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*, 212–13.
51. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution*, 338.
52. Milovan Djilas, "Izgledi na razvoj Antifašističke fronte žena" [Perspectives for the Development of the Antifascist Women's Front], *Žena u borbi*, no. 3–4 (September 1943): 3–6.
53. Milovan Djilas, "Govor na IV Kongresu AFŽ" [Speech at the Fourth AFŽ Congress], 1953, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 5, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
54. These letters are available in the Archives of Yugoslavia, Collection 141—AFŽ, particularly in the boxes 35 and 37.
55. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*, 145.
56. Batinić, *Women and Partisan Resistance in Yugoslavia During World War II*, 115–22.
57. Mitra Mitrović, "O antifašističkom frontu žena" [About the Antifascist Front of Women], 1943, Collection 141 AFŽ, ox 10, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
58. Dudić, *Dnevnik 1941*, 21–22.
59. "Sa okružne konferencije AFŽ-a" [From the Regional Conference of the AFŽ], August 1, 1943, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 35, The Archives of Yugoslavia; Dudić, *Dnevnik 1941*, 37.
60. "Rezolucija sa I konferencije antifašističkog fronta žena kotara Veljun" [Resolution from the First Conference of the Antifascist Women's Front of the District Veljun], December 12, 1942, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 35, The Archives of Yugoslavia.

61. The brochure also praised Soviet industry and the *kolkhoz* system, as well as shock-workers' enthusiasm which became the cornerstone of Yugoslav policies after the war. "Referati sa Prve zemaljske konferencije A.F.Ž. i Sovjetske žene u Otadžbinskom ratu" [Papers from the First AFŽ Conference and Soviet Women in the Fatherland War], December 1942, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
62. "Porodica je kičma Sovjetskog Saveza" [Family is the Backbone of the Soviet Union], *Žena u borbi*, no. 8 (April 1944): 12.
63. "Veličajmo ženu-majku" [Let's Glorify the Woman-Mother], *Žena u borbi*, no. 9 (August 1944): 16–17.
64. "Veličajmo ženu-majku."
65. See Renata Jambrešić Kirin, "Žene u formativnom socijalizmu," in *Refleksije vremena: 1945.–1955.*, ed. Jasmina Bavoljak (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2012), 182–201; Milica G. Antić and Ksenija H. Vidmar, "The Construction of Women's Identity in Socialism: The Case of Slovenia," in *Gender and Identity: Theories from and/or on Southeastern Europe*, ed. Jelisaveta Blagojević, Katerina Kolozova, and Svetlana Slapšak (Belgrade: Women's Studies and Gender Research Center, 2006), 291–307; and Ivana Pantelić, "Osvajanje neosvojivog: politička emancipacija žena u posleratnoj Jugoslaviji 1945–1953," *Istorija 20. veka*, no. 3 (2012): 139–54.
66. Until the conflict with the Soviet Union in the summer of 1948, 16.6% of all texts published in the AFŽ's main magazine *Žena danas* were devoted to the Soviet Union. "Pregled koliko je kroz centralni i republikanske ženske listove pisano o SSSR, narodnim demokratijama, kolonijalnim i zavisnim zemljama od oslobođenja do danas" [Inspection of the Amount of Writing About the USSR, People Democracies, Colonial and Dependent Countries in Central and Republican Women Magazines from the Liberation Until Today], 1950, Collection 141 AFŽ, ox 16, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
67. Women's magazines described very emotional meetings with Russian soldiers: Draga Kaifeš, "Vidjeli smo sovjetsku delegaciju" [We Saw a Soviet Delegation], *Žena u borbi*, no. 8 (April 1944): 11.
68. See, for example, letters sent by the AFŽ to the Soviet women, published in the Soviet magazines: "Dejatel'nicy zhenskogo dvizhenija o kongresse" [The Activists of the Female Movement About the Congress], *Sovetskaja zhenshhina*, 1945.
69. On the WIDF, see Francisca de Haan, "Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organisations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF)," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 4 (September 2010): 547–73.
70. Spasenija Babović, "Govor na I Kongresu" [Speech at the First AFŽ Congress], June 18, 1945, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 1, The Archives of Yugoslavia.

71. Ruža Kumić, "Govor na I Kongresu" [Speech at the First AFŽ Congress], June 19, 1945, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 1, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
72. Vida Tomšič, "Socijalno staranje kao jedan od najvažnijih zadataka antifašistickog fronta žena u obnovi zemlje" [Social Care as One of the Most Important Tasks of the Antifascist Women's Front During the Reconstruction of the Country], June 19, 1945, Collection 141 AFŽ, Box 1, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
73. *Sovjetska žena – naša sestra i naš uzor*.
74. Slavko Komar, "Govor na II Plenumu CO USAOJ-a" [Speech at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Alliance of the Antifascist Youth of Yugoslavia], August 5, 1945, Collection 114—SSOJ, Box 27, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
75. Boris Ziherl, "Pismo Milovanu Đilasu" [Letter to Milovan Djilas], September 9, 1945, Collection 507, CK SKJ, Ideološka komisija (VIII), Box 31, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
76. Nina Popova, *Žena u Sovjetskom Savezu* [Woman in the Soviet Union] (Belgrade: Glavni odbor AFŽ-a Srbije, 1947).
77. "Organizacija i program nižih partijskih škola" [Organisation and Programme of the Lower Party Schools], December 3, 1945, Collection 507, CK SKJ, Ideološka komisija (VIII), Box 1, The Archives of Yugoslavia.
78. Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*; Vida Tomšič never changed her stance towards feminism. Even in the 1980s, she argued that feminist movement ignored a class struggle and wrongly fought against men. Vida Tomšič, *Žena u razvoju socijalističke samoupravne Jugoslavije* [Woman in Development of the Socialist Self-Management Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska stvarnost, 1981), 18.
79. As concerns high politics, several authors have argued that Tito always tried to be respectfully embraced by Moscow following Stalin's death and the reconciliation with Khrushchev. For example see James Gow, "The People's Prince—Tito and Tito's Yugoslavia: Legitimation, Legend, and Linchpin," in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945–1992*, ed. Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine, and Carol S. Lilly (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 35–60.
80. "Na sva pitanja mi možemo smelo odgovoriti" [We Can Bravely Answer to All Questions], *Radnica* 10 (October 1950): 4.
81. The Alliance of Women's Societies—Savez ženskih društava (SŽD).
82. "Zapisnik sa sastanka Upravnog odbora Ženskih društava Jugoslavije" [Minutes from the Meeting of the Ruling Board of the Alliance of Women Societies of Yugoslavia], September 2, 1955, Collection 354 SŽDJ, Box 1, The Archives of Yugoslavia.