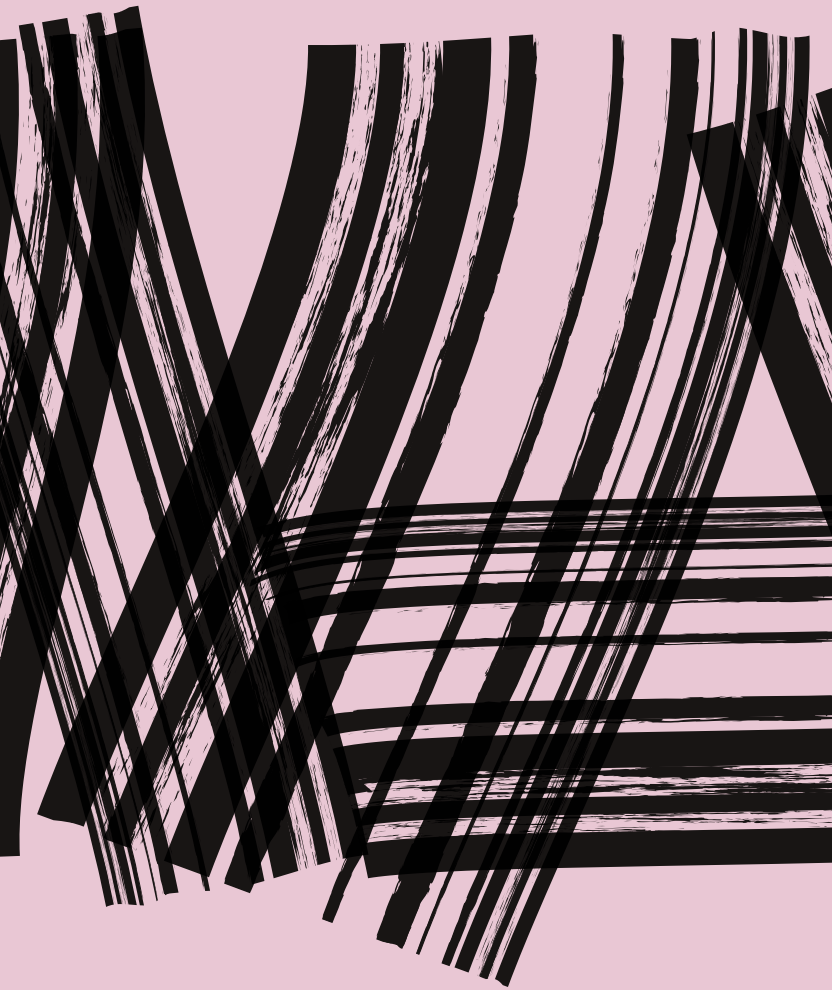
# Notes on Post-Yugoslav Women's Activism and Feminist Politics

VJOLLCA KRASNIQI AND JELENA PETROVIĆ



# Notes on Post-Yugoslav Women's Activism and Feminist Politics

*By Vjollca Krasniqi and Jelena Petrović*

Fondacija
Jelena Šantić

# *Feminine in post-time and post-space*

Dubravka Stojanović

Feminine is political. This could be a paraphrase of a paraphrase of the well-known 1968 slogan[1] at the beginning of Jelena Petrović and Vjollca Krasniqi introductory study to the book Notes on (Post-) Yugoslav Women's Activism and Feminist Politics. At the same time, it means that women's issues have always been emphatically political, but also that all other political issues have always referred to the issue of women's status. Both of them, political as well as feminine, we see and understand better when they are intertwined, when we regard them as a symbiosis.

Feminine has paralleled the political. Ever since the women's issues were first raised in the 19th century, they have always been related to other, close, 'brother', 'sister' issues. Initially, they were logically associated with the socialist idea, because it was believed that class liberation would inevitably bring freedom to women. Something similar was behind the linking to the 19th century idea

[1] 'Personal is political', and 'Political is personal'.

of nationalism – the conviction that free nation could also bring freedom to women. Moreover, the movement of decolonisation had a forceful women's imprint, motivated by the belief that women would be free with liberation from the colonial power. Liberalism too, focused on the free individual, promised in its program a free female individual. Democracy, introducing the principle of general and thus women's suffrage, seemed like a good ally. The political bonds between these ideologies and the women's movement were clear, but women's issues were always treated as an appendage, as something that could only later emerge from other, older, more important, prioritised forms of freedom. Only feminism of the 1960s started to invert such state of affairs and to clearly promote that without a free woman there could be no free society, class, or nation. And no free men either.

For the theme of this book, it is also particularly important that the feminine has always been pacifist as well. Naturally, this does not mean that all women have been pacifists, but rath-

er that all pacifist movements have been feminist, starting from the first peace institutions of the 1880s, from which, upon the initiative of the Austrian pacifist Bertha von Suttner, the Nobel Peace Prize was established in 1901. Immediately after the beginning of the First World War, the first women's anti-war organisations were created. In 1915, female pacifists from 12 countries congregated in The Hague and founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. All this should be understood as being a part of the first anti-war movements in general, since until this first global conflict, the war was regarded as the ultimate challenge, where the best would prevail in knightly competitions. The abyss in which the civilisation fell, sinking into the muddy trenches of the Western and other fronts, immediately drove women to say that they would no longer consent to it.

The above would constitute a very concise historical context needed in order to understand what female activists say to us in the interviews this book is based on. In these interviews,

eight women spoke about their political, anti-war and artistic activism they used in opposing the 1990s wars led by their national leaders in the former Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia and Kosovo. For that reason, the fundamental questions are how to understand Yugoslav anti-war feminism and where to locate it in the political sense.

It is certain that, from its very beginnings in the 1970s, feminism in the SFRY was always dissident, for it was critical of the way Marxism remained blind to the exploitation of women, as a special form of subjugation. However, Yugoslav feminism also manifested some important differences when compared to the feminisms that were emerging in other parts of the world in the late 1960s. Unlike feminism in the East, which was not critical of the West and capitalism, Yugoslav feminism was. Additionally, Yugoslav feminism was critical of the most of the domestic dissidents, who criticised communism mainly from the Right, as traditionalists, nationalists and patriarchalists, thus being even more adverse to wom-

en's issues than the socialist authorities. Precisely because of everything that women gained in Yugoslav socialism, they, unlike those in the West and those in the East, were not fully engaged in infighting with the state, aware that the alternative would imply even more constraints to their freedoms. That was the reason that Yugoslav feminists stepped on their own path, disassociating their ideas and movements from any political mainstream, governmental or oppositional, thus becoming a precedent in the general history of women's movements which most often sought broader protection of other close political ideas. Yugoslav feminists spoke what no one else would dare, as Svetlana Slapšak testifies in the research interview.

Yugoslav feminists embarked on a very lonely journey, particularly at the beginning of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Completely in compliance with their pacifist forerunners, they unequivocally stood up against the war, creating the first anti-war actions, organisations, artistic and political movements. This research tes-

tifies to these stories. And all these stories have a firm basis. This basis is made up of shared values that gave them the strength and courage to oppose, to seek peace in situations in which unleashed military, police and paramilitary units destroyed, burned, killed, and raped on a large scale. It was exactly in that situation, in which rebellion was life-threatening and rape was one of the favoured war activities, that, in unison, Yugoslav women shouted: “Enough”!

Aside from all historical and political reasons, they were impelled to do so by something that, at first glance, looked very simple. As Svetlana Slapšak testifies in this research, every day they had to think about other women, 24 hours a day. Their care for women in Vukovar, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, Prijedor, Mostar, Pristina, Belgrade... was the first impulse that set them off. No matter how minimalistic it may sound, it is exactly the care for the ‘other’, for the female other, which destructs the essence of nationalism in its foundations, the nationalism that cares only about itself, and sees dan-

ger and enemies in others. And taking care, helping, looking after someone, being compassionate - all this breaks the basic logic of war, since war is founded on the idea that the enemy cannot be human, a man. Let alone - a woman.

The anti-war feminist movement remained Yugoslav movement, as Vjollca and Jelena propose in the introduction, exactly because, as Jelena Višnjić says in the interview, it essentially meant crossing the borders, both personal and political. In the war of all against all, Yugoslav feminists turned to 'their own'. But not to their own nation that asserted its victimhood while pointing their finger at other nation's crimes, but on the contrary: feminists pointed their finger at the crimes of 'their' side, the responsibility of 'their own', as Lepa Mlađenović testifies from her anti-war experience and the experience of Women in Black. This directly opposes to the logic of warriors and their supporters. To critically see oneself and care for others contravenes the logic on which crime is founded.

Finally, from the study by Jelena and Vjollca, and from all the interviews, the question arises as to where anti-war feminism is today? Where is the feminine situated in this post-space and post-time that we live in? The answer to this question depends on how we perceive the situation in the countries today? As the study defines, we live in the state of a global permanent war, in a situation where a difference no longer exists between war and peace, which is the basic framework within which the authors of the introductory study think, or, perhaps, this situation is best defined by Svetlana Slapšak in her interview - as a state of emerging fascism.

In such a situation, the task of feminism is to fight for the emancipation by constantly recalling the crimes committed as 'ground zero' as 'the question of all questions', since without answering this question, it is impossible to move on. Feminism has a task of constantly re-examining the responsibility and seeking activist and artistic responses that can prevent new evils, as Zana Hoxha

Krasniqi, Blerta Zeqiri and Aleksandra Sekulić advocated in their interviews. A question is raised in both the study and the interviews, and especially by Olga Dimitrijević, whether being as it is, today's feminism is necessarily and exclusively situated on the Left and whether it is, thus, again connected to a broader movement within which it should fight for social changes? Or maybe it is already strong enough to start this fight on its own, relying on its war experience in which it resisted calls of ethno-nationalism and remained Yugoslav, activist and anti-war? Perhaps now, in the state of neither war nor peace, beyond space and time, once again without allies, it could wage its battle for a society of equality, justice and humanity, as it is proposed in the study's final sentence? Perhaps now, having been a movement that used to follow the leadership of larger movements, it has the strength to become the leader itself.

# Notes on Post-Yugoslav Women's Activism and Feminist Politics

*By Vjollca Krasniqi and Jelena Petrović*

## *Introduction: Political Is Personal*

Reversing the feminist slogan from the late 1960s *Personal is Political* into *Political is Personal*, the (post)Yugoslav women's activism from the 1990s onwards shows how political friendships and feminist alliances proliferated through everyday personal experiences, constituting strategies of resistance to confront larger social and political structures of war, ethno-nationalism and transition. Research on the question that relates to the heritage of women's activism and today's women's political practices reveal various threads of social imagination leading to a politically emancipated future, but also to difficult subject positions in need of re-articulation.

When we talk about the post-Yugoslav space and societies, we enter the zone of anxiety induced by geopolitics and a constant struggle between the nationalist myths and nostalgic past, impossible history and crises, and finally, permanent hope and dystopi-

an future. Today, post-Yugoslav space does not only represent a geographical, but also a political space, a social signifier of possible shifts towards consensual perceptions of plural meanings of the antagonized politics of belonging instrumental in building a common historical knowledge. Inability to produce this knowledge on common grounds is a symptom of the war still being fought, yet by different means, be they administrative, nationalist, economic, or political. The initial question in this common process of producing historical knowledge about Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav space is whether we speak about a single war which indicated the end of the utopian era of socialism and erosion of the social state, or what we have here is a succession of nationalistic wars which, by means of post-WW2 nationalist dissident resistance and the 1990s transition, established the hegemonic system that exterminated people based on their nationality, religion, or other minority status, using the dominance in strength, weapons, population, and greed when it came to the post-socialist privatization with

its amassment of wealth through corrupt practices.

Places of tribulation, destruction, terror, war trauma and the 1990s genocide, are the locations where socialist Yugoslavia lost its political articulation of the shared past, as well as its social imagination of the common future. Politics of memory and discourses of reconciliation, which have been generated since the 1990s, have neutralized the need for political subjectivisation and common historicizing of the war(s). This was in fact a war lost, due to the inability to overpower the nationalist signifiers of the oncoming so-called democratization of the society through neoliberal demands of the global, post-socialist, atomizing capitalism in which all newly established post-Yugoslav states merely became Balkanized periphery of Europe; each founded their very own endless war. An impossibility to break through ossified patriarchal, ethno-nationalist and corrupt structures of everyday life shows that new post-Yugoslav states today share a neoliberal logic of permanent war.

Following the previous collaboration and common work on these two important research issues *Yugoslavia* and *feminism*, as authors of this study, we would like to address the subject of war and peace in the post-Yugoslav space from the feminist perspective that would bring into focus some important political thoughts and actions. Accordingly, this research starts from political and personal engagements within Yugoslavia as a geopolitical space of discomfort. Additionally, the study will be accompanied by interviews with women activists, scholars, cultural workers and producers that from different temporal (before and after the 1990s) and spatial (Kosovo and Serbia) perspectives reveal an on-going and common women's struggle against entrenched oppressive, hegemonic, and patriarchal state structures shaped by a locally-specific juncture of nationalism and neoliberalism. Through positions of their own, Olga Dimitrijević, Zana Hoxha-Krasniqi, Lepa Mlađenović, Igballe Rogova, Aleksandra Sekulić, Svetlana Slapšak, Jelena Višnjić, and Blerta Zeqiri speak about their present activities

and thoughts, about the history of the present, through past women's actions, shifts, errors and struggles, as well as about their feminist imagination of a common future beyond patriarchal, neoliberal and nationalist concepts of state and society.

## *(Im)Possible Pacifist Activist and Feminist Vocabulary*

Raising the question about political responsibility and social engagement within women's, feminist and anti-war movements, there is always a struggle for notions, meanings, and ideologies. Use of language and appropriation of pacifist, activist, and feminist terms in public, political, and non-governmental organizations' (NGO) discourses very often relativize the sense of peace, freedom, social and human rights, as well as justice. The past and current processes of war crimes' prosecutions, reconciliation and normalization within the post-Yugoslav space, triggered new diversifications of social and political problems. Consistently, the main question which oc-

cupied women's movements and feminist politics from the 1990s onwards was: How to build together an idea of peace and freedom with all this historical, political, social and economic burden of the war(s)? And further, how to deal with it today in the Age of Permanent War?[1]

Two referential cases which challenged the impossibility to deal with these questions in a singular way, beyond two-folded or many-folded truths about conflicts, war, transition, normalization and reconciliation process, will be taken as paradigmatic for political thinking and activism within this exhausted geography of the post-Yugoslav space. The first case refers to the main question of the conference entitled, *REDacting: TransYuqoslav Feminisms: Women's Heritaqe Revisited* (October 2011, Zagreb) that derived from the panel: *What is Left of the Femi-*

[1] After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration declared a worldwide war on terror(ism) (under parole: *either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists*) involving new security discourses and legislation. The war on terror, or the permanent war becomes a new ideology of fear and repression, undermining peace and freedom.

*nist Left?* with a focus on political activism, red feminism, and socially engaged art in post-Yugoslav and other post-socialist European states. The conference brought together critical and political voices of prominent feminist theorists, activists and artists who discussed the past and the present searching for a possible common future in which the unified women's movement would represent a base for the emancipatory politics of equality and justice for all.

The second one refers to the art-theory platform of collaborative translation project: *What Does War Stand for Today?* (2010-2011) initiated by Grupa Spomenik (The Monument Group) and co-created different translation groups from the post-Yugoslav space and beyond.[2] This translation pro-

[2] This platform was engaged in translation of the text by Sylvain Lazaurs "L'importance des mots: la guerre et la paix," with a group of artists, scholars, and students. The participants engaged in the translation have raised questions regarding contemporary conceptions of the meaning of war. In the context of the current global and permanent war, they have also tackled and discussed the web of basic terms which contribute to understanding of the history of wars in Yugoslavia.

ject was performed and exposed for the first time during the NGBK's exhibition *Spaceship Yugoslavia* (September 2011, Berlin). Dealing with the post-Yugoslav and other experiences of the war today, notions such as: nation, security, violence, war and peace interventions were discursively investigated in various forms (book, workshop, talks).

Thus, shifting between individual work and collective practices, these two paradigmatic cases reveal that many activists' perspectives are based on de-colonial, feminist and materialist emancipatory knowledge, especially this one which introduces the politics of affects into the sphere of political thinking and social life, through performative voices, visual inscriptions, and public staging.

## *What is left of the feminist left?*

During the panel discussion at the above-mentioned conference: *What is left of the feminist left?* Many questions were raised concerning leftist

feminism, feminist left and the intersections between feminist movements and perspectives in the post-Yugoslav space. The question of feminist politics, i.e. its continuities and discontinuities, appears as the basic social impetus, since the primary question of political and economic, as well as of a more broadly defined social emancipation, is more actual than it was before. Therefore, the panel addressed the question: what is left of the feminist left today to deconstruct the historical, theoretical, and ideological underpinning of the left and feminism, since nothing much connects these notions in the today's social reality.

For this reason, the notion of "feminist left" has for quite some time been arbitrarily ab/used in constructing what is supposed to already signify its actuality. The fact is that this notion speaks neither about the new social-political ideas nor the fiery enthusiasm of the self-organised women workers' movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, this notion refers to a political movement which

has its own history and real-politics behind, and different leftist currents that are gradually establishing themselves through contemporary economy, politics or academia, as well through the efforts made by supportive foundations, with their countless overlaps and fallacies. Occupying feminist positions within the emerging left and mobilization of women within it do not necessarily imply their emancipation, not in socio-economic, or any other sense, the fact which becomes glaringly obvious when studying the history of the left and leftist social transformations and achievements, especially if we bear in mind that in socialism, the symbolic role of *pater* was taken over by the party. Perpetuation of patriarchy in socialism was evident upon the introduction of women's labour force in the labour market, which did not involve revolutionary transformation of domestic labour and patriarchal family patterns, resulting in women being doubly burdened – both with their professional tasks and their domestic chores, which subsequently influenced their active participation in political life. Today's position of feminism on

the left side of the political spectrum cannot therefore be the same as it was at the point of its historical negation in favour of an alleged leftist universalism, which failed in its primary mission: to ensure the equality of men and women within a classless society. Therefore, many queries regarding the meaning of the notion "feminist left" are posed today – above all in the post-Yugoslav context of the feminist heritage and (dis)continuity – resulting in the political demands for these movements' (re)articulated positions towards the present socio-political economy of everyday life.

Reflecting on this, it is important to emphasise that terms *Yugoslav* and *post-Yugoslav* in the context of the perpetually marginalised position of feminist schools and attempts at critical intervention were at no point homogenous. Yugoslav feminisms as a historical fact and as a political position – as shaped by the transitional triangle nation-class-gender during the 1980s and developed during the war in the 1990s – have to be viewed both as a diachronic/historical development and

synchronic/political action of common feminist practices within the current process of “leftist” situating.

For post-Yugoslav feminism, the question of responsibility involved defining one’s position concerning the Yugoslav war(s) in the 1990s. Feminist movement of the time remained “Yugoslav” in spite of the crucial anti-event which, shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, abolished Yugoslavia as a revolutionary political subject in favour of ethno-nationalist hegemony. At the same time, it can be said that Yugoslav feminism (as a singular movement) regrouped at this point into post-Yugoslav feminisms (as plural structures), proceeding predominantly in two directions, the academic and the activist and later also engaging in the fields of the cultural, juridical and administrative, as well as in other specific fields of civil society, acting predominantly as a corrective intervention into the politics of newly formed gender, national and class identities, by adopting neoliberal strategies of social pacification.

Although criticism of post-Yugoslav feminist liberal engagements would be justified at this point, it is important to previously establish when these feminist practices actually emerged, and ask: can the left indeed attempt a political intervention in the feminist field and induce feminism to assume the responsibility for the political and material reality? Keeping in mind that the left underwent a transformation and practically disappeared from the political stage during the excessively turbulent and dramatic processes of privatisation of social ownership, only to return there once the "transformation into democratic capitalist society" had suffered an economic collapse, another question that has arisen is whether feminism should re-establish itself on and within the left, or would it suffice to reassess its scope of action within the sustained practices of political intervention and social emancipation?

In other words, should feminism today be rearticulated – while simultaneously assessing its own practice with respect to the society and its so-

cio-economic turmoil – by posing relevant demands and deploying new modes of action together with the so-called new left which has re-established itself in the post-Yugoslav space as the new social movements. If we consider the retrospective criticism of post-Yugoslav feminism by today's leftist perspective, and venture into its comprehensive analysis, particularly taking into account the objection that feminism "came short" in the years of social transition, we must first face the illusion of the continuity of the left in undertaking collective action to preserve the social and the common in the political, as well as in the economic sense, foremost in the post-Yugoslav context.

In order to openly define the relation between feminism and the left, primarily in the emancipatory process of the formation of a political subject, and of an understanding of recent political history, one should point to the fact that neither feminism nor the left evinced any direct response to the changes in socio-economic system through the process of the wartime pri-

vatisation of social ownership during the 1990s. The crucial difference was that feminism remained persistent in its pacifist standpoint concerning the war, acknowledging the responsibility for what was happening and directly addressing the production of "human waste"[3] that served as the foundation for the transitional society. As Jasmina Husanović has argued, "recycling bodies, the erasure of bare/precarious lives, human trafficking, these

[3] There are at least three theoretical cross-referential understandings of the meaning of "human waste" that relate to symbolic, bio-political, and political-economic. The first two approaches re/produce social order that is achieved through inscription of pollution, danger, redundancy, contamination into the Other by violent means of so-called social purification and protection (intervention). Symbolic approaches to humans-as-waste mostly engage the work of Mary Douglas (1966) and Julia Kristeva (1982), relating to the meaning of abject and abjection as a process of being expelled, thrown down, debased, and humiliated. Biopolitical approaches are generally based on Michel Foucault's writings on biopolitics and state racism (2003); Giorgio Agamben's on homo sacer and "bare life" (1998); and Achille Mbembe's on necropolitics (2003). The difference is in the individual or collective constitution of humans-as-waste as a threat at the level of population. The Marxist critique is based on a third political-economic approach, which examines humans-as-waste as a byproduct of the capitalist mode of production. Marx argues that capitalism perpetually generates human accumulation in the form of a "surplus population" of workers (*Capital, Volume 1*), and "squanders human beings, living labor," resulting in a "waste of the workers' life and health" (*Capital, Volume 3*).

are some of the "difficult questions", the object/affect that overflows us once we unfold the stories and expose the political economies that surround us." (Husanović, 2011: 49). This was the very reason that the emergent answer to the war – its concentration camps, ethnic cleansing, terror, genocide – at its outset and throughout, also included feminist anticipation of the transitional privatisation of the society, the red thread of the present political subjectivation, but also the production of critical discourse concerning the current socio-economic system. The political mobilisation of the left is largely made up as a rupture moment of the new "post-Yugoslav" generations, for whom the war, as a point of political, as well as economic transformation, represents a blind spot. In the process of creating "new left perspectives", it is logical to maintain that only the practices of self-criticism and self-reflection on one's own blind spots can result in the creation of a politically engaged sociality. The politics of emancipation today can therefore be reflected on solely through the critical estab-

lishment of the relational notion of social transformation, one that would equate feminism and the left.

Notwithstanding the recent trend of criticising feminist practices and political actions on various levels, personal as well as political,[4] particularly in the context of the new left feminist dynamics, it is important to stress that a simplifying criticism of feminism in the 1990s is not an appropriate starting point for a politics of emancipation, although there are sufficient reasons for a thorough critique of and reflection on feminism during the war and post-war. Is such an emancipatory act truly necessary for establishing leftist feminism to-

[4] The reactions to the conference *REDacting TransYugoslav Feminisms: Women's Heritage Revisited* can also serve as an example of this point. The attention of the media was primarily focused on the speculative question of who has the right to speak in the name of the feminist left today, which mostly provided a series of personal positions, merits, and conflicts, combined with a monumentalization of Yugoslav feminism through personal biographies. This shift of focus somewhat thwarted the event, the original intention of which was to ensure the space for the criticism of and (auto)reflection on Yugoslav feminisms, for a productive discussion of left feminist perspectives and their contemporary demands by connecting various generations of feminists, theory and practice, art and activism.

day if we know that it was precisely the criticised feminist practices of the 1990s and early 2000s that gave rise to numerous feminists ready to respond from a leftist standpoint to the current socio-economic situation, in which women are often the most endangered party? And what would political significance of such an act be?

Feminism shaped by the civil society, which recognised gender as the basic category of social relations formed during the period of war and transition, was soon after the 1990s depoliticised. As Nira Yuval-Davis pointed out nation, class and gender become the most important transitional reversals[5] which globally forced the new age of identity. With regard to the notion of nation, constructed through an ethnic-nationalist discourse and its flagitious politics, feminism certainly succeeded in opening up space for its emancipatory politics in relation to the dominant nationalist discourses of the 1990s, opposing it by all available means. However, the question of

[5] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, London: Sage, 1997.

class diversification which accompanied post-socialist transition and the post-war period was replaced by the question of building a civil society, primarily through the demand for gender politics within the paradigm of gender mainstreaming.

Operating through non-governmental organisations as well as institutional channels of national offices and agencies for gender equality, feminist politics was in part transformed into the politics of gender mainstreaming. At the same time, attempts at intervention into the production of knowledge, as well as critical questioning of theory and practice, enabled the emergence of the third wave of feminism, which established itself primarily through the activities of feminist schools and centres for women's studies, but also became visible in the public sphere through cultural production, art, and, to some extent, the media. Various spheres of feminist intervention and, above all, the proliferation of different feminist organizations and groups, as well as work on research projects, resulted in the

atomisation of the women's movement in the 1990s, and in a division into activist, academic, cultural and other practices which are nowadays being further differentiated, leaving very little common ground for joint action.

The creation of various post-Yugoslav feminisms has affected social relations in diverse ways, but their different policies were not powerful enough to impose themselves as the basic or dominant force of political and social life. On the other hand, their political demands were not sufficiently consolidated to create a unified women's movement, capable of bridging the artificial gap between activism and academia, theory and practice, equality and difference. It is this apparent lack that leads us today towards facing new turning points and voicing new feminist demands, which would acknowledge the necessity to create a unified feminist movement, while at the same time finding a way out of the vicious circle of criticising and rediscovering feminism in relation to the momentary flexibility of patriarchal relations and values.

Dealing with the (im)possibility to initiate a unique post-Yugoslav women's movement, an attempt is made to establish a continuity of critical reflections on the recent past, as well as an (auto)reflection on the necessity of ascertaining diachronic and synchronic connections between all women's and feminist movements and the creation of an autonomous space. This space is intended to be a temporary women's zone, where the political emancipation and social reproduction of everyday life can be discussed from the point of view of leftist feminism, capable of undertaking a critical or affirmative analysis of schools, theories, and practices developed by various feminist movements (or groups, to put it more precisely), while at the same time avoiding to let the self-praise of one's own exclusiveness and "pioneer" work take the place of valuable heritage and experiences.

From this point of view, there is a need to return to feminism in its actuality and to an attempt to free ourselves from the traumas of various inter-feminist conflicts, above all,

the inter-generational one, which is always based on putting the past and present context on the same plane, and which appears to be paradigmatic in the history of the movement. In such a process, it is important to stop occupying the positions of the attacker and the victim because these positions are, after all, patriarchal ones. This, of course, leads us back to the political subjectivisation of feminism and the question of the politics of emancipation which needs to be built today. The starting point of feminism today must be a point of crossing between the present and the past, one that will generate emancipatory discourses and practices, but also one that will disable interruptions and the negation of continuity of the still unaccomplished social emancipation of women, as well as society on the whole. Concerning the feminist heritage and differences in the ways it is understood, it is necessary to reflect the history of these differences in order to reassess what we are actually still trying to define under the term feminist left, asking at the same time whether the left is the only

frame in which it is possible to conceive political subjectivisation and the future of the women's movements?

## *What Does War Stand for Today?*

The politics of memory, economy of war, and emancipatory knowledge about Yugoslavia have been dealt with by art and theory group Grupa Spomenik in different discursive, exhibitions, and performance practices, triggered by the impossibility to construct and name a common monument dedicated to the 1990s wars. Grupa Spomenik was founded in 2002 by artist Milica Tomić, and the group's full and guest members, gathered around forensic, research, discussion, and exhibition projects, have participated in its work, and so have the people who dealt with the war in any way, or merely survived it. The work on subjugated knowledge about Yugoslavia and the forensic project concerning the Srebrenica genocide and entitled *Mathemes of Re-Association*[6]

[6] *Mathemes of Re-Association* is a project by Grupa Spomenik/Monument Group where artists, theorists, and activists jointly discuss the ways in which the ide-

brought up the question of "What Does War Stand for Today?", which in turn resulted in developing the already mentioned art and translation project of the same name.

The project *What Does War Stand for Today?* was established as a platform which in 2010-2011 gathered translation groups of artists, theoreticians, activists, academicians, cultural workers, and other actors interested in participating in the work of Grupa Spomenik in different locations: Prishtinë, Ljubljana, Maastricht, Zagreb, Tuzla, Belgrade, Mostar, Berlin. The basis of this collective art-theory work was the translation of a text by Catherine Hass, *Qu'appell- t-on une querre? Enquete sur Ie nom de querre aujourd'hui* (*What is the Meaninq of War? A Survey on the Name of War Today?*, 2010), using the method of *teacher ignoramus*, i.e., the absence of any kind of authority in the production of knowledge and without prior knowledge

ology of reconciliation works through forensic science to depoliticize genocide, with the genocide in Srebrenica as the initial departure point.

of the source language.[7] Work on the translation produced a discussion about the 1990s wars, and subsequently on the permanent war. The contemporary conception of war and its current meaning referred to in the text by Catherine Hass have raised a series of questions and resulted in the establishment of a network of basic terms in understanding the history of the wars in Yugoslavia outside the existing narratives and mainstream politics.

This artistic, social, and theoretical project, based on participatory translation and collective thinking, was conceived as a locus of creating common, socially engaged, and politically subjectivising historical knowledge pertaining to the war. Through this project, Grupa Spomenik triggered political awareness of Yugoslavia within the context of war, crime, and genocide, indicating the possibility of thinking this social-political space which we call post-Yugoslav from a

[7] The art-project methodology is proposed by psychoanalyst Branimir Stojanović, a member of Grupa Spomenik, and based on the pedagogical revolution initiated by the Jacobin adept Jill Jacoto, which implies a radical absence of teacher in the educational process.

common perspective. Yet this proved to be challenging, leaving open the space for potentially shared understanding of the past and the present.

Looking more broadly, two significant historical events, namely, the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11, transformed the previously ideological East-West conflicts into a new one, structured on the political and libidinal economy of living and dying within the global neoliberal society and its war-state. Defined by force, violence, and fear, the war-state underlines that the major logic of dominance in the world today is the logic of war,[8] which abuses the meaning of freedom, democracy, and peace in order to protect the global system of neoliberal inequality on many levels: social, political, economic, military, and others.[9] Catherine Hass's research on the question: *What does war stand for today?* tes-

[8] Marina Gržinić, "From Biopolitics to Necropolitics and the Institution of Contemporary Art", *Pavilion, Journal for Politics and Culture*, No.14, 2010, 59.

[9] Jelena Petrović, "What Does Freedom Stand for Today?" In: *Border Thinking* (ed. Marina Gržinić), Berlin: Stenberg Press and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. 2018, 112.

tifies to this current state of war, its permanence and necessity, the purpose of which, as she emphasized, is not the achievement of peace,[10] because the differentiation between war and peace doesn't exist anymore. Accordingly, contemporary war is necessarily a permanent one, because there is no intrinsic political, subjective goal that would determine its end, and that is peace. Perpetual post-Yugoslav conflicts inherited from the 1990s wars fit into this meaning of war today.

After many feminist or political attempts to redefine the geopolitics as well as the history of post-Yugoslav space, there has remained an impossibility to define any geographic location outside the hegemonic distribution of power. Inhuman chains of migration, refugees and war violence, growing inequalities, global raise of the right-wing politics and fascism, along with catastrophic climate changes, became the global geopolitical frame of the post-Yugoslav space

[10] See Catherine Hass, "*Qu'appelle-t*-on une *guerre*? *Enquête* sur le *nom* de *querre aujourd'hui*," Ph.D. dissertation, U*niversité Paris 8*, Paris, 2001.

and contemporary neoliberal society in general. Using different means of diversification – the old ones such as colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal mechanisms of social and geographical (re)production and the new ones such as technological, scientific, and (techno)cultural methods of political and territorial identification it transpires that our global world has become a geopolitical space where the majority of people do not feel they belong. Freedom appears at this point as a fundamental and arbitrary notion of neoliberal society, a notion that justifies the state of war (consisting of all recent and actual political, economic, social crises) and through it develops further "liberal" interests and inequalities.

The actual means of democratic defense of humanity, such as military interventions, austerity measures, refugee policies, humanitarian aid, migration laws and human rights are discursively and ideologically based on the meaning of freedom. Those means (co) produce the neoliberal mechanisms of global governmentality, as well as the

permanent state of crisis, conflict, and terror. Such inverted horizons of freedom exclude any critical way of thinking, education, organization, resistance and living outside the neoliberal concept of legality. The false choice between legal and illegal means of social resistance and political struggle for freedom, opens up questions about the limits of political, theoretical, and artistic practices, as well as about responsibility and subjectivity of many feminist ideas and actions for transformative gender politics.

## *What Is the Meaning of Freedom?*

This is the question that Angela Davis, as well as many other pacifists and feminists, posed after so many years of fighting, thinking, and resisting the repressive mechanisms of the power structures in our contemporary world.[11] In the most idealistic vein, such freedom is a permanent struggle—

[11] *The Meaning of Freedom* is the title of Angela Davis's book, which consists of collections of public speeches, interviews and texts.

this refers to the term of permanent revolution, which is the basis of society emancipation and freedom gained through struggle/resistance/revolution—a radically different future, a fundamental social precondition for an emancipatory collective transformation beyond slavery, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, capitalism, fascism and so forth. But freedom has at the same time, through substantial historical events and material (post)ideological transformations of state, become the most expensive word of the globalized neoliberal society.[12] Today, the meaning of freedom is (ab)used as a fetishizing synonym for the law of those who have permanently established themselves within the neoliberal system of political and economic power. Envisioning revolutionary freedom through the larger collective claim for a new

[12] *Freedom: The Most Expensive Capitalist Word* is the title of the theater play based on the authors' research trip to the world's most isolated country—North Korea. The two authors, Maja Pelević and Olga Dimitrijević, question the idea of freedom in the era of ever-intensifying global surveillance and face the existing propaganda and dominant stereotypes of the North Korean totalitarian regime and Western neoliberal democracies. See http://festival.bitef.rs/event/freedom-expensive-capitalist-word/.

society (unity), requiring a radical emancipatory conception of complex community beyond the existing power structures of the neoliberal state and its regulative and oppressive apparatus, Davis reminds that freedom is a process of becoming. In other words, it is a process "of being able to see and understand difference within unity and resisting the tendency to reproduce the hierarchies embedded in the world we want to change."[13]

Merging all these questions together, the study will discuss post-Yugoslav women's and feminist actions and other significant individual practices which actualise, conceptualise, and imagine the politics of freedom beyond the existing neoliberal, patriarchal, neo-colonial mechanisms of today's state. The singular meaning of different activist, cultural, art and other perspectives about the 1990s war(s) is generated through some of the following examples of practicing pacifism and feminism from two post-Yugoslav states: Kosovo and Serbia.

[13] Robin D. G. Kelley, foreword to Angela Y. Davis, *Meaning of Freedom*, 14.

## *What does Women's Activism Mean? Between Collective Practices and Individual Work*

Feminist and women's engagements could be traced in numerous examples. This section presents six paradigmatic cases of socially engaged practices dealing with the topic of pacifism and anti-war politics at different levels of women's collective action and individual work of women activists and artists. The two projects selected here speak of the collective activism of women. These are the Balkan Women for Peace[14] and the Women's Court for the Former Yugoslavia projects.[15] To highlight the interplay between collective practices and individual work, the life story of Didara Djordjević, a woman leader during socialism in Kosovo and Yugoslavia, is presented to emphasize the temporality and continuity of women's engagement in the public sphere. Moreover, here we expand on women's activism by looking into a selected number of socially engaged art-

[14] http://www.transeuropeennes.org

[15] http://www.zenskisud.org/en/

based projects where women's activism and art meet. The main aim here is to discuss how women's activism shapes the narratives and practices of anti-war politics and is shaped in return.

## *Balkan Women for Peace: Women Activists Crossing Borders*

Positing that "theory and action are not mutually exclusive, but in constant interaction", the Balkan Women for Peace network grew out of the *Transeuropeanne* project that had been active from 1993-2005, as a response to social and political transformations after the end of the Cold War, the Gulf War, and the wars in the former Yugoslavia.[16] Balkan Women for Peace was a collective of women academics, activists for women's rights, NGO leaders and media from Albania and the former Yugoslavia. The first meeting of Balkan Women for Peace took place in December 1999, in Royaumont, France. This was the first meeting of

[16] See http://www.transeuropeennes.org

women after the end of the 1998-1999 Kosovo war. Situated within the larger frame of *Transeuropeanne* on cultural translation and critique of national identity-based exclusions and violence, the Royaumont meeting of Balkan Women for Peace addressed the issue of borders: physical, symbolic, psychological or any other kind which keeps communities apart. Thus, seeking to foster a culture of dialogue and critical thinking through gender and women's perspectives on peace and reconciliation, the Royaumont meeting served as a platform for women's collective organisation in the Balkans. The conference was entitled "Women Activists on Conflicts: a Democratic Perspective for the Balkans." The network was a unique political collective with a vision for peace and social justice in the Balkans. Balkan Women for Peace was an expression of resistance to nationalist discourses and deepening fragmentation and divisions in the Balkan societies. Following the Royaumont meeting, women activists reconvened in April 2000 in Mavrovo, Former Socialist Republic of Macedonia, now North Macedonia. The

Mavrovo meeting of Balkan Women for Peace addressed the question of facing community pressure.

Balkan Women for Peace defined their vision, principles and commitment in the Royaumont and Mavrovo declarations, which also served as platforms for action. The Mavrovo declaration, which was signed on April 30, 2000 stated that despite the "fragmentation processes at work both within and between Balkan societies, as well as the various pressures that individuals are facing, and from a perspective of resistance", women activists acknowledged "individual responsibility as the necessary step towards assuming the risks of facing [their] own reality and that of others; develop a network of solidarity to support one other in taking those risks; coming into the public sphere and into visibility; and crossing both symbolic and territorial borders."[17]As further specified in the Mavrovo Declaration, Balkan Women for Peace aimed at "overcoming both visible and invisible community

[17] The Mavrovo Declaration, 2000.

pressures which are intimidating and which deny individual choices; opening up space for others; refraining from judging the experience of others, the fear and the pain of the other being unquestionable; and building trust and recreating space for communication and movement."[18] Moreover, a set of specific actions were proposed that entailed "drawing upon local and regional resources; border-crossing actions; peace and gender education within the NGOs networks of various countries; gender-sensitising of the electorate; educating women politicians for political action on the basis of the agreed charter; and any and all other actions which are civil tools opposed to armed communities (and including writing, learning, meeting, travelling, raising awareness)."[19] In order to make visible the individual women activists of Balkan Women for Peace and signatories of the Mavrovo Declaration, we herein provide the full list of names:

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

Sevim Arbana (Tirana)
Nazlie Bala (Prishtina)
Elsa Ballauri (Tirana)
Teuta Barbullushi (Tirana)
Mirjana Barbulović (Nis)
Biljana Bejkova (Skopje)
Sonja Biserko (Belgrade)
Eli Bojadzieska (Skopje)
Antigona Bucaj (Prishtina)
Diana Culi (Tirana)
Aida Ćorović (Novi Pazar)
Koralja Dilić (Zagreb)
Neli Dimc (Ljubljana)
Aleksandra Dukovska (Skopje)
Rreze Duli (Prishtina)
Jagoda Gajić (Mali Losinj)
Advije Gashi (Prishtina)
Bojana Genov (Mali Losinj)
Anka Gogić-Mitić (Pozarevac)
Brankica Grupković (Belgrade)
Milica Gudović (Belgrade)
Meliha Hubić (Zenica)
Tanja Ignjatović (Belgrade)
Merita Ilo (Tirana)
Slavica Indzevska (Skopje)
Rada Iveković (Paris)
Jovanka Ivković (Banja Luka)
Edit Jankov (Novi Sad)
Spasijka Jovanova (Skopje)
Natasa Kandić (Belgrade)

Kosovare Kelmendi (Prishtina)
Katarina Kolozova (Skopje)
Elife Krasniqi (Prishtina)
Florina Krasniqi (Prishtina)
Vjollca Krasniqi (Prishtina)
Katarina Kruhonja (Osijek)
Nada Ler Sofronić ((Sarajevo)
Sandra Ljubinković (Belgrade)
Iris Luarasi (Tirana)
Natšsa Međedović (Nikic)
Briseïda Mema (Tirana)
Azbija Memedova (Skopje)
Jadranka Milićević (Sarajevo)
Lepa Mlađenović (Belgrade)
Biserka Momcinović (Porec)
Nazmie Pacolli (Skopje)
Nela Pamuković (Zagreb)
Milica Panić (Uzice)
Žarana Papić (Belgrade)
Erika Papp (Subotica)
Borka Pavićević (Belgrade)
Tanja Rener (Ljubljana)
Valida Repovac (Sarajevo)
Zibija Šarenkapić (Novi Pazar)
Maria Savovska (Skopje)
Arbnore Shehu (Prizren)
Zana Shuterqi (Tirana)
Svetlana Slapšak (Ljubljana)
Sonja Stanić (Osijek)
Mariana Stanković (Bijeljina)

Sabina Stopinšek (Ljubljana)
Teodora Tabački (Belgrade)
Milka Tadić (Podgorica)
Radojka Tomašević (Split)
Gordana Vidović (Modrica)
Jadranka Vojičić (Podgorica)
Biljana Zeković (Podgorica)
Jasna Živković (Kraljevo)
Arlinda Zylali (Tetovo)

As quoted in the declaration, Balkan Women for Peace set an example of solidarity and collective action to overcome barriers and borders and enable inter-ethnic communication and cooperation. This commitment was set in practice through the project intervention entitled "Women's Peace Caravan," which took place from 25 May to 9 June 2002. Forty-seven women activists were resolute to cross the borders in the Balkans: old and those newly established, real or imaginary, those separating countries, communities, languages, those existing in dreams. The main objectives of the "Women's Peace Caravan" were to engage with one another's reality, bring to light the truth about the wars and responsibil-

ity for war violence, and additionally to support one another in struggles against the community pressures of every kind.[20] The caravan visited women at "places of pain," segregated communities, talked to women in the locations of hope and civic engagement, visited memorial sites, and engaged in conversations with policy makers. By crossing physical borders between states and communities from Slovenia to Albania, the "Women's Peace Caravan" showed the potential of women's activism and politics, capable of bridging identities, memories, and justice, seeking for the promotion of peace in post-conflict societies.

## *Women's Court for the Former Yugoslavia: Seeking Justice, Truth, and Active Remembering*[21]

The wars in the former Yugoslavia—in the 1990s—caused destruction of lives, violence, pain and suffering on a large

[20] http://www.transeuropeennes.org

[21] This text was first published and it that can be found at https://www.zenskisud.org/en/pdf/Vjollca_Krasniqi_eng.pdf.

scale. As geography of violence, these wars constituted lived experience of many women and men across different communities of the former Yugoslavia. Despite the human toll, such geography is seen by some as an historical episode belonging to the past. For many more, the memory of atrocities, massacres, expulsion, forced displacement, sexual violence, and destruction of property, is ever present—embodied in their selfhood and carried in memory. War and memory are, however, not the only trope in the present time; it is the survivors' thirst for justice.

As mechanisms of retributive justice, tribunals and war crime trials are important in dealing with wrongdoing of war. Restorative approaches to justice are significant too, not only because they involve a greater number of people but because they entail remembering, commemoration and public staging of suffering and loss. And all these elements, it may be argued, contribute to healing, a precondition for a future without violence. The Women's Court for the former Yugoslavia—comprising Women's Movement(s) in the post-Yugo-

slav states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia)—was in 2015 in Sarajevo. It represented the first Women's Court in Europe. It was a feminist intervention towards restorative justice. In this endeavor for justice and truth, the Women's Court stood against forgetting the violence committed during the Yugoslav wars, which has been perpetuated by multiple criminal systems, with state and non-state actors acting against civilian population, especially women. The Women's Court was about public consciousness, ethics and morality over human loss. The underlying political motive was to help ensure that the past would not be repeated. It sought to bring to light the link between the individual and the collective in the experience of war and violence; to problematize the risks entailed in transmitting trauma to the next generation, and last but not least, to stress the importance of remembering in order for such violence not to be repeated in the future.

Premised on the feminist conceptualizations of justice, responsibili-

ty and care as foundations of lasting peace, the Women's Court provided a public space for women's voices to be heard. It was a venue where women could stage their experiences of injustice induced in war, their enduring pain and suffering, as well as resistance to war and their activism for peace. Hence, the politics of the Women's Court was about women survivors. It opposed the metanarrative of women as victims, because when such narrative is conceived and applied, it takes away any agency from women. The structure of the Women's Court consisted of panels on five broadly defined themes, and concerning the forms of violence experienced by women. They included violence against civilians, sexual violence, economic violence, militaristic violence and ethnic violence.

At the Women's Court, which was held at the Bosnian Cultural Centre in Sarajevo, the women survivors of war violence took center stage. They spoke to an audience of hundreds of women who stood there in silence, listening attentively, and often in tears

to hear what the women from places such as Srebrenica, Drenica, Krusha e Madhe, Deçan, Vukovar, to mention just a few, remembered about the war violence they survived, family members they lost, their shattered lives and crushed hopes, but also their struggles for justice and strategies they deployed to reconstruct their lives. Women witnesses were not alone. They were joined by women activists and supported by women mediators of the Women's Court who expressed solidarity and analyzed the broader social and political context of the wars in the former Yugoslavia in front of the panel of judges and the public.

More than 50 women spoke of their personal experiences of war and the violence they had lived through. The violence they described was more complex than that conceptualized in traditional justice. Their testimonies were individual, yet they pointed to the methods of violence that were institutional and part of a political economy of war and systems of criminality encompassing multiple actors: state military and police forces, par-

amilitaries, mercenaries and mafia, yet with blurred lines of engagement, and it was directed primarily against civilian populations: women, children, young men, and the elderly.

The Women's Court constituted an intervention for justice, truth and against forgetting of the war and the effects it had on the lives of women and their communities. Moreover, it contributed to the acknowledgement of women's survival and enhanced a plural understanding of how war violence was gendered. Three days of testimonies showed that for the women witnesses, the loss and pain were immense, but it was outweighed by their struggles for justice, active remembering, and against the cultures of impunity. They struggled to rebuild their lives, the lives of their families, and their communities. Moreover, they tirelessly sought justice. At the Women's Court, women witnesses made clear once more that the struggle for justice and peace must continue.

The history of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia during socialism, after the collapse of the socialist state, in the 1990s and after the 1998-1999 war, has left out social history in general, and women's history in particular. History and the representations of events are gendered and women hardly make a footnote. Interventions in history studies by feminist scholars have brought to the centre the social actors through oral history and biographical interviews, showing how macro systems and personal experiences of people collide and converge in everyday life. One such representation is the life story of Didara Đorđević from Prizren, who in the aftermath of WW2, in the new era of socialism in Kosovo, left the traditional way of life; became a teacher and embraced the emancipatory politics that socialism was granting at the time in the former socialist Yugoslavia and in Kosovo.

Socialism was a modernist project and education played a role in its modernization. The socialist states allowed women access to labor market, even though women were segregated in lower paid industries and occupations.[22] Integration of women into the labour market was premised on binary definitions of femininity and masculinity. Even though socialism was deemed more egalitarian and emancipatory for women, the socialist state and socialist ideologies did not eliminate the trope of motherhood as social and national duty.[23] Patriarchy remained strongly entrenched across the social structures. Yet women resisted patriarchy even at the expense of being excluded from the family and community. Didara has expressed that "patriarchy neither supported women's word nor the right of personal choice."[24] She lived through this, as she resisted

[22] See Julie Mertus, "Human Rights of Women in Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*, Vol. 6. No. 2 (1998), 369-484.

[23] Rada Iveković and Julie Mostov, *From Gender to Nation*, Ravenna: Longo, 2002.

[24] Miroslava Malesević, *Didara: Životna prica jedne Prizrenke*, Beograd: Srpski Genealoški Centar, 2004, 65.

the frames and borders which limited her space for finding a voice and her freedom of choice. Her life story testifies to women's emancipation in the socialist era, offering a window into women's everyday experiences. Furthermore, it enables an understanding of multifaceted yet temporal gender relations in Kosovo after WW2. Didara' story is about the liberation of a woman and her personal resistance to the symbolic and material borders sustained by the national ideologies, religion, and cultural formations. Moreover, it tells of a new women's subjectivity that was gaining ground in Kosovo during socialism. As Elife Krasniqi has argued, Didara offered a counter narrative of "a period when everything was divided along ethnic lines, and everything would be simplified in 'black and white' terms, while Didara's narrative showed the grey zone in between."[25]

[25] Elife Krasniqi, "Didarja: Një Rrëfim i Munguar" [Didara: A Missing Narrative]. Retrieved from https://kosovotwopointzero.com/didarja-nje-rrefim-i-munguar.

## *Art as Activism: Individual Work by Women Artists in Kosovo and Serbia*

Women artists in Kosovo and Serbia have played an important role, engaging art to address war, nationalism, justice and human rights. This section showcases the work by three women artists: Saranda Bogujevci, Milica Tomić and Flaka Haliti. Their work is constituted at the intersections of art as political engagement, touching upon the themes of war, nationalism, post-war justice, memory, and ethics. The three art interventions selected here by Bogujevci, Tomić and Haliti are political, and engage with questioning war and its crimes, but also failed reconciliation and limits of peace-building.

*Saranda Bogujevci's* art project "Bogujevci: Visual History" tells the story of the loss and survival of her family during the 1998-1999 Kosovo War.[26] The art project depicts the personal narrative of the war crimes committed

[26] See the oral history of Saranda Bogujevci at http://oralhistorykosovo.org/saranda-bogujevci/

against her family, when 14 members of the Bogujevci family were killed by the paramilitary group of Skorpioni, while five children, including Saranda, who at that time was 13, Jehona (11) and Fatos (12), who also participated in the exhibition as artists, survived. This is a story of personal tragedy and family loss in the war, where the author communicates personal narration of her experience and survival. This work pays homage to civilian war casualties and creates a venue for seeking justice, while it also proves that justice can be met. This exhibition caused great commotion in Belgrade, resulting in violence and the forced closing of the exhibition.

The art intervention entitled *XY The Reconstruction of the Crime: Challenging Amnesia*, by *Milica Tomić*, engages with the politics of memory. It problematizes amnesia by questioning the paranoiac spaces surrounding national identity and maintained by nationalist ideologies and sentiments. As a critique of nationalism and the exclusionary project of the nation, it seeks to build an ethical subject that

is capable of memory and remembrance, in order to question war, oblivion, fear of the Other, and xenophobia. This is indeed a critique of nation and collective amnesia. This work also problematizes the usage and plural meanings of the term reconciliation in the political discourse, on institutional level, in art and everyday life. This work destabilizes exclusionary identity categories. Milica Tomić's work tears apart the zones of sociality which reside in oblivion and challenge memory. For Milica Tomić, art cannot fail remembrance as memory makes war crimes visible and hence offers a possibility of justice. Milica Tomic's art centers on active memory, seeking justice and political visibility, and thus opening up space for agency.

Flaka Haliti's work *Our Death, Other's Dinner* poses the question concerning the ethics of representation of the victims of war violence in art projects. Focusing on the victims and missing persons of the 1998-1999 Kosovo War, Flaka Haliti asks: "is it ethical to use the victims as a concept

for an art piece, and where is the border for such an abuse in this case and other cases in art work?" This is an important intervention highlighting the risks of political appropriation of the victims' experiences in the service of political narratives. This work critiques the national narratives of victimhood that are themed on identity, emotions, and culture. Evoking the "our death, other's dinner" metaphor, Flaka Haliti directs the artists and audiences to the stories that victims themselves construct about their own life, thus searching for new means to avoid the risks of (re)victimization in/through art interventions. Moreover, Flaka Haliti's work destabilizes the trope of victims beyond art, in politics, as well as in the media.

## *Narrating Women's Activism in Kosovo and Serbia*

Feminist research is about the storytelling of collected events, narratives, and memories. It is also about the acknowledgment of the ways

in which they have shaped the history of the present time. To study feminism(s) across time does not necessarily bring attention to all feminist interventions one has witnessed, heard, and experienced. While engaging with the texts and practices embedded in the everyday politics of her generation, it is also about the legacies and memories of the preceding ones. This study, however, is not an attempt to reconstruct a historiography of feminism and the women's movement in Kosovo and Serbia, in the past and present. Instead, it is an intervention seeking to highlight the historical fluidity of temporal and spatial relations of feminism—as an idea, theory, and politics—and to show the ways it has resonated across narratives and patterns of women's mobilization in the 1990s and onwards.

The 1990 war(s) in former Yugoslavia had a lasting imprint and shaped the feminist movement and feminist identifications. As Dubravka Žarkov has pointed out, feminists "were the first to reflect how the wars of Yugoslav disintegration and partition influ-

enced their identities and what the wars meant for them personally, and for their activism."[27] War as a physical and emotional experience is gendered. The gendered conflict has an enormous and lasting impact on women's agency and identities. The "master narratives" of the Yugoslav conflicts have rendered marginal women's agency and resistance against war and nationalism. Indeed, the feminist organizing against war in post-Yugoslav spaces has remained an uncharted terrain. Therefore, the critique of the gendered narratives of Yugoslav wars offers possibilities for accounting for women's agency across national divides and the continuing feminist solidarity in the present. Mapping women's mobilization and political activism destabilizes gendered narratives and the sidelining of women in the historical accounts of socialism, post-socialism, war and post-war. Viewing feminist post-Yugoslav spaces as expressions of difference and diversity, we thus also seek to acknowledge and make visible

[27] Dubravka Žarkov, "Feminism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia: On the Politics of Gender and Ethnicity," *Social Development Issues*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2003), 3.

solidarities and potentialities for transnational gender transformations.

The relationship between national identity and women's solidarity has accompanied the women's movements across post-Yugoslav spaces. In fact, resistance against war did entail complex forms of civic linkages and solidarities across feminist groups. Women's agency has been expressed in various ways and moments, forging connections between women in post-Yugoslav spaces and internationally. In post-Yugoslav spaces, feminism did shape resistance against war and nationalism. As Jill Benderly has argued

> Women's solidarity above and beyond national identity made feminism a fairly unique social movement in the period when most other movements had, to varying degrees, become nationalized by 1991.[28]

We seek to understand women's agency in its complexities, challenges, and the potentiality of grounded fem-

[28] Benderly quoted in Žarkov 2003, 2.

inist struggles during the war. We hence propose to situate knowledge in the specific practices that speak about women's solidarity and breaking of boundaries: physical, symbolic, emotional, and imaginary. To this effect, we looked at the refugee camps in Macedonia during the Kosovo war. The refugee camps were not singled out as spaces for women's organizing and solidarity. The refugee camps offer a site to read the spatio-temporal dynamics of women's agency. Moreover, feminist women's solidarity during the war stand against the recurring themes and renditions of the gendered narratives of war and nationalism in the post-Yugoslav spaces.

We deploy the camp as a paradigm of the human condition, of bare life, or, to borrow the trope from Giorgio Agamben, of *homo sacer* – a product of sovereign power. We contend that not only the refugee camp as a particular confinement in space and time, but space in general carries political meanings and potential for agency. The refugee camps in Macedonia in 1999 opened up new possibilities and potentialities

for women's agency. In the refugee camps, Kosovar women built on a geography of solidarity and empowerment. Moreover, refugee experience and organizing in the camps created a particular relational identity and definitions of women activists' selves. At this time, "many activists reclaimed their identity as activists through support from other activists and their work in refugee camps."[29]

As David Harvey argues "places are … always contingent on the relational processes that create, sustain and dissolve them."[30] Women's agency in the times of war and the refugee camps in Macedonia speaks about the making of an historically empowered agency that transforms boundaries and borders. As Svetlana Slapšak has pointed out, "some narratives on women clearly define women's spaces as liminal and

[29] Nicole Fransworth, *History Is Herstory Too*, Prishtinë: Kosovar Gender Studies Centre. Prishtinë: Kosovar Gender Studies Centre, 2008, 149.

[30] David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, 190.

peripheral."[31] In fact, in the refugee camps women activists created safe spaces so that women refugees could share their experiences and find support from other women.[32]

Feminists in Belgrade extended solidarity to Kosovar women. During the NATO air campaign, they embarked on documenting the feelings of fear "of women in Prishtina and other parts from Kosovo living under extreme fear, terror and pain."[33] They called women in Kosovo and followed that up with visits to Kosovo Albanian women who had become refugees in Macedonia. In the refugee camps in Macedonia they sought to bear witness to what the women had experienced. Solidarity was an important concept in the feminist activism across the post-Yugoslav space. Drawing on the definition of feminism as a political project aiming to do away

[31] Svetlana Slapšak, "Theorizing Women's Mobility in the Balkans," in *Gender and Identity: Theories from and/or on Southeastern Europe*, Belgrade: Women's Studies and Gender Research Center, 2006.

[32] Fransworth, 2008, 155.

[33] Žarana Papić, "Kosovo War, Feminist Politics and Fascism in Serbia," Belgrade: Women's Studies Centre, 1999.

with hierarchical relations of power, Lepa Mladjenović defines women's solidarity as an act that

> is resumed with the decision to listen to the Other, to hear her experience, to allow her story to get out as she narrates it to me. That entails my agreeing that every experience of any woman is equally valuable. That I matter to myself and that the other woman also matters.[34]

Intersubjective recognition is the main characteristic of solidarity in this instance. This definition aims to nurture an active interest in the women on the other "side" seeking to transform thinking and effective economies that foster divisions and sustenance of borders. To be sure, engaging with the Other is a political process and not an expression of similarity and/or difference. This entails solidarity that seeks to validate each

[34] Translation of the quote from Serbian language into English is by Vjollca Krasniqi. See Lepa Mladjenović, Politika Ženske Solidarnosti [Women›s Politics of Solidarity], available at http://www.mreza-mira.net/vijesti/aktivnosti-mreze/lepa-mladjenovic-politika-zenske-solidarnosti.

woman's experience and undo gendered, ethnicized and racialized hierarchies. Solidarity is a political act. The undoing of hierarchies allows women's agency and possibilities for transformative politics towards justice. This brings home the plea made by Chandra Talpade Mohanty for "politics of engagement rather than politics of transcendence."[35]

Women's solidarity during the Kosovo 1998-1999 war also testifies to the tension between the difference and diversity paradigm in the feminist theorization. While the difference paradigm aims to "put women in the centre," the diversity paradigm in contrast seeks to "deconstruct centres." Yet, paying attention to gender differences does not juxtapose those differences as a marker of inferiority but of equality and mutual process of subject constitution. This is a significant complexity of subjectivity and political agency. Solidarity across difference is also an ethical relationship within an as-

[35] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

sumed "we" collective. Indeed, solidarity may begin with feelings. Yet it extends to a process of encounters across national difference.

Similarly, to the notion of "mestizas," coined by Gloria Anzaldúa,[36] feminists in the post-Yugoslav spaces have used the symbol of the border as division, whilst recasting it through the self-identified women activists who undo boundaries. An activist as a witness of the pain of the Other is equal to a witness as political actor. Hence, it is important to highlight "the significance of temporality and the sequencing of actions in relations between actors during the construction of meaning."[37] Spatial relations and dialogues beyond boundaries, such as *face-to face* encounters in the midst of war, entailed not only descriptions of experiences but also examinations of how they had affected the feminist activist identifications. This political solidarity has been born out of

[36] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987.

[37] Sylvia Walby, *Crises*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017, 17.

the process of negotiating the politics of difference. As such it enables an understanding of how difference intersects with assertions of women's feminist and activist identity.

Locating women's agency through reflections on difference is important for transformative feminist politics and the future of women activism. Feminist solidarity in the post-Yugoslav space attests to this. Women activists' experiences were accompanied by reflections on the notions of difference that shaped feminist solidarity locally and regionally. The domain of women's agency was complex and existed across different sites of groups and collectives within the emerging civil society in the post-Yugoslav space. Highlighting the difference across that stream of activist groups, Lepa Mlađenović has maintained the major "difference between human rights NGOs and feminist NGOs was that feminists insisted on ethics of difference."[38]

[38] Lepa Mladjenović, "Notes of a Feminist Lesbian during Wartime," *European Women's Studies Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (2001), 386.

Women's agency during wartime has certainly constituted a site for oppositional histories and memories of war and wars' gendered practice, as well as its effects on the body, culture, and politics. Feminist solidarity entailed not only locating but also opposing the hierarchical restructuring of gendered difference within the nationalist ideologies. As Ana Miškovska Kajevska has pointed out, feminists "by speaking of 'transgression of boundaries' or 'crossing the lines', accentuated their markedly daring continuation of cooperation across the newly established ethnic and state demarcation lines."[39] This is an expression of political agency at its best. Feminist solidarity during the war in the post-Yugoslav space drives home the point made by Chandra Talpade Mohanty that the

> unity of women as women is best understood not as *given*, on the basis of a natural/psychological commonality; it is something that has to be

[39] Ana Miškovska Kajevska, *Feminism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb in the 1990s*, New York: Routledge, 2017, 8.

worked for, struggled towards – *in history*.[40]

## *Final Note for a Common Emancipatory Future*

Over the past decades in the post-Yugoslav era, especially at the end of the 20th and in the first two decades of the 21st century, a proliferation of work on feminism and gender has been noticeable and expressed in numerous and various women's actions, knowledge and cultural production shaped by the politics of resistance and emancipation. Yet, specific to the area of post-Yugoslav society was the treatment in each separate country of women's movements and organisations, which has tended to neglect this area as a knot of nostalgia and loss, and therefore at the same time the knot of potential for questioning the criteria of plausibility of the dominant ethno-centric, post-transitional/neoliberal and patriarchal

[40] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Encounter: Locating the Politics of Experience" in Anne Phillips, *Feminism and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 264.

ideologies in this continuing unsettled geopolitical zone of discomfort. Feminist, women's and gender questions disturb the entrenched prejudice and conformist stance, while offering no guaranties in relation to the outcome of transformative politics.

This study has aimed to offer insights into the question of to what extent women's and feminist engagement has reflected and participated in social change and knowledge production in the periods of existence, destruction, and abolishment of Yugoslavia, and on its geo-political map of today? The answer would be that at this historical juncture an opportunity presents itself in the potential of the productively engaged feminist and women's actions that foster critical knowledge as well as cultural and socially transformative politics around common issues and in search for emancipatory models that drive social change in a more equitable, and more importantly, a common direction for the future.

Novel research in the field that shifts between the politics of social

movement and the politics of cultural and knowledge production offers a vision that aims to go beyond the state of disappointment and despair, which many feminist activists, actors, cultural workers and scholars have felt after the wars of the 1990s. In this vision, affective networks of personal relationships continue to have a prominent role in finding alternative routes for discussing emancipatory politics in feminist action, theory and social critique. These personal relationships do not in any way build a secluded safe-haven, but rather give an impetus for developing more collaborative ways of thinking and fostering new strategies of resistance, against the sophisticated neoliberal ways of perpetuating patriarchy, conflicts, crises and other hegemonic mechanisms that maintain unequal power relations intact. These personal activist relationships are also 'epistemological cells', mobile and technologically savvy, generated through the politics of friendship and critical thinking.

A series of interviews with women who are politically, culturally, socially

engaged in the post-Yugoslav space, offers valuable insights into their different positions. The positions they maintain build a *feminist common ground* yet making us aware of the local specificities and solidarities across difference. As such, they resist the depoliticizing stance of multiculturalist politics and offer a platform for creating both theory and practice rooted in local specificities. Situating feminist and women's questions, achievements and struggles, all women have shown that despite the challenges they are faced with in their own lives, work, and actions, it is worth to live and struggle for emancipation, freedom, and solidarity. For all of them, the goal is clear: a socially, politically, economically, culturally liberated society, classless and equal for all.

Thus, it becomes obvious that a social analysis of the history of present within the post-Yugoslav space needs continuities with different feminisms - past and current - that have the same ideological red thread of freedom and social justice. From the past, it is also obvious that women of so-

cialist times benefited the most from all women's engagements and struggles, but unfortunately not for long. All those activist, cultural, theoretical reflections on the emancipatory politics of concrete material practices, as well as all the socially aware feminist claims, must today be linked to other, similar practices, either local or international, in order to confront the current neoliberal appropriation of feminism and its movements, which gives the image of a false reality in which women have free will to choose the way they want to live. At the same time, this promising image hides the rise in violence on every scale: structural, domestic, sexual, and symbolic.

Relying on the analytic resources provided by current socio-political studies on transformative politics and examples of cultural and gender studies, this research points to some valuable notes about the socially engaged women's actions and political feminist strategies, which insist on the politics of equality and engage towards shared socio-political and cultural imaginaries. Broadly speaking, this

study adopted a materialist feminist critique that pays attention to the historical context and theoretical grounding, political commitment, discursive analysis and subject redefinition. Moreover, guided by the previous research experience and results, the intention here was to read the past against the grain, "to amplify the voices of the disenfranchised, to expose the guilty political unconscious, to deepen and widen the faultiness in its legitimation of the status quo."[41] The value of such a materialist critique lies in its ability to assist in the examination of "the co-occurrence of subordinate, residual, emergent, alternative, and oppositional cultural forces alongside the dominant, in varying relations of incorporation, negotiation, and resistance."[42]

All in all, the common women's struggle today goes beyond all those past narratives and stands for a more specific and grounded stance towards singular

[41] Kiernan Ryan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader*. London, Arnold.,1996, XV.

[42] Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading, Oxford, Clarendon Press*. 1992, 9.

subjectivities that are collectively bound and outward oriented by the concept of "sustainability". Following Rosi Braidotti, we conclude by arguing for a re-grounding of the subject in a materially embedded sense of responsibility and ethical accountability for society and environment, based on previous knowledge and experiences of post-Yugoslav feminists. Thus, in the redefinition of the political subject, sustainable shifts or changes emerge by nomadic subjects in their active resistance against the risk of being subsumed in the commodification of their very own diversity. It is within this concept of "becoming' that "time frame is always the future anterior, that is to say a linkage across present and past in the act of constructing and actualising possible futures."[43] And our future, as all those who participated through interviews and conversations in this study agreed, leans towards the feminist idea of a common, socially equal and just society.

[43] Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2006, 137.

# Bibliography

Agamben, G. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Stanford California: California University Press,* 1998.

Anzaldúa, G. E. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute. 1987

Benderly, J. "Rape, feminism and nationalism in the war in Yugoslav successor states". in Lois A. West (ed.) *Feminist nationalism,* London: Routledge, 1997, 59-72.

Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2006.

Howard, C. *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, London: Pluto Press, 2000.

Davis, A.Y. *The Meaning of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues*. San Francisco: City Light Books, 2012.

Dimitrijević, O. & Pelević. M. *Freedom: The Most Expensive Capitalist Word*. Belgrade: Bitef Production, 2016, available at http://festival.bitef.rs/event/freedom-expensive-capitalist-word/.

Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London, UK: Routledge, 1966.

Foucault, M. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. New York, NY: Picador, 2003.

Foucault, M. *The Birth of Biopolitics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Foucault, M. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, New York, NY: Picador, 1992.

Fransworth, N. *History is Herstory Too*, Prishtinë: Kosovar Gender Studies Centre, 2008.

Gržinić, M. "From Biopolitics to Necropolitics and the Institution of Contemporary Art", *Pavilion, Journal for Politics and Culture*, No.14 (2010), 9-94.

Harvey, D. *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Hass, C. "*Qu'appelle-t*-on une *guerre? Enquête* sur le *nom* de *guerre aujourd'hui*." PH.D. disseration, *Université Paris 8*, Paris, 2001.

*Herscher*, A. & *Rieldmayer*, A. The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Kosovo, Cambridge: Kosovo Cultural Heritage Survey, 2001.

Human Rights Watch Under Order: War Crimes in Kosova, available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/kosovo.

Husanović, J. "Feminističke ekskurzije, transverzalnosti, traverzije: o punoljetnim iskustvima solidarnosti i zajedništva u proizvodnji znanja i emancipativnoj politici". In: *Feminizam - politika jednakosti za sve*. Jelena Petrović and Damir Arsenijević (eds.), Belgrade: *ProFemina*, 2011.

Iveković, R. & Mostov, J. *From gender to nation*, Ravenna: Longo, 2002.

Kajevska, Miskovska, A. *Feminism at War: Belgrade and Zagreb in the 1990s*, New York: Routledge, 2017.

Krasniqi, E. "Didarja: Një Rrëfim i Munguar" [Didara: A Missing Narrative], available at https://kosovotwopointzero.com/didarja-nje-rrefim-i-munguar.

Kristeva, J. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Malesević, M.*Didara: Zivotna prica jedne Prizrenke*, Beograd: Srpski Genealoski Centar, 2004.

Marx, K. *Capital, Volume 3*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Marx, K. *Capital, Volume 1*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Mbembe, A. "Necropolitics". Translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, No. 1 (2003),11-40.

Mertus, J. "Human Rights of Women in Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of Gender, Social Policy and the Law*, Vol. 6. No.2 (1998), 369-484.

Mladjenović, L. "Notes of a Feminist Lesbian during Wartime", *European Women's Studies Journal*, Vol. 8, Vol. 3 (2001), 381-391.

Mladjenović, L. Politika Ženske Solidarnosti [Women›s Politics of Solidarity], available http://www.mreza-mira.net/vijesti/aktivnosti-mreze/lepa-mladjenovic-politika-zenske-solidarnosti.

Mohanty, T. Ch. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonializing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Mohanty, T. Ch. "Feminist Encounter: Locating the Politics of Experience" in Anne Phillips (1998) *Feminism and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 254-272.

Papić, Ž. "Kosovo War, Feminist Politics and Fascism in Serbia", Belgrade: Women's Studies Centre, 1999.

Petrović, J. "What Does the Freedom Stand for Today?" In: *Border Thinking*, Marina Gržinić (ed.), Berlin: Stenberg Press and

the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2018, 108-122.

Ryan, K. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism: A Reader*. London, Arnold.1996.

Sinfield, A. *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1992.

Slapšak, S. "Theorizing Women's Mobility in the Balkans", in *Gender and Identity: Theories from and/or on Southeastern Europe*, Belgrade: Women's Studies and Gender Research Center, 2006

The Mavrovo Declaration available at http://www.transeuropeennes.org/en/articles/91/The_Mavrovo_Declaration.html

Walby, S. *Crises*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017.

Žarkov, D. "Feminism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia: On the Politics of Gender and Ethnicity", *Social Development Issues*, Vol. 24, No.3 (2003), 1-19.

## *Internet sources*

www.z2ogalleria.it/1/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Milica_Tomic1.pdf

http://www.seecult.org/vest/bogujevci-vizuelna-istorija

http://www.transeuropeennes.org/en/37/the_women_caravan.html

http://www.memory-culture-art.org/artists/flaka_haliti.html

http://www.zenskisud.org/en/

# Short Biographies of the Authors

*Dr. Vjollca Krasniqi* is a sociologist. She teaches at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina. She holds a PhD from the University of Ljubljana, an MSc degree in Gender, Development and Globalization from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and a BA degree in Philosophy and Sociology from the University of Prishtina. Her research interests are gender, nation and collective memory, state-building, peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction. She has published numerous articles, book chapters and reports on these issues, including: Frames of Just War: Media and Political Discourse in Kosovo during the Haradinaj Trials in *International Criminal Tribunals as Actors of Domestic Change: The Impact on Media Frames*, edited by K. Bachmann et al. (2019); War, Law, and Justice in Kosovo in *International Criminal Tribunals as Actors of Domestic Change: The Impact on Institutional Reform* edited by K. Bachmann et al. (2018); The Topography of the Construction of the Nation in Kosovo in *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-Building in South Eastern Europe* edited by P. Kolsto (2014); Another Report on the Banality of Evil: The Cultural Politics of the Milošević

Trial in Kosovo, in *The Milošević Trial: An Autopsy* edited by T. Waters (2013); and Imagery, Gender and Power: The Politics of Representation in Post-War Kosova in *Feminist Review* (2007).

Dr. Jelena Petrović is a feminist scholar, art theorist and author. She is the research leader (PI) of the project: *Art Geographies: The Politics of Belonging* at the Institute of Art Theory and Cultural Studies, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF through the Elise Richter Program 2019-2023). (Co)author of texts, events, exhibitions and projects related to (post) Yugoslav subjects - particularly with regard to social history, art-theory and feminism. She holds a PhD form ISH-Ljubljana Graduate School for Humanities (2009). From 2008 to 2014 she was an active member of the new Yugoslav art-theory group Grupa Spomenik (The Monument Group). In 2011 she became co-founder and member of the feminist curatorial collective Red Min(e)d (www.redmined.org). As an initiator of the course *Living Archive: Feminist Curatorship and Contemporary Artistic Practices* she taught at the Academy of

Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana (2014-2017). From 2015 to 2017, she was appointed the Endowed Professor for Central and South Eastern European Art Histories at Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Palgrave Macmillan published her book *Women's Authorship in Interwar Yugoslavia: The Politics of Love and Struggle* in 2019.

Dr. Dubravka Stojanović is a historian and professor at the Department of History, Chair of Contemporary General History at the University of Belgrade. She worked on issues of democracy in Serbia and in the Balkans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, interpretations of history in new Serbian textbooks, social history, the process of modernization, and the history of women in Serbia. She is a consultant of the Special Rapporteur for human rights of the United Nations in fields of culture and education. She participated in many conferences in the country and abroad and gave lectures at Sorbonne, Columbia University, Stanford University, Humbolt University, University of Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Athens, Sofia, Copenhagen etc. With Milan Ristović, she is the editor of the

Annual for Social History. She is a vice president of the Balkan Committee for Education in the field of history organized by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe, Thessaloniki, Greece. She published 9 books, including the book on world history: *The rise of the Global World 1885-2015*. For the book *Serbia and Democracy: 1903-1914* she received the City of Belgrade's Award for Social Sciences and Humanities for 2003. In 2011, the Center for Peace and Democracy Development awarded her the Peace Prize, for her peace engagement started in 1993, during the war in the former Yugoslavia. In 2012, she received the price Winning of Freedom intended for women engaged in human rights activism. She has received the French decoration Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite.

NOTES ON POST-YUGOSLAV WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND FEMINIST POLITICS

Publisher:
*The Jelena Šantić Foundation*
11a Vojvode Šupljikca Street
11000 Belgrade, Serbia
www.fjs.org.rs

For publisher:
*Irina Ljubić*

Introduction text:
*Dubravka Stojanović*

Authors of the study:
*Vjollca Krasniqi and Jelena Petrović*

Design and layout:
*Jana Oršolić*

Translation and proofreading:
*Nataša Grba Singh, Tijana Parezanović and Milan Marković*

ISBN 978-86-81592-02-1

This document is part of the project "*Heroines of Peace - Tales outside the bargaining table*", which is financially supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The opinions expressed in this publication do not represent the views of the Balkan Trust for Democracy, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, or their partners.

B | T | D The Balkan Trust for Democracy

A PROJECT OF THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND