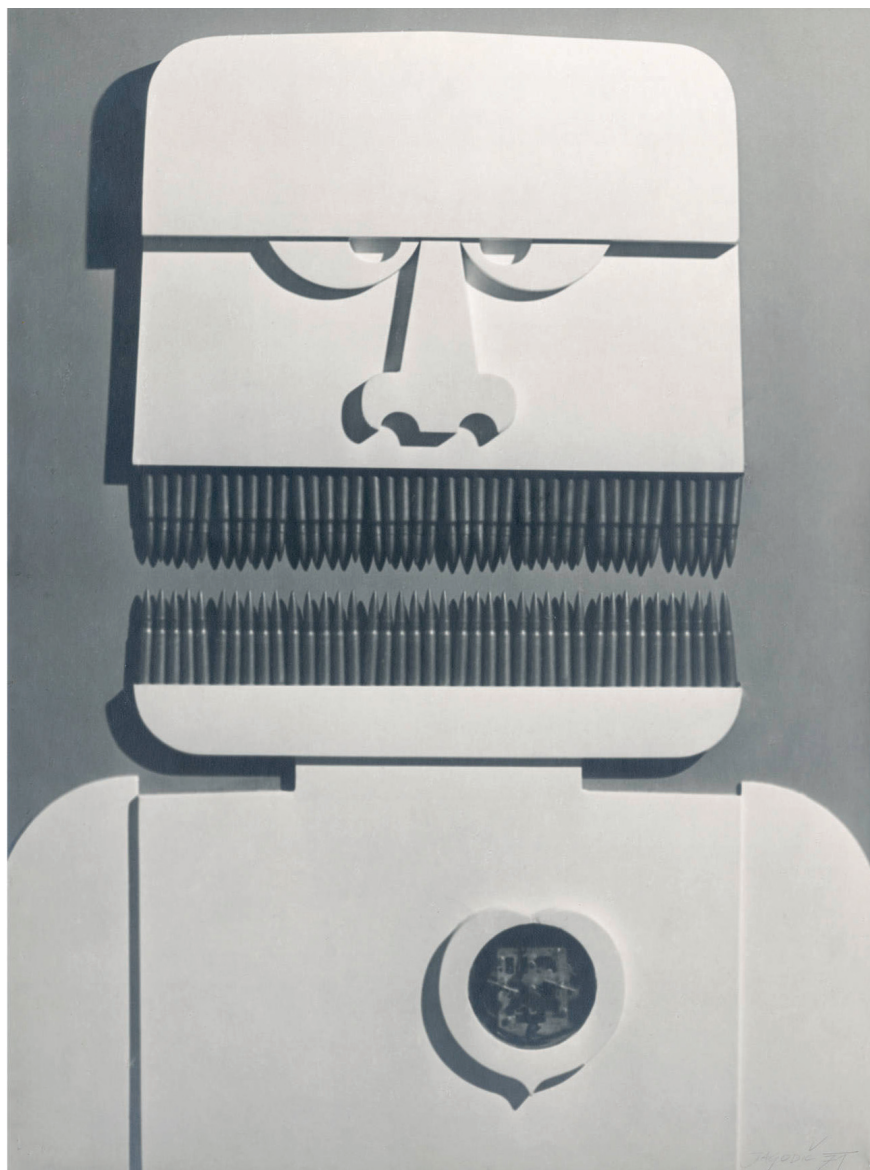


Peace Policies and Practices in Yugoslavia and Beyond



PEACE, UNCONDITIONAL!

Edited by
Sanja Petrović Todosijević and Martin Pogačar

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UNCONDITIONAL!



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Belgrade, Ljubljana
2025

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Svetlana Stefanović*

International Women's Year (1975) and the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 1976–1985 – The Yugoslav Answer**

Abstract The topics related to women's activism in socialist Yugoslavia after the dissolution of the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia (Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije – AFŽJ) in 1953 remain under-researched in Serbian historiography. Scholars have tended to focus either on the work of the AFŽJ or the feminist conference *Comrade-ess Woman. The Women's Question – A New Approach?* held at the end of October 1978 in Belgrade, or on women's activism during the years of the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia. The following text presents the work of the Yugoslav Committee for the International Women's Year – IWY (Jugoslovenski odbor za Međunarodnu godinu žena – OUN 1975), and the Interdepartmental Working Group for the UN Decade for Women (Međuresorska radna grupa za Dekadu OUN za žene), based on the documents in the Archives of Yugoslavia (primarily the Federal Committee for Labor, Health and Social Welfare 1978–1989 and the Federal Committee for Health and Social Welfare 1974–1978), with a special focus on advocating for peace policies.

Keywords pacifism, women's movement, AFŽJ, IWY, UN Decade for Women, anti-imperialism, equality, development, NAM



Stane Jagodič, *Agreement*, photomontage, 1985

* Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5877-9392>

** The author published an article about archival materials on this topic. See Svetlana Stefanović, "Međunarodna godina žena – OUN 1975. u fondovima Arhiva Jugoslavije," in: *Arhivska građa u teoriji i praksi, zbornik radova 5* (Beograd, Novi Sad: AĐC, Arhiv Vojvodine, 2022), 246–260.

Pacifism and the women's movement in the interwar period

In the introductory text of the first issue of *Ženski svijet/Jugoslavenska žena* (Women's World/Yugoslav Woman) titled "Šta hoćemo" (What We Want), Zofka Kveder called war "the greatest tragedy of humanity" and announced the pacifist orientation of the magazine: "We want peace!"¹ Pacifist ideas played an important role in the interwar Yugoslav women's movement. The pacifist-feminist organization Little Entente of Women (Mala ženska antanta, LEW) was founded precisely at the initiative of Yugoslav feminists in May 1923, at the Congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance in Rome. This organization gathered feminist societies from Balkan and Slavic countries: Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Greece and Poland. In contrast to the Little Entente, established as a form of military alliance in order to secure the political landscape and borders created after the First World War, the Little Entente of Women was imbued with the idea of pacifism and premised on the principle that there is no cause strong enough to justify armed conflict between two neighbouring nations. In addition, it aimed to bring together women from Eastern European countries to foster closer ties in the economic, social and political spheres. Peace and gender equality were seen as the most important prerequisites for the advancement of humanity, while general education and upbringing in a spirit of pacifism, as well as the political education of women, were considered key to implementing necessary social changes.² In order to prevent wars, the LEW advocated solidarity among nations and placed great hopes in the League of Nations founded in 1920. In 1928, the Yugoslav section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was also established. Three years later, the international Women's Conference for Peace and Disarmament was held in Belgrade, where representatives from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia advocated for better cooperation among their countries and mitigating the effects of the Great Depression.

The Yugoslav feminists believed that war was not the normal state of humanity. The ideology of feminism was highly idealistic. It was based on the assumption that people are capable of learning and developing and that peace could be achieved through pacifist education and the alleviation of social inequalities. Additionally, they believed that war could be prevented through collective security and international law, emphasizing that women had no representatives in the institutions where decisions about war and peace

were made.³ In the second half of the 1930s, left-leaning women gathered around the magazine *Žena danas* (Woman Today) were also advocates of peace, but they promoted a policy of active opposition to fascism and fascist militarism (war on war) – at a time when the Spanish Civil War and the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937) were underway. As the Second World War approached, the editorial policy shifted toward what is theoretically known as the "doctrine of just war".⁴

Post-Second World War era

During the Second World War, the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia (Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije) was formed – the largest women's political organization, which, according to some researchers, had its nucleus in the Sections of the Women's Movement (Omladinska sekcija Ženskog pokreta). Its activities can be seen as a continuation of the implementation of emancipatory policies of the interwar feminist movement.⁵ On the other hand, there is the view that the structure of the AFŽJ is only comparable to the Soviet Zhenotdel.⁶ Representatives of the AFŽJ participated in the founding of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in late 1945. The focus of the Federation was on disarmament and decolonization. Between 1945 and 1969, six congresses were held. These international gatherings served as a tool for forming a strong global network of

1 Zofka Kveder, "Šta hoćemo mi," *Ženski svijet* 1/1917: 2.

2 Introduction of political rights for women, equality of both sexes in the Civil Code, and equal status of legitimate and illegitimate children before the law; the abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of the history of civilization in education instead of war narratives, for example. Svetlana Stefanović, *Nation und Geschlecht. Frauen in Serbien von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*. PhD diss. (Universität Leipzig, 2013), 368, accessed 15 October 2024, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-203559>.

3 Sandra Hedinger, *Frauen über Krieg und Frieden. Bertha von Suttner, Rosa Luxemburg, Hannah Arendt, Betty Reardon, Judith Ann Tickner, Jean Bethke Elshtain*, (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 2000), 35. Svetlana Stefanović, "Radnički vs. građanski ženski pokret u Srbiji i Jugoslaviji 1910–1940," *Antropologija* 20, nos. 1–2 (2020): 66–8.

4 Svetlana Stefanović, *Žensko pitanje u beogradskoj štampi i periodici 1918–1941*, Master's Thesis, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filozofski fakultet, 2000, 126. Stanislava Barać, "Pacifistički i antifašistički diskurs u listu *Žena danas*," in: *Intelektualci i rat 1939–1947: zbornik radova s međunarodnog skupa Desničini susreti 2011*, eds. Drago Roksandić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina (Zagreb: Plejada, Filozofski fakultet, 2012), 219–230; Ivana Pantelić, "Obrazovanje za mir: pacifistički sadržaji u časopisima *Ženski pokret*, *Jugoslavenska žena* i *Žena danas*," in: *Ženski pokret (1920–1938): zbornik radova*, eds. Jelena Milinković and Žarka Svirčev, (Beograd: IKUM, 2021), 139–140.

5 Stanislava Barać, "Feminističko oplemenjivanje socijalne literature (od 30-ih do 50-ih godina 20. veka)," *Antropologija* 20, 1–2/2020: 189–211; Ivana Pantelić, Stanislava Barać, "Trajnost revolucije zavisi od toga u kojoj mери u њој учествују жене: Комунистичка партија Југославије и идеологема нове жене (1919–1940)," у *Нови човек: Конституисање српског и југословенског друштва 20. века кроз идеологију и јавне политике*, ур. Александар Стојановић (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2023), 76–122.

6 Ivana Pantelić, "Antifašistički front žena Jugoslavije i njegovo ukidanje – primer patrijarhalnog (dis)kontinuiteta," *Antropologija* 20, 1–2/2020: 75. See also Lidija Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi*, ed. Dunja Richtman Auguštin (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996), 25–62; Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Women's Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era. The Case of Yugoslavia," *Aspasia* 8 (2014): 1–25; Ivan Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Politics* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Ivana Pantelić, "Women's Organizations in Socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 through 1965 as Patriarchal (dis)Continuity," in *Everyday Socialism: Promises, Realities, and Strategies*, eds. Ana Luleva, Ivanka Petrova, Petar Petrov, Svetla Kazalarska, Zlatina Bogdanova, Yana Yancheva (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum, 2022), 202–218; Ivana Pantelić, "Nova žena u novom društvu – Sovjetski uticaji na rodne politike u socijalistikoj Jugoslaviji (1945–1953)," u *Kulturni transfer Evropa-Srbija u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*, ed. Marina Simić, Ivana Pantelić (Beograd: Institut za evropske studije, Dosije, 2024), 133–154.

women, fighters for gender equality, peace and development, as well as for establishing connections between women from the Eastern Bloc and countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.⁷ The exclusion of the AFŽJ from the Federation in 1949 was a consequence of the Soviet-Yugoslav split.⁸ The cooperation of Yugoslav women with the WIDF continued in the mid-1950s after the Soviet-Yugoslav reconciliation.

How did it come about that, in the midst of the Cold War and the division of the world into two blocs, 1975 was declared the International Women's Year? Despite the long-standing struggle for equality, women in the mid-1970s faced numerous economic, legal and cultural limitations. In Western democracies, stepping out of the domestic sphere and the role of housewife meant facing discrimination in the labour market (gender pay gap, sexual harassment and other invisible barriers). In developing countries, poverty, colonialism and patriarchal traditions contributed to keeping women in an economically subordinate position. Even in socialist countries, where the "woman question" was supposedly resolved through the abolition of private property and their incorporation into the working class, women still carried a double workload – housework and employment.⁹

At the 1972 session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of the WIDF, which included women from socialist countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc, persuaded a group of delegates to submit a proposal to the General Assembly for the declaration of 1975 as the IWY.¹⁰ Female activists from socialist countries, such as Soviet cosmonaut and politician Valentina Tereshkova or Elena Lagdinova, the youngest Bulgarian Partisan, were leading voices at the UN at that time.¹¹ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 18 December 1972 declared 1975 as the International Women's Year in Resolution 3010 (XXVII). The central themes were equality, development and peace. The goal was to contribute to intensifying efforts to improve gender equality, ensure the full integration of women into all aspects of economic and social development and involve women in fostering friendly relations and cooperation between countries. Equality was understood as achieving full gender equality before the law, addressing the health needs of women and girls, improving equality in economic rights, within the family and household,

and in decision-making at the local, national and international levels, particularly in areas such as development planning, education and foreign policy issues, such as disarmament.

The plan was to involve women from developed countries more actively in international cooperation on development issues by informing and educating them about the living conditions and problems of women in developing regions. This included improving the quality of life in rural areas, eradicating illiteracy, ensuring equal educational opportunities, providing social services, expanding and developing healthcare services for the protection of mothers and children and combating the exploitation and trafficking of women. In terms of peace, the aim was to increase women's participation in peace processes, as well as in the fight against apartheid, colonialism, neocolonialism and racial discrimination.¹² The activities in the IWY were expected to provide an impetus for moving from the general proclamation of human (with an emphasis on women's) rights to their practical implementation.¹³

In Yugoslavia, the Savezno izvršno veće (Federal Executive Council – FEC), at the proposal of the Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije (Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia – SSRNJ) formed the Yugoslav Committee for the IWY at a session held on 15 February 1975.¹⁴ Vida Tomšič (1913–1998), a member of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Federal Council, was appointed the president of the Yugoslav Committee for the IWY. The committee also included 35 members from the FEC and the Assembly of the SFRY, as well as other federal, republican and provincial bodies and organizations of the Federation.¹⁵ The task of the Yugoslav Committee was to organize and coordinate activities related to the commemoration of the IWY. At its first session on 5 March 1975, the Committee was introduced to the main UN documents on IWY and the programme of the Konferencija za društvenu aktivnost žena Jugoslavije (Conference

7 Kristen Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations. The Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement and the United Nations Decade for Women 1975–1985," in: *Journal of Women's History* (24)4/Winter 2012, 52; Александра Ђорђевић, "Другарице и (не)пријатељице – учешће Антифашистичког фронта жена Југославије у раду Међународне демократске федерације жена 1945–1950," *Архив*, 1–2/2017: 148–156.

8 Ђорђевић, "Другарице и (не)пријатељице," 156–159; Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke: Društvena emancipacija partizanki posle Drugog svetskog rata 1945–1953* (Beograd: Institut za svaremenu istoriju, Evoluta, 2011), 102–106.

9 Kristen Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex – Socialist Women's Activism and Global Solidarity during the Cold War* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2019), 3.

10 See Jocelyn Olcott, *International Women's Year. The Greatest Consciousness-Raising Event in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19; Francisca De Haan, "The Global Left-Feminist 1960s: From Copenhagen to Moscow and New York," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. Chen Jian et al. (London: Routledge, 2018), 230–242.

11 Including Chibesa Kankasa and Lily Monze from Zambia. Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 2.

12 "Program Jugoslovenskog odbora za Međunarodnu godinu žena – OUN – 1975," *Žena danas* 274 (1975): 11. Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia – AJ, Fond 577-36-57), Savezni komitet za radi i zapošljavanje (Federal Committee for Labor and Employment), Međunarodna godina žena OUN – 1975 (IWY), Predlog za obeležavanje godine u Jugoslaviji (Proposal for celebrating the Year in Yugoslavia), Prilog – Program za Međunarodnu godinu žena (Appendix – Programme for ICW), 10 May 1974.

13 "Program Jugoslovenskog odbora za MGŽ," 12.

14 AJ, 577-36-57, To Secretary-General of the FEC, 5 December 1974.

15 Zora Tomič, President of the Federal Committee for Health and Social Protection; Mara Radić, President of the Federal Committee for Disability and Veterans' Affairs; Lazar Mojsov, Deputy Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Pero Ivačić, Director of TANJUG; Dr. Sida Marjanović, President of the Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO; writer Jara Ribnikar; journalist Dara Janežević; Vaska Duganova and Perka Vitorović, President and member of the Presidency of the Conference for Women's Social Activity of Yugoslavia; Hajra Marjanović, President of the Republic Conference for Women's Social Activity of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ida Sabo, member of the Federal Council and Vice President of the Provincial Board of the Alliance of Veteran Associations of the National Liberation War (SUBNOR) of Vojvodina, etc. "Jugoslovenski odbor za Međunarodnu godinu žena – OUN 1975," *Žena danas* 274 (1975): 20–21.

for Women's Social Activity of Yugoslavia).¹⁶ A Proposal was prepared outlining measures to improve the social position of women in the country, as well as further contributions to international activities in the UN and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).¹⁷

The World Conference of the IWY was held in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975. Over 1,000 delegates participated in the conference, though the daily newspaper *Politika* reported that there were as many as 5,000 delegates.¹⁸ Representatives from governments around the world gathered under the auspices of the UN to discuss the "woman question" for the first time. The Mexico City Conference opened an unexpected new space for dialogue during the Cold War, a period marked by the rivalry between the two major superpowers.¹⁹ The Conference was opened by the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, who, in his welcoming speech, announced that the world was on the path toward "true equality for women in society". At the opening ceremony, Mexican President Luis Echeverría Álvarez also delivered a speech, advocating for decisive action by all developing countries to change the international economic order. He called for the removal of the politics of force from global relations and emphasized the importance of disarmament.²⁰ The President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, sent a greeting message to the Conference, stating that "the social role and status of women are very indicative of the overall development of any society, and that every action aimed at solving the problem of the women's position means a contribution to the general prosperity of the entire society, and through that, the progress of the entire world community, and vice versa". According to J. Broz Tito, the struggle for social progress was inseparable from the fight for human rights, particularly women's rights. He emphasized that through their massive participation in the National Liberation War, women had won the right to be one of the decisive factors in the creation and development of socialist self-management during peacetime.²¹

16 After the dissolution of the AFŽJ, the Savez ženskih društava Jugoslavije (Union of Women's Societies of Yugoslavia) was formed. From this organization, the Conference for Women's Social Activity of Yugoslavia emerged in 1961. At its Second Assembly in 1969, according to Neda Božinović, the rules were changed, and the last remnants of autonomy in women's work were abolished. The Conference remained a social forum, but exclusively as a form of work for the SSRNJ, to monitor, study and address issues related to the social and economic status of women. See Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX i XX veku* (Beograd: Devedesetčetvrti: Žene u crnom, 1996), 161–196.

17 AJ, 577–36–57, Programme of activities of the Yugoslav Committee for the IWY – 1975, Belgrade, March 1975, 1; "Program Jugoslovenskog odbora za MGŽ," 10.

18 The conference in Mexico City in 1975 was attended by delegations from 133 states, 10 intergovernmental bodies, 23 UN organs and specialized agencies, 8 liberation movements and 113 non-governmental organizations (NGOs). AJ, (Fond 582–22–51) Savezni komitet za zdravstvo i socijalnu zaštitu (Federal Committee for Health and Social Welfare), Jugoslovenski odbor za Međunarodnu godinu žena (Yugoslav Committee for IWY), 4 (August–September 1975), 2. See also Sekretariat za informacije Skupštine SFRJ, *Enakopravnost, razvoj, mir. Izabrani dokumenti Združenih naroda, sprejeti u međunarodnom letu žensk – 1975*, Beograd 1977. "У главном граду Мексика: Почела светска конференција жена," *Политика* 22164/June 20, 1975, 2.

19 Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations," 49.

20 "У главном граду Мексика: Почела светска конференција жена," *Политика* 22164/June 20, 1975, 2.

21 "Равноправност жена је саставни део борбе за друштвени прогрес и права човека," *Политика* 22164/June 20, 1975, 1; AJ, 582–22–51, Jugoslovenski odbor za MGŽ, 1.

Yugoslav Committee for the International Women's Year

Vida Tomšić, a lawyer by profession, was the head of the Yugoslav delegation at the 1975 Mexico World Conference of the IWY. In 1940, she was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) at the 5th National Conference of the CPY in Zagreb. She also actively participated in the National Liberation War and later became the president of the AFŽJ.²² On behalf of Yugoslav women, Tomšić spoke about the connection between women's equality in developing countries and the abolition of imperialism and neocolonialism,²³ as well as support for the policy of *détente*: "Hence our unconditional support for all peoples fighting for the liberation of their forcibly seized territories – Africa, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and others – who are struggling against colonialism and neocolonialism. I especially wish to express our support for the Palestinian people in achieving their legitimate rights, including the establishment of their own state, without which there can be no peace or a genuine solution to the problems in the Middle East". Tomšić warned the global community not to forget the lessons of history and stressed the need to find timely answers to the resurgence of fascism, "as the last refuge of the most reactionary forces in the world".²⁴

Another member of the Yugoslav delegation, Mara Radić,²⁵ president of the Federal Committee for Veteran and Disability Affairs, delivered a notable presentation within the committee working on the draft World Plan of Action. Radić argued that the Plan, while not overlooking the issues of discrimination against women in developed countries, must primarily reflect the demands and needs of the majority of women, who live in developing countries.²⁶ The third delegate, Sana Salahović (1926–1986),²⁷ head of the international

22 Throughout her career, she held various important functions in the SFRY. She supported women's abortion and contraception rights and was a prominent member of the International Federation for Family Planning (IFFP). Tomšić also represented Yugoslavia in the Social Development Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (1960–1963; 1971–1974). She had an important role in the Board of Trustees of the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) set up in 1976. Chiara Bonfiglioli, "The first UN World Conference on Women (1975) as a Cold War Encounter: Recovering Anti-Imperialist, Non-Aligned and Socialist Genealogies," *Filozofija i društvo XXVII*, no. 3 (2016): 534.

23 The control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means. The term was first used after the Second World War. Sandra Halperin, "Neocolonialism," in: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed 21 February 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism>.

24 "Говор Виде Томшич на конференцији УН о положају жене: Нужност политичке и економске еманципације у свету," *Политика* 22168/June 24, 1975, 4; AJ, 582–22–51 Jugoslovenski odbor za MGŽ, 5.

25 Radić (unknown date of birth and death) served as the Yugoslav ambassador in Switzerland from 1963 until 1967. From 1967, she was ambassador in the Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs, where she had served as the Chief of the Division for Social and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department for International Organizations from 1958 until 1963. Accessed 13 November 2024, <https://sigedon.com/shop/photos/after-1945/1967-original-press-photo-mara-radic-portrait-social-humanitarian-assembly-un/>; Наташа Ђурић, "Наш гост: Мара Радић. Све жене света желе и боре се за равноправност," *Жена данас* 14 (5 July 1978): 6.

26 AJ, 582–22–51, Jugoslovenski odbor za MGŽ, 9–11.

27 A member of the Council of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Наш гост: Сана Салаховић. Напредне снаге у свету су за активну улогу жене у развоју друштва," *Жена данас* 19/20 September 1978, 7.

cooperation group of the Conference for Women's Social Activity of Yugoslavia, addressed the committee discussing the integration of women into development processes. She stated that when discussing developing countries, it is not enough to focus solely on improving agriculture as the primary factor of their development: "We must speak about the need for comprehensive changes in the global economic structures, the necessity of industrialization in developing countries and a different distribution of global income."²⁸

At the World Conference, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace was adopted – this was the foundational political document outlining the principles and conditions required in the world and in each country for both genders to live with dignity, freedom, justice and prosperity. The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the IWY was also adopted, which serves as the main action document discussing the need to change global and national economic and political relations and proposes necessary actions and measures to improve the position of women.²⁹ A total of 34 resolutions were adopted. They addressed the status of women in apartheid-era South Africa, in Namibia during its struggle for independence from the Republic of South Africa and in Southern Rhodesia under international sanctions following its unilateral declaration of independence. One resolution addressed the status of women in Chile during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, while another focused on the issues faced by Palestinian and Arab women. This group also included resolutions concerning the legal status of the Panama Canal and aid to the Vietnamese people after the withdrawal of the US and the end of the war in April 1975. There were resolutions on the participation of women in strengthening international peace and security, as well as in the fight against colonialism, racial discrimination and foreign domination.³⁰ The remaining resolutions addressed various issues affecting women (for example, Protection of Maternal and Child Health, Women and Health, Status of Women in Rural Areas, Prevention of the Exploitation of Women and Girls, Education and Vocational Training, Integration of Women into Development, Women and Mass Media etc.).³¹

In 1976, the Yugoslav Committee for IWY submitted the Final Report on its activities to the FEC along with a Proposal for the implementation of the decisions made at the World Conference and other UN meetings during the IWY. The Proposal detailed the tasks of all relevant factors and the directions for action to improve the social position of women, in accordance with the Yugoslav system, the World Plan of Action and other documents. FEC adopted the aforementioned Report and Proposal and forwarded them to the Assembly of the SFRY, which did not consider them until the end of 1977. At that time, it was acknowledged that despite the freedoms, rights and duties of individuals and citizens

guaranteed by the Constitution of the SFRY and other significant achievements in the field of gender equality, there were still "certain contradictions in socio-economic development, inconsistencies in implementing established policies, historical legacies and other factors" that created challenges and setbacks and had a negative impact on the material and social position of women.³²

Interdepartmental Working Group for the UN Decade for Women

In 1975, the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976–1985) was declared. During this period, international women's conferences were held in Copenhagen (1980)³³ and Nairobi (1985)³⁴. It was initially planned that the Mid-Decade World Conference on Women would be held in Tehran, but due to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the conference took place in Denmark instead. Representatives from Western countries primarily advocated for women's equality in legislation and employment, while activists from socialist countries emphasized that this goal was unattainable in a world filled with social injustices, racism, colonialism, underdevelopment and war.³⁵ At the conference in Mexico, as well as in Denmark, the US delegation opposed "politicized" resolutions (such as condemning US intervention in Vietnam, equating Zionism with racism, etc.). The Nairobi conference took place in a different geopolitical climate, after Ronald Reagan was elected president (1981–1989) and the conservative political shift in the US as well as the

²⁸ AJ, 582-22-51, Jugoslovenski odbor za MGŽ, 11–13.

²⁹ Ibid., 4–6.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Ibid., 54.

³² AJ, (Fond 578-50-87) Savezni komitet za rad, zdravstvo i socijalnu zaštitu (Federal Committee for Labour, Healthcare and Social Welfare), Formiranje Međuresorske radne grupe za "Dekadu UN za žene" (Establishment of the Interdepartmental Working Group for the UN Decade for Women), Odgovori na upitnik o ostvarivanju tokom perioda 1975–1980. godine Svetskog plana akcije usvojenog na Svetskoj konferenciji MGŽ (Answers to the questionnaire about the implementation in 1975–1980 of the World Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference IWY).

³³ ECOSOC, at its session held in 1978, established the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women in Copenhagen, of which Yugoslavia was a member. The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee was held in Vienna (June 1978), and the second in New York (July 1979). AJ, 578-50-88, Aktivnosti Međuresorske radne grupe za Dekadu UN za žene. Program rada Međuresorske radne grupe za Dekadu UN za žene za 1979. godinu (Activities IDWG for UN Decade for Women. IDWG's Work Programme for 1979). The NGO Forum was held separately. The delegate from Yugoslavia at the Forum was Danica Šašić-Dridić. The focus was on women's employment, healthcare and education. Наташа Ђурић, "Светска конференција Декаде УН за жене. Једнакост, развој и мир," *Жена данас* 15/July 23, 1, 4–5. See also "Са Форума и око Форума. Тражи се излаз из кризе," *Жена данас* 16 (6 August 1980): 2.

³⁴ The Third World Conference on the status of women was held in July 1985. The goal of the Nairobi Conference was to appraise the achievements of the UN Decade for Women. See Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15–26 July 1985, accessed 16 December 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/women/nairobi1985>

³⁵ However, by 1985, many women from developing countries had embraced the idea that the feminist struggle was closely linked to the issue of national and economic independence. Kristen Ghodsee, "Revisiting the United Nations decade for women: Brief reflections on feminism, capitalism and Cold War politics in the international women's movement," *Women's Studies International Forum* 33/2010: 49–50.

Soviet-Afghan War. The US administration was more involved in preparations for that conference, contributing to the cost of hosting the event as Kenya's ally.³⁶

The Yugoslav Interdepartmental Working Group³⁷ was established to coordinate activities to implement the decisions of the World Conference of the IWY in Mexico City and the goals of the UN Decade for Women. On the national level, measures were taken to improve the status of women in areas such as employment, education, maternity protection and family planning, family law, children's social care, housing, the socialization of household work, political decision-making (involvement in the process) and the treatment of women in the media.³⁸

The Interdepartmental Working Group coordinated preparations for Yugoslavia's participation in UN and Non-Aligned Movement meetings regarding the advancement of women's roles and status. At the Fifth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the NAM in Colombo (Sri Lanka) in 1976, it was concluded that non-aligned countries should actively work on implementing the decisions adopted at the Conference of the IWY. Yugoslavia was chosen as one of the coordinators for cooperation among Non-Aligned countries in the area of the role of women in development, while also becoming a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Baghdad Conference.³⁹ In 1979, from 6 to 13 May, a Special Conference on the Role of Women in Development in Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries was held in Baghdad.⁴⁰ At the beginning of the meeting, there

were disagreements among certain delegations over political issues that were not on the agenda and which the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries did not have a mandate to discuss. A representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with the support of Arab countries, called for Egypt's exclusion from the NAM due to its signing of a separate peace treaty with Israel. Pro-Soviet-oriented countries raised the issue of supporting Vietnam's military intervention in Cambodia and condemning China's punitive expedition against the Vietnamese military.⁴¹ The Yugoslav delegation was led by Mila Đorđić. In addressing the political issues at hand, the Yugoslav delegation adopted a tactical approach, avoiding excessive exposure (not wanting to provoke Arab countries and the PLO too much or divert the conference from its main focus).⁴² A high-level experts' meeting from the non-aligned and other developing countries on the role of women in development was held in Havana in 1981. During this meeting, a resolution was adopted, calling on non-aligned and other countries to actively implement the conclusions of the Mexico City World Conference on Women and to participate in the work of the World Conference in Copenhagen.⁴³

Yugoslavia believed that the "progressive" conclusions of the IWY aligned with the key principles of the Non-Aligned Movement's policy. The fundamental positions of the NAM were that the role of women in development and the question of their position can only be considered in the context of global social and economic development, efforts to eliminate economic domination and dependency and the introduction of the New International Economic Order (NIEO); that the principle of collective reliance on one's own strength is an important factor in the struggle for NIEO and that the improvement of women's status requires the concretization of issues linking these efforts with the struggle for the establishment of NIEO.⁴⁴ It is necessary here to explain what NIEO stands for. The struggle of Yugoslavia and the NAM for NIEO was the first systematic attempt to fundamentally change the character and structure of the global economic system in favour of developing countries. During the 1950s and 1960s, non-alignment was primarily viewed as a political concept focused on strategic issues (such as peace, stability and security) and achieving the interests of non-aligned countries. At the First Non-Aligned Summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia raised the issue of the economic emancipation of non-aligned countries and the establishment of control over their natural resources. The

36 The Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi conferences forced national governments to allocate resources for enacting new legislation (particularly concerning inheritance, child custody and citizenship rights). They also led to the adoption of other measures aimed at improving the status of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UNGA on 18 December 1979, can be considered one of these measures. It explicitly protected women's reproductive rights and provided a platform for nations to more effectively resist cultural norms and practices that kept women in subordinate positions in both public and private life. Yugoslavia ratified the Convention in 1981. Ghodsee, "Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women's Organizations," 6–9; Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 3–4; "Zakon o ratifikaciji Konvencije o eliminisanju svih oblika diskriminacije žena," in: *Službeni list SFRJ* 1/1981, accessed 15 October 2024, https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_ratifikaciji_konvencije_o_eliminisaju_svih_oblika_diskriminacije_zena.html.

37 Formed on 1 September 1977 with Zora Tomić (1929–2021), a member of the FEC and then president of the Federal Committee for Health and Social Welfare, appointed president. The Working Group consisted of representatives from federal government bodies and organizations, (socialist) republics and autonomous provinces, socio-political and social organizations, social and scientific workers, as well as representatives from institutions such as the International Centre for the Management of Publicly Owned Enterprises in Ljubljana [Međunarodni centar za upravljanje preduzećima u javnoj svojini]. After the reorganization of the federal administration in May 1978, the Federal Committee for Health and Social Welfare and the Federal Committee for Labour and Employment were merged, forming the Federal Committee for Labour, Health and Social Welfare. The IDWG continued its work under this new committee, and Mila Đorđić (1927–2021), the deputy president of the Federal Committee for Labour, Health and Social Welfare, was appointed as its president. AJ, 578–50–87, Rešenje o obrazovanju Međuresorske radne grupe (Decision on the establishment of an Interdepartmental Working Group).

38 AJ, 578–51–89, Odgovori na upitnik Centra za socijalni razvoj i humanitarna pitanja o sprovođenju Programa akcije za Drugu polovinu Dekade UN za žene (Answers to the questionnaire of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs on the implementation of the Action Programme for the Second Half of the UN Decade for Women).

39 AJ, 578–50–88, Program rada Međuresorske radne grupe za Dekadu UN za žene za 1979. godinu.

40 AJ, 578–50–88, Platforma za Konferenciju NZ i ZUR o ulozi žena u razvoju, Bagdad, 5–13 maj 1979. godine (Platform for the Conference on the Role of Women in Development in Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries).

41 See Dragan Bogetić, *Nesvrstanost kroz istoriju. Od ideje do pokreta*, Beograd 2019, 479–481. See also AJ, 578–50–88, Izveštaj delegacije SFRJ o radu konferencije NZ i ZUR o ulozi žene u razvoju (Report of the SFRY delegation on the work of the Conference on the Role of Women in Development in Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries), Bagdad (Irak), 6–13 May 1979.

42 AJ, 578–50–88, Izveštaj delegacije SFRJ o radu konferencije NZ i ZUR o ulozi žene u razvoju. See also Наташа Ђурић, "Жене, несврстаност и развој. Нема повратка на старо," *Жена данас* 9 (16 May 1979): 1, 5.

43 Д. Ш. "Пред Светску конференцију Декаде УН за жене *Равноправност, развој и мир*. Доследни порукама из Мексика," *Жена данас*, 11 (28 May 1980): 6.

44 AJ, 578–50–88, Dekada za žene: Ravnopravnost, razvoj i mir. Završni izveštaj Konferencije o ulozi žena u razvoju nesvrstanih i drugih zemalja u razvoju – Bagdad, 6–13. maja 1979 (UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Final Report of the Conference on the Role of Women in Development in Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries).

Algiers Conference would ultimately succeed in expanding the Movement's platform, dedicating equal attention to both political and economic issues. Essentially, NIEO was aimed at achieving cooperation between developing countries and developed nations and redistributing global income rather than promoting revolution or open conflict. The struggle for NIEO was an integral part of a broader fight to change the entire global order and the nature of contemporary international relations – to create an alternative to the policies of the great powers, which advocated for the division of the world into two blocs, spheres of influence, and an arms race.⁴⁵

During the 1970s, the NAM emerged as a “new force” in global politics, increasingly influential within the UN. Thanks to their cohesion, the non-aligned countries were more successful in pitching their own agenda in the General Assembly. According to Vida Tomšič, it was precisely the activities of the NAM and developing countries that contributed to UN decisions highlighting the true causes of women's inequality and the pathways to overcoming this situation. The mobilization of public opinion and socialist and progressive forces spurred by the IWY helped raise broader public awareness of the “revolutionary social nature of the women's issue”.⁴⁶ The head of the Yugoslav delegation, Mila Đorđić, similarly argued at the World Conference on Women in Copenhagen that the establishment of the NIEO was in the interest of all women and peace (arguing that hunger, poverty and various forms of discrimination were consequences of inequitable political and economic relations in the world).⁴⁷

The East, West and the Non-Aligned

The UN Decade for Women provided a platform for uniting and fostering cooperation among women across class, national, racial, ethnic and religious divides, as well as transcending the global division of the world into capitalist, socialist and developing countries. Yugoslavia advocated the position that there were no “women's issues” and that the role of women in development should be viewed as a fundamental issue of development rather than merely part of social policy measures.⁴⁸ It also rejected the approach of

certain feminist and neo-feminist movements, whose proponents emphasized that women represent a unique structure and should organize to fight for equal rights. The key conclusions of the IWY World Conferences and the UN Decade for Women aligned with the essential commitments of the NAM's policies.⁴⁹

Vida Tomšič played a prominent role during the UN Decade for Women, not only within the framework of the SFRY but also beyond. Devaki Jain, a development economist from India, paid tribute to Vida Tomšič at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians at the University of Massachusetts in 2011 with the words: “I know that Vida is not in your pantheon of goddesses, but she certainly is in mine”.⁵⁰ Nowadays, the contributions of this Yugoslav communist and activist on the global stage are almost entirely forgotten. Serbian historiography insufficiently addresses topics related to women's activism in Yugoslavia after the abolition of the AFŽJ in 1953. Researchers tend to focus on the feminist conference *Comrade-ess woman. The Women's Question – A New Approach?* held in late October 1978 in Belgrade, or on women's activism during the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, with their analyses largely ignoring the activities related to the IWY and the UN Decade for Women. The mentioned conference is mainly linked to the 1968 student movement and the second wave of feminism.⁵¹

In October 1977, under the auspices of the Conference for the Social Activity of the Women of Yugoslavia, the 10th international seminar, “Women and Development”, was held in Slovenia (at Bled). Delegates from around 50 countries participated in the seminar and exchanged their experiences. In her opening speech, Vida Tomšič warned that “the arms race is increasingly taking on a global character, absorbing vast material resources, human capacities and natural resources” and emphasized that the way out of this situation lay in the NIEO – through international cooperation predicated on new foundations.⁵² Yugoslavia sought to address the issue of improving the social status of women primarily within its own society, while simultaneously advocating for the same cause on the international stage as an integral part of the struggle for equality, human

45 While at the Colombo Summit the creation of the NIEO seemed within reach, at the Havana Summit it became clear to everyone that it was impossible to achieve. See Јован Чавошки, “За један праведнији свет: Југославија, несврстани и борба за Нови међународни економски поредак (1973–1976)”, *Токови историје* 2/2022: 217–248.

46 Чавошки, “За један праведнији свет,” 227. “Акценти: Жена у развоју, породици и друштву. Прави узроци неправедности,” *Жена данас* 23 (13 December 1978): 3.

47 Наташа Ђурић, “Из излагања Миле Ђорђић, шефа југословенске делегације: У интересу свих жена света,” *Жена данас* 15 (23 July 1980): 4.

48 AJ, 578-51-89, Platforma za učešće jugoslovenske delegacije na Sastanku eksperata NZ i ZUR po pitanju uloge žene u razvoju (Platform for the Participation of the Yugoslav delegation at the Non-Aligned and Developing Countries Experts' Meeting on the Role of Women in Development), Havana, od 24. do 27. maja 1981.

49 AJ, 578-50-88, Konferencija NZ i ZUR o ulozi žena u razvoju. Dokument pripremljen od strane Jugoslavije po tački 13. Privremeno dnevno red Konferencije (Conference of Non-Aligned and Developing Countries on the Role of Women in Development. Document prepared by Yugoslavia under Item 13 of the Provisional Agenda of the Conference).

50 Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 11, 251 (footnote 29). See also Bonfiglioli, “The first UN World Conference on Women (1975) as a Cold War Encounter,” 532–538.

51 Вера Гудац Додић, “Конференција Друг-ца жена. Женско питање – нови приступ?” Транснационална секвенца у историји феминистичког покрета у Југославији, in: *Традиција и трансформација. Транснационална искуства југословенске историје*, ed. Олга Манојловић Пинтар and Вера Гудац Додић (Београд: ИНИС, 2019), 246. See also Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Belgrade, 1978. Remembering the conference Drug-ca žena. Žensko pitanje – novi pristup?/Comrade Woman. The Women's Question: A New Approach? Thirty years after*, A Master's Thesis, Utrecht University 2007/2008.

52 Vida Tomšič, “Unapređenje društvenog položaja žena – integralni deo bitke za ravnopravnost, ljudska prava, ekonomsko-socijalno razvoj i mir u svetu,” in: *Žena i razvoj X. Međunarodni seminar Bled 1977* (Београд: Savezna konferencija SSRNJ, Konferencija za pitanja društvenog položaja žena Jugoslavije, 1978), 24–25.

rights, socio-economic development and world peace.⁵³ A participant in the seminar, the first-ever female Assistant-Secretary-General of the UN, Helvi Sipilä, concluded that more money was invested in armament than in development and that not enough women were included in decision-making processes about how money is spent. “I think we have also become aware”, said Sipilä, “that the women’s issue is not an isolated issue, but a matter of the entire society, and an issue that concerns us all”.⁵⁴ American author and political activist Barbara Ehrenreich,⁵⁵ whom *Žena danas* described to its readers as a feminist and Marxist, participated in the International Round Table on “Socialism and Political Systems” in Cavtat, Croatia, the same year.⁵⁶ Before the World Conference of the UN Decade for Women in Copenhagen, Lucille Mair, Jamaican diplomat and the conference Secretary, visited FEC in Belgrade, where she noted a stagnation in global negotiations for easing world tensions, adding that there was great interest in the upcoming conference.⁵⁷ During the UN Decade for Women, numerous initiatives and actions were launched by national and international political, social, humanitarian and other organizations to improve the position of women.⁵⁸

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, only ten years after the end of the UN Decade for Women, the memory of the contributions of activists from Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia was erased. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1996, the 20th anniversary of the Mexico City conference was commemorated, but the participants who had initiated the original 1975 gathering were excluded from the event.⁵⁹ In the 2004 edition, which published autobiographical essays by 27 protagonists of the UN Decade for Women, not a single essay came from activists from the former Eastern Bloc. Scholars from the English-speaking world also ignored the contributions of women from the Eastern Bloc. Furthermore, some individuals attempted to give credit for declaring the IWY to the United States.⁶⁰ According to research by Kristen Ghodsee, feminists from the United States perceived themselves as leaders of the women’s movement. During the UN Decade for Women, their ideological principles were challenged by activists from

socialist countries with their anti-capitalist rhetoric and their view on the essence of the “woman question”. Women from the Eastern Bloc were also very successful in mobilizing women in developing countries and spreading their influence through UN institutions (among others, through the Commission on the Status of Women). According to Ghodsee, these two types of feminism – American liberal feminism and the feminism of women from Central and Eastern Europe – arose and developed independently of each other. The superior stance of the latter was also based on the fact that a larger number of women in the Eastern (Socialist) Bloc participated in the labour market, and their legal status was better than in the Western Bloc countries.

The end of the Cold War in favour of capitalist countries gave American feminists an advantage within the international movement. After 1989, younger generations of Western activists had the opportunity to teach “feminism” to women from the former Eastern Bloc. Moreover, Western feminist concepts prevailed when shaping the European Union’s Gender Equality Action Plan. This plan focuses on discrimination in employment policies and legal restrictions, while giving less attention to the economic causes of women’s social and political marginalization.⁶¹

Final remarks

In the interwar period, Yugoslav feminists became aware that the issue of war and peace was not, and must not be, exclusively a male domain. Already at that time, in an organized form, they advocated for peace. In the second half of the 1930s, leftist feminists advocated for peace but also promoted a policy of active resistance to fascism and militarism.

While socialist Yugoslavia introduced unconditional women’s suffrage, their representation in leadership positions remained low until the early 1970s. The proclamation of the International Women’s Year once again raised the issue of the status of Yugoslav women. Many studies conducted during the 1970s and 1980s in Yugoslavia concluded that socialism had not fully liberated women. Instead, it created a framework where women’s rights expanded but did not necessarily translate into gender equality in everyday life.⁶²

53 Н. Ђурић, “Политичка библиотека: Жена и развој 1977,” *Жена данас* 22 (1 November 1978): 8. See also *Žena i razvoj. X Međunarodni seminar Bled 1977*.

54 Н[аташа] Ђурић, “Хелви Сипила: Имам шта да кажемо у ОУН,” *Жена данас* 13 (19 October 1977): 1. Helvi Sipilä, pomoćnik Generalnog sekretara UN za socijalni razvoj i humanitarna pitanja, *Žena i razvoj*, 118–119.

55 Ehrenreich was a prominent figure in the Democratic Socialists of America, involved in the “women’s health movement”. Accessed 30 November 2024 <https://www.barbaraehreich.com/>

56 Сеада Хоџић, “Перспектива женског питања,” *Жена данас* 15 (16 November 1977): 3.

57 Н. Ђ, “Пред Светску конференцију Декаде УН за жене. Нема развоја без равноправности и мира,” *Жена данас* 11 (11 June 1980): 8.

58 For example, at the invitation of the French government, Yugoslavia participated in the seminar “The Participation of Women in the Economic Evolution of the ECE Region,” held in Paris from 9 to 12 July 1979. See AJ, 578–50–80, Izveštaj sa seminara “Učešće žena u ekonomskom razvoju EEK regiona” (Report from the seminar).

59 Ghodsee, *Second World, Second Sex*, 1.

60 Ghodsee, “Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women’s Organizations,” 50–51.

61 Ibid., 3–6, 10; Bonfiglioli, “Women’s Political and Social Activism in the Early Cold War Era,” 1–2.

62 At the same time, the UN Year events confronted Yugoslav women from official organizations with the growing Western second wave. It has been noted that the IWY opened up the discourse about feminism in the Yugoslav intellectual scene. The new Yugoslav feminism targeted the proclaimed yet, in their view, unfulfilled equality of women from a feminist position, inspired by critical Marxism, post-structuralist French feminism and new theories in psychology, anthropology and sociology. They questioned whether the enslavement of women had been wrongly placed in the context of the opposition between labour and capital, and whether it should be recontextualized in the contradiction between women and men. Is the struggle for women’s liberation wrongly placed within the framework of class struggle? Zsófia Lóránd, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 2, 41–44. See also Nada Ler-Sofronić, *Neofeminizam i socijalistička alternativa* (Beograd: Radnička štampa, 1986).

Generally, the IWY (1975) and the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985) contributed to women's visibility in international relations, exploring their influence and legitimizing it on a global scale. Moreover, it provided women with a global forum to simultaneously discuss issues specific to women and peace policy concerns, as three World Conferences on Women were held during this Decade: in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). In addition to these World Conferences, various meetings, seminars and round tables addressing the status of women were held throughout the entire Decade.

The Yugoslav position was that the issues concerning the social status of women were inextricable from the struggle for peace, consistent respect of independence, sovereignty and equality of all nations, new democratic and equal international relations, overcoming the gap between rich and poor countries and greater humanism and international solidarity. Furthermore, Yugoslavia recognized a strong alignment between this position and the views expressed in the Declaration of Mexico, the World Plan of Action, and other UN documents formulated for action during the proclaimed Decade for Women.

Yugoslavia advocated the same position within the Non-Aligned Movement. The Yugoslav Interdepartmental Working Group, established to coordinate the implementation of the decisions of the World Conference in Mexico City, also oversaw preparations for Yugoslavia's participation in Non-Aligned Movement meetings concerning the advancement of women's roles and status. Two conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement on the role of women in development were held: one in Baghdad in 1979 and the other in Havana in 1981.

Summary

This article examines the peace-oriented international activism of Yugoslav women during the International Women's Year (1975) and the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985). It highlights how Yugoslav feminists, building on interwar pacifist traditions and socialist ideals, framed gender equality as inseparable from global peace, anti-imperialism and solidarity among nations.

Through archival research, the article reconstructs the work of the Yugoslav Committee for the IWY and the Interdepartmental Working Group, which organized Yugoslavia's participation in UN and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) initiatives. At conferences in Mexico City, Copenhagen and Nairobi, as well as regional events in Baghdad and Havana, Yugoslav delegates promoted a feminist vision grounded in disarmament, collective security and global justice.

Figures like Vida Tomšič and Mila Đorđić articulated a distinctly non-aligned, anti-militarist feminism, arguing that the struggle for women's rights must also confront global inequality, underdevelopment and militarization. The article also critiques the post-Cold War erasure of socialist women's contributions to international feminist discourse, particularly their emphasis on peace as a feminist issue.

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