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## **Feminism, Nationalism, and War: The 'Yugoslav Case' in Feminist Texts**

By Jelena Batinic

### **Introduction**

In the last decade, what was known as Yugoslavia disintegrated through a series of wars.<sup>1</sup> These wars are known worldwide for their brutality and for the tragic 'privilege' of imposing the notion of 'ethnic cleansing' to international political discourse. In the Western media, they were often represented as just another phase in everlasting, ancient - even tribal - ethnic tensions, and this representation often merged with an Orientalist discourse of the Balkans.<sup>2</sup> The situation in the former Yugoslavia also became central to numerous feminist texts. Different ideological, cultural, and theoretical assumptions, as well as dependence on different sources, influenced the emergence of different feminist approaches and analyses, and initiated debates and divisions among both local and Western feminists. The remarkable presence and lifespan of this topic in Western feminist publications was due to the fact that, with the case of Bosnian rapes, the issue of systematic, mass rape in war made an unprecedented breakthrough into the international political arena. For women and for feminists around the world, the effects of the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the discourses that surrounded them, had undeniable transnational importance. For the first time, rape in war found its place on the international agenda and in legal and human rights discourses; it was a crucial moment for feminists to try to make critical interventions into these discourses and to struggle for a feminist reconceptualization of violence against women. Some feminists, like Cynthia Enloe (1994), optimistically claimed that this case opened a new era of international political consciousness - the era in which "the construction of the entire international political arena [would] be significantly less vulnerable to patriarchy."<sup>3</sup>

Given the transnational significance of this case, it is important to examine critically the ways in which feminists represented the gender specific violence in the former Yugoslavia, both in terms of its conceptualization and its function in making political claims. Also, given that nationalism in the former Yugoslavia became a destructive and forceful state-supported ideology, and that nationalism-driven wars incorporated gender-specific atrocities, it is equally important to examine the feminist representation of war not only in the context of mass rapes, but also in the broader context of the relationship between feminist and nationalist discourses. The study of feminist reactions to these wars and political engagement with them, as represented and produced by feminist texts will help to understand how a certain type of feminist political subjectivity was constructed in the context of ethnic wars of the 1990s. The specific examination of these texts, I argue, reveals much about the maturity of both the feminist theoretical apparatus and activism as they face the challenges of a complex late modern ethnic conflict and its gender specificities. It reveals much about the still existing weaknesses and - to use Enloe's word - 'vulnerability' of feminism to the "affective nationalist" discourse.<sup>4</sup> Finally, it reveals the pervasiveness of Orientalist patterns in representing the non-Western world, to which some feminist approaches remain susceptible.

This paper presents a study of *feminist representations* of the situation in the former Yugoslavia. I have decided to look at *feminist texts* that were generated in response to the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina,<sup>5</sup> which appeared in both the feminist popular press and scholarly publications *in English*. By focusing on the ideological plane, seen in terms of narrative structures available for speaking and perceiving one's experience, I seek to examine the feminist representation of the conflict of Yugoslav nationalisms and within Yugoslav feminism itself. Narratives are produced in the space where various discourses transpire, compete, and/or converge. I will here concentrate on the narratives through which the specific, *intersectional*<sup>6</sup> experience of ethnic and gender identity of Yugoslav women was *mediated* in feminist texts available in English.<sup>7</sup> I consider these narratives a product of the dynamics of three dominant discourses in feminist texts on Yugoslavia – nationalist, feminist, and Orientalist discourse. I will try to identify the present narratives that feminists used to speak about the experiences of local women and to speak about nationalism and war in the former Yugoslavia. I will examine the ways that nationalist discourse is implicated in these feminist narratives, pointing to critical 'discursive traps' in which feminist representation of the conflict was caught. I am particularly interested in discursive mechanisms or 'traps' whereby, paradoxically, nationalism gets reproduced and reinforced within nominally antinationalist feminism itself.

In my analysis, I rely on Dubravka Zarkov's theoretical approach, which assumes that practices are both represented and constructed through the use of certain discourses. Since neither the authors nor the readers of texts are just passive recipients of discourses, I do not approach feminist texts "merely as reflections on and reports of events." I define the feminist representation of war as a discursive practice through which both nationalist and feminist 'realities' of war are constructed. I assume that feminist texts do not only reflect a feminist view of reality but they also *constitute* a 'reality' themselves and offer politicized subject positions. Thus I do not read feminist texts on the former Yugoslavia as simply conveying information and messages but rather as *defining the feminist self and other* and as *constitutive of a certain type of feminist subjectivity*.<sup>8</sup>

My analysis starts with a hypothesis that both the political context of events in the former Yugoslavia and the set of ideological assumptions that dominated feminist theories of the time shaped feminist representations of the war. The discursive 'reality' of war, constructed through feminist narratives of rape and nationalist narratives of the ethnic self and Other, produced a certain type of politicized feminist action. In order to explore the ways in which this type of politicized subject position is constructed, an examination of the internal theoretical climate in Western feminisms at the time when 'the Yugoslav situation' captured Western feminist attention is necessary. Therefore, I situate the analysis of these narrative structures - which constructed and made a certain type of feminist subjectivity visible - in relation to a broader context of Western feminist dilemmas of the time. I will try to trace the current conundrums in feminist theories, particularly around the issues of rape and pornography, the implicit presence of which, as I will try to show, highly conditioned the reading of the wars by some Western feminists. Also, by placing the narratives in the political context of Yugoslav feminist divisions along national lines, I explore how nationalist ideology played a role in their understanding of the war, and how it subsequently informed and shaped Western feminist discourses on Yugoslavia.

It is important to clarify my use of the phrase 'Western feminism' above and in the following text. 'Western feminism' is not a monolith. There is a wide range of varieties of feminisms found in the 'West,' and it is impossible to talk about a homogenous Western feminist discourse. Furthermore, a particular geographical location does not necessarily confer a particular perspective and it is difficult to identify and delineate any thread of consistency that runs throughout various feminist discourses in the West that would allow for an unproblematic use of the phrase 'Western feminism.' Yet the terminological distinction between 'Western' and 'local' feminisms - neither of them being homogenous, as will be shown below - is useful for analytical purposes in this case for several reasons. First, it is helpful in showing that a set of regional issues had a wider impact as it attracted the attention of feminist theorists and activists, who were not directly affected by the situation in the region and not necessarily familiar with, interested in, or active in the region prior to the crisis. Second and more important, it is useful for an examination of whether and how the divisions along ethnic or locally relevant political lines among feminists in the region affected the ways in which the wars were represented and in which some more general feminist issues – such

as rape in war— have been (re)conceptualized in the West. And vice-versa, how the existing feminist debates in the West on these larger issues informed and shaped feminist interpretations of the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

Some authors criticized both the mainstream media and feminist coverage of the Yugoslav situation for marginalizing or ignoring women's cooperation and solidarity, which persisted among many women's groups and defied the nationalist discourses of ethnic divisions and hatred.<sup>9</sup> I agree that some feminist groups opposed militant and aggressive nationalisms and stood as a small, and to my knowledge, singular beacon of resistance to nationalisms in the former Yugoslavia. But nonetheless, many local feminists did not remain united in the times of war. The problems they encountered, their reactions to them, as well as the consequent interfeminist divisions and disputes illustrate some of the challenges that women face in their attempts to organize around feminist ideologies. They also reveal the 'points of vulnerability' of feminist discourses to influences of masculinistic discourses. Therefore, I will revisit and examine the points of internal conflicts in local feminism.

Yugoslav feminists have split into two branches. One branch privileged their identification with their nation-states over the principle of women's solidarity. Their approach was in Jill Benderly's case study described as 'patriotic' and I will also use this term.<sup>10</sup> The other branch took a clearly non-nationalist stance and remained united regardless of ethnic, religious and cultural differences. The narratives through which these two branches spoke about their experiences and articulated the experiences of women war survivors were characterized by different ideological assumptions.<sup>11</sup> Their differences were mirrored in Western feminist representations of the Yugoslav crisis. Specifically, some Western feminists accepted the framework of 'patriotic' feminists. I have decided to consider their textual representations together with 'patriotic' texts to delineate a 'patriotic' feminist discourse.<sup>12</sup> The 'stream' of texts in which the authors, both local and Western, tend to resist, confront and/or deconstruct nationalist discourse constitutes a 'non-nationalist' feminist discourse.

While there are feminist essays, case studies, and surveys that discuss the origins and consequences of the split in local feminism, none provide a comprehensive study of the ways in which the ideological orientation of local women's groups shaped the Western feminist discourses of rape.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, few studies examine the ways that feminist work prepared the terrain for a new political consciousness and created room for the Yugoslav rapes in the international agenda.<sup>14</sup> But there is an evident lack of analyses that examine the internal theoretical context in Western feminisms at the time when the stories of mass rapes in Bosnia emerged and how that context shaped the representation of the rapes in Western feminist discourses. Finally, while several feminist analyses of the representation of war in both the international and local media, and of the representation of local women's movements in the media can be found, there is none on the representation of the wars in feminist publications. My attempt here is to supply an analysis of all of the above.

My work draws on interdisciplinary methods used in feminist and cultural studies as well as on historiography. These approaches offer critical analyses of co-existing and competing discourses and provide tools for close reading of the dynamics of feminist and nationalist discourses and practices as related to broader social processes, to cultural and historical contexts. In accordance with the basic principle of discourse analysis, I will study feminist texts "as constitutive parts of local and global, social and cultural context," mapping out the connection between a close textual analysis and wider discourse structures.<sup>15</sup> By surveying the chronology of textual events, I will try to trace the history of changes and shifts in feminist discourses of the war, which is located in relation to larger intertextual<sup>16</sup> feminist references.

My analysis covers a group of about 60 widely varied sources, which range from feminist popular press to academic studies. At certain places in the text I refer to each of them. However, in the sections where I analyze the two major discursive 'streams,' i.e. 'patriotic' and antinationalist discourses, I concentrate on a few selected texts that I consider representative either because they capture the major arguments and rhetorical strategies of each discourse respectively or because they were particularly influential and prominent. I am aware that in this way I myself create another narrative, another text, which, together with the texts I analyze, constitute ways of thought that both reflect and create modes of action.

The first section starts with a brief historical overview of the women's movement in the former Yugoslavia, which traces the origins of the first dramatic split among local feminists and follows the development of conflicted feminist discourses of war and their impact on Western feminist discourses. Multiple quotations from various texts serve to describe and illustrate the features of the language different feminist authors use to talk about nationalism, war, violence, women's experiences, about themselves and about other feminists. The quotations that often include critiques and accusations of feminists who took the opposing stance are juxtaposed with the responses to critiques and accusations in order to crystallize the differences between the two major discursive streams in Yugoslav feminism. My text compiles different excerpts from texts in which the rhetoric range from the scholarly to the 'gossipy,' and it is intentionally so, for, all these nuances of argumentation share the same ideological prepositions and constitute a single but multi-stranded discourse - be it 'patriotic' or antinationalist. The second section focuses on the coverage of the wars in Western feminist press (journals and magazines), which reveals much about the persistence of imperialist attitudes in feminist perceptions and representations of the presumably non-Western world.

### **Yugoslav Feminists: The Witches, Patriots, Traitors, and Aggressors**

Women's and feminist movements in what is now known as the former Yugoslavia have a rich history. The first women's organizations were founded in the second half of the 19th century in Serbia and in the Southern Slavic provinces of the Habsburg Empire (the territories of today's Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina in Northern Serbia). They were linked to the European Women's Movement of the time. In the period preceding World War II, "several women's organizations and movements emerged, composed mostly of literary and academic women, some supported by the government or even by the royal family" of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously, the Yugoslav Communist Party "placed a major emphasis on work among women (an up-to-then neglected subject); women were to be the main force preparing the resistance and revolution, since most Communist (men) had been imprisoned or otherwise immobilized by the then-bourgeois Rightist regime."<sup>18</sup> An unprecedented number of women participated, estimated 100,000, in the Partisan struggle against the Nazis during the Second World War. The Communist Partisan movement during the war promised equal rights to women, seeing gender equality as an inevitable byproduct of the unfolding communist revolution. Numerous women were active in the AFZ (Antifascist Women's Front) during and after the war. They worked to mobilize women for the war effort, and were later engaged in the rehabilitation of the country ruined by the war, in educational activities, and in the propagation of socialist ideology. The establishment of the socialist regime after the war brought many new rights for women: equal salaries, easy divorce, free medical and childcare, free education, and accessible legal abortion. Women's presence in political life in the first postwar years was not negligible, and "it seemed for a while that a breakthrough in the patriarchal Balkan mentality has occurred."<sup>19</sup>

But women's organizations were soon reined in. AFZ was dissolved by the Communist Party in the 1950s, formally evolving into the Union of Women's Association, which included approximately two thousand small women's units all over Yugoslavia. In 1961 these women's

organizations were abolished, and the party formed the *Conference for the Social Activities of Women*, which was hierarchically organized and governmentally divided.<sup>20</sup>

It was said that the law had given [women] equal rights, and that many women were in the work force. Indeed most women worked, but they were and still are expected to perform household duties as well. In politics or in worker's self-management control of their enterprises, women are usually found in posts of low and local responsibility. Patriarchal mentality remains widespread in Yugoslavia and fosters confusion by repeating a sophism: "Women have rights by law, so they already are equal."<sup>21</sup>

Yet unlike other East European countries under communism, Yugoslavia's borders were open, "allowing communication and exchange of ideas, one of which was feminism."<sup>22</sup> In the 1970's, several groups of women intellectuals emerged. They formed to discuss and analyze the role of women in society. They questioned the official position of the socialist regime that women's struggle was synonymous with class struggle, and that solving the class question would solve all women-specific problems. They also articulated a critique of the socialist self-management position of gender neutrality and raised the issue of the "unfulfilled promise of women's emancipation."<sup>23</sup> The first feminist conference "The Woman's Question: A New Approach" was held in 1978 in Belgrade. After that meeting, 'Woman and Society' discussion groups were formed in Zagreb [Croatia] and Belgrade [Serbia]. Feminists in Belgrade defined their independent 'Woman and Society' organization as feminist in 1986. This move was condemned by the governmental women's organization. Feminism was understood and presented as opposed to Marxism, or in the words of the president of the government sponsored *Conference for the Social Activities of Women*: "Such ideas, as are foreign to our socialist, self-management society, especially the feminist ones which are imported from the developed capitalist countries... demand an organized fight for suppression and elimination in daily actions by our subjective forces, especially the League of Communists."<sup>24</sup>

That was just another instance of antifeminist discourse under socialism. According to Slavenka Drakulic, socialist rhetoric labeled feminism with often contradictory accusations: firstly, it was viewed as an imported capitalist ideology. Secondly, feminists were seen as being in 'love with power,' substituting female power for male power without changing the structure of power itself. Thirdly, feminism was seen as elitist, since only a few 'unoccupied intellectuals,' who lacked understanding of working class problems, were interested in it. Fourthly, as a spontaneous non-institutional activity, not easily controlled, feminism was dangerous for the socialist regime. Paradoxically, feminism was also accused as an 'apolitical' activity, which was leading the majority of women into political inertia. In the words of one of the communist politicians: "Insisting on the women's question and organizing women into women's organizations or independent movements in itself brings a danger of separating women from the whole. It means the weakening of women as potential builders of contemporary socialist society."<sup>25</sup> The fact that women embody the threat of division reveals the codes of phallocentrism in socialist discourse, which are to a certain extent similar to those in Western liberal democracies.<sup>26</sup> The abstract, universal working-class identity reflected the behavior of an ideal, genderless - but always already male - worker. Women, symbolically on the side of the particular, cannot represent the universal 'whole.' Thus they are the bearers of the threat of separation.

Although feminists were condemned and unpopular under the socialist rule, they were not completely silenced or made illegal. Feminist groups organized independently in the early 1980's, becoming "actively involved in advocacy and support work on women's issues...including rape and domestic violence, pornography and women's right to employment."<sup>27</sup> By the late 1980s, several women's groups existed in the capital cities of Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia. As a result of their cooperation, in 1987, the First National Feminist Conference of Yugoslavia was held in Slovenia, when the Network of Yugoslav

feminists was formed. Faced with the emergence of nationalism in their republics, feminists “showed little interest in the independence of republics.”<sup>28</sup> One of the resolutions of the First Conference stated “that women would not recognize artificial male boundaries; that they were united in sisterhood, and their common experiences as women over-rode male concerns for territorial rights and geographical boundaries. It was also resolved that the male power struggles should not be enacted across women’s bodies.”<sup>29</sup>

Until the outbreak of war, feminists insisted on their links and solidarity beyond national identity. They criticized nationalist ideology, pointing at its “patriarchal and sexist essence” and “the manipulation of reproductive rights for nationalist demographic purposes.”<sup>30</sup> Their antinationalist standpoint was visible in their criticism of state-nationalisms, which primarily addressed the negative impact nationalism had on women and the ways nationalism manipulates women.<sup>31</sup> Their critique captured, and, in a way, anticipated the ways in which nationalism would divide and co-opt the women’s movement during the war.

When, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, nationalist tensions erupted to ultimately lead to the succession of wars, all feminist groups at first challenged and confronted the rising nationalisms and criticized the regimes of their own republics in the former Yugoslavia. But the outbreak of war and the ruling state-nationalisms divided women’s groups. The war made cooperation and even communication between antiwar movements extremely difficult. With the first war-victims and refugees on all sides, nationalist hatred reached its peak. Intensive and overwhelming chauvinistic nationalist discourse affected everyone, and forced women’s groups to redefine their position. In Serbia, women’s groups experienced severe internal tensions and conflicts over nationalism. *Women’s Party*, initially formed after the first multiparty election in response to the mere 1.6% of women in the Serbian Parliament, was unable to resolve these conflicts and could not continue its work:

The party decided to ‘freeze’ its activities until the war was over and then see. The hotline had many problems as well. Despite the fact that the group had had a deliberately nonnationalist policy from the beginning, some volunteers were unable to keep their nationalist feelings out of their hotline work. Several attempts were made to reconcile the opposing viewpoints; after that some of the women left, and some of them stayed and remained silent.”<sup>32</sup>

Yet the remaining feminist groups in Belgrade maintained their original antinationalist orientation. A group of women, inspired by the Israeli/Palestinian women founded an antiwar group in Belgrade, *Women in Black*. They held silent protests every Wednesday afternoon, expressing their opposition to war, the Serbian regime and its militarism, and violence against women. They persisted, although often exposed to nationalist rage, insults and harassment, both on the streets and in the state-run media, which portrayed them as quislings and traitors of the nation. The women criticized primarily the Serbian government (“we have always had politics that the first regime that we should accuse is our own”), but their criticism also addressed all warring sides:

We entirely refuse the politics of Serbian regime that encourages violence of its own and at the same time accuses the violence of the other side. We have repeated many times that we believe that Serbian regime has started this war, ethnic cleansing and has in the last two years spread its male military forces on the territories which have never been theirs. But we also have to notice that all three governments [Serbian, Croatian and Muslim] in

this war are based on nationalist hatred, on hatred against women and exclusion of others.<sup>33</sup>

But women's groups in Croatia divided into two branches – one that believed that the interests of Croatian women overlapped with the interests of their new nation-state, and another that still clearly opposed nationalism and Croatian politics. Having the war and thousands of refugees on Croatian territory influenced feminist reactions; the former branch identified themselves as a part of 'victimized Croatia.' They also drew an analogy between 'woman as victim' and 'nation as victim' and thus "moved toward a sort of feminist nationalism, or the patriotism of the victimized."<sup>34</sup> According to Djurdja Knezevic, an outspoken critic of both chauvinistic nationalism and 'patriotic' feminism, these women's groups "were immediately presented in the media as 'patriotic feminists' and praised for their heroic work for women."<sup>35</sup> 'Patriotic' feminists refused every contact with Serbian feminists. Stasa Zajovic, one of the *Women in Black* activists, writes: "Some feminists from Zagreb [Croatia] erected a wall between us, dividing us: we women from the aggressor state and they from the attacked state."<sup>36</sup> Unlike them, the latter branch, grouped around the Antiwar Campaign - Croatia, tried to address some internal political problems, to write about the crisis from a different perspective, and to stay in contact with antinationalist feminists in Belgrade. Non-nationalist women wrote critically about nationalist politics and the war, opposing "the Serbian and Croatian war-mongering machinery, media manipulation, corruption, and autocratic government tendencies."<sup>37</sup>

When, in 1992, the refugees who fled from Bosnia reported systematic war rapes, feminists quickly organized to provide help and support for women victims of rape. However, different feminist groups differently articulated their understanding of the horror that had become the reality for many women from Bosnia. The major split in views appeared, as Benderly puts it, on the 'assessment of blame' - the crucial question was whether men on all sides should be condemned for rapes, violence against women, and violation of reproductive rights, and whether the suffering of women victims on conflicted sides could be seen as comparable. 'Patriotic' groups in Croatia argued that

mass rapes under orders of the Serbian-occupied territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia are part of a Serbian policy of genocide against non-Serbs. That means that non-Serbian women -- most prominently Muslims and Croats -- are not only tortured by rape as are all women, but are being raped as a part of a Serbian policy of "ethnic cleansing" on the basis of their sex and ethnicity both; most of these rapes end in *murder*. And this is *not* happening to all women.<sup>38</sup>

Their stand was that "rape is a distinctly Serbian weapon for which all Serbs - even feminists who oppose the war - are culpable."<sup>39</sup> They also felt that Serbian feminists, who condemned men on all sides of the conflict for rapes, tried to equalize the phenomenon of rape on the different warring sides, thus equalizing the responsibility.<sup>40</sup> The wall between feminists from Serbia and 'patriotic' Croatian feminists became insurmountable. *Women in Black* responded:

The feminists of Belgrade and Serbia do not support the position about symmetrical suffering. They are conscious that the more powerful and better armed military-political forces of Karadzic in Bosnia (the army of the self-declared Serbian Republic in Bosnia) have the largest number of rapes on their consciences. How many exactly, it will be



difficult to know, even after the war. The high percentage of Muslim women raped in the war in Bosnia is not a reason to forget the suffering of women of other nationalities and religions, atheists, or those claiming no particular nationality.<sup>41</sup>

We refuse to be part of the debate: who is the real victim, or who has the greatest right to call themselves victims. We refuse the politics of instrumentalization of victims. A victim is a victim, and to her the number of other victims does not decrease her own suffering and pain. We happen to live in Belgrade and happen to work with women who happen to have Serbian names, and happen to be prisoners of war and victims of rape (we meet also Muslim and Croat women as well). Some of them have been months and months in camps where they have suffered all kinds of mental, physical and sexual violence. Facing these courageous, exhausted and traumatized women, we cannot in any way see them as less victims than any women of different nationality. They tell us of all kinds of atrocities, systematic rapes, death threats and other horrors. It is obvious that in war rapists are mostly of other nationality, but for many women it is not the nationality but the body of men which have destroyed their joy of life. We must say that we are sad that some of our sisters from Croatia... do not want to communicate with us anymore. Even though we support their work for women, which in the long run should bring more freedom for everyone - they still see us as a part of the Enemy Body.<sup>42</sup>

Simultaneously, the gap between pro- and anti-nationalist groups in Croatia became wider. Croatian feminist activists who disagreed with the patriotic approach and disapproved of the way in which the Croatian government dealt with the issue of wartime rape formed the *Zagreb Women's Lobby*.

In Autumn 1992 a big media campaign started about rape in war. We knew that all three parties of the war could manipulate people, opinion, and reality for their use and political aims. Then we decided to form an informal group for political pressure: Zagreb Women's Lobby. There was a lot of money around for the purpose of helping raped women, so we thought that it would be completely wrong for groups supporting their governments to use that money.<sup>43</sup>

The *Lobby's* statement says:

We fear that the process of helping raped women is turning in a strange direction, being taken over by governmental institutions, [Ministries] of Health of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and male gynecologists in particular. We fear that the raped women could be used in political propaganda with the aim of spreading hatred and revenge, thus leading to further violence against women and further victimization of survivors.<sup>44</sup>

Non-nationalist women's groups in Serbia and Croatia shared the same view that victims were primarily *women*, who needed help and support, and protection from nationalist manipulation. In December 1992, several women activists from various feminist and pacifist organizations in Croatia (including the Antiwar Campaign - Croatia and *Zagreb Women's Lobby*), founded the Center for Women War Victims, "grounded in the principles of women's solidarity, independence and self-help," and offered support for rape victims and refugee women

regardless of their nationality.<sup>45</sup> They cooperated with the pacifist non-nationalist women's groups in Bosnia (*Medica Zenica*) and Serbia (*Women in Black*).

Some feminists in Croatia and Serbia were particularly concerned about the media role in the propagandist exploitation of women victims. The reports of mass rapes in Bosnia gained a lot of attention worldwide, and at first, all women's groups in the former Yugoslavia welcomed the unusual visibility of the rapes and the international interest in them. But soon the media coverage became sensationalist.<sup>46</sup> Graphic depictions of atrocities appeared in the media, "exploiting the topic without caring about possible adverse consequences...showing women on television without protecting their identities and asking them to talk about their horrible experiences."<sup>47</sup> Knezevic argues that the media symbolically raped the women again.<sup>48</sup>

In a similar manner, Serbian authorities, using the same propaganda pattern, started collecting data and talking about the mass rapes of 'their women,' to justify their military action in Bosnia. Thus, in the Serbian media, it was the Serbian woman who was constructed as the symbol of suffering, and Croat and Muslim men stood as the demonic, Orientalized, male Other – the rapists of 'our' mothers, daughters and sisters. In the Croatian media, the dichotomy victim/perpetrator was similarly ethnicized – the Muslim and Croat women became the symbol of victimhood, while the Serb man was turned into the symbol of all rapists. In Zarkov's words, "raped women became flags waved by the warring parties."<sup>49</sup>

Some of the prominent feminists from Croatia, who challenged the Croatian regime and wrote critically about the war were accused of being traitors of the nation and were severely attacked in the Croatian media.<sup>50</sup> An article under the headline "Croatian feminists rape Croatia!" appeared in the Croatian national weekly *Globus* (December 11, 1992). Five women were proclaimed national traitors: Slavenka Drakulic, Rada Ivekovic, Vesna Kesic, Jelena Lovric, and Dubravka Ugresic. They were accused of 'hiding the truth about sexual violence as the instrument of Serbian racist and imperialistic politics,' and called 'witches,' 'synthetic garbage that could not even be recycled,' and 'a group of egoistic middle-aged women who have serious problems with their ethnic, moral, human, intellectual, and political identity:'

They have discovered American and French feminist literature, which preached the necessity of not only class struggle but of the struggle between sexes as well. As most of the ladies had serious problems finding the partner of the male sex and an area of interest, they chose feminism as their destiny, ideology and profession...Those few among them who, in spite of their theoretical positions and physical appearance, were able to find a companion or husband made choices according to the official Yugoslav standard: Rada Ivekovic chose a Serbian from Belgrade, Slavenka Drakulic a Serbian from Croatia (twice), and Jelena Lovric a Serbian from Croatia. It may not seem ethical to say so, but when laid out like this, these look like systematic political choices, not random ones based on romantic attachment.<sup>51</sup>

At the end of the unsigned article was a chart with detailed information about the women's private and professional lives: birth date, nationality, family background, marital status, number of children, Communist Party membership, extended travels abroad during the war (considered tantamount to desertion), and, according to Kesic, the article set off a true witch hunt in the media.<sup>52</sup> The antifeminist discourse, well-known in the socialist tradition of the former Yugoslavia, was reshaped to fit the nationalist context, and simultaneously found a new impetus. Ironically, the same women that were labeled 'the enemy of the state,' 'procapitalists' and 'pro-

Western' elements under communism, became under state-nationalism - 'Marxist feminists,' 'communist profiteers' and 'Yugo-nostalgics' - the enemies of their nation-state. In nationalist antifeminist discourse, feminism remained labeled a foreign import, superfluous and strange to local women. The discursive tactic of impugning feminists' femininity and heterosexual prowess, which revived the image of 'unattractive' Communist women officials, was used as a crucial argument to dismiss their political credibility.<sup>53</sup> In this situation, patriotic feminist groups did not side with the attacked women, but accused them in a similar manner, as will be shown below.

That the split happened among women's groups within Croatia and not within Serbia can be explained by the fact that after the first post-communist multiparty elections in 1990, new regime came to power in Croatia. Some of the new women's groups celebrated the new system, either because they identified themselves as nationalists or because "endorsement of nationalism appear[ed] as an opening to a much wider space for women's activism. Within this space women [were] provided with the widest social recognition."<sup>54</sup> Simultaneously, the newly formed women's groups distanced themselves from the women who were known for their antinationalist standpoints and/or from women who were active in women's groups before the elections. In Serbia, on the other hand, the regime stressed the continuity with the previous socialist federal government. Thus, in Serbia, the existing government sponsored women's organizations took on the 'patriotic' role. However, as they never identified themselves as feminist, they are not addressed in my analysis.

The tension among patriotic and antinationalist groups had its impact internationally. In Spring 1993, MADRE, a women's group founded in 1983 in response to U.S. intervention in Central America, organized a tour entitled Mother Courage II,<sup>55</sup> focusing on war rapes in the former Yugoslavia. Local women were represented primarily by antinationalist women from Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. Four Croatian and Bosnian 'patriotic' groups (*Kareta*, *Tresnjevka*, *Biser*, *Bedem Ljubavi*) released a letter protesting the focus and content of MADRE's tour. Among other things, they criticized MADRE for universalizing rape as a weapon of war and omitting to address genocidal nature of the Bosnian rapes, which include 'historically unique' forced impregnation: "Rape as a genocide is, therefore, *not* the *universal* rape your tour information states but is very *ethnically specific* to Muslim and Croatian women... Only when this genocidal particularity of rape is grasped and respected can we begin connecting it with the rape of all women in war."<sup>56</sup> According to MADRE Executive Director, this accusation seems to be inaccurate, since all participants in MADRE's tour foregrounded the genocidal aspect of the war.<sup>57</sup> But they also mentioned that rape happens on the Bosnian and Croatian side, and for patriotic groups, that meant "equalizing a genocidal system to fabricated or isolated events by the *victims* against *aggressors*" - a part of Serbian propaganda - which "hides the aggressor by blaming it equally with the victim." They wrote they were sad to see that MADRE supports this type of propaganda.<sup>58</sup>

According to the Croatian patriotic groups, all Serbian women, including feminists, are "women of the group committing the genocide" and therefore, Muslim and Croatian women's groups could not participate in the same forums with them: "to place Muslim and Croatian women in forums which force on them [Serbian women]... is to commit further violence against these women." Patriotic groups were disturbed not only by the presence of Serbian women on the tour, but also by the choice of participants from Croatia in MADRE's tour: Vesna Kesic (Croatian antinationalist feminist, journalist, and one of the 'witches') and Djurdja Knezevic. In

the protesting letter they mentioned Kesic and Knezevic as “very unrepresentative women,” “women who had privileges in a totalitarian system at the brutal expense of others,” and women who silenced the victims of rape “by refusing to acknowledge the reality and particularity of genocidal rapes.”<sup>59</sup> The letter, insisting on ethnic identification over feminist solidarity, and the responses to it produced confusion, frustration, and anger, and the tour was not as successful as it could have been.

There is another way that the split among Yugoslav feminists influenced Western and international feminist discourse of the Yugoslav war, rapes and nationalism. I suggest that it is possible to identify a “stream” among Western feminists who focused on nationalism and the war (and particularly mass rapes) in the former Yugoslavia, which corresponds to the patriotic branch in local feminism.<sup>60</sup> The ‘patriotic’ women’s groups retained Catharine MacKinnon, a well-known U.S. feminist and University of Michigan law professor, to represent wartime rape survivors.<sup>61</sup> MacKinnon agreed to provide legal assistance and to sound these women’s call for international intervention. According to non-patriotic sources, she, in addition, accepted the ‘patriotic’ condemnation of Serbian and Croatian antinationalist feminists. At the June 1993 UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, “MacKinnon, going public with her hostility to Serbian feminists, made the following comment in response to a question posed by Belgrade feminist Nadezda Cetkovic: ‘If you are in opposition to the regime in Serbia, why aren’t you already dead?’”<sup>62</sup> According to Knezevic, MacKinnon’s involvement also meant that the Croatian witch-hunt became international:

A message distributed through electronic conferences, made in close cooperation with the office of Catharine MacKinnon, fiercely attacked two of those women [Croatian antinationalist feminists] using the same repertoire of accusations: traitors to the Croatian nation, communists, pro-Serbian, attempting to conceal information about victims...equating victims with perpetrators, etc.<sup>63</sup>

The differences between the two branches in local feminism turned into an ugly interfeminist conflict. Although both branches are to be praised for their courageous and restless work with women victims, their struggle to portray themselves as the sole representative of local women’s interests led to a set of, often, bitter mutual accusations, in which the arguments range from academic to inflammatory, gossipy, and offensive dismissal.

In sum, Yugoslav feminism was a small but important opponent to the rise of nationalism before the war. But under the pressure of war, some feminists accepted the nationalism of their new states, while the others opposed nationalism of the new regimes. The ideological differences finally divided feminists in Croatia into two opposed camps. They also created a wall between feminists from Serbia and ‘patriotic’ women’s groups in Croatia. The split among them was either implicitly or explicitly present in the work of some Western feminists, and was remarkably visible in Western publications regarding the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Yet, although reflecting some of the internal conflicts among local women’s groups, representations of the ‘Yugoslav case’ in some Western feminist publications had another, unique characteristic, which will be discussed below.

#### **Western Feminist Press on the ‘Yugoslav Case’: Orientalizing and Westernizing the Balkan Other**

In the Western media, the Yugoslav conflict was usually represented as a product of ‘centuries of ethnic hatred,’ of irreconcilable ancient and ahistoric ethnic, religious and cultural

differences, and of an everlasting tribal mentality, all of which were alien and incomprehensible to the 'rational West.' Orientalist discourse, applied to the Balkans, was constitutive of this representation.<sup>64</sup> In this respect, feminist representation is no exception. I focus here on Western feminist press coverage of nationalism and the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the period from 1991 to 1993. Although the war continued for additional two years, and the ongoing crisis in the region captures world attention as I write, the period from 1991 to 1993 is interesting because in it the first effects of the social transformation and the war, as well as the first reports of mass rape, emerged as dramatic news which invited immediate, unprecedented responses. These first feminist texts, generated in response to this period's events, also prepared the terrain for (and directed) further feminist discussions. I analyze here the articles published in the feminist journals and magazines which contain the coverage of international issues and include illustrations: *Ms.*, *off our backs* (*oob*), and *Spare Rib*. Other feminist publications have also, here and there, published reports on Yugoslavia, but these three provided an extensive coverage of the Yugoslav wars, and I believe that this sample offers a comprehensive and challenging material. I approach the feminist coverage of war as constitutive of feminist practices and constructive of a specific subject position. My analysis does not merely address the question *how* feminists reported and interpreted the events, but rather what definitions of the feminist self and other - or what subject positions - were constitutive of their writing about particular events. I analyze both the texts and the visual materials (photographs) that served to illustrate them. Photos and texts work together to create narratives, which reflect the dominant ideological assumptions and are implicated in larger cultural discourses.

The majority of articles that appeared in the magazines I study here took the form of an appeal or demand for international help and/or intervention. Many were published in the *Action Alert* sections, the vast majority written by 'patriotic' feminists.<sup>65</sup> I am particularly interested in the kinds of utterances, both linguistic and visual, which are couched to provoke feminist political mobilization. Therefore, I will primarily focus on the articles that not only intend to provide information to the reader, but also explicitly ask for a specific political (re)action (often in the form of donations, petitions, etc). I hope to show that the coverage of the Yugoslav wars in these Western feminist publications was affected by Orientalist discourse. Also, it was neither invulnerable to a patriarchal/nationalist logic nor free from - to use Chandra Mohanty's words - the "discursive homogenization" of the presumably non-Western world.<sup>66</sup>

***The Codes of Victimhood:*** When, in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia announced their independence from the Yugoslav federation, which refused to grant it, the war began. That year, *off our backs* featured two stories about the change in the region. Both of them centered on Croatia, and the potential for the development of feminism in the newly established democratic society. The first one, written before the outbreak of the war, informs the readers about a Croatian radical feminist group, which started publishing the "first independent, nonpolitically affiliated feminist newspaper in Yugoslavia." Their work was made possible "in the aftermath of democratic elections in Croatia and Slovenia when it became clear that it would no longer be illegal to form a feminist newspaper outside the institution of the state."<sup>67</sup>

The second article, by Natalie Nenadic (published in November 1991), focuses on the effects of war in Croatia. This article begins with a similar enthusiastic review of new feminist possibilities in Croatia that arose with the democracy and were then brutally disrupted by Serbian aggression. Nenadic describes the atrocities done to Croatian civilians, primarily women and the elderly, by Serbian guerrillas, and criticizes the U.S. coverage of the situation that termed it as

one of 'ethnic differences' or 'ethnic conflicts.' She asks the readers to help Croatia: "Please help. Call your local representatives to exert diplomatic pressure to stop the war."<sup>68</sup>

The text is illustrated by a black-and-white photo (figure 1), with no caption that would explain its origin or the characters in it.<sup>69</sup> The photo shows a group of traditionally dressed black women with covered heads, most likely from an underdeveloped region. Behind them we can spot a wall perforated by bullets or grenades. In the center of the picture is a woman, whose whole body expresses despair, anger and suffering - her mouth open to cry, to weep, to curse, to mourn; her face cramped in a grimace of pain producing the inarticulate scream; her upraised arms that invoke a primitive religiosity and encode both an expression of pain and non-channeled resistance. The "sound" of this picture is a yell. No words, no sentences, no language. The woman is a (stereo)typically poor, ethnic, rural, 'primitive' woman, whose voiceless suffering may be expressed only through body language.

The codes of victimhood work here - the image conveys an implicit message which the Western audience of *oob* can easily recognize - she is a voiceless victim, she cannot do anything, change anything, all she has is her screaming body in the spasm produced by an explosion of grief. Positioned in relation to Nenadic's appeal, the photo constructs another set of meanings which invokes a specific reaction, well known in the context of export of Western feminism in the Third and now Orientalized Second world: let's 'liberate' her, let's sound her voice, let's give her the language to speak her experience, to articulate and direct her anger.

There is a set of questions that the positioning of this particular photo in relation to Nenadic's article raises. First, this is not a picture of women from the former Yugoslavia - what is it doing here, then? This leads to the second, closely related question - if the women in the photo are black, why do they illustrate the text about Croatia, where, needless to say, the population is (exclusively) white? It is important to note that the U.S. audience of *oob* is not necessarily familiar with geopolitical, ethnic and even racial identities in the Balkans. In an interesting way, the Second and Third world merge here and become transformed into the monolithic, homogenized, non-Western Second-and-Third world Other.

There is, off course, a possibility that Nenadic's text left an extra space in *oob*, and that the editors arbitrarily decided to put a photo - any photo, to cover it. Anyway, they chose this one, and their choice - no matter how arbitrary, the meaning nevertheless emerges - reflects the underlying ideological assumptions, which shape the Orientalist representation of the non-Western world. The set of inherited cultural meanings is associated with specific visual codes that work to represent (and construct) both the timeless victimhood and the rage of the Other, which is gendered, ethnicized, and racialized. An image in which these codes dominate necessarily alludes to these meanings. What we see, or better, what we read on this photo is precisely such a *victim*. To recognize it, we do not need an explanation, and, indeed, one is not given in *oob*. More importantly, the picture gives multiple dimensions to Nenadic's article and, as argued above, provokes a certain type of political reaction.

In the same period (December 1991/January 1992) another feminist magazine, *Spare Rib*, published Mirjana Graean's report from Yugoslavia. The report is articulated as a critique of every military organization, including the federal Yugoslav Army, and big business and transnational companies - which the author calls monsters and dragons. She poses the question: "How to deal with the monsters that suck the blood of the people and the environment?" The Yugoslav conflict, for Graean, begs for a "co-ordinated effort of political movements" - feminist, pacifist, environmental and spiritual, which must confront the dragons and make "a smooth passage into the new organic world order." Graean discusses the situation in Croatia in a manner somewhat similar to Nenadic's, implying that new democratic forces that came to power in Croatia opposed the military dragon. She notes that Slovenia and Croatia - "through their democratically elected governments" - resisted the unreasonable demands of the federal army,

which then decided to take “the path of war,” and to confront democracy. Although gender is not explicitly in focus of Graean’s text, she describes the gendered symbolism of the ‘soil and blood’ nationalist ideology in order to deconstruct it - “The federal army cannot get rid of the idea of a totalitarian state in which a ‘peoples army’ is the defender of the ‘motherland’.” Nonetheless, she rather reconstructs the very symbolical dichotomy, for, the federal army is one of the monsters, which, symbolically on the side of masculinity, engage in killing the Earth and degrading the environment. The monster has systematically penetrated into the Croatian territory - “Croatia is the victim of aggression and urgently needs help.”<sup>70</sup> The text is accompanied by a photo (figure 2), which, either intentionally or not, gives this victim a visual embodiment.

Again, we have here a group of mourning women, this time a group of white women. Again, they are ‘ethnic’, rural, most of them are older. The ‘sound’ of this picture is not a yell anymore. It is more attenuated sound of deep, painful weeping that expresses the sorrow for the loss that cannot (ever) be recompensed. The women are dressed in black (the black wardrobe is traditionally related to the period of mourning; people who have lost a person next of kin usually wear black for a year after his/her death), and their heads are covered. The photo might have been taken at a funeral. There are some details that may imply the women’s religion: a woman in front has a rosary in her left hand, which, given the religious and ethnic context of the Yugoslav population, suggests her Catholic (and thus, most likely Croatian) identity.

Again, we do not need textual explanations to understand the message - to recognize these women’s pain and sorrow. On the second page of the text, a segment from the same photo appears - a close-up of the faces of two women in front, one of whom occupies the central position in the integral picture. Unlike the woman in the *oob* image, this woman’s face does not express the mixture of inarticulate curse, anger and pain, but only a profound grief, the presence of which is emphasized by the repetition of the most intense segment of the picture. Such emotional charge leaves no one untouched; it directly strikes the readers’ emotional register. This suffering urges an empathic response, for there is nothing that can justify it, and its causes must be prevented. However, this empathy is not free from othering - these women (ethnic, rural, old, desperate) need help, liberation, and justice, but ‘their’ experience (of the horrors of the Balkans war) is not ‘ours.’<sup>71</sup> Not yet.

Although such images of ethnic rural women, tragically affected by the war, remain one of the prevailing themes in the representation of women from ex-Yugoslavia in the Western media coverage,<sup>72</sup> especially when the problem of refugees is in focus, a shift happened with the emergence of mass rape stories in the feminist magazines I have studied.

**Rape, Victims, and Feminism:** In 1992, the war spread to Bosnia. The refugees who fled from Bosnia to Croatia reported systematic rapes. In August 1992, the American journalist Roy Gutman wrote the first report about the rapes of Muslim women by Serbian soldiers, which was published in *New York Newsday*. After that, the stories and analyses of the phenomenon of mass rape became an inevitable - if not the central - topic related to Yugoslavia in feminist publications.

The first texts on that topic appeared in 1992-1993, often including an explicit appeal for help as well as information about the ways in which humanitarian, material and financial support might be provided and/or the ways in which political pressure on international institutions might be exerted.<sup>73</sup> One such article is a report from Croatia by the *Tresnjevka Women’s Group*. The text begins with the testimony of a 66-year old woman, who was kept in the camp Ciglane in Prijedor, Bosnia and who described horrible scenes of tortures and murders. The authors

compare Bosnia to Nazi Germany and continue by focusing on the gendered nature of this war's atrocities, which occurred in camp brothels, where "rape, gang-rape and incest are used as a special means of psychological torture designed to destroy the woman's willpower, resistance and identity."<sup>74</sup> The article ends with an appeal to all women's and international organizations to condemn these crimes and to stop the horror. The text is followed by a photo (figure 3) with an explanatory subtext. What we are to see is, according to the caption, "a Bosnian woman, one of over 1500 who were held in the Serb detention camp Trnopolja, [who] carries her baby off a bus bringing her to a Red Cross Shelter after being released to Croatia." Without that textual explanation, the photo could hardly be related to the text. For, what we see in this black-and-white picture (which is placed under the bold title "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia: Inside the Death Camps - Women Plea for an End to the Rape, Torture and Incinerating Ovens" and surrounded with words that depict in detail the terrors and atrocities done to people in the camps) is a well dressed, good looking woman - *the victim* - who has manicured long nails with dark (the color may only be assumed) nailpolish.

It is hard, impossible even, not to notice the nails. The background is dark, the woman wears a dark jacket, and the 'pack' she is holding (this is a baby, as the caption suggests) occupies a position that is necessarily alluring to the viewer's gaze. Her hand is on display on the white surface of the pack. An uniformed man – policeman – stands next to her, and even his undefined gaze follows the line directed towards her hand. Unlike the *oob* and *Spare Rib* photos (discussed above), here we cannot easily recognize the scene. This picture needs a textual explanation. Who is she? Where is she? She might be any woman, in any Western country, in any situation. (Only the insignia on the man's cap and shoulder may indicate the region for those familiar with it). But the text says that she is released from one of the camps where women are systematically raped, where people are systematically murdered, where children are burnt alive. Then, how can she possibly have manicured nails? This raises another question: *what is a victim supposed to look like?* Do we know the victim when we see one or do we need a linguistic mediation to recognize her? At first sight, there is such a discrepancy between the text and the image, it is such an unexpected, unimaginable, unbelievable illustration of the story, that it *must* be authentic. If it was not authentic, if the woman was not a victim released from the detention camp, then any other fake photo would work better with the text than this one.

But there is another contextual element that must not be forgotten. *Spare Rib* is a feminist journal, the Tresnjevka women's group is a self-identified feminist group. For more than two decades feminists have tried to deconstruct the patriarchal myth that rape happens to somebody else (who deserves it anyway). This woman is not the Other - she is just like 'us,' just like our neighbors, just like the women we see everyday in the streets. And her appearance on this page goes well with feminist refrain that victim's bruises do not have to be visible, that rape may happen to anyone, anytime; that all women are, "either already raped or already rapable;"<sup>75</sup> that one should learn how to recognize women's suffering outside the patriarchal codes.

In juxtaposition with the photos of mourning women discussed above, this one is radically different, because it represents a victim who does not correspond to the culturally imposed construction of victimhood. Its presence, thus, may dramatically challenge the text. But the feminist conception constructs a demand for another kind of reading (which, on the other hand, necessitates a contact with the set of self-referential feminist ideological premises). Thus, it is not surprising that a photo like this one accompanied a text like this one precisely in a feminist magazine. Similarly, in all illustrations of articles on rape of that period, the rape survivors



represented are contemporary, Western women, usually in situations that the reader can recognize in her daily life. Even if the experience of rape is visually suggested through facial and bodily expressions of emptiness and breakdown, the presence of war is not visible (see, for example, figures 4 and 5).

In the Summer of 1993, *Ms.* featured Catharine MacKinnon's (in)famous "Turning Rape Into Pornography."<sup>76</sup> One of her major arguments was that pornography, which "saturated the former Yugoslavia," was one of the by-products of, but more importantly, one of the causes of sexual violence in the current Yugoslav wars. The context of the U.S. feminist pornography debates proves to play a significant role in understanding the importance and origins of such claim.

***Pornography, War, and Pornography Wars:*** The work of the radical feminist and antiporn movement was based on the argument that "the sexual ideology of patriarchy eroticizes domination and submission and that pornography is one of the key sites in which these values are mediated and normalized in contemporary culture."<sup>77</sup> According to radical feminists, pornography sexualizes the violence against women, or briefly put, pornography is the theory the practice of which is rape. Catharine MacKinnon is one of the most important figures in the field of feminist jurisprudence and "the unquestioned theoretical lodestar of the feminist antipornography movement," and therefore I focus here on some of her arguments.<sup>78</sup> For MacKinnon, gender is a relation of domination and subordination, constituted by sexuality, which itself is the eroticization of dominance and submission, and a form of sexual discrimination. Pornography, on the one hand, 'institutionalizes the sexuality of male supremacy, fusing the eroticization of dominance and submission with the social construction of male and female.' The fundamental sexist values of our misogynist culture are depicted, reinforced, and enacted by and through pornography. On the other hand, pornography is an act of visual and/or verbal –as Butler calls it –'illocutionary' speech, which makes the very utterance into a deed, which has the power to transform representation into reality, description into prescription, which proclaims and simultaneously produces the subordinated position of women and 'constructs the social reality of what a woman is.' The representation of sexualized women's subordination in male heterosexual pornography is an act of subordination itself.<sup>79</sup>

The growing anti-pornography movement in the U. S. met its earliest critiques in the late '70s and early '80s. These critiques, as well as later debates in the feminist intellectual community, deeply problematized MacKinnon's and, in general, radical feminist arguments.<sup>80</sup> Among other things, they were criticized for focusing on sexuality itself as the enemy, for implicitly condemning not only women who enjoy pornography but also all women who sleep with men, for flirting with conservative moral assumptions, making many women ashamed of their sexual feelings, and thus, bolstering the patriarchal good/bad girl split, for presenting women as victims who need protection rather than emancipation, and for proposing regulation of sexuality rather than sexual freedom – or in Brown's words: "not freedom but censorship; not First Amendment guarantees but more rights to sue for damages; not risky experiments with resignification and emancipation but more police, more regulation, better dead-bolt on the doors"<sup>81</sup>

In the midst of the U. S. pornography debates, I suggest, MacKinnon discovered in Bosnia a terrain where concrete, unassailable evidence to support her theory could be found. "With this war, pornography emerges as a tool of genocide," MacKinnon writes. Her article implicitly suggests that what pornography has produced in the Balkans, it can produce

anywhere.<sup>82</sup> As the authors of the letter published in *Ms.* in response to her “Turning Rape into Pornography” wrote, she used mass rapes in the Yugoslav wars as the “springboard for discussing pornography,” and “trivialize[d] that war in the interest of making a case for censorship.”<sup>83</sup> Quite a case, indeed. The one that provided MacKinnon with the ultimate proof for her theory, with the vocabulary and position from which to defend her construct.

On the one hand, MacKinnon projected the internal U.S. political context on the former Yugoslavia, and through the Western lenses, without an understanding of the complexities of Yugoslav crisis, she read the gendered wartime violence as a result of the uncensored pornography market. On the other hand, she used the situation in the distant Balkan region as an unquestionable argument to support her views in the internal Western feminist debate. In fact, in MacKinnon’s article, there is a bi-directional causal relationship between pornography and mass rape in this war. In the first, implicit direction, where pornography serves as a script staged in reality through genocidal rape, her argument is based on her observation that, due to the lack of censorship, pornography saturated Yugoslavia before the war; on the report that ‘piles of pornographic magazines’ were found in the bedroom of a captured Serbian soldier; on the stories of a refugee women who saw porn magazines in unidentified camps; and on the statement of a member of a Croatian feminist group that a news report showed Serbian tanks, plastered with pornography, rolling in to ‘cleanse’ a village. This statement has a visual support in a photo that accompanies MacKinnon’s text (figure 6). It shows a bearded man indoors, pointing his machine gun in the direction of something outside, which is invisible to the viewer. According to the caption, he is a “Serbian soldier” who practices his aim. The origin of the photo is not indicated; the man is not wearing a uniform, and there is no sign in his cabin that might suggest to which ethnic, military or paramilitary group he belongs. On the wall on his right side hangs a poster of an almost naked, bare breasted pin-up girl. That is, apparently, the kind of pornographic imagery that impelled Serbian men to genocidal rape.<sup>84</sup>

In the opposite, explicit direction of the causal relationship, rape has been turned into pornography. In ‘rape theaters’ in Serbian-run concentration camps, rape was videotaped, according to MacKinnon’s informants. MacKinnon quotes an informer’s graphical description of the crime that involved murder, torture and cannibalism. Narrated explicit depictions of sadistic scenes of sexual violence, a number of which characterize her text, leave the reader entrapped in the patterns of textual voyeurism. (Thus, in an ironic way, MacKinnon’s text itself turns into pornography).

MacKinnon’s article was followed by information on the ways in which her political and legal action may be supported: through donations to her lawsuit (MacKinnon has sued the Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic for genocidal rape) and a survivors’ witness protection program. Also, the readers were invited to write to the UN secretary-general to demand that the UN war crimes tribunal prosecute those accused of rape. The next issue of *Ms.* contained another kind of appeal - only a photograph with a brief subtext, which situates the spectacle in Bosnia (figure 7).<sup>85</sup>

What it shows is a group of young women, participants in the “Miss Besieged Sarajevo” beauty pageant. Women in bathing suits and high heels, some of them, according to the subtext, with shrapnel scars, photographed from their back, hold a banner: DON’T LET THEM KILL US. Neither the photo nor the subtext offer the explanation of who *they* - or implicitly present *you*, whose help is demanded in the appeal - are. Young women (the winner is only 17 years old) are obviously displayed to the gaze of English speaking journalists. However, from the position of the photographer and the viewer of this photo, their bodies are not fully exposed, the banner covers them. Interestingly, one who sees their bodies is unable to see the banner, and vice versa,

if one sees their half-naked bodies, one cannot read the textual message. Visual pleasure is, nonetheless, disrupted for both viewers by indicators of war: by scars on women's bodies (invisible on the photo) and by the banner that wraps the contestants. Everything about this photo is unusual - the visual absence and textual presence of war, of this specific war, the previous knowledge of which invokes associations of rape, archetypal crimes, butchery, horror and brutality; the explicit demand of these Bosnian beauties in English; the traditional Western model of femininity in a beauty contest, and the appearance of this photo in an issue of a *feminist* magazine, the cover of which read *Pornography* (!).

In sum, the very first texts focusing on the war as a feminist issue, that appeared at the outbreak of the war in Croatia, often represented the war as a danger to a newly established democracy and consequently, as a threat to opportunities for feminism that had recently arisen in the wake of the collapse of communist tyranny. The images that accompanied these texts followed the traditional and Orientalist codes of gendered, ethnicized, racialized victimhood, which sets up a desperate need for Western empathy, help, and liberation. There is a recognizable difference between feminist discourses on the former Yugoslavia before the beginning of the war in Bosnia in which the testimonies of mass rape appeared, and after it. The issue of the export and establishment of feminism in the context of new, democratic states in the Second world shifts to a specific feminist issue - rape. Consequently, the imagery changes. In accordance with the feminist narrative that 'rape does not happen to somebody else,' the identification of the English speaking readers of these Western feminist publications with the victim becomes necessary - now the victim is not the rural, Orientalized, imaginary Balkan Other - it is a westernized, white, contemporary woman.

The texts on the situation on the territory of former Yugoslavia in the Western feminist press reflect the '90s dilemmas and upheavals in feminism. The images that served to illustrate these texts reveal both the political context of the events they represented and the set of ideological assumptions and theoretical dilemmas that dominated feminist theories of that time. The representation of mass rapes in the feminist press was highly conditioned by the current feminist debates on rape and pornography. On the other hand, the divisions among Yugoslav feminists on the basis of national identification and/or ideological orientation affected Western interpretations of gender specific violence in Yugoslav wars. As the discourse surrounding the rape of women shifted to the discourse of ethnic conflict, the already gendered binary patterns of conquest/suffering and perpetrator/victim obtained a concrete ethnic version. The conceptualization of these binary patterns here took a particular form in which radical feminist narratives of rape coincided with nationalist narratives of the ethnic self and other. The discursively constructed 'reality' of the war, both on the linguistic level and through visual elements, produced a certain type of politicized feminist action. My study of simultaneous works of both (visual and textual) domains reveals the construction of a specific type of feminist political subjectivity in the Western feminist press of the 1990's, characterized by its long-standing and persistent attachment to the radical feminist concepts, this time ethnicized, and its continuing investment in the imperial Western self-definition that necessitates the idea of the Orientalized Other.

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When, in 1998, I decided to look at feminist texts on the former Yugoslavia, I expected to find a story of solidarity in resistance to militarism, chauvinist nationalism, warmongering, and abuse of women. And I found it. In extraordinarily difficult conditions, local feminists quickly organized and, with the help from Western feminists, provided support for women in need. They also developed the most articulate and astute critiques of nationalisms and wars in the region. But I also found another story about feminists being not immune to internal power struggles, about feminisms being vulnerable to chauvinism, to the principles of sameness and

exclusion, and entrapped in nationalist and Orientalist discourses. I tried here to identify and make visible the points at which feminist thought and activism proved vulnerable to influences and interventions of these (masculinistic) discourses. Although focused on a specific set of issues related to a particular region, this case points at some more general challenges to feminist ideologies and some weaknesses within them, which feminists need to address and try to overcome in the future.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Former Yugoslavia, geographically located in the Balkans, was a federation of six republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (with two autonomous provinces: Vojvodina and Kosovo), and Slovenia. Today's Yugoslavia is an uneasy federation of Montenegro and Serbia, while Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia are separate states. For the reason of simplicity, I will use the term 'Yugoslav' or 'local' to refer to the whole region of the former Yugoslavia.

<sup>2</sup> Dubravka Zarkov, "Gender, Orientalism and the History of Ethnic Hatred in the Former Yugoslavia," in *Crossfires: Nationalism, Racism and Gender in Europe*, ed. Helma Lutz, Ann Phoenix and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Pluto Press, 1995) 105-20. The presence of Orientalist themes in both Western representations of the former Yugoslavia and among the local peoples themselves, was first analyzed by Bakic-Hayden and Hayden. See Milica Bakic-Hayden, and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review* 51.1 (Spring 1992): 1-15, and Milica Bakic-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of the Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54.4 (Winter 1995): 917-931. Examining the broader context of Western perceptions and representations of the Balkans as a whole, historian Maria Todorova defined Balkanist discourse as a category similar yet separate from Orientalism. See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), and same author, "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention," *Slavic Review* 53.2 (Summer 1994): 453-482.

<sup>3</sup> Cynthia Enloe, "Have the Bosnian Rapes Opened a New Era of Feminist Consciousness?" In *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, ed. Alexandra Stiglmayer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994) p.220.

<sup>4</sup> 'Affective nationalism' is the title of Djurdja Knezevic's text in *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*, ed. by Joan W Scott, Cora Kaplan and Debra Keates (New York: Routledge, 1997) 65-71.

<sup>5</sup> The crisis in the region of the former Yugoslavia is ongoing, as tensions in Macedonia continue. The latest conflict, preceding the Macedonian one, was known worldwide as 'the Kosovo crisis' (Kosovo is a southern province of Serbia). The representation of this war is not included in this work.

<sup>6</sup> Kimberle Crenshaw conceptualizes the particular experience of black women in the dominant cultural ideology of American society as 'intersectional,' to explain their particular location in social relations as "unassailable into the discursive paradigms of gender and race domination." Crenshaw argues that black women cannot communicate the reality of their experiences because the existing narratives of racial oppression reflect the experiences of black men, while the available feminist narratives of gender discrimination reflect the experiences of white women. She criticizes feminists' inability to develop alternative narratives that would include race. I believe that this approach can be applied to the experiences of women in an ethnic conflict where the available narratives are nationalist and feminist ones, and I have therefore decided to borrow her term. However, I think that the categories of race and ethnicity (and consequently racist and nationalist discourses) are, though sharing certain similarities, based on significantly different power structures and modes of oppression, and must not be conflated. See Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-Discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139-67; and "Whose Story is It Anyway? Feminist and Antiracist Appropriations of Anita Hill," *Race and Justice, Engendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas and the Construction of Social Reality*, ed. Tony Morrison (New York: Pantheon, 1992) 402-40.

<sup>7</sup> I focus exclusively on the articles and books that were written by self-identified feminists and published in English. I have to emphasize that I analyze here the *feminist representation* of the Yugoslav conflict, which includes the narrative structures feminists used to represent the experiences of women in the former Yugoslavia during the wars. Although an analysis of women's personal testimonies and stories about their experiences of war, rape, and

nationalism (representations in and of themselves) is necessary, this is beyond the scope of my research. My primary concern is the rearticulation of experiential narratives and the mode of their inclusion into feminist (and often nationalist) narratives. I am *not* in any way intending to question the veracity of testimonies of women victims. The 'experience' narratives of women war survivors are inevitably quoted and interpreted in the texts I am analyzing, but my focus is on the narratives that were produced through the reinterpretation of testimonials - I am thus using 'secondary' texts (or representations of representations) as 'primary' sources.

<sup>8</sup> See Zarkov, "Gender," and same author, "Pictures of the Wall of Love: Motherhood, Womanhood and Nationhood in Croatian Media," *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 4.3 (August 1997): 305-39; p. 306. I apply here the analytical framework Zarkov developed in these texts.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Zarkov "Gender," and Svetlana Slapsak, "Nationalist and Women's Discourse in Post-Yugoslavia," in *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*, eds. Joan W. Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates (New York: Routledge, 1997): 72-9.

<sup>10</sup> Jill Benderly, "Rape, Feminism, and Nationalism in the War in Yugoslav Successor States," in *Feminist Nationalism*, ed. Lois A. West (New York: Routledge, 1997): 59-72.

<sup>11</sup> Although the use of terms discourse and ideology usually implies two different analytical approaches, I will use both terms. I assume that ideology is made manifest through a variety of different discourses, as a particular set of effects within discourses. See Sara Mills, *Discourse* (Routledge: New York, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Both branches took a strong antiwar position. The former branch of feminists identified with their nation-state, but they developed articulate critiques of nationalism in general, and of nationalism of their state's enemy in particular. Therefore, I think that Benderly's term 'patriotic' describes their approach more accurately.

<sup>13</sup> See Benderly. Also, Knezevic "Affective nationalism," and Jovanka Stojasavljevic, "Women, Conflict, and Culture in Former Yugoslavia," *Gender and Development* 3.1 (February 1995): 36-41.

<sup>14</sup> See Enloe. See also Rhonda Copelon, "Gendered War Crimes: Reconceptualizing Rape in Time of War," *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*, ed. Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper (New York: Routledge, 1995): 197-214.

<sup>15</sup> For discourse analysis as a methodological tool, see Teun A Van Dijk, "The Study of Discourse," *Discourse as Structure and Process*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk (London: Sage Publications, 1997): 1-34. See also Mills, *Discourse*.

<sup>16</sup> *Intertextuality* is a term introduced by Julia Kristeva to mark "the propensity of texts to refer to others and to be constructed by that reference to other texts," Mills, p.154. I employ the term to point at the relational nature of discourses and to illuminate that feminist discourse of the war in Yugoslavia draws upon the existing feminist discourses of rape and nationalist discourses.

<sup>17</sup> Slapsak, p. 74.

<sup>18</sup> Rada Ivekovic, "Yugoslav Neofeminism," in *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996) 734-6, p. 734.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 735.

<sup>20</sup> Vera Litrichin and Lepa Mladjenovic. "Belgrade Feminists: Separation, Guilt, and Identity Crisis," *Ana's Land: Sisterhood in Eastern Europe*, ed. Tanya Renne (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997) p. 179.

<sup>21</sup> Ivekovic, p. 735.

<sup>22</sup> Donna M. Hughes, Lepa Mladjenovic and Zorica Mrsevic, "Feminist Resistance in Serbia," *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 2.4 (November 1994): 509-32, p. 512.

<sup>23</sup> Benderly, p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> As quoted in Slavenka Drakulic, "'Six Mortal Sins' of Yugoslav Feminism," *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996): 736-8, p. 736.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 737.

<sup>26</sup> Traditionally, in Western liberal discourse, the citizen is a disembodied, impersonal community member, whose particular identity shaped by race, gender, ethnicity, and class is subordinated to an abstract, public self, determined primarily by loyalty to the state. But feminist scholars have argued that this model represents the behavior of the white male elite, whose characteristics are accepted as a general norm for all individuals; it is based on the assumption that all other particular loyalties (to locality, race, class, and gender) should be suppressed, so that citizenship becomes an abstract relationship among equals. See Kathleen Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," *Signs* 15.4 (1990): 781-812.

<sup>27</sup> Stojasavljevic, p. 37.

<sup>28</sup> Benderly, p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> Stojasavljevic, p. 36.

<sup>30</sup> Litrichin&Mladjenovic, p.182; Benderly, p. 62.

<sup>31</sup> Yugoslav antinationalist feminists developed an analysis that relies on the framework proposed by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (1989), according to which women tend to participate in nationalist and state practices in the following ways: as the biological regenerators of the nation; as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic groups; as central participants in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; as signifiers of ethnic/national differences - as the ideological focus of symbolization for defining the traits of one's nation; and as participants in national, economic, political discourses and military struggles. Discussed in Benderly, p. 63; and Andjelka Milic, "Women and Nationalism in the Former Yugoslavia," *Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, eds. Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller (New York: Routledge, 1993): 109-22, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> Litrichin&Mladjenovic, p. 183.

<sup>33</sup> Women in Black, "Women in Black Against War: A Letter to the Women's Meeting in Amsterdam on the 8th of March 1993," *Women Magazine* 40 (December 1993): 17-8.

<sup>34</sup> Benderly, p.71.

<sup>35</sup> Knezevic, "Affective nationalism," p. 67. Women activists in Tresnjevka Women's Group also could not resolve internal conflicts. Some women left and formed a separate organization - the Center for Women War Victims. "We completely split with the telephone hotline. The reason was completely different approach in work." Quoted in Tanya Renne, "For Women, About Women, By Women," in *Ana's Land: Sisterhood in Eastern Europe*, ed. Tanya Renne (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997) 188-9. p. 189. Women who decided to stay chose the 'patriotic' approach.

<sup>36</sup> Stasa Zajovic, "I am Disloyal," *What Can We Do for Ourselves?/ East European Feminist Conference, Belgrade, June 1994* (Beograd: Center for Women's Studies, Research and Communication, 1995) 49-51, p. 50. See also Benderly; Litrichin&Mladjenovic; Stojasavljevic. Also, Laura Pitter and Alexandra Stiglmeier, "Will the World Remember? Can the Women Forget?" *Ms.* 3.5 (March/April 1993): 19-22.

<sup>37</sup> Vesna Kesic, "Confessions of a 'Yugo-Nostalgic' Witch," *Ana's Land: Sisterhood in Eastern Europe*, ed. Tanya Renne (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997) 195-200, p. 199.

<sup>38</sup> From the letter published in the special pull-out section of *off our backs*, "Serbia's War Against Bosnia and Croatia," *off our backs* 23.5 (May 1993): 1-15, pull-out page 10, italics in original.

<sup>39</sup> Benderly, p.67.

<sup>40</sup> Pitter and Stiglmeier, p. 21.

<sup>41</sup> As quoted in Hughes et al., p. 519.

<sup>42</sup> Women in Black, 1993.

<sup>43</sup> Renne, p. 189.

<sup>44</sup> Pitter and Stiglmeier, p.21.

<sup>45</sup> Martina Belic and Vesna Kesic, "Center for Women War Victims Disregards Nationality," *off our backs* 24.1 (January 1994): 6, 7, 17.

<sup>46</sup> See Djurdja Knezevic, "Abused and Misused: Women and Their Political Exploitation," *Connexions* 42 (1993): 12- 13, 37; Pitter and Stiglmeier, p. 20; and Isidora Sekulic, "Inside Serbia: The War at Home," *Ms.* 4.5 (March/April 1994):18-19, p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Knezevic, "Abused," p. 42.

<sup>48</sup> "Hundreds of journalists entered the refugee camps, searching for raped women...There is already a joke about it. The answer to the question: 'What does a journalist say in a camp?' is 'OK, anybody around here being raped and speaking English?'" Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>49</sup> Zarkov, "Gender," p. 114.

<sup>50</sup> See Benderly. Also, Vesna Kesic, "The High Price of Free Speech," *The Women's Review of Books* 10.10-11 (July 1993): 16-17; Kesic, "Confessions;" Knezevic, "Affective Nationalism;" and Slapsak.

<sup>51</sup> As quoted in Knezevic, "Affective Nationalism," p.68; and Kesic, "High Price," p.16.

<sup>52</sup> Kesic, "High Price," p.16.

<sup>53</sup> As Raneta Salecl writes, "even some top women academics or managers will not call themselves feminists because they fear being perceived as man-like women. The roots of this equating of feminism with a lack of femininity lie in the image of the communist woman. Women who held top party or government positions under communism were usually perceived as unattractive: they supposedly dressed in grey suits, displayed man-like

behavior, and were considered to be hard-line Party bureaucrats." Renata Salecl, *The Spoils of Freedom: Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Knezevic, "Affective Nationalism," p. 67.

<sup>55</sup> The tour Mother Courage I was organized to discuss the Persian Gulf War. Arab and Israeli women participated in it.

<sup>56</sup> "Serbia's war," pull-out page 10.

<sup>57</sup> The *oob* reporters also testify that "Mother Courage II presenters did address the genocidal aspect of the rapes by Serbian soldiers," but they add that *oob* attended only one presentation of the tour, see "Serbia's War," pull-out p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pull-out p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> According to the letter, Kesic was a writer and occasional editor of the "pornographic magazine *Start*," and Knezevic a "director of the Museum of Communist Revolution which was essentially a weapons warehouse in the middle of Zagreb and was directly financed by the communist party." Jill Benderly, a U.S. feminist and one of the organizers of MADRE tour's stop in Washington DC, defended the women: "Vesna [Kesic]'s role, when she was at *Start*, was to struggle against the inclusion of that [soft-core photographs of women] material, but not to boycott that magazine. What Vesna wrote for that magazine was some of the more articulate feminist analysis that was available to Croatia at that time. They covered American feminism closely, they translated a lot of texts and that was the only place in Croatia you could really get that. You make a tactical decision as to where people can hear you... she certainly was not a pornographer. Durda [Knezevic] is a historian. She was dealing with documentation of the partisan movement and particularly she does work on women's role in the partisan movement. She does it from the very critical perspective. Yes, it was directly financed by the Communist Party -- I mean, the Communist Party was the state," Ibid., p. 5, italics in original.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) and Catharine MacKinnon's texts on Yugoslavia, discussed below.

<sup>61</sup> The evidence here differs. According to Benderly and Knezevic "Affective Nationalism," they are *Kareta*, *The Wall of Love*, *Biser* (International Initiative of women of Bosnia-Herzegovina) and *Zene BiH* (a Bosnian refugee women's group). According to Amy Hamilton, "Catharine MacKinnon to Represent Croatian, Muslim Wartime Rape Survivors," *off our backs* 23.2 (Feb 1993): 3, they are *Kareta*, *Women's Help Now*, and *Mothers for Peace*.

<sup>62</sup> Benderly, p.67; also Vesna Kesic, "Response to 'Turning Rape into Pornography,'" *off our backs* (Jan. 1994): 10-11.

<sup>63</sup> Knezevic, "Affective Nationalism," p. 68.

<sup>64</sup> See Zarkov, "Gender." See also Bakic-Hayden and Hayden "Orientalist Variations," Bakic "Nesting Orientalisms," and Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*. Although Todorova defines Balkanism as a separate discursive category, different from Orientalism, I believe that here, in the context of feminist representation of the former Yugoslavia, term Orientalism is more appropriate.

<sup>65</sup> The term 'patriotic' feminists is used here for both 'patriotic' local women's groups and the accordant 'stream' of Western authors.

<sup>66</sup> Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 61-88, p.63.

<sup>67</sup> Kareta, "Yugoslav Feminists Found Newspaper," *off our backs* 21.7 (July 1991) p.10.

<sup>68</sup> Natalie Nenadic, "Croatia: One Woman's View," *off our backs* 21.10 (November 1991) p. 20-1.

<sup>69</sup> In the January 1992 issue of *oob*, a letter responding to Nenadic's article was published. The letter was signed by Branka Veselnovic, who identified herself as a lesbian feminist, currently living in Geneva, Switzerland. She criticized *oob* for publishing Nenadic's text, which "might easily have been signed by some Mr. Right from the Righteous Party of Croatia." That made Veselnovic think that "*oob* had succumbed to daily politics," asking us to take sides, namely, to play "according to their [men's] rules." Veselnovic added that *the photo which illustrated Nenadic's text was not of Yugoslav women*, and asked *oob* to check their source and explain its origin in the next issue. The *oob* editors responded to Veselnovic's critique, but avoided mentioning the photo. See *off our backs* 22.1 (Jan 1992) p.17.

<sup>70</sup> Mirjana Graean, "Yugoslavia: Fighting the Dragons," *Spare Rib* 230 (Dec 1991/Jan 1992) pp. 67-8.

<sup>71</sup> Although empathizing might be expected, the *identification* of contemporary U.S. feminist audience with the women in *oob* and *Spare Rib* photos is hardly plausible. The reader neither looks like these women do, nor shares the experience of their underdeveloped rural reality now additionally transformed and distanced by the presence of war.

<sup>72</sup> See Slapsak, p. 72.

<sup>73</sup> In November 1992, *oob* published "An International Appeal: Word Out of Bosnia," a collection of testimonies of Sarajevo poet Asja Zahirovic and two female witnesses of atrocities done by Serbs. Zahirovic's appeal was transcribed and translated by Natalie Nenadic, while the "Bosnian Press Agency [was] the official source of the two sworn testimonies that appear [in *oob*]." In the Dec 1992/Jan 1993 issue of *Spare Rib* and Jan/Feb 1993 issue of *Ms.*, the Tresnjevka women's group reported the rapes and asked for help. The action alert section of *Ms.* in May/June 1993 was also devoted to Bosnia.

<sup>74</sup> The Tresnjevka Women's Group, "Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia: Inside the Death Camps," *Spare Rib* 239 (Dec. 1992/Jan. 1993) 48-9.

<sup>75</sup> Sharon Marcus, "Figthing Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention." *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992) 385-403, p.386.

<sup>76</sup> Catharine MacKinnon, "Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide," *Ms.* 4.1 (July/August 1993): 24-30.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Jensen, "Introduction: Pornographic Dodge and Distortions." *Pornography: The Production and Consumption of Inequality*, ed. Gail Dines, Robert Jensen and Ann Russo (New York: Routledge, 1998) 1-7, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) p. 78.

<sup>79</sup> It is impossible to reproduce MacKinnon's ideas in a paragraph and to do justice to the complexity of her arguments. Therefore I focus only on the points which are relevant to my following analysis of "Turning Rape into Pornography." This brief summary is based on MacKinnon's works *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); and *Only Words*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), and on the analyses of her work by Wendy Brown in *States of Injury*, p. 77-95, and Judith Butler, in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>80</sup> As an example of the early critiques of radical feminist antiporn movement, see Ellen Willis, "Feminism, Moralism and Pornography," *Powers of Desire*, Ed. Ann Snitow, et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983) 460-67. For the more recent critiques of MacKinnon's work see Brown, *States of Injury*, p. 77-95; Butler, *Excitable Speech*. There is a large body of works that take sides in the ongoing debates on pornography. See for example, *Pornography: The Production and Consumption of Inequality*, ed. Gail Dines, Robert Jensen and Ann Russo, 1998; Nadine Strossen, *Defending Pornography* 1995; Carol Avedon, *Nudes, Prudes, and Attitudes: Pornography and Censorship* 1994; Susan G. Cole, *Power Surge: Sex, Violence, and Pornography*, 1995.

<sup>81</sup> Brown, *States of Injury*, p. 94.

<sup>82</sup> Munk and Kesic made a similar point. See Erika Munk, "What's Wrong with this Picture?" *The Women's Review of Books* 9.6 (March 1994) p. 5, and Kesic, "Response," p. 10-11.

<sup>83</sup> The letter was signed by a group of 29 women, including Erica Jong, Karen DeCrow, Barbara Ehrenreich, Wendy Kaminer, and others. See *Ms.* 4.3 (Nov/Dec 1993) p. 8. I have to add that the letters published in response to the articles I analyze here, often problematized, contested, and disrupted the dominant representation. However, they were usually placed in the less visible section reserved for individual reader's comments, which is separate from the coverage.

<sup>84</sup> MacKinnon insists on the ethnic specificity of rape perpetrators and victims. That insistence makes her somewhat contradict herself, for, in Bosnia, access to pornography was not ethnically determined and available to Serbs only.

<sup>85</sup> See "Miss Besieged Sarajevo," *Ms.* (Sep/Oct 1993): 16.