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Forging the Bubikopf nation: a feminist political-economic analysis of *Ženski list*, interwar Croatia's women's magazine, for the construction of an alternative vision of modernity

Marina Vujnović
University of Iowa

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FORGING THE *BUBIKOPF* NATION: A FEMINIST POLITICAL - ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS OF ŽENSKI LIST, INTERWAR CROATIA'S WOMEN'S MAGAZINE,
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ALTERNATIVE VISION OF MODERNITY

by
Marina Vujnovi

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Mass Communications
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

August 2008

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Sujatha Sosale

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of *Ženski list*, arguably the first magazine published exclusively for women between the wars in Croatia, and Yugoslavia. To fully understand the place, meaning and the impact of this magazine on everyday lives of its readers, with the study of the content I also include examination of the role of its editor and the first Croatian woman journalist Marija Juri Zagorka. Finally, this thesis examines readers' responses to the content, their opinions, interactions between the readers and the editor, as well as interactions between the readers themselves for the overall assessment of the significance of *Ženski list* in the history of popular women's press in Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

This thesis is a historical project which uses two theoretical approaches to study of media: feminist political economic approach, and the feminist critique of the public sphere. Situating the study within the historical context of the interwar Yugoslavia, and interwar Europe was important for understanding of this project, and its research questions.

In this study I used multiple methods: (a) textual; (b) historical and biographical and, (c) audience study. In the larger part of this study which is a narrative discourse analysis of the content of *Ženski list*, I was also inspired by the interpretive ethnography of texts. I connected ethnography to feminist theory and political economy, to circumstances of gendered everyday practices and to circumstances of media culture production, all within the specific historical context.

In this study I found that women in the changing socio-political and economic context expressed their relation to capitalism and modernity in different ways, sometimes exerting their critiques and the refusal of the existing patriarchal structures and sometimes seeking inclusion within the structures, with the intent to practice primarily gender equality by direct participation. Finally, the analysis of *Ženski list* has told an important story of the place of media, and the women's press in particular, in initiating, carrying, and challenging traditional and emerging discourses in the hope that they would contribute to the ways in which society can be imagined differently.

Abstract Approved: _____
Thesis Supervisor

Title and Department

Date

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Graduate College
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Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
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Elizabeth Heineman

Bonnie Sunstein



From right to left: my grandmother Zdenka Rasti
and her friend Ljubica Kralj in the early 1930s.

to my grandmother Zdenka, and all the strong women of my family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would have not been possible without a support of people I was fortunate enough to encounter and know during this long journey, and those who have been in my life from the beginning. I would like to especially thank my thesis supervisor Prof. Sujatha Sosale for her encouragement, support and patience. She has been my guidance and my inspiration throughout my doctoral studies at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Iowa. I deeply thank my committee members: Prof. Dan Berkowitz for his insightful comments, support, and many conversations that helped me find my path in the doctoral program; Prof. Carolyn Dyer for opening up a universe of historical research and sharing her love for history; Prof. Elizabeth Heineman for teaching me how to think like a historian and enjoying every step of this project, and last but not least Prof. Bonnie Sunstein for her enthusiasm and for awakening the writer in me.

I am fortunate enough to have been surrounded with the colleagues and friends at the University of Iowa who were compassionate and brave to put up with me for the past several years, and without whom I would not have been able to start and finish this work: Anup Kumar, Hye-Jin Lee, Yeon Yeong Kim, Amani Ismail, Mervat Yousseff, Mary Ann Martin, and Robin Johnson. I also thank my roommates Nina Brni and Vanja Stojkovi for loving me and for staying at the same address even after realizing that it might be impossible to live both with me, and with my dissertation. One special thanks goes to Prof. Dean Kruckeberg, my friend and my co-author of many projects who truly rejoiced over the making of this study and believed in it even when I didn't. Finally, I

would like to thank my best friend in the whole world Jennifer Raghavan. There are no words to express my love and gratitude to her. She has been my friend, my sanity, and my hope when I had none. I am grateful to my friends at home in Croatia who supported me from 8000 kilometer distance: Jadranka, Vesna S., Romana, Sonja, Danka, Ina, Melanija, Darijo, Vesna, Jesenka, Slobodan, and Zoran.

Help of the staff of the following archives, libraries, and organizations is gratefully acknowledged: in Zagreb, Croatia: Croatian State Archives (HAD), Croatian State Archives in Zagreb (DAZ), National and University Library in Zagreb (NSK), City Library of Zagreb (KGZ), City Library of Zagreb – Marija Juri Zagorka Library, Croatian Journalists' Association (HND), and Centre for Women's Studies Zagreb: in Vienna, Austria: Austrian National Library (ÖNB): in Iowa City, USA: The University of Iowa Main Library. I would also like to thank Biljana Caki - Veseli , the film director of the movie Marija Juri - Zagorka for giving me not only a place to sleep for one long but significant night during my research in Croatia, but also for sharing her own research information she gathered during the course of three years. Special thanks to Slavica Jakobovi - Fribec, a Croatian scholar and feminist, for supporting me throughout the summer of 2007, and many fruitful intellectual conversations we shared on the terrace of the Gradska kavana in Zagreb. Further I would like to thank Željko and Marinka Car who unselfishly shared Zagorka's papers with me, and who kept the box of letters from *Ženski list* alive for so many years.

Finally, I would like to thank my family in Croatia who were unselfish to let me go on this journey, who believed in me, loved me, and supported me throughout: my mother Marija for her sacrificial and true love; my sister Milena who gave me the best

graduation present and made me truly happy by giving birth to her daughter Tia; my stepdad Zvonko for his love and support, and my aunt Jasna and uncle Božo for sharing all my successes. I hope that the sacrifices that my family, my friends, and my colleagues have made for me are at least partly rewarded by this project.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of *Ženski list*, arguably the first magazine published exclusively for women between the wars in Croatia, and Yugoslavia. To fully understand the place, meaning and the impact of this magazine on everyday lives of its readers, with the study of the content I also include examination of the role of its editor and the first Croatian woman journalist Marija Juri Zagorka. Finally, this thesis examines readers' responses to the content, their opinions, interactions between the readers and the editor, as well as interactions between the readers themselves for the overall assessment of the significance of *Ženski list* in the history of popular women's press in Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

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PREFACE

This dissertation is in some ways both the end and the beginning of my professional and personal journey. Personally, it is the end of my old self that I had left in Croatia, the self that is known to most of my family members and friends back home. Professionally, it is also the end of my old self that I had left in Croatia in fall 2003 when I had decided to leave two jobs and to take only two suitcases of clothes and two English-language dictionaries with me to the airport on January 7, 2003. I remember that day and I remember my mother, who had encouraged me to go to the United States and to attend graduate school. She was sitting bravely next to me at the airport café. We were looking at each other, smiling in silence, sipping coffee, swallowing tears and keeping our sanity all at once. Two hours later at the Heathrow Airport in England, I gave up on keeping sanity as I frantically ran to find some way or somebody to exchange my ticket to Chicago for a ticket to Zagreb. I didn't. I boarded with other several hundred people on that plane to Chicago. I found my seat next to a wonderful family from Detroit who were completely and kindly concerned for me during the whole flight while I was in the process of exhausting all of their supplies of Kleenex. Then, I could not have imagined that I would ever be writing a preface to my dissertation.

On board that plane, I had decided to go home after one year of graduate school to resume my old professional positions as a teaching assistant at the University of Zagreb and as a public relations practitioner for British Airways. This, of course, never happened. I am still leaving and coming back. This dissertation marks the beginning of my new professional life and my new personal life. I have to admit that this new self is

sometimes in a quite serious conflict with my old self. The most difficult part is to resume my old self when I am with my family members and friends back home, who have never seen me speaking English and who at times think I have gone out of my mind for writing some “feminist stuff” thousands of kilometers from home. In the beginning, when I had spoken on the phone with my stepfather, I would often use the word *campus* (no equivalent word exists in the Croatian language) to explain how American college life is organized. My stepfather doesn’t speak English, nor do many members of my immediate family. The closest word in the Croatian language that resembles the word campus is the word *camp*. One day in early 2003, I talked to my step dad on the phone. He is something of a doubting Thomas; he doesn’t believe much in history, the rules of physics, inventions, and he seriously questions how ships can stay afloat when every second grader knows that ships are heavier than water. In sum, he believes that everything around us is designed as one big conspiracy against logic, and he refuses to be persuaded otherwise. That day, the conversation went something like this:

My stepfather: Hello, my dear. Oh, it is amazing. I just don’t know how it is possible. Just imagine, I am sitting here, and you are there and it is like you are here in this living room. Amazing.

Me: Yes, step dad, truly amazing. I bought an international calling card. This miracle costs me \$20 a month.

My stepfather: So, how are things down there in the *camp*?

Me: Did you say the *camp*? (*Me cracking up. I had a flashback of the war labor camp, then something more cheerful such as a children’s summer camp, and finally something unusual like a Jesus camp...*)

My stepfather: Yes, *camp*. You know, the *camp*. The one you always talk about.

Me: You mean the campus?

My stepfather: Yeah, the *camp*.

Me: It's great, step dad. They work us pretty hard. But, after all, it is a camp.

Attending graduate school was not something that was expected from me. My working-class mom and step dad were happy to put my sister and me through primary and secondary school. College wasn't an expectation. I find it difficult to explain to my family members why I'm doing what I'm doing. Every summer I go home for a few weeks, and here is a typical conversation that I have with my uncle, who is a good representative of middle-class mentality. In his world, money is still the best measure of a success.

My uncle: So, tell me what is it that you do there, across from us ... on the other side of the Atlantic in America ... on the other side, ha ha ha....

Me: Well, I study, and I teach.

My uncle: How much do they pay you for that?

Me: Enough to survive.

My uncle: In America?

Me: Yes, in America.

My uncle: Oh, then you should have stayed here. It is our tradition to pay only to survive.

Me: But, in America, my work is recognized. For example, I had a paper published recently in one of the top journals in our field.

My uncle: How much did they pay you for that?

Me: Well, nothing. You don't do it for money.

My uncle: Then why do you do it?

Me: For society, to build knowledge, to build a career and recognizibility in the field....

My uncle: Eh, my dear, all of these years in school, and you still don't know anything about earning a living. It worries me profoundly. What is going to become of you?

In many ways, the journey on which I had embarked in Spring 2003 has profoundly changed my life, and it has influenced the way in which I look at the world and on what decisions that I make. It was not until I had come to my Ph.D. program at the University of Iowa in Fall 2004, that I truly engaged in feminist thinking and scholarship. I could say for sure that I was gender-blind during my life in Croatia. Although frustrated with the patriarchal society in which I had grown up, I wasn't conscious of its origins and meanings. Or that it is called patriarchy. Here is one example: I had lived in an apartment building that had been built in the early 1960s when communists were at the peak of their reign. The building was designed in a California style that had fascinated their imagination of luxury living of the kind that you find in the West, only much better. We had small tea kitchens and a laundry facility on the first level. While the building was constructed, some workers, intent on practicing a true socialist and communitarian mentality, took home building materials to expand on their summer porches—leaving our building with walls that were as thin as cardboard. These thin walls inescapably forced me to overhear the fist fights between my neighbor and his wife; although fighting in their living room, it was as though they were fighting in ours. He would scream: "I am the boss of this house, and you'll do as I tell you." One morning, as I had met on the wife in the hallway, I thought as she was hiding her battered face with a scarf, "This is just the

way it is. People fight, the stronger people win the fight, and there is nothing wrong with this picture.” Later, however, when I was taking classes at the University of Iowa, I had flashbacks of these memories rushing through my mind, and I felt a deep emotional change. I admitted to myself, “I am gender-blind.”

In Summer 2004, I went home for a few weeks, and I experienced this change in me. I saw things differently. I was surprised that I had never noticed how abusive Balkan men could be. I learned that one of my close friends was killed by her husband in front of the day care where she had gone to pick up her son. I was infuriated. Then I went with my sister to the emergency care because she was sick and needed immediate help. While I was waiting for her, two men in the waiting room were conversing, or more accurately cursing. This public display of rudeness irritated me. What hit the final blow to my transformation into becoming a feminist was the following comment they gave about the female physician. She wore professional dress, but, instead of the typical shoes that physicians wear, she wore open-toed sandals:

The first obnoxious man: F..., it’s cold here. This AC is killing me.

The second obnoxious man: Yeah, f... yeah!

The first obnoxious man: Look, there she goes. I would f...her you know where.

The second obnoxious man: Yeah, f... yeah!

The first obnoxious man: This is our Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman..., ha, ha!

The second obnoxious man: Yeah, f... yeah!

The first obnoxious man: Look, sandals. She wears sandals in this f...cold place. She is some hot f... chick!

The next day, I was on the train to Zagreb. I needed some library smell. I found myself at the new facility of the National and University Library that unfortunately

smelled like fresh paint, rather than old books. On the train, I thought about Balkan men, the patriarchy, myself as a woman journalist, and I remembered one of the lectures that I had attended during my college years for the course, “History of Croatian Journalism”. My professor had talked about great Croatian journalists in the great Croatian history of journalism and, as an aside, remarked, “Yes, and maybe you should write down that we had the first woman political correspondent and journalist in South Eastern Europe, or maybe even Central Europe, Marija Juri Zagorka. But yes, there it is, you won’t find much about her in books.”

That day in the library, I was determined to find whatever I could about her, and I found very little, only a few paragraphs here and there that were scattered in different history books. She was only mentioned as an aside, often with such remarks as “her journalism was too emotional” and “her books were too trivial...” In my search, I discovered that she had edited a women’s magazine during the interwar years, and I decided to find more about it. I asked a librarian for the copies of the magazine, and from the moment in which I had opened the first page of the first issue, I knew this was it. I was standing in front of my dissertation project. In that instance, her past became my future, and my story and her story began to merge. I dedicated my graduate studies to researching as much as I could about Marija Juri Zagorka, and *Ženski list*, the magazine that she had edited for a full 14 years, because I thought that it mattered, not only as a contribution to the history of women journalists and their struggles, but also as a contribution to women’s history in the Balkans. I felt indebted to these women who had worked on eye-opening mass communication projects, such as *Ženski list*, and I felt that the preserved copies of the magazine had preserved their living words. I wanted to tell

their story placed within the historical context of interwar Europe and interwar Yugoslavia, because it would show, not only the interaction between economic and cultural capital, but also the impact of history on the everyday and the role that women had played in making and re-making of that history. I feel indebted to my teachers who have encouraged me to pursue this research, and I feel indebted to the feminist scholars who, for decades now, work on uncovering these silenced stories, making an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the mechanisms in which patriarchy works in different cultural contexts.

I had many sleepless nights during this past year. I couldn't leave this project, and this project couldn't abandon me either. I lived Zagorka's life. I lived the lives of the women journalists and women readers who had produced this magazine. I laughed and I cried while reading their articles, comments and letters that stand as the legacy of the ways in which they had experienced their lives, their desires, and their troubles. As a mass communication scholar, I have deeply experienced the potential that media have in impacting our lives, and I have come to realize that media should always be studied contextually. I also have become aware of myself as a woman, a feminist, and a historian who is still growing in all of these roles. This dissertation was, thus, a way to speak out about what was silenced in me and to speak out about what has been silenced in Croatian history. I hope that, by telling the story of *Ženski list*, I will both contribute to and challenge our understanding of the media, history, and feminism. Most of all, I hope that this dissertation will correct some wrongs by allowing Zagorka and her women who had been gathered around *Ženski list* to speak once more from history.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Need for Examination of *Ženski list*¹

This dissertation uses historical and discursive approaches to examine the contribution and the place of what is arguably the first magazine published exclusively for women within the context of interwar Croatia. I am further concerned with the impact on the everyday lives of the magazine's readers through an examination of its published and unpublished letters and the correspondence to the editor. Finally, I am concerned with the impact and the role of its editor Marija Juri Zagorka during the life of the magazine and therefore studied her unpublished papers, archival, and published material. In other words, I am concerned with the impact that she, as an editor, had on the everyday lives of the magazine's readers and the ways in which her personal ideologies had influenced the production and selection of the magazine's texts. I am keen on understanding both the particular historical female subject and the constructed female subject(s) that had been produced around the magazine's readers. Hence, situating this magazine and its readers in a social and political context will play a crucial role in determining the significance of this case for journalism history, feminist historiography, and gender history in the context of research concerning Central Eastern European countries.

So far, there have been very few studies that have examined the impact of women journalists and popular-culture women's magazines in the Central-Eastern European

¹ Literal translation-Women's Paper

countries. Existing studies are most often descriptive narratives about women journalists, without deeper engagement with their historical context and often lack any structural examination of communication institutions that have helped to produce them.² This study will engage with the historical context and with the examination of the communication institutions to produce more complex analysis of the emergence of this magazine.

Before I engage in a discussion of the context from which this study has emerged, I want to outline my justification for choosing this case. *Ženski list* was the first magazine published with intent to target exclusively female audiences in Croatia and Yugoslavia, and thus far it hasn't been given proper scholarly attention. Yet, I will argue that this oversight has nothing to do with the magazine, itself; rather, this scholarly omission has more to do with the attitudes of contemporary journalism historians in Croatia who have neglected the importance of the popular press, including the women's magazines. I believe that *Ženski list* is a compelling case to study for several reasons. This magazine had emerged as the first commercial magazine for women that had a clear goal to win over a readership from diverse communities and from different classes throughout the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, it was a magazine

² The best sources so far have been a collection *An Improper Profession: Women, Gender, and Journalism in late Imperial Russia*, Barbara Norton and Jehanne Gheith, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), bibliographical source *Women and Gender in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Euroasia: A Comprehensive Bibliography* Vol. 1 and 2, Zrin Mary, ed. (NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), and *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest ; New York : CEU Press/Central European University Press, 2006).

with a large circulation,³ published with domestic capital,⁴ and in a script and language that was understood by all women readers in the Kingdom—unlike the other magazines that had preceded it. The editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, a prominent figure in the production and selection of the articles that were published in *Ženski list*, was also the first woman journalist in Central-Eastern Europe and one of the few women political correspondents in Europe in the late Nineteenth Century. She was among the first women protagonists of modern, liberal, and feminist ideas in Croatia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.⁵ Finally, this magazine understood its readers as one of its most important assets. Readers were a source of its survival for certain, but, more than that, its readers were understood to be truly “conversational partners” who had high involvement in their

³ The exact circulation numbers do not exist to my present knowledge. However, through an examination of the content, it is clear that, in the best days, circulation was somewhere between 65,000 and 70,000 copies.

⁴ This was unusual. Historically, most of the magazines in Croatia were foreign, mostly German and Italian.

⁵ Some early biographical scholarly contributions were made. See Ivo Hergesi, “*Marija Juri Zagorka*” *An introduction to Zagorka: Tajna Krvavog Mosta* (Zagreb, 1979) and Stanko Lasi, *Književni počeci Marije Juri Zagorka (1873-1910)* (The Literary Beginnings of Marija Juri Zagorka) (Zagreb: Znanje, 1986). See also Slavica Jakobovi Fribec, “Marija Juri Zagorka: protagonistica nepisane povijesti hrvatskog feminizma” (Marija Juri Zagorka: A Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism), *Republika*, 6 (June, 2006), 14-25 and A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries, Slavica Jakobovi Fribec “Juri, Marija (1873-1957)”, eds. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi. (CEU Press: Budapest, NY: 2006). Claire Buck’s *Bloomsbury Guide to Women’s Literature* (Prentice Hall General Reference: NY, 1992), Bora Dordevi, *Zagorka: Kronika Starog Zagreba* (Stvarnost: Zagreb, 1965) and Dunja Detoni-Dujmi, *Croatian Women Writers from the “Moderna” to the Second World War*. In Celia Hawkesworth ed., *A History of Central European Women’s Writing*, (NY: Palgrave, 2001). Unfortunately, her contribution to journalism, so far hasn’t been recognized. Most studies focus on her contributions as a novelist. No comprehensive biography exists to this day. Recently, feminist scholars in Croatia began to recognize her as a pioneer of feminism and as a women’s rights activist. This year is celebrated as the 50th anniversary of her death. Cultural events across the country received significant press coverage. The Center for Women’s Studies in Zagreb organized an interdisciplinary conference “*Marija Juri Zagorka- Life, Work, Heritage*” as a part of celebratory *Days of Marija Juri Zagorka*.

contribution to the magazine's content through letters, stories, and social-interest news.⁶ All of these reasons have compelled me to engage in a deeper understanding of the significance of *Ženski list* within its historical context and have inspired me to situate this magazine within the contemporary discourses of the roles of media and journalism history in the lives of women in the Central-Eastern European societies.

1.2. Situating the Case Study

The magazine examined in this dissertation was published under the name *Ženski list* from April 1925 through November 1938. I have also traced its continuation from 1938 through 1939, when it was published under the new name, *Novi Ženski list*,⁷ and under new editorial leadership, and from 1939 through 1944, when it was published under the name *Hrvatski Ženski list*.⁸ The context of interwar Yugoslavia is important for understanding the changes that *Ženski list* underwent from its founding moment to its demise.

Yugoslavia was a new state in the post-World War I geographical map of Europe, together with the other new-successor states of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, e.g., Czechoslovakia and Poland.⁹ The Austro-Hungarian provinces of Croatia,

⁶ The term “conversational partners” to refer to relationships between audiences and journalists was first used by James Carey in his 1974 essay *The Problem of Journalism History*. *Journalism History* 1: 3-5, 27.

⁷ Literal translation – *New Women's Paper*

⁸ Literal translation- *Croatian Women's Paper*

⁹ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

Slovenia, Slavonia and Vojvodina, Dalmatia, and also Bosnia and Herzegovina formed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918, together with the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, which had gained the recognition of independence after the Berlin Congress in 1878.¹⁰ Yugoslavia was geographically located in the southeastern part of Europe, an area that is often referred to as the Balkans.¹¹ The idea of Yugoslav unity was almost a century old before the formation of the state. The Illyrian movement (Croatian nationalist movement led by the intelligentsia) in the 1830s provided the initial outline of what would later become the concept of Yugoslavism. The Croatian intellectual elite, inspired by Napoleon's rule and the French ideas of liberty, equality, and brotherhood, first argued for Croatian national unity. In 1867, Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and historian Franjo Ra ki¹² were instrumental in founding the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences, which institutionalized Illyrism as a means to achieve Yugoslavism—or Slavic unification. Despite the initial efforts for Slavic unification, the idea did not gain significant acceptance among the Serbian intellectual elite, who worked on developing their own

¹⁰ Barbara Jelavich in *History of the Balkans: 20th century (Vol. 2)*. (Cambridge University Press, 1983) argues that "...Congress of Berlin is an important landmark in the formation of the Balkan nation states," 7.

¹¹ There are many disputes among historians as to what exactly constitutes the Balkans, but it is the predominant belief that countries of former Yugoslavia do constitute the Balkans. See, for example, Stevan Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans: 1804-1945*. (London: Longman, 1999), Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (NY: The Modern Library, 2000), and Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*.

¹² His name will be mentioned later in this study in connection with Zagorka. Here I would like to mention that Strossmayer (1815-1905) was one of the most influential Church intellectuals during the Illyrian movement, who argued for the unity of Croatia and Dalmatia under the Habsburgs, but against Hungarian domination. He was the leader of the Croatian People's Party from 1860-1873 and held strong ties with Czech and Bulgarian politicians, arguing for a common Slavic identity. With Franjo Ra ki, a Croatian historian and politician, Strossmayer built on the idea of Yugoslavism or the belief in a common South Slavic identity.

national identity. The idea of Yugoslavism was hampered by the development of separate national identities, especially Croatian and Serbian. Two initial proponents of Illyrism, Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, abandoned it in favor of the pursuit of an independent Croatian state. From this separatist idea, Croatian nationalism and later the Party of the Right were formed.¹³ The newly formed state of Yugoslavia was born out of this historic Yugoslavism, but it was troubled by the separatist political ideologies of both the Serbian and Croatian political elites throughout the interwar period. When the so-called Serbo-Croatian question in the Kingdom culminated in 1929, King Aleksandar¹⁴ proclaimed a dictatorship on January 6, 1929 (accordingly, called January 6 Dictatorship) and renamed the country the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. His idea was that the name itself, as well as the regional reorganization of the country into Banovinas,¹⁵ would strengthen the growth of what was until then an elusive concept of Yugoslavism. However, the dictatorship only radicalized already separatist sentiments in the country. Separatist politicians had built strong international relations with Fascist Italy since the 1920s and Nazi Germany after 1933. In 1934, King Aleksandar was assassinated in Marseilles during his official visit to France by the separatist Macedonian organization

¹³ See Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2003* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2006), Mirjana Gross "Croatian National-Integrational Ideologies from the End of Illyrism to the Creation of Yugoslavia." *Austrian History Yearbook* (1979), 15-16(1): 3-33 and John Lampe, "The Failure of the Yugoslav National Idea." *Studies in East European Thought* (1994), 46(1-2): 69-89.

¹⁴ King Aleksandar was of the Serbian bloodline and although Croats accepted him as their own king, this fact was often stressed as the first sign of the Serbian domination in the new state. See Dejan Djokic, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*. (London: Hurst and Company, 2003).

¹⁵ Subdivisions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia deliberately designed not to correspond to the ethnic divisions or the Austrian-Hungarian imperial borders.

with the help of the Ustaše Croatian separatist movement in immigration. The successor of the state regent, Pavle II, had very little influence on internal affairs. In 1939, Croatian politician Vladko Maček managed to secure quasi-independence for the administrative province of Banovina, Croatia, but the outbreak of World War II and the occupation of Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, erased interwar Yugoslavia from the political map of Europe. In Croatia, the Independent Croatian State was established April 12, 1941 as a Nazi puppet state. Almost immediately, racist policies were installed in the new state, and Jewish, Roma, and Serbian citizens were proclaimed enemies of the fascist state.¹⁶

Thus, the case of *Ženski list* in the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which had witnessed the first expressions of feminist ideas in this part of the world in the context of ethnic tensions, serves as a compelling case study. Interwar Yugoslavia had witnessed a change from a parliamentary monarchy to a dictatorship, and through the emergence and closure of *Ženski list*, we can examine the rise of gender issues in the parliamentary monarchy and can trace changes in mediated discourses during this dictatorship and during the rise of the right. Scholars of history tend to focus either on democracies or dictatorships:¹⁷ interestingly, the case of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and *Ženski list* allows an examination of the changes in mediated discourses on gender, together with changes in politics and the economy, using both democratic and authoritarian contexts.

¹⁶ See Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Nezavisne Države Hrvatske*, 2nd edition (Zagreb: Naklada P.I.P. Pavišić, 2002) (History of Independent Croatian State).

¹⁷ For studies on gender in dictatorial regimes see for example Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Claudia Koontz, *Mothers in Fatherland: Women, The Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988), and Maria Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

Next, the examination of *Ženski list* is situated within the growing field of media and journalism history and the scholarly contribution of feminist scholars who argue for the inclusion of questions of gender, power, and agency in journalism historiography.

1.3. The Problem of Journalism and Media Historiography

More than 30 years after James Carey published his essay, *The Problem of Journalism History*, and almost 20 years after David Nord's 1988 critique, *A Plea for Journalism History*, journalism historians have yet to embrace suggestions that had been put forth by Carey on the need for cultural histories and Nord's more holistic suggestions that journalism history needs to embrace more than just culture. Rather, it needs to embrace intellectual and cultural history within the political, economic, and social contexts to better account for relationships of power. While American historians focus on journalism historiography, British scholars focus more on media historiography.¹⁸ James Curran presents media history as a history of narratives that are competing ideologies in themselves.¹⁹ Among dominant narratives of media history, Curran identifies the feminist narrative. Using interpretations of the rise of periodicals in the second part of the Nineteenth Century, he argues that "popular women's journalism gained a significant audience, and defined the central concern of women as winning and keeping a man,

¹⁸ I do not wish to engage more deeply in discussion into the differences between media history and journalism history, but I wish to say that my work delves into both journalism history and media history. I am interested in both shedding "light on the central role of mass communication in making of the modern society", and the role of journalism as a profession and journalists as professionals, women in particular, who are part of the media industry as such and participants in the creation of the narratives influencing the making of the society at large.

¹⁹ See James Curran, *Media and Power*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

home-making, motherhood and looking good.” In other words, he opts for the model that media and capitalism have helped to strengthen the already existing subordinate view of women who are placed in the realm of domesticity.²⁰ However, he does acknowledge that by focusing only on understanding of the constructions of femininity in media researchers miss out on a more complete understanding of gendered discourses. He suggests that a more complete understanding should be complemented by the “understandings of masculinity.”²¹ Inclusion of the feminist narrative to narratives of media history is a commendable one, although Curran makes little effort to situate the actual feminist press and the women’s political press within the context of the narrative.²² On the other side of the Atlantic, debates on journalism history between the call for emphasis on cultural production or the emphasis on institutional power still has not adequately addressed gender as a category of difference. One important effort in this direction is set forth by Georgia NeSmith in her 1994 unpublished dissertation, *Feminist Historiography, Journalism History and Problem of Human Agency*, where she offers a critique of Carey’s and Nord’s approach to journalism history. The main issue that NeSmith takes with Carey’s cultural approach is that it inadequately addresses power relations in the production of cultural meanings, while, in Nord’s case, she argues that

²⁰ Ibid, 10-11.

²¹ Ibid, 12.

²² See, for example, one recent study on intersections of gender and journalism in Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005). She writes “Between 1856 and 1930, female proprietors published over 150 political journals and newspapers targeted at a female audience,” 1.

primacy is given to writing history from the perspective of the power elites.²³ My own approach to journalism and media history follows the approach set forth by feminist scholars and takes into account gender as a crucial category for understanding power relations in the contexts of the political economy of culture. I believe that this approach enables me to better understand the dynamic process of power relations in society and opens a critical eye to the historical gaps in which those less powerful groups have struggled to assert their visions of the world and themselves. Uncovering meanings that were created in these historical gaps are the gemstones of historical analysis that can help us further our understanding of journalism as a potentially subversive practice for dissenting and silenced groups and of media as a potentially subversive site of cultural production.

I do agree with NeSmith's argument that journalism historiography would greatly benefit from feminist theory and feminist historiography. However, I would like to take her argument one step further to include political-economic concerns. Most feminist scholars have been, thus far, largely concerned with the private practices of media consumption without accounting for production practices, and they thereby fail to account for the role of the media in the public sphere.²⁴

In my dissertation research, I am making an effort to shed more light on the interconnections between the private practices of media consumption and acts of cultural

²³ Georgia Anne NeSmith, *Feminist Historiography, Journalism History and the Problem of Human Agency*, unpublished dissertation, University of Iowa, 1994.

²⁴ In the well know study, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991), Janice A. Radway points out that "Book buying, then, cannot be reduced to a simple interaction between a book and a reader. It is an event that is affected and at least partially controlled by the material nature of book publishing as a socially organized technology of production and distribution," 20.

production in the public sphere. Both levels of analysis are needed to account for inequalities and oppression among less-powerful groups in capitalism's reproduction of patriarchy.²⁵ Gender as an inclusive category of analysis plays a crucial role in understanding this intrinsic relationship between the sphere of consumption and the sphere of production. Thus, I would like to argue for more scholarly endeavors that would look to include political economy and gender historiography within journalism and media historiography.

Gender history emerged 20 years ago from the field of women's history and is a constantly changing field of inquiry with a growing interest in the politics of sexualities, bodies, ethnicities, race, and hybridity.²⁶ I find the epistemology of gender historians to be useful for my own work. In that respect, especially useful are studies that focus on the development of consumer societies and the studies that focus on power relations within different historical contexts as being intrinsic to the politics of consumption. The production of commodities has long been a subject of study of both historians and media scholars. Whereas historians have often relied on productivist perspectives, critical media scholars have relied heavily on the cultural meaning of commodities. Such studies have tended to neglect a historical context and the diverse processes that might have been important in shaping consumer practices. Furthermore, feminist inquiries have made

²⁵ Ellen Riordan, in *Sex and Money: Feminism and Political Economy of Media* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis/London, 2002), argues the following: "Even though both production and consumption are inextricably linked, feminist scholars and political economists tend to focus primarily on only one of these processes" and "I would argue that for feminists it is not sufficient to examine only the mode of production, but that we must investigate the social relations arising from patterns of commodity consumption, not just as a cultural phenomenon but as an economic practice shaping women's lives," 8.

²⁶ See Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

scholars aware of the woman as a consumer, as a consequence of the household division of labor and market forces, i.e., between the sphere of production and the sphere of consumption.²⁷ Gender historians have established that the separate spheres of work and home or public and private have had a profound influence on our understanding of gender differences. Clear-cut differences between consumption practices as women's domain and production practices as the men's sphere have also been questioned.²⁸

This argument calls for a re-examination of the often-simplistic definition of the public as a political sphere only. The public sphere includes also the sphere of production, and, whereas the political sphere built rigorous barriers often try for women, the sphere of production has been more flexible and more versatile for women's entry. In the context of journalism and media studies, this can prove to be a useful point of departure, i.e., to argue that the concept of the public sphere also includes media and journalism as such. Media and journalism as a profession has imposed barriers often try for women, but in situations where women break this barrier, journalism and media have provided opportunities for identity subversion that are similar to the opportunities present in theater.²⁹ Journalism and theater at the end of the Nineteenth Century were the first public spaces that actually "offered women paid work, new means of expression,

²⁷ See Victoria De Grazia, "Introduction," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, eds. Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (University of California Press, 1996), 1-11.

²⁸ See, for example, Roger Horowitz and Arwen Mohun, eds., *His and Hers: Gender, Consumption, and Technology* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

²⁹ See Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). She writes "...the histrionics characterizing behavior in the newsroom and on the stage threatened conventional gender norms," 11.

financial independence and cultural visibility.”³⁰ For example, the engagement of women with theater, and even more so with journalism at the-turn-of-the-century France, broke the seal on women’s participation in public life, and large numbers of women entered the feminist political sphere of interwar France.³¹ The subversive potential of journalism was among the first exercised by women journalists in the French fin-de-siècle magazine *La Fronde*. Women journalists in *La Fronde* “used the new emphasis in journalism on mirroring ‘reality’ to challenge male views of women,” playing out the fine differences between reality and fantasy, constructing male understanding of female gender as fantasy rather than reality.³² It is the presence of a woman in journalism as a public practice, i.e., the creation and the ambiguity of a woman reporter at the end of the Nineteenth Century that had presented the biggest challenge to the conventional understanding of female identity and womanhood.³³

Gender historians suggest that concepts of consumption, public sphere, citizenship, nation, and body all merit examination in different historical contexts. I find all of these concepts to be important for understanding the historical emergence of *Ženski list*, its political-economic context, and the narratives that this magazine embraced. All of these concepts significantly reflect interwar narratives in Europe and Yugoslavia.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid, 11.

³¹ Ibid, 91.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 88.

³⁴ See, for example, Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Making Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics of Yugoslavia* (Stanford University Press, 1998).

Particularly significant was the narrative of women's place within the larger concept of the nation and the narrative of women as citizens. In *Ženski list* one of the most dominant narratives was reflected through a discussion on meaning of the fashionable the page-stytle haircut, *Bubikopf*. The usaga of this German word for the popular 1920s and early 1930s hairstly embodies layers of meaning. First, it signaled rising of the class distinction between the new working class woman, and the old elite. It signified the rebellion of the new generation of women who replaced long hair as the symbol of femininity with the boyish hairstyle, to blure the lines between genders. It was a new style for a new type of liberated woman, who enjoyed every aspect of the emerging consumer society, buying goods with her own earnings. Finnaly, this term holds a paradox, quite characteristic for the interwar Croatia. While at the same time, women were trying to get away from the German products that they considered imperial, including print, the vernacular language for the new consumer goods was still not invented. It was common to use German words, such as *Bubikopf*, because fashion styles were coming packaged in fashion magazines in German language. The consumer culture significantly influenced women's participation in the public space. In fact, the call for citizenship was partly coming from the women's new gained power to consume. It is argued that education and voluntary organizations are a part of the institutional organization that is important for the promotion of citizenship. These institutions were first to open up spaces for women's engagement toward their recognition as equal citizens.³⁵ To this we can definitely add, institution of

³⁵ See Andrew Lass, "What Are We Like?": National Character and the Aesthetics of Distinction in Interwar Czechoslovakia" in Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery, eds. *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale Center for International Area Studies, 1995), 39-64.

consumerism that promoted this new self sufficient consumer woman into *Bubikopf* nation.

Following this argument, we could also position the press as being essential for the literacy of this new kind of citizenship. I would like to argue that the press as an economic, political, and cultural entity is, in fact, one social mechanism that has the capability to unite all other social mechanisms. It is possible that, through this process of imagined and actual participation, the press has played a crucial role in women's engagement with the creation of a new citizenship. This new citizenship reflected through the developing consumer culture of interwar Yugoslavia that women readily joined, as evident by the popularity of *Ženski list*, possibly signaled a way for women to express their sentiments for national belonging, and even more importantly against the nationalistic antagonisms that were permeating interwar Yugoslavia. Women in *Ženski list* were, with the respect to ethnic diversity, trying to forge new Yugoslav nation, and because of the lack of the political rights, they promoted that citizenship through the new emerging consumer culture.

Hence, by examining the case of a popular women's magazine in interwar Yugoslavia in this dissertation, I wish to better understand: (1) the interaction between the changing historical, social, political, and economic contexts and the women's press; (2) the role of the press, and the women's press in particular, as the cultural commodity and material site for professing and critiquing capitalist consumer culture; (3) the potential of the press, the women's press in particular, in opening an alternative public space for the discussion of gender relations; and (4) the interplay between interwar

discourses of capitalism, consumer culture, national ideology, and gender in the popular women's press.

1.4. Analytical Framework and Research Questions

Academic discourses have placed history and theory in an ongoing antagonism. However, with the recent linguistic turn and especially with the contributions of feminist theory and feminist historiography to history, historical research has been informed by theory, and theoretical concepts have been objects of historicizing.³⁶ With feminist theory, experience gained importance in scholarly research, and, with the use of historical method, it gained its temporality.

The meanings that we attribute to personal experiences change significantly with changes in historical contexts. This recognition enables researchers of history to understand "...specific ways subjects lived – and experienced – the passage of time."³⁷ J.K. Gibson-Graham argue for analyses that render practices of economic difference visible while critiquing political economy's tendency to focus on only one economic form – capital itself.³⁸ These authors also argue for the politics of the production of subjects and places, or the politics of becoming in place, in other words for studying practices in the contexts of their becoming, and within the contexts of their change.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid, x.

³⁷ Ibid, xi.

³⁸ J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As we knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

³⁹ Jenny Cameron and J.K Gibson-Graham, "Feminizing the Economy, Metaphors, Strategies," *Politics, Gender, Place and Culture*, 10 (June 2003), 145-157.

The differences created, altered or produced by women are often rendered invisible in the androcentric totality.

However, to be able to render these differences visible, to invoke Curran, efforts to understand expressions of masculinity are equally as important as efforts to understand expressions of femininity. Gender in this thesis will be understood, then, as "...a construct that regards the ideas we hold about masculinity and femininity, about appropriate roles and about power relations...and as a historical and social category."⁴⁰

Thus, this research will utilize a feminist political-economic approach to the study of media and cultural productions and a theoretical perspective that is derived mostly from the feminist critique of the Habermasian public sphere theory as the analytical framework for understanding this historical project. Political economy is based on the Marxist premises of the interrelations between base and superstructure.⁴¹ In this project, I wish to join in an ongoing scholarly debate on the relationship between the structural forces of the society and culture by attempting to understand the relationship between base and superstructure as symbiotic.⁴²

I want to allow for the possibility that cultural texts and cultural production could also have a powerful influence on the structural levels of production. Questions of power are, therefore, crucial to investigate. Certain dominant ideologies have power to control meaning production, and media serve as the most effective channel for its

⁴⁰ Freya Schiwy, Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity: Gender, Race and Binary Thinking, *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3), 271-295, 275.

⁴¹ See Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), 26.

⁴² Ibid, 26-27. See also J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism*.

dissemination.⁴³ Drawing on influences from feminist political economists, this research is concerned with mass media practices and with the ways in which the lives of women are shaped under the conditions of capitalism.⁴⁴ Feminist political economists especially emphasize the need to contextualize cultural practices within historical conditions and conditions of production.⁴⁵ Historian Richard Ohman, in his 1996 analysis of interactions among media production, capitalism, and class at the turn of the century, emphasized intrinsic links between media industries and capitalism.⁴⁶ Hence, in this project, I emphasize the historical context of interwar Europe and the conditions of production in the newly emerging post World War I Yugoslav society.

Feminist political economy of media, unlike mainstream political economy, acknowledges the neglected feature of patriarchy, i.e., gendered oppression of women under the conditions of capitalism. Thus, feminist political economy of media is more critical in orientation, and this aspect of it is crucial for this research project.⁴⁷ Critical political-economists are concerned with the process of commodification and the

⁴³ See James Curran, *Media and Power*.

⁴⁴ See Riordan Ellen, *Intersections and New Directions: On Feminism and Political Economy*, in Eileen R. Meehan and Ellen Riordan eds. *Sex & Money: Feminism and Political Economy of Media*, 3-16. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Richard Ohman, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and the Class at the Turn of the Century*, (NY: Verso, 1996)

⁴⁵ See discussion in Record R. Angela, *Born to Shop: Teenage Women and the Marketplace in the Postwar United States*, in Eileen R. Meehan and Ellen Riordan eds. *Sex & Money: Feminism and Political Economy of Media*, 181-196. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁴⁶ Richard Ohman, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century*, (NY: Verso, 1996) says “like mind and body, mass culture and capitalism evolved together” 12.

⁴⁷ Riordan, *Intersections and New Directions: On Feminism and Political Economy*, 4-5.

production of cultural goods. They are concerned with the ways in which cultural consumption takes place under the economic structures of capitalism and the way in which texts reflect the production of public discourses by privileging certain cultural discourses and silencing others.⁴⁸ This idea is important for the feminist political-economic approach to the study of media, which takes political-economic concerns from structural analysis to micro-analysis, i.e., to the private sphere of women's lives. The private sphere for those theorists is shaped both by capitalism and patriarchy, and it is, therefore, both gendered and economic.⁴⁹ While the traditional political-economic theoretical approach is used critically to examine social phenomena, including media, and, while it aspires to prioritize to an understanding of historical transformation and social change, gender is seldom at the center of analysis. Feminist political economists of media offer a theoretical approach that remedies this shortcoming of the traditional political-economic approach to the study of communication and media. Such an approach could benefit from feminist insights, especially in the politics of representations that are so well-articulated by post-colonial feminist scholars.⁵⁰ Feminist analysis, on the other hand, has been avoiding political-economic approaches, relying primarily on

⁴⁸ For more on critical political economy, see texts Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*. (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, Culture, Communications, and Political Economy, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch eds. *Mass Media and Society*, 15-32 (London: A Hodder Arnold Publication, 2005) and Andrew Calabrese, Toward a Political Economy of Culture. In Andrew Calabrese & Colin Sparks, eds., *Toward a Political Economy of Culture: Capitalism and Communication in the Twenty-first Century*, 1-13, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

⁴⁹ Riordan, 4. See also Eileen Meehan, "Introducing the issues: An interview with Eileen Meehan." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (Special Issue on feminist approaches to political economy in communication), 23(4), 1999, 321-326.

⁵⁰ See Lisa McLaughlin, "Beyond "separate spheres": Feminism and the Cultural Studies/Political Economy Debate." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 23(4), 1999, 327-354.

cultural/critical approaches. One of the reasons for that is the historically grounded exclusion of women from political-economic domains and debates.⁵¹

I believe that a feminist political-economic approach to the study of media is most appropriate, in particular for women's magazines, not only because of its focus on the interplay between the cultural and labor domains of women's everyday lives, but also because of its focus on identity construction through consumption practices and experiences of the pleasure that people derive from the practices of consumption.⁵² The labor domain as the site of oppression in women's lives under capitalism historically holds a prominent position.

With the rise of mediated communication and the culture industry, women's labor in the news industry became a new site of oppression.⁵³ Feminist political economists argue for a focus on commodity, because that is where consumption and production meet. The focus on micro-level analysis and prioritizing individual experiences, and a focus on human agency, utilizing Giddens' idea of structuration, recognized that the study of media texts is important for understanding how micro-level events can affect macro-level structural changes.⁵⁴ Hence, a feminist political-economic approach is the most appropriate for understanding the interplay between media production and consumption practices of the readers of *Ženski list* under the historical conditions and the conditions of production in interwar Yugoslavia. Culture and economics are interrelated in a way in

⁵¹ Riordan, 3.

⁵² Ibid, 6.

⁵³ See Meehan, 1999; Ohman, 1996 and Riordan and Meehan, 2002.

⁵⁴ Riordan, 2002.

which one is often the site of the other. People oftentimes make sense of their everyday lives by engaging in economic discourses. Hence, it is possible to argue that, by engaging in the examination of economic concerns as manifested in the everyday lives of women, we could further our understanding of them. Feminist political economists of media have emphasized the importance of the private sphere of women as both political and economic.

To this idea I wish to add the idea that media consumption and magazine-reading could potentially serve as a bridge between the private lives of women and the traditional public spaces. We could theorize that women as consumers and producers of magazines gained access to a limited public sphere, which, in turn, opened possibilities for constructing discourses for access to institutional, economic, and other structures of the society. Magazines, in certain historical conditions, potentially played a crucial role in constructing spaces for women and other marginalized groups to voice their opinion and to challenge traditional power relations. The idea of the bourgeois public sphere was put forward by Jürgen Habermas in the early 1980s, and, since then, it was advanced by Habermas, himself, but was challenged by many—especially feminist scholars.⁵⁵ Most feminist scholars attack the idea that the public sphere, as originally put forth by Habermas, was based on rational/critical deliberation as one of the most important aspects of the public. Some critics resent the exclusion of women from the public sphere

⁵⁵ For ideas on the public sphere of Habermas, see original the text, Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991). For feminist critiques, see Lisa McLaughlin, *Feminism and the Political Economy of Transnational Public Space*. In Nick Crossley and Michael Roberts, eds., *After Habermas: New perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing/The Sociological Review, 2004), 156-175, and Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of actually Existing Democracy*. In Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 109-143.

as well as some lack of attention to the so-called counterpublics that have existed along with the rational/deliberative public sphere.⁵⁶ The idea of the public sphere does not depart from the political-economic approaches to the study of media. In fact, theorizations of the meaning of the public sphere are an important part of the political-economic understanding of media.⁵⁷ The political economy of culture, in fact, examines the material side of what is now known as the public sphere and argues that citizenship is not derived from responsibilities to those who govern, but—equally important—from responsibilities toward civil society.⁵⁸

Because of apparent connections between the interests of political economists and public-sphere theorists, especially the feminist public-sphere theorists, this project will attempt to bring the public sphere theory more prominently into the feminist political-economy-of-media perspective. The public sphere concept and ideas that have been laid out by feminist public-sphere theorists will be useful for this project, although they are criticized for not giving enough attention to the media.⁵⁹

For this research, it will be important to theorize both the public sphere and the feminist political economy of media, not only in terms of transnational contexts, but also within national contexts. The Yugoslavian case can be seen both as a national and transnational context. In the national sense, it was the attempt of the creation of the new

⁵⁶ See Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988).

⁵⁷ See Calabrese, 2003, and Curran, 2005.

⁵⁸ Calabrese, 2003, 45.

⁵⁹ Lisa McLaughlin, *Feminism and the Political Economy of Transnational Public Space*.

identity among three South Slavic peoples, i.e., the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. But Yugoslavia in the interwar period can also be seen as three distinct territories and three distinct nations in which media did, in fact, cross borders. More importantly, evidence exists that *Ženski list* was a primary reader for Yugoslav women immigrants in the United States.⁶⁰ In this respect, we could position *Ženski list* as an attempt to build an alternative public sphere for women in Yugoslavia and for immigrant women outside of Yugoslavia, as well as a more typical space for shaping and selling to the female consumer.

Furthermore, *Ženski list* can be theoretically positioned as the oppositional response to the exclusionist public sphere in which mainstream media operate. From that perspective, it could possibly be theorized as a medium that had introduced and demanded discussion on private issues that were excluded from the bourgeois public sphere list of issues for deliberation.⁶¹ This idea brings the publication close to the feminist political-economic concerns about media in which the private lives of women, i.e., topics and issues deliberated in the private domain of everyday life, are in the crux of the feminist political-economic concerns. *Ženski list*, as an expression of the cultural domain as the “political” domain of women’s lives, could be understood as the springboard that connects the public to the private and, in Habermasian words, a system (e.g., market economy and state apparatuses) to the lifeworld (world of the individual

⁶⁰ Discussion of the evidence in chapters four and five.

⁶¹ On the exclusion of private issues, see Fraser.

social actor).⁶² It is then crucial to analyze how economic, political, social, and cultural forces enabled the rise of this public sphere of dissent. Women who organized around *Ženski list* displayed the need for participation in the production of their own culture. The press and journalism, in that respect, can be seen as the ultimate foundation for such expression.

The above discussion, thus, suggests the importance of the interplay between historical and political-economic conditions. This interplay is best actualized through cultural practices and cultural production of the press. The theoretical framework serves to remind us about the importance of both economic constraints and the historical conditions that allowed for emergence of *Ženski list*. The conditions and constraints also include routines and ideological aspects that are the results of context of media production.

Hence, I believe that utilizing these theoretical perspectives will be a useful point of departure for the analysis of the ways in which women created media places to articulate their own rational, critical, and private voices about the constitution of their own lives in society that can—and should be—imagined differently. Based on the proposed theoretical framework, I specifically seek to find out: (1) How did the life and journalistic work of the magazine's editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, contribute to the emancipation of Yugoslav women in media and the journalistic profession; (2) How did her editorial work and writing influence the identity of *Ženski list*; (3) What were the enabling and constraining historical and structural factors in the emergence and eventual demise of

⁶² On the idea of lifeworld and agency, see Jürgen Habermas, Further Reflections on the Public Sphere. In Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 421-462.

Ženski list; (4) What political-economic narratives and narratives of gender, nation, citizenship, and body politics were evident in *Ženski list*, and how did these narratives change from its emergence to its demise; and (5) How did *Ženski list* influence the everyday lives of its readers as evident from the published and unpublished letters and other correspondence to the editor?

1.5. Method and Data Collection

In this dissertation, I utilize multiple methods: (a) textual; (b) historical and biographical; and (c) audience study. For the analysis of the texts in *Ženski list*, I used narrative discourse analysis,⁶³ drawing inspiration from the interpretive ethnography of texts proposed by Norman Denzin. In mediated text-focused research, researchers usually approach discourse analysis with attention to the way that discourses are produced by the cultural, social, economic, and personal realities as well as to how dominant or hegemonic discourses influence discourses in the socio-historic matrix. This approach resembles what is embedded in Lindlof and Taylor's term cultural economy, i.e., a "blend of traditional meanings of text and commodity."⁶⁴ Similarly, interpretive ethnography of

⁶³ For details on narrative discourse analysis, see Norman Fairclough, *Analyzing Discourse: Textual analysis for Social Research*. (Routledge, 2003), and Helen Fulton, Rosemary Huisman, Julian Murphet, and Anne Dunn, *Narrative and Media* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). Helen Fulton, in the Introduction, writes, "The economic function of the media, to generate profits, undermines the idea of narrative as some kind of innate or universal structure common to all humanity. Narrative in the media becomes simply a way of selling something. This means that the economic structure of media industries determines their output, the kinds of stories we tell," 3. The same could be said for other structural forces that shape what sorts of narratives are being told. Yet, we also need to leave space for human agency to fight these structural influences and efforts that individuals make to construct their own narratives.

⁶⁴ Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 58.

texts sees narrative as a political act in itself. Interpretive ethnography of texts interrogates situations in which power is exercised and investigates the ways in which power is exercised as well as how power affects human meaning construction in the day-to-day activities of people. It connects the voices of the people in the private sphere to the public sphere and to the apparatuses of culture that commodify the personal by which the personal becomes political.⁶⁵ Hence, this approach connects ethnography to feminist theory and political economy; to circumstances of gendered everyday practices; and to circumstances of media culture production. The overall narrative analysis of text, then, includes an examination of the discourses of patriarchy within the context of capitalism as well as on feminist discourses and meanings that women readers derived from *Ženski list*. During the examination of the copies of *Ženski list*, special attention was paid to the categories of labor, class, femininity, masculinity, body, motherhood, liberalism, nationalism, and citizenship as they were situated in the larger socio-historic discourse.

Within the context of the historical and biographical methods in this dissertation, I am using primary documents whenever possible. I have supplemented those with secondary sources only when primary sources were not available. Primary documents include: governmental papers, police documents, court documents, personal papers, letters, newspapers, and magazines. Primary documents were gathered during three months of fieldwork in Croatia in summer and fall of 2007. I started archival research on May 15, 2007, and continued with it for the next three months. The research was carried out with the support of the T. Anne Cleary International Dissertation Research

⁶⁵ Norman K. Denzin, Interpretive Ethnography for the Next Century, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28(5), 510-519. 1999.

Fellowship. Documents were gathered in the Croatian State Archive, State Archive in Zagreb, The National and Academic Library in Zagreb, The National Library in Vienna, and the Society of Croatian Journalists. Personal papers and readers' original letters were obtained from a private individual between June and July of 2007. Secondary documents are comprised mostly of the autobiographical writings of Marija Juri Zagorka. Although these types of historical evidence are often discredited as being weak, some historians argue that autobiographical writings are extremely important when they come from those who are subordinated individuals, whether by their class, gender, religion, or race.⁶⁶

Because the emergence of *Ženski list* depended, for the most part, on the life and struggles of Marija Juri Zagorka, its editor and primary contributor to the content of this magazine, I have engaged in writing a short feminist biography of Zagorka. This short feminist biography of Zagorka serves as a foundation on which a better understanding of the politics of this magazine can be achieved. For feminist biographers, issues of identity are crucial because women's multi-sited identity is viewed as a constraining factor on women's lives.⁶⁷ Feminist biography should be approached from feminist theoretical perspectives, albeit while relying on traditional biography's emphasis on the importance

⁶⁶ Judith Okely, "Anthropology and autobiography: participatory experience and embodied knowledge" in Judith Okely and Hellen Callaway, eds., *Anthropology and Autobiography*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 1-29. Oakley writes "autobiographies are a record of questions and of subversion," 5.

⁶⁷ See by Sara Alpern, Joyce Antler, Elisabeth Israels Perry, and Ingrid Winther Scobie eds. *The Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the lives of Modern American Women*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

of evidence.⁶⁸ In feminist biography, special attention is paid to the subjectivity of the biographer and to the understanding that lives of women are socially constructed. Women biographers can reveal attachment to their subjects and still remain critical.⁶⁹

Finally, the discovery of unpublished letters to the editor opened up the possibility to engage more deeply in an understanding of the audiences. Even though temporal distance did not permit me to directly observe the conditions under which these letters were written, nor did it permit me to directly engage into communication with the readers, the preserved letters gave me a unique opportunity to look into the interpretations and experiences of the media culture that was created by the *Ženski list* for its readers, by its readers. The ethnographic reading of the letters allowed me to get a grasp of the ways that readers interpreted their identities and experiences in that specific “passage of time.”⁷⁰ The so-called “third generation” of audience researchers is particularly keen on understanding “connections between media/audience and the larger culture”⁷¹ and “in the role of media in everyday life.”⁷² Methodological choices are determined both by the questions asked and by the available evidence. In a 1992 study of supermarket tabloids,

⁶⁸ See Alice Wexler, “Emma Goldman and the Anxiety of Biography,” in Alpern et al., eds., *The Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the lives of Modern American Women*, 34-51. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

⁶⁹ Alpern et al., 32.

⁷⁰ Kathleen Cuning, *Gender History in Practice*, xi.

⁷¹ See Elizabeth S. Bird, *The Audience in Everyday life: Living in a Media World*. (NY: Routledge, 2003), 5.

⁷² Pertti Alasuutari. Introduction: Three Phases of Reception Studies. In *Rethinking the Media Audience*, edited by Pertti Alasuutari (London: Sage, 1999), 6 as cited in Elizabeth S. Bird, *The Audience in Everyday life: Living in a Media World*, 5.

Elizabeth Bird asked 116 men and women to write letters about their media engagement with supermarket tabloids. This allowed her to get a better understanding of the people's identities far beyond their identities as tabloid readers. She found letters written by women to be especially telling about their overall lives. In fact, these letters showed that women would use responses to the tabloid texts for self-expression and re-examination of their other social and private identities, much more so than men. This ethnographic method of an open-ended letter/diary allowed for opening up the cultural context of communication.⁷³

The overall data collection process was based on two premises: the amount and quality of the data and the conflicts of sources. I have kept these two premises in mind as being important because the amount of evidence and the quality of evidence determine attempts to answer the research questions. Furthermore, in terms of the conflict of sources, the important aspect for me was to question whether the evidence that I had found matched the expectations of what I had hoped to find and whether the evidence that I had found conflicted with other existing sources of evidence.⁷⁴ Finally, I would like to emphasize that doing archival research using predominantly historical sources requires attention to the power that archival institutions have over the preservation or annihilation of documents, thereby holding the upper hand on what kind of histories will be preserved and ultimately will be used to construct historical memory. The most

⁷³ Elizabeth S. Bird, *The Audience in Everyday life: Living in a Media World*, 11-12.

⁷⁴ On the topic of evaluation of the sources, see Russell H. Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), and John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

important emphasis of this critique is on power in the production of knowledge.

Historians engaged with colonial sources question the process of knowledge production by those who have the power to write and preserve knowledge. The attention is not only on social relations, but also on the material conditions through which colonial archives are produced.⁷⁵ Anthony Giddens suggests that institutions are in constant change, but constant linear change gives the illusion that nothing is really changing.⁷⁶ With this theoretical stipulation and the actual historical changes in my research context (South-Eastern Europe – the Balkans), it is apparent that institutions have undergone significant changes in recent years. From the early 1990s until today, transitional processes from communism to parliamentary democracy and from a planned to a market economy have affected the ways in which institutions of “memory preservation” are organized. It is to be expected that, in this transitional period, some annihilation of the documents from the communist time were either destroyed or are currently being made unavailable for research. Such practices were not uncommon in the earlier transitional periods, from imperial and colonial times to the joint Yugoslav state. All of these historical moments, and the current context that is permeated with numerous transitional processes, affect the current state of archives in the Balkans. However, some researchers have recently reported that research in Eastern Europe has been neither difficult nor impossible. On the contrary, to debunk some of the more common beliefs that research in Eastern Europe

⁷⁵ On ethnography of archives, see Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial archives and the arts of governance,” in Francis X. Blouin, Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, eds., *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (University of Michigan Press, 2006).

⁷⁶ See Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

would be overridden with difficulties, one researcher during her study in Hungary found the Romany community that she studied to be fully accepted without any traces of marginalization. Civil society was welcoming after obviously embracing openness as the most important democratic value.⁷⁷ Although I personally have felt that the change in acceptance of transparency as being an integral part of the new, more democratic social values in Croatia, traces of the decades of administrative disorganization nevertheless have been evident everywhere. The first barrier was the difficult access to information due to the inability of the archival workers to adjust to the demands for materials that fell outside of their everyday routine. Electronic databases were available in limited form only in the National and Academic Library in Zagreb and in a much more organized form in the National Library in Vienna. Other archival material was listed in inventory books, in many instances without analytical descriptors. This made search for evidence extremely difficult. One of the archivists referred to my endeavor to narrow the search by years or subjects as trying to find a needle in a haystack. I found out that the people with whom I talked are still suffering from the fear of politics and the consequences of public disclosure of information, even if the information to be disclosed wasn't particularly political in nature. Furthermore, my research experience has confirmed that institutions in Croatia, although undergoing some transformation, have a long way to go until they can serve the public more efficiently. Some archivists were relying on the so-called personal or familial model in regard to access to information. Oftentimes, I was exposed to

⁷⁷ See Fran Deans, *Doing Fieldwork in Eastern Europe: Fieldwork Made Easier*, *Anthropology Matters Journal*, 8(1), 1-9, 2006.

questions and statements such as, “Do you have an insider here who can help you?” or “If you don’t know anybody here personally, you will have a tough time getting the information” and so forth. This may suggest that, in transitional societies such as Croatia, institutional and structural changes could precede actual changes in peoples’ attitudes. In some instances, primary documents were not attainable, and I had to derive my conclusions using secondary sources. This archival research was, therefore, ridden with sentiments of anguish but also with a sense of exhilaration over unexpected findings. One of the most remarkable findings in this research was a box of unpublished letters-to-the-editor filled with personal information on readers. The letters were an open book of evidence of readers’ hopes and fears, their thoughts about the everyday life in interwar Yugoslavia, and, most of all, their relationship to *Ženski list*. The examination of “The Box” merits a dissertation project in itself and, in the future, might become one of my research goals, but here I have a more modest goal. Based on the outlined theoretical framework and methodology, I intend to provide a glimpse into the life of *Ženski list* and the important role that it played in the construction of meanings associated with the everyday lives of its readers.

1.6. Chapter Outline

This dissertation has six chapters, including the introductory chapter where I have stated the research problem, outlined goals of the research and my research questions, described my theoretical points of the departure for this research, and described my methodological approaches. The major part of Chapter 1 is an overview of the relevant

scholarly literature on the theoretical assumptions that underlie my historical and narrative discourse analysis of *Ženski list*.

Chapter 2 provides historical contexts, a context of the lives of women in Yugoslavia, and provides both a discussion of the scholarly literature on the history of women's magazines in Yugoslavia. I also provide results of the primary research I've done on this topic. This chapter lays out the context for understanding the emergence of *Ženski list*.

Chapter 3 begins a series of analysis chapters. This chapter is a feminist biography of the magazine's editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, that outlines her life from her childhood to her death, with special emphasis on the ideological influences that had shaped her personality in private, public, and professional life. It is based on the primary and secondary sources that have helped me outline major events in her personal and professional life. In the concluding remarks in this chapter, I argue that understanding these ideological influences helps us to better understand how she influenced the politics of the magazine, the ideologies that this magazine professed, and editor's relationship with the readers.

Chapter 4 is based on the narrative discourse analysis of the content of the magazine and on other primary documents. This chapter begins with the emergence of *Ženski list* in the context of interwar Yugoslavia and Croatia and discusses the significance of this magazine in the everyday lives of women. By utilizing narrative discourse analysis I discuss here the significance of the discursive construction of modernity, gender, consumerism, class, ethnicity, etc. in the larger historical and political context in which this magazine was published. In this chapter, I try to understand those

discourses that were discussed on the pages of the magazine, particularly the political-economic discourses, that have impacted readers' own understanding of their everyday lives. I also outline the trajectory of the emergence and the demise of the magazine.

Chapter 5 focuses on the unpublished and published letters to the editor, and other correspondence. In this chapter, I map out the magazine's attitudes toward its readers and the readers' attitude toward the magazine. I also discuss the ways that readers expressed why they read *Ženski list* and the debates and/or issues that readers initiated in their letters to the editor. Finally, I discuss the relationship between the editor and the readers.

In Chapter 6, I reiterate and summarize my findings, provide some concluding statements, some limitations of the study, and give some guidance for future research.

CHAPTER 2
INTERWAR YUGOSLAVIA, GENDER,
AND HISTORY OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I first lay out the historical context for the study of *Ženski list*, with an emphasis on political-economic debates. Second, I provide an understanding of women's history and gender history in Yugoslavia, with a special emphasis on the divergent legal positions of women throughout the newly formed state after World War I. Third, I discuss women and women's organizing in Yugoslavia, with an emphasis to women's organizing in Croatia. Fourth, I briefly address the place of women in the modernizing processes in Croatia. Finally, I will provide a rationale for the study of women's magazines in Central-Eastern European countries, followed by a discussion of the history of women's magazines in Yugoslavian countries, in which I provide a report of the primary data collection.

In my discussion, I will sometimes refer to the histories of the countries that can be subsumed under the term Eastern Europe. A host of definitions exist for the entity of Eastern Europe, and scholars usually have a difficult time differentiating among the different terms that they use for countries east of Europe's west, mostly relying on geographical demarcation lines: West-Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Southeastern Europe, Balkans, etc. However, as Walters rightfully points out, "Eastern Europe is more a political expression than a geographical one", and therefore I include the following countries, relying on Walters' classification: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania,

Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania. Two of these countries, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, have disintegrated after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Czechoslovakia peacefully broke into two independent states, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and Yugoslavia experienced one of the most violent disintegrations in modern history.⁷⁸ Most of the recent scholarship on interwar Yugoslavia suggests that the history of this country, as much as is the case of the histories of other Eastern European countries, should be understood in the larger European context rather than as an anomaly. The whole of Europe in the interwar years was engrossed with questions of establishing a stable concept of nation even after nation-states were established. New states in East-Central Europe all experienced constitutional debates, debates on questions of citizenship, debates on the rights of ethnic minorities, debates on the rights of foreigners, and debates on women's rights which were accompanied with attempts to rebuild institutions of civil society and strong democratic governments in post World War I Europe. Internal political affairs and weak democracies only partly contributed to the democratic failure of most of the new nation-states. Influences of the international economic crisis of 1929 and Europe's turn toward the right in the 1930s all contributed to weaknesses of the newly built European societies between the two World Wars.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁸ For discussion of what constitutes Eastern Europe, see Walters Garrison E., *The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), xi. In 1990, Croatia and Slovenia led the separation of Yugoslavia, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Serbia and Montenegro constituted Yugoslavia until the name of the country was changed to Serbia and Montenegro a few years ago. Last year, Montenegro separated and formed an independent state. Serbia still experiences internal and international pressures over Kosovo, one of the two autonomous counties of the Former Yugoslavia (Vojvodina and Kosovo) with majority of Albania population.

⁷⁹ See Dejan Djokic, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007).

following discussion on the context of interwar Eastern Europe and interwar Yugoslavia provides an interlude to an understanding of the context in which the women's press emerged and in which gender relations were readily debated. I wish to specifically focus on the political and economic debate that was accompanied by some strictly political issues because these will better serve for building a context for the feminist political-economic examination of *Ženski list*. Political-economic issues are often neglected by historians because histories are often written exclusively from a political perspective. Hence, I have chosen to focus on the common interwar political and economic debates of interwar Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia in particular.

2.1.1. Interwar Eastern Europe and Interwar Yugoslavia: Political Economic Debates

On the crucial importance of the interplay between political and economic decision-making in interwar Eastern Europe, Walters provides a compelling discussion, arguing that “the greatest tragedy of interwar Eastern Europe was the politicians’ inability to take a broad view of the economic situation.” This inability to recognize the importance of international economic politics set Eastern Europe back in economic development. This process was accompanied by other aspects of modernism, mainly nation-building. Some 60 years later, this would come to haunt the generation of the 1990s. This generation experienced an uprising of aggressive nationalistic sentiments, and, in the case of Yugoslavia, this aggressive ideology turned into one of the bloodiest conflicts in post-World War II Europe.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Walters, 15.

In Eastern Europe, the pre-World War I pattern of trade was multinational. This meant that the small industrial production that had existed was marketed outside of the borders, and the situation with agriculture was basically the same. Furthermore, land reforms were not uniformly carried out, and they made the situation for peasants worse. Instead of acting as a vehicle in the modernizing processes, agriculture, with at least a theoretical potential to produce a surplus value that could possibly modernize society, hindered economic development of Eastern Europe. Peasants were placed in a double-bind: giving them the land was an incentive to stay in the countryside, and peasants readily abandoned the idea of going to the cities, which ultimately hindered modern migration processes from countryside to city. On the other hand, the impossibility of growth and development in the countryside questioned the very basis of people's survival.⁸¹

In the interwar Europe of the West (Germany, France, Britain), a protectionist economic worldview was closely related to the idea of the nation-state, and development was equated with modernity. The same ideology governed Eastern Europe, but the low industrial capacity and the importation of essential products made domestic production weaker and society-at-large prone to crises.⁸² As I previously mentioned in the discussion on the development of domestic capital in Yugoslavia, another problem was dependency on foreign capital that was always dominant in this part of the world. Foreign loans that floated into Eastern Europe immediately after the war helped to produce a "mini-boom" in domestic production, especially in the developing consumer market and

⁸¹ Ibid, 153-154.

⁸² Ibid.

in consumer goods. However, this quickly changed, because investments were channeled away from production.⁸³ The depression, therefore, had a more devastating effect on Eastern Europe than on Western Europe. Finally, the resolution for some Eastern European problems through bilateral trade was first offered by Nazi Germany. After 1933, Germany led the first economic expansion toward Eastern Europe. Nazi finance minister Schacht offered “clearing” as a form of bilateral trade through which “Nazis would purchase agricultural products and raw material and in return provide finished industrial goods.”⁸⁴ This expansionist effect was felt mostly in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, and less so in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Yugoslavia in the interwar years was a country that had inherited many political and economic problems of the old Europe. The very constitution of the state in the Corfu Agreement⁸⁵ in 1917 planted the seeds that would reflect on its politics even in its communist years. Yugoslavia was constituted as a new country, but with the leadership of the old Serbian royal family Kara or evi and with Belgrade as a capital. The dominance of Serbia in legal, military, police, and financial affairs would significantly affect political movements and the Serbo-Croatian question.⁸⁶ The population of

⁸³ For more discussion, see Walters, 156-157. Only 20% of the investments went to production of the new capital. The percentage of the foreign capital presence was between 50-70, with the exception of Czechoslovakia.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 157.

⁸⁵ The agreement signed on the island of Corfu on July 20th, 1917, by the representatives of the Yugoslav Committee, politicians who represented Slovenes, Serbs, and Croats living in Austria-Hungary and representatives of the Kingdom of Serbia, as the first step toward building the unified Yugoslav state and Yugoslav nation. See John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

⁸⁶ Serbs and Croats were two largest majorities in interwar Yugoslavia. Much of the politics in this period was dominated by the so called Serbo-Croatian question, in which Croatian

Yugoslavia was over 70% agrarian, and the farmers' lands were somewhat different than in the rest of Eastern Europe. Besides dwarf estates, there were a number of middle-sized farms that were typical only for one other Eastern European country, Czechoslovakia.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, this did not significantly transfer to the creation of surplus value in agrarian production, and Yugoslavia was ridden with economic problems and underdevelopment. Industry was focused on extractive industries: silver, bauxite, copper, and chromium, and foreign capital investments influenced the export of most of the production.

In the early 1920s, the "mini-boom" was felt in Yugoslavia as well, although only Bulgaria and Albania had lower industrial development than did Yugoslavia in the interwar period. The Yugoslavian government borrowed heavily in the 1920s to accelerate development, but the severe decline in agricultural exports resulted in the second highest interest rate on foreign debt in Eastern Europe.⁸⁸ In the early 1920s, Yugoslavia formed a partnership with Romania and Czechoslovakia, called the Little Entente.⁸⁹ Small industries were clustered around the big cities of Zagreb, Belgrade, and in central Slovenia. This is where the small middle class was most likely to thrive.

and Serbian political parties fought for dominance in the newly created state. For more discussion, see Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: 20th Century (Vol. 2)*. (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁸⁷Walters, 238.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 240. See also Djoki , *Elusive Compromise*, 48.

⁸⁹ Women also followed the example and formed Women's Little Entente. In the 9th Congress of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (IWA) held in Rome in 1923, women from Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and set up an organization called Women's Little Entente. The second meeting was held in Athens in 1925, where common initiatives were discussed. See Emmert A. Thomas, "Ženski Pokret: The Feminist Movement in Serbia in the 1920s", in *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and*

Yugoslavia was socially quite homogenous, but the ethnic and religious differences were significant.⁹⁰ The most important political question in interwar Yugoslavia was the question of the centralized and radical Serbian politics and the oppositional politics that were led by the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and its leader, Stjepan Radić. Not all Serbian politicians were centralist or even monarchist. Two smaller Serbian parties, the Socialists and the Republicans, presented their constitutional proposals, but Croatian and Slovenian proposals, for the larger part, were carriers of decentralization.⁹¹ Political parties in Yugoslavia promoted separatist and nationalist politics, except for the Communist Party, which was truly Yugoslavian in nature, but, for the most part, was forced to work underground. Before, the dictatorship country was governed by the Radical-Democrat coalition with Serbian Radical leader Nikola Pašić as prime minister.

The HSS and its leader constantly worked to reform the Yugoslav constitution and to tame Serbian radical politicians. When Nikola Pašić died in 1926 and the Slovene People's Party joined the ruling coalition, the HSS became further radicalized in its demands for decentralization. This political question culminated in 1928 when the representative from Montenegro, Puniša Račić, shot and killed 5 representatives of the HSS and wounded Stjepan Radić. Several days later, Radić died as a result of deadly

Yugoslav Successor States ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (The Pennsylvania State University, 1999), 33-51.

⁹⁰ Walters gives following the percentages for the national composition of Yugoslavia: Serbs 43%, Croat 23%, Slovene 8.5%, Macedonian 5%, Bosniak 6%, Albanian 4%, and other minorities 10%. (primarily Hungarians, Italians, Bulgarians, and Romanians), pp. 240-243. I would also add the Roma population and, in Croatia, the German and Jewish populations. For religious composition: Orthodox 49%, Catholic 38%, and Moslem 11%, p. 241.

⁹¹ Djokic, *Elusive Compromise*, 50-51.

wounds, and the country was on the verge of civil war. On January 6, the king of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Aleksandar Karađorđević, proclaimed a dictatorship and terminated the 1921 Vidovdan Constitution.⁹²

Among other democratic freedoms, the administrative division of the country also diminished. The former 33 counties disappeared, and the king established nine Banovinas.⁹³ King Aleksandar experienced similar problems as did King Carol in Romania. He was unable to develop political support for his regime, and the depression of the 1930s weakened the regime further. During Aleksandar's visit to Marseille in 1934, Yugoslav emigration led by IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization formed in 1890s) and the radical Croat nationalists Ustaše planned and assassinated King Aleksandar. Because the king's eldest son, Petar II, was too young to lead the country, the king's cousin, Prince Pavle, tried to gain control over the country. But, as the economic depression progressed, so did the political crisis. This gave rise to some radical rightist political options in Yugoslavia. The Croatian Party of Right (HSP) went underground with the other parties after the dictatorship, and leader Ante Pavelić, while in emigration, organized the fascist Ustaše movement.⁹⁴ In Serbia, the Yugoslav

⁹² The first Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, proclaimed on June 28, 1921, was a constitution that legalized centralization of the country and set forth Serbian domination. Vidovdan (the day of Saint Vitus) had a special place in the national mythology of Serbia. Some historians argue that this Constitution was a tragedy and a bad omen that set the stage for the triumph of the Serbian national ideology in the new state. See Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1988).

⁹³ For more discussion on the political history of Yugoslavia see

⁹⁴ Axis Powers occupied Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941. Ante Pavelić returned to Croatia from exile and became the leader of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), which was proclaimed on April 11, 1941. This state was a fascist puppet state of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

National Union played the same political tune. Although some historians argue that the Yugoslav-type of fascism was not anti-Semitic because there were no Jews in interwar Yugoslavia,⁹⁵ historical evidence shows something quite different. In fact, Yugoslav fascism was no different than fascism in other countries in interwar Europe. In 1919, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes signed a Minorities Treaty with the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan at St-Germain-en Laye, which was in connection to the *Protection of Linguistic Racial, and Religious Minorities by the League of Nations*. The Treaty guaranteed freedom of minorities to express their religious and other ways of life. These freedoms were further promoted in the Constitution of the Kingdom, the so-called Vidovdan Constitution in 1921. The rights of Jews in the Kingdom were also guaranteed by the *Law on the Religious Community of Jews in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* from 1929. However, in the 1930s, the Kingdom's attitude towards its minorities, and especially Jews, changed under the influx of a more radical rightist ideology, mainly from Germany and Italy.

Even before the formation of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) in 1941, a fascist puppet state of World War II, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had voted on the Anti-Jewish Legislation in October 1940. The regulation targeted Jewish businesses and objects of human sustenance and dealt with regulation on the limitation of schooling of

⁹⁵ “Yugoslav fascism differed from that of its sister parties elsewhere in Europe in that it was not markedly anti-Semitic”, 249. I disagree with Walters. In fact, interwar politics, as this dissertation will show, even in the women's magazines, acquired anti-Semitic rhetoric, especially in Croatia. There was a Jewish minority in interwar Yugoslavia, and their capital had an important rise in the 1920s Yugoslavia, helped by foreign Jewish capital, especially from Germany. I engage in this discussion because the capital that produced *Ženski list* was Jewish, and this produced some later prejudices against the magazine, its owners, and its editor, Marija Juri Zagorka.

Jews.⁹⁶ Hence, Yugoslav fascism and Croatian fascism, propagated by the Ustaše movement, was anti-Semitic, with some specific domestically grown racial prejudices against Serbs, Vlachs, and Gypsies. Serbs as Vlachs, who were constructed as evil capitalists, businessmen, and bankers who lured Croatians into unfair capitalist exchange, was one of the dominant racial ideologies in interwar Croatia.⁹⁷ This rhetoric resembled Nazi rhetoric against Jews. As Croatian fascism grew in similarity to German fascism, it more readily embraced the same anti-Semitic rhetoric. But this anti-Semitism was not only an imported ideology. It was a domestically bred ideology, based on the relations toward Jews that were built since the late Eighteenth Century when Ashkenazim Jews were granted permission to live in Zagreb in the 1780s.⁹⁸ In the next section I will discuss history of the Jewish population in Yugoslavia, with some emphasis on women's organizing to better understand the emergence, and the destiny of *Ženski list*. I will return to this discussion in Chapter 4.

Most of the Jews in Yugoslavia settled in the large cities of Belgrade (Serbia), Zagreb (Croatia), and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Ashkenazim, or the more modernized Jews who made up two-thirds of all Yugoslav Jews in the interwar period, lived in the more urbanized and modernized northern parts (Zagreb), and the Sephardim

⁹⁶ For example, Article 1 of the Regulation on the limitation of schooling states: At universities, high schools with the rank of universities, higher, middle, normal, and other vocational schools may be enrolled only a fixed number of pupils of Jewish origin. Reprint of the law in Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 235.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Freidenreich Harriet Pass, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community*.

were situated in the southern parts (Sarajevo and Belgrade).⁹⁹ During the Nineteenth Century, a substantial number of Jews migrated to the Hungarian parts of Austria-Hungary, mainly Croatia and Slavonia, and to Vojvodina.¹⁰⁰ In 1919, non-Zionist integrationist Jews in Croatia, who were gathered around the Jewish community in Zagreb, filed a petition for a Croatian ban opposing the formation of the Jews as a separate nation, rather arguing that Jews were a part of the Yugoslav nation.

Pro-Zionist and anti-Zionist Jewish politics were very much alive in interwar Yugoslavia. David Albala, President of the Executive Board of the Jewish Religious Communities, was a proud Jew, but he also espoused Serbian patriotism. During World War I, he represented the Serbian government in exile and toured throughout America speaking to Jewish communities and raising money for war bonds. Albala kept close ties with the royal family, and regent Pavle in 1939 sent him for another public relations and fund-raising trip to the United States, where he died in 1942.¹⁰¹ The leading Zionist in Croatia was Alexander Licht, a Zagreb lawyer, and almost all Yugoslav Zionists were his disciples. Although the number of Zionists in Yugoslavia was steadily rising in the pre-

⁹⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁰⁰ For more information, see Schwarz Gavro, *Povijest zagrebacke zidovske općine od osnutka do 50-tih godina 19. vijeka* (Zagreb, 1939), Freidenreich, Harriet Pass, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community*, and Friedenreich Harriet, "Sephardim and Askhenazim in Inter-War Yugoslavia: Attitudes Towards Jewish Nationalism," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 44, (1977), 53-80. The census in 1931 showed that there were 73,000 Jews living in Yugoslavia among the total of 13,934,038 people. By 1941, there were 80,000 Jews living in Yugoslavia, counting the refugees from Germany, Austria, and other countries in the total of 15,839,000 people. In 1941, in the time of German occupation of Yugoslavia, there were 16,000 Jews in Serbia, 40,000 Jews in Croatia, with 11,000 of them living in Zagreb where they thrived throughout the interwar years (according to the data from the Jewish Community in Zagreb, only about 3,000 Jews live today in Croatia), and Bosnia and Herzegovina had 14,000 Jews in 1941.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 11-12.

World War II years, only 1 out of 7 Jews was a Zionist. Others saw themselves as members of the Yugoslav nation. Zionism, nevertheless, managed to root itself in interwar Yugoslavia, but with some differences. For example in Zagreb (Croatia), Jewish meant rejection of the Croats of the Israelite faith, and, in Belgrade (Serbia), being a Zionist was not considered incompatible with being a Serbian patriot.¹⁰² The question of Jewish nationalism in interwar Yugoslavia shows that it is more difficult to assimilate in the ethnically diverse countries, such as Yugoslavia, where nationalism is accompanied with religious sentiments.¹⁰³ In Croatia in particular, most early Jewish settlers were Hungarian or German speaking merchants. Marrying non-Jewish members of society was one of the most important ways for achieving desired socio-economic status. Regardless of the fact that there were no Orthodox Jewish communities, and regardless of the fact that many Jews in Croatia did not go to synagogue, Jews were able to retain their identity mainly because many laws in the Habsburg Monarchy and Austria Hungary later kept them away from full inclusion into social life.¹⁰⁴

Jewish women played an important role in women's organizing in interwar Yugoslavia. They mostly participated in charitable activities; in 1924 in the congress in Belgrade, as many as 24 women's clubs organized in the Association of Jewish Women's Societies (AJWS). These women were organized around cultural, educational, and

¹⁰² Ibid, 21. Some other historians disagree and argue that, in Yugoslavia in general, Jewish identity was accompanied by either Croatian or Serbian patriotism. See Djokic, *Elusive Compromise*.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 27.

¹⁰⁴ See Melita Švob, *Židovi u Hrvatskoj: Migracije i promjene u židovskoj populaciji* [*Jews in Croatia: Migrations and Changes in Jewish Population*], (Zagreb: D-Graff, 1997).

charitable activities, and, in 1934, there were as many as 40 clubs throughout the Kingdom of Yugoslavia who were members of AJWS. In Zagreb, the Organization of Zionist Women (WIZO) was organized in 1928. By 1940, this organization had members from 67 local groups and approximately 5,000 members who organized predominantly around Zionist activities rather than causes that pertained to the welfare of women and children.¹⁰⁵ This example shows that even minority women in interwar Yugoslavia found women's organizing as one of the most important features of building a democratic society. In the next section, I will briefly address the status of women, particularly the legal position of women in interwar Yugoslavia, and patterns of women's organizing.

2.2. Women's History and Gender History in Yugoslavia: Legal Position of Women in Interwar Yugoslavia

Women in interwar Yugoslavia were in many ways unequal to men. Unlike some other Eastern European countries in the interwar era, the women of Yugoslavia were excluded from political and even legal life. For example, women were not allowed to be judges, but discriminatory treatment also existed on the levels of the civil society and economy. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, founded December 1, 1918, was a country of incredible geographic, historical, and ethnic diversity. Countries of the former Habsburg Monarchy, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (under the Ottoman rule between 1463 and 1878),¹⁰⁶ the independent states after the Berlin Congress in 1878, Montenegro and the Kingdom of Serbia with Macedonia, a part of the Kingdom of

¹⁰⁵ See Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: A Quest for Community*, 123-125, especially for more on the history of Jewish women in Yugoslavia.

¹⁰⁶ After the Berlin Congress, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a part of Austria-Hungary.

Serbia after the First Balkan War in 1912,¹⁰⁷ all became a part of the new state. Different historical developments and cultural heritages influenced the lives of women. Women living in different geographical areas of the new state were experiencing significantly different legal, social, economic, and cultural conditions. Until the Vidovdan Constitution in 1921, this new state did not have common laws. Even after the Constitution, civil laws in this country were not unified. The laws, which had governed civil society from the Nineteenth Century, partly reflected feudal relations toward women's rights. The legal position of women in this new state was, therefore, extremely complicated, which made emancipatory processes extremely difficult.

As previously mentioned, Yugoslavia had six different legal systems. These systems differently regulated the lives and rights of women.¹⁰⁸ Most of the regulations on women's lives were subsumed in marriage laws. The best discussion on these marriage laws in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia remains Bertold Eisner's 1935 book, *Bra no pravo Kraljevine Jugoslavije (Marriage Law in Kingdom of Yugoslavia)*. He established that marriage laws throughout the European continent always reflected cultural, religious, and ethnic understandings of marriage. Understanding laws in Yugoslavia, because of ethnic and religious diversity as well as because of diverse

¹⁰⁷Macedonia was captured by the Ottoman Empire, just like Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the first half of the 15th Century, and was under its rule for another 500 years.

¹⁰⁸ For more discussion, see Eisner Bertold, *Medjunarodno, medjupokrajinsko (interlokalno) i meduvjersko bracno pravo Kraljevine Jugoslavije [International and Inter-county and inter-religious Marriage Law of Kingdom of Yugoslavia]* (Zagreb: 1935), and Tomac Dragutin, *Ustav i bra no pravo* (Zagreb: 1925). Also see Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radni kom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama, 1918-1941*. Please not that there are some discrepancies in Kecman in considering the geographical areas and some dates for when the laws were installed in these areas. In regard to that, I followed the descriptions provided by Eisner, because he was using primary documents.

political histories and legal systems, presents a complicated task. Many competing regulations existed among the civil and religious courts, as well as among the religious courts themselves. For example in Slovenia and Dalmatia and parts of Istria, Austrian Civil Law (*Allgemeine Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) from 1811 and additions to this Law from 1868, made when Austria had become a constitutional monarchy, as well as changes to the Law made in 1914, 1915, and 1916, regulated the lives of women in this part of the Kingdom.¹⁰⁹ In the areas of the former Croatia and Slavonia (with the new state of Croatia made up of the former Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and parts of Istria), the Czarist Patent from November 1852 installed Austrian Civil Law to Croatia and Slavonia. With this Patent, members of the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Orthodox religions were to follow the regulations of the religious courts as they pertained to marriage, rather than civil law. Although this changed in Austria and in the Austrian parts of the Empire with the changes in 1868, in Croatia and Slavonia, the laws of the Czarist Patent of 1852 remained the same.

In Croatia and Slavonia with the law from April 27, 1916, in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia (as a part of Austria-Hungary), Islam was recognized as a religion in its full right. Until 1929, with the Law on Sharia Courts and with the Law in 1930 about the Islamic religious community, Austrian Civil Law was applied on the marriages of Muslims in Croatia and Slavonia. After these new laws, Sharia law became the Law that regulated Islamic marriages in the whole Kingdom of Yugoslavia.¹¹⁰ With the initial 1811 Law, women were not equal to men, especially in marriage and family. Women

¹⁰⁹ Eisner, 5-6, and Kecman, 58.

¹¹⁰ Eisner, 11-12.

could not be the sole caretakers of their children and could not be witnesses in last will testimonies. However, with the aforementioned changes, some more-modern regulations were incorporated into the 1811 Civil Law. Women did not need permission from their husbands for their legal affairs. They could be caretakers of their children and of people who were legally incapacitated.

In Serbia and Macedonia, Serbian Civil Law from 1844 regulated the lives of women in ways that were considered more backward in comparison to other parts of the Kingdom. In legal affairs, married men would represent married women because women were relegated to the same legal position as minors and mentally disabled persons. In other words, they were not considered responsible for their own decisions. Women could not be caretakers of their own children, could not inherit property, and male children had the advantage over female children in inheritance and other family and civil rights. In the counties of Vojvodina (northern part of Serbia) and Me imurje (northern part of Croatia), Hungarian Civil Law governed the lives of women. Women did have working rights, but in their families, they were the property of their husbands or fathers. They could not be sole caretakers of their children, but there were no differences made between rights of female and male children. Widows could inherit a part of their husbands' property. Furthermore, besides obligatory religious marriage ceremonies, civil marriages were acceptable. This law for all religious groups was available since 1894, and it equalized the rights of underage women who got married with the rights that adult women enjoyed.

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¹¹¹ Ibid; and Kecman, 60.

In Montenegro, there were no specific laws to regulate women's rights. The General Law on Ownership Rights from 1888 was used to regulate family and inheritance laws. Unmarried, divorced, and widowed women could work, take care of their children, and represent themselves in legal matters. Married women, on the other hand, did not enjoy this freedom. In front of the law, they were represented by their husbands.¹¹²

Finally, ethnic and religious diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina produced an array of regulations regarding the lives of women. Besides the Turkish Civil Law "Medzela," dating from the 13th Century, Austrian Civil Law from 1811 without additions from 1914, 1915, and 1916 regulated the lives of the non-Muslim population. Lives of Muslim women were regulated by the Sharia Islamic Law for the more than half million Muslim women who had lived in Yugoslavia in the interwar years. Although, in principle, women had rights to represent themselves in front of the law and to accumulate property, this was not true in practice because women were veiled and were not present in public spaces. Husbands would decide where women should live, at what circumstances they would be allowed to go outside of the house, and, if a husband determined that his wife deserved punishment, he could use disciplinary and corporal punishments.¹¹³

In relation to international marriage law, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did not develop a common law as did Poland, so the situation stayed equally complicated as

¹¹² Kecman, 59.

¹¹³ Ibid; For more discussion on the Sharia law as historically practiced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Eisner, 21-22, Eisner Bertold, *Šerijatsko pravo i naš jedinstveni građanski zakonik*, *Pravosudje*, 6, 1-16, 1936, and Begović Mehmed, *Šerijatsko brašno pravo* (Belgrade, 1936).

internal marriage law regulations. Only in Vojvodina, with the Hungarian Civil Law from 1894 (article XXXI) did regulations comply with the international marriage law.¹¹⁴

What was common to the whole Yugoslav territory was that religious marriage laws had primacy over civil marriage laws, except in Vojvodina. Because these religious communities were more-or-less closed, the complicated law system generated not only gender inequality but also religious misunderstandings.¹¹⁵

In criminal law, women had an equal position with men. Although still not very well developed, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did in some ways have very advanced protective working laws that pertained to women, but only for women who were employed in hard industry and mining, and not women employed in services, the agrarian industry, and the housekeeping industry.¹¹⁶ But, regardless of the word of the law, because of the conditions of the constant rise of unemployment in interwar Yugoslavia, few women used their guaranteed rights, and few women actually spoke against unlawful practices of the employers in fear of losing their employment.¹¹⁷

The problem of unemployment was often solved by gendered laws that discriminated against women. *Doma e ognjište* (1902-1914), the professional magazine for women teachers published in Croatia, initiated a public discussion in 1913 about the

¹¹⁴ For more detailed discussion, see Eisner, 40-79.

¹¹⁵ Kecman, 60.

¹¹⁶ For example, Kecman states that women in hard industry and mining were exempt from night work and from work 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after giving birth. Women had a right to social compensation for these days. These laws regulated the duty of the employer to provide child care for women workers and to allow women to nurse their children for 15 to 30 minutes every 4-5 hours, 60.

¹¹⁷ Kecman, 61.

1888 Austria-Hungary law that had installed celibacy for women teachers. This law still regulated employment practices of women teachers in interwar Yugoslavia until the 1929 Law on regulation of public education. However in 1937, an amendment that suggested that all women teachers who entered marriage would be released from their position as teachers evoked the 1888 Austria-Hungary law. Although numerous women's organizations protested, this law was passed, and a similar resolution was entered into the Financial Law of Yugoslavia.¹¹⁸

Disadvantaged by many different laws that were practiced in interwar Yugoslavia, and aware of their unequal rights in front of the law, Yugoslavian women organized in *Alijansa ženskih pokreta u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* (*Alliance of Women's Movements in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia*). This organization was founded in February 1937, and, on the first plenary meeting, the document "Statut žene" ("Statute of a Woman") was produced in cooperation with two other women's organizations, *Jugoslavenski ženski savez* (*Yugoslav Women's Union*) and *Udruženje univerzitetski obrazovanih žena* (*Association of the University Educated Women*). This document was sent to the *International Feminist Alliance* in Zurich, and it explicated the position of women in Yugoslavia and the need for Yugoslavian women to be placed in an equal position with men in front of political and civil laws.

The same *Alliance of Women's Movements in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* in January 1938 developed a "Memorandum" with specific changes to the laws that discriminated against Yugoslavian women for all the people's representatives and senators of Yugoslavia, as well as with the proposition for unified civil law.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Unfortunately, discussions were stopped due to the outbreak of World War II, and interwar Yugoslavia never managed to vote for a unified civil code that would potentially change the diverse and difficult position of women in that state.¹¹⁹

2.2.1. Women and Women's Organizing in Yugoslavia

According to the census of 1921, there were 6,380,102 women out of the total of 12,545,000 inhabitants of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, according to the second census in 1931, there were 14,534,000 inhabitants, among which 7,335,044 were women. Anecdotal evidence exists that the number of people in 1941 at the outbreak of World War II in Yugoslavia was close to 15 million, including about 7 million women. The first census after the war in 1948 shows 15,841,566 million inhabitants in the new Yugoslavia, with 7,615,023 women. There were vast differences in population between the territories within Yugoslavia. For example in 1921, the total population of Serbia was 4,819,430, with 2,480,082 women; and, in Croatia, the total population was 3,427,268, with 1,747,491 women. In Montenegro, the total population was 311,341, with 156,040 women; and, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the total population was 1,890,440, with 924,231 women. In Slovenia, the total population was 1,287,797, with 665,002 women; and, in Macedonia, the total population was 808,724, with 407,256 women.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Kecman, 62-63.

¹²⁰ Data from the Savezni zavod za statistiku, "Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1918-1988 [Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia] (ISKRO "Savremena administracija" and OOUR "Savremena izdanja Beograd: Februar, 1989).

In the predominantly agrarian Yugoslavian society, according to statistics from 1935, women made up almost all of the working force on the farms.¹²¹ The lives of peasant women were quite difficult. In addition to taking care of the farms, they also took care of their homes and families. Most of them were illiterate. According to Kecman, in 1921 there were 4,407,352 illiterate women in Yugoslavia, from among a total of 8,507,979 illiterate people. In 1931, there were 9,882,547 illiterate people, with 5,053,808 illiterate women. This means that in 1921 there was a total of 48% of literate people out of which 59% were men and 38% were women. There was a total of 61% illiterate women. Ten year later in 1931, there was a total of 56% illiterate women. There were huge differences in literacy among the territories within the state. For example, there were 94.2% literate women in Slovenia in 1931, but only 27% in Montenegro.¹²²

In 1921, there was a total of 30.2% of employed women in Yugoslavia, but most of them were again employed in the northern territories, in particular Slovenia.¹²³ Most of the women were young, coming from the countryside to cities to find work, mostly in the textile industry, clothing industry, and food industry. According to the Law for Protection of Workers from February 1922, children under the age of 14 could not be employed; however, statistics from 1924 and 1926 show that employers did exploit children younger than 14 years old. For example, 13-year-old girls worked on hard jobs

¹²¹ Lovrenovi Stjepan, *Ekonomska politika Jugoslavije [Economic Politics of Yugoslavia]* (Sarajevo: 1960), 26.

¹²² Kecman. 24-25.

¹²³ Ibid.

in the production of bricks.¹²⁴ The exploitation of girls and women was particularly evident when it came to monetary compensation for their work. Women's compensation was between 45-75% of the monetary compensation that men would earn for the same work.

After the king proclaimed a dictatorship in January 1929, and in the midst of the economic depression that affected the Yugoslavian economy as well, women in the textile industry in Zagreb (Croatia) couldn't even earn enough to cover essential boarding expenses.¹²⁵ Due to these difficult conditions, many women after the formation of the new state joined syndicate organizations and the workers movement that was being led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which worked underground after the 1920 Obznana, Government's decree, which narrowed political participation of citizens in fear of a Communist uprising in Yugoslavia.¹²⁶

After World War I, Yugoslavian women, as in other countries, ventured to form organizations that would protect their civil rights and allow for universal suffrage. Church and clerical organizations in Yugoslavia held a strong influence on women through education and the press. The clerical press in interwar Yugoslavia was a strong enterprise. In the years 1928-1929, the clerical press published five women's magazines and 15 other religious magazines, with their aim to be distributed among women.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Ibid, 29.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 49.

¹²⁶ For more on the women's organization for syndicate and Communist causes, see Kecman.

¹²⁷ Kecman, 162-163.

The first women's organizations in Yugoslavia were in the late Nineteenth Century, although there is some evidence of earlier attempts. In September 1919 in Belgrade, the First Congress of representatives of the women's organizations throughout the country met to discuss a common agenda. In this Congress, women founded *People's Women's Union of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. This Union changed its name to *Yugoslav Women's Union* in 1929, and many women's organizations that had been formed between 1919 and 1929 became joined members of the Union.¹²⁸ Already by the end of 1921, there were 250 organizations and more than 50,000 members in this national alliance of women.

Yugoslavian society, much like other Eastern European societies of the period, was driven by nationalistic discourses. Women in the early 1920s felt the buoyancy to explore the possibilities for the recognition of the equality of sexes in the newly emerging society. Yet, even during the first meeting, representatives of Croatia's largest women's organization, *Croatian Woman*, complained about the hegemonic discourse of the Serbian women. The organization became YWU (Yugoslav Women's Union), and, although it had gained large support, not all women's organizations joined. Those organizations that eventually did join were divided on issues and goals. In Serbia, many women's organizations were very traditional, conservative, and anti-modernist. Modern woman was seen as deteriorating the essential women's task in society. Most women supported traditional views because the preservation of the nation and the Serbian culture

¹²⁸ Kecman, 167. One of the important ones was the Slovenian Women's Charitable Association, which published the magazine *Women's World* in 15,000 copies. See also Carol S. Lilly and Melissa Bokovoy, "Serbia, Croatia and Yugoslavia" in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe 1919-45*, ed., Kevin Passmore (Manchester University Press, 2003), 91-111.

was one of the roles that women could argue for without making ruptures in societal norms.

Other women joined organizations that were not nationalistic, although they were national.¹²⁹ In Croatia, women's issues were predominantly expressed through the largest women's organization in the interwar period, Croatian Woman. Accordingly, as the name of the organization suggests, the Croatian national question dominated these women's discourses. Promotion of cultural activities was central to the organization's work. Although women who were organized in Croatian Woman were mostly middle-class, educated, professional women, unlike Polish or Czech feminists, these women reached for inclusion of peasant women.¹³⁰ Two dominant political parties in Croatia in the interwar period, the Croatian Peasant Party and the Communist party, reached for the inclusion of peasant women in the debates around the women's question.¹³¹ Although some of their claims for improvement of peasant women's lives were genuine, fear of feminism's possibly growing political power precluded leaders of both parties to benefit women's lives in general.

Differences between urban women and peasant women, as well as ethnic differences, were retrograde factors in the development of a unified feminist movement in Yugoslavia. Other causes were disagreements about whether women should first push for universal suffrage or focus first on social problems, hoping that this would be a ticket

¹²⁹ Ibid. See also Kecman.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Mary E. Reed, "Peasant Women of Croatia in the Interwar Years", in *State and Party in Eastern Europe*, ed., Sharon L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Meyer (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 98-115.

for women's entry into equal citizenship. The National Women's Alliance advocated the slower road and for work on social problems, such as a single moral code for women and men and a war against prostitution and alcohol.¹³²

One of the biggest pushes in the other direction came from the Society for the Enlightenment of Woman and the Defense of Her Rights, founded in April 1919 in Belgrade and September 1919 in Sarajevo. This feminist organization published the already-mentioned journal *Ženski pokret (Women's Movement)*, which would eventually give name to the organization itself. The goal of this organization was universal suffrage and the elimination of the retrograde laws in the Serbian Civil Code that did not recognize women as individuals. As was previously discussed, the Serbian Civil Code from 1844 was the most retrograde of the six different civil laws that regulated the lives of women in Yugoslavia. It is not surprising, then, that the strongest feminist voices came from Serbian society and from Serbian women. *Ženski pokret* was a middle-class organization, but the journal it published opened up pages for feminists throughout the Kingdom as well as some Communist women who openly expressed their opinions on the status of the women.¹³³ The movement also had a multi-ethnic outlook, and many discussions concerned the status and lives of Muslim women.

The movement since 1925 had encouraged the political participation of women, and many politicians in the country were invited to speak at the meetings about gender equality and the role of women in society. Although many politicians were willing to support women's emancipation rights during the meetings, these ideas did not transfer to

¹³² Emmert, 36.

¹³³ *Ibid.* 41. See also Kecman.

parliamentary discussions; neither were politicians willing to support women's suffrage, believing that this move would be too revolutionary for Yugoslav women.¹³⁴

Even though there were constant ethnic tensions among the women of Yugoslavia as a reflection of the larger political framework, there were constant attempts to build inter-Yugoslavian alliances of women and to venture out to Eastern European sisters and to the larger international family of feminists. In September 1923 in Ljubljana, three large organizations, *Associations of Yugoslav Women* from Zagreb, *Splošno Žensko Društvo* from Ljubljana, and *Ženski Pokret* from Belgrade and Sarajevo, formed the *Alliance of Feminist Societies on the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. The Alliance was affiliated with *the International Alliance for Women's Right to Vote*, and they participated in the formation of the *Women's Little Entente*, a regional Eastern European women's organization.¹³⁵ The first meeting of the *Women's Little Entente* was held in Bucharest in 1923, and the second meeting was in Belgrade in 1924. The main goals were to achieve political rights for women in the countries of the Little Entente (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania), and those who joined the organization were Bulgaria, Greece, and Poland.¹³⁶ The third meeting was held in Athens in 1925, and women of the organization met again in the Conference for Voting Rights of Women held in Prague in 1927. After the fifth conference in Warsaw, Poland, it was clear that the organization did not manage to accomplish much of its ambitious project.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Ibid, 44.

¹³⁵ Emmert, 48. See also Kecman.

¹³⁶ Kecman, 190.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 192.

After the Vidovdan Constitution in 1921, one group of women who did not agree with the strategies of women in *Ženski pokret* organized into the *Women's Party*, the first women's political organization. Although the initial program of the party was to fight for consciousness-raising in women for engagement in social and political life, the members of the party did not manage to win much support, and, in 1928, this organization ceased to exist. The dictatorship of 1929 and the economic crisis made the organization of women more difficult, but large organizations in the pre-dictatorial Kingdom still managed to keep their membership and organize meetings, although they were increasingly quieter on the demands for the political equality of women.¹³⁸ In Dubrovnik (Croatia) in 1936, Yugoslavian women organized the Congress of *International Women's Union*. There were 400 delegates from 30 countries representing more than 40 million women in the world. Representatives of the *Yugoslav Women's Union* for the first time voiced their discontent with the representatives from the industrially powerful Western countries who, in their opinion, did not show enough understanding for women in less-developed countries. Similar sentiments were expressed in the next meeting of the Congress in Edinburgh in 1938, where women celebrated the 50th anniversary of the *International Women's Union*¹³⁹

The whole of post-World War I Europe shared similar interwar experiences; women of Yugoslavia tried to find a common language to fight the heritage of patriarchy, as numerous attempts to join in alliances show. Yet, none of these attempts resulted in any concrete results that would actually better the lives of women. The struggle for

¹³⁸ Ibid, 281.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 269-270.

women's emancipation is a "long revolution," to borrow the term from Raymond Williams, and two decades between the two World Wars served only as the prelude for hope in women's emancipation, interrupted by the beginning of World War II. The interwar years were a historical experiment in themselves, in which different identities were tested and retested again and again. Governments tested their democratic potentials and often ended with autocratic societies, and individuals tested their own potentials to transgress boundaries of identities and often ended up in racial and national hatred. The previous discussion also showed that the women's press played a large role in popularizing ideas about women's emancipation. There is evidence to suggest that the women's press had a tendency to reinforce traditional gender roles, but that the new emerging press in interwar Yugoslavia showed real potential for transgression of these patriarchal discourses.

2.2.2. Overview of the Croatian Women in the Croatian Modernizing Processes

The rising awareness of the processes for national integration dating from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century and the modernization processes with the need to build modern civil society from the second half of the Nineteenth Century in Austria-Hungary carried through all parts of the Empire. The parts of the Empire, later Croatia in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was a mostly agrarian society, and it had a small middle class that carried the ideology of the civil and nationally integrated Croatian state.¹⁴⁰ The process of transformation of the Croatian society into a modern society was

¹⁴⁰ On the development and the rise of Croatian middle-class, see Mirjana Gross and Agneza Szabo, *Prema hrvatskome građanskom društvu [Towards the Croatian Civil Society]*

not without difficulties. In the second part of the Nineteenth Century, and until 1903, the repressive rule of the Hungarian Ban Khuen Herdervary did not stop these processes, but it slowed them down. This small, yet unified, educated Croatian elite that was organized around national and civic ideas carried out most of the modernization in spite of the difficulties.¹⁴¹ The modernization processes in Croatia meant mostly changes in the modernizing processes of social structures and the rising awareness of national identity and common cultural values in Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and parts of Istria. This modernization, unlike in some other Western European countries, but also some Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, was not accompanied with an “industrial revolution” or industrial developmental processes. For example in Austria and in Czechoslovakia, industrialization was finished before the beginning of World War I. About half of the population in these areas was employed in industry.¹⁴²

Were women a part of these modernizing processes? Just recently, historians are filling in the gaps of historical inquiry about the role that women played in the

(Globus: Zagreb, 1992). See also Gross Mirjana, “O društvenim procesima u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj u drugoj polovici 19. stoljeća” in *Društveni razvoj u Hrvatskoj od 16. stoljeća do početka 20. stoljeća* ed. Mirjana Gross (Liber: Zagreb, 1981): 343-373 [“On Social Processes in the Northern Croatia in the Second Half of the 19th Century” in *Social Development in Croatia from 16th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century*], and Gross Mirjana, *Počeci moderne Hrvatske: Neoposlutizam u civilnoj Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1850-1860* [Beginnings of the Modern Croatia: Neoposlutism in Civil Croatia and Slavonia 1850-1860] (Globus: Zagreb, 1985).

¹⁴¹ Mirjana Gross, *Društveni razvoj u Hrvatskoj od 16. stoljeća do početka 20. stoljeća*, 345.

¹⁴² Ibid, 345-347, and Katherine Verdery and Ivo Banac, eds., *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995).

modernization and industrialization of the Croatian society.¹⁴³ For example, Vlatka Filip i Maligec, in her study “*Žensko lice preporoda*” (“*Female Face of the Revival*”), writes about numerous women who were a part of the Croatian national revival (Illyrian revival) of the Nineteenth Century through their patriotic poetry, education efforts, and even public engagement. The most well-known evidence that women were recognized as an essential part of the national revival by the men of the national revival is the document, *Ein Wort and Ilriens hochherzige Töchter* (*Word on Illyrian Magnanimous Daughters*), written in 1838 by the Count Janko Draskovi i (1770-1856), one of the most educated people of his time; in this document, he addresses the Germanization of Croatian women as the foremost difficulty in carrying out the complete national revival of the Croatian people, paradoxically by addressing them in German.¹⁴⁴ Members of the Croatian revival movement considered German and Hungarian imperialistic languages as one of the biggest of obstacles for building a unified Croatian nation. Linguist Ljudevit Gaj, one of the main leaders of the movement in 1830, printed the most essential work in building a unified Croatian language in the Latin script, *Kratka osnova horvatsko-slavenskog pravopisanja* (*Brief Basics of the Croatian-Slavonic Orthography*), which set the standard for the future Croatian language. Meghan Hays, in her article “Valjane majke i blage k eri,” argues that Croatian women were among the first to embrace the

¹⁴³ See, for example, Andrea Feldman, “Posljednjih tisu u godina: Povijest žena-ženska povijest,” *OTIUM*, 7-8, (1999-2000), 30-37 [The Last Thousand Years: History of Women: Women’s History], and Natalija Rumenjak, Povijest žena u Hrvatskoj historiografiji, *OTIUM*, 7-8, (1999-2000), 27-29. [History of Women in Croatian Historiography].

¹⁴⁴ See Vlatka Maligec Filip i , “Žensko lice Preporoda”, *OTIUM* 7-8, (1999-2000): 56-65, and Meghan Hays, “Valjane majke i “blage k eri.” Odgoj i izobrazba žena u nacionalnom duhu u Hrvatskoj 19. stoljeca,” *OTIUM*, 4 vol. 1-2 (1996), 85-95. [Fine Mothers and Tender Daughters: Upbringing and Education of Women in National Spirit in Croatia in 19th Century].

Croatian language in literature and education. She reconstructs the work of the two women: a writer, Dragojla Jarnjević,¹⁴⁵ and educator Marija Jambrišak,¹⁴⁶ who built the path for educating Croatian women in the national spirit.

Education was early discovered as a system of the “construction and production of desirable identities.”¹⁴⁷ Gendered constructions of male and female roles and of male and female identities were first developed by educators, anthropologists, physicians, and psychologists in textbooks and school newspapers.¹⁴⁸ In the Nineteenth Century, Croatian middle- and upper-middle-class women were relegated to the married and “marry” family life. Peasant women and lower-class women, although forced to work outside of the house for economic reasons, were nevertheless relegated to the will of their husbands in family life. Men were still considered the primary bread winners. Middle- and upper-middle-class women did not have their own income, and the educational system was supposed to breed generations of good wives, housewives, and devoted mothers.

¹⁴⁵ Dragojla Jarnjević (1812-1875) is considered to be the first woman writer in Croatia. I have already mentioned her name in the discussion of the Germanization of Croatian women in the section on women’s magazines. Although she was determined to write in Croatian (she wrote romantic poems and short stories with a patriotic angle), she admits in her diary from 1938 that she couldn’t even think in Croatian, much less write. For details, see Izmić-Horvat, 104, and Hays, 86.

¹⁴⁶ Marija Jambrišak was one of the two first editors of *Doma e ognjište*, the second editor was Jagoda Truhelka.

¹⁴⁷ Dinko Župan, “Uzor djevojke”: obrazovanje žena u Banskoj Hrvatskoj tijekom druge polovine 19 st.” *časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 33 vol. 2. (2001), 435-452., 435 [Model Girls: Education of Women in Banska Croatia During the Second Part of the 19th Century].

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 436.

The construction of the female identity was closely related to body politics, and those bodies from the earliest educational institutions in Croatia were connected to the building of national identity.¹⁴⁹ It is not surprising, then, that the first educational opportunities for girls and women were opened within the institution of the Church. Just to mention some, during the time of Maria Theresa, an Austrian Empress of the late 18th Century and a great reformer, the first school for girls opened in Varaždin, Croatia, with the Ursulan Sisters. In 1846, the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb had already opened its third school in Croatia. In 161 public schools of Croatia and Slavonia for the years of 1841-1842, there were 6,558 boys and 3,114 girls. In 1807, the first public schools for girls were opened during the Napoleon time¹⁵⁰ in Dalmatia. Although it seems that there were plenty of opportunities for female education, the statistics from the second part of the Nineteenth Century show that, in total, only 10% of all children went to school and only one-third of this number were girls.¹⁵¹ There were significant class differences in education of women in the Croatia at that time. The first higher civil schools¹⁵² for girls in Croatia in the late Nineteenth Century were opened in Zagreb (the Capital) in 1868 and Varaždin in 1874. Ursulan Sisters' school in Varaždin in 1872 opened to the public. Up until 1868, girls whose parents allowed them to continue their education after the first

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 439.

¹⁵⁰ Napoleon took over the Dalmatian provinces shortly after the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1795. In 1805, Dalmatia was already a part of the Kingdom of Italy under the French influence, but, in 1809, Dalmatia became a part of the Illyrian Provinces that were annexed to France. After the defeat of Napoleon and at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Dalmatia became the Kingdom of Dalmatia, a province of the Austrian Emperor Francis I.

¹⁵¹ Maglinec Filip i , 61.

¹⁵² Equivalent to today's elementary education.

four years of public education could continue in the higher school for girls with the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb. In the next several years, so-called civil higher schools for girls were opened throughout Slavonia as well. Girls could not attend gymnasiums,¹⁵³ and they could attend schools for teachers in Zagreb or Đakovo. After 1884, the only teachers' school was the one with the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb.¹⁵⁴ The religious upbringing of girls, accompanied with other behavioral qualities such as shyness, quietness, virility, and virginity, were enforced, not only in religious schools, but also in public schools. School authorities in 1877 authorized a regulation that forbade physical education for women in schools. This was supposed to be replaced by dancing classes, but, one year later, public dancing for school girls was forbidden as well. Sexuality of women was suppressed by different regulations regarding sexual and physical activities. Masturbation was considered the most dangerous of all diseases,¹⁵⁵ and schools were the foremost agitators of the gendered sexual politics of the time. In principle, women of that time could be actresses and singers, caretakers, midwives, and housekeepers, and, although there were rare incidents in which women would take on unusual jobs such as the case of a woman courier in the mid-Nineteenth Century Croatia who distributed results of the lottery from Graz and Vienna throughout parts of Slovenia and Northern Croatia,¹⁵⁶ women were relegated to the narrow world of the quiet life in the safety of the family. Public participation and economic independence of women were in actuality

¹⁵³ Equivalent to today's secondary education.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 440-441.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 447.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 62.

rare incidents. One such example of upper-class women, Baroness Vilhelmina Kulmer, who opened a glazer's shop in the small town of Samobor, near the capital, created public interest, and it was not sure whether she would be allowed to do so, just for her class position, but but also her political connections.¹⁵⁷

The beginning of the Twentieth Century brought to the political fore two other political ideologies, mainly those of Liberalism, Socialism and Yugoslavism. Those ideologies would shape the future development of Croatia significantly, influence the lives of women, and influence the ways in which women of Croatia organized.

2.3. The Rationale for the Study of Women's Magazines in Central-Eastern European Countries

With the rise of the middle class at the end of the Nineteenth Century, together with the early democratization of education and the rise in literacy, women's magazines became a means of popular mass culture.¹⁵⁸ The late Nineteenth Century and the turn of the century signaled a revolution in the publishing industry for women's magazines. The revolution was not so much in the content of the magazines, but in their circulation, price, and promotional techniques. Advertising in women's magazines became prominent partly because these magazines had achieved the largest circulations before general-interest journals or mass-market journals.¹⁵⁹ Hence, we should allow for an examination of the

¹⁵⁷ She was the sister-in-law of the already-mentioned Count Janko Draskoic, one of the most influential men of that time. Her glazer's shop could not compete with the foreign competition, and it was closed in 1847. See Filip i Maligec, 62.

¹⁵⁸ See Cynthia White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968*, and Brian Braithwaite, *Women's Magazines: the First 300 Years*.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Ellen Zuckerman-Waller "Women's Magazines," 716-718.

history of women's magazines as a part of the larger construction of the so-called popular culture. Only then does this history become less linear, less class- and even less sex-segregated. Early popular periodicals were addressed to the mixture of classes and to women and men, even though the upper-class elite was initially a part of the popular periodical audience. Readers of popular periodicals were not a part of that dominant class. Besides, this very popular periodical called a women's magazine established the notion of "women as different in kind rather than degree from men, possessing in the household a 'separate but equal' area of activity and authority" that became an instrument in articulating conceptions of gender relations, establishing itself as one of the principal linguistic sites for the production of a new ideology of femininity and the family.¹⁶⁰

Popular women's magazines, then, are a powerful form of print culture and print journalism with the ability to both construct and shape economic and gender relations in society. For this reason, if not for any other reason, the examination of women's magazines should be a principal focus of those mass communication historians who want to understand how the popular shapes the political and how the political shapes the popular. Besides, the popular press as a cultural site was also used as a form of resistance to prevalent social beliefs, sexual mores, and gender norms. Women's magazines are, indeed, feminized spaces that can "challenge oppressive and repressive models of the feminine" and be a source of power for women who wish to "challenge potential mismatch between 'femininity' and historical women."¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 3.

¹⁶¹ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity, and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 3.

For years now, mass communication historians have been making significant contributions to the examination of the women's press and the popular women's press, especially in the United States and in Britain. However, there is little knowledge of the history of the popular women's press and their roles in the larger historiographies of the Central-Eastern European countries. Hence, in the following section, I will turn my discussion to the history of women's magazines in countries that formed the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats in 1918 and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as it was known from 1929 to the beginning of World War II, which is sometimes also referred to as the First Yugoslavia. For my discussion, I use some of the existing secondary literature on the topic, and I also will provide a discussion based on the results of the primary data that I have gathered in the archives of the National and University Library in Zagreb, Croatia (NSK).

2.3.1. Women's Magazines in Yugoslavian Countries: Against the Boundaries of the Historical Imagination

To write a history of women's writings, women's journalism, and women's magazines in the countries of the former Yugoslavia is an almost impossible task for any journalism historian. No comprehensive bibliography of women's magazines exists, and, in the existing partial bibliography that was published in 1991, it is hard to guess which one is a magazine for women unless it is clearly stated in the title.¹⁶² Classification is even more difficult, considering the fact that women's magazines are a generic construct for a host of different print categories such as: those that follow the life of women and

¹⁶² Marina Izmić-Horvat, "Ženski listovi u Hrvatskom novinarstvu," [Women's Magazines in Croatian Journalism] *Riječ [Word] 11* vol. 2 (2005), 101-107.

family, those that are written and edited by women, those that are targeted for women's entertainment and education, and those that are considered organs of the struggle for women's rights i.e., those that are more feminist in nature.¹⁶³

In Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, journalism historians have to resort to the realm of historical imagination to try to fill in the legacy of the intellectual history of women's writings and women's journalism. To this day, the most comprehensive work on the history of the women's press in Yugoslavia is the book by Serbian scholar Neda Todorovi -Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti (Women's Press and Culture of Femininity)*, published in 1987.

The first magazine for women in the territory of the former Yugoslavia was published in 1847 in Serbia, under the very condescending name *Ženski Vospitatelj (Women's Educator)*, several hundred years after the first such magazines in Western Europe. The editor and publisher of this magazine was a Croatian entrepreneur, Matija Ban, who sought to use the press to educate women on the ways to be a proper, cultured woman.¹⁶⁴ This first magazine had very similar characteristics to the first magazines from the West. It was published by a man who had wanted to educate women on how to be proper mothers, wives, and housekeepers. This educational and moralizing style survived only three editions.

¹⁶³ Many historians discuss this classification but mostly agree that all of these classifications fall under the category of women's magazines. See Marina izmi -Horvat, "Ženski listovi u Hrvatskom novinarstvu." 101, and Neda Todorovi -Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti*, 3. See also Neda Božinovi , *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX I XX veku [Woman's Question in Serbia in 19th and 20th Century]* (Devedesetčetvrt, Beograd 1996), 85.

¹⁶⁴ Neda Todorovi -Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti*, 49. and Neda Božinovi , *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX I XX veku*, 85.

Between 1860 and 1870, social changes were marked by the rise of educational opportunities for women. This period marks the rise of more-educated and -literate women, and a market for another magazine was soon opened. The first women's organization was also founded in this period. Katarina Milovuk, one of these newly educated women, decided to organize Serbian women in *Žensko društvo* (*Women's Society*). The goals of this organization were purely social and humanitarian. Immediately after the first women joined the organization in 1879, a magazine for its members was established under the name *Doma ica* (*Housewife*). Even though this magazine was an outgrowth of the women's organization, the style was equally moralizing and educational. Women were educated to be good wives and patriotic mothers, but critiques of the patriarchal social organization would emerge on occasion, and women were advised not to be completely complaisant to their husbands.¹⁶⁵ Two other magazines of similar character appeared in the same period. One, founded in 1882, was called *Srpkinja* (*Serbian Woman*), and another, founded in 1885, was called *Ženski svet* (*Women's World*). These magazines hosted topics on hygiene and health as well as more philosophical discussions on the place of women in the world, but did not make significant moves toward more progressive questions of women's rights and women's independence.

The first magazine for women in Slovenia was founded in 1896 under the name *Slovenka* (*Slovenian Woman*), and, contrary to the Serbian experience, it was founded and edited by two educated and progressive women, Marica Nadlišek-Bartolova and Ivanka Anžic-Klemen i . This magazine in its beginning was more open to addressing

¹⁶⁵ Neda Božinovi , *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX I XX veku*, 86.

the political interests of women, but, as it reached its demise in 1902, it lost its initial, more progressive edge. Slovenian women after 1902 had to wait 21 years until they would get another magazine that targeted their interests in the Slovenian language. This magazine, which was titled *Ženski svet* (*Women's World*), was published between 1923 and 1928. In 1933, the first illegal Communist paper as a revolutionary herald for women, titled *Proleterka*, was published in Slovenia. This was a class-oriented magazine that was targeted strictly to Communist-conscious working women of Yugoslavia. One of the foremost reasons of the success of the Communist Party in Yugoslavia during World War II and afterward can be attributed to the early understanding of the social importance of the women's press and to recognizing its mobilizing potential. The Communist Party in Yugoslavia published other magazines for women. In Belgrade (Serbia) in 1938, a magazine titled *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*), in Zagreb (Croatia) *Ženski svijet* (*Women's World*), and in Ljubljana (Slovenia) in 1941 *Naša Žena* (*Our Woman*).¹⁶⁶

Most of the work on the history of women's magazines comes from Serbian academic research. In Croatia, little or no scholarly work exists on the history of women's magazines. In fact, the two most influential books on the history of Croatian journalism do not mention women's magazines at all, as though the women's press culture had never existed.¹⁶⁷ Some attempts have been made to establish the history of

¹⁶⁶ Jovanka Kecman, *Žene Jugoslavije u radni kom pokretu i ženskim organizacijama 1918-1941* [*Women of Yugoslavia in Worker's Movement and Women's Organizations 1918-1941*] (Beograd: Institut za savremenu historiju, 1978), 360-361.

¹⁶⁷ Two most influential books on Croatian press history, Bozidar Novak, *Hrvatsko novinarstvo u 20. stolje u*, [*Croatian Journalism in 20th Century*] (Zagreb: Golding Marketing-Tehni ka knjiga, 2005) and Josip Horvat, *Povijest novinstva Hrvatske 1771 – 1939* [*History of Croatian Press*] (Zagreb: Golden marketing - Tehni ka knjiga, 2003), make no reference to women's magazines or the press for women.

women's magazines, and most of the debate surrounds controversy about which magazine in Croatia was the first magazine for women. It is a common belief that the first magazine for women was *Ženski list*, first published in 1925.¹⁶⁸ However some recent research contests this argument and attempts to establish the magazine *Doma e Ognjište* (*Home Fires*), or more accurately *Na doma em ognjištu* (*On the Home Fires*), as the first magazine for women in Croatia.¹⁶⁹ This magazine was started by women teachers who were organized around the *Croatian Pedagogical and Literal Group*, as the organ of the *Organization of the Women Teachers in Croatia and Slavonia and the Section for our Children* in 1900.¹⁷⁰ This magazine ran under the title *Na doma em ognjištu* for two initial years (1900-1902) and afterward under the title *Doma e Ognjište* between 1902 and 1914. As an organ of this organization, it had a very narrow audience, and its goal was to keep a traditional role of women as mothers and protectors of homes. But the idea of “home fires” expressed in the title of the magazine had a double meaning. Teachers and first editors, Marija Jambrišak and Jagoda Truhelka as well as their successor Milka Poga i , also tried to raise the cultural consciousness of their women readers. In the last two years of publication, two editors, Zdenka Markovi i and Zora Verni i , also addressed

¹⁶⁸ Two early books on the work of the editor of *Ženski list* and the first woman journalist in Croatia talk about this magazine as the first magazine for women in Croatia. See Bora Đor evic, *Zagorka: Kroni ar Starog Zagreba* [*Zagorka: Chronic of Old Zagreb*] (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1965) and, Ivo Hergeši , *Marija Juri Zagorka*. Introduction to *Zagorka: Tajna Krvavog Mosta* [*Marija Juri Zagorka*. Introduction to *The Secret of the Bloody Bridge*] (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1979).

¹⁶⁹ Danja Kari -Šilovic, “Doma e ognjište – prvi ženski list u Hrvatskoj,” in *Žene u Hrvatskoj: ženska i kulturna povijest* [“Home Fires-first women's magazine in Croatia” in *Women in Croatia: Women's and Cultural History*] (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka: 2004), 181-191.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 181.

some more political issues, such as the issue of women's voting rights.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, the main goal was to persuade its readers that educated women were better suited for performing the social role of mothers as educators of the future generations.¹⁷²

In the fourteen years of its existence, this magazine, although edited by educated women, reinforced traditional roles of women in Croatian society, emphasizing the division of labor and a division based on feminine and masculine characteristics. Hence, this magazine helped to construct traditional views of femininity and masculinity and to emphasize a division between female and male spaces. Some more progressive articles did appear in 1913 during the public debate on celibacy for teachers. In 1888, Austria-Hungary voted for the new Law on Regulation of Education of Teachers that formally established celibacy for women teachers. This Law applied to Croatian territories, which were, at that time, a part of Austria-Hungary. The debate was especially intense before the outbreak of World War I, and *Doma e Ognjište* participated in the public debate to debunk government arguments for installing this law.¹⁷³ *Doma e Ognjište*, however, was not the first magazine for women in Croatia. To understand this debate, some scholars in Croatia consider only those magazines that were published in the Croatian language. Other scholars consider all magazines that have been published in Croatia, regardless of the language. In my research, I considered those magazines that were

¹⁷¹Slavica Jakobovi -Fribec, "Zazorno tijelo, feministi ki korpus, žensko pisanje, ginokritika i feminizam u Hrvatskoj," in *Kategori ki feminizam: Nužnost feminističke teorije i praxe* ["Objectionable Body, Feminist Corpus, Women's Writing, Gynocriticism and Feminism in Croatia] (Zagreb: Knjiga prva, 2007), 197-210.

¹⁷²Ibid, 182.

¹⁷³Ibid, 184-185.

published in the Croatian language, or in the Serbo-Croatian language, that were published for large audiences of women. Through archival research, I have concluded that the first such magazine for women was a fashion magazine called *Pariška moda, list za žensku i dje ju odje u i ženski ru ni rad* (*Parisian Fashion: Magazine for Women's and Children's Clothing and Women's Needlework*). The first issue of this magazine was published in 1885¹⁷⁴ in the publishing house *Kugli and Deutch*. The publisher was Albert Deutch, a Jewish-Croatian entrepreneur,¹⁷⁵ and the editor of the magazine was Draginja Savić, the former manager of the Women's Entrepreneurial School in Zagreb. In its first issue, the publisher opened with more than just a rationale for satisfying high fashion standards of Croatian ladies. The magazine started with a clear patriotic statement and established fashion-reading as an openly patriotic act:

Starting January 1st, 1895, we will publish our own edition of the fashion magazine *Pariška moda* in Croatian, with a special supplement on needlework twice a month in large format. *Pariška moda* is targeted to our women to encourage the fairer sex in Croatia, who love their mother tongue, to adhere to Croatian texts even in the area of fashion.¹⁷⁶

In the second issue, a more detailed explanation of the publishing intentions was spelled out. Editors added clearly anti-imperialistic and anti-globalization sentiments:

A pressing need and an unprecedented opportunity for the Croatian publishing industry inspired us to publish the fashion magazine [*Pariška moda*] in the Croatian language. The need for such magazine has become increasingly apparent by the day, as our patriotic Croatian women are eagerly taking up the

¹⁷⁴ My examination did not support the data published in Neda Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti*, 54, where she mentions that the first issue of this magazine was published in 1883.

¹⁷⁵ *Pariška moda*, 1885, No. 1, 1. All translations mine.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 1.

task of denouncing foreign-language fashion magazines, the only sources of advice, so far, on dress-making patterns for embroidery and needlework.

Throughout the Croatian lands, we are swamped by German and Italian fashion magazines for Croatian homes. As a result, even if involuntarily, our women use foreign words in everyday communication about dress-making and needlework. Our women, by doing so, omit our beloved Croatian speech. Today, it is difficult to communicate about matters of fashion, costume, and dress-making without using foreign words. Besides, by continuing in this wrong way, vast amounts of our money are poured into foreign sources, while one branch of our cultural advancement is, of course, stagnating. But we can put a stop to this evil. For this reason, we think we can satisfy all those who love their beloved mother tongue if we adhere to publishing a Croatian fashion magazine, especially with our highly skilled editorial staff.¹⁷⁷

Without doubt, foreign influences were dominant in Croatian lands during the Habsburg Monarchy and Austria-Hungary, and as American writer and feminist Adrienne Rich oftentimes emphasizes, language is that cultural artifact through which we voice our identity. I, myself, experienced the strength of the imperialism that was reflected in my grandmothers' language, although she, with eight years of education (in a time when most women had only four), did not have a vocation. My grandfather was a tailor, and, in the house, she assumed some of my grandfather's work while he was out hunting and spending time with his fellow hunters in the local bar, a well-known public arena that was not readily opened for women. In the early 1980's, my grandmother attempted to teach me knitting. In the system she used that was called right-wrong knitting, I got everything wrong and she soon gave up on me. However, the problem was not only in my lack of talent for knitting. In the teaching process, she used words that were unintelligible to me. Those were words that she had learned from her mother, and they were of German origin, such as *endlanje* for the Croatian word *obamitavanje* or, an

¹⁷⁷ *Pariška moda*, 1895, No. 2, 1.

English word, buttonhole stitch. The core of the idea of the first issues of *Pariška moda* was to replace such foreign words with Croatian words and to strengthen Croatian identity through women's usage of language. The skillful combination of commercial and patriotic appeals was not only targeted to women. Indeed, one of the main commercial-patriotic appeals was targeted to the men of the family:

No father of the family who wishes to have his home filled with the spirit of the real Croatian patriotism should lose this opportunity to subscribe to *Pariška moda* for his wife and older daughters. *Pariška moda* will provide everything in the field of fashion news that women get from foreign magazines, with the important difference that all this will now be provided in their beloved mother tongue.¹⁷⁸

It is clear that the intentions of the publishers were both commercial and political. The *fin-de-siècle* Croatian society and emerging capitalistic domestic entrepreneurship were suffocating, burdened by foreign imports. These imported publishing products, in the eyes of domestic publishers, were hindering both the Croatian publishing industry and Croatian culture. *Pariška moda* was, then, both a commercial endeavor and an anti-imperial project spanning from 1895 to 1938. Its content, regardless of the initial radical anti-imperialistic and patriotic statements, was purely devoted to elevating the fashion standards of Croatian women (See figures 1 and 2 below).

178 Ibid.



Figure 1. The cover page of the first issue of *Pariška moda*, January 1, 1895.



Figure 2. Fashion dresses in color.

Paradoxically, those standards were mostly imported from the West and were seldom home-produced. Even the title of the magazine, itself, speaks of the inescapable cultural and industrial influences that were dictated by the Western countries. This magazine, in its pages, did however bring many advertisements for Croatian fashion products, propagating domestic producers with “Buy Croatian”¹⁷⁹ ideology to protect domestic production. Some of these advertisements were quite symbolic in the spirit of the *fin-de-siècle* New Woman, such as one for the Croatian factory “*J. Job and Son*” of sun umbrellas and other umbrellas for the male and female members of the higher-middle class of the Croatian Society (See figures 3 and 4 below).

¹⁷⁹ Construct again used in the 1990s and in present-day Croatia to protect genuine Croatian products and boost domestic industrial production.

Englezki Magazin
Ilica 41. ZAGREB, Ilica 41.

Nigdje se tako dobro i jeftino ne kupuje
Englezka odijela za gopodu i dječake
Stalne cijene.
Novosti za gospodje.

Za gospodje:		Za gopodu:
okovana jaka s tipom pok- riva fr. 8.-		Frak odijelo fr. 22.-
Suknena jaka s vretenom podiznom fr. 12.-		Sukneno odijelo fr. 22.-
Ovratnik (krag) fr. 12.-		Kaput i prskica od tkan- jine fr. 18.-
Kabanica odijelom od juna fr. 18.-		Kaput i prskica od tkan- jine fr. 18.-
Kabanica s mlač. od juna fr. 18.-		Sukneno klobučje fr. 3, 7, 8.-
Kabanica s vretenom odijelo od juna fr. 22.-		Zimsko klobučje fr. 3, 4, 6.-
Kabanica s vretenom odijelo od juna fr. 35.-		Zimski kaput, prskica od juna odijelo fr. 18.-
Jaka od vretenog juna, nam- tana od juna fr. 20.-		Kaput s krakom fr. 12.-
Jaka od vretenog juna, nam- tana od juna fr. 40.-		Kaput s krakom, juna fr. 14.-
Kabanica sa špičastim vr- hovima od juna fr. 7.- i 9.-		Parne hlače od juna fr. 8.-
		Kaput od čarvica fr. 6.-
		Medvjed fr. 14.- i juna fr. 14.- odijelo fr. 18.-

Za djecu:
Dječakovo odijelo, vrh. for. 4.-
Dječakovo odijelo, vrh. for. 6.-
Kabanica vrh. for. 7 i 8.-
Kabanica sa petericom fr. 7 i 8.-

Učijeta glede mjere
za gospodje:
Mjerna juna i vrhova
nametnuta odijelo
od juna.

za gopodu:
Mjerna juna i vrhova
nametnuta odijelo
od juna.

Klobučje
vrhova od juna i vretena

Vanjske naravnih nam-
ta od juna.

Na obradbeno plaćanje se
ne daje.

Za svaki odijelom
nametnuta odijelo
od juna.

M. ARNSTEIN.

Figure 3. An advertisement for popular English suits for men, boys, and women.



Figure 4. The Croatian *New Woman* is winning the umbrella fight.

Pariška moda continued to be the primer Croatian fashion magazine, which survived the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, World War I, and, after the formation of the new state, it changed into a smaller-format fashion magazine that also sometimes printed some general political information¹⁸⁰ (See figure 5 below) and articles about homemaking, cooking, health, and child-rearing.



Figure 5. The cover of the April 1925 of what was now-called *Pariška moda*.

The magazine's new editor was Melanija Vidale, and the subtitle was changed to "Illustrated Monthly for Fashion, Home, and Society." Even though this was a significant

¹⁸⁰ For example in 1938 issue no. 5 on page 122, *Pariška moda* brings news on Hitler's annexation of Austria.

move away from the typical fashion-style magazine, in the interwar years *Pariška moda* stayed largely devoted to women's fashion and needlework.

Marina Cižmi -Horvat has named *Der Courier für Damen*, a supplement to the educational-entertaining magazine *Croatia*, which was published between 1839 and 1842 from the hand of the publisher Franz Suppan (Franjo Župan), as the first magazine for women in Croatia.¹⁸¹ This German-language supplement so far had not been recognized as a magazine for women for several reasons. One obvious reason is that it was a supplement and not an independent publication, and, secondly, the term women's magazine was first used in the Eighteenth Century and wasn't always used for all magazines, especially in countries such as Germany and France. Other common names were *Almanac*, *Journal*, or *Der Courier*.¹⁸² It is quite possible that the first editorial of *Pariška moda* was a response to such German magazines and supplements that were prevalent at that time in Croatia. Women in Croatia during the time of the Habsburg Monarchy and Austria-Hungary were educated in the German and Hungarian language, and German seemed to be more pervasive throughout Croatia. For example, in the eastern part of Croatia, called Slavonia, and especially in its biggest city, Osijek, upper-middle-class women used mainly German, French, Hungarian, and sometimes even English. Some public opinion that was expressed in the Slavonian press shows that Croatian women did not want to speak Croatian and read Croatian literature because there was nothing published in the Croatian language that was worthy of their interest. Croatian women wanted German entertainment literature (*Deutscher Unterhaltunsslektiüre*),

¹⁸¹ Marina Cižmi -Horvat, "Ženski listovi u Hrvatskom novinarstvu," 102.

¹⁸² Ibid, 103.

known as literature for entertainment. This persistence on foreign languages is reflected in another example. In cases when men only spoke Croatian, women made them learn German.¹⁸³ But, if we consider the fact that the most upper-middle-class women in Croatia, especially in Slavonia, were of the German or Jewish minority, it is not surprising that they insisted on speaking foreign languages. Croatian was considered the language of the peasantry. This situation started to change, though, even before World War I with the Croatian national uprising against German and Hungarian imperialism in 1903 and 1906. In the interwar years and during the formation of the Croatian political parties, the Croatian Peasant Party in the center and some right-oriented and left-oriented parties began a heavy political mobilization of women. These years witnessed both a strong mobilization for Croatian national causes and a strong German rightist foreign influence. The towns and villages in Slavonia, with their German minority, were mobilized and sponsored directly by the German Nazis. In the 1930s, the Organization of the German Minority and young women's organizations found the promises of Nazi ideology attractive. But the German minority was not so unified. Most of the Germans in Slavonia were Catholic. Clerics supported the Croatian national movement. The German movement on the other hand was anti-clerical.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ "An Osijeks Fraum" [Women of Osijek] in *Slawonische Presse*, (October 31, 1918), 13.

¹⁸⁴ Carl Bethke, "Volksdeutcher Parallelgesellschaft"? Identitätskonstruktion und Ethnopolitische Mobilisierung in Kroatien und der Vojvodina, 1918-1941. Mit einem Vergleich zur Ungarischen Minderkrit" [*German Parallel Societies: Construction of Identity and Ethnopolitical Mobilization in Croatia and Vojvodina, 1918-1941. With Comparison to the Hungarian Minority*]. Unpublished dissertation in German, University of Berlin, 2006. It is important to note that clerics were sided with the Croatian national movement, especially for understanding a turn that Zenski list underwent in the late 1930s when clerics sided with strong nationalistic political options.

Similarly, even patriotic Croatian women, such as patriotic poet Dragojla Jarnević, witnessed this pervasive influence of the German language in Croatia. Although she had studied Croatian all her life, the public language was German, and she had difficulties expressing herself, communicating, or even thinking in Croatian.¹⁸⁵ German public and popular culture, through newspapers and magazines, was so strong that it hindered the development of the Croatian language and Croatian popular culture. *Parižka moda* signaled the beginnings of the rise of the Croatian popular culture, the importance of which would be fully recognized by the first Croatian woman journalist, Marija Juri Zagorka. First, in her articles and novels that were published in the Croatian language and, more importantly, in the mass popular press product for women in all Yugoslavia, the women's magazine *Ženski list*. Examples above show how publishers of women's magazines used anti-imperialistic discourses for making strong political appeals. The discourses of gender in women's magazines reflected common public discourses at the end of the Nineteenth Century in the Central-Eastern European countries, those of the rise of linguistic nationalism.

Finally, it is important to mention some other women's magazines that were founded a few years before World War I, but it is noted that these magazines were not aimed at mass female audiences. These were the publications of the varied women's organizations, such as *Srpska žena* (*Serbian Woman*), published in 1912 as the organ of the Associations of Humanitarian Societies of Serbian Women for Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁸⁶ In Vojvodina's capital Novi Sad in Northern Serbia, the magazine *Žena*

³⁹ Marina Čizmić-Horvat, "Ženski listovi u Hrvatskom novinarstvu," 104.

¹⁸⁶ Neda Božinović, *Žensko pitanje u Srbiji u XIX I XX veku*, 88.

(*Woman*) was founded in 1911. Most of the contributors were women, and the editor, Milica Jaše Tomić, brought notes from the history of Serbian women and the history of the women's movements in Europe.¹⁸⁷ In Slovenia, a magazine called *Ženski list* was founded in Ljubljana in 1913 with similar content. In the Croatian capital of Zagreb, a very influential, but short-lived, journal was published in 1917, called *Ženski svijet* (*Women's World*). It was a magazine that very eagerly discussed women's and gender issues and published debates by many then-influential writers. In 1919, it changed its name to *Jugoslavenska žena*, hoping to embrace discussions on women's issues in the whole of Yugoslavia; however, it soon demised. Very few magazines from that time survived more than two to three years of continued publication. One of the main reasons was the non-commercial strategy of its founders and these magazines' lack of appeal for mass female audiences. In 1920, another journal for women, called *Jednakost*, was an organ of the socialist (Communist) women of Yugoslavia. It was founded with a very open agenda, i.e., to propagate socialist causes for Yugoslavian women. It was printed at the socialist printing house and only survived the year 1920. However, in this short time, it was marked as the only political monthly for class-aware women.¹⁸⁸

Another influential magazine for the small, educated group of Yugoslav women was *Ženski pokret* (*Women's Movement*), also founded in 1920 in Belgrade. This magazine was very irregularly published throughout the interwar years until 1938. As a monthly journal and as an organ of the organization under the same name, it mostly published debates on women's rights in Yugoslavian and international contexts.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Neda Todorović-Uzelac, *Ženska štampa i kultura ženstvenosti*, 60-61.

Although the aim was to embrace all Yugoslavian women, it was not always circulated outside Serbia, and most of the articles were published in Cyrillic script, which was foreign to most Croatian and Slovenian women who used Latin script (See figure 6 below).

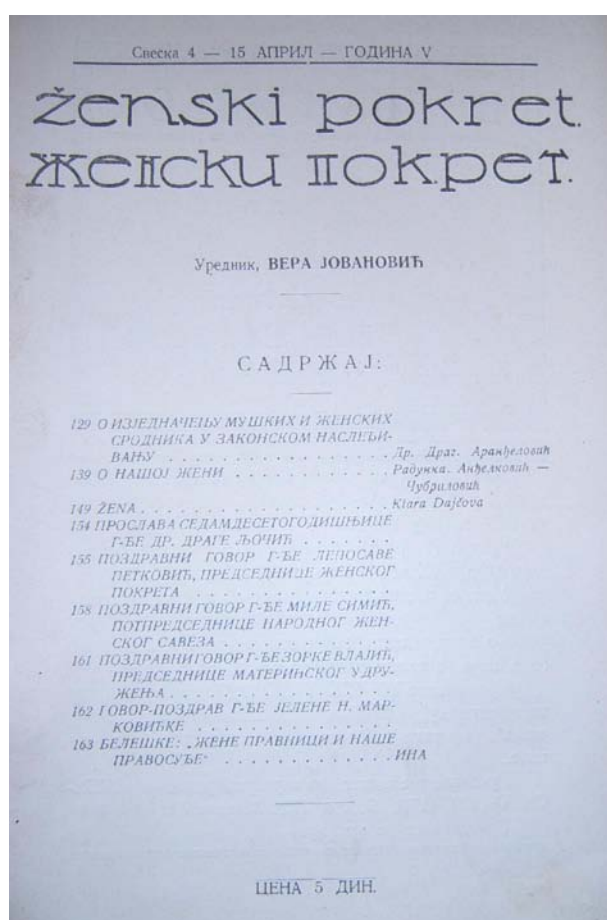


Figure 6. The cover of *Ženski pokret* from April 1925 illustrates the usage of the Cyrillic script.

Such a significant rise in the number of published women's magazines during the interwar years can be attributed to the modernizing processes that were connected to industrialization of the new state. The early interwar years signaled new changes in the

modernization processes in Yugoslavia. In Croatia, modernization can be traced back to the middle of the Nineteenth Century. After the fall of Austria-Hungary and the formation of the new state in 1918, and after attending to the consequences of the war, the new state invested in the development of private domestic entrepreneurship and in the building of industrial, transportation, and other communication systems.¹⁸⁹ In the interwar years, the newly formed state experienced a transition from a mostly agrarian to a market-based economy. This growth of the new capitalist society was marked by the influx of foreign capital as a significant variable in the process of modernization and industrialization. Domestic capital, although on the rise, was still very weak and underdeveloped in comparison to the foreign capital.¹⁹⁰ At the end of the Nineteenth Century and the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Hungarian and Austrian capital had the strongest influence. This was more truthful for Slovenia and Croatia, while, in Serbia at that time, the Russian and French capitals were more influential. Yugoslavia in the early 1920s got its first loan from France, but many other European countries had influenced the Yugoslavian economy: Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands, England, Czechoslovakia, the United States, and Sweden. In the 1920s, the French and English capitals were the strongest, but, in the 1930s, ties with Germany grew stronger, especially after Hitler had come to power. One of the main first goals of Nazi Germany's economic politics was building strong ties with Balkan and Southeastern

¹⁸⁹ Igor Karaman , “Uloga malog i srednjeg poduzetnistva u oblikovanju kapitalistickog privrednog sustava na tlu Hrvatske,”[“The Role of Small and Middle Size Entrepreneurship in the Development of Capitalistic Economy in Croatia”], *Povijesni Prilozi*, 9 vol. 1 (1990): 1-36.

¹⁹⁰ Jozo Tomašević , *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford University Press, 1955).

markets. With these economic exchanges, Hitler hoped to strengthen Germany's political influence in Yugoslavia. After the *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938, Germany took over the French and English economic influences in Yugoslavia.¹⁹¹

In the publishing industry, the most dominant influence was German throughout the interwar years in Croatia, followed by Italian, French, Hungarian, and English. Several reasons for such strong influence exist. First, in Croatia, the dominant German and Hungarian languages during the Habsburg Monarchy and Austria-Hungary set the stage for its continuing influence in the future. Second, the German publishing industry in the interwar years was one of the most powerful in the world, leading with the House of *Ullstein* in interwar Europe by the publishing of popular novels, magazines, and newspapers.¹⁹² However, domestic capital in the interwar publishing industry in Yugoslavia was steadily growing. For example, in the 1920s, through the merger of several smaller printers, the printing concern "Tipografija d.d." Zagreb was founded as the largest printing and publishing house in interwar Croatia. Soon, another competitive publisher and printer emerged, "Jugoštampa" or "Jugoslavenska štampa." Both took a strong hold of the publishing industry in Croatia.¹⁹³

Hence, in the pre-depression and pre-dictatorial years in the changing economic conditions of the growing capitalist economy, newspapers and magazines became an

¹⁹¹ Sergije Dimitrijević, *Strani kapital u privredi bivše Jugoslavije* [*Foreign Capital in the Economy of the Former Yugoslavia*] (Nolit: Beograd, 1958) and F. Šegoti, *Jugoisto na Europa i strani kapital* [*Southeastern Europe and Foreign Capital*] (Zagreb, 1939). The name is initialized in the original.

¹⁹² See Linda King J., *Best-Sellers by Design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).

¹⁹³ Novak, 137.

everyday necessity. The rise of the publishing industry was also initiated by the first press law in Croatia in 1907, before the establishment of the Kingdom, which had allowed for the open public promotion and selling of newspapers. This change signaled a new economic strategy after which the market success of a newspaper had become the primary measure of its success.¹⁹⁴

In these economic conditions and with the new press law of 1925, a number of women's magazines were founded in the Kingdom. More importantly, these magazines were the first mass-market and mass-public women's magazines. They were founded for primarily commercial reasons with the understanding of the growing middle-class and of its women who were in need of magazines of their own. The first such magazine that was targeted solely to women of the Kingdom, *Ženski list za modu, zabavu i kućanstvo* (*Women's Magazine for Fashion, Entertainment and Homemaking*), was published in April 1925.¹⁹⁵ This magazine, the object of this study, had no competitor in the style, content, and the reach to all parts of the Kingdom and even abroad. Serbian women's magazine *Žena i svet* (*Woman and the World*), founded in June 1925, comes the closest to this type of magazine, and, although it was at times printed even in 60,000 copies, it had never achieved the popularity of *Ženski list* among all Yugoslavian women. Besides its more modest looks, the main downside was the Cyrillic script that was unfamiliar to the overwhelming majority of women in Croatia, Slovenia, and even Bosnia and Herzegovina (See figures 7 and 8 below). *Ženski list*, on the other hand, was printed in

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 136.

¹⁹⁵ Full title: *Women's Paper for Fashion, Entertainment and Homemaking*. More on the founding and formation of this magazine will be in the analysis chapter.

Latin script, with translations in Cyrillic and Slovenian for patterns and some other sections of its content. This magazine was truly unique in the whole newly established women's mass magazine market.



Figure 7. Title page of *Žena i Svet* - May 1925



Figure 8. Pattern pages in the May 1925 issue of *Žena i svet*.

In comparison, *Ženski list* started the trend of designed Art-Deco covers with colored patterns similar to those in the West, relying on the commercial appeal of the design. In 1926, an illustrated magazine of the general character titled *Svijet* (*World*), sometimes referred to as Croatian *Vanity Fair*, which was published by Tipografija d.d., followed the same Art-Deco illustrative style on its covers that were illustrated by famous Croatian artist Otto Antonini (See figures 9, 10 and 11 below).



Figure 9. 1920s cover of the magazine *Svijet*.

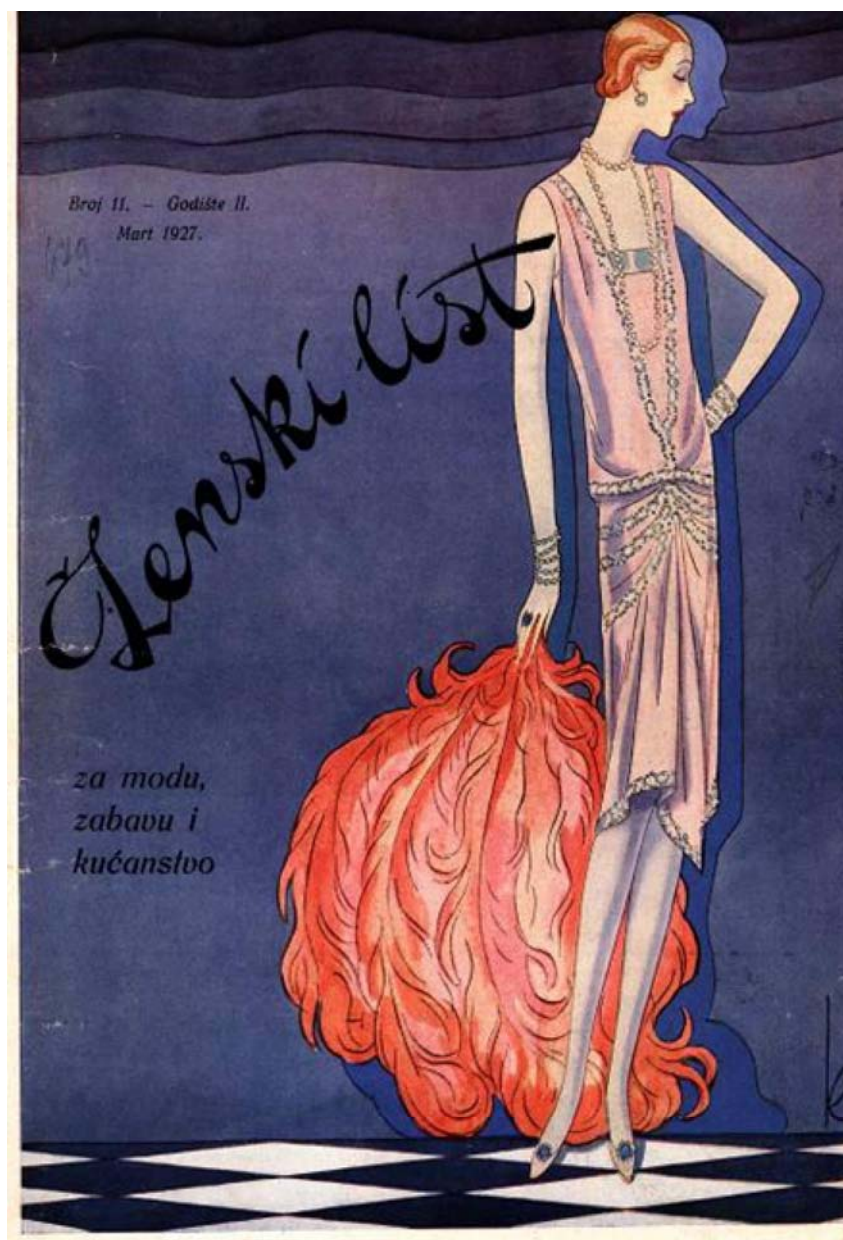


Figure 10. 1920s cover of *Ženski list*.



Figure 11. Pattern section in 1920s *Ženski list*.

The interwar years were, indeed, an important period in the development of Yugoslavian and Croatian mass culture. Women gained a prominent role in shaping popular culture through the form of women's magazines and the women's press. In many ways through popular mass culture, women of the growing middle class were for the first time being presented by the material forum of discussion, a public sphere, where they could share their views on the changing post-World War I society. One important feature of *Ženski list* was an attempt to include experiences of peasant women, who were the largest population of women in the Yugoslavian society, and the growing number of working women. Paradoxically, this popular mass culture offered a new space for women

to exercise their freedom to speak, the very tenet of a democratic system, and, at the same time, widely opened up to a growing capitalist economy that instantly commodified this newly discovered female public space. This public space for women was also an avenue for much of the vibrant discussion on gender roles in post-World War I Yugoslavia. It is without a doubt clear that the women's press significantly influenced the understanding of gender roles in the new Yugoslavian society. My own approach to understanding the emergence of women's magazines and the women's press in this part of the world is situated in the dynamic power relations among producers, consumers, and identity construction. Beetham describes this approach to the study of magazines:

Magazines are...deeply involved in capitalist production and consumption as well as circulating in the cultural economy of collective meanings and constructing an identity for the individual reader as gendered and sexual being. The woman's magazine works at the intersection of these different economies – of money, public discourse and individual desire.¹⁹⁶

Although Beetham acknowledges the importance of the material and the political struggles over meanings, her own work is largely discursive and is based on the examination of the content, with little or no reference to the larger historical and material conditions of the society in which the examination takes place. My dissertation traces political and economic changes that took place in the life of *Ženski list*, because these changes directly influenced power relations among editors, writers, and readers in the ways that these groups were allowed or denied access to meaning-making. More importantly, reading periodical texts in the 18th and 19th Centuries involved a part in the production. Similarly, in the interwar context under examination, readers were invited to

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 2.

write, and, in fact, these readers did provide significant amounts of content for those magazines.¹⁹⁷ We could trace some of the current debates on participatory journalism that have been developed in light of the potential of the new media of communication to the history of the popular periodical press.

This “reader as a writer system,” in the case under examination, will show that such practices extended all the way to the beginning of World War II. This practice, which I wish to call “the economy of writing/reading,” highly influenced the power relations in the economy of the production of the content as a whole. This practice did not exclude the later more-common practice of the readers/writers in the letters-to-the-editor pages. However, “letters to the editor” pages took on a more prominent place as journalism became more established as a profession. Hence, my primary concern is with feminist political economy of gender and media, which tries to untangle these complex inter-relations between different spheres of production, consumption, and the construction of gendered identities.

Hence, in the next chapter, I will begin with an examination of the life of the magazine’s editor, Marija Juri Zagorka. It can be argued that her personal ideologies and her editorial work in *Ženski list* significantly influenced the magazine’s content. Ultimately, she influenced the dynamic relationship among readers, writers, and producers and, therefore, held one of the main gate-keeping functions that shaped *Ženski list* into an unique example of the construction of the women’s popular culture.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 11-13.



Figure 12. Flamboyant Marija Juri Zagorka. Photograph undated.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

CHAPTER 3

THE BECOMING OF ZAGORKA: LIFE, WORKS, AND HERITAGE

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine evidence that will contribute to the written feminist biography of Marija Juri Zagorka. According to some, she was the first professional woman journalist in Central Europe.¹⁹⁸ Marija Juri Zagorka began her professional career in journalism at fin-de-siècle Croatia in Austria-Hungary. For a brief time at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, she was also the first woman in Central Europe to edit an influential daily newspaper. In the interwar years, she was an editor of the first women's magazine in Croatia, and, at the outset of World War II, she also edited and published another women's magazine.¹⁹⁹

First, I will examine the problems of feminist biography and women's historiography for journalism history, after which I will chronologically lay out the events and analyze texts that were written by and about Zagorka, starting with her childhood and her beginnings in journalism. I will conclude with her mature professional days and with her death. At the end of this chapter, I will provide some concluding thoughts to help us understand her life and work in light of her editorial influences on the

¹⁹⁸ Ivo Hergesi, "Marija Juri Zagorka," Foreward," *Zagorka: Tajna Krvavog Mosta* (Zagreb, 1982), v-xxxiv.

¹⁹⁹ Not regarded as the first magazine by some historians. Danja Silovic-Kari places *Doma e ognjište* (1900) as first women's magazine in Croatia, but at the same time concludes that that magazine was, in fact, perpetuating the patriarchal division of private and public spheres and that it argued for traditional gender roles for men and women. See Dunja Silovic-Kari, "Doma e ognjište-The First Women's Magazine in Croatia," in *Women in Croatia: Women's and Cultural History*, ed. Andrea Feldman (Institut "Vlado Gotovac" and Ženska Infoteka, 2004): 15-27.

content and the identity of *Ženski list*. I am particularly interested in understanding this evidence as a window that could provide insights into the crucial influences that had shaped her identity, her private decisions, and, most of all, her professional decisions. My focus will be on her personal ideologies and the way in which those ideologies had been shaped by her life experiences.

This chapter will provide evidence that will help us to answer the first research question: (1) How did the life and journalistic work of the magazine's editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, contribute to the emancipation of women in the media and to the journalism profession? This chapter also will help to ground our understanding of the second research question: (2) How did her editorial work and writing influence the identity of *Ženski list*, that investigates the influences that she had as an editor and as a contributor to *Ženski list*. Hence, I am particularly concerned with the events that were described in her private and journalistic texts as well as in the texts of others (both scholars and her contemporaries) to map out the development of her professional and political being. The ideologies that had influenced her life and those ideologies that she had embraced were sharply reflected in the content and the complex identity of *Ženski list*.

3.2. The Feminist Biography and the Problems of Women's Historiography in Journalism History

Even though biography of individuals or groups of individuals often has been characterized as being at odds with the empirical goals of historiography, biography nevertheless remains an important element of historiography.²⁰⁰ Biographical writing is

²⁰⁰ Stephen Davies, *Empiricism and History*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2003).

essential because it assists in a greater understanding of societal developments, and it plays a significant role in raising societal consciousness about its own history.²⁰¹

Biography as a “*weak historiography*” paradigm seems to have had little impact on the historians who have chosen to study women’s contribution to history. Nevertheless, women’s individual lives seem to provide evidence for the often-taken-for-granted account of history that goes hand-in-hand with the so-called history of “Great Men.”²⁰²

What a historical biography is cannot be easily defined. Davis finds historical biography to be “a kind of archaeology of mind and character” of an individual or individuals that is put together based on the available evidence with an emphasis on historical contextuality.²⁰³ Not to argue Davis’s point, but there is an intrinsic problem with empirical biography for the study of women in history. The problem is twofold: the lack of evidence, since women were virtually written out of history, as Gerda Lerner argued back in the 1970s²⁰⁴; and the danger of falling into the trap of writing “Great Women” history, because most of the existing evidence is about the lives and work of the elites. Nevertheless, the rise of social history in the 1970s and of the interest in the historiography of the lives of marginalized groups presents a turning point toward the development of interest in women’s history. New historical evidence, such as demographic data, police records, autobiographical writings, and documents produced by

²⁰¹ Michael Keren, “Biography and Historiography: The Case of David Ben-Gurion,” *Biography-Honolulu*, 23 (2000): 332-352.

²⁰² In Davis, *Empiricism and History*, 48., on Carlyle’s “Great Men” theory.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 51.

²⁰⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

labor movements, provides a sufficient amount of evidence for the reconstruction of the lives of women who had belonged to different classes.²⁰⁵ Regardless of the increased amount of scholarship on women's lives, women's history is still in need of more evidence, especially about the lives of ordinary women and their day-to-day lives.²⁰⁶ Hence, questions that would investigate the lives of women, private and public, still merit examination. One of the best examples of such work is the study of ordinary women's role in the French Revolution.²⁰⁷

In the field of journalism history, women journalists and their contribution to the profession of journalism have been identified as the major subfield. American scholarship in the interdisciplinary fields of women's studies, history, and journalism has certainly made significant progress since the 1970s in uncovering women's pasts.²⁰⁸ However, most of the work in journalism is done in the traditional model in which women's efforts to succeed in journalism is contrasted to the male model of journalistic performance.²⁰⁹ A new definition of journalism includes women who were a part of journalism practice,

²⁰⁵ Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, Women and Wars] (Druga, Zagreb: 1996).

²⁰⁶ See introduction to Andrea Feldman ed, *Women in Croatia: Women's and Cultural History* (Institut "Vlado Gotovac," and Ženska Infoteka, 2004), 5-11. The distinctions are still debated. In terms of feminism, the lack of a continuous historical analysis of women and their roles in feminist activities means that feminism seems to have to be rediscovered with each generation of women, 9.

²⁰⁷ Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998).

²⁰⁸ See Sharon M. Harris and Ellen Gruber Garvey, eds., "Foreword." *Blue Pencils & Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830-1910* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004): xi-xxv.

²⁰⁹ Maurine Beasley, "Recent Directions for the Study of Women's History in American Journalism," *Journalism Studies*, 2 (2001): 207-220.

but not in terms of the professional norm of objectivity. This redefinition also seeks “inclusion of women’s perspectives, family-oriented social histories,” more biographies, and more oral histories of women’s networking and personal experiences.²¹⁰

American scholarship also needs more studies and biographies on women journalists. A collection of writings that offer a similar account of the work of women in professions, including journalism, exists for Western European countries. However, in Eastern Europe, scholarship on women’s history and feminist history is just emerging.²¹¹ Recently, a much-needed history of women in Russia, and Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe has been recognized as a growing subject of historical inquiry.²¹² One of the most recent books on women journalists is an edited collection of biographies of Russian women journalists who had inspired public discussions on women and who had initiated public discussions of gender in the late imperial Russia. This work links women, gender, and journalism as being intrinsically related and as being essential in understanding Russian history, yet argues that connections among these categories are being left unexplored. A biographical approach to the historiography of women’s contributions to Russian journalism in this volume seems to serve the goals that were set by its editors, first of which is to recover the lives and the works of individual female

²¹⁰Ibid, 207.

²¹¹ Karen Offen, *European Feminisms: 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford University Press, 2000).

²¹² Maria Bucur, “Romania,” in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester University Press, 2003), 27-36.

journalists.²¹³ Many women in print media in the Nineteenth and in the first part of the Twentieth Centuries, particularly in magazines, were editors. Most of them edited domestic, children's, or fashion magazines, and it is believed that women's editorship was a distraction from the more desirable calling – writing.²¹⁴ Regardless of the lack of perceived prestige, the role of the editor is without doubt critical in the way that information is selected and presented to readers. Scholars so far have acknowledged the power of the editor's role in publishing, but only recently have they recognized that editorial positions such as copyediting “is essential ... to the commodification of authors for the reader's consumption.”²¹⁵ Women editors of the Nineteenth and the first part of the Twentieth Centuries used their editorial positions to build a bridge between writing and editing, to create communication between the magazine and its readers (oftentimes with the hope of developing a community of readers), and for self-expression. Particularly as it pertains to the first-mentioned, the voice of the editor is authoritative; however, many magazines at the time had collaborative editorships, and any member of the editorial office could at different times act as an editor.²¹⁶ Understanding all of these aspects, including the business aspects of the publishing industry with which the editor would be involved, is important for any attempt to assess the ways in which women

²¹³ Jehanne M. Gheith, “Introduction,” *An Improper Profession: Women, Gender, and Journalism in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. Barbara T Norton and Jehanne M. Gheith (Duke University Press, Durham & London, 2001), xi-xxv.

²¹⁴ Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Foreword,” *Blue Pencils & Hidden Hands*, xii.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

editors had tried to influence the lives of their publics, i.e., their readers' choices, actions, and politics.

3.3. Zagorka's Longest Day: The First Steps Toward her Career in Journalism

*If I give up my pen, I will give up my life.*²¹⁷

Marija Juri Zagorka

On the cold autumn afternoon of October 30th 1896, Marija Juri walked, visibly distressed, through the ornate archway of Zagreb's Main Train Station. Her dress was dark and long. The equally dark overcoat completely covered her rather round and short body. Her hair was unusually short for the prescribed popular fashions of the late Nineteenth Century, but was skillfully hidden under her large hat. Despite her unattractive dress and small posture, she was standing out in the crowd. She was showing her class unintentionally. She was an upper-middle-class woman who was holding tightly onto her purse as she shuffled around in the crowd of peasant men and women who were pushing each other in all directions. In all of this commotion, it was unusually quiet and rather hot. She could clearly hear the bell announcing that the next train would soon enter the station. This bell could be the last thing that she would ever hear in this world, she thought to herself. This was the beginning of the end. She ran toward the platform and watched as the first wheels of the large steam train rolled slowly over the rails, as she contemplated the end. She contemplated the misery and despair and the drudgery of

²¹⁷ Marija Juri Zagorka, *Kamen na cesti* [The Stone on the Road] (Zagreb: Mladost, 1990), 290.

being a woman in a man's world. She wanted this life to be over. Soon. Very soon. But the quiet contemplation of the meticulously recalled events that had been rushing headlong through Marija's memory was violently stopped by screams and haunted cries for help. She turned her head once, and she could clearly see Hungarian railway men beating the peasantry who were standing on the platforms. They were beating them with utter cruelty while, at the same time, pulling them out of the trains and pushing them onto the side, crying in Hungarian: "Egy Percz."²¹⁸ "One moment," she could understand the words, unlike the dozens of peasants who only spoke the Croatian language and who had found the official signs and rules in the Hungarian language to be unintelligible. It took only this one moment for her to get a grip on herself and to fall back into the arms of an old and well-known companion – anger. Her anti-imperial sentiments and strong sense of injustice had instantly shook the core of her rebellious soul and had brought her back to life. She quickly stepped away from the platform, turned, and, in small steps, rushed back into the inner turmoil of her unfurnished rented room somewhere in the Upper City behind the Jelačić Market. She took one of the very few sheets of paper that she owned and wrote, "Egy Percz ... doesn't anybody in this whole country feel obligated to stand by the poor and protect our peasantry ... while our politicians fight around the party leadership, our people suffer.... But, my dear gentlemen, be aware! One day you might reach the platform from which people will cry "Egy Percz" to your own survival."²¹⁹ She signed the article using the name Zagorka. She wrapped the paper within the

²¹⁸ Expression used for the "Time is out."

²¹⁹ Excerpt from her first political article published in the most popular oppositional daily *Obzor* [*Horizon*] on October 31, 1896, in the section, "Doma e vijesti" ("Domestic News") on page 2.

envelope, posted it with the last coins from her pocket, and sent it to the *Obzor* (Horizon), the most prominent oppositional daily in Zagreb. She waited for the morning to come to her cold rented room. It was one the longest nights of her life.²²⁰

Marija Juri lived to see her first political article published in *Obzor* (*Horizon*) on October 31, 1896. Later, she would be known as Zagorka, and she would use this surname as her most popular pseudonym. Editor Josip Pasari²²¹ initially published this article only because he thought that *Zagorka* was the pseudonym of a male anonymous writer. The article was thought to be too critical even for an oppositional daily such as *Obzor*. One week later, the president of the *Obzor*'s printing house, Šime Mazzura,²²² who at the time was the newspaper's editor-in-chief, sent an invitation to the author of the

²²⁰ This account is based on my reading of Zagorka's many published and several unpublished accounts of the ways in which she had recalled these particular events in her life. In the biographical entry published in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms (Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 19th and 20th Centuries)* by CEU Press in 2006, Slavica Jakobovi Fribec writes, "Later, in her memoirs, Juri described in detail the following period of her life: from escaping her husband in 1895 to becoming a contributor to the newspaper *Obzor* [Horizon] in October 1896. In her autobiographical *Kamen na Cesti (The Stone on the Road)* 1937-1939, the fictional heroine commits suicide in circumstances strikingly similar to those of Juri during this episode of her life," 196.

²²¹ Editor of the *Obzor* (1893-1905) during the revolutionary years. He was a supporter of the oppositional Croatian parties and a strong critic of Magyarons (Magyarons) – who were Croatian politicians and supporters of the imperial Hungarian politics in Croatia, as described in the *Obzor Spomen-Knjiga 1860-1935* [Horizon Memorial Book 1860-1935] in the article "One Hundred Years of Croatian Journalism," published by *Obzor* in Zagreb in 1935, 269.

²²² He was the founder of the Dioni ka tiskara (Shareholders Printing House) founded in 1871. The main publication of this printing house was *Obzor*. Mazzura b. 1840, was a young lawyer who was involved in the political party Narodna Stranka (People's Party); however, he was unsatisfied with its lack of political will to fight back Austrian-Hungarian imperialism and thus followed the other Narodna Stranka (People's Party) dissidents (one of them popular Franjo Ra ki, a close friend of bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, who was fond of the Yugoslav ideas) and formed Neovisna Narodna Stranka (Independent People's Party). As a lawyer, he represented Zagreb Municipality and Zagreb Archbishop's Diocese. *Obzor Spomen-Knjiga 1860-1935* [Horizon Memorial Book 1860-1935] in the article, "One Hundred Years of Croatian Journalism," published by *Obzor* in Zagreb in 1935, 269. Zagorka, described him as a chauvinist who did not believe women should write for newspapers.

article to come to the editorial office of *Obzor*, “the most influential daily of the Croatian civil liberal intelligentsia.”²²³ *Obzor* was first published under the name *Pozor* (*Attention*) on October 1, 1860, by two journalists, Bogoslav Šulek and Eduard Vrbani , after the fall of neo-absolutism in the Habsburg Monarchy and the reinstatement of the Constitution. With the formation of the four political parties immediately afterward, *Pozor* became the official newspaper of the Croatian People’s Party, with Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and Franjo Ra ki as political leaders and as the financial supporters of the publishers, Dioni ka tiskara (Shareholder’s Printing House), of *Pozor-Obzor*.²²⁴ Several sources identify the influential Croatian bishop, politician, and theorist Josip Juraj Strossmayer as the one who stood behind Zagorka’s recommendation letter to the editorial of *Obzor*.²²⁵ Šime Mazzura was the largest shareholder in the Dioni ka tiskara, but did not hold the most political power.²²⁶ Zagorka tellingly described her first meeting with Mazzura in one of her memoirs, titling it *Disastrous Beginning*:

²²³ Božidar Novak, *Hrvatsko novinarstvo u 20-tom stolje u* [Croatian Journalism in the 20th Century](Zagreb: Golden Marketing-Tehni ka knjiga, 2005), 39.

²²⁴ *Obzor* often changed its name from *Pozor* to *Obzor* and vice versa under the political pressures between 1860 and 1886 and during the rule of the ban Levin Rauch, but on January 1, 1886, it permanently resumed the name *Obzor* and continued publishing until the beginning of World War II.

²²⁵ See Ivo Hergesi , “Marija Juri Zagorka,” foreword to *Zagorka: Tajna Krvavog Mosta*; Stanko Lasi , *Književni po eci Marije Juri Zagorke (1873-1910). Uvod u monografiju* [The Literary Beginnings of Marija Juri Zagorka (1873-1910): Introduction to Monography] (Zagreb: Znanje, 1986); Bora Dordevic, *Zagorka, kroni ar starog Zagreba* [Zagorka the Chronicle of Old Zagreb] (Zagreb: Stvarnos, 1965), and Lydia Skevicky, *Konji, žene ratovi*. J.J. Strossmayer is also identified as the person who had encouraged Zagorka to write feature novels for newspapers. See Slavica Jakobovi -Fribec, “Marija Juri Zagorka: protagonistica nepisane povijest hrvatskog feminizma” [“Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism”], *Republika*, 6, (2006): 14-25, 20.

²²⁶ In the official notes taken at the 1876 shareholder’s meeting, listed shareholders are: Dr. Ivan Bauer, Dr. Josip Hofman, Hinko Janušić , Dr. Šime Mazzura, Franjo Šviljuga, Ladislav Mrazovi , Ivan Von ina, Spiro Brusina, and Dr. Franjo Ra ki. From the notes in the meeting, it is

One week after the article had been published, I was summoned to the Editorial Office of *Obzor*. There, I was immediately faced by a furious president of the *Dioni ka tiskara* and two of his friends—rich, famous friends (Š. Mazzura and Kostren i , Zahar). The editor-in-chief and his deputies, Josip Pasari and Jovan Hranilovi , were also present. The president raged: "So it is you who have ruined the reputation of *Obzor* with that article. I have already upbraided Editor Pasari for printing this thing, and you even dare to suggest collaborating! You, who dare to attack the leaders of all Croatian oppositional parties; you, who dare to threaten us – respectable middle-class men – that our time is up and that people will tell us one day, "One moment"?! ... Are you aware that these can only be the words of somebody with a socialist mentality? Words of a person who hates us! And we gave the people, the peasants, their bread and their culture. We support the peasantry, and we create the homeland. Without us, there is no nation. Yes, smile away, you are desperate, you ran away from your home where you had nine meals to chose from for lunch and eight rooms to sleep in. You sneaked into some small room in Zagreb to eat saveloy at noon just to be able to write. Well, that lunacy can only be exercised by a socialist, and we do not need this mentality in *Obzor*.²²⁷

Years later, in her autobiographical novel, *Kamen na cesti (The Stone on the Road)*, she wrote that Mazzura, together with his middle-class mentality, expressed his chauvinist mentality by saying:

First of all, if somebody wants to be recognized as a writer, this person needs to be a man. The only way that a woman could get such recognition is to either have a title or a noble name, or at least she should be beautiful. And you, my dear, you have nothing.²²⁸

obvious that liberal political leanings and the political importance of the newspaper were not the primary concerns. In the third paragraph of the notes and before the conclusion of the meeting, Mazzura suggested the termination of their second publication *Obzor* (another publication was *Vijenac*), due to financial losses that this newspaper was bringing to the printing house. However, Dr. Franjo Ra ki, politically the more influential shareholder and one of the leaders of Narodna stranka (Croatian People's Party), quickly brought the discussion to a close by suggesting that *Obzor* should deserve the treatment that was equivalent to its contribution to the development of civil society in Croatia. In the notes from the meeting in 1895, several names were added as shareholders, among them Josip Pasari , editor of *Obzor*, and Dr. Ivan Zahar, another important shareholder. Documents from the funds of Kingdom's Juridical Court in Zagreb (Kraljevski sud u Zagrebu), HAD.

²²⁷ Marija Juri Zagorka, *Što je moja krivnja [What Is My Guilt?]*, *Disastrous Beginning*, 451.

²²⁸ Zagorka, *Stone on the Road*, 356.

It wasn't completely true that Marija Juri Zagorka was a nobody. Unlike many women of her time, she had come from a privileged background, but, early in her life, after her family had coerced her into an unwanted marriage, she renounced them. The moment that she had left her husband and came to Zagreb in the fall of 1896, she promised to herself, "I will die from hunger and thirst...but I will never take one drop of water from my house."²²⁹

3.3.1. Early Days

There is no comprehensive biography of Zagorka's life. The first attempts to recognize her contribution to Croatian literature can be attributed to the historian Ivo Hergesic.²³⁰ Thus far, her contribution to the emancipation of women in the profession of journalism hasn't been an object of comprehensive scholarly investigation. Lydia Sklevicky solemnly states that Zagorka's feminism also needs to find a place in the "unwritten history of feminism that still owed its debt to her."²³¹ Recently, there has been much interest in her work, which had been initiated by Croatian women's organizations and women scholars.²³² In the English language scholarly literature, I

²²⁹Ibid., 291.

²³⁰See Leksikon Hrvatskih pisaca [Lexicon of Croatian Writers] (Školska knjiga: Zagreb, 2000). Later, she'll be recognized in a literary monograph by Stanko Lasi in *Književni poeci Marije Juri Zagorke*, published in 1986.

²³¹ Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene i ratovi* [Horses, Women and Wars] (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996.), 247.

²³² In November 2007, a scholarly conference was held in Zagreb titled "Zagorka: Her Work, Life, and Heritage" in the organization of Women's Studies and Faculty of Philosophy – Department of Comparative Literature. An international group of scholars met on November 30

came across one entry in Claire Buck's, *The Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature*, with a reference to Zagorka:

Pen name of Marija Jurić, Croatian novelist and dramatist. She wrote popular adventure novels and plays and was also the first Croatian political journalist. She was one of the first women in south-eastern Europe to express feminist ideas. She married, against her will, a wealthy Hungarian, but, forced to choose between social convention and a coveted professional life, she left him after three years of misery, and ran away to join the newspaper. From then on she was a dedicated intellectual. She came in for many misogynist and antiprovincial attacks from contemporary critics, and has, by large, been under-represented in literary histories. Her work is now being re-evaluated.²³³

Marija Jurić was born on March 2, 1873,²³⁴ in Negovac on an estate near the city of Križevci in Austro-Hungarian Croatia. Her baptism document shows that she was baptized as Marianna in the Roman Catholic Church on March 3, 1873. Her father, as listed in the document, was Ivan Jurić, a wealthy manager of the Šanjugovo, the estate of

and December 1 to discuss the life and contribution of Zagorka to the cultural life of women at home and abroad. The conference was part of the set of events, "Days of Marija Jurić Zagorka," initiated around the 50th Anniversary of her death.

²³³ See Claire Buck, *The Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature*. (NY: Prentice Hall General Reference, 1992), 1161. Zagorka is also mentioned in a recently published *A Bibliographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms* published by CEU PRESS in 2007 and in Celia Hawkeswarth, ed. *A History of Central European Women* (NY: Palgrave, 2001).

²³⁴ For a number of years, the date of her birth was not known. Zagorka, herself, rejected confinement into a firm identity and often rejected the importance of her birth date. In *Obzor's* (Croatian oppositional political daily for which she had worked since 1898) article that was published on December 3, 1937 in recognition of the fortieth anniversary of her journalistic work, the year 1879 is noted as the year of her birth with the remark that some historians wrongly take 1876 as her birth year. Slavica Jakobović-Fribeć reported that Zagorka was born on March 2, 1873 (in *Bibliographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe 19th and 20th Centuries*), 197-199, after her research in the Croatian State Archives. I obtained a copy of her birth certificate and baptism documents that match recent findings.

Baron Geza Rauch, godfather of ban Khuen-Héderváry.²³⁵ Her mother, Josipa Domin, had three children with Ivan Jurić in addition to Marija, two sons and a daughter, Emilija Berta Jurić, who was known as Dragica (1879-1896). We don't know much about her family because no official data were preserved. The little that we do know about her mother, father, and sister is based on Zagorka's own reports. In an interview with Zagorka's sister-in-law, Paula Jurić, published in the magazine *Danica* in 1933, I learned that Paula was the wife of one of Zagorka's brothers. Paula Jurić for this interview claimed, "I am the wife of Zagorka's brother Leonardt."²³⁶ According to her statement, Leonardt had suffered from a mental illness and had died in the mental institution in Stenjevac. Zagorka's mother died in the same place after having been proclaimed mentally ill.²³⁷ Paula Jurić, in that particular interview, accused Zagorka of complete cold-heartedness toward her family. Zagorka allegedly had denied help to her brother. Paula remembered one incident that had happened in the hotel *Esplanada*, where Zagorka had lived and worked during most of the interwar years. Paula Jurić described the event that took place in *Esplanada* hotel in 1933:

I came to her door, and she refused to help ... and the poor man was six years in the mental hospital in Steinhof near Vienna, and now he is in Stenjevac

²³⁵ Ban (civil governor of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia) used in South-Eastern Europe from approximately seventh to the twentieth century. Khuen-Héderváry was a notorious Hungarian who planned and implemented the Hungarization of Croatian society.

²³⁶ *Danica*, "Zlatno srce gospođe Zagorke" ["The Golden Heart of Missis Zagorka"], March, 1933, 10.

²³⁷ *Ibid.* In my interview in June of 2007 with Biljana Čakić-Veselić the director of the documentary film *Zagorka* (this documentary was recently aired on Croatian television), I learned that both of her brothers and her mother ended their lives in the mental institution, but through my research found no supporting documents that would reveal the destiny of her other brother.

for six long years. She never came to see him. Not once. She never came to see her mother, and she died in Stenjevac.²³⁸

Little has been written about Zagorka's early life and experiences. Although Zagorka left some autobiographical material, most of these texts dealt with her later life and events from her professional life. She publicly spoke about her childhood for the first time in 1938 when she published her autobiographical novel. The fact that she had written this novel so late in her life testifies to the hardships that she must have experienced throughout her life at every attempt to come face-to-face with her origins.²³⁹ Because no other information about her childhood is available, the most valuable source for a reconstruction of these early days is still, without a doubt, her autobiographical novel.²⁴⁰ In fact, it can be argued that autobiographical novel is especially valuable source for understanding Zagorka's inner self. First, the fact that she wrote this novel in 1938, when her career in *Ženski list* was ending, is telling in itself. This moment in her life was a moment of interrogation, a moment of pondering upon her accomplishments. She was already 65 years old when she decided to write this novel. The novel was intended to familiarize her public with her own life, and to gain some sympathy for the current hardships she was experiencing. It is possible that she wanted to offer another

²³⁸ Danica, "Golden Heart of Mrs. Zagorka," 10.

²³⁹ In the *Lekikon Hrvatskih pisaca* [Lexicon of Croatian Writers], (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2000) it is stated that she spoke with "touching honesty" about her family relations in *Kamen na cesti* (*The Stone on the Road*), 316.

²⁴⁰ The same material was recently used for a documentary movie about Zagorka and in the recent publication *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms*. Previously, this information was used in Stanko Lasi, "Književni počeci Marije Juri Zagorka (1873-1910)". *Uvod u monografiju* [The Literary Beginnings of Marija Juri Zagorka, 1873-1910, An Introduction to the Monograph]. (Zagreb: Znanje, 1986).

novel to her public, and not a biography, thinking that she would re-gain her old, and gain more readers if she published another novel. Maybe, simply because of the trying moment in her life in 1938, she chose to write about most disturbing and challenging events of her life, to let her public know, how she became who she is, and explain why she is making tough decisions still. *Kamen na putu (The Stone on the Road)* is a disturbing confession, but also a plot for the retelling of the story of her turbulent childhood that had inadvertently led to the awakening of Zagorka's feminist consciousness. She wrote this autobiographical novel in the third person, and the main character is a girl by the name of Mirjana. Zagorka's mother (Jelena in the novel) was torn by jealousy, and her fights with her husband, Zagorka's father, would often end in bloodshed. She had separated Zagorka from her brothers, and not until Zagorka was about five years old did she learn that she had brothers who were living in a separate part of the estate. Zagorka's first conscious moment about these dysfunctional family relationships was during one of her parents' fights. She writes, "... (E)verything else is in the dark, just this picture is clear. My first conscious moment, my first sense of being."²⁴¹

Her mother's preoccupation with sexual purity led the whole family to insanity. In one instance while visiting with her godmother in Varaždin, nine-year-old Zagorka attended mass at the local Catholic Church and kissed the hand of the priest, as was the custom at that time. However, both her mother and her godmother accused nine-year-old Marija of running after men. She wrote: "One afternoon, my godmother looked at me

²⁴¹ Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 4.

and said ‘Mirjana you are a tramp, hussy, gypsy, good-for-nothing, pervert...’²⁴² Such accusations tormented young Zagorka. In her own words of confession, she wrote:

The whole afternoon she sits in the garden interrogating her mind: What does it mean to run after men?... Mirjana feels she was splattered with something muddy, something disgusting, something stinky. She feels cold, freezing in her soul. The child feels ashamed, alone, and left like the stone on the road.²⁴³

The Stone on the Road is a dominant metaphor in this novel and points, in many ways, to the difficulty of the emergence of a female subject. Zagorka was beaten and pushed like the stone on the road. She was objectified and never considered to be somebody. Even later in life when she fought her way into the exclusively male occupation of journalism, she was oftentimes pushed around and accused of being a nobody. Zagorka’s early experiences made her identity more complex and led her to question her own gender. The underlying theme of her novel is the constant and unsuccessful escape from her identity as a woman. “I am drowning in the dungeon of my gender...in front of everything I desire stands woman.”²⁴⁴ Zagorka was at first home-schooled at the estate of Baron Geza Rauch and later in the school for girls in Varaždin. Her father was more supportive of her schooling, but he often expressed his opinion about the value of her education. He believed that the Baron would not school her for long because it didn’t seem that she would grow up to be pretty, and, therefore, he would have little interest in making her an educated woman.²⁴⁵ Zagorka at an early age had

²⁴² Ibid., 43.

²⁴³ Ibid., 40, 45.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 322.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

developed a sense for social justice. In the estate, she was cared for by her nanny (Marta in the novel), who was one of the few people who offered her support throughout her life. Zagorka played with peasant children and listened to stories about victories of good and justice as told by the local sage (Tenšek in the novel) and about the suffering of the peasant people.²⁴⁶



Figure 13. Zagorka with her mother, Josipa, at age 2.
Courtesy of Biljana Ćiki – Veseli

²⁴⁶ Ibid.



Figure 14. Zagorka (second from the left in the first row).²⁴⁷

When Zagorka was still a little girl, after venturing to the village, she had discovered that she had a sister whom her mother had given away to the peasant family. Her mother on many occasions had expressed hatred for the child who had kept her away from her duties as a wife. Zagorka vividly described the shock and utter dismay of the

²⁴⁷ Zagorka as a fourteen-year-old school girl wrote a play with a theme from the Roman times titled “Kalista and Doroteja”. The play was put on the stage in the school for the Christmas of 1886. Photograph from the Marija Juri Zagorka., *Kako je bilo* [The Way it Was], (Belgrade: 1953). Zagorka’s copy of the book is now in my possession by the courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car.

moment in which she had discovered a frail baby lying in the crib in a nearby peasant home.²⁴⁸ Years later, her sister Dragica (Dorica in the novel) would become her best friend. Dragica was the only female family member of Zagorka's family who she believed had any empathy and understanding for her life's desires.



Figure 15. The only preserved photograph of Zagorka and her sister Emilija Berta Juri (Dragica). Zagorka – on the right. Photograph published in *Ženski list* in July of 1931.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 16. Zagorka in 1895 as a young woman wearing folk dress from the Posavina, area of Croatia.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

Zagorka had attended a Catholic School of the Sisters of Mercy in Zagreb. She loved her studies and dreamed of becoming a teacher, actor, or a journalist. In the Convent's school at age twelve, she edited her first newspaper, *Samostanske novine*

(*Convent Newspaper*).²⁴⁹ She was reprimanded for her first literary endeavor, but her teacher (Sister Bernarda in the novel) recognized her talent and her rebellious spirit.

Zagorka later recalled her words:

Don't give up on your fate, your soul, the freedom of your spirit. Don't give them up for anything, for gold or medals, not even for your own life. What I mean is: do not subjugate yourself to anything. Just fight.²⁵⁰

However, her parents had forced her to leave this educational institution at age of sixteen in 1889 before she could finish her degree. She returned to her parent's home and remained there until 1890, when she was forced into marriage to a wealthy Hungarian railway engineer, Andrija Matray, who was 18 years her senior.²⁵¹ Zagorka remembered her complete disbelief when she had found out from her sister, Dragica, about the correspondence between her mother and her godmother that they had conducted for months with a certain Hungarian bachelor. After she had learned about the letters, she planned to escape, and she confided her escape plan only to her sister, Dragica. In her written recollection, she had not only wished to leave her family behind, but, together

²⁴⁹ She writes about this in her autobiographical novel and in her memoirs. In July 2007, I visited the Convent and talked to the Sisters of Mercy who held evidence of her staying there, but who did not have any evidence of her first newspaper except for stories that were still being told.

²⁵⁰ Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 85.

²⁵¹ Zagorka describes this event in her autobiographical novel. This marriage was arranged by Zagorka's mother and Zagorka's godmother. Her marriage to the Hungarian railway engineer is mentioned in several other sources, including Claire Buck's *Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature* (Prentice Hall General Reference: NY, 1992), Bora Đorđević, *Zagorka: Kronika Starog Zagreba* (Stvarnost: Zagreb, 1965), and Dunja Detoni-Dujmić, "Croatian women writers from the 'Moderna' to the Second World War" in *A History of Central European Women's Writing*, ed. Celia Hawkesworth (NY: Palgrave, 2001), 7. The most recent account can be found in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms*, in which Slavica Jakobović-Fribeć writes that she was married to Lajos Nagy, arguing that the real name of her husband was not known. The document certifying marriage between Marija Jurić and Andrija Matray from the Croatian State Archive is evidence of the exact date and of the name of her husband, information that had been thus far unknown, 198.

with her miserable family life, she also had wished to abandon her gender. One evening, she had found out that her mother and godmother were going out, and she had decided to dress up in male clothes and to leave her former life as a woman. She wished to continue living as a man, in the hope of liberation from the constraints of her gender:

In a deep hole in the garden, Mirjana lays down her female clothes. She has just buried her femininity. Never again will she wear a skirt. It is here in her godmother's garden that she'll let her femininity rot. She'll let it vanish the same way Mirjana will vanish. She will bury this convent girl whom they want to marry off. She is dressed as the village boy, and now she is a man. And she'll stay a man. First, she'll go to the Zagreb, to the theater, and she'll act as a male apprentice. She'll refuse to put on a female dress. Who can make her? ... She'll go and become an apprentice, and, when she earns enough money, she will go to school again. Nothing is impossible. She doesn't see obstacles anywhere. In her male suit, she can do anything. And she feels safe ... she is calm, she doesn't know the pain, the fear, or the weaknesses She feels no hesitation and no reluctance. The peace is within her, and the strength, and the sovereignty Mirjana is buried in the garden. The young man walks on her grave. Not one sigh is released, and not one tear is shed for her... Under the thick bushes is a bench... she lies down and feels comfortable. How wonderful it is to be a man! You can do as you wish, go to school, choose a university, rebel and fight against the enemies of your homeland, and even go to jail. That is happiness, pleasure, and honor. Now she can accomplish whatever she wants. Everything.²⁵²

That same evening, her father, Ivan, found her aboard the train, and, while she was begging him, "Papa, please don't give me away," he coldly replied, "Every girl needs to marry, and for you that's the best solution."²⁵³ Years later, he will remind her again of the patriarchal mentality of the world in which she lived: "But you must know by now what women are made for in this world."²⁵⁴

²⁵² Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 46-147.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 150.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 174.

The marriage certificate states that she was married on September 14, 1890.

Parents of both couples were present: Norberd and Magra Matray and Ivan and Josipa Domin. The two names of the witnesses were listed in the document as Dr. Žiga Fink and Julija Matray. The priest, Ivan Ku ek, marked the occupation of the groom as railway civil servant. No occupation is listed for Zagorka.²⁵⁵ Among the many photographs that had been preserved in her papers, I did not find any traces of this event. In her autobiographical novel, she briefly recounted her thoughts about the day in which she had gotten married:

Why do I have to like him, listen to him, and live the life that belongs to him? This is what my mother said I should do. Ah, and all these ladies during my wedding. They said, “It has to be like that because a woman has to be submissive to her husband.” Could somebody tell me who had arranged all this? If I were man, I wouldn’t have to be submissive. Nobody would command me.... God almighty, why did you make me a woman?²⁵⁶

Social conventions and dramatic married-life experiences²⁵⁷ had led her to flee from Hungary after five years of marriage. During the last three years of her married life, she had lived in Szombathely, a small provincial town in Hungary, and had written extensively in her hideout in the attic.²⁵⁸ She took telegraphy courses and learned

²⁵⁵Church Marriage Documents from the Varaždin Church Parish from 1890. Parish priest Ivan Ku ek. Entry 33, page 89, HAD.

²⁵⁶ Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 174.

²⁵⁷ Zagorka writes in her novel about physical abuse by hunger and mental abuse by her husband and his mother. One of the dominant themes in the novel is her increasing discomfort of life with this Hungarian, who repeatedly tried to deny her Croatian nationality by not allowing her to speak or write in Croatian.

²⁵⁸ Slavica Jakobovi -Fribec used for Zagorka the metaphor “madwoman in the attic,” borrowed from feminist critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar and their book *Madwoman in the Attic*, first published in 1979. The metaphor was used for women who wrote at the turn of the 20th Century, who were often hidden in attics. Slavica Jakobovi -Fribec, “Marija Juri Zagorka:

Hungarian perfectly. Somehow, her personal oppression was in synchronization with the imperial political oppression going on in her homeland, Croatia. Although Zagorka had learned the language of her husband, she had never wished to write in any other language but Croatian. On numerous occasions, her husband would prevent Zagorka from speaking her native Croatian, even during 1895, the year when her sister, Dragica, had stayed with her in her husband's house just before she became seriously ill with tuberculosis.²⁵⁹



Figure 17. Zagorka as a young woman in 1893.
 Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

protagonistica nepisane povijesti hrvatskog feminizma” [“Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism”], *Republika* 6 (2006): 14-25.

²⁵⁹ Zagorka, *Stone on the Road*, 242.

In October 1895, Stjepan Radić, later the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party,²⁶⁰ led a group of students who, in protest against Hungarian oppression, burned the Hungarian flag at the main square in Croatia's Capital, Zagreb, during the visit of the Austrian Emperor Franjo Josip I (Franz Joseph I). This event was a revolutionary moment for the Croatian younger generation to whom Zagorka belonged. Zagorka's husband had seen an opportunity to use her writing skills and asked her to write an article in which she would condemn the whole event. The article was supposed to be written in Hungarian and to be published in one of the many Budapest newspapers. She vehemently refused.²⁶¹ Her husband judged her behavior as an act of a madwoman and threatened her with life in the mental institution. She planned an escape that she successfully accomplished in October of 1895:

Dressed as a maid like most of her later literary protagonists, she ran toward her freedom, choosing her independence. This revolutionary political event corresponded with her personal revolution. "The personal is political" will become a revolutionary phrase of the Second-Wave Feminism decades later.²⁶²

She left Hungary and ran to find refuge with her uncle, who lived in Sremska Mitrovica, and then, somewhere between the winter of 1895 and the fall of 1896, she left

²⁶⁰ Founded by Stjepan Radić and his brother Ante Radić in 1904. It was the dominant political party in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and it had organized women around its political causes. See Dejan Djokić, *Elusive Compromise: The History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

²⁶¹ Ibid., and Slavica Jakobović-Fribec, "Marija Jurić Zagorka: protagonistica nepisane povijesti hrvatskog feminizma" ("Marija Jurić Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism"), 17.

²⁶² Ibid..

Sremska Mitrovica in her search for a professional life in Zagreb.²⁶³ She never returned to her home or to the home of any of her relatives. Her decision to work and to earn her own money was considered unacceptable. In October 1895, her husband issued a warrant of arrest for a mentally ill fugitive wife. As a fugitive, she was exposed to pursuit by the law.²⁶⁴ When she had come to Zagreb, she found a small room for rent with the help of her cousin (Marko in the novel), who attended the University in Zagreb. Not too many rooms in Zagreb at that time were available for single women. She was scrutinized for walking alone in the city without a male chaperon, so her cousin often served as the savior of her reputation. It was believed that only prostitutes walked alone.²⁶⁵ One night she was captured by the police. To avoid arrest, she cut her shoes and her only dress.²⁶⁶ When police found her, they had no doubt in their minds that the woman was disturbed, and she was immediately turned over to the mental hospital for evaluation. The physician declared that “everything is completely fine with her brain,” and for a while she was supporting herself by selling jewelry.²⁶⁷ Months later, her father came to look for her in Zagreb and begged her to return home, if for no other reason than for the reputation of the family, but she refused without ever looking back. Although alone and hungry, Marija

²⁶³ Zagreb is the Croatian Capital. See Marija Juri Zagorka in *Leksikon Hrvatskih pisaca* [Lexicon of Croatian Writers] (Školska knjiga: Zagreb, 2000).

²⁶⁴ Jakobovi - Fribec, *Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism*, 17.

²⁶⁵ Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 224.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 242.

²⁶⁷ Jakobovi -Fribec, *Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism*, 17.

Juri sat on her bed that night with a feeling of utmost calmness and a sense of unconquerable strength:

She sits on her bed. This rebellion is a miraculous food to satisfy the longings of her life. She feels the growth of her soul. This rebellion in her grew that night the same way heat expands mercury.²⁶⁸

3.3.2. *Obzor (Horizon) Years*

In 1896, two major events changed the course of Zagorka's life. One was the death of her beloved sister, Dragica. She remembered words that she had once uttered to Dragica about her marriage:

I don't like marriage. Even if I would like some man, the sole thought of getting married would take these feelings away. There is no happiness for me in this world. Something in me constantly screams from bitterness because I was not born a man. Only then I would be happy.... The only thing I dream of is to be a hero for my homeland.... In my dreams, I fight with male strength, and I win.... I'm so unhappy, and I feel disgusted for being a woman in this world.²⁶⁹

After Dragica had died from tuberculosis in the summer of 1896, Zagorka decided that, in memory of her sister, she would stop being angry about her female gender. Dragica was everything that the female soul could represent. Later, she would recount, "... (T)he time will come when women will replace the male soul."²⁷⁰ It could be argued that the deep emptiness that she had felt over the loss of her beloved sister was instantly filled with the feeling of female camaraderie and female sharing and that, during this event, Zagorka's feminist soul was finally awakened. The second event was the moment

²⁶⁸ Zagorka, *The Stone on the Road*, 131.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 242.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 350.

when Bishop Strossmayer had decided to send a letter of support for Zagorka's writing to the Editorial Office of *Obzor* that opened a new chapter in her life: the career in journalism.²⁷¹ Her work in *Obzor* was the most intensive during 1898 and 1899 and during the years 1903 and 1906.²⁷²

Even before her first serious journalistic work in *Obzor*, Zagorka published poems and stories in *Bršljan*, a well-accepted youth cultural magazine at the time. The first poem that she had written appeared the same year that she had got married in 1890.²⁷³ In March 1896, she published a 15-page story titled, "Peasant." She signed the story as Marija Matray, still using her married name.²⁷⁴ The article is a tale of two brothers, Rudolfo and Božidar, who are both landowners. Rudolfo is unappreciative of the peasants' work and treats them as slaves, while Božidar understands the importance of the land and peasant labor. Rudolfo leaves the land and wanders around the world, but ends up hungry and alone. After his return to his home country and his brothers' estate,

²⁷¹ The copy of the letter was published in the *Kako je bilo* [The Way it Was] (Belgrade: 1953), 15.

²⁷² See Stanko, Lasi, *Književni počeci Marije Juri Zagorke (1873-1910). "Uvod u monografiju"* ["The Literary Beginnings of Marija Juri Zagorka, 1873-1910, An Introduction to the Monograph"]. (Zagreb: Znanje, 1986)., and *Leksikon Hrvatskih pisaca* [Lexicon of Croatian Writers]. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2000.)

²⁷³ See *Obzor* article, "Marija Juric Zagorka: In the event of 40th anniversary of her journalistic and publishing work," December 3, 1937, 1. In 1890, she published two poems, "Pray" in number 7 of the July issue and "Sleep, sleep Jankice" in number 10 of the October issue. In 1891 and 1892, only two poems appeared, and in 1893. In 1894, three short stories appeared in issue 8, 10, and 12. Starting with 1895, she published more than four poems and short stories until 1898.

²⁷⁴ Zagorka writes in *What is my guilt?* that the editor-in-chief of *Obzor*, during their first meeting, referred to that article, saying that it was targeted against feudal gentlemen. See Marija Juric Zagorka, *What Is My Guilt?*, 452.

he asks Božidar for forgiveness and writes a children's story about the love for peasants and about the contribution of their labor. Zagorka writes:

He even wrote a book for children that ends like this: Yes, children, respect and love the peasant; he should be your role model, and from him learn to love your country and your work. Only the one who works like a peasant could truly love his home and at the same time support himself and feed the world. Peasants teach us what is useful for our country. Yes, children; never despise a peasant; even though he is not as educated as you are, he still holds a most respected place. Never be haughty if you are of noble origin!²⁷⁵

This 1896 article represents everything that Zagorka would try to stand for in her future journalistic and novelistic work: a strong sense of class justice and a belief that peasants and common people are true sources of patriotism. She believed that peasants held the strength to fight for the final disintegration of class differences and for the final fight that would result in national independence. Zagorka translated these class and national beliefs into gender, which would become one of the most important personal goals that was evident, not only in her journalistic work, but also in her political texts, novels, and dramas. She strongly believed that Croatian women had an important patriotic role to play in the Croatian society that was being oppressed by the colonial power of Austria and Hungary. Her appeal to women was also a critique of Croatian women of the day, who often had forgotten about their Croatian origin under the pressure of the so-called "modern" cultural trend to embrace everything that was produced abroad. This constant battle between modernism and traditionalism was characteristic of Zagorka's journalism. Zagorka in the late Nineteenth Century believed that politics were not only reserved for parliament, but that politics belonged to the home and that the home

²⁷⁵ Marija Matray, "Peasant", *Bršljan*, 3, March 1, 1896, 74-87.

was the prerogative of women. In her early work in *Obzor* in 1898, Zagorka wrote feuilletons and short stories with messages to women. Zagorka was also writing reportage from the travels of Bishop Strossmayer and his political party and covered debates in the Croatian parliament, Sabor. During one of these travels, she brought the story about Strossmayer's message to Croatian women. While delivering this message, Bishop Strossmayer, according to her report, cried:

“...The duty to enlighten the people and to bring them to the path of patriotism and freedom first lies in the hands of the Church, and then in the hands of women. If they raise their children in a patriotic spirit, if they instill in them a love for freedom, then our people will be saved. Therefore, women – be patriotic, be Croat women...” What do these tears mean to Croatian women?... “Why did he cry,” one woman asked me [about Bishop Strossmayer]. Why did he? This is a mighty good question, and the answer to this question is defeating... Can we deny that, in these challenging times, we have shown less patriotism than any other group of Slavic women?... Why? Partly we are preoccupied with everything foreign and our desire to copy foreign education... Our girl studies French and other foreign languages, knows all the popular foreign novelists, but she does not know who was the first Croatian king.... She does not know about Croatian novelists and poets, who are in many ways better than those from abroad. Not to mention the Croatian language. This is the most painful wound for us Croatian women. A Hungarian politician, who spent a lot of time in Croatia, once said, “German is the language of Croatian women.”²⁷⁶

That same year, Zagorka held the desk for international (Hungarian) politics and started a daily column dedicated to the issues of feminism and women's rights.²⁷⁷ In 1900, she published a critical review of the intersections between issues of fashion and issues of feminism:

²⁷⁶ Zagorka, “Maecenas' Tears,” *Obzor*, number 179, 1898, 71-72.

²⁷⁷ See *Obzor* article “Marija Juri Zagorka: In the event of the 40th anniversary of her journalistic and publishing work,” December 3, 1937 and *Obzor Spomen-Knjiga 1860-1935* [Horizon Memorial Book 1860-1935] in the article “One Hundred Years of Croatian Journalism,” published by *Obzor* in Zagreb in 1935, 269.

The whole enlightened world is preoccupied with the discussion of the so-called women's question. The purpose of this discussion is to liberate women from gender oppression and to give them freedom to make decisions about their own lives. Finally, the goal of this discussion is to help women achieve equality with men in every aspect of life. Last year at London's International Congress for Women's Rights, many promoted voting rights for women, rights to work outside of the home, and so on. In one word, everywhere women declared: "Down with the women's oppression!" While they were cheering enthusiastically for women's freedom, they were cramped in corsets, strained by the chains of the enslaving fashions. It is almost funny and nonsensical to talk about a woman's freedom while she is a slave of fashion... (S)uch fashion damages a woman's health and distorts her true natural beauty... (I)t is sickening to see frail young girls cramped into a corset until their bones crack, and it is sickening to see all these corpulent women torturing themselves to fit into one.... Fashion should work for women and not against them.... To talk about freedom while looking like an armored battleship is really an odd thing! First, we need to remove the corset so that we can breathe freely, and then we will be able to move freely everywhere else.²⁷⁸

This awakening of her political being in 1899 resulted in publishing of her first novel.²⁷⁹ This political novel ideologically followed the story of the oppressed Croatian railway workers and their oppressors, i.e., the Hungarians, metaphorically referring to the Hungarian treatment of Croatian lands and people. This novel had been coming out serially until Bishop Strossmayer financed this publication that "sparked a hurricane in Hungarian political circles...., and it was translated into Polish and Russian."²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Zagorka, "Fashion and Women's Question," *Obzor*, number 30-31, 1900, 68.

²⁷⁹ It is believed that she wrote and published this novel in 1901, but in her papers I found a copy of her first novel with an exact year and publisher: Dioni ka tiskara 1899. She had dedicated this copy to her friend, Ani ka Štefanek. She wrote: My first novel published by the Bishop Strossmayer to Ani ka Štefanek as a pledge of friendship. Signed Zagorka. Dated November 1947. Book in the private collection.

²⁸⁰ *Obzor-Memorial Book*, 269.

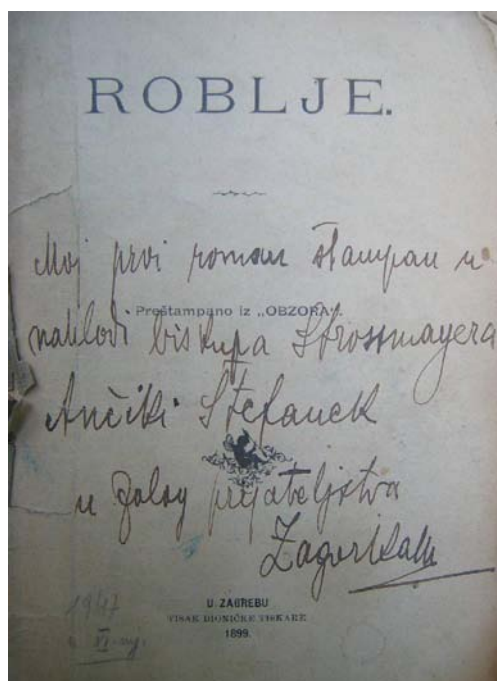


Figure 18. The first page of her first novel, “Slaves,” published in 1899.

Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

The influential political daily *Jutarnji List*, in a 1931 article that had been dedicated to Zagorka’s journalistic work, commented on the anger that this novel had provoked among Hungarian politicians in 1902. The unsigned author of the article cited the Hungarian newspaper, “*Magyar Ország*,” from June 10, 1902:

She spreads hatred against Hungarians among the Croats. Her writings are so respected that she could destroy the Hungarian people and Hungarian politics. We appeal to the Hungarian Government and ask that she be thrown into prison.... And this is not all. Not only has this novel flooded Croatia, but it has also been translated into Polish, a copy of which we have read. What is our Government doing? How is it possible that our Government does not see the deadly power of Zagorka, who incites her Croatian people to rise up against us Hungarians.”²⁸¹

²⁸¹ *Jutarnji List*, May 15, 1931, 3.

Although Zagorka fulfilled her wishes to become a professional journalist, and in the few years of her professional work had accomplished what no other woman had accomplished in Croatian journalism up to that time, her professional life was burdened by the unfavorable position of women in the society of that time. Celia Hawkesworth, in *Voices in the Shadows*, describes the rise of women's voices in Bosnia and Serbia. Although Croatia had its historical specificities, most historical accounts of the position of women in these societies could be applied to Croatia. First, women writers in the Balkans had emerged at the end of the Nineteenth Century. This was partly due to the changes that had been made to the Eighteenth Century marriage law throughout Austria-Hungary. Women were given the right to inherit half of the shared property, so, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, some women, such as Katarina Jankovi from Novi Sad in Serbia, were known to run their husbands' printing presses.²⁸²

Some evidence exists of the attempts to liberate voting rights for women in Austria-Hungary at that time.²⁸³ However, the overall society was characterized as being deeply patriarchal and with virtually no feminist expression.²⁸⁴ With her political commentaries and reports from Zagreb's parliamentary debates, as well as with her vivid political reportage from the Hungarian-Croatian parliament, Zagorka changed the face of

²⁸² Celia Hawkesworth, *Voices in the Shadows: Women and Verbal Art in Serbia and Bosnia* (New York: Ceupress: 2000).

²⁸³ In *The New York Times* article from October 14, 1894, a reprint of the report from the *Chicago Tribune* on places where women had whole or partial suffrage, Austria-Hungaria was mentioned as place where women voted by proxy for all elective office, and Croatia and Dalmatia were mentioned as places where women could vote in local elections.

²⁸⁴ *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*, ed. Anne Commire, (Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, 1999.), 100-101.

Croatian journalism. She had practiced investigative journalism at a time when journalism in Croatia was in its nascent stages.²⁸⁵ Zagorka's sustained fight against patriarchy is evidenced in the section on feminism that she introduced to *Obzor*. This daring deed placed Zagorka in the history of women writers as the "first woman in South Eastern Europe to express feminist ideas"²⁸⁶ and assured her the title of the "militant feminist whose place as the ultimate star is reserved in the unwritten feminist history of Croatia."²⁸⁷

In 1901, Zagorka wrote for the Croatian cultural newspaper, *Vienac*, and she began her correspondence with Sarajevo's (Bosnia) magazine, *Nada*.²⁸⁸ In *Vienac*, she wrote feminist sketches titled, *From a Women's World*.²⁸⁹ That same year, she wrote her first play, in which the main character was a woman who knew how to fight for life outside of the walls of the home. The play was premiered in Croatian theatres in January.

²⁸⁵ See *Obzor Memorial Book*, 269, and Sklevicky, *Hoses, Women and Wars*, 246.

²⁸⁶ Claire Buck, *Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature* (Prentice Hall General Reference: NY, 1992), 1165.

²⁸⁷ Sklevicky, *Horses, Women and Wars*, 245.

²⁸⁸ In the fond Ivo Politeo (Zagorka's friend and one of the most prominent Yugoslav lawyers in interwar years) in HDA, a little booklet is kept regarding members of *the Society of Croatian Writers*, dated January 1, 1901. Marija Juri is listed in the section of belletristic and again in the section of journalism. Although there were several women listed in the belletristic section, only one other woman was listed for the journalism section (Jambrišak Marija – Croatian woman activist and nationalist. As early as 1871 she demanded equal pay for woman teachers. She campaigned in Austria-Hungary for opening of the first school for women in Croatia. The school is still opened and bears her name). Among people who were members of the Managerial Board were Josip Pasari, editor of *Obzor*, Jovo (Jovan) Hranilovi, contributor to *Vienac*, and Ante Tresić-Pavić, editor of *Croatia*. RKP- POLITEO, II-9. From the Scope of the Society, 1926. Management and members of the *Society of Croatian Writers*, HAD.

²⁸⁹ Adela Milinović in 1908 article "Marija Juri Zagorka," published in the February issue of the magazine *Zvono* [The Bell] in celebration of 10th Anniversary of Zagorka's journalistic work, 10.

The play, *What a Woman Can Do*, did receive considerable attention, and *Hrvatsko*

Pravo magazine ran the critique:

“*What a Woman Can Do*” is not original, God knows ... but it should be noted that the issue in the matter was nicely developed. This play will be liked by wider audiences, and it will be especially useful for local amateur theaters because it is easy to develop for a stage performance. The content, in short, is: A beautiful young woman has a dried-out old professor for a husband, and he believes that it is best for a woman to always stay at home. On the advice of her friend, she cures her husband through jealousy. He is now ready to give her new dresses and takes her out to dance.... We should also note that the playwright is the young and talented writer Mrs. Juri i .²⁹⁰

In 1901, she reported from the Congress of Slavic Journalists held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and, in 1902, from the Congress held in Opatija, Croatia. In 1903, Zagorka became editor-in-chief of *Obzor* against the wishes of the publisher. She was an editor for a full five months from March through July during the upheaval against the Hungarian ban, Khuen-Héderváry,²⁹¹ who led oppressive politics toward the Croatian people, their language, and political rights.

After the arrest of *Obzor*'s editors, Josip Pasari and Dr. Milan Heimerl, Zagorka continued to run the newspaper. She organized Croatian women to protest loudly in the streets against oppressive Hungarian politics. These events were described in the foreign press.²⁹² She described these days in her autobiographical text, *What Is My Guilt?*:

In the year of 1903, the month of March, the resistance against 20 years of tyranny of the ban Héderváry broke out. The leaders of the opposition, led by

²⁹⁰ *Hrvatsko Pravo*, “What a Woman Can Do,” Number 1550, January 9, 1901, 15. Juri i - error in the original.

²⁹¹ He was removed as ban of Croatia in 1907 and became president of the Hungarian government. The new ban was Teodor Graf Pejacevi until 1908 and 1908 – 1910, Pavao baron Rauch.

²⁹².See Zagorka, *What Is My Guilt?*, 459 and *The Way it Was?*, 25.

Stipe Radi [Stjepan Radi], were thrown into jail. The Editorial in *Obzor* got correct information about Héderváry's plans to jail all of the journalists and editors. (When the police inspector warned the ban by saying that, "In this Editorial office also sits one woman," Héderváry said, "I have heard about this monster, so leave her in peace, she doesn't matter at all for one newspaper editorial. Do not jail any women. The whole of Europe would laugh at me.").... After I am done with the work on the newspaper, I go out, sometimes dressed as a man, and sometimes as a woman.... I have a great help from the members of my first women's organization, *Kolo radnih žena* [*The Circle of Working Women*], and among them is my right hand, the young and enthusiastic woman – Marija Krizman. She helped me to organize the women's demonstration against the ban. In *Obzor*, I published the call for women to come to mass at the Church of St. Mark. Eight hundred of them showed up, and some of them did not even know about our plan to demonstrate. But, as we opened the gate of the Church toward the Ban's Palace, we all cried, "Down with tyranny." European newspapers called this women's demonstration a miracle...²⁹³

Two weeks after these described events, Zagorka was jailed and thrown into solitary confinement for 48 hours. She spent 12 days in jail, where she wrote her second play, *Evica Gup eva*,²⁹⁴ in which she introduced a strong female protagonist who participated in and changed historical events.²⁹⁵ Later, she continued to develop a plethora of female characters in her novels, through which she expressed some of her

²⁹³ Zagorka, *What Is My Guilt?*, 459-460.

²⁹⁴ This play was proscribed by censors in Croatia, but several months later in Split (a city in Dalmatia that at the time was under the jurisdiction of Austria), the play was staged, and Zagorka herself helped direct the play. See *Jutarnji list*, May 15, 1931, 3. Article in magazine, *Jedinstvo* [Unity], from May 27, 1904 stated: "Zagorka with Evica Gup eva wrote the apotheosis to freedom.... Zagorka managed to bring applause to freedom, democracy, and applause to national and humanitarian ideals..." 7.

²⁹⁵ See Sklevicky, *Horses, Women and Wars*, 246, and *Obzor* article of December 3, 1937, 227. Her work on dramaturgy begs for close examination. Its scope and importance cannot be illuminated through this dissertation. Zagorka earned her nickname, "Red flag," after the play. Some newspapers accused her of promoting socialist, feminist, and nationalist ideas. See *Jutarnji List*, May 15, 1931, 3.

most important feminist ideas.²⁹⁶ For example, the newspaper *Jutarnji list* in 1933 in the article, “Women in Zagorka’s Novels,” wrote:

In Zagorka’s novels, the main agitators, for the most part, are women. All of these heroines are not sentimental lovers. They always fight for some idea – and, maybe simply because of that fact, all of these heroines are adored by so many readers.²⁹⁷

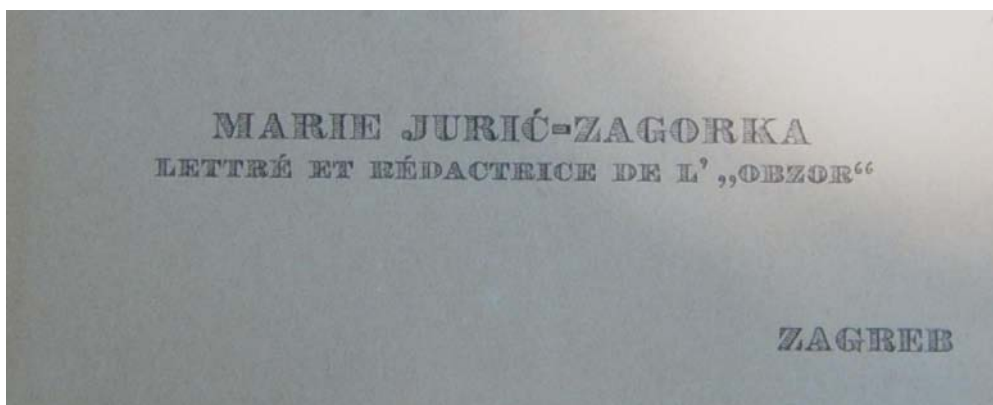


Figure 19. The card Zagorka carried at the time in her international travels.
In French: Writer and Editor of *Obzor*, Zagreb.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

After the upheaval, the situation in the *Obzor*’s editorial office turned to “normal.” Zagorka’s colleagues never mentioned that she was editor of *Obzor* in the year of 1903—not even in the article dedicated to her journalistic work that was published in the 1935 *Obzor*’s *Memorial book*. On another occasion, during the 40th anniversary of her journalistic work, not one word was published about her days when she was an editor of *Obzor*. In 1906, the Croatian-Serbian coalition won the election in Croatia and, led by Franjo Supilo, went to the Budapest parliament to represent Croatian politics of the new

²⁹⁶ See Dunja Detoni Dujmić, *Ljepša Polovica Književnosti* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska:1998)

²⁹⁷ See *Jutarnji list*, “Žene u Zagorkinim romanima” [“Women in Zagorka’s Novels”], , Number 7613, May 9, 1933, 5.

course.²⁹⁸ Zagorka immediately became *Obzor's* political correspondent for Budapest and Vienna. In 1906, Zagorka wrote the most interesting reportage from the Budapest parliament that changed political and informative journalism in Croatia.²⁹⁹ This new way of reporting significantly influenced the circulation of *Obzor*. With 5,000 copies published every day, this newspaper became the most read political daily in Croatia.³⁰⁰ Zagorka collected her reports and published them in 1907 under the title, *Broken Engagements: Pictures and Impressions from the Settlement and Last War with Hungarians in Common Parliament in Budapest*. In her introduction, she wrote:

When the Croatian-Serbian Coalition, as a newly elected delegation of the Kingdom of Croatia, first went to the common parliament in Budapest in May of 1906, I was sent to cover these events for *Obzor*. I had a chance to participate in all of these important events: from the day when we had proclaimed our new friendship with the Hungarians to the day we decided to “break our engagement” – how this event was labeled by the Slovakian representative Hodža. I collected interviews about every important event. I collected sketches and photographs of the ways in which Hungarian politicians thought about our situation, the Coalition, our Croatian people.... My purpose was to explain to my readers the Hungarian understanding of our statehood position in relations to Hungary....³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ See John R. Lampe, “The Failure of the Yugoslav National Idea,” *Studies in Eastern European Thought*, 1-2 (46) (1994): 69-89.

²⁹⁹ Horvat writes that she was the first journalist to bring political interviews and had brought a completely new way of reporting. “Besides facts, she reports on the general atmosphere, political and social, and the swift changes, gives profiles of the parliamentary personalities, registers political talk behind the scenes and brings effects of the debates. Then this was a completely new way of political reporting....” See Josip Horvat, *Povijest Novinstva Hrvatske 1771-1939* [*The History of Croatian Press 1771-1939*]. (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 2003), 307-308.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 308.

³⁰¹ Marija Juri Zagorka, “Introduction,” *Razvrgnute zaruke: Slike i dojmovi iz pomirbe i posljednjeg rata s Magjarima u zajedničkom saboru u Budimpešti* [Broken Engagements: Pictures and Impressions from the Settlement and Last War with Hungarians in Common Parliament in Budapest], Published by Milivoj Majcen: Zagreb, 1907. Copy in the DAZ.

An unsigned author from the January 1908 issue of the magazine *Zvono* (*The Bell*) wrote about Zagorka's reporting from the Budapest parliament:

The "reporter"— is still undervalued. But if we take examples from around the world, we see that unusual capabilities are needed for a good reporter. Exceptional examples of reporting, such as one by Barzini describing the Beijing-Paris automobile race, signal the coming of a new literary genre. Zagorka introduced a clear, literary, lively, and cinematographic style of reporting in her reports from the Pest parliament. She rescued political reporting from dry theory and chronology and introduced a human touch to the reporting that brought it much closer to the public. Her descriptions of situations, her characterizations, interviews, descriptions of moods, everything is full of life and shows very sharp observations, wit, and effortless writing. If we consider the fact that these articles were written in the parliament, coffee shops, and on the road, and in great haste, then they are testimony to a great will for reporting that is more than just routine: it reflects a special intuition.³⁰²

Ten years after she had been officially employed as a journalist at *Obzor*, she was for the first time recognized publicly for her work in journalism. During the 1907 Congress of Journalists in Budapest, male journalists from throughout Europe organized a celebration that was specifically dedicated to her journalistic work. A woman journalist as a parliamentary reporter represented an oddity in European journalistic circles.

Several Croatian newspapers reported on that event, but foreign newspapers gave it much more attention. *Obzor* never mentioned the event. Adela Milinovi, in her article written for the professional magazine for women teachers, *Doma e Ognjište* (*Home Fires*), brought quotations from two foreign newspapers. One was the Hungarian *Magyar Est*, and another was the French *La Figaro*, in which the French journalist Duboyer spoke about his impression of Zagorka:

The Hungarians greeted her more warmly for her 10th Jubilee than did her fellow Croats. All newspapers praised her enthusiastically.... *Magyar Est* writes: "Croatian journalists celebrate something unusual that we unfortunately cannot

³⁰² See "Jubilee of a Woman Journalist," *Zvono* (*The Bell*), January, 1908, 58.

celebrate. Their only woman journalist, a correspondent for a political newspaper, has been reporting for 10 years already! We would not comment on this event if we did not have an opportunity to meet her in our parliament, where she is the most popular member among the foreign correspondents. We are all amazed by her persistence and her sharpness, the skill and ease with which she has reported all by herself – as if she were playing a game. She reported on the events so swiftly ... it would take two or even three of us to do this kind of work for just one newspaper. We would all gather around her, and we would ask her to give us information, we politicized with her and admired her zealous patriotism. If we only had such a woman – such a patriot, who can not only feel, but also work for her people! And look at us, we mock Croats – in the end, can we say that we have such women? Can we conquer the people who have such women? At this time, we need to celebrate this Jubilee of the Croatian woman reporter, because she is also ours. She modernized our parliament... It is true, as much as the Obstruction harmed us – we also gained because we got a woman colleague and, without her, our parliament would not be the most modern in Europe.” The French journalist who was there during the Obstruction wrote for *Figaro* (sic): “Something strange struck me in the Hungarian parliament. There sits a young girl with big blue eyes, and reports for Zagreb’s *Obzor*, translates and informs her Hungarian, German, Russian, and Italian colleagues, and eagerly politicizes for her homeland. A little monster upheld by the Hungarian parliament above everybody else. Hungarians should not complain about the Obstruction where she is concerned.³⁰³

Zagorka was delighted with the attention and recognition that she finally received for her hard work. Upon her return to Zagreb, she was attacked by her colleagues in the editorial office of *Obzor*. Instead of pride, they offered her resignation. On the other side, three Hungarian newspapers, *Pester Lloyd*, *Budapesti Hirlap*, and *AZ EST*, offered her to write for them as a referent for Yugoslav politics.³⁰⁴ Turbulent political events worked in her favor. *Obzor* needed an experienced journalist who spoke German and Hungarian, and instead of resignation they offered her to go to Vienna and cover events from the

³⁰³ Adela Milinovi, “Marija Zagorka,” *Doma e ognjište*, Number 6, February, 1908, 104.

³⁰⁴ Zagorka kept the correspondence her whole life, maybe in regret that she did not accept offers that could have resolved her existence, but she went for patriotism and once again returned to her home country and her base newspaper, *Obzor*. She wrote about these events in *What Is My Guilt?*, 467.

famous Friedjung process in 1909.³⁰⁵ During her stay in Vienna, she reported on the alleged treason committed by the Croatian-Serbian Coalition against the Monarchy. Zagorka took a political stance to privately support the coalition. She was faced with a call to the office of Foreign Policy Minister Aehrenthal.³⁰⁶ In her unpublished manuscript *My Political Work*, Zagorka described this meeting:

The Minister of Foreign Policy Ehrental [Aehrenthal] scolded me and warned me personally to do only my reporting and to leave aside propaganda for the treasonable Coalition. I told the Minister this: “Officially, I am a reporter, but privately I volunteer to represent the foreign ministry of the Coalition, and I am not afraid of anyone’s threat.”³⁰⁷

Around the same time, she was actively engaged in giving numerous speeches to women’s organizations and their members throughout Croatia, Slavonija, Slovenija, and Bosnia. The only trace of these early feminist activist engagements can be found in her text, *The Way it Was*:

My lectures were titled, “Woman is a Part of the Nation,” “Croatian Woman in National Struggle,” “Politics and Women,” “Voting Rights and Women...” I gave over 200 lectures....³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ The controversies over the Friedjung process (Croatian-Serbian Coalition wrongly accused for treason in a false process) is well-described in Alan J. P. Taylor, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

³⁰⁶ Graf von Alois Lexa Aehrenthal (1854–1912) was the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister (1906–12). The chief event of his ministry was the Austrian annexation (1908) of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Allegedly, he held some documents against the Croatian-Serbian Coalition, but Zagorka did not believe him. This is how she recalled his words: Remember, if you tell this to somebody, I will say that I never saw you before ... and everybody will trust me because I am a man, and nobody will believe you, a woman. Nobody ... You came to this world just a little bit too early, Miss Journalist!” As described in Zagorka, *What Is My Guilt?*, 470.

³⁰⁷ Marija Juri Zagorka, *My Political Work*, Unpublished Memoirs in Private Collection, 5.

³⁰⁸ Zagorka, *The Way it Was*, 39.



Figure 20. Zagorka in Budapest Parliament 1907.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

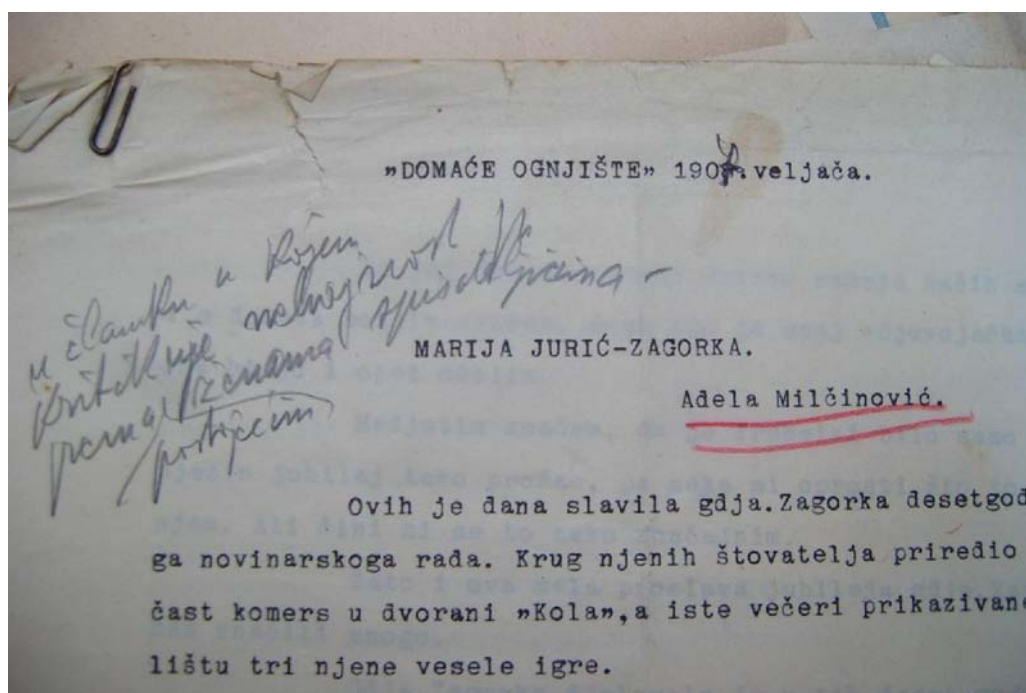


Figure 21. An original copy of the article by Adela Milčinović with Zagorka's edits. In the corner: In the article, she criticizes indolence toward today's women writers. *Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car*

In Zagreb, she continued to write for *Obzor*, and she joined the feminist polemic with an article, "Napredna žena i danasnji muškarci" ("A Progressive Woman and Today's Men"), published in *Zvono* (*The Bell*) in January 1909. The polemic was opened by Mira Konda³⁰⁹ in December 1908, and, along with Zagorka, another influential feminist of the day, Zofka Kveder – Jelovšek,³¹⁰ joined the polemic. Zagorka set forth her belief that a woman should not strive to be anything else than a woman. Zagorka would fall into the category of those feminists who believed in difference and those

³⁰⁹ Croatian feminist and writer.

³¹⁰ Croatian and Slovenian writer. She began publishing the magazine, *Ženski svijet* [Women's World] in 1917 (later called *Jugoslavenska žena* /*Yugoslav Woman*, published only until 1920). See Katja Mihurko Poniž, *Držno druga na: Zofka Kveder in podobe ženskosti* [Impudently Different: Zofka Kveder and Images of Femininity]. (Ljubljana, 2003).

feminists who believed that this difference is the basis for equality. Zagorka also believed that women and men should be collaborators in striving for equality:

I believe that the progressive woman has a healthy understanding of life. She strives for higher progressive goals, but never ignores nature. I think this is the main mistake of so many women world organizers of the women's movement in Europe and across the Ocean. Women should go headlong with men, but they should stay women.... Nature created women as different from the nature of men, but this very nature provided women with the mind and the capability to climb to the same heights as men.... Yes, it is true, a progressive woman needs a man to accomplish her work within the realm of humanity.³¹¹

Women in the polemic were publicly attacked by the Croatian poet Antun Gustav Matoš, who believed that a woman was created for kitchen and bedroom.³¹² During these years of polemics and expression of feminist ideas, Zagorka was involved in a relationship with fellow journalist and writer Slavko Amadej Vodvák, whom she married in 1911. In her private life, she was finally supported and loved, but this marriage lasted only for short three years. They divorced at the outbreak of World War I in 1914.³¹³

³¹¹ Marija Juri Zagorka, "Napredna žena današnji muškarcima" ["Progressive Woman and Today's Men"], *Zvono* [The Bell], January 2, 1909, Nuber 1, 12-13.

³¹² Slavica Jakobović-Fribeć, "Marija Juri Zagorka: protagonistica nepisane povijesti hrvatskog feminizma" ("Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism"), *Republika* 6, (2006):14-25 20. Zagorka also mentioned that his misogynist beliefs were invoked in 1984 during another polemic against feminist writers in Croatia. Literary critic Igor Mandić, in his article, "What Do These Women Really Want?," accused Croatian women journalists and women writers of late 1980 (among them Slavenka Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić, today world-acclaimed writers) of the production of gossip and kitchen literature., 21.

³¹³ Very little is known about her life with Slavko, but the director of the documentary on Zagorka in a conversation in early June 2007 told me that she had found out that his family was against this marriage and that he married her mostly for professional reasons. Together, they edited the magazine, *Male Novine* and *Ilustrovani tjednik*.



Figure 22. Her Hungarian personal identification card shows the year 1911 and the name Vodvarška Zagorka.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

Years later, Zagorka would engage in a relationship with another man, Rudolf Habeduš Katedralis, a writer with whom she had found common interests in historical research and in writing historical novels. However in 1929, this relationship ended in a bitter controversy over the historical novel, *Catacombs of Saint Mark*. Zagorka claimed that she had written years before a novel under the same title that was now being published by Katedralis and Dr. Duje Girometti. She wrote a long polemic on May 18, 1929, that was published in the magazine *Ve er* as a final response to the controversy:

I say here only as much as it is needed, to explain my previous responses. I am deeply convinced that this novel, *Catacombs of Saint Mark*, would have never been published without my novel with the same title.... My dear and respected readers! I want to use this opportunity to thank you all for writing to me with such sympathy and trust....³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Marija Juri Zagorka, "A Response to Mr. Habeduš and Dr. Duje Girometti," *Ve er*, May 18, 1929, 6.

On the advice of Bishop Strossmayer, Zagorka started writing novels after her return from Vienna.³¹⁵ In 1910, she wrote her first historical novel, *Princess from the Petrinjska Street*. This novel was published in serial editions in the newspaper, *Croatian News*. That same year, she was one of the founders of the Croatian Society of Professional Journalists.³¹⁶ After Vienna, she was often accused of being anti-German, especially after protesting against the flood of German novels and magazines at the Croatian booksellers.³¹⁷ After the success of Zagorka's first novel published in the *Croatian News*, her base newspaper, *Obzor*, saw an economic opportunity to raise circulation by publishing novels for wide readership. Finally, Zagorka was pushed out of political journalism into novel-writing, which was thought, at the time, to be a more suitable occupation for a woman. In 1912, Zagorka published a series of novels in *Little Newspaper*³¹⁸ that would later become her most popular novel of all times, *The Witch from the Gri*. This novel was dramatized by Zagorka and staged on July 18, 1916. The novel and the play became popular, both at home and among Croatian immigrants in the

³¹⁵ Slavica Jakobovič-Fribeč, "Marija Juri Zagorka: protagonistica nepisane povijesti hrvatskog feminizma" ["Marija Juri Zagorka: Protagonist of the Unwritten History of Croatian Feminism"], *Republika* 6 (2006): 14-25, 20.

³¹⁶ In the meeting November 20, 1910, the elected president of the society became Milan Grlovič, and the "members of the committee were Ivan Perisič, Toni Schlegel, Veleslav Vilder, Ferdinand Pajas, Zvonimir Vukelič, and Marija Juri Zagorka." See Josip Horvat, *Povijest Novinstva Hrvatske 1771-1939* [The History of Croatian Press 1771-1939], 317.

³¹⁷ It is believed that she went around Zagreb warning people on the street not to speak German, but rather to use their own language, Croatian.

³¹⁸ Published in 1910 by Dionička tiskara, publisher of *Obzor*. *Little Newspaper* gained wide readership because of Zagorka's novel. Two years later in 1912, the printing house of Ignjat Granitz published *Jutarnji list*, which at the time supported the existing regime. *Jutarnji list* would thrive in the interwar years for the same reason. See Josip Horvat, *History of the Press in Croatia 1771-1939*, 311.

United States.³¹⁹ It is believed that, during World War I, she worked closely with her husband, Slavko, on dramatizing this play.³²⁰ In her papers, there is no trace of Slavko Amadej Vodvák. She never mentioned him in any of her autobiographical texts. With the war, another part of her private life was forever buried.

3.3.3. The Mature Years: Ideologies and Becoming of Zagorka

In 1917, Zagorka became inspired by the October Revolution and, in 1918, she wrote the novel titled, *The Red Ocean*. In her autobiographical text, *What Is My Guilt?*, she clearly explained her fascination with Marxism:

I have known about Marx through Dr. Milan Heimerl since 1903. Ever since 1896 and until this day, the fact that I am a woman has been an obstacle for me in my every step. Marx brings equality for all people and brings hope for the elimination of gender inequality. So naturally, because of my desire for equality between women and men, this revolution had a deep influence on me. This revolution left a deep imprint on my destiny. My best friends are not alive anymore, so this new hope in democracy I entrusted to my new novel....³²¹

The impact of the October Revolution and its socialist ideas on Zagorka's personal ideology was without doubt profound. In her undated and unpublished manuscript, *My Political Work*, she mentioned this novel once again:

At the onset of World War I, I continued my propaganda with novels. *Republicans* show Habsburg-German oppression. Our democratic people raised their voice against this clerical-monarchist oppression, and in this struggle many

³¹⁹ She writes about her popularity in the United States in *The Way it Was*. I also found a copy of the poster in her personal papers from the play staged in St. Louis, Missouri. Poster undated in the private collection.

³²⁰ Slavica Jakobovič-Fribeč, "Marija Jurič Zagorka," *Bibliographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe 19th and 20th Centuries* (Budapest and New York: CEU PRESS 2006), 197.

³²¹ Zagorka, *What Is My Guilt?*, 480.

Croats and Serbs gave their lives. At the beginning of 1918, I started to write for, at the time, the small newspaper, *Jutarnji list*. I started with publishing the fantastic war novel, *The Red Ocean*. There I brought the idea of complete equality of all classes, and that I said completely openly. In the plot, one Croat with one Serb and one Slovenian fight against the “island of terror” (Germany) and the ruler of the island who attempts to conquer the whole world. This ruler is Vilim Ossado (Czar Vilim) and his adjutant Karlo Servus (Czar Karlo). This novel passed censorship because I wrote it in the style of the fantastic novels that had been written by Jules Verne. The novel attracted an incredible number of readers to *Jutarnji list*.³²²

After the war, Zagorka, along with writing historical novels, became more engaged in organizations that fought for women’s causes. She closely aligned herself with the largest Croatian woman’s organization, *Hrvatska Žena (Croatian Woman)*, that had members among immigrant Croatian women in the United States and Canada.³²³ In 1919, Zagorka traveled to Belgrade to report from the first congress of the *National Women’s Union of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. Dominated as it was by Serbian suffragettes, Zagorka wasn’t persuaded that this organization would represent the interests of Croatian women. Indeed, the inter-war period in Croatia was colored by the Croatian question, and many women’s organizations, the largest of which was *Hrvatska žena*, were organized around cultural and social welfare activities to build foundations for the revival of Croatian culture.³²⁴ As a result of the fear of the rise of Serbian hegemony and of the dominance of Serbian women in the *National Women’s Union of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*, Zagorka made the decision to accept the editorship of *Ženski list (Women’s*

³²² Marija Juri Zagorka, *My political Work*, 4-5. Private collection.

³²³ The organization was established on January 27, 1929. During the interwar years, this organization established 26 branches throughout the United States with President Marija Zuro. See Lucija Benyovsky, *Društvo Hrvatska Žena u Kralovcu 1921-1945 and 1991-1996* [Society Croatian Woman in Karlovac 1921-1945 and 1991-1996] (Karlovac, 1996), 67-69.

³²⁴ See Melissa Bokovoy, “Croatia,” in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester University Press, 2003),

Paper) in 1925. Her intense work on writing novels during the interwar years and the editorship of this magazine were also a result of her early recognition of the rise of mass culture³²⁵ and of its significance for the promotion of the women's question. *Ženski list* had a recognized feminist perspective, although, at times, it denied that it promoted feminist views. Its political agenda was apparent in numerous articles about women's rights in Croatia as well as in other countries. It featured articles by and interviews with European writers on women's suffrage. Bokovoy finds *Ženski list* to be almost a Croatian *National Geographic* by featuring numerous articles on women in different professions (police women, aviators, doctors) in Croatia and abroad.³²⁶ Throughout the interwar years, Zagorka wrote extensively, but mostly novels and plays. In an article published in *Ve er* (*Evening*) in 1940, it is stated that "in the thirty years of her work, Zagorka wrote 6,272,631 printed words."³²⁷ Zagorka received considerable attention again in 1931 when her fellow woman journalist in *Ženski list*, Olga Baldi -Bivec, organized a public celebration of the 30th anniversary of her journalistic work.³²⁸ Olga Baldi -Bivec, in the July issue of *Ženski list*, published articles on seven full pages about Zagorka and her Jubilee. The organized event in the National Theatre on May 27 was filled with representatives of the cultural and humanitarian societies, but most of all the masses of

³²⁵ Croatian writer Pavao Pavlicic writes that Zagorka was among the first to recognize the emergence of the mass culture, recognizing her as the "first Croatian author of mass literature" in Pavao Pavlicic, *Rukoljub: Pisma Slavnim Zenama* (Slon: Zagreb, 1995), 7.

³²⁶ Melissa Bokovoy, "Croatia" 113. In 1938, Zagorka left *Ženski list* and founded another magazine for women, *Hrvatica* [Croat Woman].

³²⁷ *Ve er*, Number 5830, 1940, 5-6.

³²⁸ Document about the organization of a celebration dated April 9, 1931, held in the archives of the Croatian Society of Journalists (HND).

her readers. Queen Mary of Yugoslavia sent an official letter to Zagorka, inviting her to sit with her for a tea on June 6, on which occasion Zagorka was rewarded for her work with the Medal of Honor.³²⁹

In her speech that night, Zagorka said:

It is easy to write, and it is hard to talk! But still my heart tells me this: “Look at your friends here tonight”.... This gives me the courage that I need in this greatest moment of my life.... I have to tell you something personal, because I will never again see you like I see you tonight. All my work was a result of the irrepressible need of my soul – it was the only condition to my soul living! It was my whole happiness – and all of my pain! And your love – I tell you honestly and openly – was my guiding light!³³⁰

This 30th Anniversary of Zagorka’s work got coverage in the European newspapers in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Some newspapers continued publishing stories about the first woman journalist in Central Europe for years to come (See figures 14 and 15). Never again did Zagorka gain such a public support and recognition of her work. The late 1930s became radically different as socialist and anti-German sentiments and the increasingly rightist political environment pushed Zagorka outside of the public work. In the 1920s, Zagorka attempted to go back to political journalism and left for Belgrade to report from the parliament for the *Jutarnji list*. After only four days, she returned to Zagreb. In her own words, Zagorka had made some undesirable comments about Croatia and the Croatian idea of the republican system to Nikola Pašić, the prime minister of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who was insulted and decided that he would not give her any statements in the future.³³¹

³²⁹ Olga Baldi -Bivec, *Ženski list*, July, 1931, Number 7, 28-29.

³³⁰ “Mrs. Zagorka’s Speech,” *Ženski list*, July, 1931, Number 7, 28.

³³¹ See Manuscript *My Political Work*, 5. Private collection.

In Zagreb, Zagorka returned to covering criminal investigations and reports from the court and police and to writing her novels. In 1929, Zagorka went to Prague as a guest of Tomáš Masaryk, where she gave several political lectures and met with representatives of women's organizations. Zagorka engaged in historical research of the 12th and 13th Centuries, and, after her return to Zagreb, she wrote two novels – *Plameni Križari* (*Flaming Crusaders*), and the controversial novel, *K i Lotrš ak* (*The Daughter of Lotrš ak*). Zagorka had already earned the reputation that she was anti-German and anti-clerical, but, after having published these two novels, all clerics in Croatia rose up against her. Clerical women's organizations in Zagreb even attempted to publicly boycott her 1931 Jubilee.³³² In the 1930s, Zagorka continued to write novels and to adapt them for the stage.³³³ She also continued to be engaged with women's organizations and actively participated in the promotion of gender and class equality, better health and education opportunities, and better employment opportunities for women. She gave a lecture for the women members of the *Hrvatska žena* branch in Vukovar on February 26, 1939. This public lecture focused on the patriotic role of women in society and of gender as a means to promote equality among sexes.³³⁴

³³² Ibid, 5.

³³³ Fourteen of her plays were adapted for the stage until 1940 and were shown in the Croatian National Theatre. They attracted the masses, and, in the interwar years, Zagorka became the most popular public figure in Croatia. In one poll in *Jutarnji list*, citizens were electing the two most recognizable public figures of interwar Europe (male and female). Zagorka was the winner for the most popular female public figure, and Hitler was voted to be the most recognizable male of interwar Europe. See Slavica Jakobovic Fribec, Marija Juri Zagorka, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 19th and 20th Centuries*, 197, and the documentary film *Zagorka*, directed by Biljana Caki Veseli. Aired December 1, 2007, Croatian Television (HTV).

³³⁴ "Public lecture Mrs. Marija Juri Zagorka, Croatian writer and journalist from Zagreb will talk about the topic 'The Strongest Weapon.' We invite respectable citizens to come

At the end of 1938, Zagorka left *Ženski list*, and, in early 1939, she began publishing a new magazine titled, *Hrvatica (Croat Woman)*.³³⁵ In *Hrvatica*, Zagorka continued her patriotic and feminist work. In the very first issue in January 1939, she marked the beginning of this publication with the Editorial titled “Zašto mislim da nam je potreban list Hrvatica” (“Why Do I Think We Need the Paper Hrvatica?”), which openly established this publication in a dramatically patriotic tone:

All the women in the world live with the sense of responsibility toward their people. All of women’s problems and feelings are developed under the circumstances of the lives of their people.... (T)he spirit of the family cannot be international, so the spirit of a woman cannot be international either. The main reason is that all of her feelings are connected with the conditions of the existence of her people. Hence, our Croatian woman is a peculiar personality: by the way she thinks, feels, and acts – by all of her being. Her home fires are the reflection of her whole national being. This is the reason why I want to publish this magazine that would serve as a true reflection of our Croatian woman in all her emotional and social life – as a human being, as a mother, and as a housewife.... I would like for *Hrvatica*, which I intend to publish in the true spirit of journalism, to be a mediator between all Croatian women regardless of where they are – in the family life or in the public work. I want to bring all of our women together to exchange their thoughts, to express their exceptional capabilities, and to join all of their strengths for their advancement and the advancement of our people. I did everything to try to succeed in this project. I decided to charge per copy only as much as it is necessary to cover the printing expenses.... So here it is. I offer you the first issue of *Hrvatica*, the way I have envisioned it – and you, read, judge, and send comments. ³³⁶

to the lecture of our beloved writer of ‘The Witch From the Gri ,’ ‘Secret of the Bloody Bridge,’ ‘Gordana,’ ‘Queen of Croats,’ etc.” Poster in the private collection..

³³⁵ Marija Juri Zagorka registered *Hrvatica [Croat Woman]* in November 1938. The document kept in the HDA shows that she had registered this publication with the Attorney General (in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, it was mandatory for publishers to register their publications with the Attorney General). The document states: “Attorney General No. Kns. 2700/1938.-1. To Attorney General in Zagreb. Marija Juri Zagorka from Zagreb has declared on the 26.XI.-1938 the attempt to initiate publication of the paper titled *Croat Woman*, which will be published once each month. It will be printed in the ‘Tipografija’ printers in Zagreb, Dolac kbr. 8. Editor, owner and publisher is Marija Juri – Zagorka from Zagreb Dolac br. 8. Attorney General, in Zagreb, on 26. November 1938.” DN- KS 1/1938, 53-565, HDA. The magazine had blue and red editions. The blue *Hrvatica* had, in addition, patterns for dresses and embroidery.

³³⁶ Zagorka, “Why Do I Think We Need the Paper Hrvatica,” *Hrvatica*, 1, 1939, 5.



Figure 23. The cover of the blue *Hrvatica*, July, 1940.

Most of the articles published in *Hrvatica* were written by Zagorka. She gathered material from organizations and people with whom she had developed friendly relationships throughout the years. Many of them were women writers, artists, and women representatives of numerous women's organizations and women's educational institutions, including immigrant women from the United States with whom she had maintained relationships throughout the interwar years. *Hrvatica* in many ways represented political and economic propaganda material for women in the pre-World War II Croatia. The main goal, as she had stated in her introduction, was to open up a space for women's engagement in national causes. However, another important goal for Zagorka, as has emerged from my reading of *Hrvatica*, was not only to invite women to the political life of the country, but also to encourage them to participate in the economic public sphere. In the very first issue, she brought several pages on women's opportunities

in the economic public sphere. In an article titled, “Galerija žena u javnom radu” (“Gallery of the Women Public Workers”), she invited readers to give her information on women in their immediate surroundings who were engaged in the public work.³³⁷ She continued to bring stories about women workers in the economic public sphere. Under the title, “One koje zarađuju u zvanju” (“Those Who Earn in Their Calling”), she brought three short articles about women factory workers, women intellectuals, and women in entrepreneurship and trade. Zagorka didn’t have a particularly good sense for the business side by her idealism-driven work. She was in a constant battle with the printers, who thought that the magazine was not profitable.³³⁸ In an undated document³³⁹ written to one of her subscribers, Zagorka explained how she got into the rather damaging business strategy:

Dear and respectable Madam!

I was informed that you wish to cancel your subscription because the management had warned you about your debt. I am not trying to talk you into another subscription; however, I owe to myself this explanation. When I had decided to publish *Hrvatica*, I had declared that I have a duty to give our Croatian women a magazine that would serve as propaganda material for everything that is Croatian. I felt that I had this duty as the oldest and the only professional Croatian woman journalist. To serve this purpose, I had declared that I would give my work for free and that women subscribers would pay for the paper, printing, and

³³⁷ “Gallery of Women Public Workers,” *Hrvatica*, 1, 1939, 14.

³³⁸ In a letter sent by Kamilo Kovačić, the manager of “The Croatian Paper” and “Citizen’s Printing House” on the March 4, 1940 to Zagorka from Osijek, he gives her financial advice: “...as far as *Hrvatica* is concerned, I would advise the following – you need to ask from ‘Tipografija’ to give you a salary. Why should you work for free?” Letter in the private collection..

³³⁹ The typed letter addressed to the woman subscriber from the editorial office of *Hrvatica* – magazine for social, cultural and family problems of our woman and for the needs of our domestic life, Zagreb, Square of Louis Barthou, no., 2. There were several copies of the original in Zagorka’s papers. One was given to me as a courtesy from Željko and Marinka Car.

fashion-and-needlework sections of the magazine. Therefore, I had decided to charge only 5 din.- for the red and 8 din.- for the blue *Hrvatica*, and you can see that, with such calculation, there is not one single penny left. For that reason, if a subscriber does not cover the debt, I have to cover it from my own pocket and sacrifice a night of work to pay the subscriber's debt.... The management had sent such harsh admonition to our subscribers without my knowledge because they knew that I have to work day-and-night to assure another publication....³⁴⁰

Zagorka

This letter not only shows her concern for the survival of *Hrvatica*, but, most of all, it shows disappointment over her idea that *Hrvatica* was first and foremost a collaborative project between her and her women readers. She saw *Hrvatica* as a collaborative project between the magazine and all women in the political, spiritual, and economic sense. In the first issue below the editorial, she published an invitation to women to join as contributors: "Hrvatske sestre postanite sve suradnice" ("Croatian Sisters – All of You, Become Contributors!"), She wrote:

We invite all Croatian women's organizations, humanitarian, religious, cultural organizations ... women's organizations regardless of class, organizations of intellectual women, and women workers ... we invite mothers and teachers to give us their opinions ... we invite housewives to tell us about their lives and their needs....³⁴¹

To initiate communication in the very first issue, Zagorka invited women to respond to the prize competition by answering three questions:

Tell us the story of the most important event of your life?... Are you happy and satisfied with your calling and your earnings, or would you rather like to live only as a mother and a housewife?... and, what would be your suggestion to our governmental body if you had active and passive voting rights? The last question we ask here we clarify as follows: If you had a right to vote and if you were to be

³⁴⁰ Undated letter to the subscriber in private collection.

³⁴¹ Zagorka, "Croatian Sisters – All of You, Become Contributors!" *Hrvatica*, 1, 1939, 5.

elected to be a parliamentary representative, what reforms and laws would you recommend for the improvement of the life of the Croatian people?³⁴²

Women responded in large numbers. Some of the responses were published in upcoming issues, and women shared their life experiences. In almost equal numbers, women were satisfied either with their work in the public life or with their roles as mothers and housewives, although some regretted the lack of educational opportunities and the lack of equal employment opportunities for women, including lower salaries.³⁴³ Zagorka read almost all of the mail that she had received from her women subscribers. She cared deeply about their opinions on the quality of the magazine and particularly if they felt the magazine fully served their needs. In an unpublished letter dated November 21, 1939, which was addressed to one of her women subscribers, Zagorka reacted bitterly to a returned copy of *Hrvatica*:

Highly respected Madam!

The management informed me that you had returned the last issue of *Hrvatica* with the note that you do not wish to receive future issues. Let me say this: My whole life I have worked for Croatian causes, fairly and with a lot of sacrifice... (A)lthough I am in no privileged financial position, I have decided to publish *Hrvatica* because I have wished as a Croatian female journalist, before God's final call, to give our Croatian women one true and contemporary magazine that would serve all their needs.... I had no financial interest in this project, only patriotic, and therefore only a moral interest. I do not know what is your national being.... I have wished to publish a magazine in a purely Croatian spirit... (I)f your national being is in the opposition to mine, then I understand why you do not wish to receive future issues of *Hrvatica*. On the other hand, if you are a true Croat Woman in your being, then there must be something you don't like in the magazine.... So, be honest and say openly what is it that you do not like about this magazine? This information will inform me about its possible

³⁴² *Hrvatica*, 1,1939, 17.

³⁴³ See *Hrvatica* of March and April, 1939.

shortcomings. My dear and respectable madam! I make this appeal to you as an appeal to a human being. Tell me honestly the reason why you have returned the copy of the magazine? It is of the critical importance for a journalist such as me, who has been in journalism for the last 44 years, to know the opinion that my readers hold about my work....

Respectfully MJ Zagorka³⁴⁴

I did not find a response to this letter in Zagorka's papers. Maybe it never reached the destination, and it is almost impossible to conclude what was the reason that the reader had returned the copy of *Hrvatica*. It is, however, clear that Zagorka used highly patriotic, even nationalistic, statements to appeal to the reader's morality to provide honest reasons for returning the copy of Zagorka's magazine. Nevertheless, Zagorka did not differ in her rhetoric from the public rhetoric of the late 1939. It is even possible to say that this nationalistic tone in Zagorka's magazine did not necessarily exclude women of other nationalities. In fact, as her invitation for collaboration shows, she believed that every woman who believed in the advancement of the society in which she lived, regardless even of her religion and class, was a good Croatian woman. *Hrvatica* reached beyond Croatian borders, and it was an accepted, as well as a respected, publication. The editorial offices of the illustrated magazine *Eva* (*Eve*), which was published in Ljubljana, Slovenia, sent a letter to the editor of *Hrvatica*, which was received on November 8, 1939, with a request: "Please, let us know if you wish to exchange your reputable magazine, *Hrvatica*, with our paper, *Eva*, beginning in January 1940."³⁴⁵ In the course of two years, Zagorka received a number of letters from women who felt that the magazine was serving their needs, and some of them expressed that, without this magazine,

³⁴⁴ Unpublished letter, dated November 21, 1939. Private collection.

³⁴⁵ Private collection.

Croatian women would have been neglected in the public sphere. One woman from Krapina, in her letter dated February 16, 1939, wrote:

To the very respectable woman novelist and Mrs. Zagorka!

I would like to give warm thanks to your endeavors in preparing such a wonderful magazine for all Croatian women. This magazine helps us to go on through our everyday lives. With your sensitive heart and life experience, you give us an example of how to succeed in life. You show us the value of women's work and the value of women's financial independence. It is pleasing to me to hold in my hands such a lavishly produced magazine, and, as far as my wishes are concerned, I would like you to bring to us different embroidery techniques with specific patterns. In March, I will send you the amount that would cover expenses for the costs of printing additional material.

With sisterly love,

Marija Fizir³⁴⁶

Many women readers expressed their gratitude for the numerous articles that had suggestions about home management, and Zagorka readily published tips from readers in every issue. Milka Matula from Jaškovo, in a letter dated September 29, 1939, wrote:

Very respectable madam Editor!

I am writing to say that I am very happy with the magazine, *Hrvatica*. I am especially grateful for all the dress patterns. I live in very modest conditions, and I am urged to make all of the clothes for my family alone. My only wish is that the price of the magazine remains the same and that it does not cease to exist.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

Zagorka was aware of the economic hardships of the late 1930s, and she eagerly published everything that would pertain to the political economy of the home. To encourage communication between the magazine and its readers and to build a sense of belonging, Zagorka often organized competitions for the best story, the best suggestion, and the best advice. She shared the economic difficulties with her readers, and she often sent gifts, such as books, from her private library and valuables that she had found in her own home. One of her readers, Kata Petrovi from Vinkovci, wrote a letter of gratitude for a gift that she had received from Zagorka for her story that had been published in *Hrvatica*. The letter was dated October 9, 1939:

Respectable Madam Editor and dear sister!

I apologize for not writing sooner to thank you for the gift that I had received for my story that was published in *Hrvatica*. I was preoccupied with a death in my family and did not have a minute of time to write to express my kindest gratitude. The present was so lovely! I could not believe my own eyes that such a lovely gift was sent to me. I so kindly thank you.³⁴⁸

With warmest regards,
Katica Petrovi

Without a doubt, Zagorka's magazine filled a considerable gap in the market for a women's magazine in pre-World War II Croatia, and it had opened up a space for women to participate in the public communicative exchange. More importantly, it provided needed information in the political-economy of women's everyday lives. Unfortunately, at the beginning of its third publishing year at the outbreak of World War II in Yugoslavia in April 1941, the newly formed fascist puppet state, Independent State of

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

Croatia (NDH), ordered the confiscation of her magazine, the burning of her books, and the confiscation of all of her furniture. In her undated and unpublished manuscript, *My Political Work*, she brought a detailed description of the events that took place in her home in April 1941:

On April 10, 1941, at 5 p.m., The Independent Croatian State (NDH) was proclaimed. Already the next morning (April 11, 1941), the Ustaša commissioner confiscated my magazine, *Hrvatica (Croat Woman)*, together with Din. 180.000.- of subscription money. They also confiscated my salary in *Jutarnji list* that I had received for publishing my novel. All of my works have been prohibited. My novel, *The Witch from the Gri*, was publicly burned at the *Paper Factory*. I appealed to all institutions, but without any success. The clerical-fascist Press-Bureau gave me the following statements: "Zagorka, you cannot publish your magazine, *Hrvatica*, you cannot sell your books, and you cannot write one more word." I asked, why? They said: "Because you are not a good Croat woman. You attacked the Church. You were a confidant of the Serbo-Croatian Coalition. Your relationship with social-democrats is suspicious. You mock the Church and the monarchy, and only the Catholic monarchy is the moral state system. You are finished." And I asked: "How will I survive?" And they said: "You can be a cook!" I was banished. I was hungry. They tried to evict me. I was on the street. I protested against the prohibition of my magazine, *Hrvatica*, but I got no answers. I asked to be put in front of the judge, but all was in vain. They told me that I should be happy that I was not sent to the concentration camp. Then I decided to send 5,000 farewell letters to my women readers... My readers were upset, and they protested with delegations.³⁴⁹

The letters of support were sent to Zagorka in large numbers. In a letter dated July 14, 1941, sent from the offices of the largest interwar women's organization, *Hrvatska žena (Croatian Woman)* branch in Vinkovci, words of encouragement and support were expressed:

Very respectable Mrs. Zagorka!

Croatian Woman in Vinkovci has received your circular letter, and our members cannot understand how it is possible that this horrible thing has

³⁴⁹ Zagorka, *My Political Work*, 6-7.

happened to you. Our Society has always regarded you as a respectable and true Croat Woman – you showed your patriotism in your work and in your texts. We are sending you a copy of the document from our notes on March 7, 1939, that is a testimony to your work and your popularity. We trust that this injustice will be undone, and we wish that your feelings of depression disappear immediately, because we still believe in your words: "Our strongest weapon is our staunch faith in the final victory."

For Our Homeland Ready³⁵⁰

Zagorka tried to commit suicide and was taken to the sanitarium, where she received a letter from the Ministry of Education with an offer to accept retirement and an apartment in the now-empty Jewish villa. The government offices tried to coerce her to join the Ustaša movement. She vehemently refused both offers. Finally, she was allowed to publish a novel in the newspaper, *Nova Hrvatska (The New Croatia)*. In the letter written by the newspaper's Editor, Dr. Franjo Dujmovi , to the State Informative and Propaganda Ministry, Dujmovi made an appeal that Zagorka be employed at the ministry so that she could continue to work for *Nova Hrvatska* and to keep writing in her current apartment.³⁵¹ The list of all contributors to *Nova Hrvatska* showed that Zagorka was an honorary contributor as a novelist for at least two years.³⁵² Zagorka described her life during NDH as "horrid and intolerable," and she hoped for the soon ending of the war and the fascist regime.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Letter in the private collection "For Our Homeland Ready" was an official greeting of the Croatian Independent State (NDH).

³⁵¹ DIPU-NDH, 0-327/42, 798/42, HAD.

³⁵² DIPU-NDH, HAD. Olga-Baldi , Zagorka's friend and the former journalist in *Ženski list* was listed as a honorary contributor for fashion and homemaking.

³⁵³ Zagorka, *My Political Work*, 7.

After the war, she returned to public life, but she felt the burden of her old age. Zagorka primarily participated on panels for the *Antifascist Women's Front*, and she continuously made attempts to write another book – her memoirs.³⁵⁴ Several of the last years of her life were filled with controversy. Zagorka knew the value of her work and of the enormous amount of books, papers, and documents that she had kept throughout the years. She lived in very difficult conditions in the apartment at Dolac No.8., in Zagreb. The best testimony to her last days were the numerous letters that she had written to her friend, Štefica Vrbani , and some of the letters that she had written to the Croatian Society of Professional Journalists. In 1953, she wrote a letter to the president of the Society, asking that the Society give her small financial support and to take her documents, letters, and photographs before they were forever lost:

Dear and respectable comrade Majer!

I had a tough month – I was ashamed to admit that, with my identification card, I also lost my pension check!! I had to give 2,000 dinars for health, so I only have 1,000 dinars to live on for the whole month.... I can't do anything but visit you, dear comrade ... and ask that you give me 4,000 per month for writing my memoirs.... I already have 200 typed pages, but I have to ask you for one other thing. When you find time, please advise me what I should do with my old documents, letters, and photographs so that they would not get lost forever.... Be so good to send me some money so I can, as soon as possible, get some firewood and dinner – because it is so hard for me right now.

Greetings, Marija Juri Zagorka³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ See Slavica Jakobovi -Fribec, Marija Juri Zagorka, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms (Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 19th and 20th Centuries)* 198.

³⁵⁵ Letter in the collection of HND.

The Croatian Society of Professional Journalists never took on the responsibility to store and preserve her papers. This task was taken on by the two cooks, Leo Car and Nikola (Nino) Smol i , from the hotel *Esplanada*, where Zagorka had lived during the interwar years. Her friend, Štefica Vrbani , in the 1992 interview with Dijana Ku ini ,³⁵⁶ journalist of *Vijesnik*, claimed that Zagorka was abused by these two men and was held in house arrest. In her numerous letters to Štefica, she wrote letters of desperation, sadness, and loneliness. Zagorka spent her last days contemplating her life and her work, and one of her main regrets was that she had never had children who would now be preserving her documents that would keep her life from oblivion. In one of her last letters to Štefica in March 1955, she wrote:

My dearest Štefica!

As I have wandered through the jungle of my life with glorious enthusiasm for ideas and work, I have met only animals – more or less – bloodthirsty, evil, and cunning. Nowhere have I seen a way out.... At the end, I have stopped believing that I will ever meet more human beings. On my last step, I see a small bright light – somebody desired some light for this wretched woman. It was you ... you found me, the stone on the road – overrun and crushed. Can this stone be helped, the stone over which all the burdens of this world were rolling? I don't know? I feel like a person who is walking in the mud.... But you did open your arms above me shading me with your wonderful wishes ... you came to pick me up, this miserable stone on the road, before it finally rolls into the earth. Will it have enough strength to see relief of the misery? Every night I see pictures of the jungle with beasts running around feeding on the evil. Yet – here you are – you are still here!

Always grateful,
Marija Juri Zagorka

Zagreb 16/III 1955.

³⁵⁶ I have transcripts of the interview and copies of the letters. Courtesy of Biljana Caki - Veseli .

Zagorka died in her sleep in her apartment on Dolac 8, in Zagreb on November 29, 1957. She was found with a towel wrapped around her head.³⁵⁷ Five days later, she was buried in Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb, where she shares her last resting place with numerous other famous people of Croatian cultural and political life. Her fellow journalists recognized her journalistic work after her death by naming the most prestigious award in journalism after her, “Marija Juri Zagorka.” In December 2007, Zagorka got a postal stamp as recognition of her contribution to Croatian journalism, feminist history, and politics.

3.4. Conclusion

This short feminist biography of Zagorka’s life shows the remarkable strength and will for life that she had held against all the odds that were dictated by the patriarchal culture during the 84 years of her life. I primarily focused to the moments and events in her life that could help us to understand her contribution to the emancipation of women in the media profession and journalism. I also focused on the moments in her personal and professional life that could help us to understand the origins of her personal ideology that had shaped her career as a journalist and novelist. Without doubt, Zagorka paved the way for generations of Croatian women who have come after her to try to earn their livings in journalism. She also served as an example during her life as a popular public figure.

³⁵⁷ Zagorka was known to be sensitive to cold. The picture above shows Zagorka at the seaside wearing a thick coat. Nada Volovi , in my interview with her in June 2007, told me that Zagorka always felt cold, even during the summer, and that she probably tied her head with a towel to keep herself warm. She also confirmed that Zagorka had desperately tried to find somebody to entrust with her inheritance. On one occasion, she asked Nada and her husband, but they did not feel confident enough to take on such a responsibility.

More importantly, she invited women to join her in the making of *Ženski list* and later in the making of *Hrvatica*.³⁵⁸ Zagorka strived to fight against backward culture, hypocrisy, retrograde politics, and injustice because she had experienced them in her own life. She was a rebellious character who had decided to fight conventional ideas about female and male identities. She at times had hated being a woman, and at times she had loved it. She wore feminine dresses and male clothes at the same times during her life, attempting to defy the conventions of the day that had tried to define male and female identities as socially and biologically static, mutually exclusive, and utterly different. Yet Zagorka was also a product of her time, and, to fully understand her personal ideologies, we have to understand the events, people, politics, and culture during the time in which she had lived. Zagorka left several autobiographical manuscripts that had been heavily documented for the need to make a chronicle of the events that would justify the professional and personal decisions that she had made. Two major political ideologies were at play in Zagorka's life: socialism and nationalism. These two ideologies shaped the way in which she understood and saw the world. They shaped her political and professional being. The third political ideology – the ideology of fascism – significantly had affected her life at the end of her professional career. Finally, by the end of her life, she had become disappointed with communism, which did not fulfill her hopes for equality, and she had become an almost forgotten figure, left at the margins of Yugoslavian cultural life. However, Zagorka was also influenced by liberal ideas through her associations with liberal politicians, such as Tomáš Masaryk, and foremost by the

³⁵⁸ More on her relationship with the public and on engaging women to write for newspaper in the following chapter.

feminist ideals, which spoke directly to her life experience. Zagorka's whole life was more complex and more difficult because of her experiences as a woman and by the gender disadvantages in her private and professional life. By reading Zagorka's life, I have tried to live it through her writings, and, as extraordinary as it may seem, I can see the creation of Zagorka's identity being shaped by the discourses of the world in which she had lived. The years at the break of the 20th Century, and especially the interwar years, were turbulent political years, filled by equally turbulent cultural changes throughout the globe. She had tried to understand the power of the growing mass culture during the times when Croatia was undergoing transitions from feudal to capitalistic society and during the transition from one multinational and imperial state (Austria-Hungary) to another multinational and heavily centralized state of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Zagorka's two main goals were to utilize her patriotism for the benefit of the disadvantaged classes (the peasants and lower-middle-class) and for the disadvantaged gender – women. Olga Bivec – Baldi insightfully wrote in 1931, "If Zagorka did not do anything but to teach her readers to respect and love their homeland ... she did a great deed."³⁵⁹ Zagorka used her socialism to understand her feminism. She demanded for all women what was for all men, with equality of all people as the ultimate goal. Her feminism had class-consciousness. It was aimed at peasant women, women without formal education, and women belonging to a growing and disadvantaged working class. Zagorka's feminism was not middle-class feminism, and at times it was aimed against gentlemen and their educated wives who spoke German. These new masses that had arisen on the horizon of Zagorka's cultural and political moment were Zagorka's most

³⁵⁹ Olga Bivec-Baldi , "About Our Zagorka," *Jutarnji list*, July, 1931, 24.

dedicated public. Her workforce was a force that had pushed forward the massification of culture through which she saw ways in which the masses of working and peasant women could empower themselves. Through perpetuating and utilizing mass culture, Zagorka saw the purpose and extension of her own life. Zagorka left plenty of evidence in need for exploration that unfortunately has been so deftly avoided for too long.³⁶⁰ Her life and work offer us a unique view into the ways in which different political ideologies played out in one personality, creating a complex, but forceful, identity. Zagorka was, at the same time, a liberalist, socialist, nationalist, and feminist; she interwove these ideologies into the solid material from which her cultural legacy is made. This important finding questions some of the more established understandings of the history of feminism as a liberal middle-class ideology and begs for more research into the lives of all women as well as women who have exhibited extraordinary agency for change in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

³⁶⁰ In the 2005 edition of Božidar Novak's, *Povijest Hrvatskog novinarstva u dvadesetom stoljeću* [History of Croatian Journalism in the 20th Century] (Golden marketing-Tehnicka knjiga, Zagreb: 2005), Zagorka is mentioned in several places in only a fragmented manner.

CHAPTER 4

A FEMINIST POLITICAL-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF *ŽENSKI LIST* –
FROM ITS RISE TO THE TRANSFORMATION AND DEMISE

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the content of *Ženski list* by analyzing narratives during the fourteen years that were discussed in this magazine. I will approach this analysis contextually, seeking to place this magazine into the cultural and historical context of the interwar years in Yugoslavia and within the contexts of its production as well as within the context of the everyday lives of its readers. The questions that I seek to address in this chapter are: (1) what were the enabling and constraining historical and structural factors in the emergence and eventual demise of *Ženski list*; and (2) what political-economic narratives and narratives of gender, nation, citizenship, and body politics were evident in *Ženski list* and how did these narratives change from the magazine's emergence to its demise? I will first lay out the context of interwar Croatia and Zagreb, which is the largest city of Croatia and which was the most modern city of interwar Yugoslavia where *Ženski list* was published. Further, I will discuss the emergence of *Ženski list* by analyzing documents and papers that were connected to the company that had published the magazine and to its owners, Ignjat Schwartz and his wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz. I will place the emergence of this privately owned company that was founded on private domestic capital into the larger economic context in which foreign capital in the publishing industry was dominant. I will discuss the significance of these findings by showing how the goals of the magazine and the idea

behind the initiative for starting this publication were based on the need to counter the dominance of foreign publications in Croatia as well as throughout Yugoslavia. Finally, I will provide an analysis of the political-economic narratives that were, as I show, often discussed in conjunction with other narratives, such as citizenship and the nation and also women's bodies. My discussion will show that all of these narratives were interwoven and that narratives never occur as single entities. Absences of some narratives, such as the narratives of motherhood or of the place of Croatian and Yugoslav women in the creation of the new Yugoslav nation also tell us how topics pertaining to the lives of women are intrinsically linked to the larger context of politics, economy, and culture.

4.2. Emergence of *Ženski list*: In the Battle between the Growing Class of Domestic Entrepreneurs and the Forces of Foreign Capital in Interwar Croatia

The revolutionary years of 1848 that had swept across Europe brought two novelties into the political and economic systems of Central-Eastern Europe: the nationalist movements and the rapid growth of capital. This period of increasing processes of industrialization had influenced the growth of the city of Zagreb, which had emerged as the largest and the most developed city of the semi-autonomous province of Croatia-Slavonia in Austria-Hungary. In the late Nineteenth Century, Zagreb had evolved as the main hub for the Hungarian railroad system, and, by the time that Zagreb had emerged as the second-largest city in the newly formed post-World War I state, it had also become the “leading industrial, commercial, and financial center in Yugoslavia.”³⁶¹

³⁶¹ Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia*. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 41-42.

The major cities in interwar Yugoslavia, i.e., Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Zagreb, were urban centers that attracted capital and a population who was in search of employment and education. These cities became the centers of the growing bourgeoisie. Zagreb, as the city that had experienced rapid industrial growth and the city that had emerged as the financial and commercial center in interwar Yugoslavia, had attracted minorities that had included Jewish populations from throughout the country. As an “almost exclusively urban element” developed, “in sharp contrast to the overwhelmingly rural character of the other peoples of the area”, Yugoslav Jewry emerged as the leading entrepreneurial force. It is not surprising, then, that the whole generation that had been born in the late Nineteenth Century was leading the capitalist entrepreneurial movement of interwar Yugoslavia. New businesses were emerging daily, especially in the commercial and financial sectors. Many entrepreneurs chose to focus on the emerging publishing sector that had become an increasingly interesting place for investments with the rise of the more educated middle-class readers. The young and educated man Ignjat Schwartz,³⁶² a member of the German-Jewish minority, had returned to Zagreb in 1918 to begin his own business. Born in 1883, he was a member of the generation that had embraced the capitalist system and was the force of the societal and economic change of Interwar Yugoslavia. Ignjat Schwartz was born in the small town of Križevci in north-east Croatia. He was educated in Zagreb, but, upon finishing his education, he returned to the city of Daruvar, in close proximity to Križevci. Although he had managed to earn quite a fortune with his German book-publishing company, *Pollak and Schön*, that business did not thrive in this mostly rural and underdeveloped area. Hence, in 1918, he had decided

³⁶² Also Ignac Švarc or Ignjat Švarc; founder of *Ženski list*.

to return to Zagreb where, two years later, he founded the company that would become one of the largest interwar shareholding businesses in the publishing and advertising industry. The most influential newspaper publishers in the country took their share in his company. The document from the register of the Court of Commerce in Zagreb dated September 3rd, 1920, shows that the company named *Medjunarodni Prometni, Novinski i Oglasni Zavod (The International Traffic, Newspaper and Advertising Agency)* was registered for the businesses of distribution of foreign and domestic newspapers and magazines as well as for the business of advertising.³⁶³ This agency was founded as a shareholding business. The hand-written memorandum from June 30th, 1920, shows that the agency was envisioned as a shareholders' society, and translations of the title to Cyrillic script and the translations to French, German, and Czech languages speak of the intended international character of this agency. The society was founded on the capital of 1,000,000 Kruna (currency), and shares were split into 2,500, with 400 Kruna as the minimal value of each share. In the directorate of the society were the most influential editors and publishers of the newspapers and magazines in Croatia: Dragutin Heumer for *Obzor*; Toni Schlegel for *Rije* and *Agramer Tagblatt*; Eugen Demetrovi for *Jutarnji list* and *Tipografija d.d.*; Marko Mautner for *Trgovinski list*; and Ignjat Schwartz, owner of the *Pollak* and *Schön*.³⁶⁴ The notes from the founding meeting reveal that the president of the society was Dragutin Heumer, the editor of *Obzor*. Dr. Robet Rosenberger and Julijo Schönbaum, Zagreb's influential lawyers, and Makso Mautner were appointed to

³⁶³ R 1067-20 document in the State Archives in Zagreb (HAD) . The document reveals that the agency, in addition to distribution of foreign and domestic newspapers and advertising, was registered also for selling train and steamship tickets.

³⁶⁴ R 1067-20 92/20 document in the *National Archives in Zagreb*.

legalize the notes from the constitutive meeting.³⁶⁵ In 1921, Ignjat Schwartz transferred part of his ownership of the agency to his wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, and she became a rightful shareholder with 100 shares and later with 300 shares.³⁶⁶ The company was almost immediately faced with the weak Yugoslav economy, and Ignjat Schwartz decided to transfer the advertising part of the business to another shareholders' company, and, in October 1921, he founded *Interreklam d.d.* This new company during the 1920s took over businesses throughout the country, mainly in Zagreb, Stubica, and Ljubljana (Slovenia), and it would continue to do business rather successfully, even during World War II. It was established to publish magazines and to gather and publish advertising in newspapers, magazines, and billboards.³⁶⁷ In 1938, Ignjat Schwartz died, and his wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, took over the business. She had part ownership of this company, together with another woman entrepreneur from Zagreb, Jetta Dukes.³⁶⁸

For the first several years, *Medjunarodni Prometni, Novinski i Oglasni Zavod* (*The International Traffic, Newspaper and Advertising Agency*) struggled to survive in

³⁶⁵ The notes reveal that Ignjat Schwartz owned the majority of shares, i.e., 1,230, followed by Makso Mauter with 500, Dragutin Heumer with 250, Toni Schlegel with 250, Eugen Demetrovic with 250, and Dr. Robert Rosenberger and Julijo Schönbaum with 10 shares each. In the Supervisory Board for the first year were elected: Dr Robert Rosenberger, Julijo Schönbaum, Milan Band (procurator of one of the two most influential publishers in interwar Croatia, *Tipografija d.d.*), and Grga Mautner, bank procurator in Zagreb. Document in the National Archives in Zagreb.

³⁶⁶ R 1067-20 3410, shows that she was also appointed as the first procurator for the company. Document in the National Archives in Zagreb. Her name in some places is written Jozefina Schwartz.

³⁶⁷ See Notes from the Constitutive Meeting and registration document R 1424/21, National Archives in Zagreb.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Among other shareholders are Ignjat Schwartz, Dr. Vladimir Prebeg (a lawyer who represented both companies), and Peroslav Paksijević ikara, the influential secretary of the Commerce Chamber in Zagreb and a member of the Zagreb's Serbian minority.

the small and weak Yugoslav market. In a business report from June 30th, 1922, Ignjat Schwartz explained the causes of its financial struggles:

Unfortunately, the traffic and economic situation in our country stayed unchanged, and our hopes for a better economy that we had set forth during the founding moments did not prove true. The reasons for less-than-expected profits are partly in the depreciation of our currency, causing a constant rise in the prices of foreign newspapers and magazines, followed by the tax expenses for distribution across the country.... Regardless, we have managed to cover all expenses and to gain a nice amount of clean profit.... With the transfer of the publishing and advertising sections of our company to *Interreklam d.d.*, we can now focus more on the development and expansion of our newspaper distribution business....³⁶⁹

The Business Report for 1923 had already witnessed the expansion of the business to Vojvodina (a county north of Serbia) with the opening of the branch office in Subotica.³⁷⁰ Although this expansion meant considerable success in establishing this home-grown business that was based on domestic capital, the Yugoslav market of the 1920s functioned under the enormous pressures from foreign capital investments in all sectors of the economy.³⁷¹ Publishing and advertising industries were no exception. The dominant capital in the publishing industry was, not surprisingly, German. There were several reasons for this dominant position of German capital in the Croatian publishing industry: (1) political ties with Austrian and German countries that had been built during

³⁶⁹ The Business Report from June 30th, 1922. Document in the State Archives in Zagreb.

³⁷⁰ The Business Report from April 30th, 1923. Document in the State Archives in Zagreb.

³⁷¹ Yugoslavia's economy almost completely depended on foreign credits and foreign capital. Croatia, traditionally tied to German and Italian foreign capital since the mid-19th Century, was still largely dependent on the influx of this capital. Many Croatian men were educated in these countries, and, upon their return to the country, they were supporters of these foreign investments. See Sergije Dimitrijević, *Strani Kapital u Privred Bivše Jugoslavije*, Izd. Saveza Društva Ekonomista Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1958.

several centuries of common statehood; (2) cultural ties and educational emphasis on the German language; (3) weak development of the indigenous Croatian language among the rising middle-class from which most of the readership had emerged; and (4) pressures on the emergence of domestic capital within the newly emerging capitalist economy that was being driven by foreign cultural and economic influences. The most influential foreign publisher in Croatia after World War I was the German publisher from Berlin, *Ullstein-Verlag*. It had been founded in 1877 by Leopold Ullstein with the acquisition of the daily *Berliner Zeitung* and *Stahl & Assmann* printing house in Berlin. The family business that he had developed had become one of the largest publishing enterprises, if not the largest, in the interwar world. Leopold Ullstein, as a proud German, wasn't wary of the importance of the spread of German culture. He had five sons (Hans, Louis, Rudolf, Franz, and Herman) with two wives, and his sons extended the business to advertising and book publishing. They launched some of the most important publications in Germany of the time, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Berliner Morgenpost*. Although the depression of 1930s had influenced the business, through their determination to expand their business across the classes of emerging readership in 1929 with *Grüne Post*, they had gained over a million readers in the German rural areas. The youngest brother, Herman Ullstein, ran the magazine department, which published mainly magazines for children, and for women were *Die Dame*, *Blatt der Hausfrau*, and the *Heitere Fridolin*, as well as patterns and Ullstein books that were distributed throughout the former Austrian-Hungarian territories.³⁷² In 1924, Herman Ullstein planned an expansion of business by

³⁷² Herman Ullstein, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Ullstein*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943. Patterns were one of the main economic attractions for German women, as well as for women outside of Germany, for example Croatia. Especially during the time of the

publishing a magazine for women in Croatia. However, no official documents of his business intentions were preserved.³⁷³ However, Zagorka wrote about these important events that eventually led to the founding of the first women's magazine to be published exclusively for women in interwar Croatia:

In 1924, I got a visit from a representative of *Ullstein*, the multimillion-mark German publishing house. He made me an offer to edit and manage for *Ullstein* a magazine for housewives that they wish to publish in Croatia, and he also offered a lot of money for my monthly salary. They would send the material from German magazines, and I would translate everything to Croatian. I told him about my past, when I fought on the streets against German influences, and I still fight these influences with my pen. Hence, the offer is absurd, because it is completely unacceptable to me, who fights against everything foreign. I also told him, if he makes attempts to find somebody else for this endeavor that is intended to bring to Croatian homes German customs, thoughts, and a German spirit, I will start my own magazine without a penny. The whole thing fell through. One year later, I got a visit from a distributor of German newspapers in Zagreb, and he told me that he would finance the publishing of a magazine for housewives and that I would have complete freedom to edit this magazine in the Croatian and Yugoslav cultural spirit. Although the pay was small, I readily accepted the offer, and I am beginning working on *Ženski list*...³⁷⁴

Zagorka's notes on these events might be the only preserved account of the *Ullstein*'s attempt to break into the Yugoslav market. It is interesting that Zagorka left out

depression, women were forced to make their own clothes, and these patterns attracted female buyers. *Ullstein* was an innovative company that not only published patterns, but that had over 50 women dressmakers employed in the company who were responsible for turning out patterns: "There was a real dressmakers' workshop employing some fifty accomplished women dressmakers who were engaged in turning out patterns for readers who wished to make their own clothes. When one of our women readers wanted to make herself a dress that she had seen reproduced in *Blatt der Hausfrau*, she sent for a pattern from the workshop of this paper. The pattern was accordingly made to order after the customer's own measurements." 103. Something similar was later used by *Ženski list* with Atelier of *Ženksi list*.

³⁷³ I sent an e-mail query in June 2007 to Kati Sprung of today's company, *Ullstein-BuchVerlage*, and she explained that no documents from the original company were preserved. In fact, Herman Ullstein, in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the House of Ullstein*, writes about the last days of the company that was forcefully closed in 1933 by the Nazis, and, during these last days, many important documents, along with books and magazines, were confiscated or burned. The e-mail is in the letter appendix.

³⁷⁴ *The Way It Was*, 44.

the names of the representative of the *Ullstein* as well as the mysterious distributor of German newspapers from Zagreb.

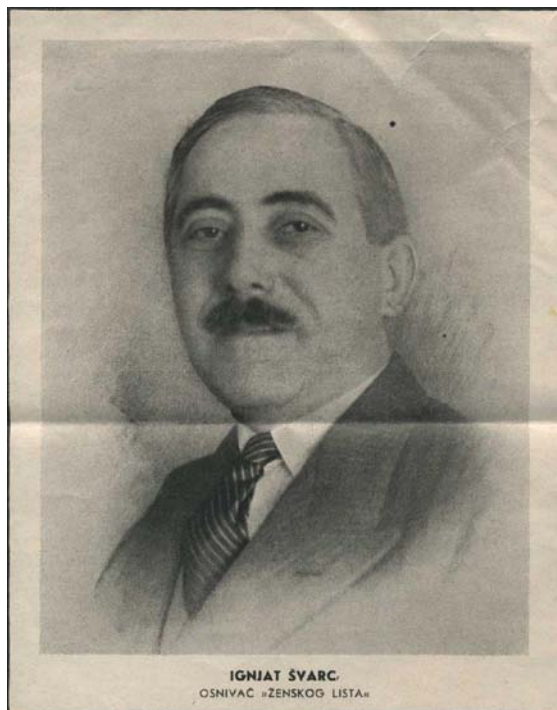


Figure 24. The founder of *Ženski list* Ignjat Schwartz.
Photograph published in *Ženski list* in April 1938.

This partial account of the above events made my task to learn more about the owner of the magazine that much more difficult. It is possible that Zagorka had omitted the names because she had written these accounts during a time when it was still not popular to talk about Jewish entrepreneurs in Yugoslavia or in Germany. Of course by further examination of the historical evidences, I found out that the mysterious distributor of the German newspapers was Ignjat Schwartz (Figure 24 above), owner of the *Medjunarodni Prometni, Novinski i Oglasni Zavod d.d.* (*The International Traffic, Newspaper and Advertising Agency*) and *Interreklam d.d.* and that the *Ullstein's*

representative was Alfred Remitz, manager of the *Ullstein's* Vienna office, *Ullstein-Verlag-Auslieferung*.

Although Zagorka was aware of the *Ullstein's* further attempts to influence the owner of the magazine during 1924, I am not sure that she was aware of the fact that, on March 30th, 1925, just a few days before *Ženski list* was officially published in April 1925, Alfred Remitz had joined the Supervisory Board of *Medjunarodni Prometni, Novinski i Oglasni Zavod d.d.* (*The International Traffic, Newspaper and Advertising Agency*), official publisher of *Ženski list*.³⁷⁵ It is possible that the *Ullstein* could not pass up the publishing opportunity in the open-and-developing Yugoslav market and had negotiated its influence, slightly leaning away from the broad import of German customs and culture to that of pure business influence. *Ullstein* had employed 50 dressmakers in its publishing section for women's magazines, who tailored clothes based on the original magazine's patterns. In the 1930s, *Ženski list* founded its own "Atelier of *Ženski list*" with a designer and dressmakers who tailored clothes based on the magazine's original patterns (See Figure 25. below).

³⁷⁵ The Business Report from March 30th, 1925. Along with Alfred Remitz from *Ullstein*, Austrian publishing company *Literarie* was represented by the Franz Neidel, vice-president, and Erwin Müller, director of *Literarie-Wien*.

Iz ateliera „Ženskog Lista“
Što veći u modi šefica ateliera „Ženskog Lista“

Uzšla sam u salon za primanje. Kraj otvorene vitrine nabavila dva dama pregledavala prokramne ukrase za haljine. Druge dvije dame prekrila tkanine, a gospođa šefica tomaji, razlaze, svjetle. Ona je neumorna. I svjetlija je. Svaka je njena riječ za mišicu, uvijek dadeš u dobar čas i meni uvijek pravi savjet. Posjetiteljice ateliera odabavljene za njezinim uputama. Opet: daje je. I sa moga da biogod odabera bez da ne pitaju sja. A sve je to ne umara. Sve to čini lakko, promišljeno, nakon što je ona. Kona pita, dobro promišlja. Sveim varenjem in- stinkom, stručnjaškim osjećajem i ukusom pogodja ona pravo. — Vidite, baš to sam trebala! — ušikano kliču posjetiteljice ateliera. I dolaze i odnose sjačim licem. Jedna nam mogle da je ukratko sa nekoliko časaka. — Za koje boje — molim vas, šefice iz pokrajine klijelo bi znati nekoliko modnih tajna. — Dakle što? — pita ona. — Što felite doznati?

Dvije dame iz zagrebačkog društva čije su haljine izradjene u ateljeru „Ženskog Lista“

— Što nam ove zime donosi kraljica moda, barem u glavnom. — Ah, ove je sezona lijepa kraljica naročito ljubavna. U bojsma se je odučila za bijela i crna boja; naravno isto toliko jako modna i jelema, ameda, rječju: ona ljudi sve boje. Haljina boja crvenog vina (Weinrot) našta se više protežirana, ali to je po svji prilici čas- lina viti kir, Modjstim vratko na moše uzeti svaku boju. To valja naročito istaknuti. Ja dijelim dame na dvije fronte: U jednoj su one, koje žele obiti uvijek ono, što dobro poznate dru- gima. U drugoj su opet one, koje strpe od uniformiranja! Kraj svega toga možemo odu- brati nešto slično osuona što pristaje drugome, ali nikada sasvim isto!

O liniji hoćete nešto da znate? Ova se u posljednjim godinama gotovo nikako nije promijenila, a ipak pruža linija nešto sasvim novo! Što? U tome je čitava umjetnost. Otkrit- da ova tajna: Svaka haljina mora se naročitim ukusom garnirati, ukrasiti. I baš ovim se ukrasom postizava sasvim novo obilježje — dapače nešto osobitno originalno! — Kao ukrasom postizava sasvim novo obilježje — dapače nešto osobitno originalno! — Kao ukrasom služe: cvijeće, naboci (Rischi), a naročito kruno. Većina večernjih haljina urešene su krunom. Čak i šalici. Najisteminu su uski obrubi sa hermelinom i suncem, ali se isto tako lijepo i kruno od krlice ako se čestito namjesti. Mali mod divi je finale elegantnoj toaleti! Većerije haljine iziskuju mala povlaku. Najviše se večerije haljine čine od baršuna a popodneve čajne haljine od svile. U broju od Nove godine, reći će vam mnogo više.




Figure 25. From the Atelier of *Ženski list*. Two Zagreb women posing for the story wearing dresses made in the. Photographs were taken by Tonka, Zagreb's notable woman photographer to whose business Zagorka and *Ženski list* were completely devoted.

This selling of the business strategy shows how economy and culture are not so easily divorced. *Ženski list*, although strongly grounded in the Croatian and Yugoslav spirit, did not only copy this particular *Ullstein's* business strategy, but its whole approach to the magazine-publishing industry. The strategy was to sell the magazine to literate readers in the provinces and villages. *Ženski list* used similar interwar rhetoric on the role of magazines for women as the new servant of the modern house. This strategy attracted a female readership of Yugoslavia across class, ethnic, religious, and

geographical differences, all of which were burdened by the day-to-day demands of household management that was pressured by the weak interwar economy.

4.2.1. *Ženski list*: From the Founding Days to the Challenges of 1934

In October 1924, the Ministry of the Interior ordered a comprehensive listing of all print media that were being published in the territory of Kingdom of S.H.S. The report was to include a number of details, ranging from a description of the content to the name of the editor and the names of the journalists and each publication's language as well as the script in which the publication was being printed.³⁷⁶ The list for the Zagreb area and Croatia paints a rich and colorful picture of the diverse print media culture in post-World War I Croatia. Yet, it is immediately obvious that magazines for women in the Croatian language were almost non-existent. Only one magazine was devoted exclusively to fashion, patterns, and embroidery, *Pariška Moda*, which was published in 1924 in Croatia.³⁷⁷ In interwar Croatia, *Ženski list* evidently came during the time of the scarcity of mass-culture products for the rising new woman, a potential magazine reader. Administrative turbulences of 1925 in the Kingdom of S.H.S.³⁷⁸ resulted in the

³⁷⁶ PU-Pokrajinska Uprava (*Local Government*), Letter No.. 9517, dated October 13th, 1924, sent from Belgrade to Pokrajinska Uprava in Zagreb, demanding comprehensive record-keeping of all print media in the Kingdom of S.H.S. Croatian State Archive (HAD).

³⁷⁷ PU (Pokrajinska Uprava), The list of print media in the territory of Croatia with *Pariška Moda* listed under number 44. Croatian State Archive (HAD).

³⁷⁸ In 1924, local governments in the Kingdom S.H.S were terminated. The local Government for Croatia and Slavonia operated between 1921 and 1924. Local government had jurisdiction over registration of the print media. After 1924, this jurisdiction was transferred to Zagreba ka oblast u Ured Velikog župana (County-Prefect of Zagreb Province). See Ivan Beuc, *Povijest Institucija Drzavne Vlasti u Hrvatskoj (1527-1945)*. Zagreb: Croatian Archives, 1969, 338.

termination of the registration reports for print media in Croatia. During the transfer of the documents from the Journalism Section of the Local Government for 1925, documents were lost; thus, I found no official registration records for *Ženski list*.³⁷⁹ Internal political and institutional instability, however, cannot fully capture the conditions during which *Ženski list* had emerged. A photograph of a woman in the urban setting of Zagreb boarded on the tram, wearing a short-sleeved dress cropped below her knees, sitting and reading a newspaper intently, was taken by Tošo Dabac³⁸⁰ in 1936. This photograph captures the already socially fixed modern woman in the developing urban cityscape of Zagreb in 1930s (See figure 26 below).

³⁷⁹ Letter BHKB, no. 582/1925, box 86, addressed to county-perfect, explains the circumstances under which the inventory from the former Journalism Section in the Local Government were lost during the move. Croatian National Archive.

³⁸⁰ Tošo Dabac (1907-1970) - One of the most important Croatian photographers. He achieved world recognition for his interwar photographs, *People on the Street*. He exhibited in 1933 in the *Second Philadelphia International Salon of Photography* with Margaret Bourke-White, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and other famous photographers. See Radoslav Putar: *Tošo Dabac Fotograf (Tošo Dabac Photographer)*, *Grafi ki Zavod Hrvatske*, Zagreb, 1980. Many of his photographs were published in *Ženski list* during the economic depression of the early 1930s.



Figure 26. Photograph is a courtesy of the Museum of Modern Arts in Zagreb.

But before this modern woman of 1930s Croatia had become a fixed social category, she was a discursive category of the novels, theatres, and popular press as well as in journalism in general. She was partly a product of the rising mass culture that was being propelled by the popular press. Magazines for women emerged as the discursive factories for the rising new class of women who were venturing out into the new labor market dressed in the latest fashions that were being produced by the growing fashion industry. In the early years of the post-World War I Yugoslavia and Croatia, much as in the rest of interwar Europe and interwar United States, women went to find and to occupy their own place in the public sphere. By 1925, many European countries had granted passive or active voting rights to women. Other countries had opened up the discussion for the enfranchisement of women and the expansion of the limited voting rights that women had gained in some countries. In the political offices, there were very few women, but the developing consumer culture of interwar Europe witnessed armies of women marching into department stores. This newly discovered public space in which women held the privileged vote was propelled by the new literature for women – women's magazines. The first issue of *Ženski list* was published in April 1925, and it continued to be published consistently as a monthly magazine for the subsequent 14 years. In England at the same time, Virginia Woolf was preparing to publish her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, that uncovered the deep emotional life of the female protagonist who had found herself constrained by the sexual and economic oppression of her married life in post-World War I England. By the end of the same year, Adolf Hitler had published the first volume of his political pamphlet, *Mein Kampf*, in the Weimar Republic, which would become the most-read and influential book of Hitler's Germany after his rise to

power in 1933. By their contradicting statements, these books exemplified the complicated and dialectic social, cultural, economic, and political conditions of interwar Europe. It is probably a coincidence that both of these books had appeared in the same year, but it is nevertheless intriguing. *Mrs. Dalloway* opened doors to characteristic interwar debates on feminism, modernity, commercialization, sexuality, and gender. In addition to these debates in the Yugoslav context, the question of ethnic-national identities and pan-European ideas gave specific flavor to these debates. Finally, *Mein Kampf* opened up an eerie rhetoric of ethnic-nationalism, racial hatred, and a turn to traditionalism that signaled a coming age of backlash against the liberated flapper jazz generation of the 1920s. *Ženski list* issues that were published this same year were, in the magazine's most extraordinary journey through the interwar years, touched and shaped by both of these interwar discourses, i.e., the discourses of modernity and the backlash against it. The rhetoric of interwar liberalism, colonialism, feminism, commercialization, sexuality, and gender expressed in *Mrs. Dalloway* could all be found on the pages of *Ženski list*. Ironically, the ethnic-nationalism that was sometimes nurtured by the magazine in the need to develop a patriotic-modern woman consumer, who valued domestic products and who elevated the national spirits of the nation by engaging in domestic production, allowed for the traditional turn that was symbolically represented in *Mein Kampf*. This turn would eventually lead to the demise of this longest-published women's magazine in interwar Croatia, as well as in interwar Yugoslavia-at-large.

Ženski list emerged in the historical post-World War I stage that had been characterized by cultural historians of that era as being one of the most exciting and as being markedly different from the pre-war era, showing a visible discontinuity with the

past. The rise of the new modern society, in which the promise of new gender roles was about to become recognized as a part of the new way of life, constructed the interwar years as standing decadently different from the past.³⁸¹ In this newly imagined world, the popular press and women's magazines had among the most important roles in triggering the popular imagination of the growing masses of readers. One image in particular gained a dominant place in the imagination of readers. It was the post-war woman, through the consequences of war, the forever-changed woman who was now gaining a strong position in society through enfranchisement and the vote and through her participation in the public sphere. The new modern woman was "one of the most prominent characteristic figures of post war culture."³⁸² This was true for most of the Western world. Lack of interrogation of the modernizing processes that were created in the post-war Eastern Europe, especially as it pertained to the women's press, results in some shortcomings in our full understanding of the modernizing processes across interwar Europe. Interrogation of *Ženski list*, in that respect, fills this gap, even if only partly. After the breakup of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and after the formation of the new states in the Balkans, larger political conditions were created that would allow for a slow, but constant, influx of the ideological and economical tenets of modernity throughout the interwar years. Yugoslavia immediately experienced difficulties adjusting to the processes of modernity, not only because it was one of the most industrially underdeveloped countries in Europe, but because of the political instability of the newly

³⁸¹ See Samuel Haynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990).

³⁸² See Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, where ethnically, historically, politically, and religiously different peoples had come together to form one Yugoslav nation.³⁸³

In Croatia, the main residue of the old Empire was the centuries-long feeling of the primarily linguistic and cultural oppression that had been felt among people, which was often expressed by the intelligentsia. Prominent interwar writers such as Miroslav Krleža described Croatia as the country that was being tormented by internal attempts to understand and resolve new economic and political conditions that had been created after the dissolution of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. In one of his most popular novels, *Zastave (Banners)*, he describes the rise of the historical conditions that had transformed semi-feudal Croatia into a part of the semi-bourgeois and semi-parliamentary Yugoslavia, which had turned into a semi-bourgeois dictatorship in 1929. Changed political and economic conditions after 1929 had led, not only to a temporary rejection of the Yugoslav idea, but more importantly to the rejection of the capitalist-dictatorship and to the rejection of capitalism per se that had ultimately paved the way for the emergence of Tito's socialist Yugoslavia after World War II.³⁸⁴ Yet, before the capitalist system had become tied to the dictatorial royal regime and was ultimately rejected through a public critique of capitalism, it was built intensely and insidiously through the influx of foreign capital, and it crept its way into the mentality of the people precisely through the rising popular mass culture.

³⁸³ See Dejan Djokic, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007).

³⁸⁴ Dubravka Juraga, "'Miroslav Krleža's 'Zastave': Socialism, Yugoslavia, and the Historical Novel,'" *South Atlantic Review*, 62 (4), 1997, 32-56, 33-34.

Ženski list held one of the most dominant places in the rising popular mass culture in interwar Croatia, as well as in all of interwar Yugoslavia. A small group of people, who were gathered around Jewish-Croatian entrepreneur Ignjat Schwartz and his wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, and who were led by the editorial power of Marija Juri Zagorka, were determined to offer Croatian and Yugoslav women a magazine that would become the magazine for the needs of the new emerging modern woman. The core of the editorial offices of *Ženski list* was three women: Zagorka as editor and Olga Baldi -Bivec and Olga Morovi as journalists (See figure 27 on the next page). Before I engage more deeply into the discussion of the feminist political-economic discourses of *Ženski list*, I will briefly address the context of the interwar debates, one in particular that served as the backdrop of all the other interwar discourses that had been expressed on the pages of this magazine.

4.2.2. Context for the Analysis: Interwar Debates

The experience of the Great War drastically impacted the cultural, social, and even the political understanding of gender and gender roles. Masculinity and femininity, and, within the two, the New Women and the New Men, were exploring the societal limits of gender roles. The press throughout Europe, and in particular the popular press, was participating in the construction and reconstruction of the new society. The press engaged in a discussion of gender, fashion, and sexuality; women's suffrage and women's active role in politics; women's traditional roles as mothers and housewives vs. their newly found place in the public sphere; women as consumers vs. women as citizens,

etc.³⁸⁵ All of these debates were addressed in *Ženski list*, including some of the home debates that had emerged out of the particular historical and geographical context, such as language-imperialism, internationalism, and the understanding of a woman, not solely as a member of the humanity, but as a member of a specific ethnic group.



Figure 27. Photograph taken in the Editorial Office of *Ženski list* in December 1928 during the visit of the Chilean woman journalist Juanita Gracia, who worked for the largest Chilean newspaper, “La Nacion.” On the photograph from left to right: Božo Kunc, composer; Mirko De ak, a writer and journalist; Juanita Garcia, Chilean journalist; Zagorka, editor; Olga Morovi , journalist; Olga Baldi -Bivec, journalist; and the consul of the Republic of Chile, Mr. Matali . From top to left: Mr. Lavicki and Mr. Brli , journalists. *Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car.*

³⁸⁵ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.

These debates were addressed through stories of women heroines, portrayals of women in Croatian and Yugoslav history, but also through portrayals and stories about successful women in cultural, economic, and political life internationally. Debates on fashion, the body, and sexuality were expressed through stories and advertising that grew exponentially from the first issue onward. It is important to note that these debates were interwoven, and it is this intertextuality of the discourses that made any clear separations between them impossible.

Although I will sporadically address some of these debates, especially in the fifth chapter because many of them were initiated by women readers, here I would like to address one debate in particular that will serve to map out the interwar context in which was addressed the most crucial debate on the rise of the new working woman in the public sphere and the construction of the woman housewife as the woman house-worker. This interest in women in the public work was certainly the result of the historical post-World War I context. However, the interest in prioritizing the political-economic aspect of gender on the pages of the magazine was not only historical, but also was the personal interest of the magazine's editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, and the specific social context of interwar Yugoslavia and Croatia that I had addressed earlier. Marija Juri Zagorka, who was among the first to help organize working women, set to participate through the magazine in the cultural, economic, social, and political change of the everyday lives of women in interwar Croatia and Yugoslavia.

4.2.2.1. What about the *Bubikopf*?

In 1925, several months after the first issue of *Ženski list*, the publisher decided to publish an authorized translation of the at-the-time American and world bestseller, *How*

to Stay Young and Beautiful. This book was advertised on the pages of the magazine, and its content had become a part of the permanent section with the same title. Fashion styles and fashion patterns were an essential part of the magazine's content, and fashion tips were used to construct a new modern post-war woman who should prepare herself for her new role in the public sphere that demanded appealing looks. The most common example of a woman who was beautiful, yet conscious, and who was always ready for the public was an American woman.³⁸⁶ But the new standards of beauty that had become the new standards of female sexuality were also important for the more traditional woman who had remained in the household. Women at home were advised to take care of their hands and attire for their husband and their guests.³⁸⁷ But the most important debate did not concern high heels, shorter skirts, and modern make-up. It was the new boy-cut hairstyle that shook the interwar culture to its very foundations. The symbolism of the new boyish hair style, *Bubikopf*³⁸⁸, had reached far beyond the realm of the everyday fashion chatter to the reality of gender politics.

The *Bubikopf* challenged the traditional gender roles because it challenged the traditional understanding of female sexuality. Woman was a woman for the longest time in history because her female prerogative was long hair. The page-boy hairstyle was

³⁸⁶ "The Secret of the American Beauty," *Ženski list*, October, 1925, 24.

³⁸⁷ "Women's Boudoir: Beautiful Hands," *Ženski list*, September, 1925, 25.

³⁸⁸ German word used in Croatia for bob-style haircut. Bubi means little boy. See Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany*. UNC Press: 2002, 124.

introduced to Germany from France³⁸⁹ and to Croatia through the popular German culture, primarily through newspapers and magazines. Some have argued that the page-boy hairstyle was a result of the fascination with the Jazz Age culture that had been imported from America and that the rise of technology, growth of the cities, and the new lifestyle associated with this growth resulted in the “illusion of differences between sexes” and “blurring the traditional lines between masculinity and femininity.”³⁹⁰

It is this hair-fashion style that had become a metaphor for modernity throughout the world, and especially in Weimar Germany where the *Bubikopf* as part of the new aesthetic movement *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) had become associated with discourse on the new de-eroticized female body. Women were objectified “as both sexually voracious and mechanically or androgynously dehumanized.”³⁹¹ This negative association between female sexuality and the new modern woman who looked like a “little boy” was intrinsically connected to her new role in the public sphere. Her new fashions blurred gender lines, but it also blurred class differences, if only in appearance.

She was a woman who “works a white-collar job, though her roots are probably working class. In other words, she is typical New Woman.” However, there were positive representations of this new type of woman. In the poster, “*Volksgenossen Wählt*

³⁸⁹ Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany*. University of California Press: 2001, 11.

³⁹⁰ Michael Kane, *Modern Men: Mapping Masculinity in English and German Literature, 1880-1930*. Continuum International Publishing Group: 1999, 216.

³⁹¹ Dorothy Rowe, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany*. Ashgate Publishing: 2003, 166.

Sozialdemokraten,” published in Weimar Germany in 1928, she was depicted as the “model female citizen,” materially and socially intelligent.³⁹²



Figure 28. *Bubikopf* on Miss Yugoslavia Katarina Urban from Zagreb in 1931 advertisement for Elida, a brand of shampoo.

Ženski list carried out the lively debate in the 1920s and 1930s on the social, political, and even the economic meaning of the *Bubikopf*. It is through the discourses on

³⁹² Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany*, 124.

fashion and the rising consumer society that women moved themselves closer to participation in political citizenship. In the moment when women became boy-like, patriarchal society considered this fashionable hairstyle to be a threat to the conventional understanding of masculinity, rather than a threat to femininity. The social discourses were revolving around scientific evidence of the harmful effects of the *Bubikopf* to female health as well as to more mundane reasons:

Our editorial offices received from our readers many praises of the advantages of the *Bubikopf* that allows easy hair care and easier hat-wearing. However, one respectable physician from Zagreb told us that the foggy fall days can be proven fatal for women with short hair because their necks are not used to cold temperatures and therefore they could be susceptible to influenza. We need to warn our women readers about this dangerous health threat. We are not sure if the movement against *Bubikopf* will succeed, but we can say that the rapid cutting of the hair by women in the world is in decline.³⁹³

Yet this 1925 article was hardly the common narrative on the *Bubikopf*, which proved to be tougher than the male supporters of the movement, such as this respectable physician in Zagreb, could predict. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, *Ženski list* was participating in the creation and redefinition of the new nation, “*Bubikopf* nation.” On the surface, it looked as though women had succumbed to modern fashion demands and to the growing consumer culture. But, on deeper level, this new nation of the interwar woman with the page-boy hair cut symbolically declared revolution against tradition by making a sharp cut into the historical symbol of femininity, women’s hair. By doing that, they were making demands for their rightful place in the new working-class society that made them equal to men and, therefore, equal for participation in the nation by demanding suffrage. The new hair-style redefined, not only women’s bodies, but also

³⁹³ “The Last Day of the *Bubikopf*,” *Ženski list*, September, 1925, 25.

women's role in society and the meaning of citizenship. In the November 1927 issue, a discussion of the *Bubikopf* "Bubikopf or Long Hair" appeared on the same page as three other articles dealing with the women's movement and suffrage, "Women's Organizations for the Voting Rights in Kingdom S.H.S.," "Women's Political Party," and "Belittling the Women's Movement." *Ženski list* discussed the movement in Germany, France, and England against the *Bubikopf*, which argued that this new haircut caused "gender confusion" and that "women who wear this style blur differences between men and women, change moral and compromise social life," comparing it with the movement against female suffrage appearing in the daily newspapers. Articles published daily in newspapers throughout the country argued that "women who ask voting rights are either ugly or unfortunate spinsters who resort to political agitation because of the lack of love," and *Ženski list* proclaimed these ideas to be nonsense and concluded that "*Bubikopf* still lives, and so shall women's suffrage movement live ... regardless of the propaganda tours against the gender confusion."³⁹⁴ In 1928, one article brought the story about the delicate influence of the *Bubikopf* upon governmental decisions:

In Greece, the Minister of Finances declared taxes on the *Bubikopf*. Women who cut their hair will have to pay yearly taxes. Do we have to say that this decision did not stop women from cutting their hair? The only consequence of this decision is that the state collects a fine amount of taxes.³⁹⁵

However, the *Bubikopf* did cause headaches for some women, especially those who were residing in the more rural areas. One woman reader, a school teacher in the provinces, complained to *Ženski list* about her *Bubikopf* that had brought her nothing but

³⁹⁴ "Bubikopf or Long Hair?" *Ženski list*, November, 1927, 31-32.

³⁹⁵ "Taxes on Bubikopf," *Ženski list* January 1928, 49.

misery, along with her short skirt, so popular in the capital city of Zagreb. In a sarcastic response, she wrote:

I am a teacher, and I never had any trouble until the *Bubikopf* came into fashion, and I cut my hair, not because I thought I was prettier with short hair, but because it is more practical; keeping it saves me some time, and this is very important for us teachers. But the trouble is my hair is curly, and I cannot make it stick to my head. Another problem is my short skirt . . . I got a letter that said: “A woman teacher cannot come to Church bare-headed, with a messed-up hair and with a short skirt like a common servant.” I know that in Zagreb women walk with their short skirts and short hair, and, as far as I am concerned, women servants are heard by God even if they are shock-headed. I covered my head with a woolen hat, and now I look even worse. Please tell me what to do. As you can see, I am mostly bothered about my head. Should I go without it?—K³⁹⁶

Zagorka responded to this plea by staying completely on the side of the *Bubikopf* and the freedom that it offered to the modern working woman. She responded, “Just keep your messed up hair and your head. It seems like those who complain about your hair are walking without their heads.”³⁹⁷

The new hair style was there to represent more than just a fashionable vanity, but, as this woman reader had asserted, it came to represent liberation from gendered oppression; it represented modernity in which even time had become a consumer good; and, finally, it represented, in the feminist political-economic sense, a new woman in the working public sphere who needed the *Bubikopf* as a powerful symbol to alleviate the real traditional unequal position of women in society. The new hair style wasn't only a gendered statement. It symbolized the class differentiation between the new working women and the ladies from the higher social class. One advertisement for shampoo published in March 1931 (see figure 29 on the next page) contains both discourses:

³⁹⁶ “Shock-head and Woolen Hat,” Letter, *Ženski list*, March 1928, 31.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

Woman with a calling...

Many changes are present in everyday life since women and men are cooperating in public life. In their offices and stores, they bring glamour and happiness. Behind the windows, they offer a happy smile, her presence is refreshing, and her labor demands recognition. When we meet her later after the working day, in the theatres, restaurants, sports fields, vacations, or travels, we can say with joy that these women are completely equal to those ladies from the higher classes. This is because they care about their looks and their bodies – If you ask her, when your eyes go over her silky hair, you'll get a simple and joyful answer: "It is simple – with Pixavon!"³⁹⁸

The discourses on the working women who had stepped into the public sphere with their *Bubikopf* and discourses on the traditional women's roles as housewives who were undergoing the real and symbolic change in the modern society as well while wearing the *Bubikopf* in the house were the core discourses that were being developed in *Ženski list* from the magazine's beginning to its demise. Hence, I will focus my analysis on these feminist political-economic debates, followed by an historical narrative of the demise of this magazine that had influenced a generation of interwar women and that ultimately had participated in the social change that would be abruptly stopped by the emergence of World War II. However, without a doubt, *Ženski list* left a strong impact on the Yugoslav interwar discourses, and, by these very discourses, the magazine changed the lives of women and, more importantly, the meanings women of Yugoslavia and Croatia attributed to their everyday lives.

³⁹⁸ Pixavon advertisement, *Ženski list*, March, 1931, 1.

Broj 3 ŽENSKI LIST



Žena sa
pozivom . . .

Kolike li promjene u dnevnom životu otkad žene sa muškarcima suraduju. U urede i poslovnice unijele su sjaj i vedrinu, za šalterom struji iz njih radostan osmijeh, njena prisutnost osvježuje, njen rad traži priznanje. Pa kad ih kasnije susrećemo nakon dnevnog rada u kazalištima, restauracijama, sportskim igralištima ili na putovanjima i dopustima, opažamo radosno iznenađeni, da su u svakom pogledu izjednačene sa onim damama visokog društva. To je zato jer mnogo paze na sebe i jer njeguju sebe i svoje tijelo. — Upitaj li je kod zgrade, kad Ti pogled predje preko njene svilene kose, dobit ćeš vedar odgovor: „Jednostavno — sa Pixavonom!”



Lijepa Pixavon kosa sada
izlijed Pixavon-Shampoona
— potpuno oslobođena od
sode, jedan paket dostaje
za dvokratnu upotrebu, a
stoji samo Din 350



PIXAVON
sada i Pixavon-Shampoo!

Pixavon-Shampoo, je više nego li obično sredstvo za pranje kose.
Pixavon-Shampoo, je sredstvo za negu kose od prvog ranga.
Pixavon-Shampoo sadrži iste odlike kao i tekući Pixavon.

Figure 29. Pixavon Advertisement, *Ženski list*, March 1931.

4.2.3. The Golden Years: 1925-1930

The first issue of *Ženski list* emerged onto the scene of Yugoslav mass culture with a complete lack of an articulated mission. It came out at the end of April 1925 after a long discussion about the liberalization and democratization of the print media and in the midst of the discussion of the new media law that was finally proclaimed in summer 1925. In the new, more positive, discourse about print, publishers were sure of the democratic intentions of the politician supporters in the new parliamentary monarchy, but they were less sure of the market stability. The first issue seemed to have been testing market waters and exploring whether a magazine exclusively intended for the emerging female consumer was really needed and could gain public acceptance. The May issue had a short note on the second page claiming that the first issue of *Ženski list* was completely sold out and that this fact had inspired owners to invest more money, regardless of the economic difficulties, to print fashion-pattern pages that would be similar to, if not better than, the foreign examples of this kind.³⁹⁹ Two months after the first issue had been published, *Ženski list* was assured of the niche audiences that it needed to address. The June issue opened with the mission statement, “*Ženski list* – Paper for Housewives.” Although, in later statements, “the housewife” would be more readily replaced with “the modern woman,” the initial mission of this magazine was to establish a woman in the house as a woman home-worker and the home as the “economic basis of every

³⁹⁹ “To Our Respected Women Readers!”, *Ženski list*, May 1925, p. 20.

family.”⁴⁰⁰ Even fashion was established as a professional matter for the housewife because it significantly influenced the household budget and household management as the most important economic role of the new woman. But the magazine had an ulterior political goal as well. It clearly and openly wanted to dislodge the dominant positions of foreign magazines, and German women’s magazines in particular, in the Yugoslav print market for women:

The household is the business of a housewife.... The household is also the economic profession of every woman.... Because our women did not have their magazine, they had to reach out for a German magazine of this kind.... Without our will, Germans spread their words and the spirit of their homes to our home fires. We have emancipated ourselves from the foreign influences in every aspect of life, and now there is time to finally witness a turn in the field of the print. Our housewife does not need German magazines for her fashion and household needs because *Ženski list*, after two months of its existence, is a complete and perfect competitor to foreign magazines of this kind.⁴⁰¹

This political statement reflected anti-imperial sentiments that had been lingering in the discourse of Croatian society since the publication of the first fashion magazine for women in Croatia, *Pariška Moda*, during the Empire at the onset of the 20th Century. This anti-imperial discourse from pre-World War I Croatia had carried into the interwar years and into the new state. This new state was pervaded by the residues of the old systems in terms of the laws, language, and the market. *Ženski list*, through its mission, had imparted an important role for Croatian and Yugoslav women. By reading 16 pages of the text and by using fashion patterns as presented in the Croatian language, they could participate in the creation of the “new patriotic spirit” of the new time that demanded

⁴⁰⁰ “Ženski list – Paper for Housewives.” *Ženski list*, June 1925, 20.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

“that we are ourselves everywhere.”⁴⁰² Women, by fulfilling their role as home-workers, not only could participate in the creation of the new market economy, but also could fulfill an important role in the creation of the Croatian and Yugoslav identity as a political and economic new nation. This articulation of the new role for women quickly resonated with the women readers. In the following issue, one letter from a reader was given a significant amount of space. The reader had done a small market research study on her own and had found out that one German household magazine was sold in more copies than all Croatian magazines altogether, observing that “...this is an outrageous betrayal of our own economic product.”⁴⁰³ These political-economic concerns, as reflected in the everyday lives of women, set the most dominant discourse of *Ženski list* that continued throughout its 14 years of existence. *Zagorka* often included short reminder notes, similar to today’s post-it notes, for women readers to always remember the main goal of the magazine, which was especially important for women who expressed their wish to be collaborators. Women were reminded that this magazine’s duty was to “devote its space to the women’s needs in their everyday lives.... This is the purpose of our magazine.” *Zagorka* and her women journalists believed that the host of issues concerning the everyday lives of women should be openly discussed in the newly created public sphere of women’s everyday lives that was *Ženski list*.⁴⁰⁴ In 1926, many articles covered news regarding resolutions and activities of feminist organizations worldwide, and the focus was always given to the political-economic concerns. In one article on the

402 Ibid.

403 “Correspondence of *Ženski list*,” July, 1925, 26.

404 *Ženski list*, March, 1926, 35.

activities of the *Little Women's Entente* that was comprised of representatives from Yugoslavia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Greece, the main focus was on the establishment of women's work in the house as an occupation. This position as the worker of the house gave her the right to demand a part of her husband's income for her personal everyday needs.⁴⁰⁵ In the April 1926 issue that marked the second year since *Ženski list* had initiated its conquest of the Yugoslav print market for women, the mission statement emphasized the status of the magazine as the only one open for the public discussion of the everyday lives of women: women's needs, their work in the house and in the public sphere, and the need to advance *Ženski list* as the "gathering-place where every woman can take a chance to speak about her personal or general women's aspirations."⁴⁰⁶ This intent was specifically materialized in the new section called "Moot of *Ženski list*," where women readers could initiate discussions about everything that interested them. To assure confidentiality for those women who feared public or private backlash, their articles were signed by pseudonyms. The first article was initiated by a woman reader who wanted to discuss the world's women's movement. Ksenija asked other readers to give their opinions about the economic status of women, civil rights, equality in front of the law, rights of women factory workers, divorce, maternity leaves, women's rights to form and to be voted as representatives of mercantile councils and chambers, and women's active and passive rights to vote for city councils and parliaments.⁴⁰⁷ Another reader wrote to engage into a discussion about the status of

⁴⁰⁵ "Little Entente," *Ženski list*, January 1926, 26.

⁴⁰⁶ "Our Word At the Beginning of the Second Year," *Ženski list*, April, 1926, 23.

⁴⁰⁷ "Moot of *Ženski list*," *Ženski list*, April, 1926, 30.

housewives vs. women who worked in a calling. Anica reflected the common belief that was being expressed by the women readers of *Ženski list* that women who were without a proper calling and thus were relegated to the home were often exposed to male oppression simply because they were economically dependent. The rift between middle-class women housewives and the emerging class of working independent women was a common concern that was being expressed in *Ženski list*. Women housewives did not resent the more-independent status of women workers, but they regretted that little could be done for the equality of women in the house:

Women who work in the offices do not have to put up with their bosses.... They can change their job.... We on the other hand have to put up with husbands who are torturing us.... Can we quit our husbands? I think it is necessary to do something for women housewives who have so many good, but unnoticed, qualities...⁴⁰⁸

This concern about the status of women in the family and within the household was not only advanced by the lively discussions among readers, but also by Zagorka, who had initiated this discussion by a series of short stories, “Conversations about the Household in the Modern Times,” where she constructed male characters as the keepers of the traditional division of labor who, at the end, fall under the pressure of the women’s dexterous arguments. Almost from the beginning, discourse of modernity in *Ženski list* was supported by the glorification of the American lifestyle that was present in the press of that time. The influx of American industrial products, and especially cultural products such as film, as well as influences of the democratic, liberal, and feminist discourses that were originating in the United States, were often taken as a good-enough argument for a

⁴⁰⁸ “Who Has it Better: The Housewife or a Woman with her Calling?”, *Ženski list*, May 1926, 30.

change in the traditional patriarchal social order. The May 1928 issue featured a two-page article on the “Household in America,” which not only exalted the modernity of the American home, but also constructed the American woman as the married housewife who could afford to be happy and cheerful because she not only had the help of the most modern appliances, but also a modern husband who was emancipated from the traditional male roles:

[In America], the husband and wife come home from work, they open a little cabinet and in no time they electronically make lunch, they close the little cabinet kitchen, sit at the table and eat... Everyone who knows the American woman always talks about how cheerful she is, “the real sunbeam of her house.” Now we understand. With such a game of housework – where she pulls here and there some appliances and everything is done – where everything is designed to help her – including her husband – it is not a miracle that she is so happy. We, women in Europe, would also be like this, if we had it the way they do!⁴⁰⁹

In one instance in Zagorka’s short story, husband Ivica expresses his indignation with the international news section of the Croatian daily newspaper. The news from the other, more civilized, side of the Atlantic was about men in America who were educating themselves in home economics and who were assuming their share of work in the household as their duty: “What...scandal, he said, being a man today has become no advantage!,” and Zagorka humorously ended, “Poor men. As though it was ever an advantage to be a woman.”⁴¹⁰ In another article, “Right of a Woman to a Life,” *Ženski list* presented a story about the contemporary American woman who was conscious about

⁴⁰⁹ “American Household,” *Ženski list*, May 1928, 31-32.

⁴¹⁰ “Conversations About the Household in the Modern Times I,” *Ženski list*, November 1926, 25

her needs and who was not afraid to follow her dreams.⁴¹¹ In the following issue, one woman reader had this to say about the inspiration that American women could bring to the lives of European women:

We European women really need to take American women as a good example. They are natural and have a completely developed consciousness about life, and, because of that developed consciousness, they were capable of assuring their earned rights, not only in public laws, but also in the souls of American men.... I can see from the mentioned article that American women are not immoral because they strive to be liberated, to be healthy and beautiful....⁴¹²

This fascination with the American lifestyle paradoxically went against the wish that *Ženski list* would reject foreign products and ideas. The rejection of German imperialism in the political and cultural sense was simply being replaced with an Americanization of the newly emerging domestic culture. This paradox was triggered by the growing American market in general and the initial stages of the export of the American global popular culture.

The 1926 discourses on women's traditional and changing roles in the household slowly transferred into a discussion of women's independent lives as single women who could earn their living outside of the home and thereby could contribute to the economy with the public work. Women readers expressed particular interest in the article, "Bee-keeping As a Good Occupation." The article was the story about two women school teachers who had decided to start their own business with bee-keeping in 1912; by 1925, they had managed to make a living and had establish bee-keeping as a potentially successful female occupation.

⁴¹¹ "Right of a Woman to a Life," Ibid.

⁴¹² "Response to the article 'Right of a Woman to a Life,'" *Ženski list*, December 1926, 29.

In the January 1927 issue in the section, “News from the Editorial,” the staff of *Ženski list* made a special commitment to open a more lively discussion about women in different occupations, with a focus on the good and bad sides of the life of the independent professional woman. This call for a discussion of the new class of woman (the working woman) was an incentive to open another class discussion, that of the bourgeois woman in the cities and the peasant woman in the provinces. *Ženski list*, unlike many women’s magazines in the history of the women’s press, could not enjoy the advantage of participating and constructing only one class of emerging middle-class women. The particular historical circumstances of the new state and the rather underdeveloped and small middle-class strata strategically pushed *Ženski list* to seek readership within the growing working-class women and peasant women from the provinces. However, this might have been atypical for Western societies where industrialization and modernization processes had begun much earlier and the women’s press could develop specifically for middle-class women, from which bourgeois feminism eventually had emerged. Zagorka and her women journalists had to reach out to the wider population of women and to create their discourses on women’s rights and feminism as more popular discourses. Communication across classes was especially encouraged whenever there was an opportunity to support the national spirit as well as domestic products. This support was a sign of an economically conscious patriotic woman. Women from the cities, i.e., bourgeois women, found their connection with the patriotic peasant spirit through fashionable folk dress:

In our country, we cannot find one patriotic bourgeois woman who would not take a chance to at least once pose in the public wearing national folk dress.

This is a visible proof that the society life of our intelligentsia is tightly connected with our village.⁴¹³

The debate on the status of women in the professions was sparked with the increasingly unequal status of women with their male co-workers. Women felt materially and morally discouraged and, even though in principle women could do what ever they could and would do, they were often discriminated upon at their working places. *Ženski list* invited all women who earned their money independently in the public sphere to share their experiences to find comfort and to help other younger women to choose specific occupations. Women teachers were first to open the discussion, and, even though most liked their occupation, they felt discriminated upon by being paid less than were the male teachers and for often being chastised as immoral for not being married. Women teachers were joined by the sales women, who complained about their miserable pay, maltreatment by their men superiors, and especially about their status, which was much below the status of the working women in offices. Sales women often complained about the lack of educational opportunities in their early lives as well as the mocking that they were receiving from their more-educated customers. There was an obvious growing differentiation of classes in the Yugoslav interwar society, especially as it pertained to the growing differences between the educated and uneducated classes. Sometimes, these differences hampered questions of gender equality, women's solidarity, and activism. In one of the pools run by *Ženski list* in 1927 on women's right to vote, one woman said:

Yes, I would like to get the right to vote for the parliament, and I would vote based on the character of the candidate.... The same would go if the candidate would be of our gender. However, if the voting right would be general

⁴¹³ "From the World of Arts," *Ženski list*, February 1927, 20.

as it is now for men, and if I had to vote with all of the other women, without any difference, and if my vote would be the same as the vote of every peasant woman, shepherd girl, analphabet female idiot, then I wish I am never granted the voting right, especially here in this country.⁴¹⁴

Women teachers, not surprisingly, dominated the discussion because the teaching profession was still the most open profession for women. Some women artists joined with more progressive ideas about the independence of women in the professions. They believed that women artists and all women who felt a strong calling for any profession should be able to refuse marriage and live independently. This would inevitably lead to a decrease in the number of women who chose to be mothers and housewives, but it would increase the number of women who would contribute with their special capabilities to the world of arts and sciences. Women artists thought to develop the discourse about women's equal intelligence and women's special gifts in the field of arts and sciences that thus far had no chance to surface because of the dominant patriarchal male belief that women were created to be mothers and housewives.⁴¹⁵ Several issues of *Ženski list* in 1927 were devoted to women in house service. These women should be considered employees of the house rather than maids, the magazine said. This idea was also constructed through the discourse of modernity. It used to be that women who worked in other people's houses had been considered slaves, but, now in the modern society, it was not cultured to think that women in the house service were slaves. The new modern time demanded a human and dignified relationship between "those who provide employment

⁴¹⁴ "Women's Voting Rights: Would You Like to be Granted Voting Right for Parliamentary Elections?" *Ženski list*, February, 1927, 30.

⁴¹⁵ "Should Woman Artist Say No To Marriage?" *Ženski list*, April, 1927, 28.

and those who receive it – including this specific case.”⁴¹⁶ Through this example, the much larger point was being made about the modern understanding of the relationship between employer and employee in the capitalist system. The rising of the consciousness of the working class, first by union-organizing and the rise of socialist ideas—although the Communist party was being forced to work underground for the most of the interwar period in Yugoslavia—was a dominant ideology that was especially appealing to women who were seeking protection in their newly found professional life. Women’s adventure into the public sphere of employment led to the re-examination of gender roles, where women were tending to acquire perceived male behavior. In Bolshevik Russia, women tractor drivers in posters that would appear in the 1930s did not only symbolize the peasant class in the collectivization process, but the blurring of gender lines in Bolshevik Russia.⁴¹⁷

The changing image of women in the late 1920s raised concerns in the West about influences that this new material culture had on female behavior and female roles. *Ženski list* brought a similar discussion to the fore, but only to support women’s emancipation from confined gender roles and especially to support women’s role in the creation of the new material modern culture. In the article, “Influences of the Modern Woman on the Society,” *Ženski list* presented the opinion of the English sociologist Professor Harrison, who spoke for the *English Review* as a response to the fears of the scientists who perceived modern woman as a kind of a monster transitioning into manliness:

⁴¹⁶ “The Problem of the Home Service: Not Maid but Woman Employee,” *Ženski list*, May, 1927, 7.

⁴¹⁷ Victoria E. Bonnel, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (University of California Press, 1998), 106.

It is true that women are more and more manly every day, especially in England, but the reason for this is sports education of women. We should not be afraid of feminism, which will raise a woman from the level of the gender slave and domestic animal to the level of the full-fledged human being.... The whole today's peaceful material culture, the tendency to dress well and live nicely and comfortably – springs from the increased influence of a woman on our social life. It springs from so-called mannishness of today's emancipated women of the cultured world, and in particular from the most cultured woman of the world, English woman!⁴¹⁸

Political-economic concerns almost by a default were always expressed through feminist and gender concerns. *Ženski list* had worked as a public defender of the rightful place that women deserved in the public economic sphere, rather than the more traditional private economic sphere of the household. An article, “Woman’s Question: Who Got Emancipated?,” which was published in 1928 on the eve of the great depression, discussed the dire economic conditions that affected women’s everyday lives in interwar Yugoslavia. In the newly formed market economy, it was not a woman who emancipated herself from the household, but rather a man who could no longer provide for his family as a sole breadwinner:

The household is under bankruptcy – and with it our housewife.... It used to be that the husband always provided enough so that his wife could take care of the house and her spiritual being. And today? Daddy doesn’t provide a dowry, and suitors do not earn enough to support a household. What can she do, other than look for her own “dowry” in her own earnings, which she brings into the marriage, or, if she doesn’t marry, she keeps her earnings to support herself? Woman is still working, like earlier, but in a different place. So, it isn’t woman who emancipated herself from the household – it is the man who got emancipated!⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Influences of the Modern Woman on the Society, *Ženski list*, May 1927, 31.

⁴¹⁹ “Woman’s Question: Who Got Emancipated?” *Ženski list*, October 1928, 27.

The most heated women's question in the new capitalist, but weak, Yugoslav economy was her place in the working public sphere. This argument worked almost as a contradiction in itself. While it supported women's work outside of the house, and even alluded to the new modern single woman who earned her own bread, it still used the argument that a woman could never fully be emancipated from her household. It was a woman who still cared for the household as her primary duty, with the only difference that she did it now from both inside and outside of the house.

This double duty pervaded the discourse of *Ženski list* in the late 1920s and in the beginning of the 1930s. The struggle between the traditional place of the woman in society and her newly found place within the new capitalist system of production was expressed through stories and articles about women who joined the capitalist system of production without leaving their homes. One such example was the handicraft company that had been initiated by the entrepreneur Božo Ra i in Slovenia, who organized 800 Slovenian women to produce handicrafts that were specially made from lace, including clothes and bags. To promote these products, he organized many international exhibitions of the domestic women's handicraft that gained popularity, particularly in Paris, France. Ra i promoted his business through daily newspapers, and, in 1927, his marketing strategies extended to *Ženski list*. According to the article, "Domestic Women's Craft Industry," *Ženski list* would print patterns with explanations how to learn handicraft, but it would also make available already-made handicrafts through sales with a special price for subscribers. Although it is obvious that his intentions were mostly economic, the attraction for *Ženski list* seemed to be economic and political, with an emphasis on promotion of the material advancement of women in villages and domestic life:

It is needless to say that this handicraft industry brings significant material benefit and an opportunity for our village housewives and girls to earn their own money. They earn their financial independence in their spare time, and, with it, they improve their artistic skills.⁴²⁰

Those women who, on the other hand, devoted themselves to life in the family and in the house were also changing in the modern capitalist society that was demanding a new housewife for a modern home. The article, “Zagreb’s School for Home Economics: Modern Household,” elaborated on the idea of the modern times and its demands for a new type of more modernly educated woman who would be prepared for the world in which “...besides husband business man, a woman is a business woman, the situation that creates a new type of housewife and the new household.”⁴²¹

The year 1927 was an important one in the establishment of *Ženski list* as one of the most important publications for women, not only in Croatia, but also throughout the Kingdom of S.H.S. The announcement in the November 1927 issue informed readers about the opening of the special office of *Ženski list* in the city of Split on the Croatian Adriatic coast and another one in Zemun in Serbia. The December issue announced a new course that the magazine would take in terms of its number of pages and the quality of the printed material that would surpass the quality of the foreign magazines, all to engage more with its readers.

This need to engage more deeply with the needs of women readers was also based on a true interest in the magazine’s readers as well as on the other more economic and political reasons that had been the driving force of the publishers and the magazine’s

⁴²⁰ “Domestic Women’s Craft Industry,” June, 1927, 36.

⁴²¹ “Zagreb’s School for Home Economics: Modern Household,” January, 1928, 26.

editor from the very first issue, all of which were especially emphasized from the beginning of the third year. In the same section, “News from the Editorial Offices,” Zagorka invited readers to write and establish a “written relationship” that would be based on a common trust in the magazine’s intentions to serve the needs of its readers and to become a trusted place where anything could be said, discussed, and resolved. More importantly, the invitation expressed interest in the everyday lives of women from different backgrounds, classes, and geographical areas of the Kingdom, “...(W)e want you to engage in the discussion of new ideas, and we want you to tell us what are your needs in the house in the social life and in life in general.”⁴²²

In terms of the economic and political reasons, publishers and the editor of the magazine got engaged in the political and marketing strategy, “The Five Commandments of the Subscribers of *Ženski list*.” As a symbolic take-off on the Christian morality that had been expressed in the Ten Commandments, “The Five Commandments” were designed to produce an appeal to the magazine’s women readers who should feel a moral duty, as members of the magazine’s community, to engage in the magazine’s promotion and support. The “Five Commandments” were: (1) Never forget to send a subscription to *Ženski list* on time; (2) Always promote *Ženski list* and find new subscribers; (3) Never lend a copy of *Ženski list* because, by doing so, you are bringing huge economic damage to the magazine; (4) Respond to our questions, send your opinions, and share your life experiences with *Ženski list*; (5) Always remember that it is your duty to keep *Ženski list*

⁴²² “To Our Readers and Subscribers,” January, 1928, 36.

in your hands as an antidote to foreign magazines and that its survival and development rests only on your propaganda and your prompt subscription.⁴²³

In 1928, *Ženski list* was engaged with zest in the policy debate surrounding a parliamentary proposal for a new law that would regulate the life of women teachers by prohibiting marriages between women teachers and men from other occupations. A woman could keep her job only if she were married to a man who was also a teacher. The primary rationale for this law was a concern that women teachers who married men from other occupations would have to follow their men if they were transferred and, in such cases, the state's budget would be damaged by the need to search for another woman teacher who would take on the position while at the same time supporting the leave-of-absence for a woman teacher who had chosen to follow her husband. Zagorka opened this discussion in the article, "The Law that Ordains Husbands for Women Teachers." Zagorka compared this law with the most backward social rules that had dated from the Middle Ages, concluding with revulsion, "... (T)oday, in the Twentieth Century, in the age of democracy and human freedoms, we have laws that ordain husbands to our teachers!" Her strongest argument was drawn from the copies of the debates that had been held in the parliaments in Belgrade and Zemun, where some male representatives were urging women to go ahead and "bring this sacrifice to the altar of the homeland." Zagorka was revolted by this attack on the freedom of choice, and she argued that women already had made their sacrifice for the homeland in the Great War "... (T)his request in today's world is an attack on the nature; it goes against the spirit of the time; it goes

⁴²³ "The Five Commandments of the Subscribers of *Ženski list*," December 1928, 54.

against personal freedom, which humanity – especially its female part – fought for and deserved in the last big bloodshed!”⁴²⁴

After a long debate, the law was withdrawn from parliamentary debate. This debate, nevertheless, initiated a series of articles titled, “Women’s Occupations in Jeopardy,” that brought to the fore, not only the experiences of women in different occupations, but also the lack of economic and educational support for women in their occupations.⁴²⁵ To boost the spirit of women in their occupations, *Ženski list* often published statistics from women in different occupations in different counties, and, although there was an uneven number of women employed in comparison to men (1:7), it was still a significant difference from the pre-war world.⁴²⁶ The magazine also published stories from women who shared their experiences about their lives in their occupations and about how their occupational choices were influencing their married life. Such was the story of one reader who had decided to work in the same office as her husband. Although the husband was at first against it, he accepted her as a colleague after he had realized that his relationship with his wife had improved because they were sharing more common experiences.⁴²⁷ Tendencies toward the acceptance of the idea that women could earn their money, independence, and equality with men was becoming more agreeable because women were persistent in taking on a job and sticking with it, no matter what difficulties they were encountering. In Sarajevo, Bosnia, men entrepreneurs were even

⁴²⁴ “The Law that Ordains Husbands for Women Teachers,” June, 1928, 27.

⁴²⁵ “Women’s Occupations in Jeopardy,” October 1928, 24-25.

⁴²⁶ “Women’s Occupations,” October 1928, 36.

⁴²⁷ “How I became Happily Married,” November 1928, 27-28.

ready to advocate voting rights for women entrepreneurs in the local and general elections.⁴²⁸

The year 1928 was the most important and most successful year of *Ženski list* since it had been first published in April 1925, and it was possibly the best year of this magazine's existence. On May 9th, 1928, *Ženski list* represented women's publications from the Kingdom of S.H.S in the *International Print Exhibition* in Köln, Germany.⁴²⁹ The December 1928 issue was filled with promises that would maintain *Ženski list* as the most-accepted and most-read Croatian women's magazine in the whole Kingdom, not only because it had proven itself to be better than any other foreign magazine of its kind, but because it had turned itself from a magazine for fashion concerns to a magazine for the varied interests of the modern woman.

Throughout the following year, *Ženski list* was published on more than 50 lavishly printed pages, and, at the very beginning of the year, its editor, Zagorka, had decided to engage in organizing an exhibition of handicraft work of the magazine's subscribers. The handicraft business, run by Mr. Ra i in Slovenia as was mentioned earlier, was an inspirational moment for Zagorka and her women journalists. Printed patterns for handicraft work received significant interest among readers. *Ženski list* saw an opportunity to, first-of-all, engage more in the lives of its readers, second to push for more visibility in the market for economic gain, and, third, to participate in the creation of the industrious housewife who would be visible in the public sphere. In the permanent section, "News from the Editorial Offices," in the article, "Exhibition of the Handicrafts

⁴²⁸ "Sarajevo's Entrepreneurs Seek Voting Rights For Women," November 1928, 30.

⁴²⁹ "*Ženski list* on the International Print Exhibition in Koeln," May 1928, 39.

of Our Subscribers,” these three goals are emphasized, particularly the goal to make the woman of the house an equal participant in the growing system of capitalist production with the promise of visibility and independence in the public sphere:

Ženski list would like to give an opportunity to our women subscribers to show their work in the public and for those who would like to sell their handicrafts to find buyers. This is just the beginning of our goal to accomplish all our ideas that could be summed up in our need to promote interests of our readers and strengthen the relationship between them and our magazine.⁴³⁰

In the first editorial in 1929, Zagorka emphasized the role of women readers in the creation of *Ženski list* and the crucial impact that women had on its creation through their patriotism and the appeals of motherhood. “You laid aside foreign magazines, and you embraced *Ženski list* as your own child...” For the first time, Zagorka openly mentioned the technical and economic difficulties in the production of the domestically produced magazine, and, again, she used patriotic appeals as an argument for the economic support of *Ženski list*:

We have worked on building, and we will continue to build this magazine in the complete faith that our female part of the nation wants its own domestic magazine in their language, spirit, and feeling – and, for that reason, they will continue to nurture *Ženski list* and support it with their love and patriotic devotion.⁴³¹

This patriotic undertone wasn’t new to *Ženski list*; however, the emphasis on patriotism and the role of women in the consumer society as the patriotic role would become more and more dominant as time progressed. More importantly, this patriotism and increasing emphasis on the lives of Croatian women as an ethnic group could also be

⁴³⁰ “Exhibition of the Handicrafts of Our Subscribers,” December 1928, 51.

⁴³¹ “Our Dear Subscribers,” Editorial, January 1929, 1.

read as a reflection of the larger political issues that were dominating in the 1920s, particularly the nationalistic rivalry of the two largest nationalities, Serbs and Croats. The so-called Serbo-Croatian Question culminated when the leader of the largest Croatian political Party, Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić, was shot in the parliament June 20th, 1928, and the aftermath of his death caused permanent rifts in Serbo-Croatian relations. On January 6, 1929, King Alexander abolished the constitution, dissolved the parliament, proclaimed a dictatorship, and changed the name of the country to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The proclamation, "To My Dear People: To All Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," was published in a special edition of *Narodne Novine* (*People's Newspaper*) Monday, January 7th, 1929. King Alexander gave special emphasis on his role in keeping people's unity and brotherhood among all three constitutive nations.⁴³² King Alexander immediately changed the press laws from August 26th, 1925, and basically forbade all criticism of the royal family. The only reflection of these significant political changes on *Ženski list* was evident in the increased number of articles that were devoted to the life of the royal couple and their children, as well their care for the new Yugoslav nation. The more ardent issue that was expressed was the growing economic crisis and the way that it reflected on the everyday lives of women as consumers. Editorial comments by Zagorka in every issue touched on the questions of the new consumer society and modernity. In her editorial, "Modern Woman," she discussed the difficulties of modern life in which a woman did not liberate herself from the traditional roles of mother and housewife. On the contrary, she had to keep those traditional roles as

⁴³² "To My Dear People: To All Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," *Narodne Novine*, January 7, 1929, No.6.

well as to enter the battle for existence that had become especially significant with the growing economic uncertainty. Woman had stepped down from the comfort of middle-class life to life to begin the uncertainty of the modern working woman “...(W)oman with her role in the public work did not liberate herself, she made herself liable.”⁴³³

The role of a woman in the growing, but economically challenged, consumer society became a more pervasive theme in *Ženski list* throughout 1929. Modernity did not only impact the day-to-day activities of women, whether they were working women or housewives. It was the architecture of the cities that changed as well. The new architecture and the department stores were sites for the new consumer practices. Stark visual contrast between pre-war and pre-industrial cities and the growing city skylines had a significant influence on the understanding of modernity. One such example was the fascination with American cities that had been often described and visually represented in the magazine throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

The most visibly different, surprisingly new, and intriguing architectural structures were the new department-store complexes. German and Croatian languages found a moment of peace in the word *Warehous*, which was an acceptable usage for a market when it referred to the “new city palace” *Kastner and Öhler* department store that had opened for the gaze and the pockets of the new growing class of consumers in Croatia’s capital, Zagreb. This was the most glorious of Zagreb’s new buildings that had been built on the corner of the busiest street, Ilica.⁴³⁴ The building was a symbol of the modernization “... façade of this glorious building ... today is the most beautiful and

⁴³³ “Modern Woman,” *Ženski list*, March 1929, 1.

⁴³⁴ Even Today Ilica is the Shopping Center of Zagreb.

most modern decoration of the Zagreb's artery Ilica." One whole page with a photograph was devoted to the admiration of the building and everything inside that is not only of good quality, but the most affordable, for the particularly tasteful Zagreb's new class of consumers. This building became the new palace of the city:

... (A)fter we stepped out of this metropolitan market palace, we found ourselves again in front of the beautifully decorated windows.... (W)e looked at the glorious façade one more time, and we understood its decorative role so much better than before.⁴³⁵

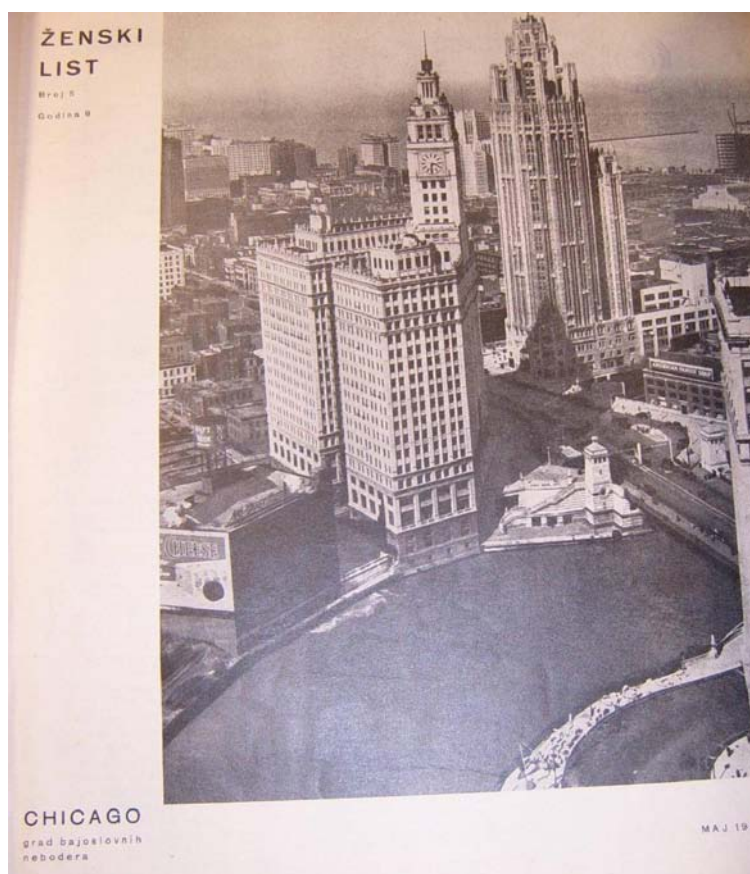


Figure 30. Chicago – City of the Majestic Skyscrapers.
Ženski list, first page in May issue of 1933.

⁴³⁵ “One Metropolitan Store in Zagreb,” *Ženski list*, March 1929, 35.

More and more, *Ženski list* was constructed as a woman's right hand in helping her to go unharmed through the economic crisis. Although the industrial revolution was criticized for bringing more responsibilities into the lives of women and for causing even more stress over basic survival, the at-large changes in the new modern society were celebrated, not only for bringing women's emancipation from men, but also for men's emancipation from their dependence on women. Industrialization helped men to gain more independence because they did not need women to make simple necessities such as socks. Men could go to the store to get a pair of socks, and the only reason they would need a woman was for fashion advice:

Everything is developing in the direction where, economically and socially, women and men are independent from each other. Even if they are married, both by being employed stay apart by their economic independence.⁴³⁶
To establish the new modern Croatian and Yugoslav woman as being progressive

and economically independent, regardless of her class, was one of the most important discursive goals of *Ženski list*. However, the magazine's goal extended from the simple discursive construction of women's lives into the real everyday lives of women. The goal was to bring a real change and to participate in providing opportunities for change. One of the most concrete examples was, without doubt, the exhibition of handicraft made by women readers, which was organized by *Ženski list* and which was held in the *Pavilion of Arts* from May 18 through 26, 1929. This exhibition was a result of the efforts made by Josefina Josipa Schwartz, the owner of *Ženski list*, who had given material and financial support to the project; Zagorka, who had given her moral support to her women readers; and Draga Kovačević -Dugački, who had worked for *Ženski list* as the pattern and motif

⁴³⁶ "Smaller Household and Independence," *Ženski list*, April, 1929, 1.

designer.⁴³⁷ The exhibition attracted ten thousand citizens of Croatia and Yugoslavia as well as some of Zagreb's most influential politicians of the time: the Great Duke, Dr. Milovan Zori i , and the Major, Dr. Stjepan Skrulj.⁴³⁸ The daily press in the Croatian and German languages in Croatia reported on the event with the utmost interest. Among the visitors were foreign travelers from throughout the world, including from the United States of America, who bought some of the exhibited handicraft as souvenirs. Articles emphasized the significance of the exhibition for the preservation of the handicraft and folk traditions, but, most of all, it emphasized that, out of 500 exhibited handicrafts, ninety percent of them were made by women in the provinces and villages. *Jutarnji list* wrote:

Our well-known and loved *Ženski list* has organized a very successful exhibition of handicraft in the Pavilion of Arts in Zagreb. This exhibition is even more so important because all the handicraft works have been made by women housewives from the provinces.... They are all subscribers of *Ženski list*, and ninety percent of them who have exhibited their works are women from our provinces.⁴³⁹

The whole June issue of *Ženski list* was devoted to the success of this exhibition. The article, "Nothing Has Changed," discovered some ideological reasons behind the need for organizing such an event. The main motive was to counter-argue some of the common interwar criticisms of the modern woman who had distanced herself from home. This exhibition was a tribute to woman, and in some ways it was a response to the

⁴³⁷ "The Exhibition of Handicraft in the Pavilion of Arts," *Ve er*, Thursday, May 23, 1929, 10.

⁴³⁸ "Great Duke Dr. M. Zori i at the *Ženski list*'s Handicraft Exhibition," *Ve er*, May 24, 1929, 2, and "Major at the Exhibition of *Ženski list*," *Ve er*, May 24, 1929, 2.

⁴³⁹ "The Exhibition of the Women's Handicraft in the Pavilion of Arts," *Jutarnji list*, May 19, 1929, 5.

allegory that had mourned the loss of woman. This event was inspired to counter-argue public opinion and the public belief in the loss of woman, and, at the same, it was inspired by the need to provide public space to the least-represented and least-visible minority of interwar Yugoslav society. But, more importantly through this exhibition, *Ženski list* continued to argue for the modern woman who had kept everything that was worthy of keeping and who had rejected all those patriarchal traditions that had kept her restrained from becoming a complete, rightful human being:

It has been said that a woman left her female duties and that she takes male occupations. She leaves the needle and takes a pen. She leaves a kitchen and goes to the office.... A woman got lost...! These opinions have been cut from the root. The exhibition of handicraft of our women subscribers turned into dust all these accusations, and it did so with a self-conscious smile. Woman stayed a woman, and she became a self-conscious human being of the female gender! Everything that is beautiful she kept. Didn't we prove this by the exhibition?⁴⁴⁰

All of the articles that were published in the June issue stressed that the handicraft that had been exhibited was done by all women subscribers, not only the housewives, but all of those women who worked in occupations as well as those who owned their own businesses. Women who worked in occupations and in the public sphere found the artistic side of their femininity, "... (A)fter the squeaking of pen or the sounds of the different other tools, she takes a fine needle to compose a song of her eternal tenderness, the song of the eternal beauty of her soul."⁴⁴¹

The exhibition was judged by influential artists and educators: Stjepan Berger, director of the Ethnographic museum; Otto Antonini, a popular artist and graphic designer; Prof. Tinka Ausperger; Prof. Terezija Pauli ; and Mrs. Slava Fürst, the director

⁴⁴⁰ "Nothing Has Changed," *Ženski list*, June 1929, 1.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

of the Zagreb's School of Home Economics. A special jury selected three handicrafts as winners, and the first winner, Mrs. Giulia Mari from Knin, Croatia, was awarded a brand new modern sewing machine.⁴⁴²

Ženski list also engaged in the reflection of the meaning behind this exhibition. In the article, "What did Our Exhibition Show," Zagorka emphasized the underlying theme that she had set forth two decades earlier in the 1908 debate on the "Progressive Woman and Today's Men." She emphasized that woman could be a woman, even if she were progressive. Women should distance themselves only from those traditions that perpetuated patriarchy. Everything else that made a woman a woman, the sense for beauty and artistic creation, and, above all, love for the folk artistic traditions, should be part of the modern, progressive woman's everyday life. For Zagorka, this event was also a way "...to continue on the way of closeness with our women readers and to place *Ženski list* at their service."⁴⁴³

The remainder of 1929 was in an almost celebratory atmosphere that was constructed around the exhibition and its successes. This continued with the last two issues that were devoted to Zagorka's success with the newly staged production of her famous novel, "Gricka vjestica." Olga Baldi used an opportunity to run a tributary article for Zagorka during the time that Zagorka had taken her leave. She disclosed for the readers that Zagorka didn't want this article to be published because of her modesty, but Olga Baldi emphasized that all the readers and subscribers of *Ženski list* should be ... "proud of the fact that Zagorka...the most famous writer and woman journalist in

⁴⁴² "Who Was Awarded," *Ženski list*, June 1929, 10.

⁴⁴³ Zagorka, "What did Our Exhibition Show," *Ženski list*, June, 1929, 12.

Croatia is their editor...and they should know that her success is their success.”⁴⁴⁴ Olga Baldi rationalized her decision to publish this article, against the desire of the editor, because of the need to recognize Zagorka’s contribution to the recognition of women’s abilities in the public sphere. She also used this opportunity to bolster the spirit of women readers to support Zagorka’s work, especially as it was materialized in *Ženski list*, and, at the same time, she criticized women for giving Zagorka little recognition for her work in the past and present:

We should always emphasize the successes of women.... (O)ur women readers should know at least some of the work and contributions of their editor.... Besides the 1908 article written by Adela Mil inovi about Zagorka, ... women hardly ever gave her any recognition for her work. This is why I feel it is my duty to write this article.⁴⁴⁵

4.2.4. The Backlash Years: 1930-1935

With the beginning of the next five years of *Ženski list*, Olga Baldi became a more prominent figure on the magazine’s pages and was Zagorka’s substitute during the times when Zagorka would travel, take a vacation, or during her brief, but serious, illness in the beginning of 1930. Although she sometimes ran the editorial office completely independently of Zagorka, the editorial politics did not change. On the contrary, Olga would always take an opportunity to provide coverage of Zagorka’s whereabouts, and, in 1931, she devoted numerous pages of *Ženski list* to paying tribute to Zagorka’s thirtieth year in journalism.

⁴⁴⁴ Olga Baldi , “Something We Had to Say,” *Ženski list*, November, 1929, 8.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

The 1929 Exhibition of *Ženski list* and the rational magazine provided for the need of such an event, announcing a more pervasive discourse in the magazine during the early 1930s – the backlash against the women’s movement and against women’s role in the public work. *Ženski list* diligently argued for the rightful place of women in the public work by making an appeal to women to have courage and to stay in their workplaces, regardless of the difficulties of the modern lifestyle. In the article, “Versatility of the Modern Woman,” the main argument was that women today looked for versatility in the house and outside of the house because of their changed lifestyle.



Figure 31. Zagorka and Olga Baldi -Bivec in the 1930s. Photograph undated.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car

Modern life placed many responsibilities on a woman, but these responsibilities, it was argued, were seldom followed by rights. Several underlying discourses of the effects of modernity on the lives of women were evident in this article: (1) The influence of mass communication on the modern life of a woman in the cities and villages “... (W)omen learn about the world from books, movies, lectures, and radio.... (E)ven women in villages are entering the world – if not in any other way, then by reading newspapers and magazines....”; (2) The influence of transportation and globalization on the modern life of women and the blurring of class distinctions “...(T)he invention of the railways led to frequent travels to the foreign countries and to encounters with the foreign peoples.... (E)arlier, only some men traveled very rarely; today all classes of people and all genders travel almost on equal terms”; (3) Blurring of the lines between the private and public spheres “... (A) woman cannot fall behind a man because life is no longer divisible between house and a family on the one side and a factory, an office, or the larger public sphere where only a man could once take a part”; (4) The influence of modern life on the changing new man “... (M)en no longer want a woman who is ‘a slave of the house’... they want a woman-partner in the economy of the house and the economy outside of the house.”⁴⁴⁶

These discourses of gender and political economy served both as praise to the modern processes, e.g., praise for newspapers and magazines as the means of mass communication that allowed for woman’s gaze into the outside world of events that forever changed her outlook on life, and as a critique of the modernity that had brought more duties for woman, e.g., fashion demands that would make a woman more

⁴⁴⁶ “Versatility of the Modern Woman,” *Ženski list*, January 1930, 11.

presentable and more suitable for life in the public sphere. There was a constant interplay between freedoms within the public sphere that women had gained in the modern world and between the constraints of the growing consumerism that was evident in the increased needs and demands of the modern lifestyle. The burden of the modern lifestyle evidently fell upon the backs of women, and, hence, the question was often asked in *Ženski list*, Did women get liberated through the consumer society at the expense of their personal integrity as human beings?⁴⁴⁷

If the first five years of the magazine had emphasized the role of the woman reader to embrace this domestically produced magazine at the expense of foreign-mediated literature for women and on the magazine's assistance to women in the economy of the house, the next five years emphasized the role of *Ženski list* in preparing Croatian and Yugoslav women for life in the modern society. The new goal of the magazine was to prepare women for the future, for life in the fully liberated modern society in which the woman would be faced with multiple roles. A woman was no longer a woman in the house with only one responsibility for her family. She was now fully established in the public sphere, and there *Ženski list* served as an educator and a friend for this completely new challenging role:

We debate on our pages all the constraints that are following our woman in the new age of women's lives.... Besides fashion and other daily needs of housewives and mothers, we developed new achievements of the female world.... We started from the very foundations. First to assist women in raising their consciousness about their position, duties, and rights, and further to assist women in building within themselves the woman citizen – to assist women in building herself for new conditions and a new life in the new world.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Editorial "Preparation for the Future," *Ženski list*, February 1930, 1.

The new modern life was seen as a cause for women's liberation from the patriarchy. Yet, at the same time on the pages of *Ženski list*, this new modern life in which women's lives were about to thrive were critically examined from the magazine's perspective. One of the costs of modernity was a sense of disconnect with others. Capitalism and the new lifestyle produced two things: consumer goods and loneliness. The "new economic-woman" lived alone, and she was in jeopardy of losing her sense of belonging. The solution for this was not to return to the safety and comfort of married family life, but rather her involvement with the social clubs, sporting, economic, and other organizations that encouraged interaction and produced common goals for the armies of working women.⁴⁴⁹ The most intriguing example of how women should interact drew inspiration, unsurprisingly, from women in the United States. Discourses on the American lifestyle and American women in *Ženski list* served as the constant inspirational point for Croatian and Yugoslav women. In the article, "How Women Organize," American women were portrayed as an example of women who worked hard to earn their independent living and who often lived very far from the support of their nuclear families. Women in America found support in their friends, not only because of geographical reasons and vast distances, but also because "American women are less sensible than our girls, and they do not yearn for their parents' home."⁴⁵⁰ Extensive coverage of the lives of women in America, who were considered to be the most progressive women in the interwar world, was one of the most obvious inspirational

⁴⁴⁹ Editorial "Female Friendships," *Ženski list*, April 1930, 1.

⁴⁵⁰ "How Women Organize," *Ženski list*, April 1930, 9.

topics for societal change that Croatian and Yugoslav women must demand, especially as it pertained to the right to vote and the right to hold public office. Among other successes of American women in the political life, *Ženski list* especially covered the Republican nomination of Ruth McCormick for the United States Senate in 1930. Although McCormick was not elected, she served as an inspiration for her feminist and publishing successes as well as for her political courage.⁴⁵¹ Obviously inspired by American women and the American lifestyle, topics about women's organizing became more and more popular in the early 1930s. In the editorial, "Modern Times and Household," Zagorka showed how Croatian and Yugoslav women organized similarly to American women. The new organization, "The Circle of Housewives," was designed to attract all women who did work in the household across classes. The new housewife was a woman with a calling in the public sphere, but also someone who cared about the household. The discourses of modernity and changing economic conditions in the modern society were the crux of the editorials, articles, and discussions in *Ženski list* at that time. Discussions of the movements for women's rights, although present, were not considered to be the main cause of these changes "... (I)t is not the women's movement that led women out of the house and into the independent public work and economy. It is the new conditions that are responsible for this change, across the world."⁴⁵² The new relationship between women's everyday lives and the economy was the main preoccupation on the pages of *Ženski list*. Women were constructed in that relationship as forces that participated equally in household management and the outside economy. Work, in itself, was

⁴⁵¹ "Ruth McCormick," *Ženski list*, October, 1930, 40.

⁴⁵² Editorial, "Modern Times and Household," *Ženski list*, July 1930, 1.

constructed as the “art of the everyday life” or the “joy of the everyday life” in which women should and could find pleasure.⁴⁵³

In the early 1930s, the effects of the world economic crisis were very much debated on the pages of *Ženski list*. Within these larger questions, the magazine interrogated gender questions that were reflected in the effect that the economic crisis had on the traditional relationship between men and women and on their everyday lives. Women were given the role to find ways to the sustainability of either their traditional lives in the family or in their independent lives. *Ženski list* devoted much attention to women who lived as independent working women outside of traditional married lives. In the series of articles on economizing living spaces for independent women were articles such as “Little Home for Independent Women,” in which women were advised on how to live modestly and stay independent. In the rise of the backlash against the new modern woman and in the uncertainty of the unstable economy, many believed that women should go back to their traditional roles as mothers and wives. *Ženski list* emphasized that the economic crisis, although impacting women’s lives with difficulties, did not have to send women back to the house. On the contrary, women already showed their skills in economizing, and independent women could live modest, but still modern, lives.⁴⁵⁴

However, another more significant discourse was at play in the early 1930s. It was the idealizing of peasant life and the emphasis on home craftsmanship as an economic and patriotic duty of women within the nation. In the story about Branka

⁴⁵³ Editorial, “Our Beneficiary,” *Ženski list*, May, 1930, 1., and “The Enemy of Our Work,” *Ženski list*, July 1930, 10.

⁴⁵⁴ “Little Home for Independent Women,” *Ženski list*, September 1930, 36.

Frangeš, a young woman who worked with her mother, Ženka Frangeš, to revive women's craftsmanship as the economic support of the villages and of the whole country, she was portrayed as a "...young, vivacious gal...who goes around villages and studies economic, national, and ethical problems of our peasant woman.... (S)he works for the economic-national idea."⁴⁵⁵ The idea of women's craftsmanship in the villages had a double duty: support of the national economy through the support of women's craftsmanship and as a patriotic duty of women. The discourses of patriotism were more and more evident in *Ženski list*, and many articles reflected more ethnic specificity when addressing the lives of women in different regions of Yugoslavia. In the early 1930s, during the years of dictatorship, *Ženski list* followed closely the lives of the royal family with articles appearing in almost every issue. The fullest coverage was given during the visit of the royal family, King Alexander and his wife, Queen Marija, to Croatia. The February issue brought extensive coverage of this event and of the King's message to the people of Zagreb and Croatia. This visit was politically strategic because of the growing ethnic rifts between the two largest ethnic groups, Croats and Serbs, within Yugoslavia. In his speech, the King emphasized "bright Croatian traditions" and the "great Yugoslav national idea."⁴⁵⁶ Although the King's visit to Zagreb was covered as a populist event, the truth was slightly different since the visit, itself, was a result of desperate royal attempts to construct a common support of the Croatian population for the idea of one Yugoslav nation. With the rise of the separatist and rightist political options in Yugoslavia, much as in Europe as a whole, King Alexander and the royalists

⁴⁵⁵ "Our Folk Home Craftsmanship and Its Meaning," *Ženski list*, 1930, 30-31.

⁴⁵⁶ "Kingly Home on the Old Gri ," *Ženski list*, February, 1931, 1.

tried to preserve the young and rather slim idea of Yugoslav statehood and nationhood, but they ultimately failed to understand that the different ethnicities in Yugoslavia would not easily accept Serbian dominance and royal politics from above.⁴⁵⁷ In 1931, *Ženski list* hotly debated female suffrage in the hope that the King would allow universal suffrage for the new National Assembly when the constitutional monarchy was reinstated by the 1931 Constitution. However, suffrage stayed exclusively male, and, except for the attempt to quiet down separatist sentiments in the historic provinces by dividing the country into new provinces or *banovinas*, the constitution didn't bring much change in the governing of the state.⁴⁵⁸

The narratives of economic crisis were for the first time introduced in *Ženski list*, not only as an economic, patriotic, and gender issue, but also as a political issue. Discourses on the political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia dominated the magazine throughout the year 1932, and, in 1933, special interest was given to the rise of Hitler to the power in Germany.⁴⁵⁹ In December 1933, the King made another visit to Croatia and Zagreb, with an attempt to pacify the separatist political tones in Croatia.⁴⁶⁰

The same year, the state legislators voted on the new *Law on Distribution of the Foreign Newspapers and Magazine* because of the constant influx of foreign political ideologies, especially coming from Germany, which the government believed had a

⁴⁵⁷ See Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Yugoslav Peoples*. Cambridge University Press, 1985, 160.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 162.

⁴⁵⁹ Untitled Article, *Ženski list*, January 1933, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ "Their Royalties in Zagreb," *Ženski list*, December, 1933, 1.

detrimental influence on the separatist sentiments in Yugoslavia, in particular Croatia. On December 5th, the distribution of foreign newspapers was prohibited for everyone except for people who were special confidants to the government ministries. The result was a state monopoly that was given to “Avala a.d.” from Belgrade, resulting in the closing of the company under which *Ženski list* was published. Ignjat and Jozefina Josipa Schwartz were, at first, forced to liquidate the company, but a special decision of the local government in *Savska Banovina* allowed them to engage in the distribution of newspapers and magazines having a scientific character. In the overall economic crisis, and with high taxes on imported goods, the company was closed by the end of the year. Ignjat Schwartz suffered from the shock, and he fell seriously ill. Josipa Jozefina Schwartz completely took over his business and the ownership of the magazine. *Ženski list* was still published, although facing very delicate financial conditions, through the support of the subscribers and of Schwartz’s second company, “Interreklam”⁴⁶¹

In 1934, *Ženski list* showed more interest in stories about immigrant Croatian women, especially those who were residing in the United States.⁴⁶² This shows the trends of a growing ethnic nationalism that were apparent on the larger political scale within Croatian immigration that was more than ever inclined to set Croatia apart from Yugoslavia, which Croatians believed was an artificial creation. But, besides the more obvious political undertones, *Ženski list* continued to focus on the influences of the economic crisis on the lives of women, which reached its peak in the Yugoslav economy

⁴⁶¹ See the company’s papers from March 9, 1934, and the Decision of the City Council in Zagreb No. 103.642-111-1933. State Archives in Zagreb.

⁴⁶² “From the Celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the ‘Croatian Woman’ Chapter in Chicago,” *Ženski list*, September 1934, 30.

in 1933.⁴⁶³ Articles such as “Savings in the Household,” which advised women how to manage their households in the crisis, were appearing in every issue.⁴⁶⁴ Further, the magazine continued to focus more and more on the backlash against women’s place in the economy outside of the home. The debate on the return of women to their traditional places encompassed coverage of different reasoning throughout the European states. In the article, “Back to the House,” this problem was extensively debated, and the main reason for such a backlash against the modern working women was the fear of growing unemployment that some thought was caused by more and more women working outside of the home. In general, women were blamed for the economic crisis:

Back to the house! This message was sent to women in many European countries, which already work on the new policies against the woman worker and women’s employment in general. The purpose of this new movement is to close all doors for women to work in their calling and to close up all possibilities for women’s economic independence.⁴⁶⁵

In another article, “Men Demand From Us...,” some of the arguments that were being debated in the public sphere about the traditional backlash against the independent working modern woman were debated. In this witty article, Zagorka wrote:

Cunning men gave the crisis female gender. Because they say, woman is the mother of crisis ... in this they are united. From north to south and east and west, they all blame the woman. See, for example, America. The grains became so cheap, and, to make it even cheaper, they throw them into the fire (the only thing they currently do not throw into the fire are women!). Why are grains cheap? Because we are overstocked with grains. Why are we overstocked with grains? Because women don’t want to eat bread. American women want to be thin, so American men blame women for the crisis.... A similar situation is in England, where women are blamed for the lower sale prices on herrings.... In

⁴⁶³ Article on the foreign capital

⁴⁶⁴ “Savings in the Household,” *Ženski list*, June, 1934, 41.

⁴⁶⁵ “Back to the House,” *Ženski list*, July, 1934, 5.

Czechoslovakia in “Narodni Listy,” one professor defends Czech dumplings and blames women for lowering the popularity of this national delicacy by insisting on their modern thin bodies. In Italy, men blame women for ruining the spaghetti industry by keeping their bodies thin.... So, at the end, I must conclude that all men want women as thin as spaghetti, while at the same time they demand from them to eat tons of bread, dumplings, and macaroons! So men, in their incapability to solve the crisis, would like us to swallow it!⁴⁶⁶

Although *Ženski list* was faced with tremendous financial difficulties, it continued to be published with the same eagerness as in the most successful years. However, concerns over women’s everyday lives sometimes had to give in to the dire political circumstances of 1930s Yugoslavia. The most important such occasion was the 1934 assassination of King Alexander while he was traveling to Marseille, France, by the Ustaša Croatian nationalistic immigrant organization and Macedonian immigrant nationalists. This story was given much attention in the November issue of the magazine. For the first time, *Ženski list* appeared with a cover that had nothing to do with the topics and discourses that were being debated in *Ženski list*, but that had a lot to do with the general political circumstances (See figure 32 below) that, in many ways, symbolized the turn and the moment in which the changing circumstances in the Yugoslav and European political stage would inevitably impact the existence and final demise of *Ženski list*.

⁴⁶⁶ ‘Men Demand From Us....’ *Ženski list*, July, 1934., 10.

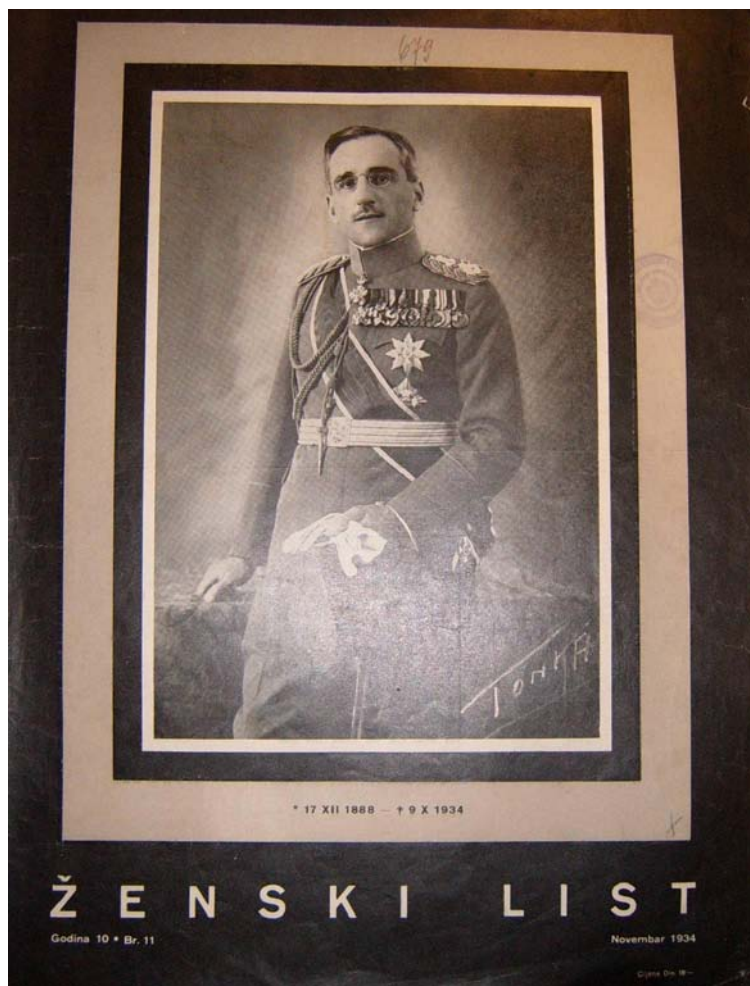


Figure 32: Cover of *Ženski list* in November 1934.
In Memoriam of the King Alexander.

4.2.5. *Ženski list* on the Eve of the Political Change: 1935-1938

The editorial introduction of the January 1935 issue was, in its rhetoric, similar to those that had appeared every year since 1925. One of the most important of the patriotic duties of the Croatian and Yugoslav women was still to support *Ženski list* and to reject all foreign products of this kind. But, in the tenth year of the continuous publication of *Ženski list*, Zagorka specifically addressed the hardships of the world economic crisis that had affected this magazine, almost jeopardizing its existence. Economic concerns,

however, were not reflected as much as were political and gender concerns in the years between 1935 and 1938. More articles appeared about education for women, women students, and even journalism as the “calling made for a woman.” The article argued that women were suited for the profession of journalism because they had a talent for interviewing. Woman’s natural ways and upbringing made her especially equipped with the talent of asking even the most indiscrete question and still getting answers. Women combined these talents with experience and knowledge, which made them not only good journalists, but also good editors. If not better than men, women became equal to them.⁴⁶⁷

In 1935, the dominant narrative was the increasing skepticism of the capitalist economic system. As much as the 1920s were expressed through a mesmerized gaze into the newly discovered eyes of modernity, in 1935 the enthusiasm of the 1920s was slowly melting down.⁴⁶⁸ The economic crisis triggered discussions about the participation of women throughout the world to try to use their influence to change the economic systems of the world. In the article, “Women’s Movements,” the capitalist system was criticized as a system that had recently shown weaknesses, and the article suggested that women needed to use their influence for social and economic change.⁴⁶⁹

Ženski list almost cynically toyed with the idea that men had shown themselves to be incompetent in bringing peace and economic prosperity to the world, and the

⁴⁶⁷ “Women’s Movement: Journalism Calling is Made for a Woman,” *Ženski list*, January 1935, 30.

⁴⁶⁸ “Poverty as the Reason for Moral Decline of Women,” *Ženski list*, May 1935, 33.

⁴⁶⁹ “Women’s Movement,” *Ženski list*, June 1935, 33.

magazine suggested that it was time for “men to go to the house” and for women “to take their place in the public.” This gender war was often emphasized together with the narratives of solidarity of genders.⁴⁷⁰ The content of *Ženski list* internationalized, and now, in addition to articles about working women in Croatia and Yugoslavia, the magazine emphasized examples of working women from Germany, England, Japan, the United States, and even the modernizing processes that were being undergone in Turkey and in some Middle Eastern Countries such as Egypt, as well as in countries of the Far East, such as India. The March and April 1936 issues brought an extensive article about the political and citizen rights of women in the world’s countries, including coverage of laws that governed lives of women in different countries.⁴⁷¹ Political and citizen rights were topics of lively debates during this period, using examples from other European countries, such as Finland, which was portrayed as “the country in which a woman is a free citizen,” but primarily using the United States as the example that served as an inspirational boost for Croatian and Yugoslav women to voice their opinion on the suffrage. Yugoslavia remained one of the few European countries that did not grant universal suffrage. One such inspirational article was devoted to the political rights of Czech women, whom Croatian and Yugoslav women considered to be sisters. In fact, many articles were devoted to Slovak, Czech, Polish, Romanian, and Bulgarian women, with the suggestion that Croatian and Yugoslav women should use these women’s political successes and efforts as an inspiration. This underlying Eastern European

⁴⁷⁰ “Men to the House,” *Ženski list*, June 1935, 26.

⁴⁷¹ “Political and Citizen Rights of Women in World Countries,” *Ženski list*, March 1936, 4-6., and *Ženski list*, April 1936, 27-31.

sisterhood was evident from the beginning of *Ženski list*.⁴⁷² But, besides building on the idea of Eastern European sisterhood, *Ženski list* continued to bring examples from American life as being the most inspirational for the progressive modern woman. One such example was an original story about Mrs. Convelli's New York initiative to form the *League for Divorced Women*, which role was not to fight against men, but to win them over, which Mrs. Convelli, according to the article, had successfully accomplished.⁴⁷³

The late 1930s in *Ženski list* were equally marked with more interest in women in the political sphere and in the political circumstances of women's lives in general. Throughout its existence, this magazine had brought numerous portrayals of women in public life, and, in the January 1937 issue, it brought a portrayal of Sida Kosuti, who was a religious-clerical poet who had begun to write in 1925, the same year that *Ženski list* was first published. She was introduced to Zagorka in 1937, when both had participated in the initiative that had led to the foundation of the Society of Croatian Women Writers. The goal of the organization was to "support work of its members, and with this work to further culture of Croatian people." Sida Kosuti⁴⁷⁴ would become a fellow woman journalist in the editorial offices of *Ženski list*. Much younger than Zagorka, Sida Kosuti exuberated working energy and, with her traditional and religious

⁴⁷² "Woman and Politics," *Ženski list*, April, 1936, 34.

⁴⁷³ "League for Divorce," *Ženski list*, April, 1936, 27-29.

⁴⁷⁴ Sida Kosuti (1902-1965) was described as "a conscious Croat woman," and "a woman with a belief in God." After World War II, she was removed from public life because of her support of the Independent State of Croatia during the war. See Tomislav Corić, *Croatian Woman in History*. K. Kresimir: Zagreb, 1997.

worldviews, she slowly made her mark on the liberal culture of *Ženski list*. She was an outcome of the younger generation that had slowly rebelled against the liberal and progressive flapper culture of the 1920s and that was politically opposed to Serbian monarchial dominance. With Sida in the editorial offices, *Ženski list* had evidently turned more toward emphasizing Croatian values and Croatian culture and focused more on the lives of women in Croatia. This was not a stark turn from before, but it was a significant turn because *Ženski list* had always proudly emphasized its role in serving the lives of all women in Yugoslavia, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or class.

Political conditions in the world were the primary concern of the magazine in 1937, and the solutions for the political unrests were being expressed through gender discourse. The article, “Woman Builds Kingdom of the Humanity and Peace,” addressed several issues: the role of woman as a mother who educates her children for peace and becomes the most important “political power in the construction of the public opinion” and the role of woman in politics, i.e., “men lead politics of imperialism, and women lead politics of pacifism.” The argument that was presented was a response to the concern of the recent developments in European politics, “... (P)olitics led by men had recently led Europe to moral and economic disaster.”⁴⁷⁵ The solution was that women should actively pursue change in the political sphere, the cultural sphere, and the economic sphere, all of which had been contaminated by foreign barbaric influences:

⁴⁷⁵ “Woman Builds Kingdom of the Humanity and Peace,” *Ženski list*, April, 1937, 6.

It is in our best interest, in the interest of all women, to show their agency and join in the triple battle: political against the war, in the economic against the poverty, and in the cultural against the invasion of the barbarism.⁴⁷⁶

These outside dangers that were produced by war threats and threats of economic and cultural invasion dominated the last issues of 1937 and the first issues of 1938. These fears were not without foundation. In March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria, and coverage of this event, as well as the possible threats to security of the people of Yugoslavia, were registered on the pages of *Ženski list*.⁴⁷⁷ Internally, *Ženski list* was going through a period of significant change. In March 1938, Ignjat Schwartz died, and his wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, although still formally the owner of the magazine, lost her influence over Sida Kosutić and another woman, Sida's confidant, Draga Ivančević, who became the representative of the publishing consortium. The name of Jozefina Josipa Schwartz was never again mentioned in the magazine.

In April 1938, after 14 years, the magazine was published for the last time as *Ženski list*. Draga Ivančević registered the former *Ženski list* on March 29th, 1938, as *New Ženski list*, whose editor remained Marija Jurić Zagorka.⁴⁷⁸ The magazine was published under this name for the next six months. Under Zagorka's editorial leadership, the magazine continued in the tradition of *Ženski list*, and the change of the name seemed more symbolic than real. However, in November 1938, Zagorka left the editorial leadership of *Novi Ženski list*, and, that same month, she registered a new magazine,

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Untitled article, *Ženski list*, April, 1938, 6.

⁴⁷⁸ Registration document, DN-Kns. 652/1938 (Attorney General). Croatian State Archives.

Hrvatica. In her memoirs, she explained her decision as a moral duty to resign under the pressure that she had felt from the clerical women who had taken over the magazine. Zagorka took with her, not only the liberal spirit of *Ženski list*, but also her women supporters and subscribers.⁴⁷⁹

Sida Kosuti addressed her new readership in the “Letter of the New Editor of the *New Ženski list*,” which was published in the December issue, expressing the turnover, not only in terms of editorial politics, but more importantly as a turn in worldview. Her letter described a turn toward the understanding of the role of women and men in society and very subtly identified the stance of the editorial to a larger political context:

In the *New Ženski list*, we will start with the foundational changes.... (T)he role is to more fully respond to the needs of the modern woman, especially the Croatian modern woman. Of course, to do this is not easy. We are faced with many obstacles to speak the way that we think and the way that we want. But we have decided to go with those few – and with them – to speak in the way that would allow us to understand each other. Woman for sure is not only the object of fashion. She is a human being on the Earth and in Heaven. She is a friend to her husband, sister, mother, member of her people, who gave her the respected role of the protector of the home. *New Ženski list* is, hence, designed to be a small manual to fulfill this important role. This is not only my opinion. It is the opinion of all of those working with me and of those who subscribe to this magazine.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ “What is My Guilt?”

⁴⁸⁰ “Letter of the New Editor of the *New Ženski list*,” *New Ženski list*, December 1938, 1.



Figure 33: Cover of the last issue of *Novi Ženski list* (New *Ženski list*) edited by Zagorka.

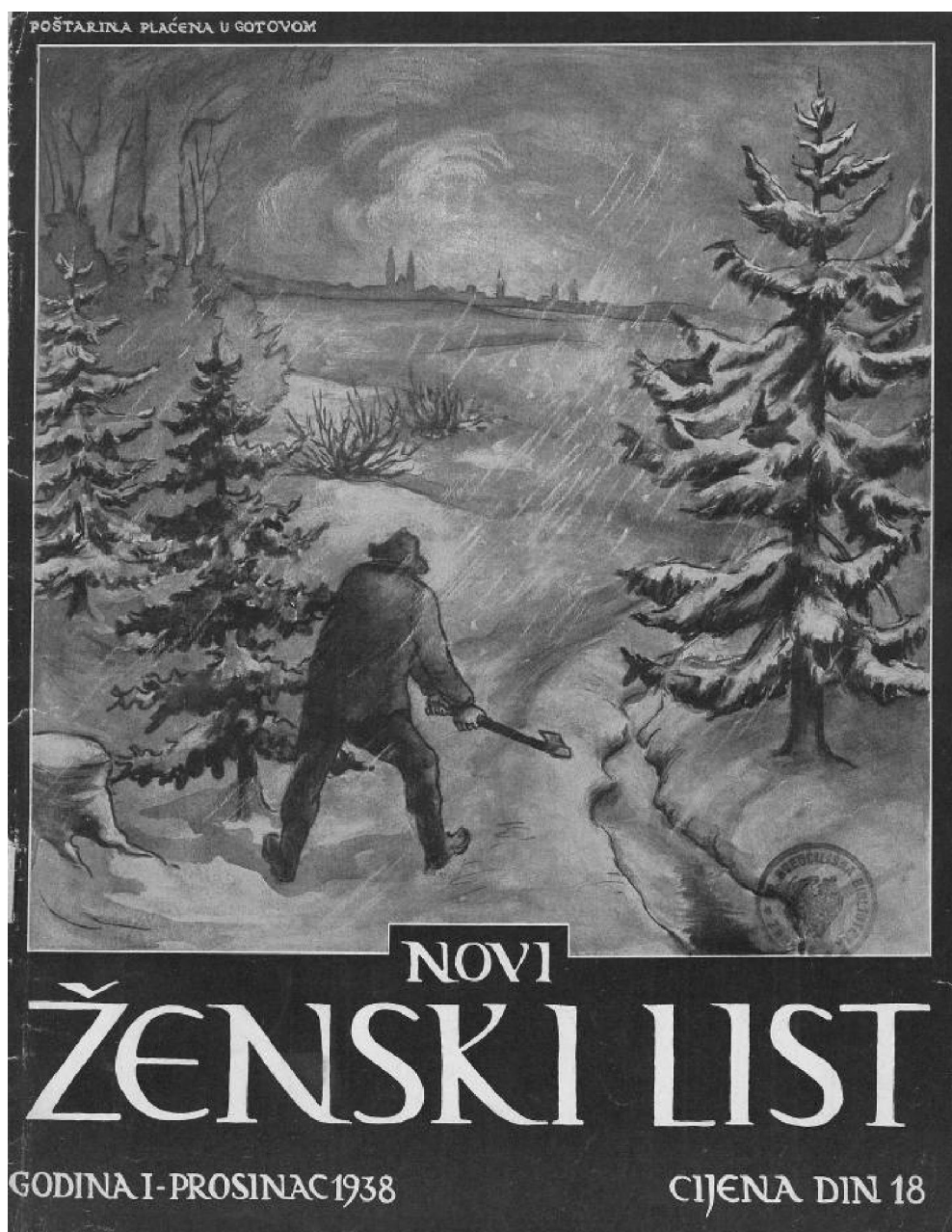


Figure 34: Cover of the December issue edited by Sida Kosuti .

The transformation of *Ženski list* into the *New Ženski list* was, in effect, more symbolic than real. However, the transformation of *New Ženski list* from the November to December issue, under a different editorial leadership, was not only real, it was stark. The cover of the last issue edited by Zagorka and of the first issue edited by Sida Kosuti

visualize to the core this profound change of the turnover and the new direction of one of the most important Croatian and Yugoslav magazines for women in the interwar era. In January 1939, *New Ženski list* became *Croatian Ženski list*, and Sida Kosuti rationalized her decision in the written address to the readers, where, among other things, she emphasized: the patriotic spirit of the magazine, the traditional values of Croatian women, and the demoralizing impact of the commercial culture on the true values of Croatian woman, the Croatian home, and the Croatian family.⁴⁸¹

The goals set by the new editor were more than evident in the first issues of *Croatian Ženski list*. Articles such as “Educational Meaning of Family: Family as the Foundation of Social Life” and articles denouncing the women’s question as being detrimental to the real woman and her values that were tied to her patriotic role as a mother and as the spirit of the house were primarily written by men. Although men had collaborated in *Ženski list* during the 14 years of its existence, those articles had been written in the progressive tone of the magazine, and they had never dominated the pages of *Ženski list*. The participation of men writers in *Croatian Ženski list* was criticized even from the readers who had seemed accepting of the new turn that the magazine had taken. Sida Kosuti addressed this issue in her first editorial:

Some complain that, in the women’s magazine, we have overrepresented men writers. I don’t see a magazine as the nameplate, but as the mirror of life. And life is expressed through both men and women.⁴⁸²

⁴⁸¹ “To the Knowledge of Our Readers,” *Croatian Ženski list*, January 1939, 1.

⁴⁸² Ibid.



Figure 35. Sida Kosuti , photograph published in *Ženski list*.

Yugoslav, and particularly Croatian, society had drastically changed by 1939. At the onset of another world war, with stark changes in the public rhetoric that had turned toward right political options, women and men participated in the creation of the new, radically different society. The life, society, men, and women portrayed in *Ženski list* seemed to have been completely lost by 1939. The rightist rhetoric was targeted to the minorities and largely to the Jewish population. It is not surprising that Josipa Jozefina Schwartz was also completely lost from the records. This was to become the destiny of many Croatian Jews who were residing in the territory of Croatia. In August 1939, in the political rally of the Croatian Peasant Party, the discourse of fear toward the Jews was expressed through the debate on women's magazines in Croatia. In the unsigned memorandum, written to Dr. Josip Raberski, the Croatian parliamentary representative of

the Croatian Peasant Party, the woman author detailed the controversial discussion that had been led during the meeting of the supporters of the party's women's chapter. At one point during the night, some women had praised Zagorka's magazine, *Hrvatica*, and had argued that "it is our duty to read what women write, not only things that are written by men, especially if what is written is written by a woman who is for a full 40 years part of the public life."⁴⁸³ This statement aroused one woman in the audience, and Mrs. Balenovi shouted that the magazine that she had talked about was part of Jewish capital and that there were two women's magazines published in Croatia for Croatian women and, between them, the more important was the other one, *Croatian Ženski list*, which was based on purely Croatian capital. Mrs. Balenovi did not realize that Zagorka was in the audience. Zagorka stood up and said:

So, are you saying that my magazine is Jewish? I can tell you that my magazine is the capital of my readers, and if it were Jewish, so what? I can also tell you that the magazine, now edited by Sida Kosuti, belonged to a Jew, Ignjat Schwartz, and now it belongs to some secret consortium.⁴⁸⁴

The woman author of the memorandum further explained that she had faced Mrs. Balenovi to disclose the names of the people in the consortium that owned *Croatian Ženski list* because she had claimed that she knew the name and that the owners of the magazine were not secret. Mrs. Balenovi claimed that the owner was Monsignor Rottig, who belonged to the Catholic Church, and that the editor was Sida Kosuti, and that possibly other women journalists were the magazine's collaborators. In 1941, the Croatian Printing Agency, the new owner of the magazine, under the instruction of the

⁴⁸³ Unsigned Memorandum, dated August 31, 1939. Zagorka's papers.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

Croatian Intelligence Service (HIS), reported on the origin and the history of the ownership of what was now *Croatian Ženski list*. Under number 13, she wrote:

The magazine was started in 1925 under the editorial leadership of Mrs. Zagorka and in the ownership of Ignjat Schwartz as “Ženski list.” In 1938, it changed its name to “New Ženski list” under the same editorial leadership and in the ownership of Josephina Schwartz. In 1939, the owner and publisher is Sida Kosuti , and the name of the magazine is changed to “Croatian Ženski list.”⁴⁸⁵

Although the anti-Semitic sentiments in interwar Croatia and Yugoslavia existed, they were imports, rather than home-grown sentiments, i.e., “(T)hroughout the 1930s, Yugoslavia was gradually slipping under the economic and political influence of Germany.”⁴⁸⁶ In August 1939, two territories, Savska and Posavska *banovinas*, based on the agreement by the president of the Yugoslav government, Dragiša Cvetkovi , and the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Vladko Ma ek, formed the so-called Banovina Hrvatska with semi-autonomous status within Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia, two Anti-Jewish legislations were promulgated: one prohibiting Jews to engage in business with wholesale foods, while the other referred to limited educational opportunities for Jews.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵DIPU-NDH Croatian State Archives. Croatian Intelligence Service of Independent State of Croatia. Document dated October 10, 1941.

⁴⁸⁶ Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *The Jews of Yugoslavia: The Quest for Community*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979, 188.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, 188-189.

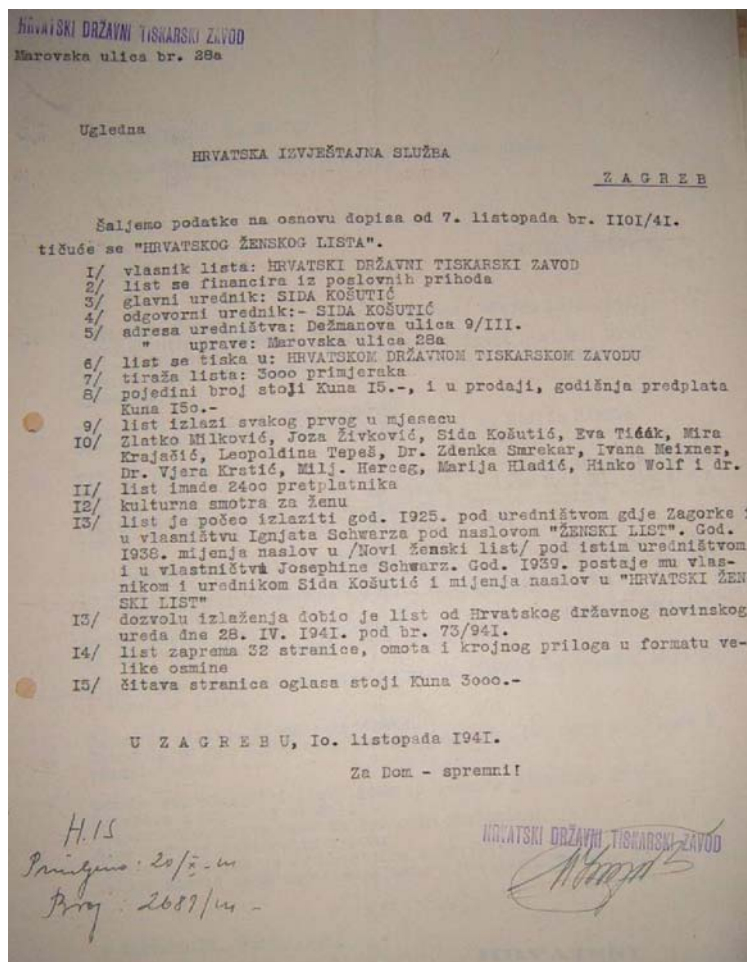


Figure 36. Croatian Intelligence Service 1941. Document on the status and ownership of *Croatian Ženski list*.

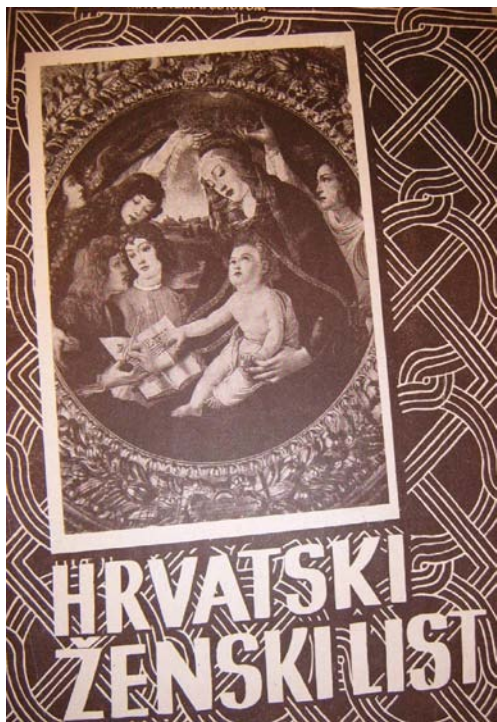


Figure 37: Cover of the *Croatian Ženski list* in May of 1940.

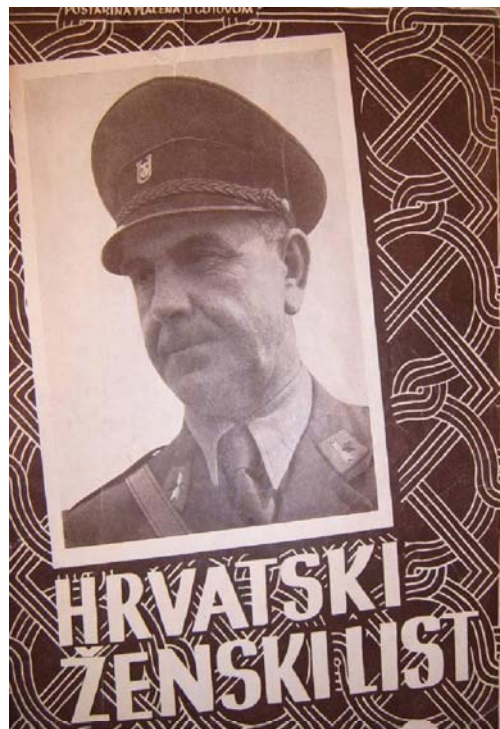


Figure 38: Cover in January 1942 with a photograph of Ante Pavelić.

However, these laws were partially implemented, and, in April 1941, Yugoslavia was occupied and Banovina Hrvatska ceased to exist. On April 10th, 1941, the Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed. The Ustaše, the Croatian nationalistic organization working in immigration during the interwar years, invited Ante Pavelić. The Croatian Independent State (NDH) was a puppet state of the forces of the Axis, and, although recognized by many European states at the time, only Germany and Japan had their embassies in Zagreb. Immediately after the proclamation of this dictatorial fascist regime, all newspapers and printing houses were banished. Soon, the Croatian Informative Office was established with the role to act as the surveillance organization for print and radio media. Several newspapers were published during the timeframe of the

Independent State of Croatia, among them the most important political daily magazine, *Hrvatski Narod (Croatian People)*.⁴⁸⁸ *Croatian Ženski list* and *The Voice of the Catholic Woman* were two magazines that were published for women during the timeframe of the Independent State of Croatia. *Croatian Ženski list* had the larger-circulation and was more consistently published than was *The Voice of the Catholic Woman*, which was more a voice of the Croatian Catholic Women's Organization than it was a popular magazine for women.⁴⁸⁹ The interest for *Croatian Ženski list* was immediately expressed. Shortly after the main institutional governmental offices had been established, the Croatian government started seeking information about the owner, editor, and journalists working and writing for *Croatian Ženski list*. This continued throughout the existence of the Independent Croatian State, mainly to 1944. Below is an example dating from 1943, which was written in the press section of the Main Directorate for Propaganda (Glavno Ravnateljstvo za Promidbu – GRP) that demands information on the magazine. The political pressures on the magazine's editor, Sida Kosutić, to edit the magazine in the style of political propaganda for women were constant. Although Sida Kosutić in principle supported the regime and was already editing the magazine in the conservative, patriotic spirit, propaganda offices were demanding that the magazine be edited in the spirit that would not only propagate patriotism, but the politics of the Ustaša regime. Sida Kosutić tried to gain support from the publisher, Franjo Dujmović, director of the

⁴⁸⁸ Hrvoje Matković, *The History of the Independent State of Croatia*. Zagreb: P.I.P. Pavić, 1994.

⁴⁸⁹ GRP-Ministry of Education – the list in 1941 shows Croatian Ženski list under number 37 “Croatian Ženski list, monthly magazine, editor Sida Kosutić, printer Croatian National Printing House, owner Sida Kosutić and consortium.” The list of print published in Zagreb, 237/box.12, GRP.

Croatian National Printing House, to use his influence on the people in the propaganda office to lessen the political pressures on the magazine:

....I ask you to tell these people in the Propaganda Office not to pressure me to turn "Croatian Ženski list" into obtrusive propaganda material. This is, after all, a high-quality magazine that we could be of here in Croatia, and even abroad.... We all know that the magazine was always produced in the Croatian spirit.... The circulation of the magazine is 4,000 copies, and this high circulation for these times is enough evidence that the Croatian family wants this magazine the way it is. I say family, and not woman, because this magazine is not read only by a woman and a mother, but also by a father and a son, and intellectuals.... If they insist that the magazine becomes an object of propaganda for the political goals and not cultural, then I refuse to stay an editor....⁴⁹⁰

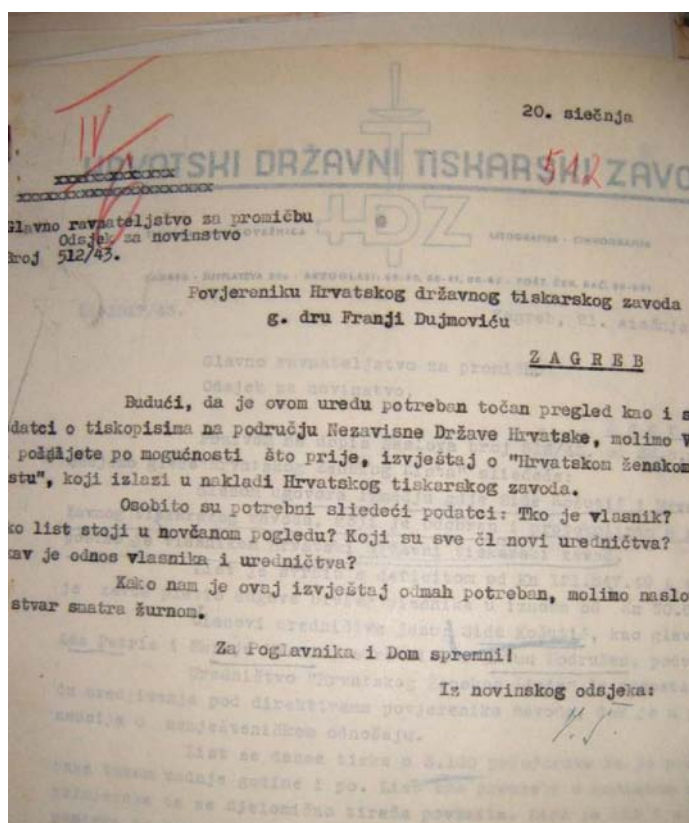


Figure 39. GRP – letter demanding information on the *Croatian Ženski list*.

⁴⁹⁰ GRP-Letter No. 0-322 dated July 7, 1942, Sida Kosuti to Franjo Dujmović. Croatian National Archives.

Even though this letter obviously had reached authorities,⁴⁹¹ in September 1942, a page of instruction for the editor of *Croatian Ženski list* was prepared and typed in the propaganda offices of the Independent Croatian State. The letter addressed complaints against editorial politics of the magazine and issued detailed instructions, including which sections the magazine should include and in what particular order, as well as the specific Ustaša language that must be used:

Editorials have to be nationalistic, in Ustaša style, for example “Ustaša woman for her home.” In the literature section, emphasis must be on the contemporary nationalistic literature, followed by the poems, novellas, short stories, etc. The section on literature will be followed by the section on great Croatian women, mothers, novelists, combaters, or note from the Croatian history or pedagogical problems the education of the female youth. In the special section, “Ustaša Croatia” magazine will bring stories on the development of the female branch of the Ustaša movement, female Ustaša youth ... and female sport. Further, the magazine will bring the most important news from the homeland and public life ... and should follow the female literature of the Ustaša movement. Poems and literature have to be imbued with the nationalistic Ustaša spirit....⁴⁹²

Sida Kosuti did not resign. The magazine throughout 1942 covered the life of the state’s leader, Ante Paveli , and the activities of the Women’s Chapter of the Ustaša Movement and diligently propagated nationalistic, conservative, and even fascist politics of the regime. As Sida Kosuti expressed in one of her editorials, “...Croatian woman, thank God, has remained conservative. Her place is by the home fires.”⁴⁹³ In October 1942, a series of articles was published on the place of the woman in the new national

⁴⁹¹ GRP-Letter No. S-515-42 dated July, 9, 1942. Croatian State Archives.

⁴⁹² GRP-Document addressed to the editorial of *Croatian Ženski list*, No. S-761/42, and dated September 12, 1942. Croatian State Archives.

⁴⁹³ Editorial “God Bless Us,” *Croatian Ženski list*, January 1942, 1.

society, as well as on the work, life, and politics of Ante Paveli . In an article titled, “About Upbringing of Female Ustaša Youth,” women were constructed as the educators of the nation, and, with anti-Yugoslav sentiments and pro-Fascist sentiments, anti-modernist discourse that was targeted to the interwar feminist political-economic emancipation of women dominated the discourse:

And really, a woman was less and less faithful to her natural calling, she was entering factories in masses, she was entering workshops, offices, and she distanced herself from the family and home. She wanted to take a place and the role of men in the society, and, in the public life, she was becoming a mannish woman of the twentieth century. This was certainly the biggest catastrophe and the biggest decadence in the history of women....⁴⁹⁴

Similar rhetoric dominated *Croatian Ženski list* throughout the war, and, with the support of the regime, the magazine not only served to propagate fascist ideology, but it had as significant impact on the construction of the conservative role of women in society as mothers, daughters, and patriotic educators. In August and October 1944, *Croatian Ženski list* published two special issues on Japanese and German women.

⁴⁹⁴ “About Upbringing of Female Ustaša Youth,” *Croatian Ženski list*, October 1942, 12.

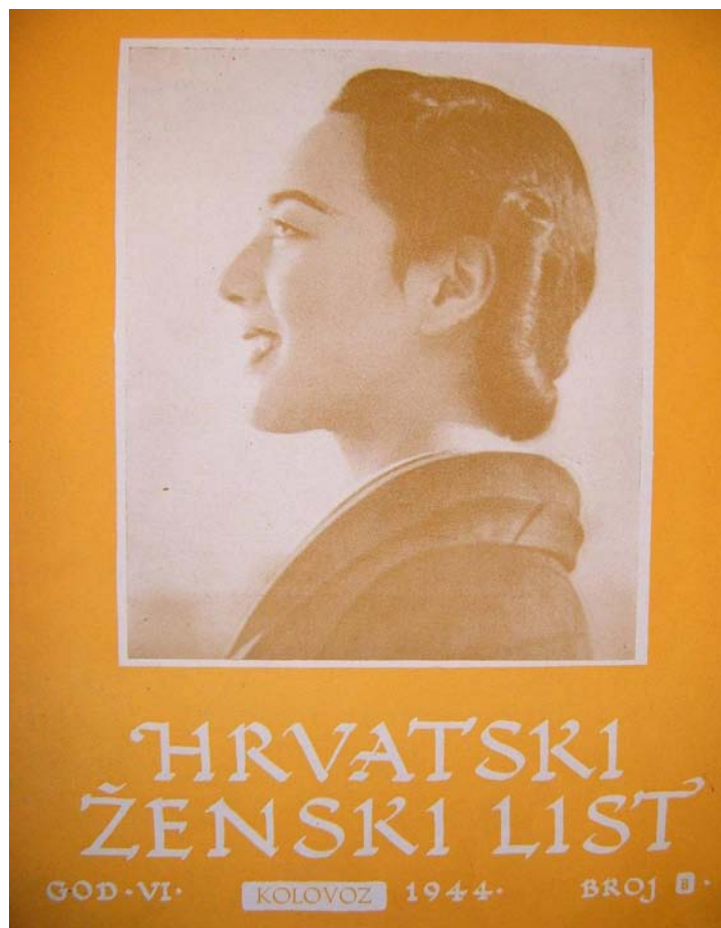


Figure 40. August 1944 issue of *Croatian Ženski list* on Japanese women.

Japanese women were portrayed as “good mothers, wives, and housewives” and as “hardworking and frugal, just like a Croatian woman.” German women were constructed as “disciplined and with less temperament than a Croatian woman,” but the German woman was seen as the epitome of a woman whose “apotheosis of her motherhood and pure femininity remains the ideal of a German woman.”

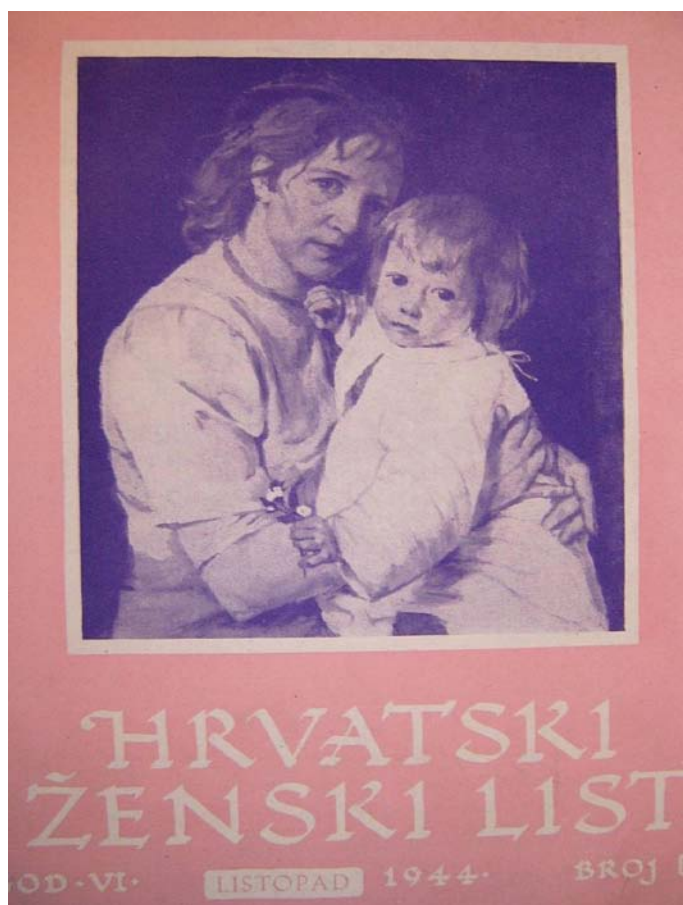


Figure 41. October issue of *Croatian Ženski list* on German women.

The last issue of *Croatian Ženski list* was published in November 1944, when the regime was in internal turmoil and the state system was under collapse. *Croatian Ženski list* ended an era of the rise of the popular women's magazines in interwar Croatia and Yugoslavia. When, in 1925, a young, enthusiastic Jewish entrepreneur had launched the first true magazine for Croatian and Yugoslav women in their own language, he could not have imagined that his "favorite project," *Ženski list*, would be shaped and reshaped by the turbulent economic and political events of the interwar world. His wife, Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, who was his partner in business, lost the fight over the ownership of the

magazine because of the different, new, and growing conservative political forces of the late 1930s. Although I found no records on what had actually happened to Jozefina Josipa Schwartz, it is possible that she shared the destiny of many other Jews who had disappeared in the gale of the war. In the April 1933 issue of *Ženski list*, Zagorka published an article about Lea Deutsch⁴⁹⁵, a Jewish girl who had been the most popular child actress of interwar Zagreb. In 1933, as a five-year-old child, she had been the youngest member of the Croatian National Theatre.



Figure 42. *Ženski list* in 1933. Lea Deutsch as a little Geisha.

⁴⁹⁵ Lea (Dragica) Deutsch (1927-1943), “Croatian Shirley Temple, the Most Popular Child Star of Interwar Zagreb.”

Her popularity reached beyond Croatian borders to Germany, Austria, and France, which countries' newspapers had written about her as the Croatian Shirley Temple.⁴⁹⁶ On April 30th, 1941, the Independent Croatian State had introduced its first of many racial laws, *Law on the Protection of Arian Blood and the Honor of the Croatian People*, targeted against the Jewish population and that regulated carnal relations between Arian men and Jewish women and Jewish men and Arian women.⁴⁹⁷ Lea Deutsch in 1941 was 14 years old, and she was banned from performing and later from attending school. One of her fellow colleagues, actor Relja Basi, saw Lea sometime in 1941, noting how she had been sitting for hours on the bench and looking nostalgically into the building of the Croatian National Theatre, where she used to perform, wearing a small coat with the yellow Star of David star on the sleeve.

She was deported to Auschwitz in 1943 in a cattle wagon, where she had died before reaching Auschwitz. In her 1933 interview with Zagorka, she said "...You know, I would really like to act in such a role so I could play not only in one act, but all three acts. I could do that."⁴⁹⁸ Lea never played all three acts. In the theatre, just as in life, she was allowed to play only in the first act. Her words and life, as recorded in *Ženski list*, serve as a symbolic trajectory of the beginning and the end of one human life and as the life and end of a magazine whose intention was to serve women across interwar Croatia

⁴⁹⁶ "Film o Tragicnom Usudu Dječje Zvijezde" ("Film about the Tragic Destiny of the Child Star"), Nacional, September 11, 2006, by Nina Ozegovic. <http://www.nacional.hr/articles/view/27554/5/>.

⁴⁹⁷ MUP-NDH box 99/223 11647, No. XLIV/67. Z.p.-41, Zagreb, April 30th, 1941. *Law on the Protection of Arian Blood and the Honor of the Croatian People*. Croatian National Archives.

⁴⁹⁸ "Lea – the Little Greatness," Interview, *Ženski list*, April 1933, 32.

and Yugoslavia, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, and their place in the society. Much like our little Lea in her interview, women left powerful records of their lives on the pages of *Ženski list* in their published and unpublished letters to the editor. These letters serve as evidence of the way in which women in Croatia and Yugoslavia had lived and experienced their lives in everyday interaction with the colorful, unexpected, and, until then, unimaginable opportunities of the interwar world.



Figure 43. Lea Deutch and as Lujza in the popular comedy
“Patient by a Force.”

CHAPTER 5

ŽENSKI LIST – THE MAKING AND RE-MAKING OF
THE ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SPHERE

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the published and unpublished letters that had been sent to the editorial office of *Ženski list* and to *Zagorka*. In this chapter, I focus my analysis to the content of these letters, and I examine them from the historical and the public sphere perspective. The examination of the letters shows that women readily opened and joined numerous debates on the issues pertaining to their everyday lives and to their position in the public sphere. Further, and more importantly, *Ženski list* served as an alternative public sphere in its own right. The sole existence of this magazine that had provided space for debates pertaining to the lives of women, contributed to the democratization of the mediated space in interwar Croatia and Yugoslavia.

I have classified letters as letters to the editor and as letters of correspondence. Correspondence letters didn't necessarily contain opinions on the content of the magazine. In fact, correspondence letters were written to *Zagorka* with an intention to build more personal relationships with her by describing day-to-day activities or by expressing admiration for *Zagorka*'s work. At times, those letters would contain comments on the content of the magazine, but the larger portion of the letter and the initial intent were not to address the content of the magazine. Letters to the editor, on the other hand, were written with the intention to comment on the content of *Ženski list* or to respond to published articles and polls and to initiate various debates. At times, these two

categories overlapped, but most of the letters were easily categorized into one of these two categories.

The analysis of the published and unpublished letters to the editor that follows will touch upon some of those debates that made up a very crucial part of the identity of *Ženski list*. The correspondence was a site for debating the private issues of women as public issues and the place where diverse readership throughout the Yugoslav state, as well as among emigrants, would meet and, at times, build an alternative public sphere—both in terms of opposition to patriarchy and in opposition to particularistic nationalistic sentiments of interwar Yugoslavia. The comparison between unpublished and published letters to the editor allowed me a glance into the editorial politics of the magazine and its editor, and it ultimately provided me with a more clear view of the magazine’s identity as well as the identity of its audience. The analysis of the letters then provided me with the needed understanding of the magazine’s role in the lives of its readers and helped me to provide answers to the fifth and final research question: How did *Ženski list* influence the everyday lives of its readers as evident from the published and unpublished letters to the editor?

5.2. “To our Dear Readers”

From the very beginning of *Ženski list*, Zagorka, the magazine’s editor, had diligently worked to build a relationship with the magazine’s readers. The goal behind this intention was twofold. First, to forge an alternative public sphere where women readers could talk freely about the issues from their everyday lives, especially those issues which were excluded from the debate in other newspapers and magazines. Second, the goal was to build a community of readers who would serve as an extended economic-

hand of the management, who was in constant economic need to sustain the magazine by collecting subscriptions. Zagorka and the management of *Ženski list*, after the first issue that was “completely sold out,” introduced the section Correspondence of *Ženski list*.⁴⁹⁹ This was one of the few sections that were kept alive throughout the fourteen years of *Ženski list* under Zagorka’s editorial leadership. This section represented, almost consistently, ten to twenty percent of the text that was published in the magazine. Correspondence with the readers was one of Zagorka’s most important duties and one of her most often expressed pleasures. She had the primary role in keeping alive this forum for discussion. The evidence for this is clear when issues that had been edited by Zagorka, and issues that had been edited by Olga Baldi -Bivec, who would replace Zagorka when she was away from the office on a vacation or during sick leave, are compared. The correspondence section without Zagorka was either absent or significantly downsized.

In the second issue, Zagorka openly encouraged correspondence as one of the most important assets of *Ženski list*, through which it could serve its readers’ needs. Zagorka also published the guidelines for corresponding, i.e., “How to Correspond.” She asked women readers not to send anonymous letters when they wished to debate on current political, social, or women’s issues. She believed that these issues should be debated transparently and that anonymity was a symptom of patriarchy. She wrote:

Anonymity is not in harmony with the social status of our magazine, nor with our mentality. Also, anonymity cannot be in harmony with the enlightened behavior of women who are entering a phase of equality with men.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ “To Our Dear Readers,” *Ženski list*, May 1925, 20.

⁵⁰⁰ “How to Correspond,” *Ženski list*, May 1925, 21.

Other types of letters could be signed by initials or with a code of the readers' choice. The correspondence section extended at times to other sections, such as the "Moot of *Ženski list*" or the "Poll of *Ženski list*." These sections, combined with the correspondence section, allowed for open debates and for raising delicate issues concerning women's political participation in Yugoslav society, women's place in the building of the new Yugoslav nation, issues concerning laws governing women's lives, and particularly issues concerning the redefinition of gender roles in interwar Yugoslav society. Gender debate was evident in hard issues, such as the debate on the political rights of women, but even more so in the so-called soft issues such as fashion and the new beauty standards.

Before I engage in the analysis of the letters, I will briefly address the audiences.

5.3. The audiences

An analysis of the letters to the editor revealed significant information about the identity of the audiences of *Ženski list*. Both men and women were readers of *Ženski list*. Even though women made up the much larger population of readers, some men felt compelled to read this novelty on the market. Unpublished letters revealed two types of men who enjoyed reading *Ženski list*: the first "confessional readers" and "loving husbands." Confessional readers were younger men born just before the outbreak of World War I. These men, now professionals who were interested in participating in the making of a new society, were interested in the redefined gender roles. Loving husbands were men interested in the magazine because their wives were readers. Both types of men felt compelled to contribute to the content of the magazine by offering their writing skills.

One unpublished letter from the category of the “loving husband” showed the mentality of these men who, by offering their writing skills, would earn subscription for their wives:

Very respected Editorial of *Ženski list*!

My wife is exhilarated by your magazine, and, because of that, I would like to offer you my humble writing skills. If you believe that the stories (such as the one I enclose) would be useful to you, please do send me free copies of *Ž.L.* in exchange.

With respect,
Josip Rukavina, teacher
Brod na Kupu, December 1925.

But there was also another kind of male reader. The reading of the published letters in the correspondence section revealed that men would ask for fashion advice. This type lingered between what we would call today the metro-sexual man and the homosexual man. Both of these categories of men were fascinated with the emerging fashion industry and the consumer goods that were targeted to the new consumer, i.e., the new woman, and they suddenly felt excluded. In one such instance, a man asked about the popular usage of facial powder among women, concerning himself with the question, “Should I use it too?” Zagorka responded that she did not see any reason why he shouldn’t, since men were historically the first to use this beauty product anyway.⁵⁰¹ Finally, there was another type of a male reader in the published letters to the editor, i.e., “the concerned husband” who felt threatened by the new changes in gender roles in which the “the breadwinner” was confronted with the overly eager “new consuming woman.” One man asked, “Why does my wife run around nervously and spend all day to

⁵⁰¹ Letter, “Should Men Powder Their Face?,” *Ženski list*, May 1928, 34.

get things ready for the summer vacation and spend all that money on new dresses, while, at the same time, I need only two hours of calm preparation and a much smaller budget?"

Zagorka didn't have much patience for such men, and she responded with her typical humor and characteristic cynicism, writing:

My dear Sir! I see you know nothing about women, although you are married.... Do you know how much time it takes to make a careful preparation of clothing for summer vacation? Do you understand how torturous it is when the public notices that her sun-umbrella does not suit her dress, or that her hat doesn't match her dress, or that her stockings don't go well with her shoes? Obviously not, because destiny is on the side of you men, whose shoes and socks have no other calling but to protect you from walking barefoot.... A woman's dress is her "public policy".... And there is another thing. Your wife is going to a summer vacation and leaves you alone at home....How could she not be nervous?⁵⁰²

Similarly, another man in the same issue complained how he could not find a suitable woman to marry because they all desired expensive dresses. Luxurious female needs and marriage seemed to be a nightmare for both unmarried and married men of interwar Zagreb. Here is how Zagorka responded:

...(M)y dear sir! You write that you would like to marry, but you don't have the courage after walking on the streets of Zagreb and observing all the luxury that rules our female world. You are not alone in this complaint, but it is completely wrong. Our women have taste.... They make their own dresses, and you think they are luxurious, but they are not.... The way women of Zagreb dress is not a sign of luxury, but a sign of taste, my dear sir. So, if you don't find other obstacles, go and get married!⁵⁰³

Demographics of the male readers were more homogenous than were the demographics of female readers. Most of the men were younger, highly educated professionals, such as physicians or school superintendents, or men with a political

⁵⁰² Letter "When a Wife Goes to a Summer Vacation," *Ženski list*, June, 1925, 12-13.

⁵⁰³ Letter "One Gentlemen Who Wants to be Married," *Ženski list*, June, 1925, 12-13.

career, such as mayors and city counselors. Female readers that made up the core of the audience of *Ženski list* were more diverse. Unpublished letters revealed that even peasant women with some education would write to *Ženski list*, as would housewives from provinces who knew how to read and write. Most of the women whose letters were published were either teachers or young professionals. Another group of women also had significant input into the content of the magazine, as evidenced in the published letters, i.e., older women with some education whose adult children had left home and whose husbands had left home for younger women, leaving them unprotected and in a precarious financial situation. These women often demanded discussions on the rights of women as human beings as well as in political decision-making. Both unpublished and published letters to the editor revealed that the audience was scattered throughout the country, although readers from the Zagreb area and Croatia in general were the larger group of subscribers, including Croatian women in emigration. One woman reader admitted that she knew that “Serbian sisters in Serbia read the magazine with diligence” and that Slovakian minority women in Vojvodina told her how much they enjoyed reading *Ženski list*.⁵⁰⁴ This woman reader was a Croatian married to a Slovakian minority husband living in Vojvodina, Serbia. Her life showed the national complexity of interwar Yugoslavia and pointed to the difficulties of creating a homogenous group of readers. *Ženski list*, possibly more than any other magazine for women in interwar Yugoslavia, lived up to its true goal of helping to create the idea of a common nationality

⁵⁰⁴ Unpublished letter from Stara Pazova (Vojvodina, Serbia) from Anka Dollinayová – Vranov , a Croatian woman who lived in Vojvodina (a part of Serbia), and was married to the Slovakian husband. She writes that even “...women in the editorial offices of Serbian women’s magazines read *Ženski list* and admire its texts and editing.” Sent from Stara Pazova on January 9th, 1931.

of diverse people living in Yugoslavia, but did so not with the encouragement of forceful assimilation, but by recognition of national diversity. Some women in Croatia who were opposed to the Yugoslav ideas expressed in *Ženski list* considered it a true Croatian and Zagreb magazine. However, Zagorka often responded by saying, “The Yugoslav idea is our idea, it came from Zagreb, and we should be first to embrace it.” Women from Serbia did embrace *Ženski list*,⁵⁰⁵ which was published in Zagreb, a city with which Belgrade and Serbia had politically tense relationships.⁵⁰⁶ One woman from Serbia wrote:

I am completely exhilarated by the fact that I belong to a group of those women who, together, feel the great joy and usefulness of our dear “Ž.L.” since Day One. I will use my every moment to find more subscribers for my dear magazine... Along with my daughters, I wait for every new issue to come.... One day I hope I will come to Zagreb to meet our dear Mrs. Zagorka and other women journalists who deliver us such a wonderful magazine.⁵⁰⁷

In the next section, I will describe the content and will address major issues that were raised by readers of *Ženski list*, first and foremost the reasons behind the reading of the magazine and the meaning of the magazine for readers’ everyday lives. In general, the letters could be divided into these categories: (1) opinions and debates, (2) confessional tales, (3) collaboration offers, (3) questions and answers, (4) critique and suggestions for improvement, (5) seeking advice and help, and (5) praises and the meaning of the magazine in readers’ everyday lives. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will focus on the two most important categories: those from which I can derive meaning behind the

⁵⁰⁵ Letter, “Discomfort with the Yugoslav Idea,” *Ženski list*, October, 1926, 19.

⁵⁰⁶ Maria Abramovi from Novi Sad (Vojvodina, Serbia). Unpublished letter written in Cyrillic script dated February 1, 1930.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

reading; and opinions and debates that reveal issues concerning the everyday lives of women.

5.4. “My Bible,” “My Companion,” “My Beloved Friend:” The Meaning Behind the Reading of *Ženski list*

Mailbox of the Editorial offices of *Ženski list* in the Samostanska Street in Zagreb was filled daily with letters from the magazine’s readers.



Figure 44. The entrance to the Editorial offices today.
Photo taken in July 2007.

Already, the first issues were full with letters from women throughout the country who had felt a need to express their views on the place that *Ženski list* occupied in their everyday lives and the gap that it filled. Such letters were not only characteristic during

the first publishing years, but were a constant manifestation of the readers' need to build a relationship with the magazine and with other readers. One of the magazine's later strategies was not only to encourage writing letters to the editor, but to also to encourage correspondence among the readers. Many women expressed their relationship with the magazine, calling it "my best friend."⁵⁰⁸ Another woman reader expressed her connection to *Ženski list* as both profound and deep: "Ženski list is my counselor and my friend with whom I rejoice like with a human being."⁵⁰⁹ Women in the provinces were thrilled to have a magazine that brought the latest news in fashion, culture, social, and even political life, because all of this was not available for them in their towns and villages.⁵¹⁰ Many women expressed their gratitude to the management and to the editorial offices for publishing a magazine in the Croatian language for Croatian women.⁵¹¹ In one response to such a letter, Zagorka wrote:

Today, in times of bad economic conditions, *Ž.L.* is still going forward. I want to tell you a secret. Our booksellers and magazine distributors say that they sell one particular German household magazine in more copies than all of the Croatian magazines together. What do you say to that?... I completely agree with you, I appeal to all women to send letters with descriptions about their everyday lives, about women's lives, and about their work.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ One of the examples is in the unpublished letter by Anka Liguti dated December 23, 1927, sent from Split. I found that many unpublished letters used this term "my best friend" or my "bosom friend," using the female noun for a friend.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter, "The Reader F.G. from I.," *Ženski list*, March 1928, p. 31.

⁵¹⁰ Letter, "The Voice of Women from The Provinces for Ženski list," *Ženski list*, June, 1925, 13.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Letter, "Mrs. from Osijek," *Ženski list*, July, 1925, 26.

Even women from Serbia were happy to have a magazine in “our own language.”

One woman from Belgrade wrote:

I am so happy that *Ž.L.* is using our wonderful language and has such good fashion pages. I embrace it warmly to my heart and hope that it lives long as it is our only domestic magazine of this kind.⁵¹³

Zagorka took this compliment with joy and wrote that this letter not only helped *Ženski list* understand its role, but also “serves as a proof that our magazine is read in the whole Kingdom.”⁵¹⁴ In the first issues, many women from Bosnia and Macedonia also wrote with encouragement for the magazine, including Muslim women, whose contribution Zagorka encouraged by writing “...do write about the lives of Muslim women, and we will be happy to publish, and please receive sisterly love from us in Zagreb.”⁵¹⁵

Throughout the first year of *Ženski list*, Zagorka attempted to bring her women readers to understand that the making of the magazine was a mutual endeavor. In the February 1925 issue, she proudly announced, “The ice is finally broken!,” meaning that the women readers were ready to send their contributions on a regular basis. She saw that as the “making of the new life for *Ženski list*” from which women readers would “obtain inspiration for their everyday lives.” But, more importantly, she saw the magazine as the result of the collaborative work between her and her co-workers with women readers, noting that “*Ženski list* will be guided by your own guidance.”⁵¹⁶ During 1926, many

⁵¹³ Letter, “Mrs. I.F. from Belgrade,” *Ženski list*, July, 1925, 26.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Letter, “Merjima from Skopje,” *Ženski list*, July, 1925, 26.

⁵¹⁶ “To Our Women Readers,” *Ženski list*, February 1926, 30.

women readers wrote with the encouragement that the magazine should be published twice a month, but the financial difficulties of the publisher prevented fulfillment of that wish. The letters published that year also emphasized a complete fascination with the American lifestyle and American women, who served as the ideal representation of the modern woman. The American woman was constructed as conscious of themselves and their freedom. The European type of woman was constructed as a woman “who dies for love,” while the American woman looks in a man a partner or a companion, not the ideal lover. The American woman is not “overwhelmed with her emotions,” but with her “rationality.”⁵¹⁷ One woman reader explained why she read this magazine as follows:

I love *Ženski list* because it comes to me as a letter from my best girlfriend with wonderful advice about life, the household, needlework, and informative and entertaining articles. I am especially happy that our people in our homeland follow the practical and good ideas of the American people. It would be even better if *Ženski list* could be published twice a month, and I hope I will live to see it happen soon.⁵¹⁸

Zagorka often made the selection of letters that she would publish in their full length. In February 1928, she published four letters of praise for *Zenski list* in which women revealed their connection, not only to the magazine, but also to the editor. Each of those four letters mentioned how these readers felt a special connection to Zagorka, who in their minds was an example of the progressive Croatian woman. The teacher, Blanka K., wrote, “Zagorka is an enlightened woman” and “her merits are even greater because she is the editor of *Ženski list*.”⁵¹⁹ Many emphasized that they enjoyed seeing how the

⁵¹⁷ “About American Women,” *Ženski list*, October 1926, 12-13.

⁵¹⁸ Letter, “V.S.” *Ženski list*, November 1926, 35.

⁵¹⁹ Letter, “The Teacher Blanka K.,” *Ženski list*, February 1928, 36.

magazine had developed to be better than any other foreign magazine of that kind that was present in the Yugoslav market. *Ženski list* seems to have had an important role in cultivating culture and in understanding the ethnic, gender, class, and economic differences of the different peoples who had been joined together in the new state. Women in distant and often completely different places throughout Yugoslavia led distinct lifestyles, especially those who were living in small provincial towns and villages. The only connection to the world outside and to other women in Yugoslavia was through *Ženski list*. Articles and ideas that were expressed in *Ženski list*, therefore, could be argued to have had a crucial impact on how women readers understood the new state, the people, and women's place in the processes of cultivating the new Yugoslav nation.

One reader from Bosnia wrote:

In this monotonous small Bosnian provincial town, I sit by the warm fireplace and I wait for the mail joyful like a child. I don't know what to read first: articles about our everyday lives, fashion, needlework, or stories. And, when it comes, I am joyful to see my dear *Ženski list* in the new get-up. I call my husband to ask him whether he believes there is any other magazine as good as this one. And he always replies, "No, *Ženski list* does not have a competition." I am happy to hear that from my husband and from other men to whom I have talked about this magazine. I feel that everybody, regardless of their gender or ethnicity or their status in our new society, will love and embrace this wonderful magazine...!⁵²⁰

Many women readers praised the magazine for its content and its concerns that dealt with the women's question as the larger social topic of discussion in interwar Yugoslavia. Some thought that the magazine always brought "very objective texts," but still maintained its primary goals "to contribute to the idea of the modern woman in the

⁵²⁰ Letter, "The Reader Z. P. from Bosnia," *Ženski list*, February 1928, 36

public space” and “to cultivate views about women as capable human beings.”⁵²¹ Other women simply found *Ženski list* to be a sourcebook for their everyday needs in the changing interwar household. Many women could not afford to keep servants or cooks anymore. There was also a gap in generational learning. Older women had little knowledge about their households because they were used to keeping servants, while younger women found themselves lacking the proper education for what remained one of the most prevalent occupations – housewife, or house-worker as *Ženski list* would often refer to this occupation. One older reader wrote a page of praise to *Ženski list* for helping her get a grip on the rapidly changing household. She found that the “household is succumbing to the spirit of the time” and that she’s slowly losing touch with basic household needs. In a conversation with her friend, who obviously had more success in running her household, she learned about *Ženski list*. She wrote:

I was helpless, moody, and unhappy. “I lost touch with my household,” I complained to my best friend. She just stood there, and suddenly she started throwing different tips at me. “Please,” I said, “tell me where is this holy spirit you are talking about who has enlightened you with all of these household tips?” She took me by the hand to another room, and she showed me a bound volume. “See, this is my saintly ghost. It is called *Ženski list*, and here you can find everything you need.” I was so happy that I hugged my friend tightly, and I ordered *Ženski list*, which I have received now for three months, immediately.... I must admit to you – this magazine is my friend, my counselor, and the reason for my home happiness!⁵²²

⁵²¹ Letter, “The Reader M. from S.,” *Ženski list*, March 1928, 31.

⁵²² Letter, “What is Needed for the Housewife’s Happiness,” *Ženski list*, December 1928, 36.



Figure 45. Bounded volumes of *Ženski list* owned by Zagorka. It was quite common to bound copies of magazines. Many women readers wrote that they wanted to preserve *Ženski list* as long as possible and that they didn't regret the money that was spent on binding. *Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car*

Unpublished letters to the editor revealed that letters were received, not only within the borders of Yugoslavia, but from the women of the Croatian diaspora in the United States and Canada. Letters were sent from Chicago, New York, Pittsburg, Detroit, and St. Louis. Women were praising the quality of the magazine, but, more than that, they were grateful for the sole existence of such a magazine that brought the taste of the homeland while bringing all Croatian and Yugoslav women together, no matter where they were. Some women felt that *Ženski list* was bringing a needed connection to their home country, especially those who were married to American or Canadian men and who

had not had the opportunity to visit their country in years.⁵²³ In December 1929, Zagorka published one of these letters on a full page, with the title, “Just How Much *Ženski list* is Respected in America.” The letter was sent from Franka Poli , who lived at 2516 West Iowa Street in Chicago, and which was posted October 21 from the Humboldt Park Station. Franka also believed that *Ženski list* served two purposes: to bring her home to her and to maintain a sense of belonging with her homeland, especially with the women of the new Yugoslav nation. She wrote:

Ženski list is not just a simple magazine. It is the teacher for our female world because all of our female needs are expressed on its pages. I will try to find as many subscribers here in America as I possibly can. If, one day, you don't receive a subscription from me, then know that my eyes have closed forever.⁵²⁴

Some Croatian women immigrants in the United States also contributed with articles, such as the article about the Radio Concert that had been aired from Zagreb on radio stations in Illinois. *Chicago Daily News* announced the concert February 23, 1934, and one subscriber of *Ženski list* from Hazel Crest, Illinois, wrote with a full description of her impressions and warm feelings.⁵²⁵ Another reader from Michigan often sent humorous stories from American life. She wrote:

If an American wants to express his or her judgment about something, that person would use a statement such as, “You are lonely like a horse fly in Detroit.”⁵²⁶

⁵²³ In more than a dozen unpublished letters, women mostly stressed the quality of the magazine and its connection to their homeland.

⁵²⁴ Letter, “Just How Much *Ženski list* is Respected in America,” *Ženski list*, December 1929, 49.

⁵²⁵ Letter signed V.S. from Hazel Crest, Illinois, U.S.A., “My First Impression About the Radio Concert from Zagreb,” *Ženski list*, May 1934, 15.

⁵²⁶ Letter, “American Humor,” February, 1936, 28.

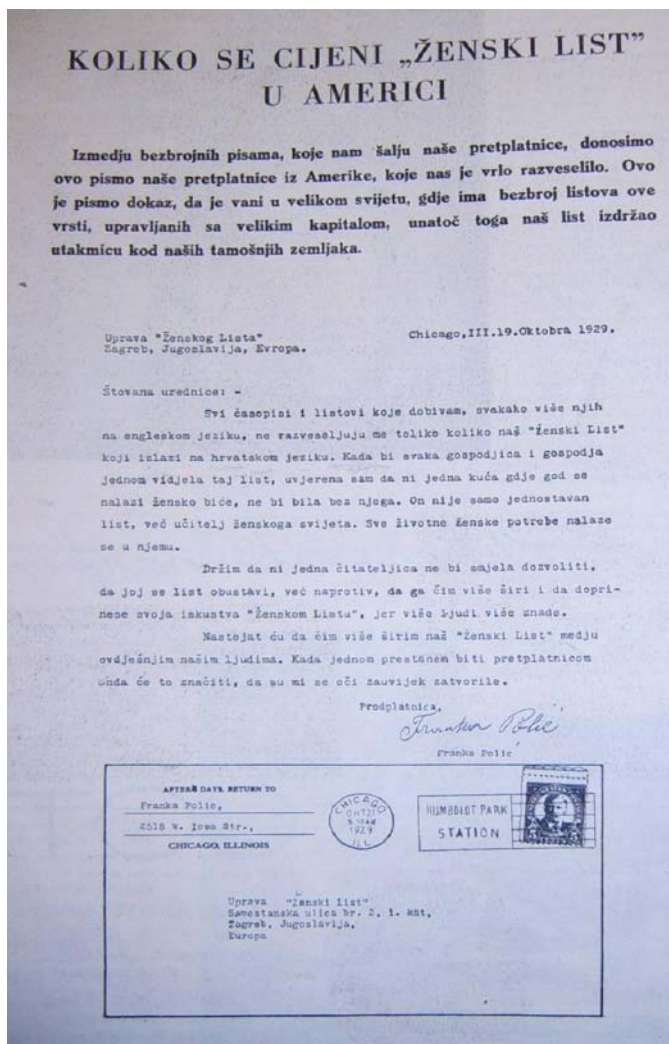


Figure 46. Letter from Chicago published in *Ženski list*.

In 1933, Zagorka began to suffer from illnesses that would prevent her from working for months, which would have a significant impact on the communication between the magazine's editor and readers. Olga Baldi -Bivec would replace her at times in the editor's chair, but she could not replace Zagorka in her communication with

readers. In fact, unpublished letters to the editor revealed, not only the intensity in the confidence that women felt with Zagorka, but also the respect that they felt for her hard work. Women readers associated the magazine's spirit with Zagorka's spirit, and they would always express their gratitude for Zagorka's dedication to their everyday lives and needs. Although, in the last two years of the magazine's life under Zagorka's editorial leadership, some correspondence still remained, it was just a shadow of the lively interaction between readers and the magazine's editor in the 1920s. The economic crisis of the early 1930s also impacted correspondence between readers and the magazine. Many women had to stop their subscription, and others who were in a better economic position, such as Draženka Medved, the wife of the merchant from Zagreb whose letter was published in its full length in February 1933, encouraged women to make all efforts to keep their subscriptions despite the bad economic conditions. She wrote:

....(W)e all know that every line in our "Ženski list" is intended to build on the idea of the woman as a self-conscious human being. It breathes with the spirit and faith in the future of female strength as a human being and citizen. These diverse goals are not achieved in any other magazine for women anywhere and in any other language. All other foreign magazines are one-sided, and only "Ženski list" brings every single thing that concerns women into their everyday lives.... We are faced with economic crisis, and we know that our magazine faces difficult times. We should, as readers, feel a duty to support this magazine and, with a little bit of effort, find a way to pay the subscription.... This is my heartfelt message to all of our women comrades, subscribers, and readers!⁵²⁷

During the transition to the *Novi Ženski list* (*New Ženski list*) and the *Hrvatski Ženski list* (*Croatian Ženski list*), correspondence completely disappeared from the pages of the magazine. The reason for that may be traced to the change of the editor. A reading

⁵²⁷ Letter signed as Draženka Medved wife of the merchant from Zagreb, "Interesting Letter to the Subscribers of *Ženski list*," *Ženski list*, February 1933, 4-5.

of the content of the changed magazine in the new era revealed that communication between editor and readers was not encouraged. Zagorka was, on the other hand, a popular personality in interwar Croatia and Yugoslavia. This was true also for other Slavic countries. Zagorka had developed very good relationships with Czech women and Polish women in particular. The Polish newspaper for women, *Wiadomsci Kobiiece*, published an article in 1931 about Zagorka in which she was positioned as an “interesting type of a woman: talented, highly patriotic, and with great heart and mind,” and special emphasis was given to her work in *Ženski list*. “Zagorka, as the editor of a women’s magazine, fights for the rights of women.”⁵²⁸ One of the main contributions of the unpublished letters to the editor for this research is the content concerning Zagorka’s relationship with her readers. Zagorka objected to being praised in *Ženski list*. But, during the coverage of the celebrations in 1931 that had been dedicated to Zagorka’s work, after much debate, Olga Bivec-Baldi had managed to win over the argument for publishing a series of articles about Zagorka.⁵²⁹ Zagorka had avoided publishing words of praise for herself in the correspondence section as well, but unpublished letters stand as the witness to the important connection that readers had felt with *Ženski list* through Zagorka. It was not uncommon that women readers would make a trip to Zagreb to visit Zagorka in her editorial offices. Many letters were sent after visits, such as the one sent in March 1931 by Marija Miski , who wrote:

I was entirely impressed by you, my dear and respected editor, and I am writing to my best girlfriend about my visit with you, and I would most kindly ask you to publish this letter in our dear *Ženski list*. I know that the letter will be

⁵²⁸ Article from Polish translated by Ania Spyra.

⁵²⁹ 1931 coverage in *Ženski list*.

shorter than in original, but I wish that the part that is dedicated to our dear editor is kept in the published version – please receive my deepest regards.⁵³⁰

Many letters had been written as an expression of gratitude from the readers whose stories, letters, debates, or comments had been published in *Ženski list*. One such letter was sent just before Christmas 1930, on December 17, from Andrijevcı, a little village in the eastern part of Croatia, Slavonija. Julija Seletkovi had expressed a depth of gratitude quite eloquently. She also chose to reveal her true identity after the answer to her question had been published in *Ženski list*:

Please receive my deepest appreciation and thank you for justifying my hopes by publishing such a nice and kind answer in *Ženski list*. May I say that *Ženski list* is twice as dear to me now and that my Christmas will be much more happy.... I apologize graciously if this letter of mine took too much of your precious time, but I was inspired to send you my response only because of your good heart. I will say no more, so I don't forsake what I had just said. I will keep the rest with me – all the things that spring from me out of gratitude and deep devotion to you. Allow me to sign this letter by my real name – Julija Seletkovi .⁵³¹

Some unpublished letters expressed critiques or regrets that their suggestions had seemed to have been ignored. However, even in those cases, readers would express their general satisfaction with the magazine as well as with Zagorka's editing. Many letters were short responses to questions and suggestions for improvements. Yet, many others were written in a confessional way, and the connection to *Ženski list* was expressed through a connection with their everyday lives. This was more typical in the letters written between 1929 and 1934 during the economic crisis in Yugoslavia. Women would open their letters with a description of the hardships that they were encountering trying to

⁵³⁰ Unpublished letter to the Editor by Marija Miski from March 1931.

⁵³¹ Unpublished letter by Julija Seletkovi , Andrijevcı, December 17, 1930.

survive the crisis. Some women complained about losing their jobs outside of the house and of feeling useless in the regular housewife role, especially during these times in which running a household had become an art of survival. These women asked for cheap and useful cooking recipes and for suggestions on how to remake old dresses into new and more fashionable garments. Some even mentioned that the postage and the sheet of paper on which they had written their opinions was a significant expense on their budgets. All the letters in the box of unpublished letters were opened, and most of them had short comments on the sides of the letters that had been written by Zagorka after she had finished reading them. Comments were sometimes a short answer to a question, but more commonly were memory jogs for what she had wanted to do with each letter, e.g., “needs to be addressed in the next issue” or “requires written response.” This shows how seriously Zagorka took her role of an editor and how genuinely interested she was in the lives of her readers. She particularly cared about their opinions regarding *Ženski list*, and sometimes she would write defensive comments to critique, for example, if a woman said that the magazine had too many novels and too little needlework, Zagorka remarked, “Imagination is cheaper than patterns.” Some women complained about the price of the magazine, which was almost twice as expensive as were foreign magazines, but which would carry fewer patterns for dressmaking. The economic situation forced women to make the most of their clothes, and some would cancel their subscriptions to *Ženski list* because foreign magazines were more affordable. However, the patriotic appeal that was being used by Zagorka and the magazine’s management seemed to have resonated with many readers, who stressed all of the advantages of *Ženski list* over other foreign magazines, and these letters were sometimes published as spirit boosters. The following

excerpt of an unpublished letter illustrates well how deeply involved the magazine's female readership was with the content and how much meaning the magazine had brought into their lives:

Once she has a chance to hold *Ženski list* in her hand, every woman will wish to subscribe to it. Once she becomes a subscriber, she will read the magazine, and she will keep it forever. *Ženski list* will never be a discarded old paper. See my example. At the end of every year, I have my copies of *Ženski list* bound in one book. I am proud to say I have six books of *Ženski list*, and soon I will have the seventh. I will go back, and I will read novels, stories, and, in a few years, I will even laugh at the fashion styles, like I laugh today at the fashion styles of four or five years back. I wish all the best to Zagorka, the editor of *Ženski list*, because I believe it was her idea to publish this wonderful magazine that helps me so much in my everyday life. I learned so much and created many beautiful things using patterns for dresses and needlework. Just how many of these things I have made, and just how many times did I fight with my sister, when the mail came, about who's going to peek at *Ženski list* first! It cannot be described in words just how much this magazine inspires us women....⁵³²

These unpublished letters speak about more than just simple communication exchange between the magazine's editor and the magazine's readers. It speaks about the trust and the true connection that these women felt with the magazine, such that they considered it their own. Women readers would often seek help or advice from Zagorka, whether it concerned their married life, their health, their children, or their wishes and dreams. Some women made concrete attempts with suggestions in what ways that they thought Zagorka and the magazine's editorial staff could help them, especially during the years of the economic depression. One such letter was sent from the northern part of the Croatian Adriatic Coast in March 1931 by a former woman teacher who had to find a different means of supporting herself after she had lost her eyesight and could not teach school any longer. She received a small present from Zagorka for the story that she had

⁵³² Unpublished letter by Pavica Sardeli posted December 10, 1934, from Split.

contributed to *Ženski list*. Inspired by this gesture “of the truest kindness,” she had decided to write with a plea for help. As she described in her letter, after she had been forced to leave her position as a teacher, she took out a small loan and bought a larger apartment at the seaside and turned it into two rooms, each with a balcony and a view of the Adriatic Sea. Now she needed to pay off the credit, and the economic crisis was bringing few tourists to the seaside. In her four-page letter, she described in detail the rooms, their furniture, and even their prices. In this letter of request, she wrote:

... (T)he times are hard everywhere in the world. I doubt that I'll have guests this year, and I don't have any other means to support myself. This is why I have decided to speak to your noble goodness because I know that nobody else has so many good connections, acquaintances, friends, and admirers like you, Madame. I beg you warmly to recommend me, if you can, to those who you think would like to spend spring, summer, or fall in Crikvenica by the sea.... I apologize for being so daring as to ask you for your help and to take so much of your valuable time. There is not much I can do to return your kindness, but I promise I will place one year of *Ženski list* in each room, and I will ask everyone I know to subscribe to our *Ženski list* – the best-edited magazine there is.⁵³³

In the following section, I will discuss the debates that women readers had initiated in their letters concerning their rights, position in the private and public spheres, gender politics, and the economy.

5.5. Opinions and Debates: Gender Politics, Economy, and the Making of the Alternative Public Sphere

What to do with your single pair of silk stockings? Should you wash it separately with mild facial soap and dry it out in the fresh air? Should you avoid soap and detergent and wash it in a solution of water and vinegar to keep the shine? How long will the

⁵³³ Unpublished letter, dated March 14, 1931, posted from Crikvenica, Croatia.

Bubikopf stay fashionable? What to do with the *Bubikopf* that went wrong? These are just some of the questions that women readers would send to *Ženski list* that illustrate their concerns about their daily activities. Sharing suggestions, including correspondence among the readers, was encouraged, and unpublished letters to the editor show that many women appreciated this magazine because it allowed for open debates on issues that were being raised by readers themselves.

In addition to tips on how to make their silk stockings look like new longer, women readers were fully engaged in opening various debates and expressing opinions on social, economic, and even political issues that concerned the lives of women. They were also engaged in responding to polled questions that sometimes stirred up eager debates. With the beginning of the second year, polling became a regular section of the magazine. The first two questions asked women to give their opinions on men and to share their views on the ideal types of men? Only a few women expressed positive opinions about men. One woman wrote, “My opinion of men is better than my opinion of women; men are more honest.”⁵³⁴ But most women wrote that their experience showed how men are “liars,” “crooks,” and “cheats” and how “men cannot be trusted at all.” One woman wrote, “About men, after the War, I have only one opinion: All women lost their respect for them, and this fact says enough.”⁵³⁵ Women obviously felt frustrated with the men who had returned from the war to their wives, who felt that men were weak and unwilling to adjust to changed social conditions. The discrepancy between how women

⁵³⁴ Letter signed as Jolanda, “My Opinion About Men,” *Ženski list*, May 1926, 32.

⁵³⁵ Letter signed as Leondrina, *Ženski list*, May 1926, 32.

perceived men and what they actually experienced could be illustrated by this statement that had been sent from a woman who signed it Marina:

It is hard for me to say precisely what I think about men, because there are moments when I hate them, and then there are moments when I love them. There aren't many ideal types out there, or they are painfully rare. I look for one, but I know I will never find him. All men are the same. All men are ugly. They sneak up on women, and under the false pretenses they make moves on them just to get their body.... Men are full of cynicism if women talk about their fight for the equality of sexes, and they feel threatened by a woman's intellect. Maybe I overact. Maybe there are better men than what I have described. I wish. Once I had believed, but I have only experienced disappointments.⁵³⁶

These responses opened a debate that was followed by a series of letters about women's position in society and in relation to men. The following issue published six full letters in which women expressed their dissatisfaction with the way women were treated in society. One woman wrote that "women are dissatisfied with their position in relation to men who consider a woman inferior, something like a slave or a fashion doll." Another woman argued that "men consider women to be like children; they are unequal in front of the law because laws were made by men only and therefore one-sidedly."⁵³⁷ This debate was followed by a series of letters from men who felt "lynched" and "unjustly accused of intolerance." One male reader, who signed his letter as Soufraget, indeed engaged in a scientific debate by trying to show how "women have no artistic spirit; there are no women composers, for example."⁵³⁸ That statement resonated so poorly with the women readers, who at that point did feel ready for the lynching of men, at least of those who dared to express such retrograde beliefs. One woman, Kasja Koren i , wrote a letter

⁵³⁶ Letter signed as Marina, *Ženski list*, May 1926, 32.

⁵³⁷ Letters published in *Ženski list*, June 1926, 30.

⁵³⁸ Letters signed as Soufraget published in *Ženski list*, June 1926, 30.

using similar scientific language and giving a lengthy list with a plethora of women who had contributed in different ways to the arts and sciences.⁵³⁹ Soufraget, however, did not give up, and, in the following issue, another of his letters was published in length, but this time Zagorka allowed herself to become engaged in the debate, publishing her response just below the letter. Soufraget had complained about the changed post-war society in which “materialism rules the world of today” and about women who had changed under the influence of the materialism that was coming from the United States. The women readers of *Ženski list* and the men readers of *Ženski list* obviously had diametrically opposing opinions about American influences on modern society. He wrote:

Today’s woman is a friend to a man as long as she needs him. Americanism! Business friendship. This is what men can expect from today’s women. Women should be spiritual, not material, physical. You can find a good body on every other woman, but not spirituality. A woman friend should be helping a man financially, not the other way around. Only in this case would she prove herself as fully spiritual, rather than material.... My female friend turned her back on me, and she left with another guy...These are the women of today.⁵⁴⁰

Zagorka did not spare him her critique:

My dear sir, this is exactly what you deserve. Good that she found another guy. Your worldviews dishonor men! It is shocking to see that you write all this completely seriously. We published your letter only to show just what kind of deviant thinking in which men are engaging in these post-war times....⁵⁴¹

In January 1927, the polling questions were slowly moving from the gender issue to that of the relationship between men and women to questions pertaining to opinions on

⁵³⁹ Letter signed as Kasja Koren i , *Ženski list*, July 1926, 31-32.

⁵⁴⁰ Letter signed as Soufraget, *Ženski list*, August 1926, 28.

⁵⁴¹ Zagorka’s answer, *Ženski list*, August 1926, 28

women's rights. Women were asked three questions. Two questions addressed the issue of marriage: Do you want to be married?, and Do you regret being married? The third question addressed issues pertaining to the political rights of women: Would you like to have voting rights? Many women wrote that they would like to get married, although they did not believe in the "lasting love of men." Some women expressed regret that they hadn't found a more worthy goal in life, but, if society allowed them to pursue their wishes, they would never marry. Many women also expressed that they were happily married. One woman wrote, "If I were born ten times, I would marry my husband ten times over." However, most women regretted being married, and some particularly stressed that the cause for their regret was their husbands, who had come back from the war changed. One woman wrote:

I deeply regret being married, but I don't think anyone can help me. My life is completely in sync with the stories, "Slavonci" from Kozarac,⁵⁴² especially after my husband has returned from the war. Our life is completely ruined. I find the meaning of life in my children only.⁵⁴³

Many women expressed regret for being married because their husbands treated them as "something they own," but many at the same time felt happy for being mothers. Motherhood was a way to "show tenderness toward someone, and this someone loves me truly."⁵⁴⁴ Zagorka also wrote a comment responding to the number of letter writers who had argued the same thing, i.e., "I want to be married because, in society and in the

⁵⁴² Ivan Kozarac was an early 20th Century Croatian writer who created male characters such as Đuka Begovi , a Slavonian man full of destruction who carries in his blood peasant and patriarchal sentiments.

⁵⁴³ Letter signed as Slovenian woman, *Ženski list*, February 1927, 30.

⁵⁴⁴ Letters published in *Ženski list*, February 1927, 30-31.

workplace, I am discriminated against because I don't have a male protector." Because of the overwhelming amount of letters that had pointed out this issue, Zagorka opened another constant section, "Woman in the Social Communication," in which issues concerning women's place in the public sphere were discussed. Zagorka had considerable interest in debating the issues of marriage and the place of women in the public sphere as women with material independence. She believed that this material independence should result in a change of the traditional public perception: woman should have a male chaperon in her public communication. In her article, "Woman about Marriage," published in the May 1927 issue, she wrote a concluding remark based on the summary of letters from the readers:

In our pool about marriage, we found two interesting things: the modern girl is weary of marriage because she does not look for a guardian and protector, but for a companion. And, second, that there are still some good marriages out there to find. However, the most important thing illustrated by this pool is that the economic independence of women did, in fact, contribute to equality in sentiments and the basis for marriage is much stronger because of that. Marriage is now positioned on an equal footing.⁵⁴⁵

Another issue that induced an overwhelming response from the readers was introduced in the February 1927 issue. One woman reader wrote a lengthy letter on the issue, "Destiny of an Abandoned Wife," in which she not only described inequalities between men and women in the marriage laws, but also gave suggestions about what to do to change such laws. She had been abandoned by her husband, who was a public official, after 26 years of marriage and was left without any financial support and with a

⁵⁴⁵Zagorka, "Woman about Marriage," *Ženski list*, May, 1927, 34.

son who still was going to school. This debate was continued for the remainder of 1927.

In her introduction, this reader wrote:

Allow me, madam editor, to speak about one special topic in our *Ženski list* who, thank God, did not only devote its pages to the fashion and household, but also to everything else that pertains to the lives of women. So here, under one roof, so to speak, we can find everything that concerns us in our private and public lives. Unlike other women abroad who need to hold several different magazines if they want to be informed about everything that concerns them, we here, due to our *Ženski list*, have to always hold only this magazine. Therefore, I am writing with this important issue to our friend, *Ženski list*.⁵⁴⁶

Following this debate, women readers almost unanimously wrote that they would like to have voting rights. One letter in particular stressed the importance of voting rights for peasant women who throughout the war carried the economy of the country and, therefore, earned their voting rights.⁵⁴⁷ In the May 1927 issue, Zagorka posed a question for the magazine's male readers: What kind of woman would you like? This question generated many interesting responses from men, but also from women. Most men wrote that they would like "a beautiful woman" or "a woman who is blonde, cheerful, but does not go to parties, also elegant, but does not wear a lot of make-up, beautiful but only devotes herself to the home and me."⁵⁴⁸ Many men sent humorous responses such as: "I like women who don't like me," "I like all of those women who are beautiful and who are not mine." One wrote, "I like many women," and, in the same style, another wrote, "I like many women to look at, but I would choose only one for my soul."⁵⁴⁹ Men in general

⁵⁴⁶ Letter, "Destiny of an Abandoned Wife," *Ženski list*, February 1927, 25.

⁵⁴⁷ Letter, "Peasant Votes and Women," *Ženski list*, February 1927, 30.

⁵⁴⁸ Letters, *Ženski list*, June 1927, 7.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

expressed very patriarchal and chauvinistic opinions about women. One male reader wrote, “My ideal type of a woman is the one who holds a big ladle in her hand and a heart full of goodness in her bosoms.”⁵⁵⁰ Another male reader wrote an exemplary response to the question and, indeed, a very honest one:

I am completely exhilarated by a woman who works, develops her intellectual abilities, and creates and contributes to the world and society. However, I would marry only a woman who devotes herself to the house.⁵⁵¹

To stir some waters, Zagorka had invited women to respond to these answers in the following issue. Women sent raging letters. A total of 27 letters unanimously accused men of being “egoists” and disappointedly concluded that “really nothing can be done about it.” One answer was particularly piercing:

So, you, my dear men, it seems, ask from us to have everything that you do not possess! Because, indeed, you have very little, you demand from us to be perfect. However, when you find out that you have asked for too much – you end up buying under the price.⁵⁵²

Another woman reader made a witty comment by saying that her husband also speaks like Casanova, but is far from being one. She finds that men use “Don Juan” rhetoric to hide the truth about themselves and to impress other men. In reality, they are nowhere near that imaginary type, i.e., “All this – is their wishful thinking.”⁵⁵³ This particular debate encouraged women to talk even more openly about their marriages and relationships with men, including the lack of sexual pleasure. The letter titled,

⁵⁵⁰ Letter signed as O.R. Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Letter signed as Dr. C. Ibid.

⁵⁵² Letter signed as Maša, *Ženski list*, August 1927, 38.

⁵⁵³ Letter signed as Rudolfina, *Ženski list*, September 1927, 30.

“Physiological Disharmony in Marriage,” published in the January 1928 issue, initiated a lengthy debate on a woman’s body and her sexual pleasure. Women readers wrote about the lack of understanding on the part of men and about what constitutes female sexual pleasure. Many women wrote that their husbands did not care about their bodies and their pleasure, but only cared to pleasure themselves. One woman said, “I don’t think there is anything there for us. The pleasure is reserved only for them. Now I understand my husband’s words when he said that this is the best thing about the marriage.”⁵⁵⁴ These particular concerns inspired Zagorka to ask this pooling question: Would you rather like to be a man, or you are satisfied with being a woman? In the next issue, one woman wrote the letter titled, “My Tragedy and My Comfort,” in which she described all the reasons why she would rather be a man – her tragedy – and also how she found a way to deal with it – her comfort:

I think that the tragedy of my life is exactly in the fact that I was not born a man.... My mom used to say: “It is good that you were not born a man; you would have been a rascal.” She thought that maybe because I love politics and sports. My mom even today does not know that her daughter is unhappy for being a woman.... I know I can’t do anything to change my gender, or men. So I found my comfort in small revenges – to pull their noses so to say – (If they heard me!).⁵⁵⁵

Many women wrote about the disadvantages that they faced in life just for being women, but most women felt that it was not their gender that they should change, but the way that society perceived women. One woman said, “I am completely happy for being a

⁵⁵⁴ Letter, “Physiological Disharmony in Marriage,” *Ženski list*, January 1928, 41.

⁵⁵⁵ Letter signed as Djurdjana, “My Tragedy and My Comfort,” *Ženski list*, March 1928, 31.

woman. Women are more intelligent beings in every way. I wouldn't want to be a man, not even for one single moment.”⁵⁵⁶

For the rest of the year, women debated issues of female education and their influences on marriage, as well as what women did for entertainment. Women unanimously agreed that education could only bring good to women, both in marriage and outside of marriage. Married women who were educated would be able to stand up to their husbands and to demand equality on an equal footing, and educated unmarried women could build materially and emotionally independent lives. Some women said that their good marriage was a result of the education that they had received when they were girls. Women expressed a lot of interest in discussing what they did for entertainment and in their free time. Most women said that they didn't have much free time, because they worked outside of the house and kept their households as well. However, most women said that they liked to use their free time to read books and newspapers. Newspaper reading was one of the most common entertainments. Some women mentioned that, in their free time, they liked to read *Ženski list* and to do needlework based on the printed patterns.

In 1929, women wrote a lot about the exhibition of *Ženski list* and the importance of this event in their lives. Many women, especially those who had been awarded prizes, wrote that this opportunity made their lives more meaningful. Some women also wrote that this event built an even stronger connection between the women readers and the magazine, as well as among readers themselves. During that year, women also wrote to express interest in learning about women from other countries. Unpublished letters to the

⁵⁵⁶ Letter signed as Content Bosnian Woman, *Ženski list*, April 1928, 38.

editor show that women were not concerned only about the ways that *Ženski list* was contributing to their everyday lives, but that they also wished to learn more about other women and about how they could possibly contribute to change. Following this discussion, *Ženski list* opened much more space to articles about women's lives and women's emancipation movements in distant and culturally different countries, such as India and Afghanistan. Several articles dealt with child marriages in India, as well as about Hinduism as a religion, through which the position of women in India should be evaluated. Several articles followed that talked about women in the public sphere in India, and women journalists in particular. This shows that Zagorka and her fellow women journalists had developed cultural sensitivity and were offering to their readers alternative readings of the position of women in different cultures and societies. In unpublished letters to the editor, many women expressed their gratitude to Zagorka for publishing those stories because they made the readers more aware of the commonalities that all women in the world shared in their position in private and public lives.

The early 1930s already saw a decrease in the published letters and debates. Although some pools were published throughout the existence of *Ženski list*, this decrease was partly the result of Zagorka's bad health and partly because of the economic crisis that was affecting subscription rates. Among the unpublished letters, I found evidence of women saying that they were planning to write, but could not because they could not afford paper and a stamp. Letters that were published focused on material and economic issues. In the late 1930s, letters expressed concerns with political issues as well, although, in comparison to the first few years, the quality of debate in *Ženski list* significantly decreased. Considering the fact that Zagorka's influences in the last two

years (1937 and 1938) were significantly diminished, it is not surprising that the initial intent to make *Ženski list* an open space for the debate of crucial issues regarding gender, politics, the economy, and society in general was almost completely abandoned.

Among the unpublished letters, I found a few unopened letters from 1937. This is a significant discovery because all of the letters from previous years had been opened, and it tells me that Zagorka felt overwhelmed by her work in the changed editorial offices of *Ženski list*, where her influence had lessened. The magazine that she had helped to create was slipping from her hands, and so was the relationship with her readers that she had worked so hard to create. It is possible that the economic and political crisis, in conjunction with her personal health, and the moral crisis that had resulted in the demise of *Ženski list* in the way that it had been envisioned in the beginning – as the collaborative effort of the readers and the small editorial staff led by Zagorka in Samostanska 2 in Zagreb. The unpublished letters also showed that the places from which the letters were sent had narrowed down to mostly Croatian towns and Croatian women. This is also consistent with the nationalistic turn – a trend evident in the larger political system at the time. The loss of the belief in the initial idea of a magazine that would serve as a sphere of bonding for all women in Yugoslavia, with a hope to build a common Yugoslav nation, corresponded with the loss of a belief in the possibility of the Yugoslav nation at the larger political level.

By reading unpublished letters to the editor, I was able to fill in the void in correspondence between the readers and the magazine in its later years, which seemed so crucial to the internal politics of the magazine. Letters in the years between 1935 and 1938 were also coming from readers in Croatia more so than from readers from

throughout Yugoslavia. Although Zagorka had tried to avoid inclusion of the larger political issues on the pages of the magazine, those issues did inadvertently influence the magazine's existence and its relationship with its readers.

Published and unpublished letters to the editor were the crucial piece of the puzzle to the project of *Ženski list* that allowed for an examination of its audience. This magazine's mission to open a space for public debate on the crucial issues of the time was, to some degree, and especially during the "golden age" of the magazine, fulfilled. The debates that had been initiated by women readers, and especially the interaction that had been encouraged between male and female audiences, provided a possibility for a unique look into the ways that these crucial issues of primarily gender politics and economy were debated in the sphere of the larger public in the Yugoslav interwar society. This may be a small, but significant, example of the attempt to form an alternative public sphere – alternative, in this case, does not mean in exclusion of the other gender – men – but alternative in terms of opening up a space for a debate between women and men and among women, themselves, on the issues that they would not have been allowed to debate publicly anywhere else.

One of the last letters that had been sent to the editorial offices of *Ženski list* that I had found unopened retained the same spirit of the female reader that I had come to know through reading and re-reading more than 300 unpublished, as well as the large number of published, letters to the editor. I wish to believe that Zagorka had never gotten a chance to open those last letters that had been sent to her during her last days as an editor, although she had kept them in a box for almost 20 years after she had left the editorial

position of *Ženski list* in November 1938. It took another 50 years before I found them in a private collection, still safely sealed in a box.



Figure 47. The box of letters from a private collection.
Courtesy of Željko and Marinka Car.

I took the liberty to open only one letter that had been left unopened on the bottom of the box. Anka had talked about her job as a clerk and about her two friends who wished to become subscribers. She talked about the goals of modern women and these women's interest in how to achieve thin bodies and to buy the most recent fashions. But, she also talked about women who “do not neglect their head” and about *Ženski list* – “the magazine for women who do not wish to neglect their head.” She finished her letter with these words:

Pardon me for this letter, my dear editor. I just wanted to express my gratitude for the moral and spiritual pleasure that your magazine gives me. I am afraid it is simply written because I was too young when I wished to start with my

independent life and with earning my own bread. I have very little time, and I do not hope that I will ever get a better education.

Respectfully Yours
Anka
Split, December, 1937.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁷ Unpublished letter to the editor. Signed as Anka, and dated December 1937, sent from Split, Croatia.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY: *ŽENSKI LIST* – THE PROMISE, THE HOPE, AND THE VISION
OF AN ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY

This dissertation has investigated the contribution and the place of what is arguably the first magazine to have been published exclusively for women within the context of interwar Yugoslavia and Croatia. I was concerned with the role of its editor and the ways in which her personal ideologies had influenced the production and selection of the magazine's texts. Further, I had wanted to examine the relationships between the readers and the magazine, and the readers and its editor, in particular those that were exemplified in the published and unpublished letters and other correspondence to the editor. Finally, I have attempted to understand the historically constructed female subject and the female subject(s) that had been produced around the magazine's readers, as well as the historical context in which this female subject had been produced.

I used historiography and discourse analysis to study the context and the magazine's content. This historical and political-economic study of media was based on questions that had sought to explore the place of *Ženski list* in the everyday lives of its readers. I examined the ways that those readers articulated gender debates in conjunction with the articulation of both their public and private experiences of modernity, industrialization, and the new capitalist modes of production. I also have studied the discourses of the readers through an examination of the correspondence and the letters to the editor. My examination of *Ženski list* was inspired by the work of the feminist political economists of media, historians of gender, and the feminist critiques of the

public sphere theory.⁵⁵⁸ The work of these scholars has demonstrated that the importance of the study of media is contextual to the particular historical moment, that media consumption and production are intrinsically interrelated, and that these complex interactions demand “expanding the object of study from structure to day-to-day activities” to understand how women “pursue their interests and understand the ways we relate to capitalism.”⁵⁵⁹

My study of *Ženski list* found that women in the changing socio-political and economic context expressed their relation to capitalism and modernity in different ways, sometimes exerting their critiques and the refusal of the existing patriarchal structures and sometimes seeking inclusion within the structures, with the intent to practice primarily gender equality by direct participation. My analysis spans from mapping out the various contexts for the emergence of *Ženski list* and the media context as it pertains to magazines that were directed to women in interwar Yugoslavia, specifically in Croatia. In the analysis, I have provided insights into the life and the personal ideologies of the most influential woman in the cultural production of *Ženski list* – its editor, Marija Juri Zagorka. In the analysis of the content, I have focused on telling the story of *Ženski list*

⁵⁵⁸ For feminist political economy, I was inspired primarily by the work of Eileen R. Meehan and Ellen Riordan, eds., in *Sex and Money: Feminism and Political Economy of Media* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis/London, 2002) and the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham in *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Blackwell Publishers: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996); for gender history by Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), and by Victoria De Grazia and Ellen Furlough, eds., in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective* (University of California Press, 1996); Feminist critiques of the public sphere by McLaughlin, L. (2004). “Feminism and the Political Economy of Transnational Public Space”. In N. Crossley & M. Roberts (Eds.), *After Habermas: New perspectives on the Public Sphere* (pp. 156-175).

⁵⁵⁹ Ellen Riordan in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, 12.

through the most significant debates within its historical context. Finally, by analyzing published and unpublished letters to the editor and other correspondence with the editor, I have provided a glimpse of the ways in which audiences had experienced the magazine and how these audiences had discussed the meaning of *Ženski list* in their everyday lives.

Examination of the context of the emergence of *Ženski list* has revealed the immense importance of the socio-economic and the historical conditions on the emergence of this magazine. Through my analysis, it became clear that the change in the socio-economic context and the historical context had a profound impact on the types of discourses, topics, and the debates carried out on the pages of *Ženski list*. This changing context had an influence on the vision of the relationships that the magazine's producers had envisioned with the readers. Finally, this changing context had a profound influence on the way in which *Ženski list* had changed throughout the years – from the progressive magazine for a modern woman that was initially envisioned by its owners, by its editor and women journalists, and by its readers to the conservative propaganda targeted to women living under the Croatian fascist government. The context also has established *Ženski list* as truly the first magazine targeted exclusively for women that had exerted influence over the interwar Yugoslav female readership as did no other magazine of that time.

In the feminist biography of Zagorka, the magazine's editor, I also discovered that the creation of Zagorka's identity was shaped by the discourses of the world in which she had lived. She had experienced liberal, feminist, nationalist, socialist, and even fascist ideologies in her own life, and at times she had embraced all except for the last that affected her position as an active voice of agency and inspiration for numerous women of

interwar Yugoslavia. The contradictions that professing these ideologies had sometimes produced in Zagorka's professional and personal lives were indicative of the contradictions that conditions in interwar Yugoslavia, and Europe as the larger context, had produced in their attempts to break out of the old pre-war Europe and its social, economic, and political systems. Before I dedicate the rest of my summary to *Ženski list* per se as the larger part of the analysis, I want to address the findings of the analysis of the published and unpublished letters and other correspondence to the editor. My findings show that the formation of the alternative public sphere was one of the primary goals of this magazine. That goal was to provide an open public space where women readers could talk freely about the issues from their everyday lives that were suppressed in the general public sphere of the time. These attempts were conjoined with the economic needs of the management to sustain the magazine. The goal was to build a community of readers who, by paying the subscription diligently and regularly, would serve as an extended economic-hand of the management. The five commandments of the readers of *Ženski list* were designed to appeal to the readers with the Christian moral of the importance of the community, but this public relations strategy was designed primarily to increase profit from the sales of subscriptions. Correspondence and letters to the editor were a crucial part of the identity of *Ženski list*. Reading the letters revealed that not only women were readers of *Ženski list*. Some men had felt compelled to write and to express their opinions, and, although the magazine's intention was to primarily serve as the voice for women's issues, men were invited to participate in the debate. This recognition that it would be impossible to impact the change without the debate between women and men and without the debate of the social constructions of masculinity and the social

constructions of femininity was one of the most striking realizations of the people who had worked to produce this magazine that would problematize historical, social, and culture-specific understanding of gender.

The analysis of *Ženski list* has told an important story of the place of media, and the women's press in particular, in initiating and challenging traditional and emerging discourses in the hope that media and particularly the women's press would contribute to the ways in which society could be imagined differently. The transitional society of interwar Europe offers unique opportunities for understanding how media influence and shape dominant narratives and also how the media offer potential for challenging those narratives. The case of *Ženski list*, as the popular magazine for women in interwar Yugoslavia in the context of transition from the primarily feudal to industrial and capitalist society, has illustrated both points. Through understanding gender, media, culture, and the political-economic context in which *Ženski list* had emerged, I was able to map out connections between the historical and structural changes of interwar Yugoslavia and Croatia and the changes within *Ženski list*. In this, the analysis of gender discourses, as linked to other social factors such as sexuality, class, religious background or ethnicity, and the political and economic discourses that had emerged from a reading of *Ženski list*, has served to provide a view into the ways in which women had discussed these practices, both as the means to reproduce their social status and as the means for the potential subversion of their social status. Further, by telling the story of change using the example of *Ženski list*, I chose to contextualize this study within the historical moment. In the face of the nationalistic discourses in the sphere of the politics, where women had no access for participation, *Ženski list* was envisioned as space where the alternative vision

of modernity was forged. Through the *Bubikopf* and other debates on citizenship, nation building, and sense of belonging to a nation, women forged an alternative identity, within a realm of consumer society. This new consumer nation, of working class women who were fighting to be self sufficient, marked the change to a visual (through the *Bubikopf*) and symbolic representation of a liberated woman in the market, as the public space. In the ethnically and separatist political surrounding, women of *Ženski list*, forged an alternative modernity. Hence, this study, opened up the possibility to take a step back from simply applying paradigms to the world to draw connections among the ontological, empirical, historical, and the discursive. The case of *Ženski list* and its editor, Marija Juri Zagorka, is exemplary of the human initiative and the power to imagine other possibilities of being a new modern woman. Zagorka understood the advantages of the interwar context in which social factors and social structures were less solidified and more open for contestation. From the very beginning, *Ženski list* had participated in the creation of the new modern woman in the emerging industrialized and capitalist system of interwar Yugoslavia. This particular moment, in which capitalist relations in the newly formed Yugoslav society were not completely solidified, had opened the potential for imagining different possibilities of resistance to the patriarchal structures, including resistance through consumption as both a cultural and economic practice. Through their dialogues about consumption practices on the pages of *Ženski list*, the women of interwar Yugoslavia were able to discuss both their discovered desires and the settings in which those practices had occurred. These discourses were closely related to the emerging economic structures and modern industrial architectural wonders, such as department stores that had become the largest buildings in the cities. These new city landscape

markers signified not only the economic power of consumerism, but they also visually displayed the cultural significance of the practices of consuming. In these new social practices of consuming, women saw their opportunity to venture out into public for the first time and to exert their power over their choices and their life desires. It is not surprising, then, that the women readers and the women journalists who had produced *Ženski list*, often through mutual efforts, felt compelled to offer celebratory comments about the rising modern society.

The metaphor for modernity was, for the most part, American society. Americanization was, therefore, seen as a positive influence in both the cultural and economic sense. Examples of American women who were seen as being emancipated were constructed as such, not only because of the democratic freedoms of the promised American society, but also because of their modern households that had liberated women from arduous household work and therefore had offered them leisure time in which they could fulfill other needs and desires. These modern households held a promise for gender equality as well, because technology that had previously been considered a male domain, when situated within the context of the household which was considered primarily a female domain, liberated women from over-demanding household work and invited men to participate in the economics of the everyday. This new household was constructed only in part as a celebration of the new consumer and capitalist society. Women of *Ženski list* constructed this household based on gender equality and the equal division of labor between husband and wife, immediately offering an “anticapitalist imagination” or a

“different representation of capitalism.”⁵⁶⁰ In *Ženski list*, industrialization, capitalism, and modernity were understood as transformative of the traditions and existing infrastructures of meaning and as sites for subversion and for reconstruction of the existing social relations. It is not surprising, then, that male readers who had responded to some of the discussions in the pages of *Ženski list* were expressing anger against consumption as a female domain as well as against changes in the household that they viewed as a symptom of Americanization, industrialization, and capitalist relations. This transitional period and its potential for the subversion of the existing social and economic relations were felt by men as a threat to the established patriarchal relations.

The forging of capitalist relations was a contested terrain in which women had seen an opportunity for offering their own vision of social and economic relations. By understanding capitalism as fluid, changing, and as a site of cultural and economic practices, the women of *Ženski list* had opened up possibilities and visions of difference and hope. The search for representations of different social and economic relations and real examples of the “economic difference”⁵⁶¹ were some of the primary goals of *Ženski list*. One such example was the construction of bee-keeping as a female occupation, and another was the discussion of the projects of women’s handicraft. Women in provincial and peasant households were encouraged to organize, or were organized, in an “imagined

⁵⁶⁰ Gibson-Graham argue that “Representations of capitalism are a potent constituent of the anticapitalist imagination, providing images of what is to be resisted and changed as well as intimations of the strategies, techniques, and possibilities of changing it.” 3

⁵⁶¹ Term used by Gibson-Graham for noncapitalist social and economic practices, 3.

manufacture”⁵⁶² that provided a new vision of economic production outside of the capitalist systems of production and the capitalist division of labor. This new type of economic production was promoted on the pages of *Ženski list* as “domestic women’s craft industry” and was designed for the economic empowerment of women who were being relegated to traditional household roles. This new economic vision was taken a step further when it was suggested to become an economic development model of the national Yugoslav economy. Household economy as constructed in *Ženski list* was both efficient and rational.⁵⁶³ This economy was made rational in the image of the Yugoslav woman as the leader of domestic crafts that were produced in the household and in the image of the industrialized household as was represented in the American household and as was represented by the American woman as rational housewife. Both transformations of the traditional household as a potential site for a different kind of industry and the household in which modern technology allowed men and women to equally participate in the economic activities in the house offered a different understanding of gender and economic practices.

On the other side, negations of the economic difference in the public sphere, where women were entering the emerging working class, had produced in women a need for inclusion in the economic system of capitalism. This inclusion had produced a critique of capitalism’s division of labor and of the larger political structure. The

⁵⁶² I coined this term taking inspiration from the Anderson’s imagined community, meaning that women did not meet in one place for production purposes, but worked from their own homes, but nevertheless still felt connected through the same goals to produce for the common purpose.

⁵⁶³ In Gibson-Graham, see the discussion on the seeming lack of efficiency and rationality as it pertains to household economy, 7.

discussions of the inequality of working women in their pay and in their often subordinate position to male superiors at work, as well as discussions of the proposal of the discriminating laws that were being targeted against women teachers, provided spaces for the critique of the gendered division of labor in the new capitalist system of relations. The emerging class of women workers opened up a discussion on class identities. The new modern working woman was in need of a real and symbolic class differentiation from the small, but existing, class of the bourgeois woman. The *Bubikopf* served as a marker of both the identity and the difference. The page-boy hair-style embodied the language of gender, politics, and class. Women were ready to march into the working public sphere armed with the symbol of their resistance to the traditional gender and class relations. Woman was a woman by being a non-woman and was both the same and different from the *other* woman of a different class. Hence, the meaning of the category of woman is contextual to the history, to the public and the private, and to the new definitions of gender. *Bubikopf* stood as the symbol of forging the new nation of women who embraced the identity of the new modern woman who could do everything – and, if she could contribute to the capitalist system of production, she could also participate in the larger political structure of decision-making over her own destiny. Discussions of class identities were transferred into a discussion of the traditional household economy as the economy of capitalist relations in which women were subordinated in labor to their husbands. Some women compared their status in the household as more depriving of their freedoms and choices than was the status of working women, who had a choice of quitting their jobs if they were unsatisfied with the division of labor in the workplace. At the same time, *Ženski list* had attempted to provide a modern understanding of the

household that would reflect non-capitalist class identities as gender identities by advocating equality in the division of labor between husbands and wives. In that relationship, gender difference was reflected in class difference, and vice versa. But the question of what would happen to the categories of gender and class once the households were outside of the system of the capitalist economy was never raised. The discussion of gender and new class identities in *Ženski list*, therefore, showed that different identities co-exist, overlap, and even contradict.

This project, as the feminist political-economic analysis in this study suggests, is a critique of patriarchy under the conditions of capitalism as well as a critique of capitalist relations – yet, to say that women in *Ženski list* expressed themselves and were constructed as the victims of the hegemonic and patriarchal discourses would take away any agency on their part. It is the context of the interwar Europe and interwar Yugoslavia that could best explain why, in this particular story, women were seeking inclusion, while offering critiques into the society that had held a promise of hope for change. The potential power of capital and participation in the distribution of capital was a novelty – and antithetical to centuries of underdevelopment. The new system initially held the promise of a possibility for the full inclusion of women within the new society and for the possibility of more even distribution of power between women and men. But the promise wasn't fully made. After the initial stage of hope, women more openly expressed their dissatisfaction with their unpropitious position in the public and in the private spheres. The initial hope for a change that had been brought about by opportunities in the modern household was diminished by the larger structural changes – namely economic crisis and political crisis. The economic crisis was both an external and an internal factor. Yugoslav

economy was weak from the beginning, but the world economic crisis of 1929, which reached its peak in the Yugoslav economy in 1933, unfavorably reflected on the lives of Yugoslav women. The beliefs that Yugoslav women had in their consumer practices and in the modern household appliances that had held promise for change of the existing gender relations soon vanished. Further, internal quibbles about political and ethnic dominance among the three constitutive peoples of Yugoslavia later coincided with the larger European context of the rise of the nationalist right that embraced the old domestic ideal of “domestic mother as a force of tradition protecting the nation from disorderly outsiders like the Jew.”⁵⁶⁴ The racial discourses of 1930s Europe complemented the internal ethnic-nationalistic discourses that were being carried on throughout Yugoslavia in the interwar years. It is important to note that the narratives of women as mothers of the nation were remarkably absent from the pages of *Ženski list* in the fourteen years of its existence, maybe simply because there was no common sense of the Yugoslav nation. In the beginning, *Ženski list* had encouraged women from throughout the country to express their experiences, visions, and hopes and to discuss their points of religious differences as well as the differences in the practices of their everyday lives. Yet, seldom would the magazine talk about Yugoslavism as the common identity marker for women readers or for women’s roles as mothers in building the new nation. From the very beginning, some reasons for initiating a publication for women as a magazine that would contest dominance of the foreign magazines, primarily the German and Italian-language magazines that were being published from foreign capital, emerged primarily from Croatian historical experiences and would resonate with Croatian women only. Diverse

⁵⁶⁴ Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts*, 250.

historical experiences and traditions of ethnic groups in the Yugoslav state that had been formed after World War I and the immediate formation of the political parties that were based on purely ethno-nationalistic sentiments prevented the maturation of the idea of the Yugoslav nation. Maybe because of this lack of a strong sense of Yugoslav nationhood, the idea of Yugoslav women's role as the mothers of the new nation was absent from the discourses in *Ženski list*. In countries such as Czechoslovakia and Poland during the same period, these ideas were prominent discourses of the official and feminist ideologies, and the public discussion of the roles of women in the nation-building that had resulted in the early enfranchisement of the Czechoslovak and Polish women. Yugoslav women, although organized in women's organizations during the interwar era, did make attempts to argue for voting rights of women, but these arguments were never based on the motherhood of the nation. This narrative became dominant only when the political system slowly had begun to change and to migrate to the right. After this change, *Ženski list* experienced profound and complete change. The first change was the name itself. The second change was the replacement of the people who owned the magazine and of the change of people who edited and ran the magazine for fourteen years. Finally the content, itself, changed.

The story of *Ženski list* is both the story of hope and a cautionary tale. It is a story of hope because it shows that marginalized groups, such as women, can use media to express different views on what they view as capitalist modes of production and consumption. Women expressed their views on the modes of production that could be understood as the non-capitalist modes of production. It is also story of hope because media had opened up a space for the emerging new discourses of women that were, up

until then, never expressed in that part of the world in such a public manner. Women who produced the magazine in collaboration with the readers allowed for a different imagining, one conceptualized by marginalized groups such as women. It is a story of hope because it shows that particular historical moments give rise to events, such as the publication of *Ženski list*, that can potentially transform the way in which we understand the society and the everyday. Finally, it is a cautionary tale because it reminds us that power is not only individual, but also collective. The story of *Ženski list* cautions us to think about the power of political and economic structures. These structures are in a constant battle to win over, or to co-opt, the transformative powers of those in the margins. Political ideologies translated into the power of the collective can hinder, or even stop, the transformative process that is initiated by those standing on the margins of the society. Yet, the story of *Ženski list* stands as the witness of the discourses of the everyday. This story can give us hope that history, media, and people hold inordinate power to produce events, images, and words through which our society can be imagined differently.

APPENDIX A

REFLECTIONS ON THE LONGEST TOW WEEKS EXPERIENCED BY AN
APPRENTICE RESEARCHER AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER OR THE
HISTORIAN S CHANT: “PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE GOD, LET ME HAVE
WHAT I WANT”

Two weeks into my research, with over one hundred boxes opened, with several hundred dirty surgical gloves wasted, and still nothing. Not one single document to support that the magazine I was writing about, *Ženski list*, had ever existed. I was sweating. Outside was an unusually hot May.

It was unbearably hot on board the train. Each morning, I would get up at the crack of dawn, and my mother would make coffee. We would drink it in silence. I was mute. I would leave to catch the morning train that would take me in a 35-minute ride straight to the Main Station of Croatia’s Capital, Zagreb. It was the same then as it had been at the beginning of the Nineteen Century and the same as it had been after World War I, as many pictures show. The information age didn’t live there yet. In all probability, it was the same as the day when Marija Juri Zagorka had come from Hungary after having left her husband in hope of a new life. And perhaps the same as the day that she had planned a suicide, but instead had decided to live. Infuriated by the way that Hungarian railroad workers were treating the peasants right there on that platform, she composed her first journalistic piece.

After the train, there would be a streetcar. Electric. Some were a bit more modern, and some were quite modern. I would take number 13 usually. That day I took number 6. I got out at the Jelačić plac (Jelačić Market) where everyone seemed to be going, passing through, day or night. It is the heart of the city. This square has been a witness to historical turbulences and changes. It is here that the political and historical changes in Croatian history happened and now are engraved into the collective memory of its people. This is the place of celebrations and protests. Before World War II, the square was called Jelačić plac, where markets for all sorts of goods thrived that surrounded the statue of the Croatian Ban Jelačić, who had fought against Hungarian oppressors. Tito's communist government dismantled that monument and renamed the square Trg Republike (Republic's Square). After Croatia's independence in 1991, the new Tudjman's government re-assembled the monument, placed it back on its old place and changed the name into Trg Bana Josipa Jelačića (The Square of Ban Josip Jelačić). My grandmother never stopped calling it Jelačić plac. She didn't believe in dismantling and re-assembling histories.

For someone who had a lot to say about dismantling and assembling politics and history and the chaos that they produce, I have embarked on a rather structured type of research, or at least I had thought of historical research as something that needed to be structured. I had everything planned by the date and the hour, together with my expected findings by the date and the hour. However, things developed in quite an unexpected way. One might say in a rather surreal way. I found myself in the Archives of the Upper

City in Zagreb. I was torn between completely giving up, or just giving up. Two archivists were puzzled by my rambling: Could you please help me? Yes, thank you. How do I find a publisher of a magazine that had been published in interwar Croatia? It was a women's magazine. A really nice one and important too. I guess what I want to find out is where did the publishers register? It doesn't appear that they registered with the Commerce Court. This is strange, isn't it? I always thought that this is where newspaper publishers registered. Can I take this water with me? Oh, I guess not.

One archivist (I later called him "my archivist") interrupted this stream of consciousness by saying: "Ma'am, here are the inventory books (he pointed at the bookshelf filled with books that reached across the wall at least 2x2 meters); you can look if you can find something." I looked at one or two dozen books and found numbers, just a bunch of numbers, no descriptions of the content, or very little, just a few sentences such as (1912-1918 companies registered in Zagreb). I sat down with the film and began rolling, beginning with 1920 and ending in 1926. I knew that the magazine was first published in 1925 and that the publisher listed was *Konzorcij za izdavanje tiskopisa*. As I found out days later, it was a generic term that had been used to conceal the real publisher. It was beginning to look like a mystery novel. Nancy Drew's adventures seemed much more fun. I had always dreamed of having Nancy Drew adventures. But this was too much adventure for me. I started to hate. I hated history. I hated historians. And archivists in particular. Everything I had learned about the historical methodology seemed to help very little. I'd learned how to recognize sources, how to classify them, and how to use them. But never did it occur to me that sources could be hidden,

misclassified, unsorted laying somewhere under the thick archival dust, hard to detect. Nobody had ever told me what to do in case that evidence is hidden from common sense. Ethnography of archives had taught me to question. So that was my next new thing. “All right,” I said, “I will question every single step that I have taken, I will question to exhaustion why I was putting myself through this, while I could be at the beach with my sister right now taking the joys of life with the rays of the sun.”

That night was the first night that left me sleepless. This was the beginning of many sleepless nights yet to come. First, I decided that I couldn't give up. It was just not me. I couldn't disappoint Zagorka, she didn't give up. She had thought of suicide, and then she became a journalist. I couldn't disappoint my mother either, nor my academic advisor, my teachers beginning with kindergarten, my committee members, my friends, and their cats and dogs, fish and frogs. It would be unthinkable to fail all of them. And especially God. I couldn't fail God. So I prayed. I had never prayed for success in historical and archival research. This was a completely new demand on my religiosity. I wanted to say only this: “God, I really want some evidence for my research, but I can't ask that from you since you are too busy...,” but then I thought that I should ask for some evidence anyway because it was a matter of life and death, and I recalled a song from the Smiths, and I chanted, “Please, please, please, let me get what I want ... haven't had a dream in a long time ... so for once in my life let me get what I want...” And I closed my eyes for a few minutes before I could feel again the first morning train shaking my bed while running through the station.

The next morning I was back in the archives. I had decided to find a few historical books and to see if any of them mentioned the registration of newspapers and magazines. And there it was. A small footnote reading *newspapers were registered with the Attorney General*. Eureka! Later, I walked across town to the National and University Library to read more of the content in *Ženski list*, and there I found the story about the death of the owner and publisher of *Ženski list*, and about his company, and about his generosity, philanthropy.... And there it was, my evidence. It was there. I had cracked the mystery open. I rushed back to the Upper City. I told “my archivist,” who had absolutely no facial expressions during the whole summer that I had been there: “I found it. I found it. I found it. Isn’t this exciting? I want to look at the film again.” He said: “Yes, very exciting. Come back in four days. Come back on Tuesday. Monday is a holiday.” And I said: “But what about tomorrow. Tomorrow is Friday. You are open on Fridays, right?” And he said: “Technically, yes. Friday is technically a working day, but, since Monday is a holiday, we are closed on Friday as well.” “What,” I screamed. And I said quietly to myself: “This is just typical Balkan sh...t.” And I told him: “I really don’t understand. This is important. I am writing a history of something that has never been written. Can’t you understand? I can’t sleep. I have to have it now! This is outrageous. This could never happen in America.” And he said to me: “Ma’am, this is not America. This is Croatia. You are in Croatia, and we are here in the Balkans where we’ve always been. If you don’t like it, go back to America, and do research there. We are open on Tuesday. Have a good long weekend.”

I learned something about long weekends in Croatia that turned, in some chaotic sense, into the most important variable that would determine my research schedule. This might be a new thing for an apprentice researcher such as me. But, in a general and universal sense, the long weekend concept is not a new thing for an ordinary Croatian citizen. One might say it is a tradition. In an occasion in which a holiday falls either on a Friday or on a Monday, Croatians get all warmed up for the beginning of what they call “a prolonged weekend.” So, if a holiday is on Friday, the week is being wrapped up after lunch on Wednesday. You can’t order films, boxes, or order more material for the next week. You can sit and read inventory books that make little sense anyway. If the holiday falls on Monday, things are being wrapped up on Thursday after lunch. You can’t order films or boxes, although more generous archivists will let you order some for the next week after carefully filling in dozens of sheets of paper, usually just for one item at a time. Here is something that ethnographers of archives should consider when writing about the power of the archives. “A prolonged weekend concept” should sit right there with the idea about who has the power to choose what is preserved and what is not. It should sit right there with other Foucauldian truths on power relations. It should be there along with the idea about who has the power to write inventory books and mess them up so badly.

I came back on Tuesday just after lunch. I was late. My train was late. Again. On average, Croatian trains are late two hours a day. My frozen-faced archivist looked rather happy and rather tanned. “Hello,” I said. And, in a split second just before I was about to

say, “I would like to see my films...,” my archivist, whose teeth finally shone in contrast with his skin, said: “Oh, it is you. An American researcher. Ha. We can’t give you the films. You forgot to put in the numbers. Numbers from the inventory books. We can’t do anything without the numbers.” I was flabbergasted: “What? I am not American, I am Croatian...and what? What numbers? I never used to put numbers.” My archivist: “It is a new rule.” Me: “But how can it be? A new rule. When did that happen? The archive was closed for the prolonged weekend.” My archivist: “Just now, this morning. It happened just before you came. We like to be fast and efficient. Come back tomorrow.”

I came back on Wednesday. I looked at my films, and I found the company registered in 1918. I was out of my mind with happiness. Wednesday seemed to be a good day for my archivist as well, who had decided to let me fill out my regular dozen forms, although it was 5 minutes after the required time to fill them out and send them to the basement where my boxes were waiting for me. It is strange how, in a system that is guided by the “prolonged weekend concept,” and in which whole days seem to matter little, my archivist seemed to be keeping minutes for us researchers diligently, and accurately. You could not get away with anything. It was a labor camp system at best.

That Wednesday was the first day of the end of the first and the longest two weeks that I had ever spent in the archives. I had hated it passionately throughout. I had hated it passionately for two weeks straight. I hated my country. I hated the Balkans. I hated doing research in the Balkans. I thought that every stereotype of a dirty, ugly, smelly, disorganized, backward Balkans was true to the core. Beginning with the trains in

the morning. With tired workers, smelly seats, windows that can't open when it's hot, and can't close when it's cold. With heat running in summer and cold air blowing from the vents in winter. With dirty curtains placed at their production date (1937) still resisting the wind, and hitting the face of their 1 billionth passenger. I was at best annoyed with my own culture. I was changed. Yet, the stubbornness, persistence, the somewhat letting go of the structure, taking steps back (looking backward), even my own sweat, my dirty city feet gave me the sense of life that I had needed to stay with my research. I was a full-blooded Balkan myself. I had turned into the Balkan worker who rides trains every morning. I was a psychotic conductor making sure that every ticket was punched and that every bum was kicked out of the train. I was my stubborn grandmother, who had never let go of calling Trg Bana Jela i a, Jela i plac. I had let go from feeling organized and powerful, and into letting myself back into the culture from which I had come.

I still ride trains when I go home. I am grateful now for belonging to this chaotic train-riding culture of the Balkans. In summer 2007, I had committed my own *Murder on the Orient Express* and had decided to inhale my belonging to the culture that had pulled me back and that had immersed me in it. It had opened up my eyes about the process of research. No research can happen by forcing and imposing an outside structure. The research strategy isn't really a strategy. It develops from listening to the heart of the culture in which the research happens. I had followed that while writing my dissertation as well. I had let my evidence guide my narrative structure. Although there were many ways to tell this story, I have felt that the one closest to the events and the people about whom I have retold the story is based on the available evidence. No story is therefore

complete. I have not found everything that I had expected to find. But I did find out that the beauty of historical research lies exactly within this inconclusiveness.

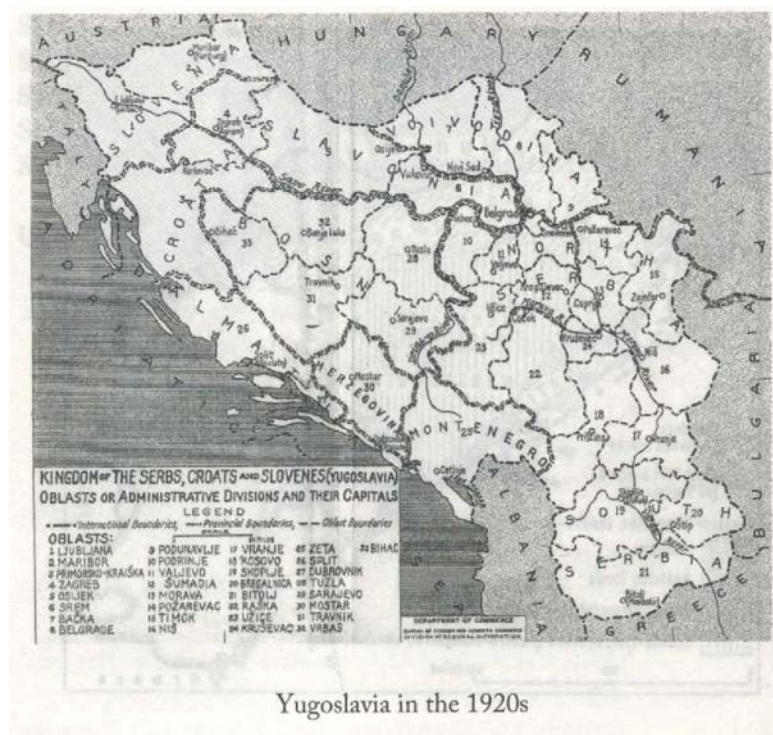
I will continue riding trains and going to the archives. I will probably also hate doing both sometimes. But, I am sure I will never forget the two-week lesson that I had learned in summer 2007. Who knows, I might even start liking the curtain.

APPENDIX B

MAPS

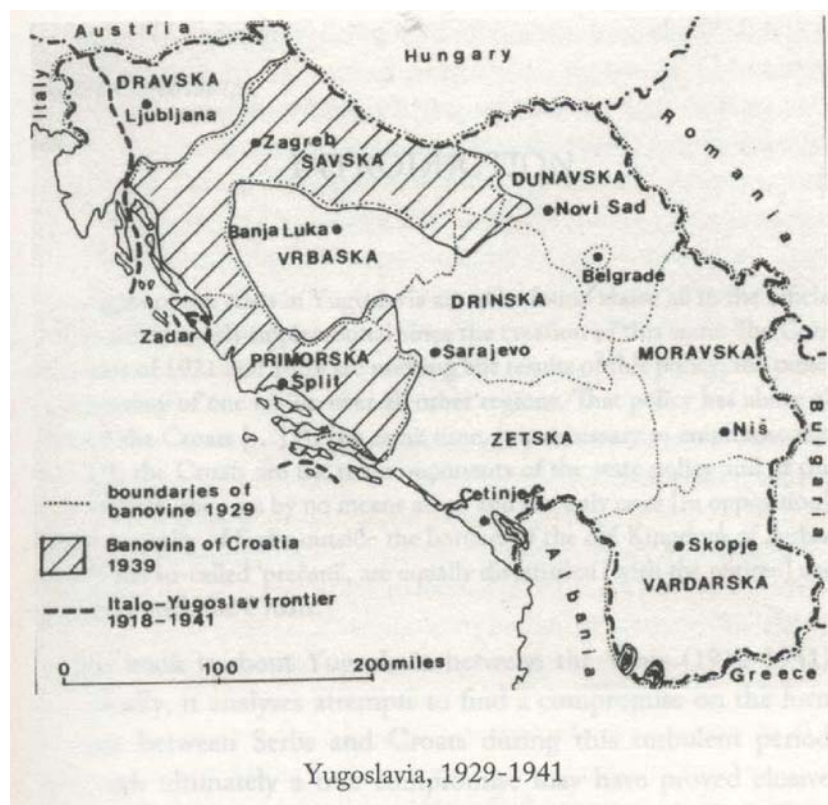


MAP B1. The Yugoslav lands on the eve of the First World War.
 Source: Dejan Djokic, *Evasive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*.



MAP B2. Yugoslavia in the 1920s.

Source: Dejan Djokic, *Evasive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*.



MAP B3. Yugoslavia, 1929-1941.

Source: Dejan Djokic, *Eusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*.

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