Diplomacy & Statecraft

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdps20

Yugoslav Women's Movement and "The Happiness to the World"

Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak

To cite this article: Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak (2020) Yugoslav Women's Movement and "The Happiness to the World", Diplomacy & Statecraft, 31:4, 722-744, DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2020.1842064

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2020.1842064

DIPLOMACY & STATECRAFT
2020, VOL. 31, NO. 4, 722–744
https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2020.1842064

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Yugoslav Women's Movement and "The Happiness to the World"

Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak

Department of History Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb Croatia

ABSTRACT

This analysis focuses on the ways in which the interwar Yugoslav women's movement contributed to national and international political processes of that time, and it divides into two parts. The first deals with the national efforts of the Yugoslav women's umbrella alliance and its endorsement of the concepts of Yugoslavia and a Yugoslav nation. The second analyses the international activities of Yugoslav women's organisations on a global and regional level. It investigates the ways that women's co-operation was used to promote peaceful solutions to regional and international conflicts. However, the national and international women's movement was a social product of its time. Although promoting pacifism and transnational concepts, in many ways it also faced, mirrored, and sometimes perpetuated contemporary social and national conflicts and prejudices.

"What will bring happiness to the world?" asked Persida Prodanović, the president of the Circle of Serbian Sisters at a meeting of the Slavic Women's Committee in Prague in 1930. She immediately offered an answer: "It is not a puzzle for a philosopher. The answer is simple: peace".[1] It was common to link women's conferences to transnational goals and pacifism. Newspaper articles reporting on the activities of the women's movement in the interwar period frequently emphasised its efforts to find peaceful solutions. However, women's organisations and conferences were places of both co-operation and conflict. They promoted the message of pacifism and togetherness, but they also had to deal with national, political, class, or racial issues amongst their members or participants, and sometimes they even perpetuated those stereotypes and conflicts. This analysis examines the women's movement in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941, its endorsement of peaceful solutions for national and international problems, and the obstacles, limitations, and conflicts that they did or did not manage to overcome.

The study divides in two parts. The first focuses on the ambitious endeavour of an umbrella organisation, the National Women's Alliance of the Kingdom

CONTACT Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak iograjse@ffzg.hr iograjse@ffzg.hr Department of History Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 10000, Croatia.

of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslav National Women's Alliance [NWA] to steer, overcome the cultural and political crisis of collective identity after the dramatic geopolitical changes in 1918, and contribute to forging Yugoslav national identity. The second part deals with the international interactions of the Yugoslav women's movement. The analysis investigates their efforts to offer solutions to major national, international, or regional problems and promote gender equality and pacifism.

The literature on the NWA and Yugoslav women's movement is scarce and inconsistent. In the 1970s, one of the first Yugoslav historians to study women's history, Jovanka Kecman, published a detailed and positivistic analysis of the interwar women's movement in Yugoslavia. Anthropologist Lydia Sklevicky complemented Kecman's work in research on the Antifascist Women's Front in the 1980s,[2] but historians of the Central and Eastern European Successor States then lost interest in the Yugoslav women's movement. They were more inclined to research specific interwar national – Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian – feminist or professional women's organisations, although every analysis of the women's movement in any part of ex-Yugoslavia inevitably mentions this Yugoslav woman's umbrella alliance.[3] Another problem is that there is no NWA archival records, and it did not publish its first bulletin until 1935. Therefore, knowledge of it finds basis on its rare and irregular annual reports, articles in various newspapers and women's magazines, especially the elite and commercial Belgrade magazine, *Woman and the World*, the feminist publication *Women's Movement*,[4] and the records of other women's organisations or individual women who belonged to the NWA. For example, the records of the Slovene feminist, Minka Govekar, are in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia and the Association of University Women in Belgrade's Historical Archive and Archive of Yugoslavia. The Archive of Yugoslavia houses the correspondence of the royal court, and those of the "Drinka banovina" section of the NWA sit in the archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[5]

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes – Yugoslavia – emerged in 1918 from a mosaic of South Slavic territories. The key part of the new country was the 40-year-old Kingdom of Serbia ruled by the Karađorđević dynasty. By 1918, it seemed that its wartime and political campaigns had finally paid off. Serbia was on the winning side of the First World War, whilst Austria-Hungary was disintegrating. Pro-Serbian political forces dominated the political scene in neighbouring Montenegro and Vojvodina, at the time the southern part of Hungary. Both joined the Kingdom of Serbia in November 1918. A few days later, the enlarged Kingdom united with the provisional State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, an entity formed by the South Slavic parts of a disintegrating Austria-Hungary.[6] The result was the multinational and multicultural Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It had three large religious groups – Orthodox, Catholic, and Islamic – and three recognised

nations – Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.[7] Each of the latter groups had their hopes and doubts about the new country, but the unfavourable terms of the merger shook the initial Yugoslav enthusiasm of Slovenes and Croats; and they started to feel that they had simply exchanged old oppressors – Vienna and Budapest – for a new one – Belgrade. On the other hand, some Serbian circles feared that their hard-won independence and freedom faced weakening in the vague project of a multinational union. The new Kingdom's government therefore faced the very delicate problem of overcoming national differences and fears and integrating three nations into a new political and cultural framework. Unfortunately, they were not very successful. Instead of improving, national relations deteriorated in the following years, reaching a low point after the assassination in 1928 of Stjepan Radić, the leader of the popular Croatian Peasant Party. King Aleksandar Karađorđević then launched a unification project based on the compulsory assimilation of the three nations into one. They would now be called Yugoslav, and the country was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. With old national symbols banned, the country reorganised into nine administrative provinces known as *banovina*, usually named after rivers. Naturally, the accompanying suppression resulted in an outburst of nationalism, especially in Croatia.

In many ways, the umbrella organisation of Yugoslav women, the NWA, mirrored the activities, policies, and goals of the government. Its founding occurred just after unification, succeeding the tradition and inheriting the network of the Serbia NWA – founded in 1906 – and supported and partly funded by the government. It also followed an unofficial but apparent national hierarchy. The president of the organisation was always a Serb,[8] but it was also customary that the two vice-presidents were a Croat and a Slovene. With an initial proposal to use a shorter Yugoslav version of the name rejected in favour of the official three-part name of the monarchy, the group changed its name to the Yugoslav National Women's Alliance after the country's official policies turned towards Yugoslav Unitarianism. In the 1920s, the activities of the alliance found basis on the co-operation of branches in the national capitals – Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, respectively – and its administrative structure was reorganised into nine branches, with a special branch in Belgrade, in 1929.[9]

The NWA's establishment also responded to the International Council of Women [ICW], an international umbrella women's alliance that gathered heterogeneous women's associations whose political orientation varied from very conservative to extremely liberal. With the ICW conceived as an international union of national umbrella women's alliances, its very existence initiated the national gathering of women's societies, thus indirectly helping the national integration processes.[10] Multinational countries, however, posed a specific problem given the complex national dynamics and the resistance of Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, and Polish women's movements to accept a joint

umbrella alliance of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The NWA, as a member of the ICW, included charitable, conservative, feminist, or professional organisations, and it brought together about two-thirds of all of the woman's societies in Yugoslavia. At first, even though it was an umbrella alliance of the multinational Kingdom, it did not have to face competing national women's alliances. The reason is probably that few women's organisations in Croatia and Slovenia hardly saw the point in forming the national alliances within old Austria-Hungary and subsequently did not develop a tradition of national assembling. Therefore, the NWA board faced a challenge to convince women from Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia Herzegovina to accept the Yugoslav alliance as their national framework. Moreover, since there were no alternatives, they could easily introduce themselves as representatives of the whole Kingdom and the institution that could contribute to the construction of the Yugoslav identity.

The NWA strongly endorsed the process of Yugoslav integration. Adopted in Ljubljana in 1922, the official programme emphasised the promotion of national integration as its primary goal, followed by agitation on "women's issues" such as legal equality, equal employment and educational opportunities, the protection of children and motherhood, equal moral standards, and the fight against prostitution and alcoholism.[11] When the editor of *Yugoslav Woman*[12] excitedly announced the formation of a women's umbrella alliance, she proclaimed, "We must be aware of what's going on, we need to come together, firmly hold hands and work to raise the consciousness of national unity and morality …. Woman can do a lot!".[13] Croatian writer Adela Milčinović[14] gave her impressions of the NWA's founding conference with a comment that women from all parts of the new country, including the "occupied regions" of Dalmatia, Rijeka, Sušak, and Trieste,[15] had gathered to document their love and unity.[16] The management of the NWA proudly declared in its first annual report, "And, isn't it inspiring to see that in this huddled atmosphere of political separatism our women's societies from all parts of the homeland transcend religious and tribal differences and join forces for a common good?".[17] But national tensions were only part of the problem. The much more challenging and ambitious task was to build a national cultural network from scratch. The people of Yugoslavia still had to become accustomed to the idea of being Yugoslav, not a Croat or Slovene in the Habsburg Monarchy, nor a Serb in their small, relatively newly-independent country, but a member of a completely different political and cultural community. This change cut deeper than politics. It affected identities. Thus, what activities could they undertake to achieve such a complex goal?

The most popular promotional tools were the annual NWA meetings and its conferences. The politicisation of everyday life played an important part in creating collective identity.[18] The conferences opened space to promote national emblems, symbols, and rhetoric, with even a careful choice of

conference venue used as a political tool. During the 1920s, all the conferences took place in the "new" parts of the monarchy. Zagreb, Croatia hosted conferences in 1920 and 1930, Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1922, Sarajevo, Bosnia in 1924, Skopje, Macedonia in 1925,[19] Bled, Slovenia in 1926, Novi Sad, Vojvodina in 1928, and Split, Dalmatia/Croatia in 1929.[20] The purpose of this approach was to outline the new cultural scope of the young monarchy, build a Yugoslav woman's network, and promote the NWA and the idea of the new national identity. The conferences usually had two parts: official and ceremonial. In the official one, the organisation's management and national branches reported on their activities. The participants also discussed important women's issues and possible new courses of action. The ceremonial portion, however, was an opportunity for propaganda. It began with a colourful woman's parade with as many as 1,000 participants, some dressed in national dress from various parts of the Kingdom. It continued in a glamorous, crowded hall, decorated with national emblems where representatives of the royal court and national and local government made speeches. The local and women's press covered and broadcast on the radio this grand manifestation of women supporting national unity.[21]

Conferences were also the venues for social networking amongst members from all over the Kingdom. A host family in Belgrade in 1919 impressed an entrant from Zagreb. "Serbian intellectuals are the people's intellectuals", she said as she departed, feeling that she had made valuable new contacts.[22] Zagreb pleasantly surprised a Serbian participant at the 1930 conference. It was very nice, felt like home, and the Croats are not so smug any more, she wrote in her report.[23] The NWA also encouraged individual contacts amongst their member organisations, especially women of different nationalities. The Circle of Serbian Sisters was especially industrious in organising such gatherings.[24] It was one of the largest members of the NWA, with over 100 branches in Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia; and it maintained intense contacts with some Croatian and Slovenian societies. It was devoted to charitable and national work. The first activity usually meant caring for war orphans, students, and craft schools, whilst the latter included the production of national embroidery.[25]

Making folk embroideries was more than a hobby or craft; it aimed to contribute to the preservation of national traditions and culture. Country life and the peasantry in general were perceived as "the healthy bases" and keepers of the true essence of the nation.[26] Wearing national folk dress was often a political statement used in the ceremonies, celebrations, marches, or funerals of politicians. Interwar magazines often published photos of Queen Marija and her ladies-in-waiting dressed in costumes from different regions of the country that consequently sent the message that she was queen of all of the people of the monarchy.[27] Therefore, the Circle of Serbian Sisters encouraged their members and *protégés* to make folk handicrafts, and they staged exhibitions

where women in various national folk costumes sold rugs – *chilims* – tablecloths, and other embroideries typical of the different Yugoslav regions. They also organised grand balls where members of the upper class wore folk costumes from all parts of the Kingdom.[28] These celebrations of national folk culture brought together women from the diverse towns, regions, and social milieu of Yugoslavia. The variety of national costumes at celebrations and exhibitions re-enforced the image of an integrated Yugoslav community and new Yugoslav identity.

Still, images are sometimes only illusions. Whilst promoting Yugoslav unity, the NWA actually struggled to attract women's organisations from Croatia and Slovenia. Fewer than ten Slovenian delegates participated in the founding conference at Belgrade, and one-half were from "occupied" territories and therefore not citizens of the Kingdom. In the next two decades, the NWA, however, gained a better standing in Slovenia. The largest societies there, the General Women's Society and the Circle of Yugoslav Sisters in Ljubljana,[29] and their distinguished members, such as writer and journalist Govekar, lady-in-waiting Franja Tavčar, or feminist and clerk, Alojzija Štebi,[30] became active participants in the umbrella organisation. Croatia, on the other hand, was a tougher nut to crack. Croatian women participated in somewhat larger numbers in the founding NWA conference, but their impressions were not always favourable towards the umbrella alliance. Some reports feared that Serbian dominance within the NWA, and their understanding of Yugoslavism as a territorial rather than national concept, would impede the NWA potential to represent Croatian interests.[31] Therefore, Croatian societies were somewhat aloof in the 1920s and, during the 1922 Ljubljana conference, the Zagreb branch secretary regrettably reported on the limited lobbying successes amongst Croats. In fact, some of the Croatian organisations had decided to leave the NWA on political grounds.[32] The NWA could rely on the Zagreb Yugoslav Women's Association, some charitable and professional organisations, the Zagreb branches of the Association of University Women, and the Women's Movement; but one of the largest Croatian societies, Croatian Woman,[33] never joined the NWA. Naturally, Croatian supporters of the Yugoslav union endorsed the NWA and tried to create a positive image for the umbrella alliance. One of the fiercest advocates of Yugoslavia and the NWA was Zofka Kveder Demetrović, a famous Slovene author, who moved to Zagreb after marrying a Croatian politician. She embraced Yugoslavism, changed the name of her magazine to *Yugoslav Women*, and even started to write in Croatian. Her friend and colleague, Milčinović, wrote less enthusiastic but still favourable articles about the Alliance. Other supporters came from a milieu of various professions that supported Yugoslavism, cosmopolitism, or shared some other goals of the NWA: teachers, a secretary of Croatian Catholic Women's Union and cofounder of Esperanto society, Danica Bedeković, feminist, translator, and English teacher, Mira Vodvařka

Kočonda, and humanitarian and promoter of national embroidery, Zlata Kovačić Lopašić.[34] One reason the NWA had difficulties in attracting Croatian and Slovene members came from the older, conservative, and nationalist faction of Serbian elite women retaining an important role in managing the Alliance.

At first, members of the political elite, usually wives of government ministers and prominent members of the two largest Serbian women's organisations ran the NWA: the Women's Society[35] and the Circle of Serbian Sisters; but by mid-1920s, the first female professionals, such as teachers, writers, and lawyers took it over. This classic case of a power struggle between conservative and progressive factions in some ways mirrored the conflict within the ICW at the beginning of the twentieth century, which led to the establishment of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance – later the International Alliance of Women [IAW].[36] In effect, it also brought the feminist issues to the centre of NWA attention. The feminist and the suffragist issues were always part of NWA interest. During the public debate on the draft of a new constitution, the NWA organised many petitions, meetings, and conferences to promote the political rights of women, but without result.

The the first constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the Vidovdan Constitution, did not prescribe rights for women, which created a puzzling problem for the NWA[37]: could a pro-government organisation promote goals not in line with official policies? A majority of NWA members believed that it could, and they decided to include the promotion of women's rights in the alliance's official programme. However, Danica Hristić, the NWA president, objected and resigned her position.[38] Although her resignation was only temporary, the progressive wing subsequently grew stronger, and it plotted a more decisive course for promoting legal and social rights and suffrage for women. The founding of the Alliance of Feminist Societies in 1923 – popularly called the Women's Movement – and the Association of University Women in 1927 inevitably influenced the dynamics within the NWA and its willingness to promote women's suffrage and professional rights.[39] Feminist issues dominated the conference in Skopje in 1925. The annual work plan highlighted the promotion of legal equality as a primary goal, and Leposava Petković won election as the new NWA president. She was a teacher at the Women's Lyceum in Belgrade and president of the Yugoslav feminist movement, the Yugoslav Youth Red Cross, the Little Entente of Women [LEW], and obviously a candidate of the modernist faction.[40]

This feminist breakthrough restructured the NWA, making it more acceptable to women outside the Serbian lands. But it also led to the first major crisis of the Alliance. The NWA became more popular in Croatia and Slovenia, but the more conservative groups, mostly Serbian elite and charitable societies like the Belgrade Women's Society, refused to accept the change. Therefore, the next NWA conference at Bled in 1926 attracted more societies from Croatia

and Slovenia, but it also saw by a large reduction in the number of participants. In a country with over 300 women's societies, only 123 sent delegates to the conference.[41] Moreover, the conservative societies split from the NWA and formed their own group, the National Women's Union. The break-up shocked the public. Women's magazines and the daily press followed the feud with interest and usually disapproval. The Union promoted the theory that the women's movement should have two parts: general and political. As a member of ICW, the NWA should focus on the first, not the latter.[42] In return, the NWA accused the Union of hypocrisy as it accused the NWA of abandoning national goals; but Union members were leaving now that Croatian and Slovenian societies were finally joining. They were generating a "male type of crisis" and dividing the already small Yugoslav women's movement.[43] The conflict escalated and became more personal. Jelena Zrnić, editor of *Woman and the World*, who wrote against the Union, was sued – and lost[44]; and pro-feminist Milena Atanacković lost her job in the Department for the Protection of Children and Youth.[45] Moreover, the local women's movement in Serbia was suffering. Once their two largest groups, the Women's Society and Circle of Serbian Sisters, came into conflict, they paralysed the women's movement in small towns and villages. Instead of co-operating, members of the opposing societies started to sabotage each other.[46] The NWA took active measures to secure their position, pleading their case before members of the government and the queen, and asking for and receiving ICW support.[47] Over the next few years, however, tensions eased. The affair had started with a bang, but ended with a whimper. Membership in the Union lost its appeal after it became evident that it had limited access to international organisations. Eventually, some Union members simply moved back to the NWA. The next conflict, however, came from the dramatic political events that antagonised national groups and ended any chance of national unity within the country and the NWA.

The loose bonds between the Croatian women's movement and NWA were irretrievably shattered after the assassination of the leader of the most popular party in Croatia, Radić. The shooting that took place in the Parliament in 1928 pushed Yugoslavia at the brink of civil war. Historians of modern Croatian history tend to single out this event as one the key moments that ultimately determined the fate of the Kingdom. It resulted with the introduction of royal dictatorship and Yugoslav Unitarianism, on one hand, and disillusion with the Yugoslav idea and outburst of Croatian nationalism, on the other; accordingly, relations between Croats and Serbs remained seriously strained throughout the rest of the period.[48] Therefore, during the 1930s, scepticism towards Yugoslav initiatives and institutions, the NWA included, characterised the Croatian women's movement, and it even tried to organise its own competitive Croatian Women's Alliance. In addition, the fiercest female supporters of the Yugoslav idea were not part of Croatian society anymore. Kveder died in

1926, and Milčinević immigrated to USA. Other women who showed a shred of enthusiasm for government policies were efficiently isolated from women's activities in Croatia. For example, the president of the Zagreb NWA branch, Zlata Kovačević Lopašić, found herself expelled from most of the Croatian associations and clubs because of her participation in the celebration of the anniversary of the breakthrough on the Salonika front during the First World War.[49] The NWA, on the other hand, embraced official Yugoslav Unitarian politics, changed its name, and reorganised its administration according to the new standards. Since new government policies enforced the idea of a Unitarian Yugoslav nation and discouraged the use of national names and emblems, the NWA retreated from proactive politics of national co-operation. It simply started to ignore the growing national tensions in the alliance. The celebration of the organisation's tenth anniversary in Zagreb in 1930 was the last NWA conference that took place outside of "Serbian lands". During the 1930s, the conferences were held in the eastern part of the country: Novi Sad (1933), Koviljača (1934) and finally Belgrade (1937, 1938). Instead, the NWA focused on promoting the international position of Yugoslav women. It introduced nine working groups modelled on the committees of the ICW – peace, press, emigration and immigration, hygiene, education, protection of children, women's profession, citizenship, and equal moral standards.[50] It hosted the 1936 ICW conference and pushed for transnational concepts that would both create a common ground for the co-operation of women's organisations throughout the country and help their standing within the international movement. For example, they launched and promoted the concept of commemorating the "Peace Day". From 1928, the NAW encouraged their branches to organise commemorative events and publish pacifist articles on 11 November, the day the warring parties of the First World War signed the armistice.[51] Two years later, they introduced their concept of the "Peace Day" during the ICW conference in Vienna, and they were very satisfied with the welcoming reception and appreciation of their proposal.[52] Transnational ideas, however, had limited success in bringing the belligerent nations of the Kingdom together, especially since their pressing problems and issues with the Yugoslav Unitarianism remained unaddressed.

Not all of its members welcomed the submissive acceptance of government policies and the centralisation of the NWA. "Why should we copy the division of the country? Shouldn't the private sector be able to choose freely?" protested a delegate of the Belgrade societies at the Novi Sad conference.[53] Accusing the NWA management of being too authoritarian and strict in implementing Unitarianism, the Slovenians disliked the use of the term "tribe" instead of "nation" for the different peoples in Yugoslavia; they had problems with documents written only in the Cyrillic alphabet; and they were generally displeased with the status of the Slovenian language in the NWA and Kingdom.[54] "I have to say that … even today, after 20 years of our life

together … most educated Serbs and Croats do not understand Slovenian".[55] But the loudest and fiercest protest against the NWA policies occurred during the ICW Conference at Dubrovnik in 1936. Hosting this international gathering was supposed to be a triumphal moment for the NWA. Dubrovnik was actually an intelligent choice as the conference venue, since it was already a popular tourist destination. However, Dubrovnik was also a Croatian city, where Great Serbian ideology frequently usurped its culture and history[56]; and the Croatian position in Dubrovnik was especially vulnerable if the country's national borders were erased and political power centred in Belgrade. From the perspective of Croatian women's organisations, the fact that the NWA hosted a conference in Dubrovnik could have meant one, or all, of three things. First, the NWA simply ignored the lack of support of the major women's organisations in Croatia; second, they considered Dubrovnik part of Serbia's heritage in the context of Great Serbian ideology; or third, it may have been another attempt to implement the politics of Yugoslav Unitarianism by which Dubrovnik would simply be a Yugoslav town. None of those options was acceptable. In the end, Croatian Woman decided to use the conference venue as an opportunity to express their own political messages and sabotage its activities. They arrived on the ship, *Zagreb*, dressed in folk costumes, and carried Croatian tricolour flags, all accompanied by a brass band. After a welcoming speech next to the statue of the celebrated seventeenth century Croatian poet and playwright, Ivan Gundulić,[57] they declared Dubrovnik a Croatian city and criticised the Unitarian policies of the Kingdom and NWA. They played Croatian music throughout the city and broke into the hall were the conference was taking place, provoking chaos and scandal. Finally, they departed on the *Zagreb*, accompanied by shouts of "Long live Croatia!" from the crowd. The mayor of Dubrovnik cancelled a planned dinner party and distributed the food to the poor. Petković called an emergency meeting of the NWA where she condemned the conduct of Croatian Woman and rejected their accusations of the Unitarian NWA policy by pointing out the argument that some of the organisers of the protest actually gave speeches on the NWA conferences in Bled ten years before. Nonetheless, the whole incident disclosed suppressed national issues within the Alliance, and the Croatian as well as some of the Slovenian members refused to participate in the meeting.[58] It is interesting that there were several articles in women's magazines that addressed the incident, but most authors simply decided to report only on the festive part of the event.

What had gone wrong? How did the boisterous excitement and optimism of 1918 transform into the determined defiance of the late 1930s? It is unfair to judge women's organisations for failing a concept that had fallen apart at the national level, but they did make several crucial mistakes. First, they did not employ enough feminist arguments. National efforts might have seemed a bit of a stretch, but women's issues were the genuine common ground of the

women's network across the country. The NWA came closest to representing all the nations in Yugoslavia when it showed more determination in promoting solutions to women's problems. Second, they embraced the official authoritarian and Unitarian national policies. Promoting national unity seemed only a bit exaggerated in 1920s, but it became overbearing and suffocating by the 1930s. By accepting and promoting the official national concept of one Yugoslav nation, the NWA identified itself with the political establishment and became just another institution of a despised regime. Finally, it failed to address the issues amongst the Yugoslavian nations. The entire concept of promoting national unity found basis only on co-operation, visits, contacts, and festive proclamations, but the NWA was reluctant to talk about the real problems. The press generously covered the conflict between the NWA's feminist and traditional factions but rarely addressed the smouldering national conflicts in the 1930s. This approach made the proclamation of national unity seem only dishonest and empty propaganda.

Nonetheless, women from interwar Yugoslavia participated in all of the major global women's associations. The NWA succeeded the National Women's Alliance of Serbia as a member of the ICW. Yugoslavs joined IAW at a conference at Rome in 1923. Women's magazines in the country often reported on the activities of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, with a Yugoslav branch of the league established in 1929. The Association of University Women was naturally a member of the International Federation of University Women.[59] In addition, Yugoslav women were active in regional initiatives, the most important of which was LEW,[60] the Slavic Women's Committee,[61] and various contacts amongst Balkan women at the beginning of 1930s.[62]

Taking part in the international initiatives provided an opportunity to have an impact on global projects such as pacifism or suffragism. It is interesting, however, that whilst national and feminist goals were often conflicted in the homeland, they complemented each other on the international level. This interweaving of nationalism and internationalism in the women's organisations remained quite consuetudinary amongst women's movements of the new or newly liberated countries, and it derived from the idea that the co-operation of different nationalisms constituted internationalism.[63] Furthermore, women from countries that were still struggling to build their international image could recognise the double potential of participating in women's international movement. Umbrella women's organisations supported their efforts to promote women's issues in their country, and the international events provided settings for advertising national culture and interests at the international or regional level. Therefore, during the international women's conferences, one could easily meet participants that wore national dresses or used some other form of national symbols.

Delegates from the Yugoslavia also saw themselves as national ambassadors at international conferences, believing that their activities could change or create an image of their country. They understood that their role was not only to take an active part in creating global trends in the women's movement but also to represent their country in a commendable fashion. During the conferences, they took actions to promote national culture and tried to distinguish themselves by prominent work. The famous Serbian writer, Isidora Sekulić,[64] presented a paper on Yugoslav literature during the ICW Conference in Oslo, and Petković gave interviews about Yugoslavia after the 1933 conference in Stockholm, which was apparently a ringing success. "The next time I must bring a map of the Balkans", she concluded enthusiastically.[65] They also believed that their personal achievements and standing contributed to the international image of the Kingdom. Women's magazines proudly reported every election of Yugoslav women to the boards of international alliances, and they showed great care about the reception of their suggestions. "Our women did not just stand still in Washington", proclaimed one article about the activities of Yugoslav members at the 1925 ICW Conference there. This conference appeared a great success because of one Yugoslav member's election to the ICW board, and Yugoslav suggestions had been incorporated in the final text of the conference resolution.[66] "If our women are like that … then the 'stronger' sex must be worth something, too", they concluded.[67] Five years later, it became even better. Inspired by the Yugoslav example, the ICW Conference at Vienna established an international Peace Day and recommended the Yugoslav practice as a way to celebrate it.[68] Women continued to ponder actions that they could undertake to improve their position within the international movement. Regional alliances provided unique opportunities to bring women of the small or new countries into the spotlight. The LEW managed to get one representative – out of 10 – onto the board of the IAW in London, and a Greek delegate won election as member of the Board.[69]

At the same time, international women's conferences were tools for promoting women's issues that aimed to improve their position in the world and homeland. Discussions that began at conferences in Rome, Washington, Vienna, or Paris continued in national women's magazines or the daily press. Thus, the Yugoslav women's movement fully participated in global debates on current topics of the time involving women. This approach was also an opportunity to raise public awareness of the issues that women considered important: suffrage, dual morality, illegitimate children, citizenship of married women, pacifism, and more. Participants in the international and national women's movement were keenly aware of such possibilities. They kept track of articles that covered international women's events and asked participants in national women's movements to report their findings. However, the results were sometimes discouraging.[70] Hosting a conference was a different story. It promoted the international women's movement in the

host country but also bolstered the reputation of a national women's movement and, most important, provided an opportunity to present the host country to the world. During these conferences, it was much easier to draw public attention to and elicit appreciation for women's issues. The international groups deliberately used this propaganda tool; for example, the LEW consciously chose to hold its first conferences in member countries that did not have women's suffrage. Yugoslavia hosted conferences for the majority of their international partners – LEW, Belgrade, 1924; IAW, Belgrade, 1931; the Slavic Committee, Belgrade, 1933; ICW, Dubrovnik 1936 – and the domestic press extensively covered them. Admittedly, their long-term impact was questionable, as most of the interest tended to fade away a short time after the conference.

Messages about pacifism had a better reception, especially in the 1920s and the early 1930s that were marked by projects of reconciliation and disarmament. Peace-making was the leading diplomatic idea of that period. The struggle to obtain and maintain lasting world peace resulted in numerous pacifist initiatives, for example, the 1928 anti-war Kellogg-Briand Pact signed by 63 nations, the League of Nations World Disarmament Conference of 1932–1933, or the 1921–1922 Washington and 1925 Locarno conferences that aimed to normalise international relations and reduce armaments. The women of that time believed that their contribution to pacifism was not only called for but implied by their gender. Men made war, but women were to make peace. It was a natural result of their sensitivity, motherhood, and care for the preservation of life.[71] The presumed biological inclination towards pacifism could present a problem in wartime but, during the interwar period, it provided a compelling argument in favour of women's suffrage rights and the necessity of their engagement in politics. Helping women to get a better standing in the political life of their own countries, it also promoted women's organisations as partners in global politics that led to the Joint Standing Committee of the Women's International Organisations that endorsed women's appointments to the various positions in League of Nations.[72]

Yugoslav women recognised multifarious potential by engaging in pacifist activism. Doing so would promote a worthy cause; it would help their status within the international women's organisations; and it was in line with their effort to change a negative image of Yugoslavia/Balkans as space of entangled national conflicts that ultimately ignited the Great War. The acceptance of their Peace Day motion at Vienna's ICW conference was excitedly commented by the Yugoslav women's press: "And so women from our country, which so often has been blamed for inciting international conflicts and turmoil, has provided the best example of its true pacifist nature".[73] Therefore, the Yugoslav women's movement tried to do its bit on both global and regional level.

One of the most successful international conferences in Yugoslavia was the IAW conference for peace organised by the Yugoslav Alliance of Women's Movements in Belgrade in 1931.[74] Coinciding with preparations for the World Disarmament Conference, this meeting sought to raise consciousness, awaken the public, and mobilise women around the world to support pacifism. It launched a petition for peace signed by almost six million people ceremoniously handed to the chair of the Disarmament Conference, Arthur Henderson, in July 1932. "Women took the initiative, now it's up to mankind to accept it", an article in *Woman's World* triumphantly concluded.[75] Although lacking permission to sign the petition, Yugoslavian women tried to encourage the action with financial and moral support. Lectures on pacifism and demonstrations for peace and disarmament marked the aftermath of the IAW conference, the largest and most successful of which symbolically took place at Sarajevo in 1932.[76] During such events, criticism of the recourse to war from a political, economic, cultural, and moral point of view occurred. "We must not be remembered as the generation that was responsible for the greatest bloodshed in history", exclaimed the president of Yugoslav Association of University Women, Paulina Lebl-Abala.[77] Still, the failure of the Disarmament Conference left them embittered. During the 1933 NWA conference, Petković looked back at the Conference with disappointment, but she also proclaimed that gathering millions of signatures of women against war was a laudable effort.[78]

Regional alliances provided an opportunity for promoting pacifist solutions to local political problems. The LEW even organised "secret meetings" in which its members discussed the most important and current regional problems. The Slavic Women's Committee pointed to two reasons why pacifism might fail – pessimism and utopianism – and called for a realistic pan-Slavic approach, the promotion of "real pacifism", and "honest internationalism".[79] Regional political efforts to solve the differences amongst the Balkan countries abetted and encouraged contacts amongst Balkan women. Women tried to help overcome these differences by re-enforcing cultural co-operation. For example, Yugoslav women organised a series of "Balkan Evenings", where they held lectures on Greek, Bulgarian, and Romanian culture, and they sponsored a group of Bulgarian women on a visit to Belgrade in 1933.[80]

Finally, participants in the international women's movement could make the world a better place for themselves. International activities required much travelling and socialising. In her review of the LEW, Štebi praised it as an organisation with ambitious goals but only one real achievement: the creation of a women's regional social network.[81] Women's networking provided opportunities for a career or personal gain. For example, A. Hristić and Atanacković won appointment to the boards of women's international organisations. The International Federation of University Women and the LEW offered scholarships to their member countries. During their research and

foreign travel, women could ask for the help and support of the local branch of their organisation.[82] The LEW also tried to encourage the sale of women's handicrafts. And, last but not least, women simply had a chance to have fun. During her extensive travels for the ICW conference in Edinburgh, Pavla Hočevar wrote about a visit to the British exhibition in Glasgow, concerts, dances, and elegant parties.[83] Women's associations often organised excursions, dinners, or *soirées*. Polish members of the Slavic Women's Committee invited their Yugoslav counterparts for an 18-day visit in 1934. They travelled across Poland, stayed with local members, and received discounted railway tickets.[84] The International Federation of University Women developed dynamic tourist activities. They encouraged members to visit other countries and offered a number of organised trips every year. For instance, in 1931, their members could choose from tours of "literary interest" across Italy, "historical interest" in Germany, history and art in Britain, or skiing in Norway.[85]

However, women's organisations, alliances, and conferences were not immune to the usual conflicts, power struggles, or stereotypes. Class, religion, race, or geographical affiliation marked the boundaries of collective identity of international women's movements. Even though ICW officially pronounced inclusiveness towards "all nations, races, creeds and classes", its politics was mostly created and steered by wealthy white Christians from Europe or North America. It went without saying that those women were considered superior to other members and therefore natural leaders of the movement.[86] Women from Yugoslavia were far from the inner circles of the international alliances, and they often had to cope with the negative images of "the primitive Balkan" and assumed inferiority of Slavic nations. In the subtext of articles that praised the accomplishments of Yugoslav delegates, there was a constant hint of the negative stereotypes of Yugoslavia that they encountered during the conferences. Yugoslavs were marked as "troublemakers", the initiators of global conflicts, or the "most chauvinist, violent and backward country in the League of Nations".[87] The Slavic Committee loudly protested against such discrimination. Whilst describing their international relations, however, they unconsciously used the vocabulary of imperialism. "The 'cultural West' underestimates the Slavic nations", they concluded, and then self-critically remarked that Slavic women should encourage their nations to improve themselves.[88] During an ICW conference in Edinburgh, Hočevar was surprised to discover that there were participants who believed that large countries with longer and more glorious histories had more rights than small countries with less accomplished experiences.[89]

Furthermore, as political conflicts could sometimes seriously interrupt their activities and burden women's international relationships, the ICW and IAW had to abandon most of their official international efforts during the world wars. The two groups also often struggled to remain impartial in various national feuds of their members.[90] One sarcastic article on the ICW

conference at Vienna shed some light on the chaotic power struggle occurring there: British women were trying to organise everything, the Bulgarians were ineffective, the Austrians constantly obstructed the Czechoslovaks, and, every time participants from India tried to take part in discussion, the meeting would grind to a halt.[91] Yugoslavians contributed to those conflicts by their own quarrels with Bulgarians over Macedonia, or at least that part of Macedonia that Serbia won during the Balkan Wars. Bulgarians believed that Macedonians were Bulgarians, and they supported the Macedonian separatist organisation VMRO; but Serbia claimed that Macedonians were Serbs and was forcing them to assimilate. This political conflict strained relations between Bulgarian and Yugoslavian women to such an extent that they could rarely be in the same room without starting a fight. It prevented Bulgaria from becoming a LEW member, and it influenced the atmosphere of the meetings of the Slavic Women's Committee.[92]

Yugoslav women believed it their national duty to fight the "Bulgarian assaults". An article on the 1930 conference at Prague praised the way that Persida Prodanović handled the "the Bulgarian incident", pointing out that "even if they [Bulgarians] would not change their mentality", they would now think twice before using every opportunity to cause strife.[93] It seemed that Yugoslavian and Bulgarian women saw no other way but to act in accord with the official policies of their government. Therefore, it took the acquiescence of the two nations during the Balkan conferences to reduce tensions and bring Bulgarian and Yugoslav women together. Interest and excitement met Bulgarian attendance at 1931's IAW Conference for Peace at Belgrade. The IAW president, Lady Corbett Ashby, concluded: "This is a historic conference because it is the first meeting of Yugoslav and Bulgarian women since the war!"[94]

The Yugoslav women's movement participated in national, regional, and global politics and endorsed projects for multinational co-operation and peaceful solutions: Yugoslavism, disarmament, regional discussions, and alliances. Two major processes governed their activities: official national politics and trends in the global women's movement. Most of their political initiatives only supported national or global projects, and they often managed to combine their national and gender activities. They used women's alliances and conferences to endorse national goals, but they also used national propaganda to draw public attention to women's issues.

The goals and means of the interwar period defined their strategies. Conferences, alliances, charity balls, exhibitions, and trips were the platforms for encountering other national and social groups and an exchange of ideas. Modern media – radio and the press – made possible the public promotion of their concepts and messages. Taking positions in

government or international women's organisations allowed them to influence the formulation and implementation of policy, and petitions were a popular democratic tool with the potential for propaganda and political influence.

Finally, there is the question of success. Did they really make a difference? Did their activities matter? It is almost too easy to say no, to disregard them as a – small – group of elderly women who travelled around the world, put on airs, and had fun in the process. Pacifism obviously did not succeed. The ideal of Yugoslavism fell apart a few years before Yugoslavia itself, and the women's movement frequently stumbled in the face of the national or social conflicts, obstacles, and prejudices against which they were fighting. However, this would be an ahistorical conclusion that does not give due consideration to the context of the time and other processes that influenced the outcome. The Yugoslav women's movement was organised and multi-layered. It promoted issues and positions considered important at the time. The press often covered its activities, its leaders were prominent figures in Yugoslav society, and the government funded, encouraged, and even censured it. It set clear national, global, and gender goals whilst aiming to make positive changes.

Notes

1 "'Šta će doneti sreću svetu.' Povodom sastanka slovenskih žena u Pragu", *Ženski svet*, 3 (March 1930), 3-4.

2 J. Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radničkom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941* (Beograd, 1978); L. Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb, 1996).

3 M. Antić Gaber and I. Selišnik, "Slovene Women's Suffrage Movement in a Comparative Perspective", in I. Sulkunen, L. Nevala-Nurmi, and P. Markkola, eds., *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship. International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009), 219-41; M. Bokovoy, "Croatia", in K. Passmore, ed., *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe 1919-1945* (Manchester 2003), 111-23; S.P. Ramet, *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park, PA, 1999).

4 *Žena i svet* (Beograd, 1925-42) was one of the most popular women's magazine in Serbia. See also S. Stefanović, "Ženska štampa: *Žena i svet* 1925-1942", in Latinka Perović, ed., *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka. Sv.2, Položaj žene kao merilo modernizacije*, (Beograd, 1998), 408-20; *Ženski pokret* (Beograd, 1920-1938), bulletin of the feminist organisation, "Women's Movement". See also G. Krivokapić Jović, "'Društvo za prosvećivanje žena i zaštitu njenih parava'- radikali i žensko parvo glasa posle Prvog svetskog rata", in Perović, *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima*, 299-308.

5 It covered activities of the NWA from 1934-1941, ABiH [Archive of Bosnia i Herzegovina, Sarajevo] Fond Jugoslavenski ženski savez, Sekcija za Drinsku banovinu, Sarajevo, 1934-1941.

6 I. Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918-2008* (Zagreb, 2008); I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1984); Lj. Boban, *Hrvatske granice od 1918. do 1993. godine* (Zagreb, 1995).

7 There were also three unrecognised but organised nations – Bosnians, Montenegrins, and Macedonians.

8 During the founding conference in 1919, there was even proposal to prescribe the Serbian nationality of the president: A. Milčinović, "Kongres Jugoslavenskih žena u Beogradu", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 7(1919), 281-87.

9 Z. Kveder, "Dojmovi s kongresa jugoslavenskih žena u Beogradu", Ibid., 287-325; L. Sklevicky, "Karakteristike organiziranog djelovanja žena u Jugoslaviji u razdoblju do drugog svjetskog rata I", *Polja-časopis za kulturu, umetnost i društvena pitanja*, 308-(1984), 415-17; J. Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, 163-78, 266-81; T. Emmeret, "Ženski pokret: The feminist movement in Serbia in the 1920s", in Ramet, *Gender Politics*, 33-49.

10 Susan Zimmermann, "The Challenge of Multinational Empire for the International Women's Movement: The Habsburg Monarchy and the Development of Feminist International politics", in Karen Offen, ed., *Globalizing feminisms, 1789-1945* (London, NY, 2010), 153-70.

11 Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, 163-78.

12 *Jugoslavenska žena* – from 1917-1919 called *Ženski svijet*, Zagreb – was a monthly women's magazine published from 1917-1921. Its editor, Zofka Kveder (1878-1926), was a Slovenian feminist, writer, and editor of numerous magazines: *Edinost, Domaći prijatelj, Ženski svijet*, and *Jugoslavenska žena*. She strongly endorsed the Yugoslav idea; and after moving to Zagreb, she started to write in Croatian.

13 Z. Kveder, "U kolo",*Jugoslavenska žena*, 1(1919), 1.

14 Adela Milčinović (1879-1968), Croatian writer, publicist, journalist, and activist for women's rights. She moved to the United States in 1925.

15 Territories occupied by Italian forces under the 1915 Treaty of London.

16 Milčinović, "Kongres jugoslavenskih", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 7(1919), 281-87.
Milčinović, "Kongres jugoslavenskih", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 7(1919), 281-87.

17 "Reč uprave", in *Izveštaji saveznih udruženja za godinu 1920-21* (Beograd 1921), I.

18 According to the Verte Taylor and Nancy Whittier, "Analytical Approaches to Social Movement Culture: The Culture of the Women's Movement", Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, eds., *Social Movements and Culture*. New Edition, Volume 4: *Social Movements, Protest, and Contention* (Minneapolis, MN, 1995), 163-87, three segments shaped collective identity: common interests, boundaries, and politisation of everyday life.

19 Serbia annexed Macedonia – today the Republic of North Macedonia – during the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars. In the 1920s, it was "Southern Serbia" and, after 1929, organised as Vardar Banovina.

20 Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, 163-78.

21 *Govekar Minka 1922-1941* (1666), AS [Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, Ljubljana] I, 1-3; Ibid., III, 3; "Predstojeći sastanak jugoslavenskih žena", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 1-2-(1920), 13-15; "Svečani dani u Skoplju. Skupština Narodnog ženskog saveza", *Žena i svet*, 11(November 1925), 7; "Kongres Narodnog ženskog saveza", Ibid., 12(December 1926), 8-9; "Skupština Narodnog ženskog saveza", Ibid., 11(November 1927), 5-6; "Skupština jugolavenskog ženskog saveza u Splitu", *Ženski pokret*, 17-20(October 1929), 2-3; "Kongres jugoslavenskog ženskog saveza u Splitu", *Politika* (7 October 1929); "Kongres jugslovenskog ženskog saveza", *Novo doba* (7 October 1929); "Kongres jugoslavenskog ženskog saveza započeo je juče u Zagrebu", *Politika* (13 October 1930);

"Kongres jugoslavenskog ženskog saveza", *Novosti* (13 October 1930); "Godišnja skupština jugoslavenskog ženskog saveza", *Ženski pokret*, 19-20(October 1930), 2 etc.

22 "Dojmovi s kongresa jugoslavenskih žena u Beogradu", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 7(1919), 300.

23 "Jugoslavenski ženski savez", *Ženski svet*, 11(November 1930), 3.

24 The Circle of Serbian Sisters was a cultural, educational, and patriotic society founded in Belgrade in 1903. It published kalends *Vadar*.

25 Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije*, 177.

26 M. Mazower [Evelin Toth Mucciaccairo, translator], *Mračni kontinent* (Zagreb, 2004), 83-108; A. Muraj, "Odnos građanstva spram narodne nošnje i seljačkog tekstilnog umijeća", *Narodna umjetnos*t, 43/2(2006), 7-40.

27 Queen Marija Karađorđević (1900-1961), wife of the King Aleksandar I Karađorđević of Yugoslavia and daughter of Romanian King Ferdinand I.

28 "Kolo srpskih sestara"; *Ženski svet*, 6(June 1930); "Izložba jugoslavenskog narodnog blaga", Ibid., 7(July1930), 5-6. Photos from balls in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Tuzla, or members of the royal family wearing different national costumes, can be found in the women's magazine, *Žena i svet*: 2(February 1926), 62-63; 3(March 1926), cover; 5 (May 1927), cover; 7(July 1926), cover; 6(June1927), cover; 4(April 1930), 1, 4, 5; 5 (May1930), 2; "Kolo srpskih sestara u Prijedoru", 1(January1931).

29 The General Women's Society founded in 1901 as a charitable and feminist society. The Circle of Yugoslav Sisters founded in 1921 and – the like Circle of Serbian Sisters – devoted to charitable work and caring for children. AS XIV, *Govekar Minka, 1922-1941* (1666), 85; D. Fortunat, "Slovensko splošno žensko društvo v Ljubljani", *Kronika*, 40/ 2(1992), 98-105.

30 Minka Govekar Vasič (1874-1950), teacher and writer. Co-founder of the General Women's Society [Ljubljana], secretary of the Slovenian branch of the Alliance. Franja Tavčar (1868-1938), prominent member of the Slovenian interwar women's movement, second secretary of the Alliance, member of the General Women's Society [Ljubljana], co-founder of the Circle of Yugoslav Sisters, lady-in-waiting to Queen Marija. Alojzija Štebi (1883-1956), feminist, socialist, teacher, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Social Politics, editor of *Zarja* and *Ženski pokret*. For members of the Slovenian women's movement, see A. Šelih et al., eds., *Pozabljena polovica. Potreti ženska 19. in 20. soletja na Slovenskom* (Ljubljana, 2007).

31 M. Bokovoy, "Croatia", 111.

32 Z. Kveder, "Dojmovi s kongresa jugoslavenskih žena u Beogradu", *Jugoslavenska žena*, 7(1919), 287-325; AS I, *Govekar Minka 1922-1941* (1666), 1.

33 Croatian Woman was an elite, national, and charitable women's institution founded in Zagreb in 1921, co-operating with the Croatian Peasant Party. About Croatian Woman, see L. Benyovsky, "Društvo Hrvatska žena", *Marulić, Hrvatska književna revija*, 26- (1993), 747-50.

34 K. Mihurko Poniž, "Kveder Zofka" and S. Jakobović Fribec, "Milčinović Adela", both in Francisca de Haan et al., eds., *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminism. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe. 19th and 20th Century* (Budapest, NY, 2006), 340-44; Emilija Laszowski, "Lopašić Zlata, udata Kovačević" in *Znameniti I zaslužni Hrvati. 905-1925* (Zagreb: 1925); "Bedeković, Danica", *Hrvatski biografski leksiko*n *s.v*.

35 Founded in 1875 in Belgrade, the Women's Society gathered elite members of Serbian society and published the first women's magazine, *Domaćica*.

36 L.J. Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movements", *European History Online* (June 2011): http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-social-movements/leila-j-rupp-transnational-womens-movements.

37 The Vidovdan Constitution was approved on Vidovdan Day, 28 June 1921. It did not reject women's suffrage altogether, but left the decision to the Election Law, which, however, did not mention the subject. For more about the suffrage struggle in Yugoslavia, see I. Ograjšek Gorenjak, *Opasne iluzije. Rodni stereotipi u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb, 2014), 89-112.

38 It was a short-lived resignation; she became president again next year: Z. Janković, *Problem saveza* (Zemun, 1926), 15-19.

39 The founding groups of the Alliance of Feminist Societies were the General Women's Society [Ljubljana], the Association of Yugoslav Women [Zagreb], and the Women's Movement [Belgrade and Sarajevo]. It promoted women's suffrage, changing its name to the Alliance of Women's Movements in 1926. The Association of University Women, founded in 1927, was a member of the International Federation of University Women with branches in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Novi Sad, and Šabac.

40 "Svečani dani u Skoplju. Skupština Narodnog ženskog saveza", *Žena i svet*, 11 (November 1927), 7.

41 AS I, *Govekar Minka 1922-1941 (*1666); Kecman, *Jugoslavenske žene*, 175-77.

42 Janković, *Problem saveza*, 4-6.

43 "Kriza na muški način", *Žena i svet*, 11(November 1926), 5; "Kuda nas vodiš", *Žena i svet*, 12(December 1926), 5-6; "Savez i Zajednica" and "Programi", both 12 (December 1926), Ibid., 6-7.

44 "Kome je čela za kapom", Ibid., 3(March 1927), 5; "Povodm druge ispravke gđe Mare Trifković"; Ibid., 4(April 1927), 6.

45 "Okružnica Narodnog ženskog saveza njegovim društvima", Ibid., 2(February 1927), 5.

46 "Je li moguće izmirenje?", Ibid., 5(May1927).

47 "Okružnica Narodnog ženskog saveza njegovim društvima".

48 Ivo Goldstein, "Croatia and Croats in Yugoslavia. Resistance to Centralism", in Latinka Petrović et al., eds., *Yugoslavia from Historical Perspective* (Belgrade, 2017), 135.

49 "Izdajstvo gospođe Zlate Kovačić Lopašić", *Ženski pokret*, 18(1 December 1928), 1; "Saopštenje zagrebačke sekcije Narodnog ženskog savez", *Ženski pokret*, 19 (15 December 1928).

50 "Skupština Jugoslavenskog narodnog ženskog saveza", Ibid., 17-20(15 October 1929), 2-3.

51 Today, 11 November is commemorated as Armistice Day, Veterans Day, or Remembrance Day, but their concepts had nothing to do with the initiative of the NWA.

52 "Dan mira", *Ženski pokret* 17(November 1928): 3; IAB [Historical Archive of Belgrade, Belgrade] Fond Udruženja univerzitetski obrazovanih žena, Box 2, 1931/82; Box 5, 1935/78; Box 4, 1936/77; Box 5, 1937/67; ABiH Fond Jugoslavenski ženski savez, sekcija za Drinsku banovinu, Sarajevo, 1934-1941.

53 "Posle žustre prepirke intelektualke i neintelektualke pomirile su se, ali ipak nisu završile posao"; *Politika* (23 May1933).

54 AS *Govekar Minka 1922*-1941(1666), XXI, 159,160, 163, 164.

55 Ibid., XXI, 163.

56 For example, different anthologies of Serbian literature and art include authors from Dubrovnik.

57 Ivan Gundulić (1589-1638), a famous Croatian poet and playwright from Dubrovnik. His poetic expression had a great impact on the formation of standard the Croatian language during Croatia's national movement in nineteenth century. He is also one of the Dubrovnik authors who is frequently included in anthologies of Serbian literature.

58 "Umjesto izvještaja o Kongresu Internacionalnog ženskog saveza u Dubrovniku"; *Ženski pokret*, 7-10(September-December 1936), 50-55.; AS *Govekar Minka 1922*-1941(1666), 155, 156, 157, 160, 164, 167.

59 Kecman, *Jugoslavenske žene*, 177-90, 268-82; "Mala feministička antanata. Liga za mir i slobodu", *Ženski pokret*, 6(1923), 264-68; "Za mir i svobodo", Ibid., 1-2(1924), 12-18; "Protiv najstrašnijeg rata", Ibid., 1-2(15 January 1929), 1-2; "VI kongres internacionalne lige žena za slobodu i mir", Ibid., 17-20(15 October 1929), 2-3; "Iz rada internacionalne lige za mir i slobodu", Ibid., 11-12(15 June 1930), 2; "Razvoj ženskog pokreta u Jugoslaviji", Ibid., 9-10(15 May 1931), 2-5.

60 The LEW was the largest and probably most interesting of the three organisations. A common mistake is to identify this association with the diplomatic union, also known as the Little Entente, comprised of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. LEW was actually the result of two separate regional initiatives during the 1923 Rome IAW Conference – one Balkan, one Slavic – and it represented Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia, the reason for choosing the name "Little Entente of Women" never explained. It is safe to assume that they simply used a familiar name that best suited them. Its goals were to achieve a better standing within the international women's movement, promote cultural and economic contacts amongst women, and tout peaceful solutions to the political issues amongst member countries.

61 Czechoslovakian women initiated the Slavic Women's Committee after one of the famous balls organised by the Circle of Serbian Sisters in 1928. It brought together Czechoslovaks, Poles, Yugoslavs, Russian *émigrés*, Serbs, and subsequently Bulgarians. Its goal was to promote pan-Slavism amongst youth, the co-operation of Slavic women and, of course, pacifism.

62 Contacts amongst Balkan women occurred during four Balkan conferences at the beginning of 1930s, where delegates from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia presented the "public opinion" of their homelands and discussed economic, educational, press, and political issues in specialised committees. The Balkan conferences included contributions by women, and there was even some talk of forming an alliance of Balkan women.

63 Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism. The Case of Transnational Women's Organisations 1888-1945", in Offen, *Globalizing Feminisms*, 148-51.

Leila J. Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism. The Case of Transnational Women's Organisations 1888-1945", in Offen, *Globalizing Feminisms*, 148-51.

64 Isidora Sekulić (1877-1958), a famous Serbian writer, travel writer, essayist, translator, and critic. She was one of the most educated Serbian women of her time and the first female member of the prestigious academic institution, the Serbian Royal Academia of Science and Art. She was an active member of Serbia's women's movement.

65 Kecman, *Jugoslavenske žene*, 171; "Povodom kongresa Međunarodnog ženskog saveza u Štokholmu", *Ženski svet*, 9(September 1933), 3.

66 "Naše žene nisu štatirale u Vašingtonu", *Žena i svet*, 7(July 1925), 7.

67 Ibid.

68 "Kongres internacionalnog ženskog saveza", *Ženski pokret*, 13-16(15 July 1930), 1.

69 "Mala feministička antanta. Liga za mir i slobodu", Ibid., 6(1923), 264-68.

70 AS *Zbirke dokumentov* (1668), "Hočevar Pavla".

71 Rupp, "Constructing internationalism", 144.

72 Rupp, "Transnational Women's Movements".

73 "Kongres internacionalnog ženskog saveza", *Ženski pokret*, 13-16(15 July 1930), 1.

74 There are reports that the Zagreb Women's Movement played a major part in organising this event.

75 "Četrdeset miliona žena rade za mir", *Ženski svet*, 3(March 1932), 3.
76 "Konferencija za mir", *Ženski pokret*, 11-16(15 August 1931); "Kako žene mogu utjecati javno mišljenje za vreme mira", Ibid., 17-10(15 October 1931), 1; "Žene i konferencija za razoružanje", Ibid., 2(February 932), 19-20; "Manifestacije za mir i razoružanje u Jugoslaviji", Ibid., 3(March 1932), 35-38; "Žena i mir", Ibid., 3-4(March-April 1935), 45-50; "Internacionalna feministička odlučila je održati sastanak u Beogradu", *Ženski svet*, 4(April 1931), 3; "Jugoslavenske!", Ibid., 5(May 1931), 2; "Skup mudrih žena u Beogradu", Ibid., 6(June 1931), 3; "Sa kongresa ženske alijanse za mir", Ibid., 6 (June 1931), 4-6; "Četrdeset miliona žena rade za mir", Ibid., 3(March 1932), 3.
77 "Manifestacije za mir i razoružanje u Jugoslaviji", *Ženski pokret*, 3(March 1932), 35-38.
78 "Trijumf jedinstva jugoslavenskih žena u Novom Sadu", Ibid., 6(June 1933), 3-4.
79 "Kongres jedinstva slovenskih žena u Beogradu", Ibid., 11-12(November-December 1933), 114-16.
80 HAB [Historical Archive of Belgrade, Belgrade] *Fond Univerzitetski obrazovanih žena*, Box 2, s1933/28, Box 3, 1934/26.
81 "Razvoj ženskog pokreta u Jugoslaviji", *Ženski pokret*, 9-10(15 May 1931), 2-5.
82 HAB *Fond Univerzitetski obrazovanih žena*, Box 5, 1939/10.
83 AS *Zbirke dokumentov* (1668), "Hočevar Pavla".
AS *Zbirke dokumentov* (1668), "Hočevar Pavla".
84 HAB *Fond Univerzitetski obrazovanih žena*, Box 3, 1934/32.
85 AJ [Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade] *Univerzitetski obrazovane žene* (158), 1.
86 Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism", 141.
87 "Za mir i svobodo", *Ženski pokret*, 1-2(1924), 12-18; "Naše žene nisu štatirale u Vašingtonu", *Žena i svet*, 7(July1925), 7.
88 "Kongres jedinstva slovenskih žena u Beogradu", *Ženski pokret*, 11-2(November December 1933), 114-16.
89 AS *Zbirke dokumentov* (1668), "Hočevar Pavla".
90 Rupp, "Constructing Internationalism", 146.
91 "Sa kongresa internacionalnog ženskog saveza", *Žena i svet*, 8(August 1930), 3.
"Sa kongresa internacionalnog ženskog saveza", *Žena i svet*, 8(August 1930), 3.
92 I.Ograjšek Gorenjak and M. Kardum, "Mala ženska antanta (1923-1939): Mali savez s velikim ambicijama", *Historijski zbornik* 71/1(2019), 116-25.
93 "Mala ženska antanta", *Žena i svet*, 1(January 1925), 6; "Što će doneti sreću svetu?", Ibid., 3(March 1930), 3.
94 "Žene i mir", *Ženski pokret*, 3-4(March-April 1935), 45-50.

Funding

This work is supported by the Croatian Science Foundation Research Project: The Transition of Croatian Elites from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav State (43-903-2778).

Notes on contributor

Ida Ograjšek Gorenjak is an assistant professor (docent) at History Department of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Siences in Zagreb, where she teaches courses on Modern History and Gender History for undergraduate, graduate and PhD studies. Her research interests and publications focus on gender history, history of education and cultural history. In her book *Dangerous illusions. Gender stereotypes in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* (2014) she analyzes the

impact of gender stereotypes on political and modernization process and construction of national identities. She actively participated in several national and international projects that dealt with cultural and political, national and regional processes of the late 19th and first half of 20th: Century: *The Effect of Ideologies of Croatian Peasant Party on the Croatian People 1904-1941.; The Croatian Modern and Contemporary History: European Models and Croatian Identities; The entangled histories of Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest (18th-20th Century); The Transition Of Croatian Elites From The Habsburg Monarchy To The Yugoslav State; Modern Women Thinkers: Intellectual Development of Women in the 20th Century Croatia*. She organized round tables on gender history and since 2013 until 2018 she edited history magazine *History teaching*.