

‘Our Girl’ Ideology and *Start*’s ‘Sexual Swashbucklers’: Women and War in the Only Yugoslav Men’s Magazine (1969–1980)¹

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ABSTRACT

The Croatian magazine *Start*, “a misbehaved child of the sexual revolution of the sixties”² was created in 1969. Its visual identity has been marked by nude women throughout its existence. The magazine’s editorial board sometimes presented it as ideological opposition to socialist puritanism, especially exemplified in so-called ‘our girl’ ideology and, therefore, as contributed to women’s emancipation. In order to explore how (some) Yugoslav men reacted to and repackaged the socialist gender agendas, this paper will examine the magazine’s contents through a gendered lens. It will particularly focus on their approach to the imagery of the People’s Liberation Struggle. It will examine a number of articles dealing with the Yugoslav theatre of the Second World War and women’s participation in it. By taking into account textual contributions as well as their visual representations, this paper will study how Western influences participated in the portrayal of the women’s emancipation project, as well as the Yugoslav gender order, during the 1970s. It will highlight how it validated the journalists’ adherence to tradition-bound gender hierarchies, which they mapped onto their supposedly liberal discourse of sexual liberation.

KEYWORDS

Start magazine, People’s Liberation Struggle, women, gender, ‘our girl’ ideology

INTRODUCTION

When *Start* magazine was created, the Yugoslav media was diversified to such an extent that it allowed the coexistence of a wide range of publications such as “obedient media, glossy tabloids or unique genres such as the youth press”.³ The Tito-Stalin Split brought about the introduction of self-management that included the subsequent softening of the press theory, as well as media legislation that guaranteed the

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- 1 This article is building on the research I have done for my doctoral dissertation that, at the time of writing, has not yet been defended.
 - 2 D. HUDELIST, *Start: kako izgubiti tradiciju (Start: How to Lose Tradition)*, in: *Start*, No. 500, March 18, 1988, p. 15.
 - 3 M. ZUBAK, *The Yugoslav Youth Press (1968–1980): Student Movements, Subcultures and Communist Alternative Media*, Diss., Central European University 2013, p. 35.



freedom of the press, matching Western standards from the mid-1960s onward. An unexpected occurrence at the end of this decade was that magazines began to publish erotic photographs of women on their pages, including the cover.⁴ Among the first of such publications was *Start*, the magazine that is still remembered as the Yugoslav *Playboy*. It appeared in the distribution of *Vjesnik*, the largest Croatian publishing house, in 1969.

In this essay, I will analyze its content during the first eleven years (1969–1980) of its existence. The year 1980 marks a major turning point for the magazine, as Sead Saračević, *Start*'s editor-in-chief, under whom it became one of the superstar editions printed by *Vjesnik*, left that year. He was replaced by one of his younger colleagues, Mladen Pleše, who refurbished the editorial office with journalists from the youth magazine *Polet* and introduced a number of new, alternative and somewhat obscure topics.⁵ No less important, 1980 was also the year when Tito died. That event became a watershed moment for the history of socialist Yugoslavia, but which left its mark on the Yugoslav media culture as well.

Despite the belief that the term “decasyllabic sexual swashbucklers”⁶ belongs to some other men, the articles published in this magazine make that description appropriate for themselves. Namely, *Start*'s emphasis on female beauty and sexuality is nothing more but a modernized version of tradition-bound gender essentialism prevalent in the Yugoslav patriarchy. Although *Start*'s journalists tried to dress regular erotic photography in a more refined outfit made out of art, education and emancipation,⁷ their efforts were often only half successful. The reason for this is that they fostered a tongue-in-cheek approach to these ideas. In order to conform, women were expected to “stay women” by nurturing their femininity to please a man — or, according to *Start*, men. It is often through such practice of aesthetic antifeminism, explains Croatian philosopher and feminist Gordana Bosanac, that women are granted access to the public sphere as, in this way, their presence has the least potential to disturb

4 In differentiating between erotic and pornographic content, I follow the thinking of art historian and art critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau. Namely, if photographs show a female nude “more or less artfully posed” then the photograph in question is erotic. If woman's genitals are visible or if she is shown masturbating, then the photograph is pornographic. A. SOLOMON-GODEAU, *The Legs of the Countess*, in: October, Vol. 39, winter 1986, p. 94.

5 According to Pleše's own testimony, the changes “eliminated many cultural themes and texts about painters,” and led to a greater opening “to the Yugoslav scene, from folk to video — and this provoked fierce resistance. When we wrote about Oliver Mandić and his television show, and published pictures of him in fishnet stockings and high heels, a terrible scandal arose in the publishing house.” Erotic photographs of young women were, of course, retained. D. KULJIŠ, *Mladen Pleše: Sreća na odlasku (Mladen Pleše: Happy When Leaving)*, in: *Start*, No. 500, March 19, 1988, p. 21.

6 The adjective ‘decasyllabic’ is a reference to Slavic folk epics, places of permanent perpetuation of traditional gender roles, which have always been written in poetic meter of ten syllables. V. TENŽERA, *Ideologija ‘naše cure’ (‘Our Girl’ Ideology)*, in: *Start*, No. 269, May 16, 1979, p. 18.

7 For relevant “frame analysis” see: B. ŽIKIĆ, *Dissidents Liked Pretty Girls: Nudity, Pornography, and Quality Press in Socialism*, in: *Medijska istraživanja*, Vol. 16, 2010, pp. 60–65.



the existing gender order.⁸ Invocation of art, education or emancipation only made the *Start* journalists' antifeminist stance seem more palatable to their readership and, even more importantly, to those individuals concerned about the fate of socialist morale in their state.⁹

The official position of the editorial board was appropriately summarized in 1979: "(...) but we believe that once a serious history of the erotic customs of our region is written, it will be possible to assess more objectively how much these *Start*'s centerfolds little by little contributed to changing our traditional attitude toward corporeality in general."¹⁰ However, a development that occurred less than two months later — the magazine caused a minor scandal by publishing semi-naked photographs of a young Slovene pop singer, Moni Kovačić — testified to the journalists' attitudes toward women's "corporeality" much better than any boastful statement. It confirmed that those men, in fact, employed and preserved the traditional gender order. They published several letters from readers who recognized the singer. However, although the editor-in-chief announced in his usual address to readers that telephones were ringing non-stop because of that particular cover, the editorial board denied recognizing her. Following Kovačić's statements to other media in which she tried to preserve some of her dignity by claiming that she had been compelled to do the photo shoot, in an exemplary patronizing tone Saračević messaged the girl via his editorial note that "we think no one can be photographed naked if they don't take off certain pieces of clothing and underwear beforehand. Isn't that so, dear Moni?"¹¹

In response, the highly regarded *Vjesnik* journalist and author Veselko Tenžera penned the opinion piece "Our Girl' Ideology" that was supposed to expose the double standards of Yugoslav men, whom he jovially described as "decasyllabic sexual swashbucklers".¹² According to Tenžera, these men were supporters of everything new in the world of erotica and sex, except when it comes to "their" women, both literally and figuratively. In the case of the sparsely dressed girls and women who graced the covers and centerfolds of *Start*, he noted, "What we consider normal, natural and beautiful in foreign women, ours should hide as a disgrace. But whose? That double standard's, of course, not their own."¹³ Tenžera's answer to his own question

8 G. BOSANAC, *Visoko čelo: Ogled o humanističkim perspektivama feminizma (Tall Forhead: Essays on Humanist Perspectives of Feminism)*, Zagreb 2010, p. 75.

9 Since the creation of socialist Yugoslavia, and especially since the opening of the country and the media to the cultural contents of Western provenance, many cultural and political workers have written, spoken and held conferences on this topic. More about this is available in: M. KOLANOVIĆ, *Udarnik! Buntovnik? Potrošač... Popularna kultura i hrvatski roman od socijalizma do tranzicije (Shock-worker! Rebel? Consumer... Popular Culture and Croatian Novel From Socialism Until Transition)*, Zagreb 2011; J. MIHALJEVIĆ, *Liberalizacija i razvoj medija u komunističkoj Hrvatskoj 1960-ih i na početku 1970-ih (Liberalization and Development of the Media in Communist Croatia During 1960s and in the Beginning of the 1970s)*, in: *Društvena istraživanja*, Vol. 24, 2015, pp. 239–258; Reana Senjković, *Izgubljeno u prijenosu: pop iskustvo soc kulture (Lost in Translation: Pop Experience of Soc Culture)*, Zagreb 2008.

10 —, *O 'Startu' od starta (About Start from the Start)*, in: *Start*, No. 263, February 21, 1979, p. 17.

11 S. SARAČEVIĆ, *Među nama (Between Us)*, in: *Start*, No. 268, May 2, 1979, p. 11.

12 TENŽERA, *Ideologija 'naše cure'*.

13 *Ibid*, p. 16.



is straightforward and on point, but the accompanying analysis of the situation the young singer found herself in is just mockery. While Tenžera clearly understood the social mechanism that pushed Kovačić to try and justify the existence of the photographs at stake, he spent a great deal of the two-page text in deriding her story by embellishing it with “photo-pirates” and naming her, among other things, a “butt naked diva”.¹⁴ Concluding, he added: “Will we now get dozens of mournful biographies of poor souls who were raped by their stepfathers or were kidnapped or survived an incurable disease... Propaganda, of course, cannot do without factoids, but even among them there are those made with taste, in the spirit of the times or simply smart.”¹⁵ In other words, whatever — if any — change toward the treatment of the female body and sexuality took place in Yugoslavia during the researched period, (male) members of *Start*’s editorial team did not deserve the praise they heaped on themselves. Defining the female nudity as “a slap to the patriarchal schmuck”¹⁶ was supposed to make their policy seem politically correct. They were, however, only in the business of endorsing ogling at semi-naked girls and women by putting their nude bodies under the guise of nature, “not in the form of a parenting imperative, but an imperative of beauty.”¹⁷ After all, as Bosanac specifies, huge part of media production is supporting that ideology precisely because it lives and profits from it.¹⁸

Due to the way *Start* used erotic photography, it seems that the sexualization of female bodies caused satisfaction in the most basic sense of the word to both its journalist’s and most of its readers. After all, since the fifth issue, when erotic photographs first appeared, in the next four editions issued during the two months of 1969, the circulation of this magazine doubled to 160,000 copies and were sold throughout Yugoslavia.¹⁹ Accordingly, *Start*’s reporters did not bother to add short biographies of the models they put on their covers, as opposed to the beauties posing for the covers of their role model, *Playboy*. On the contrary, it was once written that the editorial board considered it best if the models were anonymous.²⁰

In the following analysis, I will explore how the magazine represented the women beyond the restrictions imposed by the cover/centerfold positioning. In particular, I will point out how the magazine represented women who, during the Second World War, fought in the Yugoslav People’s Liberation Struggle (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, NOB).²¹ It is well known that the NOB figured as the founding myth of the socialist

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁷ BOSANAC, *Visoko čelo*, 75.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 76.

¹⁹ —, *O ‘Startu’ od starta*, p. 17.

²⁰ —, 10/263, in: *Start*, No. 263, February 21, 1979, p. 24.

²¹ The People’s Liberation Struggle is a term used to describe the armed struggle of the United People’s Liberation Front of Yugoslavia (*Ujedinjeni narodnooslobodilački front Jugoslavije*, JNOF) and partisan units against foreign occupying forces and their collaborators in the territory of Yugoslavia during the Second World War (1941–1945). The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, KPJ), led by Josip Broz-Tito, played a leading role in the NOB.

Yugoslavia. Therefore, this war was to a greater or lesser extent present in all Yugoslav media, and I will here examine *Start's* rendition of the circumstances in which women, according to the official interpretation, fought for and won their equality. Choosing this as the center of analysis will demonstrate that, although their discourse seemed liberal, *Start's* journalists firmly adhered to nothing more than tradition-bound gender hierarchies repackaged in a sexy wrapping. As a result of that, their interpretation of the NOB for the most part brushed aside women who participated in the struggles. And, if female participants were represented, it was as ideal-typical militarized femininities. That is to say, women's wartime activities were adjusted to the boundaries of femininity redrawn according to the imagination of *Start's* men.



NEGOTIATING THE NUDE IN THE YUGOSLAV MEDIA OF THE 1970S

The first Yugoslav magazines to print erotic photographs were *Čik* and *Eva i Adam* (*Eve and Adam*), both published in Serbia by minor publishing houses. *Čik* first appeared in 1965 as an enigmatic magazine under the title *Čik pogodi* (*Guess What*). During 1967 and 1968, the magazine partially changed its name as well as its profile and became a youth entertainment magazine that, over time, usually under the pretext of education, included more and more pictures of nude girls.²² *Eva i Adam*, on the other hand, was described as an educational magazine from the very beginning. Published since 1968, it was subtitled as “Magazine for Love, Sex Education and Life Together” (*Revija za ljubav, seksualno vaspitanje i život udvoje*) and, as such, reached an impressive circulation of 270,000 printed copies. Then, in 1974, the Belgrade committee of the League of Communists²³ sought a ban of the magazine on the pretext that it was corrupting young people. *Eva i Adam* ceased to exist shortly after. On the other hand, *Čik's* editorial office fought against the bans, among other things, by changing the name of the magazine (in 1974 it became *Novi čik* (*New Čik*), and, during the eighties, the same magazine became known as *Zum Reporter*, and then only *Reporter*). Thanks to the inventiveness and perseverance of the editorial board, this magazine was published until the mid-1980s, when it was discontinued because of its treatment of the topics related to current domestic politics.²⁴

Start was supposed to take the place, as well as the profile, of the recently discontinued *Moto Magazin*, but the topics related to transportation did not attract enough audiences to make the magazine profitable. The editorial board, therefore, initiated its reconceptualization after only a few issues. In 1988, Andrinko Krile, *Start's* first editor-in-chief, stated: “We chose topics that the other press did not consume, and

22 T. TOROMAN, Чикање: (Неочекивана) критика југословенског друштва у забавном часопису Чук (*Čikanje: (Unexpected) Critique of the Yugoslav Society in the Entertainment Magazine Čik*), in: *Kultura*, No. 161, 2018, pp. 173–174.

23 At the Sixth Congress of the KPJ held in Zagreb in 1952 and in accordance with the new socio-political conditions caused by the Tito-Stalin Split, the Party changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije, SKJ*).

24 ŽIKIĆ, *Dissidents Liked Pretty Girls*, p. 56.



then we garnished them with pictures.”²⁵ In other words, Krile’s *Start* did not have a specific concept during the three years in which he edited it. It was a broadly conceptualized entertainment magazine whose contents gravitated towards anything related to sex. For illustrative purposes, it is worth noting that *Start*’s first own editorial material from abroad was a six-page report from the “World First Sex Fair” held in Copenhagen in October 1969.²⁶ Needless to say, beautiful, very young, half-naked girls appeared everywhere in the magazine. They dominated the front cover, and centerfolds like those in the American *Playboy* and the British *Penthouse* appeared for the first time (in socialist Yugoslavia). In addition, almost all written contributions — from the horoscope page and travelogues about exotic countries (that is to say, countries that had a very warm climate and where women did not wear brassieres) all the way to the article about abortion — were ‘garnished’ with such illustrations.

Of course, just like *Čik* and *Eva i Adam*, *Start* also encountered the disapproval of some of the Party membership due to a “violation of public decency” marked as punishable under the 1960 “Law on the Press and Other Forms of Information.”²⁷ However, only from the beginning of 1972, when the part of each edition that was sold in Serbia was taxed under the newly promulgated “law on kitsch” (“*zakon o šundu*”), the magazine faced tangible consequences.²⁸ An uncommonly large part of this maga-

25 A. VOJINOVIĆ, *Andrinko Krile: Kako postati otac Starta? (Andrinko Krile: How to Become Start’s Father?)*, in: *Start*, No. 500, March 19, 1988, p. 16.

26 —, *Porno-sajam bestidnosti (Porn Fair of Shamelessness)*, in: *Start*, No. 21, November 5, 1969, pp. See more about how that fair became possible in: R. GADE, *Art, Sexuality and Images: The Legalization of Pornography in Denmark*, in: *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, Vol. 15, No. 2, June 2010, pp. 23–28; idem, *The Female Christ at the Stock Exchange*, in T. ØRUM and J. OLSSON (EDS.), *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1950–1975*, Leiden 2016, pp. 64–70.

27 —, *Zakon o štampi i drugim oblicima informacija (Law on the Press and Other Forms of Information)*, in: *Narodne novine*, No. 45, November 9, 1960, p. 819.

This law abolished censorship before publication, but in return provided the list of nine types of offenses under which the press could be banned. They focused on (1) criminal offences against the people, the State or the Yugoslav army, (2) “false, perverted or alarming reports or allegations causing public alarm and menacing public peace and order, (3) revealing military secrets, (4) publishing information representing “an official or economic secret of particular importance to the community,” (5) propaganda “contrary to the goals of the United Nations,” (6) acts which may disturb Yugoslav foreign policy, (7) “violation of honor and reputation of our peoples, their supreme representative bodies, the President of the Republic, as well as violation of honor and reputation of foreign peoples,” (8) “severely offends public decency,” and (9) publishing “information detrimental to the interests of the judiciary.”

28 This law, the full name of which was “Law on Amendments to the Republican Tax on Retail Goods” (*Zakon o izmenama i dopunama o republičkom porezu na promet robe na malo*), was announced by the Serbian League of Communists as an incentive for returning to the Marxist roots in the sphere of culture and elimination of all kinds of art and media products — magazines, comic books, music, books, films — that were deemed of low artistic quality or morally questionable. A. HOFMAN, *Micronarratives of Music and (Self-) Censorship in Socialist Yugoslavia*, in: P. HALL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship*, Oxford 2018, pp. 262–263; U. ČVORO, *Turbo-Folk Music and Cultural Representations of National Identity in Former Yugoslavia*, London and New York 2014, pp. 43–45.

zine's circulation was sold in Serbia. For instance, almost the same number of copies per issue, approximately 20,000, were sold in Belgrade as in Zagreb.²⁹ Because of the tax, which amounted to 31.5% of the sale price, by the end of summer 1972 the magazine cost 5 dinars instead of the original 3. In addition, the other republics soon set out to follow Serbia's example and started the process of introducing the same law. Therefore, it became likely that the price of the magazine would have to double again that same year. The "law on kitch" threatened to make *Start* unprofitable in a very short timeframe.³⁰

At the same time, although the magazine reached its all-time high circulation — in 1971 it was printed in 235,000 copies per issue³¹ — the leadership of the *Vjesnik* publishing house decided to dismiss Adrinko Krile and put Sead Saračević in his place. This dependable journalist was at that time working to restore the prestige of the weekly *Vjesnik u srijedu* (*Vjesnik on Wednesday*, VUS), which endured the heaviest blow of purges following the end of the Croatian Spring.³² Despite the weight and uncertainty of his current position (regardless of the efforts of the editorial team and the publishing house itself, VUS was shut down in 1977), Saračević apparently considered the move to *Start* so unappealing that journalists from that newsroom had to go to the VUS's office for consultations with him.³³

Within one year, *Start* no longer had to finance the "law on kitsch" and gained praise at various consultations. Although the magazine caught the eye of the so-called kitsch-commission (*šund-komisija*), and ended up on the infamous 1971 Kragujevac bonfire³⁴ with other presumed media promoters of "anti-socialist morality" precisely

29 A. VOJINOVIĆ, *Start*, in: J. PALAVRŠIĆ, *Monografije (Monographs)*, Zagreb 1990, p. 12.

30 A. KRILE, *Pismo glavnog urednika (Editor-in-Chief's Letter)*, in: *Start*, No. 91, July 12, 1972, p. 17.

31 K. KODŽIĆ, *Komparativna analiza kretanja Vjesnikovih izdanja (Comparative Analysis of Vjesnik Editions' Trends: 1968–1978)*, Zagreb 1979, p. 130.

Later on, the magazine's circulation remained fixed at around two 200,000 copies printed per edition, but it rarely exceeded that number.

32 The Croatian Spring (*Hrvatsko proljeće*) was a cultural and political movement in 1970 and 1971, which was especially marked by the legitimization of the Croatian national identity within Yugoslavia. The main exponents were the reformist wing of the communist leadership in Croatia, a heterogeneous group of intellectuals primarily gathered around the cultural institution *Matica Hrvatska*, and Zagreb students.

33 HUDELIST, *Start: kako izgubiti tradiciju*, 13.

34 In the days from October 28 to 31, 1971, the Congress of Cultural Action (*Kongres kulturne akcije*) was held in Kragujevac (Serbia). More than a thousand delegates from the whole of Yugoslavia who were present at the event dealt with topics such as decentralization of culture, investment in culture and artistic production, the relationship between artistic freedoms and censorship, and the taxation of so-called *šund*. The first to be hit by the decisions of the Congress of Cultural Action was the popular press, magazines, comics and pulp literature, and they were burned in public. A. HOFMAN, *Ko se boji šunda još? Muzička cenzura u Jugoslaviji (Who's Afraid of šund? Music Censorship in Yugoslavia)*, in: L. DURAKOVIĆ and A. MATOŠEVIĆ (eds.), *Socijalizam na klupi: Jugoslovensko društvo očima nove post-jugoslavenske humanistike (Socialism on the Bench: Yugoslav Society Through the Eyes of the New Post-Yugoslav Humanities)*, Pula and Zagreb 2013, pp. 288–289.



because of the photos of semi-naked girls and young women, the editorial board did not abandon publishing such photographs. Erotic content was reduced, but, more importantly for the magazine's reputation, textual contributions changed thematically and by approach.

For instance, during the conference of the Communities of Cultural and Educational Organizations of Yugoslavia (*Zajednica kulturno-prosvjetnih organizacija Jugoslavije*) on the topic "Entertainment Press and Other Entertainment Literature" held in 1975, in a presentation on erotic literature charged with negative comments author and university professor Tomislav Sabljak mentioned only *Start* as a positive example. According to Sabljak, the reason for this was the magazine's competent presentation of topics from the field of politics, science and culture.³⁵ Thanks to the publication of quality journalistic articles, numerous politicians from all over Yugoslavia turned a blind eye to the issue of erotica in the magazine and agreed to be interviewed by *Start*'s journalists.³⁶ In other words, during the eight years of Saračević's editorship (1973–1980), *Start* transformed from the magazine "for truck drivers"³⁷ into "one of the most remarkable products of our contemporary newspaper publishing business".³⁸

While it is true that from 1973 onward *Start* offered its readership much more than just pictures of semi-naked women, from a gender perspective, there was little that this self-proclaimed magazine for the modern individual offered to the Yugoslav modern woman. For example, although *Start* was (and still is among those who remember it) considered as the Yugoslav version of *Playboy*, Saračević liked to describe it as the magazine for the modern individual that paid "particular attention to the fact that a true self-manager is only a completely free and educated personality".³⁹ The statistics have largely confirmed his claims. *Start* was read predominantly in large urban centers; alongside Zagreb and Belgrade, it was sold mostly in the twenty biggest Yugoslav cities. Its readership was made up largely of students and intellectuals between the ages of twenty and fifty, of whom 35 % were women. Proportionately, only 17 % of the readership were blue-collar workers.⁴⁰ Despite *Start*'s remarkable metamorphosis into a forum promoting social progress as well as intellectual (and, to a lesser extent, political) criticism, it has continued to consistently represent women as undressed, aesthetically pleasing and sexually arousing bodies.

35 T. SABLJAK, *Erotika između kulture i konjunktura (Erotica Between Culture and Conjuncture)*, in: *Kulturni život*, Vol 17, No. 6, June 1975, p. 349.

36 As an example, I cite an interview with Zlatko Uzelac, Secretary of the Interior (i.e. Minister of Police) of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. M. TRNSKI, *Startov intervju: Zlatko Uzelac (Start's Interview: Zlatko Uzelac)*, in: *Start*, No. 297, June 11, 1980, pp. 14–17.

37 D. GOLUBOVIĆ, *Start su čitali svi, od vozača kamiona do doktora nauka (Start Was Read by Everyone from Truck Drivers to PhDs)*, in: *XXZ Magazin*, March 20, 2018, <https://www.xxz-magazin.com/start-su-citali-svi-od-vozaca-kamiona-do-doktora-nauka>.

38 V. LAMZA, *Analiza Starta (The Analysis of Start)*, Zagreb 1978, p. 1.

39 S. SARAČEVIĆ, *Među nama (Between Us)*, in: *Start*, No. 200, September 22, 1976, p. 9.

40 G. MANČE, *Profili čitalačkih publika (Profiles of Reading Audiences)*, (Zagreb 1976), pp. 164–166.

START AND SLAVICAS

Although *Start's* editorial board argued that erotic content in their magazine should be understood as a contribution to women's emancipation, their position on this issue can be much better classified as aesthetic antifeminism. However, the distortion of the notion of emancipation and what it, in reality, entails on the part of *Start's* journalistic team's male members affects more than their interpretation of erotic photography. As that was openly at variance with the officially promoted version of the so-called socialist morale, so was representation of women in the majority of other contributions to the magazine, including the interpretation of the women's participation in the People's Liberation Struggle.

In order to illustrate *Start's* journalists' initial attitude toward the project of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia in the 1970s, in this section I will analyze three contributions that concentrate on the figure of Slavica, the protagonist of the first Yugoslav film of the same name released in 1947. As Jelena Batinić writes, "the film encapsulates the revolutionary vision of the *partizanka*".⁴¹ In order to depict the scope of revolutionary changes, Slavica not only asked her loved one, Marin, to marry her, but also requested to be entrusted with a weapon. In that moment, the unit commander, Ivo Marušić, explained to Slavica's mother, who protested against it, as well as to the viewing public, that Slavica "has both of her hands and a head" and, therefore, has a right to fight. With these words, the director, speaking through the character of Ivo Marušić, defined the war as an endeavor to be undertaken by both men and women, despite the traditional definitions of gender roles, and provided her with a handgun.

However, the director did not go so far as to put Slavica in a situation to fire a gun in order to kill the enemy. Moreover, with the exception of the scene in which Slavica receives the gun, it remains hidden from the eyes of the audience throughout the remainder of the film. That is to say, although a revolutionary icon, Slavica is also "a socialist icon of femininity".⁴² She is at once a representative of the new gender order in Yugoslavia, as well as the limits it retained.⁴³ Thus, instead of actually fighting, she is presented as serving as a guard, agitator, courier and, above all, nurse. By appearing in some of the non-combatant roles that women could engage in within the NOB as members of the partisan army, she testifies to the commitment of the communist leadership to women's emancipation and its limits. It is important to mention that, according to film critic Nenad Polimac, following the film's release it was viewed by

41 J. BATINIĆ, *Gender, Revolution, and War: The Mobilization of Women in the Yugoslav Partisan Resistance during World War II*, Diss., Stanford University 2009, p. 305.

Similarly, in his doctoral dissertation, Nebojša Jovanović assessed Slavica as "a paean to the partisan woman". There, he also provided a compelling analysis of the film: N. JOVANOVIĆ, *Gender and Sexuality in the Classical Yugoslav Cinema, 1947–1962*, Diss., Central European University 2014, pp. 79–83, quote on 86.

42 N. VITTORELLI, *With or Without Gun. Staging Female Partisans in Socialist Yugoslavia*, in: M. JAKIŠA and N. GILIĆ, *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film and Visual Culture*, Bielefeld 2015, p. 119.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 119/120.



approximately two million citizens of Yugoslavia. It was a record that, in the subsequent ten years, only the Hollywood 1944 musical *Bathing Beauty* (appearing in Yugoslav cinemas in the mid-1950s) managed to approach.⁴⁴ Precisely because of the film's popularity with people in Yugoslavia and across generations, it is intriguing to discover how this character was represented and reshaped in *Start*.

First, in the winter of 1972 there appeared the interview with Irena Kolesar, the actress who played the cinematic Slavica, entitled "They Still Call Her Slavica."⁴⁵ It was published in *Start* at around the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Slavica's* release, as well as in the period when the actress retired and prepared to return to Zagreb after almost twenty years of living and working in Belgrade. None of this was mentioned in the published text. Instead, the interviewer opted for a somewhat melancholic review of Kolesar's life filled with observations about her sentiments with regard to a number of wartime situations, including the making of the mentioned film. The emphasis of the interview was on Kolesar's war experience, from going "into the woods" in order to become a partisan fighter, through the creation of the partisan theater in her home unit, to participating in the making of the first Yugoslav film. At the same time, none of the illustrations showed Kolesar during the war. Alongside a few headshots from her films (but not *Slavica*), the photograph that dominates the interview shows Kolesar knitting at home, in an armchair (Figure 1). The text next to this photo highlights some of the most prominent gendered stereotypes by mentioning her marital status and the fact that she has no children. However, her favorite hobby is mentioned to reassure the reader that she is nonetheless completely domesticated. Therefore, the journalist can conclude that she is a real — cute and lovely — woman.

During the interview, both Kolesar's musings about the war and the making of the film are rose-colored: "The atmosphere in the film was the same as the one I was used to in the war. I played the role of the girl I really was then."⁴⁶ Even when she talks about how the partisan comrades did not want to provide protection for the members of the wartime theater who were part of individual military units, and often left them to fend for themselves during the battles, those memories are not negatively intoned. That this is not just a pose set up for the readership testifies Kolesar's autobiographical text published a decade later. There, she notes:

We were all different... sympathizers, communists, leftists, rightists, orthodox, Russophiles, Anglophiles, democrats, internationalists... Some could not overcome fear, others thirst, hunger... some always spoke, others always kept silent, some thought they had to control everything, one would give everything, the other would take. Some did not even keep watch, and were only mildly reprimanded. There are stories for novels. But one

44 N. POLIMAC, *Kako se Irena Kolesar proslavila Slavicom i upropastila filmsku karijeru* (How *Slavica* Made Irena Kolesar Famous and Ruined Her Film Career), in: Nacional, No. 356, September 11, 2002. <http://arhiva.nacional.hr/clanak/11690/kako-se-irena-kolesar-proslavila-8216slavicom8217-i-upropastila-filmsku-karijeru>.

45 Đ. ZAGORAC, *Još uvijek je zovu Slavica* (They Still Call Her Slavica), in: *Start*, No. 80, February 9, 1972, pp. 26–28.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 28.



FIGURE 1: Irena Kolesar in *Start*. The text accompanying the photograph reads: “In her apartment in Jug Bogdana Street no. 18 Irena Kolesar lives alone. She is divorced, has no children. Her main concern is the theater and her parents. She was born in [Slavonski] Brod, lived in Zagreb, and became a great actress in Belgrade. Irena does not paint, does not play: she prefers to knit... cute, lovely, she wins hearts easily!” (Đ. ZAGORAC, *Još uvijek je zovu Slavica* (*They Still Call Her Slavica*), in: *Start*, No. 80, February 9, 1972, p. 27.)



*thing feels nice in my soul: it was not important what my religion was or how I spoke. [...] We were different, but connected.*⁴⁷

At the same time, Kolesar expresses the need to defend her memories from the contemporary public. As the journalist himself testified, the actress was not particularly inclined to talk about her war experience and he used the topic of love and sex in the partisan army as an illustration. Specifically, given that she was interviewed in the early days of *Start*, it is not surprising that, alongside the expected set of questions, the journalist tried to dig out some information on “[h]ow did they make love in that warstorm”. However, Kolesar refused to focus on the physical aspect to which the question alluded and, instead, highlighted the emotional dimension by insisting that she experienced “the purest love” during the war.⁴⁸ While she mentioned that she slept with a comrade under the same military overcoat for many nights without even thinking of sex, the fact that she got married in 1944 (and, presumably, consummated the marriage) remained unmentioned.⁴⁹ Apparently, she was worried that many of

⁴⁷ I. KOLESAR, *Moji doživljaji i moja sjećanja* (*My Experiences and My Memories*), in: Dani Hvarškoga kazališta: Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu, Vol. 10, 1983, p. 280.

⁴⁸ ZAGORAC, *Još uvijek je zovu Slavica*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Interestingly enough, in the aforementioned article based on her memories the actress did not mention the relationship with and marriage to Šima Šimatović, one of the founders



her contemporaries (she classified them as members of the younger generations) did not understand or care enough to appreciate the wartime camaraderie, but instead favored considering the partisan army as a site of debauchery.⁵⁰

One year later — that is to say, shortly after Saračević became editor-in-chief and the first changes to *Start*'s concept were implemented, but still before the magazine became recognized as the Yugoslav epitome of elitist journalism — Vjekoslav Afrić, *Slavica*'s screenwriter and director, spoke with another *Start* interviewer. In order to follow up on the news that director Obrad Gluščević and cameraman, Nenad Jovičić, were planning a remake of *Slavica*, the magazine published an interview with the director of the cult film in May 1973. Discussing the director's inspiration, the conditions of working on the film, and the reactions of the audience and the critics, the journalist, in cooperation with Afrić, gave a comprehensive overview of the making of the film. This was complemented with a collage of photographs taken during the filming, and the director himself sitting behind his desk is positioned in the foreground (Figure 2). The men finished the conversation with some remarks regarding the significance of the announced new version of the film in comparison to the original *Slavica*.⁵¹

In comparison to Irena Kolesar's interview, the outline and tone of Afrić's talk are significantly different as they are oriented towards an explanation of the conditions surrounding the making of the film, as well as Afrić's considerations of the planned remake. While Kolesar's remembering of making the film is reduced to the sense of partisan togetherness in which she was lucky to participate, Afrić's considerations focused on his own perseverance and sense of pride. After enumerating a number of his own merits, the director concluded: "It is known in what conditions it was created and what it meant for our film."⁵² Finally, the need to justify himself and, at the same time, separate his wartime experience from the modern representation of the partisan struggle, so plainly evident in Kolesar's answers, is not in the least visible in Afrić's interview. Instead, this man draws his authority precisely on his war experience and the events that took place immediately after it.

In the editorial of the same edition, Saračević explicitly connected the cinematic *Slavica* with the girl of the same name who appeared on the cover and in the center-fold. Importantly, the first *Slavica* he mentioned was not the protagonist of Afrić's film. The seventeen-year-old girl he first focused on, Saračević states, "would not be interesting if she was not a girl from Osijek who lives in Zagreb and her grandfather is Japanese, and [she is interesting] mostly because this Esseker-Japanese combination made *Slavica* a very attractive girl."⁵³ Only then does he mention the film that focused on the girl partisan bearing the name *Slavica*. Such arrangement of priorities suggests that the way in which he imagines a *Slavica* has precedence over talking about the real *Slavica* (Figure 3). In a broader sense, it justifies Irena Kolesar's wish to explain her participation in the partisan army and strictly separate it from, what was

of the theater group in their home unit, although she at length described the events in the Congress of Cultural Workers held in Topusko (Croatia) during which they got married.

50 ZAGORAC, *Još uvijek je zovu Slavica*, p. 28.


51 B. ĐORĐEVIĆ, *Još jedna Slavica? (Another Slavica?)*, in: *Start*, No. 113, May 23, 1973, pp. 10–12.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

53 S. SARAČEVIĆ, *Editor's Letter*, in: *Start*, No. 113, May 23, 1973, p. 6.



Kolaž fotografija iz doba kada je snimana »Slavica«, mladi Afrić uz kameru. Irena Kolesar (Slavica) pomaže kamerici pridržavajući paletu s vodenim bojama. Dolje Marin ranjen u ruku (kadar iz filma) i (sasvim dolje) Vjekoslav Afrić danas. Autor ovog članka Afrić je iznio svoju viziju nove Slavice. Ona je, kaže on, optimizam, veselje, radostan i ponosan duh, koji znači i širok, ljudski pogled na svijet.

 NEKAD I SAD

JOŠ

»Slavica« je snimana kamerom koja je imala jednu kazetu od 100 m filmske vrpce; snimanje se često prekidalo. Sve je radeno u eksterijerima jer pogodnih interijera i rasvjete jednostavno nije bilo

FIGURE 2: Vjekoslav Afrić with a collage of photographs taken during the shooting of *Slavica*. The text in black rectangle reads: “*Slavica* was filmed with one camera that had one 100 meter-long film tape: filming was often interrupted. Everything was done in the exteriors because there simply were no suitable interiors and lighting.” (B. ĐORĐEVIĆ, *Još jedna Slavica?* (*Another Slavica?*), in: *Start*, No. 113, May 23, 1973, p. 10.)

at that time, the prevalent opinion about the widespread presence of sexual relations among male and female partisan soldiers.

Through these three contributions, it is possible to discern how men approached (the actress who played) *Slavica*, how they talked to each other about *Slavica*, and, as (perhaps only) coincidence permitted, how they imagined a *Slavica*. They demon-

SADRŽAJ:

BRJ 113 — 23. V 1973.

stranica:

DANAS I SUTRA

4 Mali zeleni

ANKETA

7 Pitanja o seksologiji

NEKAD I SAD

10 Još jedna »Slavica«?

AUTOMOBILI

13 Rolls Royce

ZANIMANJA

16 Nevjeste neba

PUTOPII

20 Čisti Chicago

MEDICINA

24 Termograf otkriva rak

AVANTURE

26 Preživjeti!

LICNOSTI

30 Toma Bebić vjeran sibi

ESTRADA

32 Kovčič: Lola moj uzori!

IZ KAMERE MAJSTORA

ČETKOVICA

34 Slavica

MOTORI

38 Mnogo novca za malo

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POVIJEST

41 Velike horizontalke

OD A DO Z

43 »Startov« Seksikon (1)

BESTSELER

46 Sybilla (2)

SLIKARSTVO

51 Superrealist Hoffman

MODA

54 Kupaće gaćice

FILM

56 »Modrobradove« ljepotica

STARTOVA PRICA

58 Majdak: Ključevi

DRUGA STRANA MEDALJE

60 »Doria« otpisan?

Burton



Robertsoni



Slavica



Afrić



Bebić



Alli



Kao i obično kada nešto za-
goleta pozornost odgovora na
nezasitnu znatiželju nikada do-
sta. Tako i sada kada je u
»Startu« startala Sibylla D. Donet.
»Radi li se zbilja o istinitom
dogadaju?« »Je li moguće da u
jednoj istoj ženi živi sesnaest o-
soba?« Mi odgovaramo — jest!
Zbilo se to u Americi, a roman
se već prevodi na dvanaest je-
zika, između ostalog i na slo-
venski. Roman »Sibylla« sažeti
je i fabulirani dnevnik istini-
tog psihijatrijskog slučaja. Ali,
u ovom broju ima osim Sibylle i
drugih zanimljivosti. Najveća je
svakako pripovijest Lyn Rob-
ertson koja na potresan način
govori o spašavanju šest golih
životia iz brodoloma iako se ra-
di o brodu veličine dva obična
krevela. Plovidba je završila
vrlo dramatično, gotovo i tragi-
čno, što bi moglo biti upozore-
nje i onima koji se i na našem
Jadrnu ponašaju ponekad isu-
više neoprezno čak i za običnu
kadu s vodom, a kamo li za mo-
re. »Start« ovaj put govori i o
dvije Slavice: o jednoj koja i ne
bi bila zanimljiva da se ne radi
o Osjetkanki koja živi u Zagrebu
a djed joj je Japanac, a ponaj-
više stoga što je ta esekersko-
japanska kombinacija sačinila
od Slavice jako privlačnu curu.
Druga »Slavica« je ustvari po-
novna ekranizacija našega film-

skoga prvenca o čemu nam go-
vori njegov režiser Vjeklo Afrić.
Za Splićane će posebno zanim-
ljiv biti razgovor s Tomom Be-
bićem, nekadašnjim policajcem,
podoficrom, nastavnikom i ra-
dnikom a danas poznatim kant-
autorom i piscem koji za naše
čitaoce na svoj način govori o
tome kako nije postao splićki
ridikul iako i dandanas živi na
svoju ruku. A kada smo već u
tom čarobnom svijetu zabave (a
čovjeku je zabava iekako po-
trebna, priznali mi to ili ne
lječnici štoviše tvrde: što ma-

nje zabave to više infarkta) iz
svijeta objavljujemo reportažu
o najnovijoj ulozi Richarda
Burtona u kojoj je dao svoju
filmsku verziju sloglasnog »Mo-
drobradog«, davičelja žena. I na
kraju opet nam se javlja u listu
Mohamed Ali, nekadašnji
Cassius Clay. Kako mu je ru-
ka, očito, slomula a čitave su
mu se noge usporile čini se da
je nekadašnji super-boksač na-
kon istakne lakote aktivirao
mozak i bacio se u pjesništvo
što samo po sebi i ne bi bilo
toliko značajno (njegove transfor-
macije mado koga više uzbuđu-
ju) da na temelju tih svojih
pjevanja nije dobio ponudu ko-
jom mu se ni manje ni više —
nudi katedra na sveučilištu u
Oxfordu. A to je onda ipak već
vrijeme za »Start«.



Rješanjem broj 3407/5-1972
od 25. XII 1972. Republičkog
sekretarijata za prosvjetu
kulturu i fizičku kulturu SR
Hrvatske, »Start« je oslobo-
đen od opreuzivanja proizvo-
da i isluga u prometu.

Uređuje redakcijski kolegij. Glavni i odgovorni urednik: SEAD SARACEVIĆ — Izdavač: OOUR Izda-
vačke djelatnosti »Vjesnik«, Lj. Gerovac 1 — Tisak: OOUR Novinsko-revizijalna štamparija, »Vjesnik«,
Lj. Gerovac 1 — Zagreb, 1972. g. — Adresa redakcije: »Start«, Zagreb, Lj. Gerovac 1. Telefon: 515-353.
Telex: 21-151. Oglasi: Agencija za marketing »Vjesnik«, Zagreb, Trg bratstva i jedinstva 8. telefon
418-055. Cijena oglasa: Crnobijela stranica 10.000.— dinara, stranica u boji 13.000.— dinara, posljednja
stranica 15.000.— dinara. List izlazi svake druge srijede. Cijena primjerka 5 d. Prodaja i preplata: Ze-
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Poštarina plaćena u gotovu. Rukopisi i fotografije ne vraćaju se. Cijene tromjesečne preplate u ino-
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»Vjesnikove« press agencije (VPA). — Stručni savjetnik za pitanja seksologije: Dr. Marijan Kočić

FIGURE 3: Saračević' editorial featuring photographs of the individuals appearing in the current edition. Both Vjekoslav Afrić and "the other" Slavica are represented among them. (S. SARACEVIĆ, *Editor's Letter*, in: *Start*, No. 113, May 23, 1973, p. 6.)

strate that the representation of women in *Start* had been narrow in scope from the beginning, and that the gendered essentialization of women in this magazine had the shape of full-fledged sexualization of their bodies. Although the first such print media appeared only a few years before — Yugoslav filmmaking certainly led in this regard⁵⁴ — the degree of sexualization of women's bodies in the public sphere was so

⁵⁴ A (partially uncovered) woman's nipple appeared for the first time in a historical melodrama *Hanka* released in 1955. Moreover, the so-called *novi film* of the 1960s often focused on,

widespread that the editorial board considered it completely acceptable to publish photographs of a semi-naked minor on the cover of their magazine.

Consequently, such tendency thoroughly colored the way in which *Start*'s journalists portrayed women who participated in the NOB and, thus, enabled the progress of the process of emancipation. In general, the fundamental characteristic of any real or imagined woman soldier, including the Yugoslav *partizanka*, was her preparedness to 'take it like a man'. However, although the interview represents Irena Kolesar primarily as one-time *partizanka* and as the actress who played a *partizanka*, by emphasizing the emotions of the actress and by avoiding any war-related illustrations, it "undoes" some of the intensity associated with the action of the battle".⁵⁵ *Start*'s men did not wish to explore masculine properties in beings they intended and wanted to be stereotypically feminine. For this reason, Kolesar is portrayed according to the established gender norms that describe women as emotional and sensitive, cute and lovely. Since *Start* was the magazine fostering a certain reputation, the interviewer also asked her a sex-related teaser question in order to bring her closer to the "other" Slavica — that is to say, to *Start*'s norm of women's representation.

In addition, a deep social ambivalence towards women's service in combat roles can be recognized in the difference between Kolesar's and Afrić's interview. While Afrić is not a typical partisan soldier, he became one of the most prominent men of the partisan theater who retained some of that glory throughout his life. His interview reads like a list consisting of important things he did during the war and in the first post-war years, each of them explained as a small heroic deed. And, although *Start*'s journalists tended to ask the majority of their interlocutors questions related to sex, nothing of the sort appeared in this interview. Instead, Afrić was, in the interview in question, treated as a respected professional who had knowledge and experience to offer to the readership; this is before showing respect to the interlocutors became the practice of this magazine's editorial staff.

OLD SOLUTIONS FOR THE NEW TIMES

As a result of changing the magazine's concept, most of the editorial staff and, consequently, the approach to publication-worthy material, *Start* became an acclaimed magazine by the end of the researched period (1969–1980). In addition, as the aforementioned anonymous author suggested in 1979, it is possible to justifiably claim

and in a quite drastic manner, treated and denigrated women's sexuality. In this regard, once again I find Nebojša Jovanović's analysis of an aspect of Yugoslav cinema worthy of mention, as I think that his discussion of the *novi film*'s directors' treatment of women and their sexuality to be particularly on point. In: JOVANOVIĆ, *Gender and Sexuality*, pp. 27–31. Towards the end of the 1960s, the portrayal of the naked female body in Yugoslav cinematography became so prevalent (rampant even) that Veselko Tenžera in 1979 writes that it "has in the last ten years barely made a movie without a naked woman". TENŽERA, *Ideologija 'naše cure'*, p. 18.

55 E. BERGER and D. NAAMAN, *Combat Cuties: Photographs of Israeli Women Soldiers in the Press since the 2006 Lebanon War*, in: *Media War & Conflict*, Vol. 4, No. 3, January 2012, p. 272.



that, during this decade, *Start* indeed contributed to the change of “our traditional attitude toward corporeality”⁵⁶ as the offer of erotic — and, in the second half of the 1980s, pornographic — content in the Yugoslav press only grew over time. Already from the early 1970s, many daily newspapers, as well as various entertainment weeklies and monthlies, published erotic photographs of semi-naked young women.⁵⁷ In 1988, Vesna Kesić wrote: “Perhaps it is worth recalling that everything that was labeled as lascivious and pornographic in the then *Start* can now be seen on the ‘lighter’ entertaining pages of *Vjesnik* and *Večernji list* [the two highest-circulation daily newspapers in Croatia].”⁵⁸

However, what *Start* failed to do is help change societal perceptions of women’s and men’s roles in Yugoslav society through the supposedly liberating approach to women’s corporeality. According to the journalists who worked for *Start* in the beginning of the 1970s, as well as — according to, for the most part, altered and considerably younger — editorial staff at the end of the same decade, masculinities and femininities continued to be considered as two distinct categories made up of unchanging rules and behavior expectations.⁵⁹ Due to the uncertainty of how to handle the part of history that included the participation of an unprecedented number of women in the war conflict, various different representations of militarized womanhood appeared throughout the Yugoslav media landscape.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, *Start*’s editorial board tended to interpret the masculinities and femininities appropriate for their magazine always in the same way. Thanks to the changes that took place following the appointment of Sead Saračević as editor-in-chief, erotic photographs and lascivious texts were, by the mid-1970s, limited. In 1975, Saračević writes:

We talked last week about what is and what is not Start’s topic... And in the end we concluded that such questions are posed by those who either do not read our magazine or buy it occasionally just to peek into it, into those colorful pages with beauties, by those who think that we publish Start just because of that ten or so photographs in each edition, but do not see or do not want to read all those 96 pages that unequivocally prove that this magazine keeps track of e v e r y t h i n g that could be of interest to at least slightly educated man of ours, the modern reader. As there are too many of such people among our readers, and interest in our magazine grows day by day in all parts of this country, today we can take the liberty of telling those — whose numbers are insignificant — who

56 —, O ‘Startu’ od starta, p. 17.

57 S. MIHELJ, *Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West: Uplifting the Working People, Entertaining the Masses, Cultivating the Nation*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 53, No. 3, July 2011, pp. 529–530.

58 V. KESIĆ, *Sead Saračević: Savoir Vivre*, in: *Start*, No. 500, March 18, 1988, p. 18.

59 The exceptions to this rule are young female journalists who joined the editorial staff toward the end of the 1970s (as earlier mentioned Vesna Kesić). They belonged to the group of Yugoslav women inspired by the second wave feminism coming from the West and wrote many of their contributions in line with the feminist thinking of American, British and French authors and activists.

60 I. JELUŠIĆ, *Gender and War in the Yugoslav Media: The Role of Partizanke in the Making of the New Socialist Woman*, Diss., Central European University, forthcoming.

buy us just for looking the following: 'Talk to your news vendor in order to sell you the German *Sexy* or *Bravo*. These are the magazines just for looking. And stop buying *Start*: in that sense, you will be disappointed with it.' Because, an erotic photo of a Sinonyama is not for such people. They will not find what they are looking for in his paintings because this Japanese man is not exploring female sexuality on camera, but the eternally playful shape of a woman's body.⁶¹



However, turning away from sex-imbued topics towards current events in culture, science and politics affected the content disproportionately. Women continued to dominate the front pages and centerfolds, and only occasionally appeared as interlocutors for journalists in the magazine's most prestigious column "*Start's* Interview." In this case, it is a matter of marginalization; apparently, *Start's* journalists rarely came across a woman they considered worthy of a guest appearance in "*Start's* Interview." For instance, also in 1975, three women were interviewed in twenty-four published editions (meaning the same number of published "*Start's* Interviews"). However, with regard to the topic of women in war, the magazine's content shows a continuing rejection of the figure of the woman soldier, the *partizanka*. Plain quantitative analysis shows that the *Start* editorial board most often opted to simply ignore this part of the wartime history and leave it out of the content of the magazine. In the rare occasions when they published contributions featuring women in war, they favored substituting them with more mundane imagery offered by "ideal-typical militarized femininities" that presented women's wartime activities within the traditional boundaries of femininity.⁶²

In order to illustrate this point further, I will in the following section present the analysis of contributions, focusing on historical topics that were published during the ten-month period in which Dušan Bilandžić's most recent research appeared in *Start*. Bilandžić was a political scientist and historian of socialist Yugoslavia as well as, among many other things, dean of the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb from 1974 and 1979. During 1977 and 1978 (more precisely: from the beginning of June 1977 until the end of March 1978), *Start's* editorial board, in as many as twenty-two editions, speared three to five pages (in each) to publicize Bilandžić's scientific assessment of "Tito's historical work". In other words, in order to observe Tito's jubilee year,⁶³ Bilandžić presented the history of the Yugoslav communist party from 1928 onwards. Special emphasis was on Marshal's role in the Party during the interwar period, his role in the NOB, in post-war nation building and in the development of the self-governing system, all by way of exemplary dry historical analysis.⁶⁴ These texts were, in fact, a part of Bilandžić's more extensive research that was, for the first time, published in 1978 in the book *History of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugosla-*

61 S. SARAČEVIĆ, *Među nama* (*Between Us*), in: *Start*, No. 157, January 29, 1975, p. 9.

62 C. E. GENTRY and L. SJÖBERG, *Beyond Mothers Monsters Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics*, London and New York 2007, p. 7.

63 Year 1977 was for Tito year of "the double jubilee". He turned eighty-five and marked the fortieth anniversary of the arrival at the helm of the Party.

64 First appeared: D. BILANDŽIĆ, *Na tragu Titova historijskog puta* (*On the Trail of Tito's Historic Path*), in: *Start*. No. 218, June 1, 1977, pp. 18–22.



via: *Main Processes*.⁶⁵ The editorial decision to spare so much space over a prolonged period is important because it is an unparalleled indication that, toward the end of the 1970s, this magazine reached a degree of self-confidence as well as recognition to which entertainment magazines usually did not reach, and beyond which one such magazine probably could not go.

By that time, contributions on historical topics — most often politics- and war-related events of the twentieth century — were among the fundamental elements of *Start's* content. From the mid-1970s onwards, each edition contained at least one contribution on a historical topic. More often, however, there were two or three.⁶⁶ These contributions were inspired by relevant anniversaries, but also newly released memoirs and popular history books, documentary and fiction television shows and exhibitions. During the ten months when Bilandžić's research was published, I did not find any other text (except Bilandžić's articles) on historical topics in only three editions. In the remaining nineteen editions, I counted as many as forty-six articles that dealt with a number of different historical topics (commemorations, interviews, event reviews and serialized feuilletons, but excluding "*Start's* Interview" rubric). Including Bilandžić's work, a total of fifty-eight articles were published during this period, which is consistent with the standard number of such contents during one year while Saračević was the editor-in-chief.

Out of twenty-two chapters about the history of socialist Yugoslavia authored by Bilandžić, four deal with the history of the NOB. An additional nine articles published throughout the period in question focus on the same topic. The total amount of listed contributions thematizing the wartime corresponds to the norm of this magazine. At the same time, the number of articles that focus on, or at least mention, women as participants of the NOB in particular, or the Second World War in general, is smaller in this period. While I encountered two, occasionally three, such contributions throughout one year, only one single contribution in this entire period brings forth the figure of a woman in war.⁶⁷ It is the last, fourth, installment of the

65 D. BILANDŽIĆ, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: glavni procesi (History of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia: Main Processes)*, Zagreb 1978.

66 This information is primarily extracted from the book *Analiza Starta (The Analysis of Start)* authored by Vesna Lamza after *Vjesnik*, the publishing company that issued *Start*, commissioned quantitative analysis of its content in 1978. It should be mentioned that, unlike the *Vjesnik's* team that did the quantitative analysis of this magazine in 1978, I do not consider history to be only a part of politics. Therefore, I estimated that there were more of such contributions than they did.

67 Overall, among the remaining contributions on historical topics, only two historical feuilletons spare some space on female characters, but not one other contribution focuses on a female figure. Namely, the magazine published parts of Noel Barber's book *The Lords of the Golden Horn: From Suleiman the Magnificent to Kamal Atatürk* published in 1973. Two of the four installments feature information about the sultan's harem, his wives, and "Suleiman's love life". N. BARBER, *Sulejmanov ljubavni život (Suleiman's Love Life)*, in: *Start*, No. 230, November 16, 1977, pp. 63–66; idem, *Harem na dnu Bospora (Harem at the Bottom of the Bosphorus)*, in: *Start*, No. 232, December 14, 1977, pp. 67–71.

The following, five-part long historical narrative uses the materials from Alice-Leone Moats' 1977 book *The Billion Dollar Studs*. It recounts the lives of the Georgian Mdivani brothers, de-



feuilleton inspired by the 1971 memoir of Tilla Durieux, but entitled “Great Men of Art at the Crossroads of War”. Durieux, a Viennese born as Ottilie Godefroy in 1880, was presented to *Start*’s readership as “one of the most striking phenomena of German theater, and of cultural history in general.”⁶⁸ In the second installment of the feuilleton, her position is further explained: “As the wife of patron and cultural animator Paul Cassierre, the famous German actress Tilla Durieux has for almost a century been at the center of a circle of artists who have left their mark on an era of European art.”⁶⁹ Partly recounting the sections of Durieux’s narrative he found most relevant, and partly quoting the memoir, Šembera in the first two sequels describes Durieux as the wife of a remarkable man surrounded by a procession of similarly remarkable men, and who was also a famous actress. An interpretation of Durieux’s life through her connections to other relevant individuals, all men, in Germany during the first decades of the twentieth century may have been intended to emphasize the actress’ importance. At the same time, it is very similar to the description of Irena Kolesar’s professional development: both seem to owe their achievements to successful men who noticed and hired their talent. It, therefore, highlights the exceptionality of a successful woman’s presence in the public sphere.

In the last installment of this feuilleton, the one constitutive for the current analysis, Šembera focuses on the actress’ life in Zagreb just before, during and after the Second World War. In 1937, Durieux and her second husband settled in Zagreb, staying with distant relative and long-time friend, Countess Zlata Lubienski. Ustasha rule, supported by German-Italian protection, became more brutal as the war dragged on and the partisan movement strengthened, and both Durieux and Lubienski joined the activities of the partisan resistance in Zagreb.⁷⁰ The women collected food, clothing, medicine and money for the communist-led Red Aid, smuggled documents, hid couriers, and established contact with an unnamed German anti-Nazi who worked in the German embassy.

According to an excerpt from her memoir and Šembera’s brief explanations, these people “with clenched fists in their pockets lived through the rule of the Nazis and the Ustashes”.⁷¹ This information-packed, but short, section in no way reveals how dangerous it really was to be an illegal activist in Zagreb. The cited excerpt, for instance, mentions how so-called conspiratorial work in cities functioned as well as the importance of small working groups of people who only knew each other’s

scribed as professional fortune hunters, who pursued American heiresses and movie stars during the interwar period. (First appeared in: A. L. MOATS, *Bračne noći braće Mdivani* (*Mdivani Brothers’ Wedding Nights*), in: *Start*, No. 233, December 28, 1977, pp. 82–84.

68 S. ŠEMBERA, *Velikani umjetnosti na ratnim raskršćima* (1): *Tilla Durieux protiv kajzera* (*Great Men of Art at the Crossroads of War* (1): *Tilla Durieux Against the Kaiser*), in: *Start*, No. 215, April 20, 1977, p. 37.

69 S. ŠEMBERA, *Velikani umjetnosti na ratnim raskršćima* (2): *Oblaci nad Europom* (*Great Men of Art at the Crossroads of War* (2): *Clouds Over Europe*), in: *Start*, No. 216, April 5, 1977, p. 80.

70 Durieux’s second husband, Ludwig Katzenellebogen, was arrested in Thessaloniki (Greece) in 1941 and taken to Germany. There, he was imprisoned at the Oranienburg concentration camp and died in the Berlin Jewish Hospital in 1944.

71 S. ŠEMBERA, *Velikani umjetnosti na ratnim raskršćima* (4): *Tillina utjeha-Zagreb* (*Great Men of Art at the Crossroads of War* (4): *Tilla’s Solace — Zagreb*), in: *Start*, No. 218, June 1, 1977, p. 87.



nicknames. However, the quoted part does not mention how often the members of such groups changed in order to replace those who were caught, tortured and killed in Ustasha prisons and camps, or fled “into the woods” where, if not safer, it was then certainly easier to work because it was known exactly who the enemy was.⁷² There are two reasons for this. The first is a somewhat ironic way of storytelling that Durieux was prone to and that is felt throughout her memoir.⁷³ The second is way in which Šembera simplistically explained large sections of the text and thereby diluted Durieux’s words. From his presentation it was not possible to discern what it was like to be a famous German actress who was visited by many Nazi officials in the NDH and who accepted their attention because in that way the house she lived in — that is, the materials and money she collected and people she hid from time to time — was safe from raids.⁷⁴

In other words, emphasizing the importance and courage of the feats undertaken by a particular individual or a group during the war was commonplace in the Yugoslav printed press including *Start*. Indeed, although *Start*’s journalists as a rule worked hard to bring content that was original and not printed elsewhere — or, at least write about it in a different, more innovative way — when they wrote about the NOB they did not avoid mentioning the relevance of agency of individuals. However, that is not the case with the feuilleton about Durieux. A good comparison, within the boundaries of the mentioned ten months, provides the article published on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the 1943 Sutjeska battle. On this occasion, a research by a *Vjesnik* employee was published. It dealt with the discovery of the identity of the four individuals captured in one of the photographs taken by Žorž Skrigin during that battle that became venerated throughout Yugoslavia in the post-war years. While describing it, the journalist writes: “Some of the fighters in the picture, especially the one holding the horse by the halter, look like faces from medieval frescoes. The anxiety of the moment, the upheaval of that time, the horror of war can be read from their eyes.”⁷⁵ A similar tone is maintained throughout the article. The merits of the photographer, Skrigin, who immortalized that moment as well as a number of others (which is why he, like Afrić, remained famous in the following decades), are especially emphasized and lauded. As for the four partisans in the photo and Major General Obrad Egić, who helped the journalist establish their identities, the author of the article focused on the facts arising from their military service. That is, he enumerated their merits and successes, thus underlining the pertinence of their participation in the war effort. Due to the emphasis on the achievements of each individual mentioned in the article, regardless of whether he is a photographer, a Major General or, in the case of the aforementioned Vjekoslav Afrić, actor and director, these articles clearly affirm

72 Slava Ogrizović’s memoir *Odmazda (Retaliation)* first published in 1961 is a good example of a contrasting description of the life of an illegal activist in Zagreb during the war.

73 T. DURIEUX, *Mojih prvih devedeset godina (My First Ninety Years)*, Zagreb 2001.

74 N. POPOVIĆ, *Pozdrav jednoj zagrebačkoj antifašistici (Greetings to a Zagreb Antifascist Woman)*, in: Radio Gornji Grad, August 11, 2016, <https://radiogornjigrad.wordpress.com/2016/08/11/nenad-popovic-pozdrav-jednoj-zagrebackoj-antifasistici/>.

75 S. ZVIZDIĆ, *Prava istina o poznatoj fotografiji (The Real Truth about the Famous Photography)*, in: *Start*, No. 235, January 25, 1978, p. 35.

traditionally conceptualized masculinity by endorsing the figure of a hardy, steadfast and unwavering partisan fighter, no matter by what means he fought.



CONCLUSION

Throughout the researched period, from the inception of the magazine in 1969 and during the course of the praised and widely approved Sead Saračević's editorship up until 1980, *Start's* journalists insisted on the existing gender inequality. They brought to the fore and reinforced its sexualized dimension. As Myra MacDonald explained in her famous book *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*, the journalists defined female identity as the body that can be either appealing or unappealing to men, and therefore consistently presented women as shaped by their sexual desirability.⁷⁶ *Start's* journalists considered their own views as opposed to the restrictive socialist morale that they termed as 'our girl' ideology. Our girls, they held, should be more open about their sexuality, and the first step towards that would be removing the extra layers of clothing.

Although *Start's* journalists considered themselves modern and progressive, they were unable to come to terms with some elements of the process of women's emancipation in Yugoslavia that had already taken place. Focusing on the representation of war, particularly the People's Liberation Struggle, the analysis demonstrated that journalists' interpretation of war victories and related gains substantially leaned on the idea of the gender paradigm existing (at least) since the interwar period. Despite the multitude of available templates that thoroughly permeated Yugoslav media in all its forms, the *Start* editorial board's interest in women's participation in the NOB was slipshod at best. In November 1978, Saračević's editorial published on the occasion of the publication of the interview with Jara Ribnikar included an excuse to the readership because they will read about such an out-of-date topic in the "*Start's* Interview".⁷⁷ Ribnikar, wartime *partizanka* and an author, has been publishing social-themed literary works since the early 1950s. She also published bits and pieces of her memories concurrently with other literary work. In 1978, she published the first part of a series of memoir prose entitled *Život i priča (Life and Story)*. Hence, Saračević's move — he habitually spared a couple of sentences to introduce *Start's* star interviewee in each edition, but never with an apology — reveals the most in this respect. *Partizanka*, even when she was still an active social actor, was considered as nothing more than yesterday's news.

According to the journalistic mores of the time, *Start* regularly published contents about the People's Liberation Struggle. In accordance with its reputation — as "elitist and being too clever"⁷⁸ — its editorial board dared to publish what other entertainment printed press did not. A good example is Dušan Bilandžić's historical research.

76 M. MACDONALD, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media*, New York 1995.

77 S. SARAČEVIĆ, *Među nama (Between Us)*, in: *Start*, No. 252, September 20, 1978, p. 11.

78 P. RAMET, *The Yugoslav Press in Flux*, in: P. RAMET (ed.), *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*, Boulder and London 1985, p. 108.



At the same time, any kind of contributions about female participants of the NOB were exceedingly rare. The editor-in-chief's apology to the readership for the publication of the interview with one *partizanka* is a good indication why. As “decasyllabic sexual swashbucklers” they were, *Start*'s journalists could have, with enthusiasm, considered the idea of more women stripping for the benefit of their gaze, but struggled to fathom how they could have donned military outfits to participate in the carnage of the NOB. All in all, it is fair to conclude that *Start* all but banished women from its narrative of the partisan struggle and confidently — manly — contributed to the realization of the conditions for their oblivion.