Charles University

Faculty of Arts

Department of Czech and Comparative Literature

Germanic and Slavic Studies

Dissertation

MA, Jelena Gajić

Education of Muslim Girls During the Interwar Era and Socialist Transformation in Yugoslavia

Vzdělání muslimských dívek během meziválečného období a socialistické transformace v Jugoslávii

Dissertation supervisor prof. doc. Zora Hesová

Dissertation consultant prof. doc. Rosanna Morabito

2024

I hereby declare that I have written this dissertation independently, using only the mentioned and duly cited sources and literature, and that the work has not been used in another university study programme or to obtain the same or another academic title.

In Prague on day 24.07.2024. *Jelena Gajić*

Abstract

This dissertation examines educational practices concerning Muslim girls and women in Yugoslavia from its formation to its dissolution. It starts by exploring the dynamic interaction between rising nationalism and religion in the newly unified Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as Yugoslavia, during the interwar period, and its impact on educational reform. It also looks at the emergence of new Muslim elite, and their influence on the education of Muslim girls and women. The education policies are examined within the broader context of heated debates about the emancipation of Muslim women in general, while showing how the education gap remained during the entire interwar period. The second part of the thesis examined educational and emancipatory opportunities that arose through the involvement of Muslim women in the National Liberation Movement of the Yugoslav Partisans. It showcases the continuation of the modernist trends from the interwar era, grounded in a new ideological model. Many Muslim girls and women used this opportunity to participate crash courses and obtain basic literacy level. In the final part, this thesis sheds light on the educational reforms implemented by the Yugoslav Communist Party after the war, in a new social, cultural and political context. It examines the party's relationship with Muslim communities and universal changes to education that affected Muslim girls. These reforms had provided fresh educational prospects for Muslim girls while aligning with the party's agenda of assimilating Muslim women into a modern, socialist society. The dissertation also shows that many Muslim women used these opportunities for social mobility and careers unimaginable before.

This dissertation contributes to current academic debates by illuminating the struggles of Muslim girls for educational opportunities in three distinct periods. The research delves into the evolution of educational systems and policies, also showing continuities and discontinuities of prevailing narratives regarding Muslim women in general. Therefore, a key aspect of this study is the exploration of media messaging and its consequential impact on societal perceptions, particularly regarding the representation of women. The thesis shows the influence of transnational factors on shaping domestic perspectives and policies. Ultimately, the research illustrates the struggle of women for inclusion, equality, and recognition in Yugoslavia, with a special emphasis on the indispensable role played by Muslim women and girls in advancing these endeavours.

Abstrakt

Tato disertační práce zkoumá vzdělávací praxe týkající se muslimských dívek a žen v Jugoslávii od jejího vzniku až po rozpad. Začíná zkoumáním dynamické interakce mezi rostoucím nacionalismem a náboženstvím v nově sjednoceném Království Srbů, Chorvatů a Slovinců, později známém jako Jugoslávie, během meziválečného období a jeho dopadem na vzdělávací reformu. Dále se zabývá vznikem nové muslimské elity a jejím vlivem na vzdělávání muslimských dívek a žen. Obecně, vzdělávací politiky jsou zkoumány v širším kontextu vášnivých debat o emancipaci muslimských žen, přičemž ukazuje, jak vzdělávací propast zůstala po celé meziválečné období. Druhá část této práce zkoumá vzdělávací a emancipační příležitosti, které vznikly zapojením muslimských žen do Národního osvobozeneckého hnutí jugoslávských partyzánů. Představuje pokračování modernistických trendů z meziválečného období, zakotvených v novém ideologickém modelu. Mnoho muslimských dívek a žen využilo tuto příležitost k účasti na krátkodobých kurzech a získání základní gramotnosti. V závěrečné části tato práce osvětluje vzdělávací reformy provedené Jugoslávskou komunistickou stranou po válce v novém sociálním, kulturním a politickém kontextu. Zkoumá vztah strany k muslimským komunitám a univerzální změny ve vzdělávání, které ovlivnily muslimské dívky. Tyto reformy poskytly muslimským dívkám nové vzdělávací vyhlídky, zatímco se shodovaly s agendou strany začleňovat muslimské ženy do moderní, socialistické společnosti. Disertace také ukazuje, že mnoho muslimských žen využilo tyto příležitosti pro sociální mobilitu a kariéry, které byly dříve nepředstavitelné.

Tato disertační práce přispívá k současným akademickým debatám tím, že osvětluje boje muslimských dívek o vzdělávací příležitosti ve třech odlišných obdobích. Výzkum se zabývá vývojem vzdělávacích systémů a politik, ukazuje také kontinuitu a diskontinuitu převládajících narativů týkajících se obecně muslimských žen. Klíčovým aspektem této studie je proto průzkum mediálního sdělování a jeho následný dopad na společenské vnímání, zejména co se týče reprezentace žen. Práce ukazuje vliv transnacionálních faktorů na formováni tuzemských perspektiv a politik. Nakonec výzkum ilustruje boj žen za začlenění, rovnost a uznání v Jugoslávii, se zvláštním důrazem na nezastupitelnou roli, kterou hrály muslimské ženy a dívky při podporování těchto snah.

Table of Content

Key words: Education, Muslim girls, Muslim women, Yugoslavia

Klíčová slova: Vzdělání, Muslimské dívky, Muslimské ženy, Jugoslávie

Acknowledgments

Working on this dissertation has not only inspired my future endeavours but has also challenged my critical thinking and research methodologies. It has enabled me to recognize my potential while addressing my limitations, equipping me with the tools necessary to tackle any forthcoming academic or non-academic pursuit. This journey has broadened my perspective, teaching me to embrace diverse approaches and welcome constructive criticism from peers, ultimately fostering resourcefulness, open-mindedness, and flexibility. I am grateful for the support I received during my PhD studies from my supervisor, Prof. Zora Hesova, and co-advisor, Prof. Rosanna Morabito. Their guidance and insightful feedback were instrumental in successfully completing my studies at both Charles University and the University of Sapienza. I extend special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Ivan Simić, whose assistance and invaluable remarks propelled my work to its potential.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of department coordinators Libuse Hezckova and Annalisa Cosentino, who effectively led and organized my doctoral program despite its challenges. Their unwavering contributions and support were invaluable whenever I needed assistance. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all my colleagues and closest friends for their ongoing support and encouragement, which helped alleviate the burdens of this experience. Moreover, I am profoundly grateful to my parents for their constant love, assistance, and unwavering belief in me, supporting my academic pursuits every step of the way. And lastly, I commend myself for the perseverance, determination, and ingenuity that guided me through this journey, which, at times, challenged my sanity, to achieve the desired outcome.

1 Introduction

In the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia from 1929), the 1921 constitution mandated elementary education for all. In practice, however, many Muslim girls throughout the country were excluded. New educational system was to be open to all, a part of emancipatory push of the new kingdom. The concept of women's emancipation through education, particularly for Muslim women, was not new and had been a subject of intense debate in the Balkans, both before, and after the end of the First World War. Despite the rhetoric, however, the Yugoslav government invested little resources on women's education, treating it as a low-priority issue. Prejudices against girls' educational needs have hindered many from accessing schooling, in addition to the educational infrastructure being in poor condition, or frequently absent in rural areas. Additionally, the custom of discontinuing girls' education at the onset of menstruation, coinciding with the beginning of veil-wearing, was prevalent. Illiteracy rates were high, especially in predominantly Muslim regions. In parts of Bosnia, for instance, about three-quarters of the population was illiterate, with the rate for women often exceeding 90 percent.[1]

Despite all that, discussions about Muslim women's emancipation, including their education, became more prominent in public discourse. The growing feminist movements and modernist intellectuals made the issue of women's empowerment difficult for politicians and media to overlook. Within the Muslim community, progressives advocated for gender and religious reforms, while conservatives upheld traditional Islamic laws and values leading to a polarizing atmosphere regarding the issue. This critical matter sparked a debate within the Muslim community, causing the separation between the conservative ulama[2] and modernists led by reis-ul-ulema[3] Džemaludin Čaušević. Čaušević advocated for progressive changes in girls' education, whereas conservatives expressed concerns over the pace of these changes and increasing secularism.

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[1] Stipica Grgić, "The Kingdom of Diversity and Paternalism: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, 1918–1941," in *Interwar East Central Europe, 1918-1941: The Failure of Democracy-Building, the Fate of Minorities* (Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2020), 217.

[2] Religious scholars

[3] The head of the Islamic Community of Yugoslavia

Another problem was the relationship between the Yugoslav state and its Muslim communities, being rather turbulent and marked with the state's discriminatory and assimilating agenda towards all non-Christian communities. The all-encompassing nationalism and desire for unification, or rather forceful integration of all Yugoslav people, heavily influenced the creation of the educational policies.[4] These policies, often ignorant of and exclusive towards the needs of Muslim communities, left little room for reforming their education system, which was predominantly based on religious teachings and tightly controlled by the state.[5] This historical context raises several pertinent questions: How did the interaction between the Yugoslav state and Muslim communities influence the elementary education of Muslim girls? To what degree did these dynamics affect the school attendance of these girls? Why was women's education the point of disagreement within the Muslim community? And ultimately, how effectively were the educational needs of Muslim girls and women addressed during the interwar era in Yugoslavia? Besides these research questions that this thesis tackles, there is also a need to place ideas of women's empowerment in a broader context. For example, contrary to newly formed Czechoslovakia, all women in newly formed Yugoslavia were disempowered without any political rights while their economic and social rights were severely restricted by laws and societal norms.

The educational struggles of Muslim girls and women in Yugoslavia was further complicated by the upheavals of the Second World War. This period, characterized by widespread loss of life and destruction of infrastructure, severely hindered the provision of basic education. Despite these challenges, the war opened new avenues for Yugoslav women, including Muslims,[6] to redefine their societal roles. This transformation was largely facilitated by the National Liberation War, spearheaded by the Yugoslav communists under Josip Broz Tito.[7] For the first time, women were actively involved in combat roles, not just in

[4] Pieter Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula," *Südost-Forschungen*, no. 69/70 (2010): 152–81.

[5] Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans before World War II*, International Library of Historical Studies 95 (London: Tauris, 2015).

[6] Jelena Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[7] Josip Broz Tito, born May 7th, 1892, played a pivotal role in changing the course of World War II in Yugoslavia and shaping its future as a socialist state. Despite limited education and early adversities, Tito led a Yugoslav communist revolution against the Axis powers and internal foes, emerging victorious. Post-war, he created a democratic federation of six republics, fostering unity among diverse Yugoslav peoples. Defying

medical support, rallying around the Anti-fascist Women's Front (AFŽ).[8] Some women, such as Vahida Maglajlić, a Bosniak woman and a member of the AFŽ actively participated in the war and was declared as a People's Hero of Yugoslavia for her contributions.[9] Besides helping in the war, many women, particularly those from rural Muslim communities who faced significant illiteracy and isolation, used the opportunity to attend educational programs. This opens the question what these educational courses meant for Muslim women? How were they organized? I will examine the effects of these educational efforts during the war in elevating literacy levels among Muslim women and preparing them for active participation not only in the resistance but also in the emerging socialist state post-war.[10] The questions this thesis ask will also explore what happened to the education of Muslim women outside of the Partisan territories? How the newly established Croatian state tried to infuse existing education system with fascist ideology? What were the implications of these efforts for the Muslim community in Bosnia?

The establishment of socialist Yugoslavia in 1945, following the Second World War, marked the beginning of extensive reforms in society, culture, politics, and legislation. These reforms aimed to unify Yugoslavia's religiously, nationally, and culturally diverse population, with educational policy reforms playing a key role in both meeting the needs of all and supporting the new socialist framework.[11] A pivotal reform was the introduction of mandatory eight-year elementary education for all children, including Muslim girls.[12] Initially, Yugoslavia's educational system mirrored Soviet policies. However, following the Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslavia had to survive and then find its own path to socialism, leading to

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Stalin and balancing East-West interests, Tito established a prosperous, culturally varied nation, maintaining power until his death in 1980. On Tito, see: Jože Pirjevec, *Tito and His Comrades* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2018).

[8] Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke: društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji, 1945-1953*, Biblioteka Studije i monografije / Institut za savremenu istoriju Beograd, knj. 74 (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011).

[9] Ivan Simić, "The Veil Lifting Campaign," in *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*, 1st ed., Genders and Sexualities in History Series (Springer International Publishing AG, 2018).

[10] Adnan Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini: žena u intelektualnom i društvenom životu Bošnjaka od aneksije do Zakona o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže (1908-1950)* (Zagreb: Bošnjačka nacionalna zajednica za Grad Zagreb i Zagrebačku Županiju, 2017).

[11] Jana Bacevic, *From Class to Identity: The Politics of Education Reforms in Former Yugoslavia* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2014).

[12] Ivan Simic, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*, 1st ed. 2018, Genders and Sexualities in History (Cham: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

the ideas of self-management and diverging from Stalin's politics.[13] The education system was infused with Marxist and socialist ideologies, disseminated through curricula starting from the elementary level.[14] The new schools were entirely secular, and students were encouraged to pursue further education.[15] The Yugoslav government placed a strong emphasis on the country's cultural diversity, ensuring appropriate language instruction and textbooks in schools for all Yugoslav nationalities across the six republics. Consequently, uniform state elementary schools catered to all children, including Muslim girls, reflecting the government's commitment to inclusive education in the new socialist state. [16]

The education of girls and adults, particularly those of the Muslim faith, was a key aspect of the gender reform initiatives led by the KPJ in their broader emancipation project. The KPJ's efforts were especially focused on integrating Muslim women into Yugoslavia's evolving socialist society.[17] Taking inspiration from Soviet practices in Central Asia, the KPJ, through the Anti-fascist Women's Front (AFŽ), launched extensive educational campaigns but also efforts to discourage veiling in regions with high Muslim populations, where women's illiteracy was particularly prevalent. In the Party's view, the practice of veiling symbolized illiteracy and backwardness, leading to significant efforts to promote its abandonment.[18] The KPJ's atheistic stance and policies promoting secularism often led to a complex and fluctuating relationship with Muslim communities. While the Party sought to diminish religious influence, Tito recognized the persistence of religious beliefs in Yugoslavia's diverse society and aimed to balance secularism with religious tolerance to maintain national unity.[19] This context raises several questions: How did the interaction

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[13] Dennison I. Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1974* (London: C. Hurst for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1977).

[14] Snježana Šušnjara, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Communist Regime: An Outlook on Educational Policy," *Historia Scholastica* 1, no. 7 (2021): 111–32, https://doi.org/10.15240/tul/006/2021-1-006.

[15] Sanja Petrović Todosijević, *Reforma Osnovnoškolskog Sistema u Srbiji 1944-1959: Otećemo Svetlost Bučnom Vodopadu*, Biblioteka "Studije i Monografije," Knjiga br. 110 (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2018).

[16] "Stručno obrazovanje narodnosti, kao faktor ravnopravnosti u sferi društveno-ekonomskih odnosa [Vocational Education of Nationalities as a Factor in Equality in the Sphere of Social and Economic Relationships]," Problemi obrazovanja stručnih kadrova iz redova pripadnika narodnosti SFRJ (stručno-analitički rad) (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], September 1967), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[17] Tea Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism," *Religion & Gender* 7, no. 2 (February 19, 2017): 184–203.

[18] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.

[19] Xavier Bougarel, "Bosnian Muslims and the Yugoslav Idea," in *Yugoslavism. Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, 1st ed. (London: Hurst, 2003), 100–114.

between the KPJ and Muslim communities influence the education of Muslim girls? What were the underlying motives of the KPJ's educational and unveiling campaigns in relation to enhancing elementary education? How did Muslim religious authorities position themselves in this dynamic? And ultimately, what were the goals of the Yugoslav communist regime regarding the education of Muslim girls?

Taken together and beyond these research questions for each period, this thesis aims to shed light on how different regimes approached education of Muslim girls and women. Observing the girls' education within the broader framework of Muslim women's emancipation, this thesis touches upon the modernization efforts of the shifting governments that affected Muslim women's social positioning but provides a valuable insight into the more intricate intercommunal struggles and agency of the Muslim people and especially women to alleviate social, political, and economic standing of the Muslim girls and women via education. It provides a comprehensive analysis of educational policies towards Muslim women and girls in three very distinct periods and emphasizes their agency through an interdisciplinary approach.[20] The thesis delves into the evolution of educational systems and policies, but also into the narratives that followed education of Muslim populations. It examines how prejudices often guided policies. Therefore, a significant focus of this study is the transmission of messages through media, their public reception, and the impact on societal processes. Furthermore, as this study shows, these messages were not formed in an isolation, and I look at the impact of transnational influences on the formation of domestic perspectives and policies, particularly at those from Turkey and the Soviet Union. Throughout this work, I aim to highlight the role of specific social, cultural, political, and economic factors in shaping an environment where Muslim populations lived. Ultimately, the thesis narrates the poignant story of Muslim women's struggle for inclusion, equality, and visibility.

[20] On the concept of women's agency, see: Orit Avishai, "'Doing Religion' In a Secular World: Women in Conservative Religions and the Question of Agency," *Gender & Society* 22, no. 4 (August 2008): 409–33, https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243208321019; Sirma Bilge, "Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31, no. 1 (February 2010): 9–28, https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860903477662; Bronwyn Davies, "THE CONCEPT OF AGENCY: A Feminist Poststructuralist Analysis," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 30 (1991): 42–53.

This thesis focuses on Muslim girls and women due to their distinctive social, cultural, religious, political, and historical significance within the Yugoslav context. While non-Muslim women also faced discrimination and disparity in the patriarchal Yugoslav society, Muslim women encountered even greater challenges. These challenges stemmed from a specific set of prejudices towards Muslim communities, rooted in the history of the Balkans and Ottoman occupation. Since the inception of Yugoslavia, Islam has been viewed as foreign and antiquated, and its practitioners, particularly women, have been perceived as oppressed. These prejudices were pervasive, with even women from other religious backgrounds seeing Muslim women as backward and in need of liberation. The deepening of societal divisions and the creation of intersectional disadvantages were particularly pronounced among Muslim girls and women from the southern parts of the country, especially during the interwar period.[21] This was largely due to the anti-Turkish sentiments of the Yugoslav government and pro-Serbian Muslim factions. Despite facing discrimination, Bosnian Muslims were viewed as more Slavic and "Serbian" by the Yugoslav government. Given the dire economic and educational conditions, and deeply rooted traditionalism among Muslim communities in the south, Muslim girls and women were placed in even more precarious situations than their counterparts in Bosnia. This further marginalized them in the eyes of both Bosnian Muslims and the Yugoslav government, who deemed them even more "backward". Therefore, examining the intricate positioning of Muslim women within the Yugoslav space, which was both Islamic and European, offers insights into the policies that targeted them and their identities. The presence of multiple discrimination based on multifold factors was not, however, uniquely Yugoslav Muslim women's experience. Similar cases could be found in the instances of Afro-American and Latin-American women in the United States[22], or the Chinese women migrant workers[23], which deems the topic at hand a valuable part of broader discussions.

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[21] On such a form of orientalism, see: Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–31, https://doi.org/10.2307/2501399.

[22] Lisa Sibbett, "Intersectionality in U.S. Educational Research," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, by Lisa Sibbett (Oxford University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.403. See also, Joya Misra, Celeste Vaughan Curington, and Venus Mary Green, "Methods of Intersectional Research," *Sociological Spectrum* 41, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 9–28, https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1791772.

While this study will encompass all Yugoslav Muslim communities, particular attention will be given to Bosnian Muslim women and their community, owing to the influential role of its religious authorities on other Muslim communities. As the largest Muslim community in Yugoslavia, the Bosnian Muslim community served as the focal point for social, religious, cultural, political, and historical transformations that influenced other communities. Consequently, when gender reforms were gradually introduced during the Habsburg rule and subsequently advanced within the Bosnian Muslim community, other Yugoslav Muslim communities followed suit. Within the chapters of this thesis, I will demonstrate how Bosnian Muslim women served as catalysts for modernization and became role models for the wider community.

In addition to shedding light on intercommunal activism among Muslim populations, particularly women, this thesis explores supranational influences on Yugoslav Muslim communities, placing the study within the broader context of Islamic modernity and gender reforms. Both Muslim intellectuals and Yugoslav governments closely monitored developments in other countries concerning religious and gender reforms. They observed transformations in the newly established Republic of Turkey under Kemal Ataturk, which entailed significant societal changes following the Ottoman era, as well as the Soviet Union's efforts in women's emancipation, particularly in addressing the "Muslim woman question" in Central Asia after the Bolshevik revolution. These developments had a profound impact on the Yugoslav communist government as well. The introduction of ideas from these countries intensified discussions regarding religious and gender reforms within Yugoslav Muslim communities, leading to polarized factions: progressives advocating for reforms involving reinterpretation of the Qur'an and Sharia Law, directly influencing the social status of Muslim women through emancipation and education, and conservatives supporting the status quo. However, consensus remained elusive during the interwar era, and debates continued into and were ultimately resolved after the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia following World War II. These debates will be extensively addressed in the second chapter of the thesis. This underscores that the Yugoslav Muslim community was not immune to

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[23] Yixuan Wang, Cheng Cheng, and Yanjie Bian, "More than Double Jeopardy: An Intersectional Analysis of Persistent Income Disadvantages of Chinese Female Migrant Workers," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 24, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 246–69, https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2018.1469722.

global trends, and studies focusing on the education and emancipation of Muslim women in Turkey and the Soviet Union provide a foundation and demonstrate the relevance of addressing the education of Muslim girls and women in the Yugoslav context.

Following the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia in 1945, this thesis will explore the implementation of new educational policies by the Yugoslav Communist Party and illuminate their significant impacts on the emancipation of Muslim girls and women. The new educational legislation mandated compulsory elementary education for children of all genders and nationalities. A comprehensive educational system was introduced, offering fresh opportunities for Muslim women from a young age. They were encouraged to pursue further education in high schools and universities, thereby enhancing their prospects in the labour market and securing higher-paying positions. This study will demonstrate that many Muslim women seized these opportunities, completing their high school education and embarking on successful careers. Furthermore, it will highlight the broader transformation of their social status.

However, this thesis will underscore the importance of exploring the education of Muslim girls and women alongside the issue of veiling. The practice of veiling was a significant concern for the Yugoslav communists, who viewed it as a primary factor contributing to the widespread illiteracy among Muslim women, and were determined to eliminate it. They believed that women could not receive an education while veiled. Consequently, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia initiated urgent educational and unveiling campaigns, with the Anti-Fascist Front of Women playing a leading role. These efforts resulted in many Muslim women abandoning the practice of veiling. Subsequently, the government proceeded to outlaw veiling through the enactment of the Law on the Prohibition of Veil in 1950. Initially implemented in Bosnia, this law was later extended to all other republics. Veiling became a criminal offense, and men found guilty of coercing women to veil were either fined or imprisoned. I argue that while unveiling policies have contributed to the integration of Muslim women into socialist society, true emancipation lies in providing accessible education for Muslim girls and women, albeit conditioned upon the abandonment of this religious practice. Therefore, these two issues should be examined in conjunction, as this thesis will endeavour to do.

The emancipation campaigns led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia can be viewed as both advantageous and imposed. While these campaigns facilitated the integration of Muslim women into society, the rapid pace of socialist transformation left little room for individual religious, cultural, or political beliefs. Guided by their atheistic ideology, the KPJ sought to confine religiosity to the private sphere, which conflicted with the practice of veiling. The unveiling and educational initiatives were swiftly implemented as part of the revolutionary overhaul, garnering significant support, particularly in Bosnia. Despite the potential endangerment of their religious identity and freedoms, Muslim religious authorities maintained an amicable relationship with the Party. However, communities in rural areas, particularly in southern Serbia and Macedonia, vehemently opposed the new veiling and educational policies, resisting efforts to send their girls to school and unveil their women. As this thesis will illustrate, the path to education was fraught with challenges and was not linear. For instance, even if girls were enrolled in schools, they were often confined to their homes afterward. Ultimately, in their pursuit of gender reforms and policies, the KPJ overlooked the deeply entrenched patriarchal society that Yugoslavia had been for generations, resulting in setbacks to their mission. This thesis demonstrates how educational and unveiling campaigns were integral to the broader objective of establishing and consolidating a modern socialist state, driving the urgency and persistence in their implementation.

And finally, as a researcher from a non-Muslim background, it is important for me to address my positionality in researching such a sensitive subject. My previous academic focus on gender and marginalization naturally led me to this topic as a continuation of my scholarly pursuits. My selection of this subject was driven by an academic curiosity and a desire to fill a gap in the literature. Although my non-Muslim background positions me as an outsider, my identity as a woman from the region provides a closer connection to the issues at hand. Ultimately, my work is driven by a blend of intellectual curiosity and a profound sense of responsibility to advocate for those who have been historically marginalized. By addressing these complexities and striving for an authentic and empathetic portrayal of the subject, I aim to contribute meaningfully to the academic field and to broader societal conversations.

1.1 Research Scope and Methods

Chronologically, this dissertation examined the educational policies towards Muslim women and girls from the inception of Yugoslavia to its dissolution. I only succinctly explored the period under Habsburg rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This era, following the Ottoman withdrawal post-1878 Treaty of Berlin, is pivotal for understanding the early discussions on Muslim girls' education and the significant socio-class shifts experienced by the Muslim community. In the interwar period, which in Yugoslav case lasted from 1918 until 1941, I consider it essential to provide a closer look at the rise of modernists and religious reformists within the Muslim intelligentsia. Their role in advocating and advancing the education and emancipation of Muslim girls and women through media would be a key focus. Simultaneously, I analysed the conservative and traditionalist Muslims who sought to maintain the status quo regarding women in Islam and their impact on educational endeavours. I also looked at the interaction between the authoritarian Yugoslav state and Muslim communities as it is crucial to understanding the facilitation or obstruction of these educational practices. Other important actors such as women's associations and magazines from the early 20th century, as well as Muslim women themselves, were significant in promoting educational and emancipatory opportunities. Finally, the focus was on the establishment of modern Turkey in 1922 under Kemal Ataturk and Soviet policies which exerted substantial transnational influence on Yugoslav Muslims and authorities, particularly in gender reform and emancipation during the interwar period.

Next, I examined the period during the Second World War 1941-1945 that marked the end of monarchy and introduced Yugoslav communists on the political scene that led the country through the war against the powers of Axis. This part of the research scope was crucial not only as an introduction to the Yugoslav communist and socialist political ideology that would lead the people through the war towards the creation of the socialist state, but also as an initiation of the change of the women's social and political positioning via historically indispensable participation in war as Partisans and through educational and political courses organizes by the Yugoslav communists that would expose all women, including Muslim, to emancipation even during the most precarious of times.

The dissertation then shifted focus to socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1992). The creation of the federal and socialist Yugoslavia, was emblematic of the thorough social, cultural, and

political restructuring of the war-thorn country, scared not only by the skirmishes but also by the unrests stemming from the previous government's politics. From the very beginning of their existence, the Yugoslav Communist Party, the sole leading political entity in the new socialist country, has been powered by the Soviet Union's ideologies and policies. Hence why this research encompasses the examination of the Soviet influences on the creation of the educational policies and gender reforms ensuing during the vigorous nation-state building, and especially Soviet handling of the Muslim woman question in the Central Asia in the period after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and establishment of the alleged first communist regime in the world.[24] After Tito's break up with Stalin in 1948, the creation of the unique set of policies and ideology that was more in tune with the Yugoslav social, cultural, and historical environment took place. For this period, it was of vital importance to examine the KPJ's fluctuating relationship with the Muslim communities during the times of the secularization of the educational system and the state. The Party's antireligious sentiment was also evident through unveiling campaigns fervently organized during the first few decades. Given that veiling represented a remnant of the antiquated past, and the main cause of illiteracy and overall backwardness in the eyes of the Yugoslav communists, this would be given special attention throughout the dissertation. Finally, I analysed how the education progressed into the further higher and university education and to what level women, especially Muslim, were incorporated during the socialist era.

As part of my research for this dissertation, I have explored primary sources from several libraries and archives in the former Yugoslavia. My sources include pamphlets, booklets, magazines, newspapers, annuals, textbooks, reports, directives, laws, the internal correspondence of state and Party institutions for the socialist period, as wells as the reports, directives, magazines, and school textbooks published during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Given the heightened digitalization of the sources in the past few years, I had a direct access to most of my primary literature in the form of periodicals via digital NBS or digital National Library of Serbia particularly for the interwar period. Most of my primary sources also came from the Archives of Yugoslavia and National Library of Serbia based in Belgrade. The centralized nature of Yugoslavia directed

[24] Öz Özge, "Muslim Women in Soviet Central Asia," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 33, no. 1 (2018): 91–116.

the flow of information, with material from other districts, areas, and later republics also being available in Belgrade. Consequently, the Archives of Yugoslavia have generated a vast amount of documentation pertaining to the correspondence between the centre and the local branches of the other republics.

Throughout this study I have extensively used magazines and newspapers. I have critically analysed what these media tried to achieve with texts. I have looked at the dominant narratives and what they say about Muslim women, communities, education, emancipation, power relations and social positioning. The emergence of the magazines dedicated exclusively to women during the 1920s, the printing of the wartime press during the Second World War, and further development of the women's media in socialist Yugoslavia has brought the supposed women's emancipation to the fore in the media world, introducing the public with the idea of this "new woman" equipped with education and skills. For the interwar period many of these magazines are important sources for ideas about schooling of women and education of the Muslim girls. Following the outbreak of the Second World War, the new wartime women's press emerged, spearheaded by the Yugoslav communists and their Anti-fascist Women's Front organization. These media served as a means of mobilization of women into Partisan ranks in their National Liberation War against the powers of Axis, but also as a part of the educational literature used on the courses for the political and war education of Partisan women, encompassing Muslim women from the most remote areas of Bosnia. After the conclusion of the war and creation of socialist Yugoslavia, the women's magazines such as "Žena danas", "Zora" and "Nova žena" acquired a new purpose of uplifting women as new socialist citizens. The dominant narratives were circulating around the tropes of strong, educated, and self-sufficient woman, separated from the antiquated and backward past and liberated from patriarchy. Muslim women were receiving special attention in this new press, given that still associated with obsolete remnants of the past in the form of veiling that entailed notions of illiteracy and backwardness, Muslim women were perceived as endangered by their faith that Yugoslav Communists Party understood as an obstacle in the women's progress. By analysing such women's magazines, this thesis provides insight into the public perception and framing of Muslim women position in the society in the Yugoslav space.

That being said, in order to analyse the messages conveyed via these publications, I used the critical discourse analysis based on my background in the linguistics.[25] Understanding the language as the main indicator of the societal changes whose function, status and worth are conditioned by the various social, political, economic, "extra-linguistic", and cultural factors within a society, I follow Jelena Filipović's definition of the critical language analysis or critical sociolinguistics,[26] and Stuart Hall's definition of the language and his discourse approach that sees the language as a medium for the production of meaning and a means of "expression" that articulates the world.[27] Filipović explains that critical sociolinguistics immensely relies on the concepts of the critical discourse analysis that entails the analysis of the role of a discourse in the "re(production)" of the power relations, meaning hegemony and domination of one group over another within the same community. Furthermore, informed by Foucault's insights in discourse, power and sexuality studies, this research also examines the creation and perpetuation of the power structures via the usage of discourse and language.[28] By utilizing these approaches, my aim is to showcase the interplay of different actors in the media realm via language and discourse, as well as of the powers that created and shaped dominant narratives about the educational policies and opportunities of the Muslim girls.

This approach to the women's media analysis is not novel and I was inspired by authors like Slobodanka Peković, Stanislava Barać, and Danijela Majstorović who wrote about the creation of the "new Yugoslav woman" and her representation and propagation through Yugoslav media.[29] Peković's analysis of the first women's and feminist magazines from the beginning of the 20th century has showcased the initiation of feminism in

[25] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (April 1993): 249–83, https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006; Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003); Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Routledge, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315838250.

[26] Jelena Filipović, *Moć reči: ogledi iz kritičke sociolingvistike*, 1. izd (Beograd: Zadužbina Andrejević: Filološki fakultet, 2009).

[27] Stuart Hall, *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79* (Abingdon New York, [New York]: Routledge Centre for contemporary cultural studies, University of Birmingham, 2006).

[28] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

[29] Slobodanka Peković, *Časopisi po meri dostojanstvenog ženskinja: ženski časopisi u Srbiji na početku 20. veka*, Nauka o književnosti. Istorija srpske književne periodike (Novi Sad: Beograd: Matica Srpska; Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2015). Stanislava Barać, *Feministička kontrajavnost: žanr ženskog portreta u srpskoj periodici 1920-1941*, Serija Istorija srpske književne periodike 26 (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2015). Danijela Majstorović, "The Creation of the New Yugoslav Woman – Emancipatory Elements of Media Discourse from the End of World War II," *Viewpoint Magazine*, no. 6 (September 30, 2018)

Yugoslavia through media representation in society with deeply rooted patriarchy. Scrutinizing the media content, Peković observe the gradual, but still noticeable transformation of the perception of the women's role in the society and what new requirements society was placing on women. Moreover, the content constituted from the international feminist events and foreign policies prominent in the said magazines attest to supranational influences on the configuration of the Yugoslav gender relations vital for further understanding of domestic handling of the women's emancipation.[30]

Building on the previous points, I also tried to analyse of how audiences received and interpreted messages disseminated through media and government propaganda. In line with the argumentation of Paul Baker et al. regarding the significant impact of printed media in influencing opinions and setting agendas on key issues, my research examines the politically influenced press reporting and narratives crafted for public consumption.[31] However, my goal is also to try to understand how Muslim women shaped these narratives, and how they were influenced by them. In that sense, I try to examine and accentuate activism from women Muslim women. Given that need for the Muslim women's representation in the Yugoslav historiography is highly desirable, Fabio Giomi's extensive work on the Muslim women's organisations and individual activism significantly informed my research on this matter.[32] Revising the skewed perception of Muslim women as mere bystanders is vital for enhancing their visibility in Yugoslav history and recognizing them as

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[30] In terms of using gender as an analytical category, this research drew inspiration from the works of Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053, https://doi.org/10.2307/1864376. Kathleen Biddick, "Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible," *Speculum* 68, no. 2 (1993): 389–418. Andrea Peto, "From Visibility to Analysis: Gender and History," *Paths to Gender. European Historical Perspectives on Women and Men*, 2009, 1–11. Bonnie G. Smith, "The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France, and the United States, 1750-1940," *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984): 709, https://doi.org/10.2307/1856122.

[31] Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos, and Tony McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[32] Fabio Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European: Voluntary Associations, Islam, and Gender in Post-Ottoman Bosnia and Yugoslavia (1878-1941)*, CEU Press Studies in the History of Medicine, Volume XIII (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2021). See also from Fabio Giomi, "Reforma—The Organization of Progressive Muslims and Its Role in Interwar Bosnia," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29, no. 4 (2009): 495–510; Fabio Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 41–59; Fabio Giomi, "Seduced by Gender Corporatism: Muslim Cultural Entrepreneurs and Kemalist Turkey in Interwar Yugoslavia," in *Kemalism. Transnational Politics in the Post Ottoman World* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 178–216.

active participants in shaping their own lives. A thorough examination of Muslim women's organizations, their contributions to women's magazines, and their political engagement offers a valuable perspective. This approach is crucial for a deeper understanding of the educational journey of Muslim girls and women and highlights their own, even if cautious, engagement in its evolution and negotiation.

My research of elementary school textbooks during the interwar and socialist Yugoslavia showcased how the interwar government and later the Party's ideology tried to control knowledge production for very narrow goals. This approach was informed by the John Georgeoff's insights from his study of dissemination of nationalism through history textbooks in the communist countries of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.[33] Georgeoff argued that the communists' main goal was to raise and educate youth in the spirit of socialism. Similarly, this research is informed by Mersija Fetibegović study of national discourse analysis in juncture with the notion of imagined communities where he examined Yugoslav Marxist education goal to "create socialist citizens and pioneers beyond national boundaries" and at the same time evoke class consciousness by using nationalistic rhetoric in the schoolbooks.[34] Examination of textbooks brings more clarity to what hid behind the educational policies and propaganda, and to what kind of content children, especially minorities, were exposed to. This approach also entailed the examination of the publishing activities and languages of instruction assigned to different communities. The significance of examination of the language of instruction lays in the predetermined notion of its importance not only for the labour market outcomes but for individual identity and political behaviour.[35] For example, while various Yugoslav governments promulgated equality and unity, the practice differed from the theory and different communities' experience of the educational opportunities diverged from others, especially when discrimination towards certain communities was significantly obstructing their educational opportunities.

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[33] John Georgeoff, "Nationalism in the History Textbooks of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria," *Comparative Education Review* 10, no. 3 (October 1966): 442–50. See also, Dubravka Stojanović, *Prošlost dolazi - Promene u tumačenjima prošlosti u srpskim udžbenicima istorije 1913-2021*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2024).

[34] Mersija Fetibegović, "Channelling Nationalisms: Yugoslavisms in Croatian and Serbian Schoolbooks in the 60s and 70s," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 9, no. 1 (2022): 133–55. See also, Dino Mujadžević, "The Image of Ottomans in Croatian Historiography: Changing Narratives in Elementary School Textbooks in Croatia—1980s to 2000s," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 34, no. 3 (2014): 293–302.

[35] Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln and Paolo Masella, "Long-Lasting Effects of Socialist Education," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 98, no. 3 (July 2016): 428–41.

Finally, in order to clarify the meaning behind the policies, especially, educational, enacted by the shifting governing bodies from the time of monarchy to the establishment of the socialist Yugoslav state, this research performed the policy analysis of the passed laws encountered in various archival documents, reports, and records. This approach was informed by the Browne et al. study of the policy analysis that produces the argument that all policy problems are historically and culturally constructed.[36] Moreover, unearthing the agenda behind the passed policies and unmasking of the covert interest of the policymakers, based on the Aizada Arystanbek's insights, is provided with this approach that brings more clarity to their socio-historical contexts and showcases the perpetuation of the biases.[37]

Given that sources directly pertaining to the education of Muslim girls are far and few in between, this dissertation would bridge the gap by using secondary literature and interdisciplinary approach bringing together cultural history, gender studies, sociology, and contemporary policy analysis with the aim to explain the educational developments of the Muslim girls and women via different contexts unravelling in the Yugoslav space.

1.2 Thesis Structure

Each chapter of this dissertation tells a story of a struggle for better educational opportunities and inclusion of the Muslim girls and women. In order to grasp a better understanding of the relationship between the Muslim communities and Yugoslav shifting governments, this thesis is chronologically structured into three chapters partitioned into subsections - starting with the first period of interest for this research, interwar Yugoslavia. Before further tackling the issue at hand, the first chapter was briefly prefaced with the Habsburg's introduction of the educational reforms after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878. This part examines the very first initiation of the educational reforms by the Austrian governing body in the province that entailed mandatory elementary education for Muslim girls as well. It showcased the state of the educational system after the retreat of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkan region, and

[36] Jennifer Browne et al., "A Guide to Policy Analysis as a Research Method," *Health Promotion International* 34, no. 5 (October 1, 2019): 1032–44.
[37] Aizada Arystanbek, "Sex Education (or the Lack Thereof) in Kazakhstan: Heteronormative Propaganda in the Curriculum of Özin Özi Tanu/Samopoznanie," *Gender a Výzkum / Gender and Research* 22, no. 2 (January 18, 2022): 11–27.

the novel circumstances of the Bosnian Muslim community under the new rule and its effects on the new educational efforts. Finally, it examines to what extent did a new ruler's "cultural emancipation" of the Muslim people contribute to the increase of the literacy and education of the Muslim girls.

Following on that, the chapter proceeds with the creation of the new state in 1918, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later renamed to Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. It examines the era between the two World Wars in the newly unified Yugoslav state, the relationships between the monarchy and the Muslim communities, which gained a new status of minority religious group, emergence of the Muslim modernist and religious reformists, and the reformation of the educational system. This chapter analyses the process of national unification of the Yugoslav people and forceful assimilation of the non-Christian religious groups, especially of the Muslim faith. It examines the precarious positioning of the Muslim people in the highly nationalistic and autocratic environment, as well as their "non-political" negotiation of their positioning in the state. The emphasis is put on the interplay between two leading forces of the time, nationalism and religion, that informed and shaped the creation of the educational policies. This part explores the emergence of the new Muslim elite, diverging into modernists and conservatives and their great influence on the emancipation and education of the Muslim women from the young age. And finally, it tackles the religious education, the state's attempts to reform and control religious schools, especially that of Muslim faith, and the way that interplay informed the education of Muslim girls.

The next chapter deals with the women during the Second World War in Yugoslavia and role of the Yugoslav communists in women's inclusion into the war efforts. After briefly prefacing with the history of the beginning of the conflict on the Yugoslav territory, and looking into the origins of the Yugoslav communists, this part continues with Yugoslav women's introduction to the war as both support from the rear, combatants, and politicians. It analyses the unprecedented change of gender roles in the time of conflict in the deeply patriarchal environment. Further on, this chapter scrutinizes the educational opportunities for the women, especially Muslim, rendered by the Yugoslav Communist Party and Anti-fascist Women's Front, as a part of the recruitment and political familiarization with the National Liberation Movement's ideology. Finally, it examines the state of the

educational system in precarious times and resourcefulness to maintain some forms of schooling despite the great human and infrastructural destruction.

Following on that, the final chapter delves into the women's positioning in the newly created socialist state, interplay between the feminism and communism, socialist education and religion, and novel educational opportunities for women. Firstly, it provides an insight into the socialist introduction and reconfiguration of the Yugoslav social, cultural, political, and legal spheres, alongside the gender reforms in correspondence with the Yugoslav Communist Party's ideology. Then, it examines the formation of socialist education in the highly culturally, nationally, and religiously diverse society followed with the women's emancipation and equality, that included an increase of the Muslim women integration into the socialist society. The relationship between the KPJ and the Muslim communities is then observed via analysis of the secularization of the religious education informed by the Party's fluctuating politics towards the religion. This chapter investigates the communists' agenda behind the passed educational policies with regards to the Muslim communities, and especially Muslim girls and women. Finally, this part is concluded with the analysis of the higher educational opportunities for women and furthering of the Muslim girls' and women's education.

1.3 Terminology and Abbreviations

All translations of the Yugoslav languages used in the thesis are mine unless otherwise stated. The original sources will be translated into English for the consistency with the dominant English language used in this dissertation, but the titles or official names will be written in original languages as well. I tried to preserve the authenticity of each ex-Yugoslav language by indicating their usage of three grammatical genders for nouns, female version of the nouns in particular. Next to the English translation, I would demonstrate a female gender version of the noun, e.g. women comrades or "drugarice", Partisan women or "partizanke". Namely, the existence or omission of gender-sensitive language in communication often exposes gender-related hierarchies and creation of the dominant gender discourse that shapes the narratives.[38] Many scholars in the field of Sociolinguistics have explored gender-sensitive language, one of them being Jelena Filipović that argued

[38] Ranko Bugarski, "Pol i rod u jeziku," in *Jezik i kultura* (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX vek, 2005), 53–65.

that the use of gender-sensitive language showcases important gender relations.[39] Consequently, I will observe the creation of the dominant public narratives pertaining to the education of the Muslim girls and women via language usage of the powers at play.

With regards to the abbreviations, this thesis will consist of multiple given the importance of many cultural and political organisations, especially during the socialist Yugoslavia when the communists used abbreviations regularly. I will use the abbreviations from the Yugoslav languages, e.g. AFŽ for the Anti-fascist women's Front or KPJ for the Yugoslav Communist Party, as the most occurring examples.

Used abbreviations in the text or in the sources:

AFŽ – Antifašistički front žena – The Anti-fascist Women's Front

KPJ – Komunistička partija Jugoslavije – Yugoslav Communist Party

NOP – Narodnooslobodilački pokret – National Liberation Movement

NOB – Narodnooslobodilačka borba – National Liberation War

AVNOJ – Antifašističko Veće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije – The Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia

IVZ – Islamska verska Zajednica – Islamic Religious Community of Yugoslavia

MNO – Muslimanska narodna Organizacija – The Muslim People's Organisation

BiH – Bosna i Herzegovina – Bosnia and Herzegovina (An official name of the country, even though I would often refer to it as Bosnia, a shorter version)

NR – Narodna Republica – People's Republic

[39] Jelena Filipović, "Gender, Power and Language Standardization of Serbian," *Gender and Language* 5, no. 1 (July 20, 2011): 111–31, https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v5i1.111. Ana Kuzmanović-Jovanović, *Jezik i rod: disurzivna konstrukcija rodne ideologije* (Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2013). Bugarski, "Pol i rod u jeziku."

2 Literature Review

The academic literature addressing the education of Muslim girls in Yugoslavia is notably scarce. In this literature review, I will provide an analysis of existing studies, by approaching them through a historical overview useful for the rest of the dissertation. These studies encompass a range of topics, including the education of Muslim populations in Yugoslavia, the stance of religious authorities, the Communist Party's initiatives for emancipation, and their approach to the "Muslim women question". Additionally, this review includes an exploration of relevant research that sheds light on the education of Muslim girls in minority contexts worldwide.

2.1 Interwar Yugoslavia

The interwar period marked a significant cultural and societal shift with the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. These changes, as well as economic, political, and cultural modernization across the Yugoslav territories and its populace are well examined.[40] The political, legal, economic, social, and cultural history of Yugoslavia has been extensively studied, typically focusing either on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or socialist Yugoslavia, with few connecting both. Topics for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia include state consolidation and religious differences[41], political and economic development[42], foreign influences[43], the monarchy's role[44], cultural and intellectual development[45], and the military's role in politics and society[46].

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[40] Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia*. See also: Noah W. Sobe, *Provincializing the Worldly Citizen: Yugoslav Student and Teacher Travel and Slavic Cosmopolitanism in the Interwar Era*, Travel Writing across the Disciplines, v. 13 (New York: P. Lang, 2008).

[41] Maria Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 50, no. 4 (March 9, 2021): 539–59. Gašper Mithans, "Religious Conversions and Religious Diversification in Interwar Yugoslavia and Slovenia," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 40, no. 2 (2020): 48–76. Pieter Troch, "The Intertwining of Religion and Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia: The School Celebrations of St Sava's Day," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 91, no. 2 (April 2013): 235–61. Pieter Troch, "Interactive Nationhood: The Relation between C Roatian and Y Ugoslav National Identity in the Interwar Period," *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 4 (October 2013): 781–98, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12045.

[42] Luka Miladinović, "Trade and Nationalism: Market Integration in Interwar Yugoslavia*," *European Review of Economic History* 24, no. 2 (May 12, 2020): 288–313, https://doi.org/10.1093/ereh/hez002. Maria Falina, "Narrating Democracy in Interwar Yugoslavia: From State Creation to Its Collapse," *Journal of Modern European History* 17, no. 2 (May 2019): 196–208, https://doi.org/10.1177/1611894419835750.

[43] Vedran Duančić, "Nationalist Geographies in Interwar Yugoslavia: Manoeuvring between National and Transnational Spaces," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 25, no. 3–4 (July 4, 2018): 588–611. Thomas Schad, "From Muslims into Turks? Consensual Demographic Engineering between Interwar

The study of education during the interwar period has been tackled by scholars specializing in the modern social and cultural history of Southeast Europe, such as Pieter Troch and Nusret Kujraković.[47] Their research centres on the interplay between nationalism and religion in the regulation of religious and state education during the interwar period in Yugoslavia. A significant focus was on religious education among minority groups, particularly within the context of the Muslim community's complex relationship with the state and their efforts to preserve religious identity amidst increasing state control, nationalism, and authoritarianism. Troch's research delves into the impact of the Yugoslav monarchy's overtly nationalistic and discriminatory policies on shaping educational policies, curricula, and the governance of minority religious education. Additionally, Maria Falina has explored this era, focusing on the dynamics between nationalism and religion during the nation-building process in Yugoslavia's religiously and nationally diverse society. Falina's work sheds light on the position of minorities under the authoritarian Yugoslav monarchy and highlights the government's unequal treatment of the non-Christian populace.[48] In this dissertation I will revisit these studies and bring more attention to continuity and

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Yugoslavia and Turkey," *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 4 (October 2016): 427–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2016.1228634.

[44] Cody James Inglis, "The Languages of Monarchism in Interwar Yugoslavia, 1918–1941: Variations on a Theme," *History of European Ideas*, July 11, 2023, 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2023.2233061. Pieter Troch, "Interwar Yugoslav State-Building and the Changing Social Position of the Sokol Gymnastics Movement," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 60–83, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2018.1468735. Ivana Dobrivojević, "LIVING UNDER DICTATORSHIP. OPPRESSIVE PRACTICES IN YUGOSLAVIA," *ИСТРАЖИВАЊА*, no. 27 (January 1, 1970): 225–40, https://doi.org/10.19090/i.2016.27.225-240

[45] James M. Robertson, "Literature, Revolution, and National Aesthetics on the Interwar Yugoslav Left," *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 2 (March 4, 2018): 301–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1341471. Ivana Perica, "'Social Literature Swindlers': The r/Evolutionary Controversy in Interwar Yugoslav Literature," *Neohelicon* 45, no. 1 (June 2018): 249–80, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11059-017-0418-5.

[46] John Paul Newman, "Volunteer Veterans and Entangled Cultures of Victory in Interwar Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia," *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no. 4 (October 2019): 716–36, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009419838034. Igor Tchoukarine, "To Serve the King, the State and the People: The Adriatic Guard's Ambiguous Position in Interwar Yugoslavia," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 121–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2018.1468737.

[47] Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia*. See more from Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula." Troch, "The Intertwining of Religion and Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia: The School Celebrations of St Sava's Day." Nusret Kujraković, "Odnos Bošnjaka prema državnom školskom sistemu Bosne i Hercegovine između dva svjetska rata," *Pregled*, no. 2 (2009): 217–32.

[48] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia." See also, Falina, "Narrating Democracy in Interwar Yugoslavia."

discontinuity with the previous period, also arguing that these issues still had crucial importance for the decades to come.

One of the crucial issues in the interwar Yugoslavia, also related to education was the debate within Muslim community regarding women's position in the society. Scholarship on the Bosnian Muslim intelligentsia's debates over gender and religious reforms since the early 20th century, including the rise of modernism within Muslim communities, is solid. Researchers such as Enes Karić and Fikret Karčić have often focused on the interactions between modernist and traditionalist factions, particularly concerning religious reforms like the reinterpretation of Sharia law and the Qur'an,[49] which directly influenced gender reforms. These reforms included proposals for Muslim women's emancipation through education and employment, championed by modernists. Scholars such as Nusret Kurjaković and Adnan Jahić have also delved into these debates, especially the contentious issue of whether Muslim women should unveil and engage in public life through education and employment, as advocated by modernists, or adhere to a more confined domestic life as per traditional Qur'anic interpretations.[50] While these debates garnered significant attention, they did not result in a consensus, leaving the question of Muslim women's emancipation unresolved.[51] As Enes Karić notes, the desire for progress was evident, but the differences remained too profound to reconcile.[52] Furthermore, the tendency to view the "Muslim woman question" primarily as a means to improve the broader Yugoslav Muslim society, rather than focusing on enhancing women's rights per se, contributed to the lack of resolution in the interwar period. Fabio Giomi, in particular, has made notable contributions to this field. In his recent book Giomi presents an analytical and in-depth study of the emancipatory processes impacting Muslim women in Bosnia during these periods. He explores the involvement of Muslim women in various cultural,

[49] Enes Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century: Debates on Revival and Reform," *Islamic Studies,* 41, no. 3 (2002): 391–444; Fikret Karčić, "The Reform of Shari'a Courts and Islamic Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (London: Hurst, 2008), 253–70.

[50] Nusret Kujraković, "Emancipacija Muslimanske Žene: Izjave Reisa Džemaludina Čauševića i Njihova Recepcija u Javnosti," *Novi Muallim*, no. 50 (2012): 48–59. Nusret Kujraković, "Osvitanje - Prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Institut za istoriju*, no. 38 (2009): 145–64. Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

[51] Ejub Velić, "'Pitanje nošenja feredže/zara u raspravama bošnjačkih tradicionalista i modernista u 20. stoljeću," *Novi Muallim* 55 (2013): 80–85.

[52] Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century: Debates on Revival and Reform."

philanthropic, feminist, communist, and student groups, thereby challenging the notion that Muslim women were isolated from the broader societal changes in Bosnia. Giomi's work emphasizes the active role and voices of these women, illustrating the complexities they faced in balancing their European and Muslim identities. He not only highlights their activities and achievements but also addresses the challenges and barriers they encountered within Bosnian society and from broader national and international forces. This book offers a distinctive viewpoint on the evolution of the discourse surrounding the 'Muslim woman question' in Yugoslavia from the end of Ottoman rule to World War II. It presents a detailed narrative of the major political and social shifts of the time, showcasing how Muslim women in Bosnia navigated and redefined their roles and identities within their society.[53] I dedicate a lot of attention to these debates, viewing them as pivotal in understanding the conflict between modernists and traditionalists, with impacts extending into the war and postwar periods. After the war communists embraced this modernist perspective to advance their educational agenda, while this continuity was not explored before.

Another work that impacted this dissertation a lot is the book "Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Surviving Empires", in which Xavier Bougarel delves into the themes of Islam and nationhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular focus on the interwar period. He explores the development of Muslim women's education as part of the broader struggle of the Muslim community to establish its national identity. Beyond offering a historical perspective on Muslim nationhood in the Yugoslav region and its progressive strides towards gender equality, the book illuminates the Bosnian Muslim community's engagement with global feminist trends of the time, countering the often simplistic portrayals in Western narratives. Bougarel's work critically examines the complex process of gender reforms in regions with deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and traditionalism, such as the Yugoslav territories.[54]

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[53] Jelena Gajic, "Book Review - Making Muslim Women European," *Slovo* 36, no. 1 (December 15, 2022), https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.0954-6839.1288.

[54] Xavier Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Surviving Empires* (London; Oxford; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018).

2.2 Second World War and Muslim Communities

Literature on education for the Second World War period, particularly at the elementary level, was scarce and primarily focused on adult education. Semir Hadžimusić provided a critical analysis of the state of education and elementary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the early stages of the conflict, under the pro-Nazi Croatian regime and throughout the National Liberation Movement (NOP).[55] Milorad Gajić has examined a high rate of illiteracy among the Yugoslav population and attempts by the Yugoslav communists and the Anti-Fascist Women's Front (AFŽ) to tackle it through cultural and literacy courses. These courses significantly involved women, and Muslims from rural areas.[56] Other research on this period in Yugoslavia mainly examines the unprecedented decision by Yugoslav communists to involve women in armed conflicts and their political activism, and this dissertation will explore those as well, placing them in the context of education.[57]

For the period of Second World War, scholarly focus on women, including Muslim women, predominantly revolved around their participation in the National Liberation Movement led by Yugoslav communists and their roles in Partisan activities. Researchers like Barbara N. Wiesinger, Jelena Batinić and Ivana Pantelić have made significant contributions in studying women's engagement in the Partisan resistance against the Axis forces, highlighting the initial steps towards emancipation and political involvement during the war.[58] The mobilization of women through the Anti-fascist Women's Front, their active roles in this organization, and the AFŽ's impact on promoting women's inclusion and equality have been subjects of study by scholars such as Lydia Sklevicky and Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin. Their research sheds light on the existing power structures and biases within the Yugoslav Communist Party and the AFŽ, which impeded the full integration and equality of

[55] Semir Hadžimusić, "Opismenjavanje stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine u periodu narodnooslobodilačkog rata (1941-1945)," *Historijski pogledi* 2 (2019): 250–77. See more about Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War, Marko Attila Hoare, *Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History* (London New York: Hurst & Company Oxford university press, 2014).

[56] Milorad Gajić, "Kulturna aktivnost u Bosni i Hercegovini u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata," *Prilozi* 4 (1968): 413–22.

[57] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*. Barbara N. Wiesinger, "Rat partizanki - Žene u oružanom otporu," trans. Aleksandar Trklja, *Historijska traganja* 4 (2009): 201–26. Lydia Sklevicky and Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb: Druga : Ženska infoteka, 1996). Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*, Women and Modern Revolution Series (Denver, Colo: Arden Press, 1990). Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*.

[58] Wiesinger, "Rat partizanki - Žene u oružanom otporu"; Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*; Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*.

Partisan women.[59] Additionally, the involvement of Muslim women in the war efforts alongside the Partisans, as well as the exploration of the "Muslim woman question" during and after the war, has been extensively analysed by Adnan Jahić. His work offers a comprehensive examination of Muslim women's participation in the wartime struggles and their position within the broader social and political context of the period.[60]

2.3 Socialist Yugoslavia

Socialist Yugoslavia, due to its numerous specificities has opened a different range of topics. Scholars have examined the process of establishing socialism in Yugoslavia, including the political and economic policies implemented by the Communist government and the challenges faced in building a socialist system[61]. Some of these studies related to the establishment of the educational system will be examined in more detail later. The same is the case for studies on Yugoslav self-management[62], a specific model of socialism which also encompassed schooling. The role of Josip Broz Tito, the leader of Yugoslavia, and the Communist Party in shaping the political and economic policies of the country has naturally garnered a lot of scholarly attention[63], as well as the impact of Yugoslavia's foreign relations, particularly its non-alignment policy and its relations with the Soviet Union, the Western powers, and the Non-Aligned Movement[64]. Of relevance are also the studies on the cultural and intellectual development of socialist Yugoslavia, including the emergence of new artistic

[59] Lydia Sklevicky and Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb: Druga: Ženska infoteka, 1996).
[60] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*. See also, Amila Ždralović, "II DIO: 1941–1945. Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena," in *Zabilježene – Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku. Drugo, dopunjeno i izmijenjeno izdanje* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Centre, 2015), 71–102, https://www.ceeol.com/search/chapter-detail?id=516047. See also, Vera Katz, "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1945.," *Prilozi*, no. 40 (2011): 135–55.
[61] Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question*, International Library of Twentieth Century History 24 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012).
[62] Branislav Jakovljević, *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia, 1945-91*, Theater: Theory/Text/Performance (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016). Gal Kirn and Borut Praper, *Partisan Ruptures: Self-Management, Market Reform and the Spectre of Socialist Yugoslavia*, First English language edition (London: Pluto Press, 2019).
[63] Richard West, *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012). Pirjevec, *Tito and His Comrades*. Neil Barnett, *Tito* (Chicago: Haus Publishing, 2022). Cathie Carmichael, "Josip Broz Tito and Yugoslav Communism: A Review of the Work of Geoffrey Swain," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 10 (November 25, 2016): 1824–26.
[64] Katrin Boeckh, "Allies Are Forever (Until They Are No More): Yugoslavia's Multivectoral Foreign Policy During Titoism," in *The Foreign Policies of Post-Yugoslav States*, ed. Soeren Keil and Bernhard Stahl (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 18–43, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137384133_2. Vladimir Petrović, "Josip Broz Tito's Summit Diplomacy in the International Relations of Socialist Yugoslavia 1944-1961," *Annales. Series Historia et Sociologia* 24, no. 4 (2014): 577–92. Ivo Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

movements, the growth of civil society, and the development of intellectual thought[65]. Finally, in this dissertation I will rely on the studies examining the ethnic and national relations under socialism, including the question of national self-determination and the rights of minority groups, as well as the political, social and cultural integration of different nationalities[66].

The body of literature focusing on education and educational policies during socialism are relatively limited considering the importance the regime placed on new educational policies. This scarcity is particularly evident in studies addressing the evolution of gender norms and education. Notably, the topic of Muslim girls' education in socialist Yugoslavia has received minimal attention, often only mentioned in brief.[67] The education of adult Muslim men and women, especially in relation to post-war literacy campaigns, has garnered some academic interest.[68] However, there is a substantial gap in research regarding elementary education during the interwar period and in the socialist era of Yugoslavia,[69] as well as in the subsequent years. Furthermore, educational studies focusing

[65] James M. Robertson, "Navigating the Postwar Liberal Order: Autonomy, Creativity and Modernism in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1949–1953," *Modern Intellectual History* 17, no. 2 (June 2020): 385–412. See also from Robertson, James Robertson, "Small Socialism: The Scales of Self-Management Culture in Postwar Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 80, no. 3 (2021): 563–84, https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2021.147. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik, eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2010).

[66] Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (February 1994): 83, https://doi.org/10.2307/2096134. Gary K. Bertsch, "Ethnicity and Politics in Socialist Yugoslavia," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 433, no. 1 (September 1977): 88–99. Tomaž Ivešić, "The Yugoslav National Idea Under Socialism: What Happens When a Soft Nation-Building Project Is Abandoned?," *Nationalities Papers* 49, no. 1 (January 2021): 142–61, https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.121.

[67] Fikret Karčić, *The Reform of Shari'a Courts and Islamic Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (London: Hurst, 2008), 253–70.

[68] Violeta Achkoska, *Lifting the Veils from Muslim Women in the Republic of Macedonia Following the Second World War*, in *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Manhood in 19th and 20th Century*, ed. Miroslav Jovanović and Slobodan Naumović (Belgrade; Graz: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju; Institut für Geschichte der Universität Graz, 2002), 183–95. Tea Hadžiristić, *Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism*, *Religion and Gender* 7, no. 2 (February 19, 2017): 184–203. Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.

[69] The exception is: Jana Bacević, *From Class to Identity: The Politics of Education Reforms in Former Yugoslavia* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2014); Marko Božić, "Catechism without God: Legal Basis and Ideological Premises of Teaching Marxism in Schools of Socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991," *Pravni Zapisi* 13, no. 2 (2022): 607–29, https://doi.org/10.5937/pravzap0–40586.

on minority groups are virtually absent. The focus was often on the regime's approaches towards major religious communities, particularly Catholic catechesis.[70]

Research on education during Yugoslavia's socialist era primarily focuses on the socialist transformation of the educational system. This includes its role in maintaining the socialist regime and fostering human and cultural capital through education. Sanja Petrović Todosijević has extensively explored the reformation of the Yugoslav elementary education system, examining its structure, policies, and the Party's ideological vision for education.[71] Jana Bačević's study on the educational policy reforms from socialist Yugoslavia adds significant insights, especially through the lenses of class and identity.[72] While studies specifically addressing the education of Muslim girls are lacking, my work aims to fill this void by drawing on existing literature on elementary and general education, enriched by primary research on the education of girls and adult Muslim women.

The body of literature on gender policies is more extensive. The establishment of communist governments in Eastern Europe and Central Asia led to significant gender reforms, sparking intense debates among scholars due to their controversial and contradictory nature.[73] While much research has focused on general equality issues and women's emancipation driven by communist parties, some studies have specifically addressed the challenges faced by women from minority groups, who often experienced misrepresentation and invisibility.[74] Each country in these regions implemented socialist

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[70] See, for example: Miroslav Akmadža, "Politika komunističkog režima prema katoličkim vjerskim školama u Hrvatskoj 1945. - 1952.," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 1 (2009): 109–32.

[71] Petrović Todosijević, *Reforma Osnovnoškolskog Sistema u Srbiji 1944-1959*. See also, Samuel Farmerie, "Education in Yugoslavia," *The Clearing House* 47, no. 3 (November 1972): 145–49. Mina Kujović, "Kako su komunistiI koristili učiteljstvo za provođenje svoje politike (1945-1951)," *Novi Muallim*, no. 67 (2016): 41–52. Šušnjara, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Communist Regime: An Outlook on Educational Policy."

[72] Bacevic, *From Class to Identity*.

[73] Éva Fodor, *The State Socialist Emancipation Project: Gender Inequality in Workplace Authority in Hungary and Austria*, *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 3 (2004): 783–813. Kristen Ghodsee, "Red Nostalgia? Communism, Women's Emancipation, and Economic Transformation in Bulgaria," *L'Homme Z. F. G.* 15, no. 1 (2004): 23–36. In terms of how post-communist transformation has informed the regression with regards to gender relations, see: Katharina Bluhm et al., eds., *Gender and Power in Eastern Europe: Changing Concepts of Femininity and Masculinity in Power Relations*, Societies and Political Orders in Transition (Cham: Springer, 2021).

[74] Pamela Ballinger and Kristen Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism: Religion, Modernity, and Muslim Women's Emancipation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, 1945-1991," *Aspasia* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 6–27. Lenka Nahodilova, "Communist Modernisation and Gender: The Experience of Bulgarian Muslims, 1970–1990," *Contemporary European History* 19, no. 1 (2010): 37–53. Yulia Gradskova, *Soviet Politics of Emancipation of*

structures in its own unique way, often requiring a complete overhaul of existing political, economic, and societal foundations. A commonality among these nations was their adoption of policies and practices echoing those of the Soviet Union, whose communist ideology served as a model in various aspects of life in other newly formed socialist states. This Soviet influence on global communist societies has been a key area of research interest.[75]

Specifically, the intentions behind the Yugoslav socialist projects, including the influence of international, particularly Soviet, ideologies on the Yugoslav Communist Party, have been extensively studied.[76] Ivan Simić's work, for example, investigates how the Soviet gender models were adapted in Yugoslav communist society. He discusses the Yugoslav Communist Party's use of these models in reforming traditional patriarchal gender norms and in addressing the Muslim woman question in Central Asia. Simić highlights the challenges faced by the KPJ in implementing these reforms, particularly in relation to the emancipation of Muslim women, including the promotion of education and anti-veiling narratives, amidst deeply rooted traditionalism.[77] The Yugoslav communists often mirrored Soviet approaches to women's emancipation, integrating women's issues within the broader framework of labour class issues.[78] Kristina Jorgić, in her article also discusses how the Yugoslav Communist Party implemented Soviet policies within Yugoslavia's entrenched patriarchal setting, leading to a lack of direct confrontation with the specific nature of the

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Ethnic Minority Woman: Natsionalka, 1st ed. 2019 (Cham: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Springer, 2019).

[75] Guy J. Pauker, "The Soviet Challenge in Indonesia," *Foreign Affairs* 40, no. 4 (July 1962): 612–26. See also: Cole Blasier, "Soviet Impacts on Latin America," *Russian History* 29, no. 2/4 (2002): 481–97. Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964*, Cold War International History Project Series (Washington, D.C.: Stanford, Calif: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2005). Oye Ogunbadejo, *Soviet Policies in Africa*, *African Affairs* 79, no. 316 (July 1980): 297–325. Lavinia Stan, ed., *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Reckoning with the Communist Past*, BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies (London: Routledge, 2009).

[76] Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1974*. Banac, *With Stalin against Tito*. Henry F. Carey and Rafal Raciborski, "Postcolonialism: A Valid Paradigm for the Former Sovietized States and Yugoslavia?," *East European Politics and Societies: And Cultures* 18, no. 2 (May 2004): 191–235. Radina Vučetić and John K. Cox, *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018). Vladimir Volkov, "The Soviet Leadership and Southeastern Europe," in *The Establishment Of Communist Regimes In Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[77] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.

[78] Nada Cazi, *Društveni položaj žene - Kako slaviti naše praznike 08. mart, međunarodni dan žena* (Pula: Glas Istre, 1974).

women's question in this context.[79] This dissertation builds on these findings by Simić and Jorgić, looking into more details on influences on education policies. Additionally, the resurgence of religiosity and veiling in post-communist Yugoslavia has been explored by scholars like Andreja Mesarič, who examines the post-communist religious revival and the contextualization of piety among women who chose to veil.[80] Looking at education during the socialist time in this thesis might contribute to understanding these recent trends of the last few decades in the Balkans.

Regarding minorities, the literature primarily addresses the historical and political status of religious[81] and national minority groups[82]. Frederick De Jong, for example, provides historical and territorial insights into Balkan Muslim communities, including how their national and religious identities were shaped under Communist rule.[83] Studies on the positioning of the Muslim community in Yugoslavia reveal its significant influence from transnational trends, contextualized within the local Yugoslav setting.[84] These studies showed that the Islamic community was profoundly influenced by the transnational trends, negotiating them within the local Yugoslav context. Nevertheless, this only demonstrates that the topic at hand cannot be decontextualised from the broader regional context, and the interconnection between seemingly separate events. My research aims to build on these studies, bridging the literature gap in addressing the key questions of my dissertation.

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[79] Kristina Jorgić, "Pitanje ženske emancipacije između marksizma-lenjinizma i prakse KPJ," *Genero* 22 (2018): 1–20.

[80] Andreja Mesarič, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 22, no. 2 (September 1, 2013): 12–34, https://doi.org/10.3167/ajec.2013.220202. and "Disrupting Boundaries between Traditional and Transnational Islam: Pious Women's Engagement with Islamic Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Slavic Review* 79, no. 1 (2020): 7–27, https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2020.7.

[81] Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović, *The Possibility of Researching Religious Minorities in the Secret Police Archives of the Former Yugoslavia*, in *The Secret Police and the Religious Underground in Communist and Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), 13. Jacques Waardenburg, *Muslim Minorities: Politics and Religion in the Balkans,* in *Muslims and Others*, vol. 41 (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 2003), 381.

[82] Paul Shoup, *Yugoslavia's National Minorities under Communism*, *Slavic Review* 22, no. 1 (March 1963): 64–81. Vanya Ivanova, *Language Policy and National Equality in Socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1974)*, *Multilingual Europe, Multilingual Europeans* 29 (2012): 81–111.

[83] Frederick De Jong, "The Muslim Minorities in the Balkans on the Eve of the Collapse of Communism," *Islamic Studies* 36, no. 2/3 (Autumn 1997): 413–27.

[84] Sejad Mekic, *A Muslim Reformist in Communist Yugoslavia: The Life and Thought of Husein Đozo* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), http://site.ebrary.com/id/11233725; Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1995); Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, Religion and Global Politics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

2.4 Education of Muslim Women in Global Context

The scholarly interest in the education of Muslim women globally, has significantly increased over the past three decades, particularly focusing on their experiences in minority settings. At the same time, more studies are providing an intersectional approach in studying the education of Muslim girls, highlighting how their experiences are influenced by a blend of gender, religious identity, and cultural background. For example, scholars like Hilal Elver and Leila Ahmed have analysed the education of Muslim women in Western countries and Turkey, emphasizing the interplay of gender, religion, culture, and legislation.[85] While these studies are not directly utilized to examine Yugoslav educational policies, they provide an important grounding and demonstrate the importance of examining other cases such as this one in Yugoslavia.

Sociological literature has also investigated the impact of global Islamophobia on the educational experiences of Muslim women, examining how broader political and societal contexts affect their perception and treatment in educational environments. While not directly relevant to my dissertation, studies by scholars such as Ian Law, Leonie Jackson, and Christine Ogan et al. highlight the damaging effects of circulating negative stereotypes and prejudices.[86] This dissertation will examine how prejudices were perpetuated throughout a very long period of time, filling gaps in understanding their historical origins.

More aligned with my research is the exploration of agency and resistance among Muslim girls and women in minority educational settings. This trend emphasizes the ways in which Muslim women actively resist and challenge the limitations that are imposed on their educational experiences. Researchers in this field often focus on the strategies and tactics

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[85] Hilal Elver, *The Headscarf Controversy: Secularism and Freedom of Religion*, Religion and Global Politics Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). See also, Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, The Public Square Book Series (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2007). See also, Marko Božić, "The Law Unveiled: On Burka Ban, Kanzelparagraph and Militant Secularism in the Socialist Yugoslavia," *Pravni Zapisi* 12, no. 2 (2021): 418–41.

[86] Ian Law et al., eds., *Countering Islamophobia in Europe* (S.l.: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2020). Ray Taras, *Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012). Christine Ogan et al., "The Rise of Anti-Muslim Prejudice: Media and Islamophobia in Europe and the United States," *International Communication Gazette* 76, no. 1 (February 2014): 27–46, https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048513504048. Chiara Maritato, "Turkey as the 'Liberator' of Muslims in Europe: The Circulation of Islamophobia as a Political Remittance" (University of Salento, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1285/I20356609V15I2P444. Leonie B. Jackson, *Islamophobia in Britain: The Making of a Muslim Enemy* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

that Muslim women use to assert agency and navigate the challenges they face in educational settings.[87]

In the last few decades historical researchers began to focus more on the lives of Muslim women in post-Ottoman regions.[88] The authors were mainly discussing the relationship between Islam and Muslim women, the religious shaping of their lives and the positioning of the Muslim women in the modern Islamic societies. Fatima Mernissi offers insights into the status and prospects of women in Islamic societies, contending that while Islam itself has historically celebrated women, it is the archaic male elites who have politically manipulated religion to control and oppress them.[89] Furthermore, "Women, Islam, and the State," an anthology of original essays edited by Deniz Kandiyoti, delves into the complex relationship between Islam, state initiatives, and women's status in the modern nation-states of the Middle East and South Asia. The contributors to this collection argue against a uniform and generalized portrayal of Muslim women's lives across all Islamic societies. Instead, they advocate for an analysis that considers the impact of individual state projects on the experiences and roles of women in these societies.[90] This situation exemplifies the broader issue of women's visibility and agency. This theme is thoroughly

[87] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*. See also from Giomi, Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia." Eric Maurin and Nicolas Navarrete H., "Behind the Veil: The Effect of Banning the Islamic Veil in Schools," *Economic Policy* 38, no. 113 (January 2023): 63–98, https://doi.org/10.1093/epolic/eiac069. Ángeles Ramírez, "Control over Female 'Muslim' Bodies: Culture, Politics and Dress Code Laws in Some Muslim and Non-Muslim Countries," *Identities* 22, no. 6 (2015): 671–86, https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2014.950972.

[88] Fabio Giomi, *Daughters of Two Empires: Muslim Women and Public Writing in Habsburg Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918)*, *Aspasia* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.3167/asp.2015.090102. See also: Robert M. Hayden, *Intersecting Religioscapes in Post-Ottoman Spaces: Trajectories of Change, Competition, and Sharing of Religious Spaces*, in *Post-Ottoman Coexistence: Sharing Space in the Shadow of Conflict*, (New York – Oxford, Berghahn, March 2016) 59-85. Nathalie Clayer, Fabio Giomi, and Emmanuel Szurek, *Kemalism: Transnational Politics in the Post-Ottoman World*, Library of Modern Turkey 42 (London (GB) New York (N.Y.): I.B. Tauris, 2019). Nena Močnik, "Occupying the Land, Grabbing the Body - The Female Body as a Disposable Place of Colonialization in Post-Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Brill | Schöningh* 43, no. 2 (August 23, 2019): 93–110. Nataša Mišković, *Why Are We So Similar? Post-Ottoman Urban Space in Turkey and Yugoslavia*, in *Sharpening the Haze: Visual Essays on Imperial History and Memory*, ed. Giulia Carabelli et al. (London: Ubiquity Press, 2020), 192. Nevila Pahumi, *Which Feminism Will Be Ours? The Women's Movement in Post-Ottoman Interwar Albania*, *Clio. Women, Gender, History* 48, no. 2 (July 2018): 133–52.

[89] Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society: [New Introduction]* (London: Saqi Books, 2011).

[90] Deniz Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam, and the State*, Women in the Political Economy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

explored in S. J. Kleinberg, and especially in Joan W. Scott's work which informed my pursuit of these dynamics.[91]

When scrutinizing modernisation, the covering practices of Muslim women, the issue of veiling, as a religious, cultural, or political marker, is unavoidably omnipresent in the literature, and is being tackled in multidisciplinary way.[92] It was usually argued that perceived as an antiquated oriental custom, the practice of veiling has been disrupting Muslim women's lives ever since the beginning of the modernizing era in Europe during the 20th century.[93] Hilal Elver interprets veiling as an obstacle to the freedom of religion and practicing of basic human rights within the legal system of the western countries. She tackles the anti-veiling policies and Islamophobic sentiments in Turkey, France, Germany and United States, influencing the legal practices, thus causing the discriminatory atmosphere for the Muslim women in the public spheres, including educational system. The case of "headscarf controversy", has triggered the exclusion of veiled women from the public sphere and endangered their basic freedoms as human beings. In France, "Laïcité", the rough equivalent to the more generic term of "secularism", introduced a complete eradication of the religious practicing in the public sphere, regulating it strictly to the realm of private, as argued by Anastasia Vakulenko. On the other hand, United Kingdom, once proud of its tradition of multiculturalism, has exhibited similar intolerance towards its Muslim community, especially after the 9/11 events, but hastily tried to mend the damage by appointing Muslim officials. Vakulenko examines different political and legal systems,

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[91] Joan W. Scott, *The Problem of Visibility*, in *Retrieving Women's History*, ed. Jay Kleinberg (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1988), 5–29. See also: Gail Minault, *Making Invisible Women Visible: Studying the History of Muslim Women in South Asia*, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (1986): 1–13. Anne Firor Scott, "On Seeing and Not Seeing: A Case of Historical Invisibility," *The Journal of American History* 71, no. 1 (June 1984): 7–21. Audrey Osler, "Still Hidden from History? The Representation of Women in Recently Published History Textbooks," *Oxford Review of Education* 20, no. 2 (1994): 219–35. Jenny Rivera, "The Politics of Invisibility," *Georgetown Journal on Fighting Poverty* 3, no. 61 (1995): 5. Mahua Sarkar, *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women: Producing Muslim Womanhood in Late Colonial Bengal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, Veritas paperback edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

[92] Maurin and Navarrete H., "Behind the Veil: The Effect of Banning the Islamic Veil in Schools." Faegheh Shirazi, *The Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture* (University Press of Florida, 2022). Viola Thimm, ed., *(Re-)Claiming Bodies through Fashion and Style: Gendered Configurations in Muslim Contexts*, New Directions in Islam (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Božić, "The Law Unveiled: On Burka Ban, Kanzelparagraph and Militant Secularism in the Socialist Yugoslavia." Anna-Mari Almila and David Inglis, eds., *The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling Practices*, Routledge International Handbooks (London: New York: Routledge, 2018).

[93] Elver, *The Headscarf Controversy*.

with diverse discursive frameworks, having different stances regarding autonomy and choice, gender equality, and particular western understanding of religion and its practicing.[94]

Finally, even when research is considering the global context, the importance of local context is always central. Historians, in particular, stress the need to understand the specific cultural, historical, and political settings of Muslim women's education. Researchers in this field often conduct comparative studies across different countries and regions to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities that Muslim women face in different parts of the world. For example, Marianne Kamp and Noor Borbieva have examined lives and education of Muslim women and girls in Central Asia, bringing valuable insights that are transcending local and global divide.[95]

2.5 Postsocialist Considerations

The Balkans and Muslim communities gained a lot of attention in the early 1990s with the onset of the Yugoslav civil wars. This period saw a rush of scholars, journalists, and politicians attempting to decipher the Balkan conflicts, often relying on prejudices, stereotypes, and limited information. Most scholarly focus was on nationalism, violence, and genocide, both during World War II and the 1990s conflicts.[96] However, more recent scholarship offers nuanced perspectives, moving away from simplistic explanations rooted

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[94] Anastasia Vakulenko, *Islamic Veiling in Legal Discourse*, 1st publ (Abingdon, Oxon [UK] New York: Routledge, 2012).

[95] Marianne Kamp and Noor Borbieva, "Veiling and Unveiling in Centra Asia - Beliefs and Practicies, Tradition and Modernity," in *The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling*, 1st ed. (London: New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 84–96. See also, Katherine Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical & Modern Stereotypes* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2002). Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*. Ballinger and Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism." Nathalie Clayer, "Behind the Veil. The Reform of Islam in Inter-War Albania or the Search for a 'Modern' and 'European' Islam," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, ed. Nathalie Clayer and Eric Germain (London: Hurst, 2008), 128–55.

[96] For example: Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, 3. ed (London: Penguin, 1996). Further explained in the following literature: Rok Zupančić and Jana Arbeiter, *'Primitive, Cruel and Blood-Thirsty Savages': Stereotypes in and About the Western Balkans*, *Teorija in Praksa* 53, no. 5 (2016): 1051–63. Predrag Simić, *Balkans and Balkanisation: Western Perceptions of the Balkans in the Carnegie Commission's Reports on the Balkan Wars from 1914 to 1996*, *PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2013): 113–34. Atdhe Hetemi, *Orientalism, Balkanism and the Western Viewpoint in the Context of Former Yugoslavia*, *ILIRIA International Review* 5, no. 1 (2015): 311–35. Eugene Michail, *Western Attitudes to War in the Balkans and the Shifting Meanings of Violence, 1912–91*, *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 2 (2012): 219–39. Kürşat Çınar, *Dismemberment of Yugoslavia: Lessons for the Ethnic Conflict Literature*, *Balkan Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no. 15 (2019): 15–27. V. P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2004).

in ancient ethnic hatreds. These works are crucial for providing background context in my dissertation. For instance, Max Bergholz's "Violence as a Generated Force: Identity, Nationalism and Memory in a Balkan Community" delves into ethnic clashes in Bosnia in 1941, focusing on Kulen Vakuf, a small town in northwest Bosnia. These ethnic clashes resulted in mass killings of the Muslim population from the town. The book illustrates how powered by the intercommunal violence, the memory of these local conflicts was generating sudden eruption of nationalism which lasted for decades, extending the sense of nationhood from the micro level to the rest of the entire nation.[97] This study provides a valuable insight into the importance of intercommunal events or micro-level perspective on the creation of the macro national outlook. Another important study is Catherine Baker's "The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s," in which she examines the regional conflicts through scholarly analysis, offering a critical assessment of historical narratives and their impact on public opinion regarding the conflicts and post-war reconciliation. Her work emphasizes the complexity of these conflicts, tracing their origins to World War II and the intricate ethnic, religious, national, and political tapestry of the ex-Yugoslav peoples.[98] I mention these works as I position my dissertation along those lines, shunning simplistic explanations even though that often means not providing a straightforward narrative.

For this dissertation, I have also examined broader literature on education.[99] Local scholars such as Radivoje N. Kulić and Srećko P. Miličić have examined the impact of education on the formation and evolution of human capital. They contend that education is not just a crucial component of human capital, contributing to its growth and its broader effect on economic dynamics and individual earnings, but it also plays a pivotal role in regulating and fostering diverse investments.[100] Additionally, Saumen Chattopadhyay explores the inexorable role of the education in the socio-economic development and its manipulation by the educational policies. He argues that "classification of education and

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[97] Max Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

[98] Catherine Baker and Catherine Baker, *The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s*, Studies in European History (London New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[99] Saumen Chattopadhyay, *Education and Economics: Disciplinary Evolution and Policy Discourse* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[100] Radivoje Kulic and Srecko Milacic, "Influence of Education on Formation and Development of Human Capital," *Godisnjak Pedagoskog Fakulteta u Vranju*, no. 7 (2016): 221–35, https://doi.org/10.5937/gufv1607221K.

knowledge as public goods" and "their contributions in the economy and society are essentially policy constructs".[101] This thesis looks at how education of Muslim girls and women was seen as essential in political systems that were very different from each other, albeit in the same country. Taking a historical perspective in the study of the education of religious minorities, such as Muslim girls, provides context to the current educational landscape. I consider it crucial to identify the root causes of current disparities and challenges in education, to highlight the resilience and contributions of Muslim women and girls in the face of adversity, ultimately for providing insights into culturally sensitive approaches to education today.

[101] Chattopadhyay, *Education and Economics*.

3 Education and Muslim Communities in the New Yugoslav State

In this chapter, I examine changes in the educational system initiated by the Habsburgs following the end of Ottoman rule, and analyse its continuation and differences during the period between the two world wars in Yugoslavia. I explore the relationship between Yugoslav Muslim communities and the changing governments, and how this dynamic has influenced and posed challenges to the evolution of the educational system concerning Muslim girls and women. Despite initial hesitations, there were progressive debates and actions within Muslim communities regarding the inclusion of Muslim girls in the schooling system in the Austro-Hungarian province of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I delve into the state of education within Muslim communities during the Austro-Hungarian Empire's reign, examining the methods of persuasion and tactics employed by the empire's representatives to introduce schooling reforms and enhance accessibility for both genders. I argue that, despite limited success, these early efforts to include Muslim girls in schools from a young age served as invaluable groundwork for future emancipatory endeavours of Muslim women and underscored a timid yet evident presence of Muslim girls in the educational system.

Continuing from this point, this chapter focuses on the period between the First and Second World Wars. I explore the evolution of the educational system and the perception of Yugoslav officials regarding the involvement of women, particularly Muslim girls, in the system, as well as the policies that were enacted. Subsequently, I examine the public response and support for this cause. The establishment of the new state ushered in an era of social, cultural, and political modernization, with education being emphasized as an essential catalyst for nationalism. Among the various changes, this period witnessed a resurgence of feminist movements in Yugoslavia and increased attention to the "women's question" in the Yugoslav public sphere. Consequently, I analyse how this educational reform, coupled with the rise of feminism, impacted the education of girls, including Muslim girls, in particular.

My subsequent focus is on the emergence of modernist trends within the Bosnian Muslim community. This period marked a crucial epoch for modernists in the community who strongly advocated for women’s emancipation within Muslim circles. These efforts moderately succeeded in opening schools and other public spaces for Muslim girls and

women. Lastly, I examine religious education, which introduced the first schools aimed at disseminating Islamic teachings among young Muslims. I investigate the presence of girls in these schools, their designated subjects in the curriculum, and how they were treated by religious teachers in these institutions. My conclusion posits that conservative sentiments within Muslim communities largely stemmed from deeply ingrained religious teachings and patriarchy, which hindered women's progress, including education, and deemed them inferior to men. Consequently, the number of Muslim girls attending these religious schools was minimal, and their attendance was disapproved of by religious teachers.

3.1 Educational Situation in Muslim Communities

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire's rule in 1878, Bosnia technically remained under the nominal Ottoman control, albeit without effective governance. This situation was formalized by the Treaty of Berlin, during which the Austro-Hungarian Empire announced its intention to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, a period that concluded in 1908 with its annexation.[102] The act of annexation exacerbated the rift among European leaders, as well as accentuated the diverse interests and nationalist aspirations of the Balkan populace.[103] The primary aim of the newly established imperial governance was to "civilize" and introduce the Occident (represented by Austria) to the Orient, as Bosnia was perceived. Due to its unique position as both European and Oriental, Austro-Hungarian officials viewed Bosnia as less "other," yet still different enough to necessitate their civilizing mission. Haris Dervišević referred to Benjamin von Kallay's remarks during an interview with "The Daily Chronicle" in 1895. At the time serving as the Minister of Finance for Austro-Hungary and the governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kallay asserted that a mission of Austro-Hungary was to "bring civilization to Oriental people," showcasing a clear orientalist viewpoint."[104] As part of this "civilizing mission", one aspect involved reforming the educational system, which included integrating Muslim girls into the schooling system.

[102] Haris Dervišević, "From Orientalism to Self-Orientalism in the Bosnian Context," *Znakovi Vremena* 24, no. 89/90 (2021): 139–55.
[103] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[104] Dervišević, "From Orientalism to Self-Orientalism in the Bosnian Context."

The Habsburgs initiated the opening of schools for both boys and girls.[105] As explained by Troch, the Austrian parliament passed a constitutional law in 1867 ensuring that each ethnic group within the country possessed the "inviolable rights to preserve and cultivate its nationality and language", along with the right to establish public education conducted in their respective languages. Subsequently, a new education law for elementary schools was enacted in 1869, mandating eight years of compulsory elementary education, comprising four years of primary education followed by four years of secondary education in what were termed public schools. Troch claimed that this educational law aimed to curb the influence of the church on religious education. The curricula for both elementary and secondary schools were set by imperial law, aligning with the ideological framework of the Austrian Empire.[106]

The annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire significantly impacted the Bosnian Muslim community, particularly following their profound disillusionment with the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire, which they regarded as their primary "patron and protector".[107] The introduction of a new environment fostered feelings of alienation and isolation among impoverished and religiously discriminated Muslims, leading many to consider immigrating to Ottoman regions. This crisis sparked heated debates in the Muslim press, with religious intellectuals advocating for emigration while the majority of Muslim intellectuals advised against it, urging the population to remain and defend their heritage through knowledge. This immigration trend persisted into the 20th century.[108]

In spite of the widespread disillusionment among Muslims with both past and current rulers, an entity within the Muslim progressive party, known as "Muslimanska svijest" (Muslim Conscience) or MNS, propelled by its pro-Croatian and anti-Serbian stance, urged the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adapt to the changes.[109] On January 27, 1909, they communicated with the public through the "Tercüman-i Hakikat" (The Interpreter of the Truth) newspaper in Istanbul, elaborating the advantageous prospects of

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[105] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[106] Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula."
[107] Hazim Fazlić, "Modern Muslim Thought in the Balkans: The Writings of Mehmed Ef. Handžić in the El-Hidaje Periodical in the Context of Discrimination and Genocide," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 428–49.
[108] Fazlić.
[109] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

living under the rule of the civilized Austro-Hungarian Empire as opposed to the Serbian or Montenegrin regimes, which could result in their expulsion from the country. MNS counselled Muslims to pursue education at universities in Vienna and Budapest, embrace a new way of life following the annexation, and to persist without yielding to the temptation to emigrate. The Bosniak political and intellectual elite, a group predominantly composed of Bosnian Muslims who identify as "Bosniaks"[110], and who received their education in schools and universities within the Habsburg Empire, advocated for the notion that Bosniaks needed to acclimate to the altered living conditions in their homeland. They emphasized the importance of fostering a transformed relationship with schools and education as a means to achieve cultural and economic advancement.[111]

However, despite advocating this message for years, the progress regarding education was slow, prompting debates about Muslims' position in the society. In 1911, Hamdija Mulić, a prominent pedagogue and thinker, asserted that the primary reason was the community's own fault (referred to as "our element") for not permitting their children to receive education in state schools, which, according to him, also included mandatory religious curriculum. He criticized the disregard for the fact that Islam also advocates for the teaching of science. This idea of trying to advocate for education by looking at connections to Islamic science will remain the cornerstone for modernists in next decades. Similarly, the Muslim progressive publication "Musavat" echoed Mulić's sentiments, warning Bosniaks of neglecting their cultural heritage due to ignorance and fostering fear of the "other," thereby preventing their children from studying various sciences. Under these circumstances, there were 18,000 Orthodox children, 14,000 Catholic children, and only 3,900 Muslim children enrolled in elementary schools at that time.[112]

Jahić shows that there were also voices that blamed the Austro-Hungarian provincial government for not doing enough. For example, the Mostar's mufti, Ali Fehmi ef. Džabić, accused them of obstructing the educational progress of the Muslim community with their

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[110] *Bosniaks* are a South Slavic ethnic group typically characterized by their historic ties to the Bosnian historical region, adherence to Islam since the 15th and 16th centuries, culture, and the Bosnian language. English speakers frequently refer to Bosniaks as Bosnian Muslims or simply as Bosnians, though the latter term can also denote all inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina (regardless of ethnic identity) or apply to citizens of the country. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosniaks

[111] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

[112] Jahić.

negative stance. Despite an increase in school infrastructure and the implementation of mandatory schooling laws through campaigns promoting new educational practices, there was only a slight rise in the number of Muslim children attending state schools. From the school year 1900/1910 to 1913/1914, the number of elementary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina increased from 306 to 399. However, until the end of Austro-Hungarian rule in 1918, there were no significant changes, and the Muslim community remained the least advantaged in terms of educational progress compared to other religious groups.[113]

Prior to the occupation and subsequent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austrians, education in the province was managed by various religious institutions within the region.[114] Muslim students attended "mektebs" (elementary schools) and "medresas" (secondary schools) where they received religious education. In the 1860s, the Ottoman authorities attempted to modernize the educational system by enacting laws that mandated the creation of state schools with contemporary curricula. However, this reform faced resistance and lacked support from the obstinate Bosnian administration. According to Austro-Hungarian statistics analysed by Pieter Troch, by 1879, there were only 18 reformed schools compared to 18 medresas and 499 mektebs.[115] In their endeavour to "civilize" and assimilate the province into the empire, Austro-Hungarian authorities established a network of inter-communal state schools alongside the existing confessional schools, as argued by Troch. He noted that while the number of elementary schools increased from 31 to 74 percent, they remained a viable alternative to confessional schools primarily for the Catholic population. Austro-Hungarian authorities specifically aimed to convert Serbian Orthodox confessional schools into state schools, believing them to be centres of anti-imperial activism.[116]

There were also broader changes following the occupation of 1878 for the Bosnian Muslim community. The change in ruling authority over the province affected previously privileged citizens, placing them in a new position within Bosnian society and sparking

[113] Jahić.
[114] Troch, “Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula.”
[115] Troch.
[116] Troch.

discussions about the emancipation of Muslim women, among other topics.[117] The Austro-Hungarian provincial government saw itself as modernizers, bringing a top-down version of "modernization" of Bosnian society. This also meant significant changes for women.[118] The emergence of new civil society brought about significant changes in the social status of women, particularly through the delineation between public and private spheres, necessitating heightened the 19th century modernization processes.[119]

Before annexation, discussions regarding modern and educated Muslims predominantly focused on male children, while girls were marginalized and restricted to acquiring knowledge solely from religious teachers and within their family environments.[120] Adnan Jahić asserts that until 1908, there were no significant discussions regarding the religious education of women, let alone their cultural and social standing. Educating Muslim women outside of mektebs was not even considered, as religious authorities staunchly believed that according to Sharia law, women had no place in state schools. Additionally, there was a fear that state schools aimed to convert Muslim girls to Christianity. Muslims viewed this new civilization as heavily intertwined with Christian spirituality, leading to a defensive and restrictive stance within the Muslim community.[121]

Nevertheless, despite the predominantly conservative nature of Muslim religious authorities, there were some more progressive currents that, albeit timidly, supported the education of Muslim girls and women. Two Muslim female schools in Sarajevo, known as "ruždijas", were established on a private basis for the education of Muslim girls aged 7 to 14. These schools were opened by Olga Hörmann with the approval of the reis-ul-ulema.[122]

The reach of these schools was very limited and Muslim women still lacked access to education and equal participation in public life. Their existence was largely restricted to domestic affairs from a young age. Those who got some education, rather than attending formal elementary schools, attended mektebs until reaching the age of fifteen. After this, they would begin wearing the veil, remaining within the confines of their family homes and

[117] Kujraković, "Emancipacija Muslimanske Žene: Izjave Reisa Džemaludina Čauševića i Njihova Recepcija u Javnosti."
[118] Lejla Kahriman, "Obrazovanje ženske djece u Bosni i Hercegovini u dugom 19. stoljeću" (Master of Arts Thesis, Sarajevo, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, 2021).
[119] Kahriman.
[120] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[121] Kahriman, "Obrazovanje ženske djece u Bosni i Hercegovini u dugom 19. stoljeću."
[122] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

focusing primarily on preparing for marriage.[123] However, Jahić shows that even in "sibjan-mektebs", religious elementary schools that focused on teaching classical Islamic teachings, boys outnumbered girls in attendance. The extent of neglect towards girls in religious education is evidenced by the fact that in the year preceding the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were 9 female "mekteb-ibtidaia" (reformed mektebs) with 720 pupils, compared to 83 male mekteb-ibtidaia with 6,642 pupils.[124] Ultimately, Muslim girls faced dual discrimination within their own community. They were inadequately enrolled in religious schools due to prejudiced conservatives, and they were prevented from attending state schools because Muslim families distrusted foreign institutions.

Women also engaged in these discussions, focusing on the limited educational opportunities for Muslim girls and pointing to the serious problem of access and deliberately imposed limited curriculum. For example, in an article written by teacher Nafija Sarajlić, published in the Bosnian Muslim newsletter "Zeman" (Time) in 1912, she recounted the termination of her teaching tenure with Muslim girls for out-of-curriculum classes teaching ethics and reading to the young girls beyond regular class hours. This action was condemned by the school's board, resulting in the termination of her employment as a teacher.[125]

The issue of women's education brought a stark divide within intellectual Muslim circles already in the early twentieth century, with a rift between the new intelligentsia and religious conservatives. For example, Dr. Hamdija Karamehmedović advocated for closing religious elementary schools in areas with state schools to allocate additional resources for establishing female mektebs and enhancing women's education. On the other hand, Omer ef. Zukanović opposed this notion, arguing that girls/women did not require extensive education; the knowledge they acquired at home or from their husbands would suffice.[126] These debates did not bring many changes in practice, but their significance is that they brought the issue of emancipation for Muslim girls and women, including education to the public.

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[123] Humo, "Naša nova muslimanka."
[124] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[125] Fahira Fejzić-Čengić et al., *Prilozi za istraživanje sociokulturnog položaja žene u BiH: izabrana bibliografija (1900-2010)* (Sarajevo: Centar za edukaciju i istraživanje "Nahla," 2011).
[126] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

Generally, the Muslim community remained sceptical of the Habsburg Provincial Government and its efforts to convince families to send their daughters to school. Motivated by their own agenda, the Provincial Government consistently endeavoured to gain the trust of the Muslim community, which was also contingent upon the education of girls. Despite their families' reservations, some girls attended the classes, experiencing for the first time the unprecedented opportunity to acquire a broader knowledge beyond religious teachings and outside the confines of their family homes.[127]

Girls also faced further limitations in their educational journey. While their male counterparts had a wide array of schools to choose from, girls who completed the five-year elementary school could only further their education by attending a rare five-year secondary school for girls. As a consequence in 1919, only nine hundred Muslim girls were enrolled in elementary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a region inhabited by over six hundred and thirty thousand Muslims.[128] Consequently, the quality of life for Muslim girls saw only limited improvement during the Habsburg rule. Societal expectations of women barely changed. In addition to their formal education, girls were still expected to excel as wives and mothers and to devote much of their time to home duties. This dual role imposed a considerable burden on them, making their lives more challenging and reducing their opportunities for engagement in public life.

However, Giomi argued that we cannot overlook the positive changes introduced by the Habsburg Empire in the region, particularly in terms of education, evidenced by the somewhat increased numbers of educated Muslim girls.[129] Namely, some Muslim women managed to gradually make strides into the public sphere by participating in public writing. These pioneering educated Muslim women challenged the deeply entrenched Ottoman gender norms and dared to assert their agency through contributions to Bosnian literary journals.[130] As Giomi showed some Bosnian Muslim women have used the Habsburg "civilizing mission" for active involvement in the public sphere. He provides examples of how public writing influenced the lives of these pioneering literate Muslim women, who, albeit

[127] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[128] Hasan M. Rebac, "Naša Muslimanka [Our Muslim Woman]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 8 (November 1920): 13–16.
[129] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[130] Giomi, "Daughters of Two Empires."

cautiously, challenged the prevailing sexual and confessional segregation in Bosnian Muslim society at the time.[131]

Taken together, the Habsburg initiatives to integrate Muslim girls into a new schooling system in Bosnia had limited success. However, new debates about women's position in the society laid a solid foundation for future efforts towards the education of girls and women in the following periods. The Austrian authorities' efforts also had limited success to encourage Muslims to enrol their children in state schools by establishing reformed mektebs, followed by attendance in the third year of public elementary schools. The resurgence of religious education occurred in 1899, with a significant rise in the number of mektebs, totalling 1233 confessional and 203 reformed mektebs by 1914 to 1915[132]. The outcomes of the 'civilizing mission' undertaken by the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia were notably unsatisfactory, especially among the non-Catholics. Illiteracy rates remained widespread in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 94.65 percent of the Muslim population lacking basic education.[133]

3.2 Interwar Yugoslav Education System

The establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 has been positively welcomed by a majority of the political and cultural elites in the Yugoslav lands, as the moment of realisation of the Yugoslav national idea and pivotal point of political, economic and cultural modernisation of the Yugoslav lands and people. After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the end of the First World War, an idea of Yugoslav unity finally came to fruition through the long awaited "institutionalisation". Troch explained education was positioned as one of the most crucial branches of society for the institutionalisation of the Yugoslav idea, and thus new national ideology in creating of a sense of unity and belonging.[134] After all, in the immediate post-First World War period the Yugoslav officials have placed an improvement of the educational system significantly high

[131] Giomi.
[132] Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula."
[133] Troch.
[134] Troch.

on their agenda, perceiving the curricula and teachers as invaluable transmitters of the nationalistic sentiment, and pupils as their ideological successors.[135]

New Yugoslav education system was established relatively quickly after the war. In 1921 after the ratification of the Constitution, the government proposed a new law on elementary education. This new law envisioned a centralised network of elementary schools with the main task to raise children in the spirit of national unity and religious tolerance. This new draft prescribed free and compulsory elementary education for eight years, instructed in the language of the state, meaning Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian, but allowing minority languages as well. Curricula was designed strictly by the state, with exceptions of imposing certain adaptations if the local area required.[136]

Despite the government's efforts, education continued to encounter setbacks on various fronts. The authorities struggled with the ratification of educational legislation, particularly concerning elementary education, as part of the integration of disparate Yugoslav educational systems.[137] The proposed curricula faced continual rejection despite minor discrepancies. They were standardized across the entire state, with primary emphasis placed on language and arithmetic. Additionally, students would receive instruction in "religion and morals" throughout all four years of elementary school, alongside subjects such as history, geography, and nature study. Subjects deemed as "less important" included drawing, calligraphy, handwork, singing, and gymnastics.[138]

The educational system in Yugoslavia has been in a challenging position before and after the First World War due to poverty, war destructions, and lack of teachers. As noted by Joseph S. Roucek, schools were scarce, requiring pupils to travel long distances to attend. Moreover, low attendance rates were problematic, particularly as poor students were frequently excused for absences due to ill health. In rural areas, children were often

[135] Paulina Čović, "Building Identity: History of Yugoslavia in Textbooks for Primary Schools in Serbia 1929-1952," *Istraživanja Journal of Historical Researches*, no. 27 (2016): 276–80.
[136] Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula."
[137] Troch.
[138] Troch.

expected to work in the fields rather than attend school.[139] The shortage of infrastructure, staff, financial resources, and general public interest posed significant challenges to the overall progress of schooling, particularly in the realm of girls' education, which remained sluggish. Throughout the last decades of the 19th and the 20th century, gender segregation in schools was prevalent across all religious communities. Boys typically received a comprehensive education, whereas girls were primarily taught basic skills deemed essential for their future roles as mothers and wives.[140] These educational institutions were commonly referred to as vocational schools, where young girls were equipped with skills such as knitting, sewing, cooking, and, notably, teaching. The role of a female teacher was held in high esteem by officials, as these women were viewed as both educators and maternal figures for the nation, serving as pillars of Yugoslav society.[141] The narrative that will continue into subsequent periods.

3.2.1 New Ideas About Women's Education

The concept of women's emancipation through education was promoted through women's magazines from the early 20th century onwards. These magazines were among the first publications exclusively dedicated to women and thus serve as significant resources for studying prevalent discourses. Despite being viewed as vehicles for emancipation, these magazines frequently reinforced deeply ingrained stereotypes about women, in addition to the traditional notions of roles and capabilities. For example, women were commonly depicted, often explicitly, as guardians of traditional values and principles, rendering them subservient to the desires of their fathers, husbands, and sons.[142]

Nevertheless, the notion "a modern woman" was a frequently used phrase to describe a new kind of emancipated and educated women. This supposed modernity was often depicted as coming from other countries, and as something that should be emulated. Women magazines such as "Domaćica" (Housewife) published articles about Finish women joining the police force and Danish women making a significant progress in their fight for the

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[139] Joseph S. Roucek, "Education of the Yugoslav Peoples before 1918," *Études Slaves et Est-Européennes / Slavic and East-European Studies* 5, no. 1/2 (1960): 38–53.
[140] Ivona Neter, "Vaspitanje naših kćeri [Upbringing of Our Daughters]," *Žena i svet*, no. 2 (February 1929): 6.
[141] Jelena N. Markovićka, "O uređenju ženskih škola: Odboru za Profesionalnu nastavu u Ministartsvu Narodne Privrede [Regarding Arrangement of the Female Schools: To the Board for the Professional Teaching within the Ministry of National Economy]," *Domaćica*, no. 3 (March 1911): 90–93.
[142] Peković, *Časopisi po meri dostojanstvenog ženskinja*.

equality with men.[143] Other magazines such as "Ženski pokret" (Women's Movement) were writing about the struggles of the French women for the right to vote and obtain higher political positions,[144] while the magazine "Žena i svet" (Woman and the World) featured content dedicated to women's movements from various regions worldwide.[145]

Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 when Turkish women gained rights to education, employment, unveiling in public, participation in politics, and more, Turkey also gained attention in women's media. Anđelko Vlašić suggests that Yugoslav public discourse examined women's issues by comparing them to Turkey, which was often perceived as Europe's "Other", reflecting upon their own self-perception.[146] Magazines contrasted such swift changes in Turkey with the perceived antiquated, theocratic, conservative, and traditionalist nature of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey was hailed as an invaluable example of how "backwardness" could be overcome, portraying Muslim women as liberated from the perceived enslavement of Ottoman legacy following Kemal Ataturk's implementation of modernist reforms during the 1920s.[147] These global events presented as a significant transformation that could be relevant to women in Yugoslavia.

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[143] Magazine founded by the Belgrade women's society and its associates. It was established in 1879 (with the paused work during the First World War) and was terminated in 1941, at the beginning of the Second World War. The publishing of this magazine was following the work of the women's society, informing the public about the society's activities, reports from its meetings and work, and it additionally was comprised of the literary and educational contributions. See, https://digitalna.nb.rs.

[144] First Yugoslav feminist magazine established in 1920. It was published as a newsletter of the Society for the Education of Women and Protection of Their Rights. The magazine was printed with short interruptions until 1938. It was constituted from a broad and heterogeneous circle of associates and was gathering feminists from all around the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia. This magazine represents an indispensable media in the Yugoslav magazine production of the 20^{s} and 30s of the 20th century given its taught-provoking content in terms of various issue pertaining to women. See, https://digitalna.nb.rs.

[145] The magazine was active between the two World Wars, from 1925 until 1941. Its headquarters were established in Belgrade, and the content was dedicated to the women's emancipation and their positioning in the society. Positioning itself as an illustrated magazine within the frame of the feminist counterpublic in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, the main goal of the magazine's work was to stipulate on their own example the existence of the ambivalent treatment of the women's emancipation; ambivalence that was emblematic of the ideology of the moderate civil feminism and the newsletters that are expression and agents of that ideology, as well as of their construction of the identity of the modern woman. It is assumed that the concept of the magazine was created through inspiration drawn from the German women's fashion magazines, and *Elegante Welt* (1913-1941) in particular. See, https://digitalna.nb.rs, and http://www.knjizenstvo.rs/sr/casopisi/2014/zenska-knjizevnost-i-kultura/zena-i-svet-1925-1941-izmedju-moderne-i-nove-zene-ambivalencija-ilustrovanog-zenskog-modnog-magazina#gsc.tab=0

[146] Anđelko Vlašić, "Modern Women in a Modern State - Public Discourse in Interwar Yugoslavia on the Status of the Women in Turkey (1923-1939)," *Aspasia*, 2018.

[147] Vuka De la Martinier Velimirović, "O Turskoj ženi [About Turkish Woman]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 17 (October 1927): 4.

However, they were also viewed as a novelty that needed to be tailored to the specific needs of Yugoslav women, albeit with some reservations about their perceived extremity.

The problem of educational challenges for various groups of the Yugoslav population gained traction in the media already in the 1920s. Other periodicals, not exclusively focused on women also occasionally informed the Yugoslav public about events related to women. Such newspapers were "Politika" (Politics)[148] and "Vreme" (Time)[149] sometimes publishing articles with regards to education and emancipation. There were also publications originating in the Bosnian Muslim community such as "Novi Behar" (New Blossom) that offered valuable insights into various social and cultural issues, including those concerning Muslim women.[150] They discussed widespread illiteracy across the country, especially among women. Apart from being a topic of debate among politicians, Giomi shows that women's organizations and associations were also important drivers behind the push for more schools for girls and women, including their women magazines that propagated the very idea of education and emancipation.[151]

In addition to efforts aimed at societal and cultural transformation, the 1920s also witnessed the rise of feminism in Yugoslavia, evident in the women's press. Women began publicly addressing issues related to their freedoms, including the right to vote (which was only attained in 1945), the right to work, equal inheritance rights, and access to education. The first Yugoslav feminist publication emerged in 1920 from the "Society for Education of Women and Protection of Their Rights" (Društvo za prosvećivanje žena i zaštitu njenih

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[148] *Politika* or Politics, is a Serbian daily newspaper published in Belgrade. It was founded in 1904 by Vladislav F. Ribnikar, and it is considered the oldest daily newspaper still in circulation in the Balkans. Its publishing activity was paused during the First and Second World War. See, https://digitalna.nb.rs and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politika.

[149] The magazine was active in the period 1921-1941, and it was established in Belgrade. The founders of the magazine *Vreme* were politicians of the Radical party, supporters of the monarchy and its governance. The work of the magazine was stopped on the eve of the Second World War. Beside the events from the world of politics, the magazine contained special additions like *Ženski svet* (woman's world), *Dečje Vreme* (Children's time) and so on. See, https://digitalna.nb.rs.

[150] *Novi Behar* was published in the period between 1927 and 1945 in the form of educational and entertaining newsletter. The magazine was entailing topics pertaining to upbringing and education, religion, politics, society, health, literature, and myriads of other subjects relevant to the increase of the social development of the Bosniak people. The authors of the texts were contributing to the growth of the Bosniak's consciousness about the literacy, education, cultural, political, and religious events. See, Edina Nikšić-Rebihić, "Odgojno-obrazovni prilozi u časopisu Novi behar 1939–1945. godine," *Časopis za interdisciplinarne studije* 3, no. 1 (2016): 67–88. See the digital source from the National Library of Serbia, https://plus.cobiss.net/cobiss/sr/sr/bib/nbs/32620044.

[151] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.

prava). Their magazine, titled "Ženski pokret", served as a gathering point for feminists from across the country until its abrupt cessation in 1938. While active, this magazine tackled a number of topics related to the "woman question", advocating that women should be active members of society and not relegated to second-class citizenship.

Women's writing was not uniform, and there were diverse opinions. Some, despite their eagerness to address "the woman question" continued to propagate conservative ideologies of that time in their writing. Some authors in women's magazines even criticized the emerging educated and working women, portraying them as "modern slaves".[152] In their perspective, this newly emancipated woman become enslaved by the demands of the new societal order, while losing sight of traditional values such as being a dutiful mother and wife. Even when some authors advocated for women's education, it was often framed and justified within the context of serving the nation's broader interests. The language utilized in these women's magazines perpetuated entrenched patriarchal cultural and gender norms, which, as Jelena Filipović elucidates, reinforced women's invisibility and presumed men's visibility in the public sphere, based on the hierarchical organization of society along gender lines.[153] For example, it was not rare to argue that the primary responsibility of mothers was to supervise and educate their young daughters, and schooling was considered secondary. Conversely, formal education for boys was regarded as an inherent entitlement, stemming from their socially presumed roles as cultural creators and leaders.[154] Although this example was published in the early 1930s, it followed earlier patterns seen in the articles such as "Prva dužnost ženina" (Women's First Obligation) from the magazine "Domaćica" in 1911, where the author praises an educated and emancipated woman, but essentially as a mother and teacher of the nation.[155]

Such discourse was perpetuated for decades. The determined differences in the language commonly used in this media have exposed a number of ingrained stereotypes and prejudices based on the traditional system of values of men and women, which aligns

[152] R.K. Chesterton, "Moderna robinja [Modern (Female) Slave]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 5 (May 1925): 5.
[153] Filipović, "Gender, Power and Language Standardization of Serbian."
[154] Poleksija D. Dimitrijević-Stošić, "O racionalnom i intelektualnom vaspitanju naše srednjoškolske ženske omladine [Regarding Rational and Intellectual Upbringing of Our High School Female Youth]," *Žena i svet*, no. 11 (November 1931): 1–2.
[155] L. Gavrović, "Prva dužnost ženina [Women's First Duty]," *Domaćica*, no. 3 (March 1911): 96–97.

with the Ranko Bugarski's arguments in his study about sex and gender in language.[156] According to the common opinion in the first half of the 20th century, the culture of the humanity was polarised between men's and women's, glorifying men's physical and psychological characteristics that created and shaped it, which coincided with the language used in the media.[157] On the other hand, women were depicted and perceived as physically and mentally weaker, incapable of governing the state and religious institutions.[158] As one can observe from these early women's publication, women's primary concern was described as revolving around home and family life, positioning women as the foundational pillars of society, albeit often from a background that warranted only a modest level of education. A "truly educated" woman was portrayed as someone who possessed good manners, a kind heart, and humility, commonly used tropes at the time. Consequently, it was understood that the main objective of the educational system was to create a well-rounded mother and wife.[159]

Pierre Bourdieu suggests that cultural requirements, along with cultural habits and preferences, are intricately tied to one's level of education and, secondarily, to their social background. He elaborates that the importance of family background versus formal education varies depending on how extensively the particular cultural practices are acknowledged and imparted by the educational framework.[160] Even though positively appraised, education and emancipation of the women still stayed inferior in comparison to their family life as higher socially and culturally valued. This concept aligns with the arguments of other scholars that examined certain aspects of the content found in women's magazines. Slobodanka Peković, for instance, analysed publications such as "Posestrima" (Stepsister), "Žena" (Woman), "Srpkinje" (Serbian Women), and "Domaćica" (Housewife), all of which critically assessed women's independence and their perceived lack of self-sufficiency. Contributors to these magazines often argued that women should not rely on

[156] Bugarski, "Pol i rod u jeziku."
[157] D. L., "Ženska kultura [Women's Culture]," *Domaćica*, no. 5 (May 1911): 188–92.
[158] A. M., "O obrazovanju ženske dece [Regarding Education of the Female Children]," *Žena i svet*, no. 8 (August 1931): 2–3.
[159] Č. D., "Prvo obrazovanje ženskinja [First Education of Women]," *Domaćica*, no. 9 (September 1911): 322–23.
[160] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2010).

themselves financially or engage in discussions beyond matters of the "heart", as they were deemed emotionally driven and lacking in objective critical thinking compared to men. However, Peković contends that despite the editorial stance and policies that frequently reinforced gender role stereotypes, women's magazines played a crucial role in initiating discussions related to women's emancipation, including education. Women used these platforms to share their stories and increase their visibility in the public sphere, simultaneously inviting other women, their readers, to participate in this invisible revolution.[161]

The emergence of women's magazines was also crucial due to other publications often portrayed women as having less interest in politics and other "serious" matters. They also depicted them as less authoritative and convincing speakers, expecting them to express themselves through silence, which was deemed a more suitable for a lady. Hence, the expression of women's opinions on diverse cultural, social, and political issues through women's magazines marks an essential milestone for women in the media and society. According to Ana Kolarić, women's magazines constitute "an integral component of popular culture and wielded an unforeseen political and social subversive influence".[162] Women's magazines provided a platform for women to express themselves and have a voice, in addition to informing their audience about the global events. Finally, according to feminist theorists like Adrienne Rich, "having a voice is one of the primary conditions of existence".[163]

Additionally, through the scrutiny of feminist publications from the period and an investigation into the historical, cultural, and political changes that influenced women's liberation and their portrayal in magazines such as "Misao" (Thought), "Nova Evropa" (New Europe), "Ženski pokret" (Women's Movement), "Jednakost" (Equality), "Jugoslovenska žena" (Yugoslav Woman), "Žena danas" (Woman Today), and others, as suggested by Stanislava Barać, we address the literary representations of women to illuminate the early literary depiction of this new "modern woman".[164] Furthermore, another way of observing

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[161] Peković, *Časopisi po meri dostojanstvenog ženskinja*.
[162] Ana Kolarić, "Gender Identities in Women's and Feminist Periodicals in Serbia," *Aspasia* 13, no. 1 (2019): 175–81.
[163] Peković, *Časopisi po meri dostojanstvenog ženskinja*.
[164] Barać, *Feministička kontrajavnost*.

women's voices in the public domain was through an examination of women's authorship in interwar Yugoslavia and a series of works written during this era concerning women's roles in the public sphere. Namely, Jelena Petrović suggests that with this approach we explore the historical circumstances surrounding women's positioning within the cultural, societal, and historical development of the state. This exploration sheds light on their exclusion from progressive ideologies and emancipatory movements within both institutional and academic spheres,[165] despite largely propagated emancipation through education. These methodologies offer a clearer insight into the envisioned role of women, the expectations placed upon them, and the societal aspirations for contemporary Yugoslav women during the interwar period.

The examination of the 20th century women's magazines and conveyed perspectives within those publications provide an insight and elucidate how historical, cultural, and political shifts influenced the transition from feminist to a more patriarchal and nationalistic tone in writings.[166] This women's press during the interwar period, accurately reflected the societal shifts impacting Yugoslav society at that time, particularly concerning women. The evolution of attitudes and narratives regarding women's roles in society paralleled global trends, as well as domestic political changes that brought about significant challenges to established norms that nevertheless persisted.

3.2.2 Situation of Muslim girls' and Women's Education

Following the end of the First World War and the widespread devastation it brought, the economic landscape underwent a drastic transformation for all in Yugoslavia. A significant number of men perished in the conflict, leaving women responsible for supporting themselves and their families. This shift impacted women across all communities, while rapidly changing economic expectations outside of home meant that Muslim women faced unfamiliar circumstances, particularly those traditionally secluded from the outside world from a young age. Yugoslav economic situation led to a poverty crisis within the Muslim community, compelling women to seek out unpopular jobs, while children took to the streets to work. Many of the single mothers were compelled to

[165] Jelena Petrović, *Women's Authorship in Interwar Yugoslavia: The Politics of Love and Struggle*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[166] Srđan Mladenov Jovanović, "'Žena I Svet' and 'Hrvatica': An Analysis of Two Women's Magazines in Interwar Serbia and Croatia (1925-1941)," *Social Communication* 4, no. 2 (2018): 70–78.

abandon traditional lifestyles in order to survive, a decision met with judgment and disapproval from conservative men within the community.[167] The opposition from traditionalists was so staunch that they established a "Society for the Protection of Morality" in Sarajevo in 1920, akin to a morality police force. This society would intercept unveiled or unaccompanied women on the streets, forcibly reapply veils, and physically brand them as "immoral" or "unclean". Comprising Muslim men who paid membership fees, they sought police assistance to enforce their agenda of disciplining "disobedient" Muslim women. However, this organization had a brief existence.[168]

The illiteracy of Muslim women significantly contributed to disparities and prevalent poor living conditions. The matter was not improved with limited educational opportunities for Muslim girls and women was a subject of debate within both Muslim communities and women's organizations in Yugoslavia. Although the state had passed a new law mandating elementary education for both girls and boys, this initiative had limited effects for Muslim girls due to extreme poverty, insufficient infrastructure, and conservative resistance.[169] Moreover, the state exhibited little inclination towards supporting the Muslim community, further impeding educational efforts.[170] Another hindrance in this educational endeavour was the backing of conservative Muslims by political parties for their own agendas. Hasan M. Rebac contended in his article "O ženi muslimanki" (About Muslim Women) in the magazine "Ženski pokret" that this was one of the reasons why the state and the ruling elite showed no initiative in advocating for the implementation of this new law in favour of girls as well.[171]

Already mentioned magazine Ženski pokret based in Belgrade, regularly published articles about Muslim women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, consistently dedicating articles in almost every edition to the living conditions of Muslim women in the country and around

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[167] Rebac, "Naša muslimanka."
[168] M. Ž., "I Muslimanka će se probuditi [Muslim Woman Will Wake up as Well]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 1/2 (January 1928): 1–2.
[169] Rebac, "O ženi muslimanki." More about the general situation of elementary schooling of Muslim children, Ahmed Omerhodžić, "Problem osnovnog školstva i osnovne prosvjete u Bosni i Hercegovini i njegovo rješenje [Problem of the Elementary Schools and Elementary Education in Bosna in Herzegovina]," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 15–16 (1936 1937): 179–83.
[170] Mina Kujović, "Hasnija Berberović - Zaboravljena učiteljica - Prilog historiji muslimanskog školstva u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Novi Muallim*, no. 40 (2009): 114–18.
[171] Rebac, "O ženi muslimanki."

the world. While other women's magazines, such as "Žena i svet" (Woman and the World) and "Domaćica" (The Housewife), mainly focused on portraying the challenging circumstances faced by Yugoslav Muslim women and Muslim women in general, advocating for the elimination of perceived "backwardness", Ženski pokret transcended mere rhetoric. The magazine translated its advocacy into tangible action by dispatching delegations to cities like Sarajevo, aiming to personally assess and understand the conditions experienced by Muslim women. Predominantly comprising Serbian women, Ženski pokret actively engaged in establishing literacy and vocational courses while collaborating with local Muslim women.[172] Typically, they would organize meetings with Muslim women to garner their attention and involvement in addressing current issues. Local members of Ženski pokret opted to hold these meetings weekly, aiming to educate women about the requisites of modern life without gender distinctions and about equal rights for all. Additionally, members were encouraged to participate in meetings of both Muslim men's and women's organizations to discuss objectives. During these gatherings, both genders expressed eagerness for change, motivated by the hardships caused by widespread illiteracy and poverty. Ženski pokret lauded the positive impact on the Muslim community, noting their eventual realization "that the issue of education and equality for women is integral to the cultural and progressive advancement of the entire nation."[173]

The writings in these women's journals and campaigns aimed at Muslim women typically garnered positive responses, but practice and the implementation of education for Muslim girls continued to encounter obstacles. According to Hamza Humo, emancipation constituted a crucial process due to the stark disparity between traditional and modern practices, prompting societal (particularly familial) resistance against the status quo. Humo contended that emancipated Muslim men played a pivotal role in women's emancipation by educating their own daughters.[174]

Local teachers were also active and pointing to structural problems of Muslim girls' education. For example, Nešet Topčić, a teacher from the state school in Zvornik, Bosnia,

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[172] M. Ž., "Jedan važan rad '"Ženskog pokreta"' u Sarajevu [An Important Work of Ženski pokret (Women's Movement) in Sarajevo]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 1/2 (January 1928): 4.
[173] Ž.
[174] Humo, "Naša nova muslimanka."

submitted an appeal to the Minister of Education, Božidar Maksimović, which was published in the Bosnian newsletter "Novi Behar". In his appeal, Topčić urged for changes in the regulations governing mandatory elementary education for Muslim girls. Specifically, he called for an extension of enrolment opportunities for Muslim female children, citing low attendance rates that contradicted the requirements of mandatory elementary education laws. Topčić highlighted a concerning example from Janja, where out of 200 Muslim female children aged between 7 and 9 (whom he referred to as future Yugoslav mothers), only one child was enrolled in the first grade of elementary school due to negligence on the part of the school board. He emphasized that such occurrences were not isolated incidents and were widespread across Bosnia and Herzegovina.[175] These examples illustrate that the education of Muslim girls was hindered not only by conservative elements such as parents and teachers but also by the schools themselves, showing broader systematic issues and state's lack of diligence in addressing the matter.

Local intellectuals such as Ahmed Omerhodžić delved into the educational statistics concerning the Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular focus on the Derventa region, in the year 1937, in an article featured in Novi Behar.[176] He elucidated the challenges encountered in gathering data due to the inconsistency of numerous factors that influenced the educational landscape, as it was impossible to ascertain the number of villages without elementary schools and the attitudes of the inhabitants toward schooling in more generic kind of research. Compiling the data himself, Omerhodžić meticulously examined the factors impacting children's education and subsequently presented his findings. A significant discrepancy existed between the number of girls and boys attending elementary schools, particularly favouring boys, especially in villages where parents preferred sending their male children for education. Additionally, the precarious financial circumstances of many households impeded the education of all children within the family, with male children consistently prioritized if parents had to choose which child to send to

[175] Fejzić-Čengić et al., *Prilozi za istraživanje sociokulturnog položaja žene u BiH: izabrana bibliografija (1900-2010)*. See also, Maksim Svara, "Šaljimo djecu u škole! [Let Us Send Children to Schools!]," *Novi Behar* 6, no. 4–5 (1932 1933): 49–50.

[176] Ahmed Omerhodžić, "Kako najlakše da dođemo do potrebnih školskih statistika? Stanje školstva u derventskom srezu krajem školske 1936/37 godine [What Is the Easiest Way to Acquire Necessary Schools' Statistics? The Condition of Schooling in the County of Derventa at the End of the School Year of 1936/37]," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 13–16 (1937 1938): 212–18.

school or provide with school materials.[177] For instance, an article in Novi Behar highlighted the situation of a girl named Fata who was in fact attending fourth grade in elementary school but lacked textbooks. This was because her father, facing financial constraints, prioritized providing books for his sons, leaving Fata unable to keep up with the curriculum due to the high cost of school materials.[178] In urban areas, the situation was comparatively better, with one girl for every two boys enrolled in elementary schools, while in rural villages, the disparity was stark, with thirteen boys for every two girls. The total number of girls attending elementary education amounted to 169, while 436 Muslim boys were enrolled. Notably, Bosanski Brod stood out as the most progressive location in this regard, with 71 female children enrolled in comparison to 79 male children. During his visit to Bosanski Brod to promote education, Omerhodžić would compile a list of all female children in the town, notify the parents, and simply enrol the girls in elementary school.[179] Such individual actions, while very valuable for some, demonstrate significant challenges for girls almost two decades after the establishment of the new Yugoslav state.

On the other hand, daughters of the Muslim progressive intellectuals had better opportunities to get educated and become active members of the society, particularly in some of the many voluntary associations. In addition to the aforementioned Ženski pokret, progressive Muslim organizations such as "Gajret" (Effort)[180], "Osvitanje" (Dawning)[181],

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[177] Omerhodžić.

[178] Husejn Dubravić (Đogo), "Kako je mala Fata dobila školske knjige [How Little Fata Have Managed to Get School Books]," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 7–14 (January 15, 1939): 125–26.

[179] Omerhodžić, "Kako najlakše da dođemo do potrebnih školskih statistika? Stanje školstva u derventskom srezu krajem školske 1936/37 godine [What Is the Easiest Way to Acquire Necessary Schools' Statistics? The Condition of Schooling in the County of Derventa at the End of the School Year of 1936/37]."

[180] Gajret was the most important Muslim cultural association in the Yugoslav space. It was established in 1903 in Sarajevo with the task to promote Serbian identity among the Slavic Muslims. Set in motion with the initial goal to provide scholarships for Muslim male pupils, the organisation gradually broadened its activities that entailed publishing of the journals and books, provided literacy, established student dorms and workshops and so on. Its dedication to the education of Muslim women was one of its indispensable legacies. After 1929, the organisation will change the name to Serb Muslim Cultural Society. See, Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia."

[181] *Osvitanje* was the first Muslim women's non-governmental organisation or NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, established in 1919 in Sarajevo by the Muslim women intellectuals. This organisation's original aims were cultural and educational revival and active role of the Muslim women in the public life, integration of women in the economic aspect of the society, inclusion into the labour market and financial independence, preservation of moral and Islamic religious upbringing, and education and emancipation, as well as affirmation of the women's rights and values. The association was terminated in 1930/1931. See, Kujraković, "Osvitanje - Prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini."

"Narodna uzdanica" (People's Hope)[182], "Spas" (Salvation)[183], "Muslimanska ženska zadruga" (Muslim Women's Association)[184] which I will discuss further later, have declared their objective to involve girls and women in their literacy and vocational courses. These organizations received support from notable figures within the Muslim community. For example, one such prominent figure at the time, Agdaga Hadžialilović, chose to provide homeschooling for his daughter Fatima by hiring teachers to instruct her at home. Consequently, Fatima went on to marry and began working at Gajret and Budućnost.[185]

Information about the limited yet existing activism among Muslim women, who were striving to improve their circumstances despite significant challenges, was rarely disseminated to the public. A predominant narrative often portrayed Muslim women as passive victims in need of rescue by their non-Muslim counterparts, failing to recognize them as agents of their own empowerment. This narrative was pervasive in public discourse, including within women's magazines. However, there were Bosnian female intellectuals actively engaged within their community during the interwar period. Among them were individuals such as Rasema Bisić, Almasa Ilblizović, Šefika Bjelevac, Umija Vranić, and Asifa Širbegović. These women played pivotal roles in establishing women's organizations, participating in Yugoslav women's gatherings, and raising awareness about the struggles faced by Muslim women.[186]

Another remarkable figure was Hasnija Berberović, a Muslim teacher from Sarajevo. She was one of a few that earned recognition for her tireless efforts in educating Muslim girls and women. Berberović served as a teacher in Muslim elementary schools and managed the Gajret boarding school for women. She actively participated in cultural and educational associations, organizing literacy courses and skill-building workshops for Muslim

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[182] This organisation was founded in 1924 and concluded in 1941. In contrast to pro-Serbian Gajret, this association was pro-Croatian oriented, and next to Gajret one of the biggest and most active Muslim organisations during the interbellum in Yugoslavia. See, Ibrahim Kemura, *Značaj i uloga "Narodne uzdanice" u društvenom životu Bošnjaka: 1923 - 1945* (Sarajevo: Bošnjački Inst. , Fondacija Adila Zulfikarpašića [u.a.], 2002).
[183] Muslim educational and charitable association from Banja Luka. See, Karić, "Islamic Thought in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 20th Century: Debates on Revival and Reform."
[184] This Muslim women's voluntary association was founded in 1919 in Mostar upon the request of the local Muslim craftsmen's association Ittihad (Union). See, Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[185] Jovanka Milošević, "Muslimanske žene Bosanske Krajine [Muslim Women of Bosanska Krajina]," *Žena i svet*, no. 8 (August 1935): 16.
[186] Kujović, "Hasnija Berberović - Zaboravljena učiteljica - Prilog historiji muslimanskog školstva u Bosni i Hercegovini."

women. Berberović was outspoken about the issue of illiteracy among both Muslim women and men, publicly urging people to pursue education as a means to escape poverty. According to Mina Kujović, as a board member of the Osvitanje and Gajret organizations, Hasnija, along with her fellow activists, encouraged Muslim women to enrol in literacy courses as a step towards a better and more prosperous life.[187]

3.2.3 Education in Rural Areas

The accessibility of education varied significantly between urban areas and villages. In many Muslim villages, the number of elementary schools was low, with their establishment largely neglected by the state.[188] In urban areas, Muslim girls had access to better infrastructure and potential support compared to girls from rural backgrounds, where new educational policies struggled to penetrate the entrenched traditionalist attitudes. Poverty and language barriers, particularly prevalent among the Turkish population residing in southern Serbia and Macedonia, further compounded the challenges. According to an article in the magazine "Žena i svet", the Austro-Hungarian Empire made minimal efforts toward educating rural populations, resulting in 70 percent of girls and women remaining illiterate from all communities. Even after the dissolution of the empire and the establishment of the new Yugoslav state, little changed in rural areas. Some efforts were made to provide shorter crash courses, mostly focusing on household economics. For instance, "Prosveta" (Education), a society dedicated to education in Sarajevo, began initiatives to educate women from villages by establishing three-month schools for peasant housewives.[189] "Ženski pokret" also took action by dispatching female teachers to villages and establishing schools for young girls. Recognizing the prevailing societal narrative that prioritized women's roles as wives and mothers, emphasis was placed on opening "housewives' schools" (domaćičke škole). These schools aimed to educate girls and women on fundamental aspects of hygiene, household chores, and childcare. However, several reports indicated that even these efforts encountered challenges due to familial distrust and

[187] Kujović.
[188] Husejn Dubravić (Đogo), "Prosvijetlimo naše selo! - Pomozimo sami sebi! [Let Us Enlighten Our Villages! - Let Us Help Ourselves!]," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 1–2 (July 15, 1937): 1–3.
[189] Isaije Mitrović, ", ''Prosvetne'' škole za seoske domaćice u Bosni," *Žena i svet*, no. 8 (August 1926): 7.

precarious financial circumstances.[190] According to Ženski pokret members, opposition to the education of peasant girls and women was not only prevalent among men but also among urban women who were accustomed to a life of comfort and privilege and failed to acknowledge the crucial significance of this matter. However, both men and women in the villages were expressing profound appreciation for the life-changing impact that the introduction of education had brought to them.[191]

Even though literacy level was much lower in rural areas, the gender dynamics were further nuanced, as highlighted by Hasan M. Rebac. He observed that Muslim women experienced relatively more equality with non-Muslim women compared to their urban counterparts. They participated more evenly with men in labour distribution, and rural Muslim women were allowed to appear in public without veils, a practice more prohibited in urban areas.[192]

During the interwar period, the enrolment of Muslim children in elementary schools increased particularly in urban areas, but it in many villages the entire population remained entirely illiterate. The problem was well known, and it was often blamed on the conservative and prejudiced attitudes of the villagers who impeded the construction of schools. It was believed that the local population often placed emphasis on the establishment of religious institutions, rather than mektebs. The residents sometimes turned to violence against the authorities, when new schools could only be constructed under the strict supervision of the police force.[193] However, the primary problem was the inadequate engagement of the state, which largely delegated the construction of schools to the will of the people and communities, without imposing stricter penalties for disobeying the mandatory elementary education law.[194] During this period, Muslim communities did

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[190] O. J., "Prosvećivanje žena na selu [Education of Women in the Village]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 4 (April 1926): 135–36.

[191] "Izveštaj sekcije za narodno prosvećivanje za 1926 godinu [Report from the Section for the People's Education for the Year 1926]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 9/10 (November 1926): 435–42.

[192] Rebac, "O ženi Muslimanki [Regarding Muslim Woman]."

[193] I. G., "Prosvećivanje muslimanskih sela - Sve je više muslimankse dece u školi, ali još ima sela sa sto procenata nepismenih [Education of the Muslim Villages - The Number of Children in the School is on the Increase, but There Are Still Villages with Hundred Percent of Illiterate People]," *Vreme*, no. 6 (1940): 5.

[194] Jusuf A. Hadžić, "Školstvo i pismenost u Bosni i Hercegovini (Iz statističkog tečaja Škole narodnog zdravlja u Zagrebu) [Schooling and Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (From the Course of Statistics from the School for Public Health in Zagreb)]," *Novi Behar* 13, no. 11–12 (December 15, 1939): 133–39.

gradually change attitude towards their children's education, but this change only pertained to boys; girls were still protected and denied schooling by their parents. For many in the countryside, sending a female child to school was considered a sin, a belief that persisted for decades. By the year 1940, there was some increase in the number of girls attending elementary schools in some villages compared to the previous period, marking a significant step in the educational advancement of Muslim girls in rural environments. Nevertheless, the four-year elementary schooling, predominantly practiced in Muslim villages at the time, failed to significantly alter the deeply ingrained conservative beliefs of the Muslim peasantry or to further the education of girls or boys.[195]

3.2.4 Concluding Remarks

The modernization efforts of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, have yielded some advancements in education, but not equally distributed. Literacy rates for both men and women have notably increased compared to the Austro-Hungarian era. The enforcement of mandatory primary education for both genders has enhanced girls' participation in the schooling system in urban areas, although progress has been slow and modest, particularly among Muslim girls due to various factors discussed earlier. The state's ambiguous relationship with the Muslim community during the nation-state building process and the secularization of the educational system did not effectively address the issue of illiteracy among Muslim girls and women but underscored the significance of education in the interwar state's agenda for unifying Yugoslav peoples and nationalization. The state was not involved enough in building of the elementary schools, especially in the rural areas, and was not acting upon the disruption of the mandatory elementary education with regards to the Muslim girls as the most vulnerable and neglected group.

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[195] G., "Prosvećivanje muslimanskih sela - Sve je više muslimankse dece u školi, ali još ima sela sa sto procenata nepismenih [Education of the Muslim Villages - The Number of Children in the School is on the Increase, but There Are Still Villages with Hundred Percent of Illiterate People]." And Abdullah-beg Bukvica, "Prosvjetne i socijalne prilike muslimanskog sela u Bosni i Hercegovini [Educational and Social Circumstances of the Muslim Village in Bosnia and Herzegovina]," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 15–19 (1938 1939): 189–93. Dubravić (Đogo), "Prosvijetlimo naše selo! - Pomozimo sami sebi! [Let Us Enlighten Our Villages! - Let Us Help Ourselves!]." See also, Ahmed Omerhodžić, "Da li je danas dovoljno svršiti samo četiri razreda osnovne škole [Is Today Sufficient to Complete Only Four Grades of Elementary School]," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 20–21 (1938 1939): 227–31.

Nevertheless, this period of Yugoslav space modernization spurred a resurgence of feminism, prompting discussions on women's rights and freedoms and emphasizing the need for emancipation and education for all Yugoslav women. The inclusion of Muslim women in the educational system from an early age became a matter of public interest, uniting women of all faiths in debates concerning the disadvantaged lives of their Muslim sisters and exploring causes and potential resolutions. Despite conservative undertones, these discussions mark the emergence of Muslim women into the public sphere of Yugoslavia and their integration into society. However, the educational situation, alongside living conditions of Muslim girls and women remained dire, especially in the rural areas of the country.

3.3 Modernism and the Muslim Communities

The concept of modernity and modernization was behind Yugoslav educational policies, and in that sense they were not much different from the rest of Europe. As a theoretical construct, the idea of modernity has been analysed, debated, and critiqued from various angles over many years, extending far beyond the scope of this dissertation. For the purposes of this study, I will draw upon the insights of Professor Ismail Albayrak in the field of Qur'anic studies. Albayrak suggests that the concept of modernity lacks a clear-cut definition, as it can be understood differently by different individuals both in terms of its origins and as a technical term. He argues that modernity can be broadly understood as the emergence of a new perspective, contrasting with classical, traditional, and ancient viewpoints. Specifically, it refers to "the ideology and way of life brought forth by the intellectual shift in the West during the Enlightenment era."[196] Alternatively, modernism can be characterized as both a philosophical stance and an artistic movement that emerged in 19th and 20th century Western societies, as they underwent significant transformations to adapt to the modern industrialized world. According to Albayrak, it represents a human-centred worldview grounded in humanism, secularism, and democracy, prioritizing human agency and placing faith in science rather than religion. The advent of the Industrial

[196] Ismail Albayrak, "Modernity, Its Impact on Muslim World and General Characteristics of 19–20th-Century Revivalist–Reformists' Re-Reading of the Qur'an," *Religions 2022* 13, no. 5 (May 2022): 424.

Revolution in the 18th century marked a shift from agrarian to industrial societies, leading to the equation of industrialization with modernity. This new wave of progressive thought, referred to as modernity, also encompassed the modernization of non-Western societies, often aiming to align them with Western models.[197]

Additionally, Anthony Giddens underscores the necessity of comprehending modernity at the institutional level, highlighting the inherent transformative impact of these modern institutions on individual life and identity. Giddens explains that a key characteristic of modernity lies in the interconnectedness between extensivity, representing globalizing influences, and intentionality, reflecting personal disposition. Alongside the emancipatory potential inherent in modernity, it is imperative to acknowledge its capacity to generate mechanisms of oppression through the construction of disparities, exclusionary practices, and marginalization. Giddens contends that the establishment of class divisions intertwined with foundational axes of inequality, such as gender or ethnicity, can be partially explained by discrepancies in access to avenues for self-actualization and empowerment.[198] This concept of modernity significantly resonates with the interwar Yugoslav case and its attempt of democratization and modernization of the highly diverse population that resulted in hegemony of certain national, ethnic, and religious groups over another. Despite initially envisioned and promised equality and inclusion, the Yugoslav Muslim communities were facing a new form of discrimination and disparity, placing them in a precarious setting with limited exposure to the benefits of modernity.

Furthermore, scholars like Gelgec Gurpinar Aysu conceptualize modernity as a transition from traditional to modern, viewing it as a deterministic process symbolizing the progression of non-Western societies. Aysu contends that both the nation-state and capitalism trace their origins to European history, thereby designating modernity as a Western endeavour. Nevertheless, given the phenomenon of globalization as a by-product of modernity, which serves to diminish distinctions between societies, modernity cannot be

[197] Albayrak.
[198] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1991).

exclusively regarded as Western.[199] This study will showcase that the Yugoslav Muslim community was not excluded from the global modernity trends. The intercommunal activism and incorporation of the foreign influences from the progressive Islamic world into the unique Yugoslav setting rendered Muslim people the carriers of their own modernity.

The impact of colonialism and the envisioned modernity propagated by European powers resulted in substantial alterations within the Islamic world, which in turn had influence back in the Balkans. This transformative process, often perceived as a contrast to the perceived "backwardness" vis-à-vis the Western world, manifested in endeavours focused on revival, renewal, reform, and reconstruction. Such pursuits became central concerns for intellectuals and religious scholars (ulama) across Islamic societies.[200] One of the main subjects of contention among the reformist-revivalist leaders was a new approach to Qur'an and its interpretation[201], which subsequently caused a great impact on the resolution of the "Muslim woman question". Within Middle Eastern societies, the discourse on women initially emerged within the discussions led by Muslim male intellectuals in Egypt and Turkey. These discussions primarily focused on pressing societal matters such as nationalism, political reform, social restructuring, and cultural transformation. These deliberations were influenced by European advancements, prompting a desire to emulate Western progress in gender equality and social dynamics.[202] Ultimately, the emergence of the "woman question" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as a facet of modernity, is widely acknowledged to have arisen from sustained interactions with the West. These interactions occurred either through colonial dominance or heightened intrusions by Western powers. The discourse surrounding women's rights, particularly concerning education, veiling, and polygyny, aligned with the broader agenda for societal advancement and reform, including secularisation.[203]

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[199] Gelgec Gurpinar Aysu, "Women In The Twentieth Century: Modernity, Feminism, And Islam In Turkey" (Arlington, University of Texas, 2006), https://www.uta.edu/ra/real/editprofile.php?onlyview=1&pid=1410.
[200] Albayrak, "Modernity, Its Impact on Muslim World and General Characteristics of 19–20th-Century Revivalist–Reformists' Re-Reading of the Qur'an."
[201] Albayrak.
[202] Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*.
[203] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Islam, Modernity and the Politics of Gender," in *Islam and Modernity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 91–114, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748637942-005.

However, while secularization can be viewed as closely aligned with modernity, it used gender equality as a catalyst for the separation of church and state, consequently introducing Western-style modernity construct. Joan Scott suggests that Euro-Atlantic modernity has led to "a new form of women's subordination"[204] that supported traditional men's positioning in the society. She contends that secularism did not herald gender equality but rather advanced a white, Christian, and Western ideology deeply entrenched with patriarchal norms, which were also prevalent in non-Western and non-Christian societies, albeit approached differently. Scott argues that the issue of Islam's resurgence in the late twentieth century, coinciding with debates on the "clash of civilizations", brought gender equality to the forefront of secularism's controversies.[205]

The political elites, typically Western-educated and seen as agents of societal change in Islamic nations, frequently faced opposition from groups feeling threatened and marginalized by globalization. Kandiyoti noted that the primary source of conflict cantered on the compatibility of Islam with Westernizing trends. These debates often focused on adjusting gender relations within an Islamic framework, involving both modernists and conservatives. Consequently, the dispute cantered on preserving cultural Islamic authenticity versus resisting perceived "foreign" Western influences.[206] The Yugoslav Muslim intellectuals did not deviate from this trend either, and the debates pertaining to the reform of gender relations and religion have created a sharp line between the progressives and traditionalists that I will analyse further in this chapter. After the First World War, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and creation of the modern Republic of Turkey[207], and victory of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Empire and creation of the Soviet Union[208], propelled the idea about the women's emancipation through two leading idioms of nationalism and socialism that prevailed throughout the twentieth century.[209] This period initiated nascent feminist activities both in the Muslim world and elsewhere.

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[204] Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[205] Scott.
[206] Kandiyoti, "Islam, Modernity and the Politics of Gender."
[207] With the introduction of the gender reforms by Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern republic.
[208] Stalin's emancipation of the Soviet women and handling of the Muslim woman question in Central Asia.
[209] Kandiyoti, "Islam, Modernity and the Politics of Gender."

3.3.1 Global Discussions on Veiling and Education

The practice of veiling has been a central issue in discussions surrounding modernization, significantly impacting the lives of Muslim women worldwide, including their educational opportunities. In a more simplified manner, as Farha Ternikar explains, the contemporary understanding of modesty and veiling derives from the Qur'anic injunction for women to "cover their adornments, and to cover parts of their bodies that are considered attractive to individuals outside their immediate family or other women. Hijab, for example, a form of covering, was worn by Muslim women when in the presence of unfamiliar men.[210]

Andreja Mesarič explained that the fundamental definition of hijab encompasses a variety of terms such as wrap, curtain, veil, screen, or partition, all stemming from the same root and indicating a singular concept of separation or protection. Furthermore, the act of wearing a hijab could be construed as representing "a woman's entire manner of conduct and even state of mind", serving as an expression of one's inherent state and conveying a multitude of emotions.[211] Moreover, the veil used to represent a particular lifestyle restricted to the privileged few. Conversely, women labourers were not required to cover themselves in public, highlighting their lower-class standing. It was only during the 19th century when the veil became associated with the perceived inferiority of Muslim women that it acquired a new meaning as a contentious issue in the spheres of politics, society, and religion.[212]

Veiling denotes a historical tradition of concealment, encompassing a diverse array of textile coverings including hijab, burqa, niqab, as well as various headscarves and shawls.[213] As such, the attire of Muslim women has consistently served as a platform for negotiating diverse interpretations of Islam, thereby shaping their intersectional positioning in global contexts. Consequently, women from various Muslim nations have adapted their veiling practices to specific circumstances, whether it involves traveling to culturally diverse regions, facing discrimination, addressing health concerns or educational opportunities.

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[210] Farha Ternikar, "Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions," *Sociology Compass* 3, no. 5 (2009): 54–763, https://doi.org/0.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00237.x.
[211] Mesarič, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo."
[212] Shirazi, *Veil Unveiled*.
[213] Susan J. Rasmussen, "Re-Casting the Veil: Situated Meanings of Covering," *Culture & Psychology* 19, no. 2 (2013): 237–58.

Muslim garments have begun to find greater acceptance in the international fashion industry, yet they still maintain modesty standards in line with Islamic requirements for women's public presentation.[214]

European societies often stereotyped veiling practices, and the same was the case in Yugoslavia. During the European colonization of the Middle East in the nineteenth century, the act of veiling became emblematic of oppression for Westerners, while in Yugoslav lands it was connected to the Ottoman past. In both cases, notions of women's oppression were exploited as a means to justify actions from the dominant group. This subordinate status was supposedly evident not only in the practice of veiling but also in other customs such as polygyny, seclusion, and the ease of male-initiated divorce.[215] This comparison perpetuates a decontextualized and "culture-bound" understanding of veiling in non-Muslim cultures. Additionally, Susan Rasmussen argues that the oversimplification of the term "veil," often perceived as a universal symbol across the Islamic world, obscures the nuanced social, cultural, and political complexities associated with veiling practices.[216] Contrary to widespread belief, some women have utilized veiling as a form of resistance and empowerment. For the initial cohort of Muslim feminists in the Middle East, veiling served as a crucial symbol in challenging patriarchy and advocating for their rights, including unrestricted participation in public life. Throughout Turkish history, veiling was traditionally regarded as a component of cultural heritage until it evolved into a symbol of religiosity and conservatism. Muslim women from diverse regions have employed veiling in diverse ways and for varied purposes, underscoring the importance of contextual and individualized examination of this practice.[217]

Yet, the act of veiling was not solely perceived as a "backward" or "antiquated" tradition by Westerners; it was also viewed as such by domestic elites who gradually embraced this concept influenced by their colonizers.[218] The act of unveiling began to signify progress for upper-class Muslims, who associated modernization with Western ideals, thereby creating a division between social classes. Consequently, Bullock argues that the

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[214] Thimm, *(Re-)Claiming Bodies through Fashion and Style*.
[215] Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil*.
[216] J. Rasmussen, "Re-Casting the Veil: Situated Meanings of Covering."
[217] Ternikar, "Hijab and the Abrahamic Traditions."
[218] Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil*.

perception of the veil as a symbol of oppression arises from a desire for domination. This negative interpretation of women's covering is undeniably connected to Orientalist and colonial discourse regarding the veil.[219]

The movement towards unveiling initially began in Egypt in the early twentieth century, led by the writer Qasim Amin and his influential book which explored the gradual transformation of the status of Muslim women in society and its crucial implications for the advancement of the entire Muslim world.[220] In his book, Amin proposed that the initial step towards women's advancement necessitated the removal of the veil, which he argued was not contrary to the prescriptions of the Qur'an. Although initially met with resistance, this discourse was gradually embraced by the majority and extended to "more advanced countries" such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.[221] In fact, the Yugoslav Muslim progressives emerging during the interwar era, as well as the Yugoslav government, have imported their modernist views from these Islamic countries that subsequently served as role models for religious and gender reforms. For example, a Yugoslav magazine, "Žena i svet", covered a case from Syria in the early 1920s regarding the feminist advancements of women in the East. Namely, Sarah Shabender, the wife of prominent Syrian nationalist doctor Abdullah Shabender, participated in protests against the Turkish regime, addressing the protesters with her face uncovered—an unprecedented action for a woman in that region at the time. Syrian women were depicted as actively engaging in feminist reforms, pursuing education, and preparing for independence, which served as a great example for the Yugoslav Muslim women.[222] During the 1950s, the rise in education in the intellectual circles of the Islamic world was frequently associated with the abandonment of veiling. Both educated women and the men who supported them were rejecting veiling, along with other conservative customs, which were rapidly diminishing during this period.[223]

Turkish case was crucial for the Balkans. While veiling was a commonplace and widely accepted practice during the Ottoman era, it came under intense scrutiny as a religious and political vestige of the conservative past by the post-Ottoman successors.[224]

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[219] Bullock.
[220] Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution*.
[221] Ahmed.
[222] "Junakinje Sirije [Women Heroes of Syria]," *Žena i svet*, no. 2 (1925): 20.
[223] Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution*.
[224] Elver, *The Headscarf Controversy*.

The act of wearing a veil in public spaces was prohibited by law, leading to repercussions such as the exclusion of veiled women from attending schools, universities, and workplaces.[225] The paradigm of a Turkish woman in the Ataturk Kemal's Republic of Turkey was a common topic in the interwar Yugoslav media.

In contrast, the "modernization" and anti-veiling policies in interwar Albania were introduced gradually.[226] Nathalie Clayer elucidates that this transpired during the intricate process of nation-building between 1920 and 1923, a time marked by intellectuals and politicians raising such queries in parliament and the press amidst pivotal political decision-making. Albania was undergoing radical reforms aimed at secularizing the predominantly Muslim country through processes of "modernization" and "Europeanization". The issue of veiling had been a topic of debate across various governments and political events over the years, yet it had never been implemented. Finally, in 1929, amidst political upheaval and religious reorganization, Behxhet Shapati, the new head of the Islamic Community, called for a ban on veiling as part of the government's radical measures. Collaborating with the Minister of Justice, Shapati sought to implement the ban through the police, who would instruct the public on the new regulations prohibiting veiling and even prosecute husbands and fathers found in the company of veiled women. Albanian authorities employed diverse methods to enforce this decision on the populace, including propaganda through media, lectures, and imposing restrictions and penalties on women who chose to veil, particularly those employed by government institutions.[227]

Although not immediately, the Soviet unveiling movement from the 1920s also had influences in Yugoslavia several decades later. Specifically, the Soviets initiated the so-called liberation campaigns aimed at Muslim women with the primary goal of "rescuing" women from what they perceived as the oppressive conservatism and patriarchy inherent in Islam and Muslim society. In the initial phase, Soviet communists orchestrated extensive anti-

[225] Feyda Sayan-Cengiz, *Beyond Headscarf Culture in Turkey's Retail Sector* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[226] Clayer, "Behind the Veil. The Reform of Islam in Inter-War Albania or the Search for a 'Modern' and 'European' Islam."
[227] Clayer.

veiling campaigns through "Zhenotdel"[228], a women's organisation. The unveiling campaign actively encouraged Muslim women to abandon veiling and join the communist society as liberated, educated and working women. However, this placed them in a precarious position between enraged and violent Muslim men vehemently opposing this action and the equally fervent Soviet state. Women who dared to unveil often faced retaliation from men adhering strictly to Islamic traditions, sometimes paying with their lives. Shoshana Keller explains that the Soviet government utilized this women's liberation project as a means to undermine Islam, without openly declaring the goal of eradicating Islam due to women's oppression. Despite achieving significant success in improving the status of Muslim women in terms of education and social inclusion, the campaign ultimately failed to fully eradicate the old traditions it sought to challenge which resulted in perpetuation of dire situation of the Muslim girls' and women's educational circumstances.[229]

3.3.2 Emergence of the Yugoslav Muslim Intelligentsia

Discussions concerning gender, Islam, and modernity within the Yugoslav region trace back to the late nineteenth century, predating the establishment of the Yugoslav state. The urge to adapt to the changing post-Ottoman landscape and the consistent criticism of "backwardness" spurred modernizing aspirations among prominent Bosnian Muslims, even during the Austro-Hungarian rule in the Bosnian province.[230] Giomi suggests that under pressure from Serbian hegemony, which demanded either assimilation or emigration, and from Austrian officials seeking to counter Serbian expansionism by retaining Muslims in the region, the Muslim intelligentsia endeavoured to introduce innovative, supranational ideas into the Bosnian Muslim community, utilizing Muslim women's bodies as a catalyst for societal and cultural reforms that will cause fervent debates in the interwar era.[231]

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[228] Zhenotdel was the women's section of the Soviet Communist Party that organised campaigns for emancipation of the Russian women in the period 1917-1930. For more information see, Richard Stites, "Zhenotdel: Bolshevism and Russian Women, 1917-1930," *Russian History* 3, no. 2 (1976): 174–93.
[229] Shoshana Keller, "Trapped between State and Society: Women's Liberation and Islam in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1926-1941," *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 1 (1998): 20–44.
[230] Giomi, "Seduced by Gender Corporatism: Muslim Cultural Entrepreneurs and Kemalist Turkey in Interwar Yugoslavia."
[231] Giomi.

During the interwar period, the emergence of the Yugoslav Muslim intelligentsia within the Bosnian Muslim community comprised men educated abroad, typically in Turkey. These individuals were enthusiastic about reforming Bosnian society with their progressive ideas, often discussing the issue of equality between men and women. Influenced by modernist reforms in Turkey, the Bosnian Muslim intelligentsia introduced transnational ideas into the local Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These influences promoted significant gender reforms and aimed to eliminate what modernists viewed as the antiquated Ottoman legacy and its patriarchal norms.[232]

In the 1920s there were two major reformist currents in the Muslim community according to Fikret Karčić, "secular modernists" such as Dževad-beg Sulejmanpašić, Edhem Bulbulović and Šukrija Kurtović, who gathered in the association "Reforma"[233] in 1928, and "religious modernists" like Džemaludin Čaušević, Fehim Spaho, Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, that published a newspaper "Novi Behar" (New Blossom) in 1927.[234] Namely, secular modernists advocated for the abolition of Shari'a courts, the complete unveiling of Muslim women, and promoted the substitution of the "fez" (traditional Muslim headwear) with a hat for men. On the other hand, religious modernists focused solely on modernizing the interpretation of Shari'a law and the administration of waqfs. They also supported the notion that women should not be required to veil if it hindered their education and participation in economic activities.[235]

One of the key persons among the Bosnian religious modernists was reis-ul-ulema Džemaludin Čaušević, a religious leader from 1914 until 1930, that supported the idea of the women's emancipation which entailed unveiling, education and employment.[236] Čaušević was arguing that the interpretation of the Qur'an regarding women's rights in Bosnian society was flawed. During one of his speeches, he asserted that the Qur'an did not oppose

[232] Vlašić, "Modern Women in a Modern State - Public Discourse in Interwar Yugoslavia on the Status of the Women in Turkey (1923-1939)."
[233] For more information about the organisation see, Giomi, "Reforma—The Organization of Progressive Muslims and Its Role in Interwar Bosnia."
[234] Karčić, "The Reform of Shari'a Courts and Islamic Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina."
[235] Xavier Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-War Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, ed. Nathalie. Clayer and Eric Germain (London: Hurst, 2008), 313–43.
[236] Kujraković, "Emancipacija Muslimanske Žene: Izjave Reisa Džemaludina Čauševića i Njihova Recepcija u Javnosti."

the unveiling of women and that the Islamic faith did not prohibit women from participating in public life.[237] His astonishment at the reforms and groundbreaking events regarding women's emancipation after his trip to Turkey led him to become one of the first to initiate such discussions within the Yugoslav Muslim community.[238] As Giomi explained, Čaušević was stressing the idea of the independence and the wellbeing of Muslim women as beneficial for the community itself. This kind of stance has caused fractions within the Muslim community between the more progressive ulama and the conservatives who were opposing Čaušević's ideology.[239] His main argument was that Muslim women must be unveiled in order to get educated and become active members of the society. Veil, as the most disputed religious symbol, was seen as a shackle by the modernists, that was preventing Muslim women from progressing in any sphere of life. The modernists and intellectuals, proponents of reform, rallied behind Čaušević in his arguments of striving to improve the status of Muslim women.[240]

Xavier Bougarel highlights that Čaušević and his supporters within the intelligentsia played a crucial role in guiding the Muslim population, which found itself in a precarious position, towards modernization. This new Muslim intelligentsia advocated for departing from the Ottoman legacy, perceived as a symbol of backwardness, and instead advocated for embracing European modernity across all spheres of life, including sending Muslim children to more contemporary schools. As Buljina showed Čaušević's modernization endeavours were broad, from establishing a printing press and standardizing Bosnian writing in a modified Arabic script to his role as a theological modernist and leader of the Ulema in 1914.[241] Intellectuals around Čaušević were instrumental in the modernization of Muslim society, spearheading conversations about integrating Islam with Western science and education for both genders, thus leveraging the strengths of both domains.[242]

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[237] Ž., "I Muslimanka će se probuditi [Muslim Woman Will Wake up as Well]."
[238] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.
[239] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[240] Kujraković, "Emancipacija Muslimanske Žene: Izjave Reisa Džemaludina Čauševića i Njihova Recepcija u Javnosti."
[241] Harun Buljina, "Empire, Nation, and the Islamic World: Bosnian Muslim Reformists between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, 1901-1914" (Doctoral thesis, New York, NY, Columbia University, 2019). See also, Mustafa Hadžimulić, "Šta je merhum H. M. Džemaludin ef. Čaušević učinio za našu vjersku nastavu! [What Merhum H. M. Džemaludin ef. Čaušević Has Done for Our Religious Education!]," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 20 (1937 1938): 317–19.
[242] Bougarel, *Islam and Nationhood in Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

Both the Muslim intelligentsia and the Yugoslav government, albeit manifested in distinct manners, were substantially influenced by the gender reforms implemented by Kemalist Turkey. Following the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Yugoslav state closely monitored the unfolding events in the newly emerging successor state, the Republic of Turkey, and its radical social, cultural, legal, and political transformations during the 1920s.[243] Giomi showed that the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a growing interest among Yugoslav journalists, academics, and diplomats regarding the political, social, and economic changes taking place in the nascent Republic of Turkey.[244] Yugoslav media was saturated with content related to Kemalism, the ideological framework established by Kemal Atatürk, and impressions of Turkey, with contributions from both male and female authors representing diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds in the country.[245]

While expressing interest in the unprecedented gender reforms among Turkish women, Yugoslavs simultaneously harboured negative stereotypes rooted in anti-Ottoman sentiments, stemming from accounts of traumatic experiences with the former imperial ruler. Anđelko Vlašić argued that Yugoslavs' public interest in Turkish women and the transformation of their social status was indeed greater than commonly portrayed. Furthermore, from a European perspective, Turks were often viewed through an Oriental lens due to Turkey's liminal positioning between Europe and Asia. However, Yugoslav Muslims did not share this anti-Ottoman sentiment due to their religious, historical, and cultural ties with the Turks.[246]

The perception of the Yugoslav public, particularly within the Muslim community, regarding the Republic of Turkey and its founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, played a significant role in shaping discussions on gender relations and veiling during the interwar

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[243] Vlašić, "Modern Women in a Modern State - Public Discourse in Interwar Yugoslavia on the Status of the Women in Turkey (1923-1939)."

[244] Giomi, "Seduced by Gender Corporatism: Muslim Cultural Entrepreneurs and Kemalist Turkey in Interwar Yugoslavia."

[245] Giomi. Examples from the media: "Bahrija Nuri Hadžić o Istanbulu [Bahrija Nuri Hadžić Talks About Istanbul]." *Žena danas*, no. 1 (October 1936): 5. "Šta turska žena duguje Ataturku [What Turkish Woman Owes Ataturk]," *Žena i svet*, no. 1 (January 1939): 2–3. De la Martinier Velimirović, "O Turskoj ženi [About Turkish Woman]." Z. S., "Vojna obaveza za žene u Turskoj [Military Obligation for Women in Turkey]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 11–12 (November 1922): 351–52. Dragiša Lahčević, "Preporođavanje Turaka [Revival of the Turks]," *Politika*, no. 5599 (November 24, 1923): 1. Milo Borojević, "Gazi Mustafa Kemal paša Ataturk," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 7–14 (1938 1939): 117–22.

[246] Vlašić, "Modern Women in a Modern State - Public Discourse in Interwar Yugoslavia on the Status of the Women in Turkey (1923-1939)."

period. Muslim authors were particularly prominent in the abundance of published texts concerning Kemalist Turkey. One aspect that garnered particular attention was the introduction of women's emancipation and equality with men, a change of which Turkish progressives were particularly proud. These transformations in gender relations involved the abolition of "antiquated" Ottoman customs such as veiling, seclusion, polygyny, and the inclusion of women in the educational system and public sphere, heavily influenced by the elimination of the veil. Consequently, Turkey emerged as one of the primary role models for shaping the "Muslim post-Ottoman femininity" in interwar Yugoslavia.[247]

3.3.3 Local Discussions on Education and Veiling

The question of education has been initiated within the debates with regards to the veiling of the Muslim girls at the beginning of the 20th century.[248] Discussions regarding veiling among the ulema extended to the entire Muslim community, leading to polarizing debates on whether female children should attend school unveiled, veiled or just stay at home. This debate resulted in the division of the Bosnian Muslim community into traditionalists, who supported adhering to religious traditions prior to education, considering the veil an indispensable religious symbol, and modernists primarily advocating for education and the removal of the veil, arguing that it was not mandatory according to the Qur'an and represented a significant obstacle to the emancipation of Muslim women. Finally, a group of religious modernists attempted to mediate between the two previous factions, seeking a solution that would reconcile Islamic principles with women's right to education.[249]

The initial debate regarding veiling was sparked by the enactment of a law mandating elementary education during the Austro-Hungarian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the exception of Hamdija Karamahmedović, the majority of Muslim representatives in the Bosnian assembly vehemently opposed a law requiring mandatory elementary education for girls. They successfully amended the law in 1911 to exclude Muslim girls from this requirement. The rationale behind this restriction stemmed from the

[247] Giomi, "Seduced by Gender Corporatism: Muslim Cultural Entrepreneurs and Kemalist Turkey in Interwar Yugoslavia."
[248] Velić, ""Pitanje nošenja feredže/zara u raspravama bošnjačkih tradicionalista i modernista u 20. stoljeću."
[249] Velić.

concern that exposing female children to the outside world would inevitably lead to them uncovering their faces.[250]

The issue was not solved, and the discussions erupted once more in Yugoslavia among intellectuals and religious scholars in the 1920s. Once again, the issue of veiling was connected with discussions on education, and then potential inclusion in the labour market. Supposedly, veiled women were unable to participate in these spheres. However, consensus was not reached, deepening the divide between conservatives and progressives. Ejub Velić notes that the Muslim progressive intellectual Dževad-beg Sulejmanpašić was the first to publicly propose the removal of the veil from Muslim women in his publication from 1918, "Muslimansko žensko pitanje – jedan prilog njegovom rješenju" (The Muslim women question – a contribution to its solution). Sulejmanpašić argued that veiling did not contribute to moral preservation and only hindered the adoption of global trends and overall progress among Muslim people.[251]

Amid fervent debates, proponents of progressivism argued that unveiling and integrating women into public life would not diminish their "Muslim identity", but rather afford them equal educational opportunities and, consequently, access to the job market to the benefit of the entire community.[252] Čaušević asserted that the Qur'an did not oppose unveiling and did not explicitly mandate the covering of Muslim women. His assertions found public support from Ženski pokret through the organization of a lecture by their writers and feminists, as well as from the efforts of the Muslim women's organization "Osvitanje" in advocating for the "liberation" of Bosnian Muslim women.[253] However, as Simić explained, Čaušević faced accusations of heresy from conservative ulama for espousing this foreign ideology, despite his claim that it was his personal interpretation of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, in 1928 in Sarajevo, Čaušević convened the Congress of Bosnian Muslim Intellectuals specifically to address this issue, only to falter in reaching a consensus once again. Although the matter of veiling remained unresolved, both factions reached a broader agreement regarding the importance of women's education.[254]

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[250] Velić.
[251] Velić.
[252] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.
[253] "Feredža pada [Ferezhe is Falling Down]," *Žena i svet*, no. 2 (1928): 12.
[254] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.

The starkly contrasting narratives from the modernists have incited traditionalists to strive for the preservation of old values and customs, a sentiment that has been openly expressed in public discourse. Among the most notable traditionalists within the Muslim community were Ali Riza Karabeg, Ali Riza Prohić, and the factions associated with the newsletters "Hikmet" from Tuzla and "El-Hidaje" from Sarajevo. Both Karabeg and Prohić argued that the veiling of Muslim women with various types of veils was an essential practice mandated by the Qur'an and Islamic laws, and thus must be upheld. Similarly, the newsletters Hikmet and El-Hidaje criticized any proposals suggesting alterations to Islamic traditions, asserting that every aspect of Islam is a matter of religious significance.[255]

Moreover, Ibrahim Hakki Čokić penned an article featured in Hikmet, wherein he criticized proponents of unveiling, particularly targeting the organization Gajret and Ibrahim Čaušević's views and public declarations concerning the emancipation of Muslim women. Furthermore, Husein Jahić (Jahjazade) echoed this condemnation in the same publication, providing examples of Muslim women who had chosen to discard the veil. He argued that deviating from the traditional roles designated for women in Islam had only resulted in ruin and hindered the lives of young women by supposedly exposing them to increased risks of prostitution and alcoholism.[256]

The matter of unveiling was brought up by Džemaludin Čaušević in an event held in Sarajevo, which gathered both proponents and opponents knowledgeable about Qur'anic laws. Two opposing figures, Mufti Maglajlić and Mr. Kozarčanin, presented their interpretations of the Qur'an, arguing that unveiling was prohibited, as well as wearing hats instead of fezzes. Both factions, the progressives rallying around Čaušević and the conservatives, employed different interpretations of the Qur'an to argue whether unveiling was permissible or not.[257] Interestingly, mufti Maglajlić has responded to the author mentioning him in the article reporting on the event.[258] In his statement, he clarified that the previous author had inaccurately accused him of asserting that unveiling was prohibited

[255] Velić, ""Pitanje nošenja feredže/zara u raspravama bošnjačkih tradicionalista i modernista u 20. stoljeću."
[256] Fejzić-Čengić et al., *Prilozi za istraživanje sociokulturnog položaja žene u BiH: izabrana bibliografija (1900-2010)*.
[257] O., "Za i protiv feredže - Pitanje Muslimanske žene [For and Against Ferezhe - Muslim Woman Question]," *Pravda*, no. 17 (January 1928): 6.
[258] G. Maglajlić, "Oko emancipacije bosanskih muslimana [About the Emancipation of Bosnian Muslims]," *Pravda*, no. 17 (January 1928): 5.

by the Qur'an, emphasizing that he would never make such a claim so overtly. As a scholar of the Qur'an, he confidently affirmed that the scripture indeed prescribed veiling, a practice dating back to the inception of Islam. He criticized the belief that removing the veil would solve the problems of the Muslim community and propel them toward progress, asserting instead that the lack of religious schools and education in general was a pressing issue. Maglajlić argued that he did not wish to face the same public contradiction as Čaušević did with his assertions, which lacked support from Qur'anic teachings.[259] This dichotomy was the epicentre of the media reports in Yugoslav media in which the modernist currents were always taking the role of the positive influence that should be followed.

By connecting the issue of veiling to inadequate education, both sides of the debate avoided dealing with the structural problems of Yugoslav education in terms of lack of infrastructure, teachers' qualifications, and educational resources. However, as I have demonstrated earlier very similar debates raged elsewhere, showing that these occurrences within the Yugoslav Muslim community were heavily influenced from abroad, and their political dynamics. However, both sides of the debate also showed adaptation to the local Yugoslav environment, in their attempt on reforming Muslim society through the emancipation of both men and women on one hand, and through solidifying traditional religious teachings and laws on the other. The proposal of the modernists challenged the longstanding conservative currents that had persisted for decades and continued to resist the divergent gender ideology but supported their own version of betterment of the Muslim society.

As the ideological disparities between Muslim modernists and conservatives intensified, the Yugoslav government exacerbated the already strained situation by tightening its grip on religious affairs. Aligning with select pro-Serbian Muslim progressives, they made them instrumental in advancing their own agenda. Hasan Rebac, a prominent progressive, notably served as the director of the Bureau for Muslim Affairs in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.[260] Through Rebac's appointment, the government signalled

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[259] Maglajlić. Another example of frequent debates on the topic in the media, Abdulah Ajni Bušatlić, "O 'teseturu' i 'hidžabu' (pokrivanju) kod muslimanki. (Osvrt na brošuru g. Čokića i g. Karabega i potkrepa tvrdnji iznošenih u mojoj brošuri) [Regarding 'Tesetur' and 'Hijab' (Veiling) in Muslim women. (Review of the Mr. Čokić's and Mr. Karabeg's Brochure and Support of the Claims Presented in My Brochure)]," *Novi Behar* 2, no. 1–2 (1929 1928): 15–16.

[260] Emily Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021).

its intention to assert control over Muslim religious affairs and tailor them to align with a specific agenda aimed at establishing a modern state in line with European standards, with a focus on promoting a singular national identity. Rebac, married to a Serbian woman named Anica Savić Rebac, an intellectual involved in founding the Yugoslav Organisation of University-educated Women, advocated for what he termed "aggressive modernization," particularly targeting women. In 1925, he published a pamphlet advocating for the emancipation of Serb women of Muslim faith (common way of addressing Bosnian Muslim women by Serbian officials and pro-Serbian entities) and their equal rights to property and education. Additionally, he advocated for unveiling, describing it as a remnant of an antiquated Asian mindset.[261]

Rebac was also instrumental in expediting the establishment of the King Aleksandar madrasa in Skopje, driven by the belief that Muslims in the region were in urgent need of at least one modern educational institution. He saw this initiative as beneficial not only for the educational standing of Muslims but also for the interests of the state.[262] The majority of school textbooks, that I will delve into later, were authored by Serbian writers and infused with a negative narrative about Muslim people, frequently depicting them as inherently foreign and disloyal elements.[263] Such examples could be found in elementary schools books for history where certain texts would diverge from the Islamic teachings and would propagate Christianity.[264] Rebac was working to eradicate all the traditional Islamic markers, closing schools and courts, propagating unveiling, removing Muslim teachers and headmasters that contradicted the imposed agenda of the urgent and aggressive transformation of the Muslim communities.[265]

Women's magazines also propagated a negative perception regarding the veiling of Muslim women, depicting it as a symbol of outdated and oppressive traditions often responsible for poor schooling of Muslim girls. Among the frequent contributors, Hasan

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[261] Greble.

[262] Greble. See also, Abdulah Vehabović, "Muslimani u Južnoj Srbiji [Muslim People in the South of Serbia]," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 7–8 (1927 1928): 351–53.

[263] Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia."

[264] Omer Borić, "O reviziji školskih udžbenika koji vrijeđaju vjerske osjećaje muslimana [Regarding Revision of the School Textbooks That are Offending Religious Feelings of the Muslim People]," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 17–19 (1937 1938): 275. See also, Muhamed Redžepagić, "Prikaz nekih članaka u udžbenicima narodnih škola [Presentation of Certain Articles From the Textbooks of Public Schools]," *Novi Behar* 11, no. 13–16 (1937 1938): 235–37.

[265] Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*.

Rebac stood out as a prolific author to the women's magazines such as Ženski pokret, with multiple articles pertaining to the Muslim women.[266] In addition to discussing the history of Islam and its relationship with women, Rebac provided an account of the history of veiling among Muslim women in Yugoslavia. He argued that veiling practices among Muslim women in Islamic countries in the East often exceeded the prescribed norms, especially when compared to "Serbian" Muslims (a distinction he made between "our" Muslims and others like Turks and Albanians), who predominantly practiced veiling in a moderate manner, with some exceptions. Through an analysis of an old folk song, he attempted to depict the varying degrees of veiling among Muslim women, explaining that only married women wore the veil, while young girls were covered to a lesser extent. Unmarried young women would veil only when outside their family home, maintaining a certain distance from men. Rebac explained that Serbian Muslim women often revealed their faces to their romantic interests, unlike other Muslim women who remained permanently veiled. However, the situation regarding veiling among peasant Muslim women was entirely different, as they never veiled, not even in public spaces.[267] The portrayal of "Serbian" Muslim women or "our" Muslim women was a prominent theme in his articles, demonstrating a clear intention to distinguish them from what Serbian nationalists perceived as "other", "oriental", and "backward". This included a desire for the assimilation of other religious groups into Orthodox Christianity during the tumultuous nation-state building era in interwar Yugoslavia. This contradictory perception of Muslim women as simultaneously progressive and backward, European and Oriental, facing disparities both within their own community and in the broader context, can be understood through the lens of intersectionality, as certain groups of Muslim women experience double discrimination due to their cultural and historical backgrounds.

Women magazines were also searching for progressive attitudes towards women among other intellectuals. For example, the distinguished Muslim poet Abdurezak Hifzi Bjelevac often contribute articles, while magazines wrote about him as well.[268] Bjelevac's

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[266] Rebac, "O ženi Muslimanki [Regarding Muslim Woman]"; Hasan M. Rebac, "Pojava muslimanke među sestrama Jugoslavije [Emeregence of Muslim Woman Among the Sisters of Yugoslavia]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 4/5 (August 1920): 25–27; Rebac, "Naša Muslimanka [Our Muslim Woman]."
[267] Rebac, "O ženi Muslimanki [Regarding Muslim Woman]."
[268] Ruffo, "Ženski pisci - A. Hifzi Bjelevac [Women Writers - By A. Hifzi Bjelevac]," *Žena i svet*, no. 12 (1927): 14.

poems included themes such as mosques and veiling. Despite his privileged background and education in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire, his poetry garnered more recognition in Istanbul than in his homeland of Bosnia. At that time it was explained by the Bosnian audience being largely illiterate due to the Muslim population's lack of education.[269] Bjelevac was lauded for his efforts to improve the lives of Muslim women through his extensive writing on the subject, even enduring legal persecution for his piece "Minka", a story cantered around Muslim women. Through works such as "Minka" and "Melica", the writer depicted the lives of devout Muslim women, while in his "Rena Logotetidesova" and "Ana Zoloti" he explored the experiences of European women. His two daughters lived unveiled, and newspapers depicted Bjelevac as an exemplary figure for Bosnian Muslims, a man who exposed the challenges faced by Muslim women and empathized with their inner struggles, often obscured by the confines of the harem.[270]

Bjelevac also pushed a narrative of "our" Muslim women in his own articles about the Bosnian Muslim women and their social positioning.[271] Bjelevac explained how the public and even the intelligentsia often erroneously associated "our" Bosnian Muslim women with those from Skopje, Bitolj, and other parts of Southern Serbia (Turkish and Albanian). This misperception led to an inaccurate portrayal of the Bosnian Muslim woman, viewing her as a "foreign element" and a subordinate figure due to the unresolved "Muslim woman question" and her seclusion from the wider world. He emphasized that a Bosnian Muslim woman is distinct from Turkish women, delving into the historical background of Bosnian Muslim women. Despite enjoying lavish lifestyles during the Ottoman era, their personal development was constrained by the emergence of harems and polygyny. Moreover, Bjelevac described these Muslim women as Slavic, possessing a Slavic essence.[272]

Furthermore, Bjelevac referenced the example of the Kemalist Republic of Turkey, where the Grand National Assembly enacted legislation against veiling with the assertion that "the veil does not conceal the purity of women; rather, it serves as a disguise for

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[269] See also, Husejn Dubravić (Đogo), "Žalosno stanje bos. - herc. muslimana na prosvjetnom polju [Dire Situation of the Bosnian and Herzegovian Muslims in the Sphere of Education]," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 15–19 (1938 1939): 169–73. Husejn Dubravić (Đogo), "Rad na prosvjećivanju naroda [Work on Education of People]," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 14–15 (1929 1930): 219.

[270] Ruffo, "Ženski pisci - A. Hifzi Bjelevac [Women Writers - By A. Hifzi Bjelevac]."

[271] Hifzi Bjelevac, "Naša muslimanka i njezin socijalni položaj [Our Muslim Woman and Her Social Positioning]," *Žena i svet*, no. 11 (1932): 2–4.

[272] Bjelevac.

immorality when hidden from the eyes of others, allowing women to act of their own volition." This implies that purity lies within a woman, in her character, upbringing, and education, which determine her overall strength and worth that could be compromised by the obscurity of the veil. Bjelevac concluded by discussing "our" Muslim women and the deterioration of their situation following the liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the empires. They found themselves in a predicament similar to that of Turkish women before Atatürk's reforms. In the aftermath of World War I, Bosnian Muslim women were compelled to leave their seclusion, venturing into the streets, factories, and other public spaces while still wearing veils. Bjelevac argued that the Turkish-style gender reforms were not feasible in Bosnia due to the "sensitivity" of Bosnian Muslims. The mere idea of women's emancipation sparked strong reactions from conservatives who were determined to maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, Muslim girls and women who chose to remove the veil existed and were visible in schools, offices, universities, and virtually all professions of hardworking and talented individuals.[273] This dichotomy in the interpretation of Qur'anic prescriptions has been stirring up the animosity between the Bosnian Muslim intelligentsia without coming with the compromise or solution during the entirety of the interwar era. Other, more mainstream magazines connected veils to the struggle for modernization and the liberation of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina from their perceived "Oriental baggage".[274] Authors contributing to the popular press often engaged in discussions regarding debates among Muslim officials surrounding the issue of unveiling within the context of the nation's advancement. An illustration from the newspaper Pravda (Justice) highlights the prevalent current affairs within the Bosnian Muslim community, with veiling being a central focus.[275] The author of the article stated that the issue of unveiling was foremost on the minds of progressives, who viewed it as a vehicle for the improvement and advancement of the entire Muslim community, considering it a social rather than strictly religious matter[276].

[273] Bjelevac. p. 4

[274] Desmond Maurer, "Orientalism and Self-Orientalisation in Sarajevo," *Godišnjak Bošnjačke Zajednice kulture »Preporod«* 1 (2014): 184–219. p. 185

[275] O., "Za i protiv feredže - Pitanje Muslimanske žene [For and Against Ferezhe - Muslim Woman Question]."

[276] Husein Đozo, "Da li je problem otkrivanja žene vjerskog ili socijalnog karaktera? Gledište Mešihatul Ezhera o tom pitanju [Does the Problem of Unveiling of Women Have a Religious or Social Character? Standpoint of Mešihatul Ezher Regarding the Question]," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 6–9 (1937 1936): 78–80.

Women were actively engaged in these discussions as well. At the 1920 Congress of Yugoslav Women in Zagreb, Rasema Bisić delivered a speech as a delegate representing Muslim women. This marked a distinctive moment for the Serbian and Croatian female delegates present, who reacted positively to witnessing and hearing from a Muslim woman.[277] Bisić began by addressing the negative perception of her presence at the congress within the Muslim community, yet she remained steadfast in her determination to participate and speak to the audience. She highlighted the challenges faced by Muslim women, including widespread illiteracy, unemployment, and societal isolation. She attributed much of this distressing situation to a misinterpretation of the Qur'an. Bisić emphasized that the Qur'an does not mandate the veiling of Muslim women nor advocate for their educational deprivation and social isolation.[278] Furthermore, Muslim women have historically held even greater rights compared to their Christian counterparts (Serbian and Croatian). However, Bisić clarified that societal dynamics have shifted, yet conservative men continue to treat these women as if they were mere slaves.[279] In her closing remarks, she asserted that despite the challenges, there are still forward-thinking men and women who will advocate for the liberation of Muslim women.

Muslim women were also contributing articles on education and illiteracy, connecting them to hard social conditions. For example, in an article for the magazine "Jugoslovenski list" (Yugoslav paper)[280], prominent Muslim women Hatidža Basara emphasized difficult living circumstances of the Muslim women. She articulated that illiteracy and poverty pose significant challenges, emphasizing that the incorrect

[277] Rebac, "Pojava muslimanke među sestrama Jugoslavije [Emergence of Muslim Woman among the Sisters of Yugoslavia]."
[278] Additional example of debates pertaining to interpretation of Qur'an on the matter, Mustafa Čelić, "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene. Položaj žene u islamu uopće: Kur'an o položaju žene naprama mužu - Brak, poligamija, pokrivanje, harem [Life and Social Positioning of the Muslim Woman. Position of a Woman in Islam in General: Qur'an on Positioning of a Wife in Comparison to a Husband - Marriage, Polygyny, Veiling, Harem]," *Novi Behar* 1, no. 6 (1928 1927): 91–93.
[279] Rebac, "Pojava muslimanke među sestrama Jugoslavije [Emergence of Muslim Woman among the Sisters of Yugoslavia]."
[280] Daily newspaper published in Sarajevo during the period 1918-1941. The publications were for the most part tackling political subjects. See, https://n1info.ba/vijesti/stoljece-unazad-sta-je-pisao-jugoslovenski-list-1-februara-1923-godine-foto/, and https://ghb.ba/fond-periodike/.

interpretation of the Qur'an jeopardizes the resolution of these profound issues for Muslim women. [281]

Muslim women also wrote about the necessity of increasing the enrolment of Muslim girls in the educational system, often likening these efforts to liberation from "slavery". Ženski pokret published an article depicting the author who reflected on her own past experiences in a harem while visiting girls currently living in one. She described how young Muslim girls were weary of the confines and restrictions of harem life, expressing their desire for freedom and access to education.[282] One of the girls expressed that she reads extensively, including the magazine Ženski pokret, but regrettably, she is unable to visit the magazine's headquarters in Belgrade. She then urged the author not to relent in the struggle for women's liberation, expressing hope that one day they too would be emancipated and educated. In conclusion, the author extended an invitation through the article to all young Muslim women weary of tradition-bound lives to come forward and share their voices in the magazine, highlighting their freedom of expression.[283]

Women also looked beyond their immediate surroundings to bolster their arguments for the need of education as a part of broader reforms. The author Radunka Anđelović, in her contributions to the magazine Ženski pokret, discussed the advancements in women's emancipation in Turkey and the broader Eastern context. She praised Kemal Ataturk's reforms, highlighting the influential roles played by his mother and wife in advocating for women's education and the abolition of traditional Muslim garments. Additionally, Anđelović delved into Muhammad's teachings in the Qur'an regarding women. She argued that the Prophet actually endorsed the education of both men and women, as well as modest attire for women, albeit without face coverings. This perspective countered the prevailing belief that Muslim women were required to be veiled and secluded. Instead, Anđelović argued, face covering was not a religious mandate.[284] As Anđelović articulated only a few centuries after Muhammad, women were active participants in various domains

[281] "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene [Life and Social Positioning of Muslim Woman]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 20 (November 1927): 4.
[282] Sonja Feter-Ćuk, "Za slobodu Muslimanske žene [For the Freedom of Muslim Woman]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 1/2 (January 1924): 48–51.
[283] Feter-Ćuk.
[284] Radunka Anđelković, "Nekoliko reči o muslimanki [A Few Words about the Muslim Woman]," *Ženski pokret*, no. 8 (October 1923): 354–60.

including art, politics, law, and even the military. Muslim women served as teachers and educators, entrusted with the responsibility of disseminating the teachings of their prophet. In Anđelović's words, "In the East, Muslim women held prominent positions in society during the same era when educated men in the West were earnestly debating whether women possessed souls."[285] The assertion that Muslim women possessed greater rights before the institutionalization of Islam, even when compared to Western women, was a prevalent theme among advocates of emancipation. This perspective sought to establish the agency of Muslim women and challenge the pervasive notion of their complete inferiority and obsolescence, often associated with polarized interpretations of the Qur'an. Additionally, this narrative served to defend Islam against the attributes of backwardness typically ascribed to the faith.

3.3.4 Education Through Voluntary Associations

The endeavours of past reformists and contemporary modernization movements provided significant momentum for supporters of women's education and broader gender reforms. Key gathering points for reformers included organizations such as "Gajret" (Effort), "Osvitanje" (Dawning), "Narodna uzdanica" (Popular Hope), "Spas" (Salvation), and the Muslim Women's Association, as mentioned earlier. These progressive Muslim organizations were spearheaded and financially supported by affluent and influential community members, including men whose daughters received education and subsequently found employment within these associations. Notably, Gajret, established in Sarajevo in 1903, emerged as the largest organization actively engaged in activities during the interwar period.[286] The founder of the organisation was a renown poet Osman Đikić, who established this association with idea of preserving the sentiment of nationalism.[287] In 1912, Ando Sumbul succeeded him. Gajret positioned itself as a significant ally of the Yugoslav government by capturing the interest of Muslim youth of both genders and persuading hesitant Muslim families about the importance of education.[288]

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[285] Anđelković.
[286] Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European*.
[287] Z. J., "Gajret," *Žena i svet*, no. 6 (June 1926): 11–12.
[288] Giomi, "Muslim, Educated and Well-Dressed: Gajret's Self-Civilizing Mission in Interwar Yugoslavia."

Giomi argues that the organization's primary concern stemmed from nationalism intertwined with the social "Darwinist rationale" for educating the Muslim community. Gajret's discourse consistently emphasized the imperative of integrating the Muslim population into Yugoslav society and preserving its cultural identity. Additionally, it highlighted the adverse consequences of refusal, which could lead to the demise of the Muslim community and the collapse of the Yugoslav national unity.[289] As reported in an article in "Žena i svet" regarding Gajret, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was seen as hindering the intellectual advancement of the Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, the emergence of Gajret symbolized the awakening of the Muslim community, signifying a period of advancement and progress.[290]

Initially established exclusively for men, Gajret gradually opened its doors to Muslim women during this period. In 1921, the organization founded two boarding schools for girls at the high school level in Sarajevo and Mostar.[291] In 1920, one year prior, Gajret inaugurated a vocational school in Novi Pazar focused on carpet making. This school welcomed 50 Muslim girls who were not only learning the craft but also attending literacy courses. Members of Gajret argued that the illiteracy among Muslim women hindered their ability to adapt to the new world order following the First World War. Thus, the necessity of educating Muslim women from a young age became a pressing concern. According to them, "Offering education to young Muslim girls opens doors to broader public engagement, enabling them to secure roles where they can make significant contributions for the betterment of society."[292]

These associations achieved some success in girls' education during the 1920s. The progress was still somewhat slow, and twenty years following the First World War, sixty Muslim girls were admitted to the Sarajevo high school (gimnazija), attending classes that were multi-confessional and devoid of gender distinctions.[293] Yet, this was a notable change for Muslim girls. According to Rebac many of these girls were being raised by single mothers. Interestingly, these single mothers took the initiative to support their daughters'

[289] Giomi.
[290] J., "Gajret."
[291] J.
[292] J. 12
[293] Rebac, "Naša Muslimanka [Our Muslim Woman]."

education, defying societal prejudices by sending them to school. Supported by Gajret, which provided for and sustained twenty girls, these mothers played a crucial role in advocating for their daughters' education.[294] Ultimately, it was Muslim women who initiated the struggle for their emancipation, despite the efforts of conservatives to thwart, even at the beginning timid, progressive initiatives.

In addition to Gajret, other organizations were actively engaged in the education of Muslim girls. "Narodna uzdanica" (People's Hope), a Muslim cultural association focused on promoting literacy among young Muslims, help in schooling and assisting those with hard economic circumstances.[295] "Budućnost" (Future), an organization established in 1928, concentrated on educating women through literacy courses. This organization received financial support from the municipality, but also influential members of society and used *waqf* for free facilities.[296]

There were also organizations led by women, such as "Osvitanje" (Dawn). It stood as one of the earliest associations of Muslim/Bosniak women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Active from 1919 until 1930/31, this association was initiated by Bosniak women intellectuals from Sarajevo, including Hasnija Berberović, Rasema Bisić, Almasa Ilblizović, Šefika Bjelevac, Umija Vranić, and Asifa Širbegović.[297] The primary objectives of the association encompassed the cultural, social, and educational empowerment of women, along with efforts to eliminate "harmful" customs and uphold moral values, including women's rights and freedoms. Osvitanje conducted various activities for women, including literacy courses, vocational training, skill-building workshops, access to a library, and religious educational programs.[298] Nevertheless, despite the efforts highlighted by organizations and individuals, contemporaries like Hatidže Basara warned that Muslim women continued to face severe hardships. Poverty and illiteracy persisted as pervasive issues, exacerbated by conservative forces. Basara contended that Gajret had achieved little in addressing these challenges due to a lack of commitment and seriousness. She argued

[294] Rebac.
[295] Emina Pita, "Muslimansko kulturno društvo 'Narodna uzdanica' u Brčkom," *Bošnjačka zajednica kulture "Preporod,"* no. 1 (2012): 307–15.
[296] Milošević, "Muslimanske žene Bosanske Krajine [Muslim Women of Bosanska Krajina]."
[297] Kujraković, "Osvitanje - Prvo udruženje muslimanki u Bosni i Hercegovini."
[298] Kujraković.

that Muslim women must unite and advocate for their rights, akin to the efforts of Ženski pokret, emphasizing that the urgency for action is even greater for them.[299]

3.3.5 Concluding Remarks

Within the interwar period of Yugoslavia, the emerging Yugoslav Muslim intelligentsia played a crucial role in propagating modernising ideas within their own communities. They navigated their unique liminal geographical and historical positioning, straddling multiple identities. Notable figures among the Yugoslav Muslim intelligentsia during this era endeavoured to implement cultural and gender reforms on a supranational level, contextualized within the Yugoslav milieu. They sought to introduce the novel concept of gender equality into deeply entrenched patriarchal societies by advocating for the emancipation and education of Muslim women, framing it as integral to broader societal progress and the advancement of the entire Muslim community.

Working within Muslim organizations and associations, as well as Serbian and Croatian women's groups, Muslim women gained new visibility, positioning education as an essential aspect of overall societal reforms. The rise of feminism at the turn of the 20th century also played a significant role in advocating for the education of Muslim girls and women, particularly through media platforms such as women's magazines, which brought the "Muslim woman question" to the forefront of public discourse. Despite facing challenges posed by poverty, traditionalism, and the ambiguous politics of the authoritarian Yugoslav government, new intellectual elite significantly contributed to the promotion of Muslim girls' education and influenced the increase in their enrolment numbers in elementary schools.

During the 1920s, the issue of veiling was connected to the debates on education. Usually, veiling was mentioned as the reason for poor inclusion of Muslim girls and women in the educational system. The debate caused a deep division within the social fabric of Yugoslav Muslim communities, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the Bosnian Muslim community, divergent currents emerged: one advocating for modernization and reform of the Muslim community by altering gender norms, and the other upholding traditional values rooted in a conservative interpretation of Qur'anic teachings and Sharia

[299] "Život i društveni položaj muslimanske žene [Life and Social Positioning of Muslim Woman]."

law, which directly impacted women's lives. Progressives argued in favour of unveiling, viewing it as a primary prerequisite for women's education and integration into the labour market. Religious reformists like Džemaludin Čaušević propagated the narrative of Qur'anic prescriptions being misinterpreted, arguing that mandatory veiling and isolation from the public sphere were not inherent to old Islamic laws. Instead, they advocated for women's educational enlightenment and the removal of the veil, which they regarded as a symbol of obscurity. However, this provoked a strong backlash from conservatives, who opposed this new narrative regarding women and advocated for the veiling of Muslim women and their seclusion from public spaces. They argued that the progress of Yugoslav Muslim society was not contingent upon the unveiling and education of women, but rather on the improvement of religious education itself, which was also in disarray. This dynamic between Muslim progressives and conservatives was further complicated by the interference of the Yugoslav government, which supported certain modernist entities to advance its own agenda, ultimately seeking to assert state control over Muslim religious affairs and exacerbate inequality among Muslim women, both within Muslim communities and at the state level. Women also joined these debates, arguing for more schooling and opportunities, and calling for the improvement of social conditions. They engaged in the public discussion, having their voices heard for the first time. Nevertheless, the lack of direct intervention from the state meant that there were no significant changes in veiling or educational policies for Muslim girls and women.

3.4 Religious Education

3.4.1 Yugoslav State and Religious Education

Following the end of the First World War, the issue of religious education in public schools became a topic of debate across Europe.[300] For newly formed multinational and multi-confessional Yugoslav state, this question was even more pressing due to diversity of the regions now forming the new state. The government had to forge new relationships

[300] One notable example is the shift in the state-church relationship in Germany after the adoption of the Weimar constitution in 1919. At that time, the Social Democratic Party advocated for the prohibition of confessional religious education in public schools to mitigate the influence of the church on education. Eventually, a consensus was reached to maintain religious education, albeit under the oversight of state officials. See: Dušan Rakitić, "Jugoslovenski međuratni model konfesionalne verske nastave u javnim školama," *Harmonius: journal of Legal and Social Studies in South East Europe.* 10, no. 1 (2021): 225–37.

with religious communities, and then decide how religious education was to be conducted. According to Dušan Rakitić, the Yugoslav model resembled that of other Central and Eastern European states, emphasizing cooperation and mutually agreed separation.[301]

The right to religious education was debated among the European powers following the war, and the rights of national and religious minorities were imposed on newly formed countries. Discussions surrounding the equitable use of language, religious observance, and education for the emerging Muslim minority in Yugoslavia were held among representatives of European nations during the League of Nations congress. This led to the establishment of a specific set of protections for minorities. Nonetheless, the Prime Minister Pašić regarded the special protection of minorities as redundant and unnecessary. He argued that the ethnically and nationally unified Yugoslav state, as he saw it, already acknowledged the rights and freedoms of all its citizens, thereby maintaining the conditions of the Muslim community in status quo. The religious rights of the Muslim community were recognized, but they were prohibited from any involvement in state affairs, a restriction that later had adverse effects on their minority rights.[302] As a result, the Yugoslav administration displayed intolerance towards the Muslim community by politicizing clergy and educational institutions, as well as by exploiting Muslim properties, despite being constitutionally obligated to provide financial support for Muslim religious infrastructure.[303] Additionally, Serbian politicians, including the Ministers of Education, maintained a collective stance that the enforcement of this minority convention led to internal instability and complications. Consequently, they believed that, states would need to improvise and devise strategies to align their national interests with the imposed convention in order to achieve the desired outcome.[304] Ultimately, the new Yugoslav state opted for basic cooperation with the church primarily to uphold its religious neutrality and ensure the church's separation and independence in its affairs. However, according to Rakitić, despite this separation, the state

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[301] Dušan Rakitić, "Jugoslovenski međuratni model konfesionalne verske nastave u javnim školama," *Harmonius: journal of Legal and Social Studies in South East Europe.* 10, no. 1 (2021): 225–37.
[302] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia."
[303] Vladan Jovanović, "Chapter 10. The Points of Continuity: Muslim Migration from Monarchist and Socialist Yugoslavia to Turkey" (The Migration Conference 2017 Proceedings, London: Transnational Press London, 2017), 141–50.
[304] "Tretman manjina u projektu Zakona o osnovnoj nastavi - mišljenje Ministra spoljnih poslova [Treatment of Minorities in the Draft Law on Elementary Education - Opinion of the Minister of Foreign Affairs]" (Belgrade: Ministarstvo spoljnih poslova Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1923), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

considered religious education of pupils to be a matter of public and state interest within the realm of education.[305]

Before the unification of 1918, religious education was primarily overseen by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and Islamic Religious Community in Bosnia, with minimal intervention from the state. However, following the establishment of the new state, the government aimed to develop a unified educational system that would foster national unity and cultivate a sense of shared identity among its diverse populace, while also nurturing nationalist sentiments during the process of nation-state building. Religious education could potentially play a pivotal role in shaping the national identity, leading the government to acknowledge and support religious education in schools. This acknowledgment stemmed from the acceptance and internalization of religious equality for recognized religious institutions as a foundational principle.[306]

Establishing the principles of equal religious education was mired with problems since the inceptions of the new state. According to Maria Falina the foundational Corfu Declaration – the document outlining the agreed-upon principles of unification – ensured the freedom and equality of the three main religious traditions: Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and Islam.[307] However, the issue was whether religious education should be independent from the ideas of building the national identity, or an integral part of it. As Falina noted, this dilemma was not surprising considering that nations are formed through shared language, thought, and behaviour, aimed at forging a collective identity to mobilize people for collective endeavours. This, in turn, led to a push for increased state oversight of religious education.[308]

During the entire interwar period, the issue of religious education, particularly for Muslim communities, was in-between discussions on religious freedom and nationalistic pressures. Pieter Troch argued that the expected oppositional relationship between religion and nation, along with their representatives, became increasingly intricate and intertwined.

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[305] Rakitić, "Jugoslovenski međuratni model konfesionalne verske nastave u javnim školama."
[306] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia."
[307] Falina; Also: *Krfska Konferencija: Beleške Sa Sednica Vlade Kraljevine Srbije i Predstavnika Jugoslovenskog Odbora, Držanih Na Krfu 1917 Godine, Na Kojima Je Donesena Krfska Deklaracija* (Štamparija "Skerlić," 1924).
[308] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia."

This complexity led the Yugoslav state to manipulate various religious categories of social identification within the framework of the nation-building state. While nationalists viewed religion as a means of sanctifying the nation through confessional definitions, wherein the dominant religious identity aligns with the concept of the nation itself, religious thinkers rejected nationhood as incompatible with universal religious principles, despite the nationalization of religion in organizational and discursive aspects. Troch explained that this continual overlap between religion and nationalism renders them analogous categories of social, cultural, and political identification and organization.[309]

In 1920, the government enacted legislation that introduced a revamped framework for religious education. According to this system, primary schools were mandated to offer religious instruction tailored to the student's religious affiliation—either Catholic, Orthodox, or Islamic. Secondary schools were obliged to offer a curriculum covering the history and philosophy of religion, without the requirement of specific faith-based instruction.[310]

Continuing from that, in 1927, the government enacted legislation granting the state the authority to appoint and remove religious instructors. This move sparked protests from the Catholic Church and other religious organizations.[311] Despite these obstacles, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes persisted in implementing its religious education system throughout the interwar period, although it faced many issues. Disagreements also arose among religious leaders regarding the content of religious instruction. Additionally, some parents expressed reluctance to enrol their children in schools offering instruction in a faith differing from their own. Moreover, certain factions, notably the Catholic Church, opposed the government's efforts to regulate religious education in general.[312]

3.4.2 Religious Education and the Position of the Muslim Communities

For Muslim communities in Yugoslavia, the importance of religious education was also position for the debates of national belonging in Bosnia. Mark Pinson argues that the

[309] Troch, "The Intertwining of Religion and Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia: The School Celebrations of St Sava's Day."
[310] Pieter Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia - Possibilities, Limitations and Interactions with Other National Ideas" (Ghent, Belgium, Ghent University. Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, 2012), http://hdl.handle.net/1854/LU-4267482.
[311] Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 1st ed, Eastern European Studies, no. 20 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003).
[312] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia."

prioritization of religious education within Muslim communities served to bolster Muslim identity and distinguish it from other national identities in the region.[313] In their effort to maintain the autonomous yet non-sovereign national identity (Bosniak), the Muslim community, often referred to as the "neo-millet"[314], asserted its collective identity through a movement advocating for religious and educational autonomy.[315]

The Islamic Religious Community encountered numerous challenges concerning religious education. Distinguished from other religious groups in the nation, this community stood out as the sole group with a predominantly Muslim population, acknowledged as a religious entity, yet lacking official recognition of its national identity.[316] Following the demise of Ottoman rule, Muslims encountered widespread discrimination and risked expulsion if they failed to comply with new authorities, a scenario reminiscent of challenges faced in other Balkan nations.[317] The remaining Muslim population was compelled to embrace a new minority status within the deeply socially segregated Yugoslav society.[318] Nevertheless, the Muslim community persisted as one of the largest religious constituents within the Yugoslav state. Gašper Mithans explains that alongside other religious groups such as Serbs (Orthodox Christians) and Croats (Catholics), Bosniaks shared certain characteristics, notably language, while differing in their ethnicities, which were the primary identifiers. These distinctions were rooted in religious and historical differences, constituting a constructed ethnoreligious identity.[319]

Before the establishment of the new Yugoslav state, religious education in Bosnia was overseen by the Islamic Religious Community and conducted in "medresas", tracing its

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[313] Mark Pinson, ed., *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, 2. ed, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs 28 (Cambridge, Mass: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard Univ, 1996).

[314] According to Xavier Bougarel, a term "millet system" represented a framework within which the non-Muslim minorities of the Ottoman empire enjoyed a large autonomy in religious, educational and judicial matters. Subsequently this term was readapted for the Muslim national identification.

[315] Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-War Bosnia-Herzegovina."

[316] Troch, "The Intertwining of Religion and Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia: The School Celebra tions of St Sava's Day."

[317] Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton, N.J: Darwin Press, 1995).

[318] Leyla Amzi-Erdogdular, "Muslim Migration and Nation-Building in Interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey," in *Borders, Boundaries and Belonging in Post-Ottoman Space in the Interwar Period* (Brill, 2022), 241–65.

[319] Mithans, "Religious Conversions and Religious Diversification in Interwar Yugoslavia and Slovenia."

origins to the Ottoman conquest of the region in the fifteenth century. The Ottoman government at the time has implemented an Islamic educational system aimed at training new leaders, teachers, diplomats, administrators, bureaucrats, and judges for the Empire.[320] Under the new system of religious education in Yugoslavia, the Bosnian Muslim community was mandated to provide religious instruction in schools overseen by the state, rather than in medresas. This raised concerns within the community that the traditional Islamic education system would be undermined, potentially resulting in a loss of cultural identity.[321]

In an effort to circumvent this, several covert Islamic religious schools began to surface. Within these institutions, children received instruction in more extensive Islamic studies, including materials forbidden in state schools. Some of these schools were led by women. For example, one notable case involved Tadija Halil Spahija, an 82-year-old widow from Đakovica, who was accused of operating an undisclosed Muslim religious school without the government's authorization. She confessed to educating 60 to 80 Muslim girls over a span of 62 years, independently and within the confines of her own residence.[322] Mitja Velikonja notes that despite the monarchy's acknowledgment and support of the Muslim community, Belgrade persisted in its efforts to control it, facing staunch resistance.[323]

The royal dictatorship announced in 1929, following the deep crisis between Serbs and Croats, had profound impacts on the Muslim populations as well, but with new opportunities opening. The Islamic Religious Community was centralized by royal decree and placed under the authority of the central governing body, the Supreme Council of the Muslim Religious Community in Belgrade.[324] Following the passage of the 1930 law, which

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[320] Ahmed Kulanić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools," *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, January 2015, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t343/e0125.
[321] Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina*.
[322] s.r. Popović, "Tadija Halil Spahija udova iz Đakovice, stara 82 godine, pozvata radi saslušanja povodom rada prikrivene škole IZJAVI [Tadija Halil Spahija, a Widow from Đakovica, 82 Years Old, Was Summoned for Questioning Regarding the Work of the Clandestine School DECLARE]" (Đakovica: Ministarstvo obrazovanja Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia; Other examples include: s.r. Popović, "PREDMET: Šerijatski sudija Abdulah Škalić otvara muslimanske škole. - Kraljevskoj banskoj upravi IV. Odelenje [SUBJECT: Sharia Judge Abdullah Škalić Opens Muslim Schools. - Royal Banovina's Administration IV. Department]" (Đakovica: Ministarstvo obrazovanja Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[323] Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina*.
[324] Velikonja.

designated the opening of religious schools and the appointment of teachers as the responsibility of the Religious Educational Authorities of the Islamic Religious Community, there was a notable increase in the establishment of "sibijan mektebs", religious elementary schools for Turkish-speaking children, across villages and towns in the Skopje region. Official records indicate the presence of seven schools for boys and one for girls of the Muslim faith in Skopje, alongside 38 sibijan mektebs accommodating 1355 students in the Donji Polog municipality, and eight in the Nerodim municipality, among others. Although the Law on State Schooling allows for the enrolment of children aged 5 to 7 in these schools, data indicates that attendees ranged from 5 to 15 years old. This discrepancy highlights a contradiction with the requirement for religious education up to age seven, followed by compulsory attendance at state schools thereafter. However, reports indicated that some parents preferred to indefinitely keep both boys and girls in sibijan mektebs rather than enrol them in state schools. Consequently, the attendance of Muslim children in state schools dwindled, with girls often not attending at all. Furthermore, these schools were frequently described as lacking in resources, with poor hygienic conditions, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching staff, and lacking supervision. They were also viewed as conduits for subversive activities against national interests, prompting the state to consider either asserting control over them or shutting them down entirely.[325]

Despite the obstacles, the Islamic Religious Community persisted in offering religious education within state-regulated schools, albeit with certain adjustments.[326] For instance, the community was permitted to deliver Islamic teachings in the Bosnian language, thus aiding in the preservation of its cultural identity. Embracing modernization, Reis-ul-ulema Čaušević introduced Islamic educational institutions that incorporated non-religious subjects into the medresa's curriculum, and oversaw the printing of schoolbooks in the local

[325] "Ministartsvu prosvete - Odeljenje za Osnovnu nastavu - [To Ministry of Education - Department for Elementary Education]" (Skoplje: Kraljevska banska uprava Vardarske banovine, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1934), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia. See also, S. Ćopović, "Ministartsvu prosvete Odeljenja Osnovne Nastave [To Ministry of Education, Department of Elementary Education]," Izveštaji inspektora za Bregalničku i Skopsku oblast o zahtevima muslimanskog stanovništva za otvaranje škola na turskom jeziku [Reports of Inspectors for the Bregalnica and Skopje Regions on the Requests of the Muslim Population to Open Schools in the Turkish Language] (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1931), Fond 66, box 7, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[326] Omer Borić, "O reformi naše početne vjerske nastave [Regarding Reformation of Our Initial Religious Teaching]," *Novi Behar* 9, no. 22–23 (1935 1936): 313.

language while assuming responsibility for educational matters.[327] Moreover, Mehmed Hadžić, a prominent intellectual of the era, assumed the role of lecturer and housemaster at Gazi Husrev-beg medresa. His curriculum included Arabic language, as well as the Sciences of "Tafsir", "Hadith", and "Fiqh". Initially, some subjects were taught in Arabic, posing challenges for students to comprehend the lectures. Consequently, Hadžić introduced instruction in Bosnian language, authored textbooks, and procured modern literature on Islamic teachings to facilitate learning.[328] The curriculum concerning the history of Islam remained restricted, focusing mainly on "a cultural history of Islam" and "an overview of Islamic literature".[329]

Despite these examples, one of the main issues was the scarcity of qualified Islamic instructors in state-administered schools. The government exclusively employed teachers with pedagogical training to conduct religious classes, a qualification that many Muslim educators lacked.[330] The deficiency in proficient educators raised concerns regarding the calibre of Islamic education within the community.[331]

The new state also had more direct interventions. For example, the establishment of the "Great Medresa of King Aleksandar" (Velika medresa Kralja Aleksandra Prvog) in Skopje in 1924 was an attempt to amalgamate Islamic education with Yugoslav national identity, aiming to enhance the educational landscape for the Muslim community in that region.[332] Nevertheless, the curriculum at this medresa deviated significantly from tradition. Religious subjects were only taught for two out of the eight years of the program, with the remainder consisting of typical national subjects like language, history, geography, and physical education, aligning with the curricula of other secondary schools. Instruction was conducted

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[327] Bougarel, "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-War Bosnia-Herzegovina." See also, Mehmed Handžić, "Učbenici za vjeronauku [Textbooks for Religious Classes]," *Novi Behar* 8, no. 17–18 (1935 1934): 308–9.

[328] Fazlić, "Modern Muslim Thought in the Balkans: The Writings of Mehmed Ef. Handžić in the El-Hidaje Periodical in the Context of Discrimination and Genocide."

[329] Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia - Possibilities, Limitations and Interactions with Other National Ideas."

[330] Munevera Hadžišehović et al., *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*, 1st ed, Eastern European Studies, no. 24 (College station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003).

[331] Edhem Mulabdić, "Jedan korak naprijed. [One Step Forward.]," *Novi Behar* 3, no. 10 (September 15, 1929): 153–54.

[332] Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia - Possibilities, Limitations and Interactions with Other National Ideas."

primarily in Serbo-Croatian, and the majority of teachers belonged to the said ethno-religious group.[333] Munevera Hadžišehović suggests that this medresa was also founded as a gesture of goodwill towards Ataturk's Turkey. It aimed to cultivate a Muslim intelligentsia educated in the European style, many of whom later joined the Partisans and assumed significant government roles after Second World War.[334]

Moreover, the Yugoslav government took particular interest in the Turkish and Albanian communities, imposing stricter oversight on their religious education. These communities were perceived as more culturally conservative and posed greater risks to national unity in the eyes of the overly cautious Yugoslav authorities. Due to their historical ties to Turkey and Albania, they were viewed as potential sources of foreign influence that could undermine efforts to foster loyalty to the Yugoslav state. Consequently, some Serbian politicians advocated for Turkish children to attend Serbian schools, aiming to shape future generations of Turks who would align with Yugoslav interests. Conversely, others suggested the establishment of Turkish schools to prevent the infiltration of Turkish-speaking intellectuals who might oppose the government's policies. They also held the belief that by doing so, the Muslim population would be kept uneducated and ignorant, fuelled by prejudiced notions that they were incapable of achieving self-emancipation.[335]

Additionally, Serbian officials raised concerns about the education of Turkish and other Muslim children, particularly regarding the use of school textbooks not approved by the Kingdom's Ministry of Education. Specifically, Yugoslav authorities observed that parents were providing their children with textbooks published in Istanbul or sourced from Albania. The Serbian authorities deemed these books detrimental to national interests, as they contained content considered insulting to the Serbian nation.[336] As a result, in 1931, the Minister of Education, who also served as the director of the Department for Elementary Education, publicly announced the prohibition of certain schoolbooks estimated

[333] Troch.
[334] Hadžišehović et al., *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*.
[335] St. Simić, "Problem turskih škola u Makedoniji [The Problem of Turkish Schools in Macedonia]" (Veles: Srpska kraljevska gimnazija, 1921), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia. See also, "Prosvetne politike albanske propagande [Educational Policies of Albanian Propaganda]," Suzbijanje albanske propagande i proalbanske delatnosti na Kosovu - onemogućavanje školovanja naše omladine u Albaniji [Suppression of Albanian Propaganda and Pro-Albanian Activities in Kosovo - Preventing the Education of Our Youth in Albania], 1920, Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[336] Simić, "Problem turskih škola u Makedoniji [The Problem of Turkish Schools in Macedonia]."

unfavourable for the Yugoslav youth and national interests.[337] These banned materials included remnants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, literature promoting communist ideology, works inciting religious animosity, and any foreign publications not sanctioned by the Ministry. For instance, works such as "Nova Žena" (New Woman) by Alexandra Kollontai or "Jama" (The Pit) by Aleksandr Kuprin, authored by Russians, were among those forbidden in schools and libraries due to suspicions of spreading communist ideology.[338] Similarly, books like "Politička knjižica – Hrvatstvo starih dubrovčana i bosansko-hercegovačkih Muslimana" (Political Booklet – Croatian Origin of Old Dubrovnik Residents and Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims)[339], which were distributed to students at the conclusion of the academic year at a private school overseen by the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Jajce, were prohibited. This action was taken due to concerns that such materials propagated separatist sentiments rather than fostering Yugoslav nationalism. According to Serbian authorities, the booklet asserted that people from Dubrovnik, Dalmatia, and Bosnian Muslims shared Croatian origins, thereby challenging the idea of Serbs and Croats being a unified people, which was deemed detrimental to the goal of national unity.[340]

The textbooks endorsed by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom not only promoted the narrative of "unification" but also emphasized Serbian dominance in religious and national spheres. For instance, the fourth-grade textbook "Znanje o veri" (Knowledge of Religion) discussed all religions practiced in Yugoslavia but notably highlighted Serbian Orthodox Christianity.[341] Additionally, within the book "Istorija Srpskog naroda" (History of the Serbian Nation), intended for both high schools and vocational schools, the author

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[337] "Kraljevskim banskim upravama za prosvetna odeljenja i školskim nadzornicima na području uprave grada Beograda [To Royal Banovina's Administrations for Educational Departments and School Supervisors in the Area of the Administration of the City of Belgrade]" (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[338] "Predmet: Knjižnice gimnazija i učiteljskih škola na teritoriji Moravske banovine, uklanjanje štetnih knjiga [Subject: Libraries of High Schools and Teachers' Schools on the Territory of Moravian Banovina, Removal of Harmful Books]" (Niš: Kraljevska banska uprava, Moravska banovina, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[339] S. B., *Politička knjižica. Hrvatstvo starih dubrovčana i bosansko-hercegovačkih Muslimana*, vol. 1 (Koprivnica: Obzor, 1927).

[340] M. Tomašević, "Predmet: Djelenje knjiga školskoj djeci na završetku godine u školu sestara Dragocjenjene Krvi u Jajcu [Subject: Distribution of Books to School Children at the End of the Year at the School of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Jajce]," Zabrana rasturanja nekih knjiga [Prohibition of Dispersal of Some Books] (Jajce: Sresko načelstvo, Sreska ispostava, 1933), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[341] Milorad A. Vujanac, *Znanje o veri - za đake IV razreda osnovne škole [Knowledge of Religion - for Students of the Fourth Grade of Primary School]*, 2nd ed. (Beograd: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1924).

recounts the migration of Slavic tribes to the Balkan peninsula, the establishment of the earliest Serbian states and culture, and the eventual unification and formation of the Serbian state, asserting Bosnia and other Slavic territories as inherently Serbian.[342] Lastly, in an example of the third-grade geography textbook, students were exposed to pervasive indoctrination that emphasized the necessity of reverence for the Yugoslav nation due to its enduring historical struggles against numerous adversaries aiming to thwart its formation. The author portrayed Yugoslav citizens as intelligent and skilled, with a keen thirst for education. Furthermore, the author asserted that the religious makeup of Yugoslavia primarily comprised Orthodox and Catholic Christians, along with Muslims (specifically Serbian Muslims from Bosnia), with minimal representation from other ethnicities and religious denominations such as Albanians and Turks.[343]

Another challenge in the education of minority groups and various nationalities pertained to the provision of instruction in their native languages rather than in Serbo-Croatian, the official language of the state. Reports indicate that in numerous elementary and state schools, including those where Serbo-Croatian was designated as the primary language of instruction, teachers did not use it for communication.[344] This was viewed as a grave transgression, subject to punishment by the authorities. Numerous teachers considered incompetent, those who did not speak the official state language, or chose not to do so, were either dismissed or retired.[345] From the perspective of the authorities, the primary concern was that children needed to grasp essential aspects of the monarchy from an early age, in their state's language.[346] Even the primary school alphabet books, known as

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[342] St. Stanojević, *Istorija Srpskog naroda (sa pregledom Hrvatske i Slovenačke istorije) - za srednje i stručne škole [History of the Serbian nation (with an overview of Croatian and Slovenian history) - for secondary and professional schools]*, 1st ed. (Beograd: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1924).

[343] Blagoje Stefanović, *Zemljopis Kraljevine Yugoslavije - za treći razred osnovne škole [Geography of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia - for the Third Grade of Primary School]* (Beograd: Izdanje knjižarnice Jeremije Dželebdžića, 1932).

[344] "Referat [Report]: Upotreba '"državnog"' jezika [Use of the 'State' Language]" (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1930), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[345] M. Sekulić, "Predmet: Nataši Aladar, učitelj dnevničar u Krivoj Bari, vršački, da se otpusti. [Subject: Nataši Aladar, a Daily Wage Teacher in Kriva Bara, Vršac, To Be Dismissed]" (Novi Sad: Kraljevska banska uprava dunavske banovine, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1930), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia. See also, R. P., "Referat [Report]," Penzionisanje učitelja zbog nepoznavanja "državnog" jezika [Retirement of Teachers Due to Ignorance of the 'State' Language] (Novi Sad: Kraljevska banska uprava Dunavske banovine, 1930), Archives of Yugoslavia.

[346] M. Sekulić, "Sreskom načelniku, za školskog nadzornika [To the Head of the District, For the School Superintendent]," Penzionisanje učitelja zbog nepoznavanja "'državnog'" jezika [Retirement of Teachers Due

"Bukvar", featured images of the young King Peter II, acquainting children of various backgrounds with the significance of monarchy for all Yugoslav people.[347] Consequently, students who struggled to learn the language would be required to repeat the grade, and without proficiency in Serbo-Croatian, they would not be able to graduate from elementary school.[348] Furthermore, it was imperative for boys to embrace the official language in order to effectively serve their country in the military in the future, as failure to do so would reflect the state's inability to control these "non-Slavic" entities. Conversely, the proficiency of Muslim girls in Serbo-Croatian was not considered urgent. Ultimately, ensuring that children of all nationalities and groups acquired proficiency in the state language was deemed essential for upholding and advancing Yugoslavia's national interests.[349]

Interestingly, despite their deeply nationalistic and discriminatory policies, the Yugoslav government was rebuking and penalizing teachers of various faiths and ethnicities involved in propagating religious intolerance in schools. Nonetheless, examples of such misconduct were notably more frequent against students of Muslim background. Take, for instance, the case of Mirko Vuković, an elementary school teacher from a Macedonian village, who faced allegations of fostering intolerance towards Islam in his classroom. Authorities were alerted, prompting an investigation into the matter.[350] In another instance, teacher Milorad Grubović from elementary school in Kulen Vakuf in Bosnia, was accused of disrespecting and teaching children of Muslim faith the Orthodox Christian prayer "Oče naš"

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to Lack of Knowledge of the "State" Language] (Novi Sad: Kraljevska banska uprava dunavske banovine, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1932), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[347] Milorad A. Vujanac, *Bukvar [Alphabet Book]* (Beograd: Izdavačko i knjižarsko preduzeće Geca Kon A.D., 1934). See also, Milorad A. Vujanac, *Bukvar [Alphabet Book]* (Beograd: Izdavačko i knjižarsko preduzeće Geca Kon A.D., 1938).

[348] M. Sekulić, "Sreskom načelniku, za školskog nadzornika [To the Head of the District, For the School Superintendent]," Penzionisanje učitelja zbog nepoznavanja "državnog" jezika [Retirement of Teachers Due to Ignorance of the 'State' Language] (Novi Sad: Kraljevska banska uprava dunavske banovine, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1932), Archives of Yugoslavia.

[349] M. Sekulić, "PREDMET: Manjinski živalj - nepoznavanje državnog jezika. [SUBJECT: Minority Population - Lack of Knowledge of the State Language]," Penzionisanje učitelja zbog nepoznavanja "državnog" jezika [Retirement of Teachers Due to Ignorance of the "State" Language] (Novi Sad: Kraljevska banska uprava Dunavske banovine, 1932).

[350] "Kraljevskoj banskoj upravi - Prosvetno odeljenje, Skoplje [To Royal Banovina's Administration - Education Department, Skopje]," Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims] (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1930), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

(Our Father).[351] Moreover, certain Gligorije Baljošević, a religious instructor of the Christian faith, was reported by the Supreme Leadership of the Islamic Religious Community for compelling children of Muslim background to participate in Orthodox religious sessions. This action was denounced by the Yugoslav Ministry of Education as a clear breach of the monarchy's constitution and the Law on the Islamic Religious Community.[352] Nevertheless, such incidents persisted, exacerbating parental disillusionment, and leading to the withdrawal of Muslim children from elementary schools, thereby further impeding the education of Muslim girls. Despite criticizing the efforts of individuals to undermine the Islamic religion and the Muslim community as a whole, the Yugoslav government continued to enforce the observance of Orthodox religious holidays on Muslim students. One such event commonly celebrated in Serbian schools was the feast day of Saint Sava (Sveti Sava), a historical figure and the patron saint of education. Consequently, Muslim parents protested this decision by prohibiting their children from attending school on that particular day. Serbian authorities condemned and punished such actions, exemplified by the case of Muslim religious teachers Abdulah Gojačić and Hakija Đozić from Srebrenica, who were accused of influencing parents to keep their children from school during the Saint Sava celebration.[353]

Additionally, in response to another type of discrimination, Muslim families opted to prevent their elementary school children from participating in the festivities of the Red Cross Day, perceiving it as carrying religious symbolism conflicting with their beliefs. Rather than accommodating the Muslim community with the Red Crescent sister organization, Yugoslav authorities enforced the celebration of the Red Cross under the same banner, disregarding the convictions of this community. The act of barring children from engaging in

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[351] Ratko Popović, "Načelniku sreza bosansko petrovačkog, Bosanski Petrovac [To the Head of the Bosnian Petrovac Municipality, Bosanski Petrovac] : Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims]" (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1933), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[352] "Kraljevskoj banskoj upravi - Prosvetno odeljenje - Skoplje [To Royal Banovina's Administration - Education Department - Skopje]," Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims] (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Odeljenje za osnovnu nastavu, 1933), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[353] "Ulema Medžlis u Sarajevu, žalba protiv kažnjavanja dečjih roditelja, koji su ometali svetosavsku školsku proslavu u Srebrenici [Ulema Majlis in Sarajevo, Appeal Against the Punishment of Children's Parents, Who Obstructed the Saint Sava School Celebration in Srebrenica]," Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims] (Belgrade: Kraljevska banska uprava drinske banovine, Prosvetno odeljenje, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

the Red Cross festivities was denounced by officials as anti-national and backward.[354] This was demonstrated in the instance involving Abdulah Gojačić, a religious teacher, and Edhem Abdurahmanović, a judge of the Shari'a court from Srebrenica, who were accused of prohibiting elementary school students from participating in the Red Cross celebration. Their act of protest was depicted as religious extremism and a refusal to acknowledge anything outside the realm of Islam.[355] This ambivalent stance towards the Muslim community was widening the gap between the two parties, ultimately impacting the educational prospects of Muslim children, who were subjected to discrimination and pressured religious and cultural assimilation.

During the interwar period, the Muslim communities persisted in adapting and preserving its cultural and religious identity, despite the state's persistent efforts to suppress religious expression among minority groups and assimilate them rather than foster unity in the predominantly Christian society. Falina suggests that as a defensive strategy against the state's rhetoric, religious communities often emphasized the alignment of religion with support for Yugoslav unity, an argument that waned during the dictatorship after 1929. They also stressed the importance of religion in nurturing conscientious youth capable of discerning good from evil. Conversely, Yugoslav authorities viewed the primary purpose of the educational system as shaping Muslim youth into loyal citizens of the state, which, in their view, necessitated the "re(training) of the teachers".[356]

3.4.3 Religious Education for Girls

Prior to the implementation of formal education during the Habsburg occupation, Muslim girls exclusively attended religious institutions like "mektebs" and "medrasas".[357] In mektebs, education encompassed basic skills such as reading, writing, and fundamental religious teachings and values.[358] Troch's study shows that following the war, Yugoslav

[354] Zdravko Frank, "Oblasnom odboru Crvenog Krsta, Sarajevo [To the Regional Committee of the Red Cross, Sarajevo]," Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims] (Srebrenica: Povjereništvo Crvenog Krsta u Srebrenici, 1933), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[355] "Poverljivo; Kraljevskoj Banskoj Upravi Drinske Banovine, Sarajevo [Confidential; To the Royal District Administration of the Drina Banovina, Sarajevo]," Verska netolerancija prema muslimanima [Religious Intolerance Towards Muslims] (Sarajevo: Crveni Krst Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Oblasni Odbor, 1933), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[356] Falina, "Religious Diversity and Equality in Interwar Yugoslavia."
[357] Humo, "Naša nova muslimanka [Our New Muslim Woman]."
[358] Kulanić, "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools."

authorities sought to confine the learning of Turkish and Arabic among Muslim children solely to religious education, permitting it exclusively in "sibjan-mektebs", primary schools attended by Muslim children aged five to eight who spoke Turkish as their mother tongue.[359] Mektebs linked to mosques operated without any financial assistance from the state and depended entirely on contributions from charitable organizations or waqfs. This circumstance unfolded within the wider context of challenges confronting the Muslim community, particularly exacerbated by agrarian reforms that involved the state seizing land from affluent landowners.[360]

The newly implemented educational system mandated that both girls and boys attend classes conducted in Serbo-Croatian, whether in state-run or private schools which were established in accordance with state laws governing elementary education.[361] For instance, Munevera Hadžišehović recounted her experience of attending a mekteb, a religious elementary school, in Prijepolje at the age of barely six. She described being instructed by an imam along with around fourteen other girls, while the boys had separate classes within the same building. In less than a year, Hadžišehović transitioned to a first-grade class at a state-run elementary school, where she was taught by a Serbian teacher named Lepa Minić. She went on to share the tragic fate of her teacher, who was killed in the ensuing war, emphasizing the significance of mentioning her as the one who taught her how to read and write.[362] Nevertheless, as per official records, numerous Turkish and Albanian families in cities such as Đakovica, Peć, Kosovo, and Mitrovica, and to some extent in Novi Pazar, did comply with the Law on State Schools mandating elementary education for girls. However, in other municipalities in the southern regions of the state, Muslim girls' enrolment was notably low, resulting in partial adherence to the law's provisions.[363]

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[359] Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia - Possibilities, Limitations and Interactions with Other National Ideas."
[360] Hadžišehović et al., *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*. See also, Hamdija Mulić, "Stari i novi mektebi [Old and New Mektebs]," *Novi Behar* 12, no. 7–14 (1938 1939): 95–100.
[361] Troch, "Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia - Possibilities, Limitations and Interactions with Other National Ideas."
[362] Hadžišehović et al., *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*.
[363] Ivan Likić, "Problem pohađanja škole ženske muslimanske dece [The Problem of School Attendance of Female Muslim Children]" (Cetinje: Kraljevska banska uprava Zetske banovine, Cetinje, 1937), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

Despite the state's attempt to unify the school system, Muslim girls engaged with the emerging educational system through various avenues, including traditional medresas, modern schools, and private institutions. Modern schools aimed to deliver a secular education with some inclusion of religious instruction. Although these schools were typically coeducational, girls and boys were often segregated during lessons. The religious teachings offered in these institutions were often deemed inadequate by more conservative members of the Muslim community.[364]

Private institutions, particularly private female schools were still popular playing a significant role in the education of girls in Bosnia, regardless of their religious or social background. For example, Snježana Šušnjara notes that the network of private schools began during the Austro-Hungarian rule and persisted throughout the interwar period, often overseen by various Catholic orders that operated in Bosnia. Additionally, they founded eleven higher female schools and vocational institutions, among which the Private Female Teacher School (1882-1945) in Sarajevo stands out for its notable influence, overseen by the Catholic female order Daughters of God's Love. Muslim girls also enrolled in this school, initially to learn embroidery and sewing, but as its reputation grew, girls from various religious backgrounds began to join as well. In their relentless effort to dismantle every unregulated confessional educational institution, Yugoslav authorities attempted to shut down the school, but their endeavour proved unsuccessful. These private establishments resembled medresas in providing religious education but also offered a wider array of subjects including literature, music, and art.[365] In addition to the female order Daughters of God's Love, several other religious orders operated schools for girls. These included the Sisters of Mercy of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, and the Daughters of the Holy Blood, among others. The Sisters of Mercy were responsible for overseeing the largest number of schools, which were also referred to as state schools, followed by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Although these nuns taught in state

[364] Snježana Šušnjara, "Private Female Schools between the Two World Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Historia Scholastica* 5, no. 1 (2019): 105–20.
[365] Šušnjara.

schools, they were not appointed by the state but operated under their own governance, with the Ministry of Education solely responsible for granting approval.[366]

Nonetheless, the state aimed to regulate all private and religious educational institutions, which were mandated to meet specific criteria to continue operating. This regulation was supposed to be within the framework of the new state's nation-building. Authorities were shutting down schools that failed to submit their curriculum, along with lists of teachers and their credentials for approval by the Ministry of Education. More importantly, schools were prohibited from admitting students who did not speak the language of the nation to which the school belonged. Their curriculum had to include compulsory subjects such as Serbian language, Serbia-centric history, Yugoslav geography, and civic education, taught by Serbian state teachers or Serbian Muslims within the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ultimately, elementary education was seen as purely national, mandatory for all subjects regardless of their nationality and religion.[367]

The main educational establishments functioning concurrently were medresas. The traditional medresas imparted religious education rooted in Islamic theology, focusing on the study of Arabic, the Qur'an, and Islamic jurisprudence.[368] Although medresas had traditionally been reserved for boys, a few of them began admitting girls. As Nermina Jašarević notes, Gazi Husrev medresa in Sarajevo, previously exclusively for males, eventually established an Islamic religious school for girls in 1933 after much consideration.[369] Muslim girls were expected to follow an Islamic-based curriculum, aimed at instilling in them values of Islamic solidarity and moral conduct.[370] Furthermore, in 1934, the mixed primary Sultan-Ahmed medresa in Zenica underwent a groundbreaking reform by

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[366] K., "Predmet: Hog Herubina, učiteljica - kaluđerica - premeštanje [Subject: Hog Herubina, Teacher - Nun - Relocation]" (Zagreb: Kraljevska banska uprava Savske banovine, Zagreb, Prosvjetno odjeljenje, 1931), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[367] R., "Prosvetnom inspektoru, Bitolj [To the Educational Inspector, Bitola]," Uslovi za otvaranje nacionalnih i verskih privatnih škola [Conditions for Opening National and Religious Private Schools] (Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, Odeljenje za Osnovnu nastavu, 1920), Fond 66, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[368] Halil Mehtić, hafiz, "The Serdarević family and the work of Muhamed Seid and Abdulah Serdarević," *Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke* 10, no. 17–18 (1996): 303–12.

[369] Nermina Jašarević, "Gazi Husrev-bey's medresa for girls in the period from 1933 till present-day," *Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke* 6, no. 9–10 (1983): 281–90. See also, Hamdija Mulić, "Ženska medresa [Female Medresa]," *Novi Behar* 10, no. 23–24 (1936 1937): 331–32.

[370] Jašarević, "Gazi Husrev-bey's medresa for girls in the period from 1933 till present-day."

enrolling both boys and girls, who attended classes together in the same classroom.[371] However, due to prevailing traditional values, girls in this medresa were still segregated from boys within the classroom, had separate recess schedules, and were not provided with boarding accommodations. Other changes also happened during the 1930s, as part of the effort to modernize the curriculum and teaching methods. For example, the "muderris" of the Abdullah-ef. Serdarević medresa introduced collaboration with non-Muslim teachers within the school's faculty.[372] Still, such schools were scarce, and in most cases, their curriculum focused solely on fundamental Islamic teachings. This presented a dilemma for the Muslim community, as many families were reluctant to enrol their daughters in schools where non-Muslim teachers were responsible for their education.[373]

Finally, there is a notable absence of statistical data related to Muslim girls' education, both religious and secular. Some conclusions could be extrapolated by examining figures concerning girls' education in general. These numbers reveal an increase in girls' educational enrolment, yet highlight a significant disparity compared to boys. According to annual statistics from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the enrolment of girls in elementary schools rose from 412,781 in 1922 (the first year of data collection due to scarcity of results from the early years of the state's establishment) to 626,458 in 1938/39, the final years of the state's existence. While examining various territories or "banovine"[374], particularly those with significant Muslim populations, such as the "Drinska banovina", or territory of Drina, encompassing Bosnian and western Serbian territories, there were 40,501 girls out of 132,015 students enrolled in 778 schools during the statistical period of 1938/39. Similarly, in the "Vardarska banovina" (Vardar territory), covering areas of modern-day North Macedonia, southern Serbia, and parts of Kosovo, out of 149,295 students in 1,194 schools, 57,236 were girls. Finally, in the "Vrbaska banovina" (Vrbas territory), consisting of regions of modern Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with its headquarters in Banja Luka, out of

[371] Mehtić, hafiz, "http://anali-ghb.com/index.php/aghb/article/view/402."
[372] Mehtić, hafiz.
[373] Hadžišehović et al., *A Muslim Woman in Tito's Yugoslavia*.
[374] The Kingdom of Yugoslavia's territory was divided into nine "banovinas", with Belgrade serving as the capital city, separate from any of these administrative divisions. See more, https://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banovine_Kraljevine_Jugoslavije.

64,829 students in 529 schools, 13,949 were girls during the same statistical period.[375] Despite encompassing all confessions, the data suggests that despite a rise in girls' educational enrolment over time, substantial gaps persisted in comparison to boys. This implies that gender-based educational inequities were widespread and probably impacted all girls, including those belonging to Muslim communities.

3.4.4 Concluding Remarks

The issue of religious education during the Interwar period in Bosnia was multifaceted, shaped by various factors such as politics, religion, and culture. The state's imposition of control over religious matters was evident in the debates surrounding education and curricula, as it resisted complying with the demands of religious communities to assert its own authority. While the Muslim community sought to uphold its religious and national identity, it found itself conforming to state directives, leading to disparities in treatment compared to other faiths. Despite the challenges, efforts were made to provide comprehensive religious education for both genders amidst the state's push for secularization. Individuals and institutions were dedicated to ensuring that both boys and girls received religious education aligned with their beliefs and cultural norms. Despite conservative efforts to impede educational initiatives, Muslims as a whole recognized the importance of providing girls with religious education to instil positive moral values and shape their identity. Consequently, alongside traditional mektebs, a few medresas began gradually admitting female students. However, the state exerted pressure on Muslim communities to enrol girls in state schools as well. While state-controlled schools offered educational opportunities for Muslim girls, they also presented challenges to the traditional Islamic education system, restricting its focus solely on basic Islamic teachings. Private girls' schools emerged as a response to these challenges, providing a means for the Muslim community to safeguard its cultural and religious identity amid increasing pressure to conform to the state-controlled educational system. Ultimately, both the religious and secular education of Muslim girls faced uncertainty due to the discriminatory policies of the state, coupled with conservatism within Muslim communities and the broader Yugoslav context. Taking all this together, the government's annual statistical data highlighted a

[375] *Jugoslavija 1918-1988 - Statistički godišnjak [Yugoslavia 1918-1988 - Statistical Yearbook]* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1989).

significant increase in girls' enrolment in elementary schools. Nevertheless, the undeniable disparity between the educational opportunities available to girls and boys persisted throughout the interwar period in Yugoslavia, as a consequence of the various factors previously discussed.

4 Radical Disruption: Education and Muslim Communities During World War II

This chapter examines the importance of the Second World War for Muslim communities in Yugoslavia, and the ways in which Muslim populations participated in various new educational activities – formal or in the Partisan units.[376] The war marked the end of the monarchy, and destruction of the entire system by the Nazi Germany, including educational, as well as colossal loss of human lives and infrastructure. The war has affected every sphere of life in the country, causing the disruption of everyday life. However, with the local armed rebellion rising, the Yugoslav space saw unique resistance movement, led by the Communist Party, which encompassed women warriors ("Partizanke"). Furthermore, the resistance after 1942 mostly happened in Bosnia, with pre-dominantly Muslim populations. I will analyse new ideas about women's role during the war, and how it informed their positioning in society and educational opportunities. Furthermore, I will examine the functioning of the educational system pertaining to women during the times of deep uncertainty and constant battles.

4.1 Situation in Yugoslavia During Second World War

In the previous chapter we have seen that political situation in Yugoslavia in the interwar period was quite turbulent. During its entire existence the country was engulfed in political struggles and debates over the so-called national questions and the country's structure between Serbs and Croats, with Bosnian Muslims often being in between. Given that the Constitution from 1921 was not made consensually between all the nationalities, a great dissatisfaction with the ruling government was just growing bigger with the worsening of the political situation. The political crisis culminated with Croatian parliamentarians being murdered in the parliament, after which the King Alexander proclaimed the dissolution of

[376] Yugoslav Partisans or the National Liberation Army was the communist-led anti-fascist resistance to the Axis powers in occupied Yugoslavia during the Second World War. Spearheaded by Josip Broz Tito, the Partisans are considered to be Europe's most effective anti-Axis resistance movement during the Second World War. See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Partisans

the political party and the dictatorship in 1929.[377] The dictatorship has not solved the major problems and the tensions between the Serbs and Croats were growing bigger thus endangering the very idea of unity.[378] King Alexander announced a new Constitution in 1931, which was far from democratic standards. Not long after, in 1934, the King was assassinated in France during his state visit by the Croatian Ustashe terrorists.[379] Subsequently, Prince regent Paul, that ruled during the minority of the King Alexander's underage successor King Peter II, with his prime minister started working his way out within the frame of the existing Constitution and resolving of the "Croat question". On the eve of the Second World War, politicians managed to craft a deal which allowed for significant autonomy of Croatia, with borders that encompassed a substantial portion of the Muslim populations.[380]

During the interwar period in Yugoslavia, the Muslim population was primarily represented by the Yugoslav Muslim Organization, a political party that frequently cooperated with the central government. Calls for Muslim autonomy were also not uncommon. Eminent Muslim intellectuals like Mehmed Handžić wrote about nationalism and the autonomy of the Bosnian Muslim people on the eve of the Second World War. However, it was the Second World War that fundamentally altered the situation for Bosnian Muslims. It was during this time that plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a future Yugoslav republic within the new communist state were devised.[381] Briefly examining the war situation is therefore crucial for the context where new educational opportunities were created.

4.1.1 The Beginning of the Second Worl War in Yugoslavia

Following Germany's invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the Second World War, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia initially strove to maintain its neutrality. The Yugoslav government aimed to keep the country out of the conflict for as long as feasible. However, it

[377] Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia*, Paperback edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[378] Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953*, Russian Research Center Studies 85 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991).
[379] Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*.
[380] Pavlowitch.
[381] Fazlić, "Modern Muslim Thought in the Balkans: The Writings of Mehmed Ef. Handžić in the El-Hidaje Periodical in the Context of Discrimination and Genocide."

soon found itself in a delicate predicament, torn between sympathy for the Western Allies and fear of the Axis powers. Additionally, there was ambiguity within inner circles regarding whether to maintain neutrality and how to do so effectively.[382] The Yugoslav government was gradually losing support from the Western powers, and the French capitulation dealt another blow, eroding the sense of neutrality. The country began to make tentative preparations for military conflict, but it lacked adequate financial resources, technical expertise, or external assistance. Serbs within the government opposed collaboration with Nazi Germany, expressing a firm belief in the eventual victory of the Allies. Conversely, Croats sought to keep the country out of the conflict through collaboration. However, Hitler grew impatient and demanded that the Yugoslav government declare its stance and join the Tripartite by March 25th. On that date in 1941, in Vienna, the Yugoslav prime minister signed confirmation to join the Tripartite, officially accepting "the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe."[383]

This action definitively ended Yugoslavia's neutrality in the Second World War, a move vehemently opposed by Serbian factions. Public dissatisfaction with the regency was already evident before the pact's adherence, but it intensified afterward, leading to erupting demonstrations led by the opposition and students, initially in Belgrade and subsequently in other cities within and beyond Serbia. This widespread public uprising culminated in a *coup d'état*, resulting in the overthrow of King Peter II. The news of the coup was met with significant displeasure by Hitler, who viewed it as a breach of collaboration terms outlined in the Tripartite agreement. Consequently, Yugoslavia was attacked by Nazi Germany without a public declaration of war, commencing with the bombing of Belgrade on the dawn of April 6th, known as "Operation Punishment", which devastated nearly 50 percent of the city.[384] When Yugoslavia capitulated after a few weeks, it was promptly divided between the Axis powers, while new Croatia (NDH) was established with the fascist rule.[385]

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[382] Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*.
[383] Pavlowitch.
[384] Pavlowitch. See also: Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije - Narodnooslobodilački rat i revolucija 1941-1945* (Beograd: Nolit, 1988).
[385] Nigel Thomas, K. Mikulan, and D. Pavelic, *Axis Forces in Yougoslavia 1941-5*, Repr, Osprey Military Men-at-Arms Series 282 (London: Osprey, 1998).

Bosnian Muslims were excluded from the decision-making process in the Balkans' restructuring, and the area encompassing future Bosnia was placed under the control of the Croatian fascist state. The traditional Muslim political elite was sidelined, with some aligning themselves with the fascist regime to safeguard their positions. Hoare illustrates how the Ustasha regime's governance model in Bosnia aimed to forcefully assimilate it into Greater Croatia.[386] As Max Bergholz explains, the supreme leader of the NDH, Ante Pavelić, considered Muslims to actually be "Croats of the Islamic faith", as he stated: "The Muslims are the blood of our blood, they are the flower of our Croatian nationality."[387] Even some Muslims publicly referred to Bosnian Muslims as Islamic Croats in the media, contrasting them with Catholic Croats, as they sought to elucidate the cultural history of the Bosnian Muslim community.[388] Croats attempted to utilize the narrative of a shared historical antagonism with Orthodox Serbs as a rallying point in their conflict against the Serbs. However, Adnan Jahić observes that Bosnia, upon becoming part of the puppet Croatian State, experienced a systematic erasure of its distinct historical, ethnic, and cultural identity. This process was accompanied by the implementation of racist and discriminatory policies, aggressively targeting segments of society diverging from the vision of a homogeneous Croatian state. The Independent State of Croatia echoed Hitler's ideologies of racism and nationalism, alongside conservative views on women, idealizing them primarily as mothers and homemakers within the framework of an imagined societal and national rejuvenation.[389] This so called "brotherhood" between Croats and Muslims did not last long, with the Muslim elite starting to question their alliance,[390] particularly due to the genocidal policies of the Croatian state and its inability to provide stability and security. It was these genocidal policies that contributed to armed uprising, spearheaded by the Communist Party.

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[386] Hoare, *Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War*.

[387] Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*. 63-64. See also: Marko Attila Hoare, *Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War: A History* (London New York: Hurst & Company Oxford university press, 2014) p. 14.

[388] Muhamed Hadžijahić, "Jedan detalj iz kulturne povijesti bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana [A Detail from the Cultural History of Bosnian and Hercegovian Muslims]," *Novi Behar* 13, no. 13–18 (March 15, 1940): 185–88. See also, Hazim Šabanović, "Hrvatski muslimani u svojoj nezavisnoj državi [Croatian Muslims in Their Independent State]," *Novi Behar* 14, no. 1–2 (May 15, 1941): 3–6. Alija Nametak, "Novi vidici [New Horizons]," *Novi Behar* 14, no. 1–2 (1942 1941): 3

[389] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

[390] Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*.

4.1.2 The Communist Party of Yugoslavia

From the very beginning, Yugoslav communists viewed the interwar Yugoslav regime as their primary adversary. The emergence of fascism only hastened the comparison between the Yugoslav government and it, fuelling a desire for revolutionary change among students and young intellectuals.[391] While the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ or Komunistička partija Jugoslavije) had been banned since 1921, it continued to operate through various legal and underground organizations, as outlined by Stevan K. Pavlowitch. However, over time, it became excessively reliant on the Communist International (Comintern), which prioritized the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the revolutionary activities of separatist movements.[392] Inspired by the Soviet's ideology, Yugoslav communists saw Yugoslavia as the imperialistic state that had to be broken down into separate sovereign republics.[393] Under the significant influence of the Comintern, Yugoslav communists were altering their strategies regarding the national question in Yugoslavia. However, the Soviets did not consistently grasp the intricacies of Yugoslav internal politics and historical contexts.[394] Facing persecution by the regime and embroiled in internal conflicts, Yugoslav communists operated in a state of disarray, jeopardizing their standing within the Communist International until Josip Broz Tito assumed leadership in the mid-1930s. Under Tito's guidance, the Party developed a substantial underground organization. Additionally, many communists gained wartime experience by fighting for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, with over 1,600 Yugoslavs participating in the International Brigade, including 16 women.[395]

Upon the onset of the war, the Yugoslav communists did not immediately launch an armed rebellion. It was only when Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 21, 1941, that Tito galvanized the workers and the Communist Party, proclaiming, "The Soviet Union war is your war… Your place is alongside the working class, championing your genuine

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[391] Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*.
[392] Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*. See also: Goran Korov, *Rad KPJ u Zagrebu od 1931. do 1941. godine* (Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung SEE, 2016).
[393] Alexander Victor Prusin, *Serbia under the Swastika: A World War II Occupation*, The History of Military Occupation (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017).
[394] Pirjevec, *Tito and His Comrades*.
[395] Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*. See also: Vjeran Pavlaković, *Jugoslaveni u španjolskom građanskom ratu* (Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe, 2017).

freedom and independence… Communists of Yugoslavia! We now face the most challenging juncture of our struggle, one we had anticipated… Uphold your role as the vanguard of Yugoslavia's working class…"[396] In response, the Yugoslav communists initiated their guerilla warfare against the occupiers, drawing support from individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds and a significant number of women.

The Partisan armed uprising started in Serbia, spearheaded by the communists inspired by the Soviet model of "the united front" of the proletariat and the deprived peasants.[397] Yugoslav partisans had significant successes during the summer and autumn of 1941, liberating territories in Western Serbia and establishing first revolutionary governments. These liberated territories were retaken by Germans by the end of the year, but partisan units were not destroyed. Since early 1942, the majority of the partisan units retreated to Bosnia, being crucial context where new revolutionary education of Muslim girls was tested. Also vital to the context is that while the Second World War was unfolding in occupied Yugoslavia, communists were not only battling against Germans and Italians, but also against the aforementioned Serbian royalists, referred to as "Chetniks" (Četnici), with whom they had initially allied in 1941.[398] The Chetnik movement fostered extremely conservative ideas, and eventually engaged in war crimes against Muslim populations and collaboration with the Nazis. On the other hand, Yugoslav communists opened their ranks, and many people from Muslim background joined the Partisans.[399] Among them were many Muslim women from Bosnia, some of them engaging in military operations such as Vahida Maglajić, and many more helped in the background with support and provisions.[400] Their experiences will be examined in more details in the next section. Nevertheless, it is important to place the level of destruction and human losses in Yugoslavia, as the context where Yugoslav partisans attempted new gender and educational policies which encompassed significant numbers of Muslim women.

Women in the Partisan ranks and within the Yugoslav Communist Party held views on their rights and responsibilities consistent with communist ideology. Additionally,

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[396] Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*. 39
[397] Prusin, *Serbia under the Swastika*.
[398] Prusin.
[399] Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*.
[400] Hoare, *Bosnian Muslims in the Second World War*.

grounded in the Party's interpretation of feminism, Yugoslav communist women opposed feminist movements, particularly on the brink of and during the war. At a conference in Zagreb in 1940, prominent communist Vida Tomšič addressed the notion of bourgeois feminism, arguing that it undermined the rights of working-class women.[401] Tomšič elucidated the necessity to resist the sway of the urban elite, which advocated for women's rights without comprehending the requirements of the working class. She argued that bourgeois feminism, cloaked under the guise of equality with men, obfuscated the class-based nature of the women's issue, thereby diverting masses of women from the struggle against capitalism and class-based societal structures. According to Tomšič, feminism, as a liberal movement of the bourgeoisie, was encountering disarray akin to the purportedly progressive capitalist society and democracy. She contended that feminist movements had even deviated from their own agendas and principles, forsaking women's rights and suffrage, all for fear of infringing upon civil society's rights. Consequently, through such actions, they had become nothing more than collaborators with imperialism at the onset of the war.[402]

At the Fifth Pan-Country Conference of KPJ in 1940, prominent communist leaders established the Soviet model as the foundational paradigm for the party's policies concerning women. Discussions cantered on women's labour and related issues, emphasizing the significance of their inclusion within the Party—a matter that merited detailed reports and orations. Furthermore, several pivotal recommendations were advanced for integration into the Party's agenda. These included the safeguarding of maternity rights and the eradication of distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate offspring; the diminution of dual morality in both public and private spheres, coupled with the initiation of civil marriage and the right to divorce; the affirmation of the right to work, wage parity for equivalent tasks, the safeguarding of women in professional settings, protective legislation, and ensuring women's entry into professions commensurate with their expertise and capability; and lastly, the acknowledgment of all political rights, with a

[401] Vida Tomšič, "Referat drugarice Vide Tomšič na V Zemaljskoj konferenciji 1940 g. [Report of Comrad Vida Tomšič on the Fifth National Conference in 1940]" (Belgrade: Archive of Yugoslavia, 1940), The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[402] Tomšič.

primary emphasis on the right to suffrage.[403] The Party also passed a resolution emphasizing the need for greater attention to addressing women's issues, advocating for increased participation of women across various sectors, and continuing efforts to secure their rights, both in terms of labour and fundamental political rights.[404]

4.1.3 Muslim Women During the War

Muslim women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina faced numerous challenges, often becoming targets of propaganda by pro-Ustasha media outlets in the initial phase of the conflict when pro-fascist Croatia took over this territory. For instance, these outlets claimed that Muslim women's involvement in Croatian social gatherings was increasing. They highlighted reports of Muslim women attending events alongside prominent Croatian officials and their spouses, or visiting Ustasha soldiers in hospitals. The media presented this as a newfound freedom for Muslim women, suggesting that they could now participate openly in Croatian events without experiencing disrespect or marginalization, contrasting with their treatment in the former Yugoslavia.[405] However, Croatian leadership held a contradictory stance. While they praised influential Muslim women on one hand, they also maintained conservative views regarding women's societal roles. Ustasha leaders did not oppose education for Croatian women, but they predominantly envisioned them flourishing in domestic spheres – as nurturers and protectors of 'Croatianism' and its values. The ideal Croatian woman, as depicted by them, epitomized the "Ustasha mother": strong, devout, patriotically indoctrinated, spiritually grounded, and well-educated. Despite the core Ustasha ideology often disregarding women's accomplishments and the spirit of emancipation, they still acknowledged the crucial role of women in the establishment of the Independent Croatian State. This encompassed their involvement in transmitting propaganda and their dedication to the new regime.[406]

[403] Ždralović, "II DIO: 1941–1945. Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena." p. 42
[404] Ždralović.
[405] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*. 388
[406] Jahić.

Muslim women who survived the terror inflicted by Serbian nationalists[407] were often in the Ustasha press stories. They were heralded as courageous and honourable Muslim women who valiantly defended their homeland.[408] The Ustasha propaganda drew a sharp contrast between the depiction of virtuous, diligent, and esteemed Croat (Muslim) women and the negative portrayal of anti-fascist Partisan women, who were depicted as debauched individuals forsaking Croatia, motherhood, family, religion, morality, and unity. The Ustashas leveraged such rhetoric to intensify the conservative and deeply patriarchal Muslim society's existing aversion to the Partisan movement's driving force, the Yugoslav Communist Party. This party's ideology was reduced to atheism and the erosion of moral, familial, and societal values.[409]

Among Muslim intellectuals, there were conflicting perspectives on the roles of Muslim women during the war. Those who aligned with Ustasha politics showed little interest in involving Muslim women in their endeavours. Meanwhile, progressive intellectuals emphasized the contributions of Muslim women in academia, law, and medicine. However, the reality of the war highlighted another aspect of women's roles - that of women fighters who were nonetheless constrained in their actions. Sulejman Mašović, an administrator of a refugee camp in Sarajevo, argued that the modern, tumultuous times necessitated "women of action" and "fighting women," primarily dedicated to rescuing children and refugees. He advocated for the advancement of Muslim women in both faith and academia, but within the confines of their designated roles, emphasizing separate roles for men and women. On the other hand, other prominent intellectuals, such as writer Ahmed Muradbegović, opposed modern ideals of gender equality, contending that women should pursue paths aligned with their "natural" essence.[410]

Perceived as the weaker sex and frequently isolated from external influences, numerous Muslim women experienced profound suffering during the war, largely due to their lack of familiarity with conflict situations and resources. Many were killed by the

[407] Yugoslav royalist and Serbian nationalist paramilitary groups called *Chetniks* that operated as an anti-Axis movement but also as an opponent to the communist Partisans. See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chetniks
[408] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[409] Jahić.
[410] Jahić.

Chetniks, who ruthlessly targeted women, children, and the elderly. Survivors relayed harrowing accounts of brutality, massacre, and sexual assault. Several scholars argue that women generally face heightened vulnerability and victimhood in conflict situations compared to men.[411] As highlighted by Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, women's wartime experiences differ from those of men, irrespective of their roles as refugees, combatants, household heads, community leaders, activists, or peacebuilders. Factors like limited resources, diminished political rights, or a lack of authority, compounded by their primary responsibilities as caregivers, often restricting their mobility in pursuit of safety.[412]

Nevertheless, perceiving the war experience as transformative enables the rejection of stereotypical portrayals of women solely as victims, instead acknowledging their agency and integrity.[413] Women, often portrayed as habitual victims alongside children in armed conflicts, are traditionally perceived as enduring the greatest suffering. However, according to Maja Antonić, viewing war as a transformative experience that equips women with previously unprecedented skills and opportunities enables gender-specific investigations to reveal how women navigate relationships with authorities and citizenship.[414] Despite conservative propaganda and the prevalent victim narrative labelling them as war martyrs, Muslim women have demonstrated agency and the ability to transcend such stereotypes through their gradually increasing participation in the war alongside the Partisans.

As all these examples show Muslim women played an indispensable role in disseminating of respective politics and ideologies for all sides in the conflict. However, Muslim women for the Yugoslav communists represented a novel, invaluable factor in the execution of the National Liberation war against the fascist invaders.[415] Before further discussing Muslim women's involvement into the National Liberation Movement in the following sections, I consider that it would be of great importance to understand the Yugoslav communists' stance towards the Bosnian Muslims and their part in the National

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[411] Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (New York, NY: UNIFEM, 2002).
[412] Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf.
[413] Maja Antonić, "Yugoslav Revolutionary Legacy: Female Soldiers and Activists in Nation-Building and Cultural Memory, 1941-1989" (Master Thesis, Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, 2019), https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/3107.
[414] Antonić. p. 5
[415] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

Liberation war. Communists' stance was developed during the years of interwar struggles with the Yugoslav government, and through their education in the Soviet Union.

As articulated by Atif Purivatra, a keen insight into the Party's viewpoint on Bosnian Muslims within the National Liberation Movement can be derived from examining the public addresses of Josip Broz Tito.[416] In his public addresses Tito consistently acknowledged and affirmed the distinct ethnic identity of Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina, ensuring their equal standing alongside other Yugoslav ethnic groups. For instance, during a significant gathering in Stolice on September 26, 1941[417], Tito expressed, "Another attempt of Pavelić's Ustasha bandits and invaders have failed that by promoting of the national hatred and mutual extermination of the Serbian, Muslim, and Croatian people disables liberation fight of the Bosnia and Herzegovina people…Serbian people realises even more that their enemies are not Bosnian and Croatian people, but Pavelić's Ustasha bandits and especially German and Italian occupiers. The number of the Muslims and Croats in the liberation Partisan's ranks is increasing day by day."[418]

In a December 1942 article titled "Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji u svetlu Narodnooslobodilačkog rata" (National Question in Yugoslavia in the Light of the National Liberation War) in the Proleter[419] magazine, Tito underscored the intimate link between the National Liberation War and the national emancipation of every Yugoslav group, including Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims. He asserted, "The term National Liberation War would ring hollow, verging on deceit, if it merely connoted a pan-Yugoslav sentiment without recognizing the unique national essence of each group. It has to signify not just the liberation of Yugoslavia but also the distinct liberation of Croats,

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[416] Atif Purivatra, "Stav Komunističke partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom pitanju Muslimana u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata," *Prilozi* 4 (1968): 491–531.

[417] Stolice conference was a military-political conference of the leadership of the Yugoslav Partisans in the village Stolice near Krupanj in present-day Serbia. Amongst other vital decisions for the advancement in the war, the unified name *partisans* and the red star as an identification symbol were adopted for all fighters led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. See, https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Yugoslav_Resistance

[418] Purivatra, "Stav Komunističke partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom pitanju Muslimana u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata." 493

[419] Famous Yugoslav Communist newspaper printed illegally in various locations between 1929 and 1942. It contains first printings of the articles written by the most famous Yugoslav members of the National Liberation Army. The newspaper was distributed by the underground movement of Partisans, where articles were then reprinted in separate publications. See, https://www.abebooks.com/YUGOSLAVIAN-UNDERGROUND-PARTISAN-MAGAZINE-PROLETER-ORGAN/22497340283/bd

Slovenes, Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Muslims. A triumph over the invaders is unattainable without full participation from all Yugoslav ethnicities within the Partisan ranks."[420]

Throughout the war and its aftermath, Tito consistently highlighted the unique ethnic identity of Bosnian Muslims and affirmed their parity with other groups. This sentiment was especially pronounced in a radio broadcast celebrating Victory Day on May 9, 1945 (defeat of the Axis powers and conclusion of the war in Yugoslavia). Addressing Yugoslavia via the Belgrade radio station, Tito specifically lauded Muslims, among other Yugoslav ethnicities, underscoring that the war's success hinged on their collective efforts. Tito's wartime narrative consistently championed a united Yugoslav nation where all ethnicities stood as equals.[421]

4.1.4 Concluding Remarks

The onset of the Second World War in Yugoslavia marked two pivotal occurrences: the abolishment of the monarchy and the Yugoslav communists' advocacy for war against both Axis powers and internal adversaries. Preceding the war, the interwar period witnessed escalating polarization among the diverse Yugoslav ethnic groups and nationalities, resulting in division among former cohabitants. However, Yugoslav communists gradually initiated efforts to unite disparate factions in pursuit of a shared goal: national liberation against both domestic and global adversaries. Josip Broz Tito's assumption of leadership within the Yugoslav Communist Party catalysed transformative events, guiding the Yugoslav people through unprecedented female participation in warfare, that will be further discussed, eventual victory in the Second World War, and the subsequent implementation of comprehensive societal, cultural, political, legislative, and economic reforms in the socialist state that emerged after the war's end in 1945, that will be tackled in the following chapter.

Prompted by dissatisfaction with their status in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, certain Bosnian Muslims, despite the coercive nature of assimilation efforts, opted to align with the

[420] Purivatra, “Stav Komunističke partije Jugoslavije prema nacionalnom pitanju Muslimana u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata.” 494
[421] Purivatra.

pro-Nazi Croatian state at the war's outset, only to face increased discrimination and erasure of their cultural and ethnic identity. This discrimination extended to the conservative attitudes of Croatian authorities toward the role of women, including Muslim women. Meanwhile, Yugoslav communists under Tito's leadership were gradually emerging, having operated clandestinely for decades, covertly planning a communist revolution inspired by the Soviet proletarian liberation struggle. As they spearheaded the revolution, Yugoslav communists embraced the diverse nationalities within Yugoslavia, actively involving Yugoslav women, including Muslim women, in the forefront of the National Liberation War, a historic event not only in Yugoslavia's annals but also on the global stage. The incorporation of women, particularly Muslim women, was a gradual yet distinctive process, leading to the advancement of educational and political liberation for Muslim women through AFŽ (Anti-Fascist Front of Women) war courses, which will be explored further in subsequent sections.

4.2 Yugoslav Women and Second World War

Throughout history, global conflicts have consistently sparked significant societal changes due to their immense devastation and widespread loss. Ivana Pantelić suggests that, much like the First World War, where women in Great Britain and France assumed crucial roles by stepping into industries and various professions to replace men, a similar shift occurred in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, albeit with a focus on military participation. Women's engagement in Yugoslav battlefields, particularly through the Partisan movement, left an enduring mark on their societal status, fundamentally transforming their roles and contributions.[422] The onset of the Second World War heralded a transformative period for the role of Yugoslav women in society. Within a traditionally conservative Yugoslav milieu, the emergence of women on the warfront, particularly as combatants, was a groundbreaking development. While women were initially perceived as caregivers and secondary supporters, they progressively took active roles on the frontlines, standing shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts.

[422] Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*.

Moreover, Barbara Jancar-Webster characterizes the engagement of Yugoslav women in the National Liberation Movement from 1941 to 1945 as a defining epoch in contemporary history. The Yugoslav Communist Party, amplifying its pre-war efforts from the late 1930s to mobilize women, strategically positioned them against its adversaries. For Yugoslav women, this was not merely a battle against external foes but also a quest for self-liberation and parity with men in shaping the new Yugoslavia.[423]

4.2.1 Mobilization and Women's Roles in Partisan Units

The Yugoslav Communist Party, albeit with initial reservations due to entrenched biases, began to integrate women into the Partisan forces. Under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, the Party intertwined the narrative of women's liberation with their National Liberation Movement, envisioning a brighter future in a post-war socialist society. In this subsection I will also examine the establishment of the Anti-fascist Women's Front (AFŽ) as a pivotal moment, allowing Partisan women to articulate their political perspectives autonomously. The AFŽ was also crucial for education of women, including unprecedented numbers of Muslim women, which will be examined further in this chapter. Nonetheless, vestiges of patriarchy persisted, occasionally impeding women's advancement within both the Partisan forces and the Party. While the Party did not fully realize gender parity during the war, the introduction of female combatants and officers initiated a novel chapter in Yugoslav gender dynamics.[424]

Nevertheless, attaining higher political positions continued to pose a significant challenge for communist women. The Party's upper echelons were predominantly male dominated, with only a few women, such as Spasenija Babović and Vida Tomšič, ascending to prominent roles. Yet, as the armed resistance against the occupiers intensified, the Party began incorporating women, primarily driven by an acute demand for medical staff—a field traditionally linked with women.[425] A significant portion of the female doctors who enlisted were either sympathetic to the Party's cause or of Jewish descent, seeking sanctuary from German racial persecutions. During the Second World War, the National Liberation

[423] Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*; Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.
[424] Wiesinger, "Rat partizanki - Žene u oružanom otporu."
[425] Wiesinger.

Movement (NOP) benefited from the services of 173 volunteer female doctors and approximately 10,000 professionally trained nurses.[426]

Another vital responsibility of Partisan women was to nurture the youngest members amidst the chaos of war. The care and upbringing of children from the working class were regarded as crucial components of AFŽ's activism since the organization's inception. Even before the war, the Party had been attending to the children of imprisoned communist supporters and members. However, during the conflict, AFŽ's role took on a different dimension due to the immense loss of life. Consequently, numerous children were left orphaned, and it became AFŽ's duty to care for them by operating orphanages and children's hospitals even in the most challenging circumstances.[427] In addition to physical care, AFŽ women had to ensure proper upbringing and education for the children, as many of them were not attending school. Therefore, the staff chosen for these institutions needed to possess comprehensive knowledge that could meet all the requirements for the children's care.[428] Nevertheless, with the inception of children's concentration camps and the overwhelming loss of young life, both AFŽ and the Party were compelled to radically alter their approach to rescuing children from the clutches of the occupiers.[429]

When it comes to female combatants within the Partisan forces in the war's initial stages, they were relatively few and far in between and were primarily found within the Slovenian and Serbian contingents. The Serbian Provincial Committee articulated its perspective in a September 1941 document, suggesting that female comrades could be invaluable not only in their existing roles but also as armed fighters when required. Josip Broz Tito, reflecting the Party's stance, addressed the role of women in warfare for the first time in February 1942, acknowledging women's role in combat and as active participants in liberation. [430]

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[426] Wiesinger.
[427] Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije, "AFŽ i briga o djeci [AFŽ and Childcare]" (Belgrade, 1945 1941), Fond 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[428] "Kadrovi odgajatelja [Staff of Educators]," AFŽ i briga o djeci [AFŽ and Childcare] (Belgrade, 1945 1941), Fond 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[429] "Oblici rada na neoslobođenom teritoriju [Forms of Work in the Non-Liberated Territory]" (Belgrade: Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije, 1945 1941), Fond 141 AFŽ, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[430] Wiesinger, "Rat partizanki - Žene u oružanom otporu." 209

Notably, in February 1942, the Party also announced the Foča Ordinances, a landmark decree affirming women's rights within the Partisan units. Foča, a Bosnian town, stood as a nexus of the armed resistance, where Partisan units reconvened. The town also bore witness to significant civilian hardships amidst the civil war skirmishes. Drafted by the Party ideologue Moša Pijade, the Foča Ordinances, for the first time, acknowledged the contributions of women in both the Partisan units and the governing structures of the liberated zones. These directives conferred upon women the right to vote and the eligibility to be elected to the People's Councils, the emergent local governance bodies, thereby laying a foundation for prospective gender parity. Additionally, the Foča Ordinances vested the People's Councils with the authority to orchestrate and oversee educational endeavours, encompassing schools, courses, and reading rooms.[431]

Engaged in various activities throughout the war, women partisans could be categorized into few broader groups based on their roles. In her study, Jancar-Webster outlined three categories of Partisan women: female combatants, women in auxiliary roles, and female leaders.[432] Her data indicates that 70 percent of these female combatants were under the age of 20, even though the official age criteria for Partisans ranged between 18 and 45 years. Conversely, other sources suggest that a significant portion of women engaged in the National Liberation Movement were in their 30s and 40s. Jancar-Webster narrated the experiences of several standout female fighters. For instance, Danica Milosavljević served as the commander of the First Battalion of the Second Proletarian Brigade in Serbia. She highlighted that many young women under her leadership were novices in military matters, with no feasible opportunities for training. Another young combatant, Majka Slovenic, recounted her initial encounter with a firearm, admitting her unfamiliarity until her unit commander instructed her in its use. Given their young age—with some as young as 14 and still in school—and lack of experience, many of these women tragically lost their lives on the battlefield. Out of 2 million Yugoslav women that had participated in the war, it is estimated that 100,000 were in the ranks of Partisans, and 25,000 were killed with 40,000 wounded. Remarkably, about 2,000 women ascended to

[431] *Fočanski propisi* (Foča; Sarajevo: Muzej Fočanskog perioda NOB; Oslobođenje, 1981).
[432] Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*.

officer positions.[433] While those women not fighting did engage in typically designated women's tasks within their units, such as nursing, cooking and knitting, they also took on the most challenging duties when necessary and even voluntarily sought them out. Numerous women also entered the Partisans while pregnant, which was strictly prohibited, yet it occurred and did not deter Partisan women from continuing to fight. [434]

However, the enlistment of Bosnian women into the National Liberation Movement has revealed significant social, economic, and educational disparities between the urban, educated minority and the majority of uneducated and illiterate women. Prior to the war, these women were primarily confined to domestic duties or employed in agricultural and industrial labour, accustomed to male dominance.[435] This polarity has caused difficulties to AFŽ in their emancipatory efforts and equal inclusion of the women into the revolution, however, after a certain period of time the progress became more evident, and women were becoming more receptive to their new positions in the society. Muslim women, Bošnjakinje, gave a great contribution to the National Liberation Movement. Their stance towards the NOP transformed from the hostility into a complete support and involvement into all facets of the anti-fascist and revolutionary war. The extent of their participation is however uncertain due to different perception of the communist ideology in different Bosnian cities, their relationship with the Axis allies and the revolutionary war. Nevertheless, Partisans were gradually winning over the Muslim population to their side with the increase of the liberated territories. Muslim women were also raising against the fascist and organising public protests.[436]

While women of all backgrounds were employing various resourceful strategies during the war, Muslim women demonstrated additional ingenuity through the utilization of

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[433] Jancar-Webster.

[434] Ždralović, "II DIO: 1941–1945. Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena." Moreover, special women's units were established in liberated areas to assist in the reconstruction of burned houses, repairing roads, safeguarding harvests in partially liberated territories (under the slogan 'Ni zrna žita okupatoru!' meaning 'Not even a grain of wheat to the occupier!'). These units also managed children's homes and hospitals, engaged in disease prevention efforts, and handled other significant tasks behind the combat scenes. See, "Pomoć narodnoj vlasti u organizaciji pozadine na oslobođenoj terirotiji [Assistance to the People's Government in the Organization of the Background on the Liberated Territory]" (Belgrade: Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije, 1945 1941), Fond 141 AFŽ, Box 10, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[435] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

[436] Jela Bićanić, "Muslimanke u borbi [Muslim Women in Combat]," *Nova Žena*, no. 1 (February 1945): 8.

their traditional garment. Interestingly, the "zar" and "feredže" (the veil), which have been contested aspects of Muslim women's attire and lifestyle, have played a strategic role in warfare tactics against enemies, not only among Muslim women but also among individuals of other faiths and even men. Women utilized the veil as a disguise for transporting ammunition, bombs, and propaganda materials without arousing suspicion. Members of the KPJ, such as Dušanka Kovačević, Vahida Maglajlić, and Rada Vranješević, frequently wore veils during their visits to the NOP's secretary, Đuro Pucar Stari.[437] Following the war, when anti-veiling campaigns were launched, many Muslim women supporting these efforts argued that veiling had remained crucial during the conflict. They asserted that it provided an effective cover for smuggling bombs and guns to the liberation army, thereby protecting activists from imprisonment and serving as a vital support tool for the NOP.[438]

However, the more conservative segments of the Muslim community, along with those harbouring anti-communist sentiments, expressed disapproval of Muslim women's participation in the Partisan movement. This led to a pervasive sense of mistrust toward Partisans among Muslim peasants. However, perceptions began to shift when Muslim women well-versed in Qur'anic teachings, joined the movement, thereby bridging cultural and ideological divides and earning the trust of their fellow Muslims.[439]

4.2.2 Antifascist Women's Front in Politics and War

As women significantly joined combat units, they also began gradually advancing in the ranks of the Partisans, assuming some positions within the highest institutions of the liberated territories governed by the Partisans.[440] For instance, during the inaugural session of the Anti-fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) on November 26, 1942, held in Bihać to determine the nature of the resistance and the future Yugoslav state, Kata Pejnović participated as a delegate. Additionally, at the second session in 1943, eleven women delegates were present, including Maca Gržetić and Spasenija Cana Babović, who

[437] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*. Women were involved not just in combat but also in a range of war strategies such as road demolition, cutting telephone wires, gathering ammunition, extracting ammunition from cities, and serving as couriers, and so on. See, "Period rada od 1941 - 1945 [Work Period From 1941 - 1945]" (Belgrade: Centralni odbor AFŽ Jugoslavije, n.d.), Fond 141 AFŽ, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[438] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[439] Jahić.
[440] Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*.

were members of the AVNOJ's presidency. Other attendees included Judita Alargić, Anka Berus, Marija Ivančić, Mitra Mitrović, Kata Pejnović, Mara Rupena Osolnik, Milica Šlander Marinko, Mara Naceva, and Nada Sremac.[441] According to Ivana Pantelić, during the second session of AVNOJ, where the government of the new Yugoslavia was established under the name National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ), 269 delegates were present, with women comprising only 4 percent of the Partisan legislators. The NKOJ consisted of seventeen members, none of whom were women.[442]

Despite the slow progress of women in entering politics and attaining high positions traditionally held by men, the Anti-fascist Women's Front of Yugoslavia (AFŽJ), an all-female organization, emerged as a pivotal force. It offered women a historic opportunity to actively engage in political activism and exert influence, marking a significant milestone in women's involvement in public affairs. Established by leading communist women in the Partisan movement in Bosanski Petrovac in 1942, during the inaugural national conference of AFŽJ, this gathering represented a significant effort on the Yugoslav level to convene women delegates from prominent Partisan ranks, pre-war Women's Movement activists, young women who became active during the war, and members of the Partisan army. Josip Broz Tito also participated in the conference, addressing the audience and emphasizing the indispensable role of women in combat, highlighting their essential support roles. He underscored that while men were crucial on the battlefield, women were equally valuable, especially in providing support from the rear. The main objective of the conference was to establish a women's organization akin to the Soviet Zhenotdel, while also creating a framework for further political emancipation and literacy education for women by establishing networks with women from all territories in occupied Yugoslavia. Additionally, the conference aimed to emphasize women's equal involvement in Partisan affairs. Following Spasenija Cana Babović's speech at the conference, it became evident that the primary agenda was to encourage women to participate or intensify their efforts in all aspects of wartime activities.[443]

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[441] Pantelić.
[442] Pantelić.
[443] Pantelić; Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*; Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*.

Pantelić contends that while this AFŽ conference did not yield extraordinary emancipatory shifts within the Partisan ranks or during the formation of the socialist state, it does signify a pivotal period in establishing an organization that enabled women to gather independently for political purposes for the first time in Yugoslav history.[444] Additionally, according to Chiara Bonfiglioli, contrary to the widely held belief of predominant conservatism during the Second World War and the bias against left-wing women's organizations by anti-communists, women demonstrated notable political activism through organizations such as the Anti-fascist Women's Front of Yugoslavia. This activism proved crucial for the revolutionary war against the Axis powers in both Western and Eastern Europe.[445]

Evidently, the Party devoted considerable resources to the political education of women, aiming to familiarize them with Partisan objectives and emphasize their equality with men. References to the Soviet Union's stance on the "woman question" were frequently made in conferences and Partisan assemblies. However, it remains uncertain to what extent non-Party women and men grasped these concepts. Reports suggest that while women from northern Herzegovina (referring to Muslim women) offered support, they seemed indifferent to the Party's political agenda and the concept of gender equality.[446] A significant number of individuals affiliated with the Partisans had an incomplete understanding of the Party's objectives and the envisaged transformations of traditional gender norms. In contrast, experienced female communists had a distinct understanding of their roles within the AFŽ and the Party. They perceived gender equality within the context of the socialist revolution, without explicit feminist implications.[447]

The changing perception of AFŽ's activism became increasingly evident as the war advanced. Party officials, such as Milovan Đilas, who worked closely with Tito during the war and later served as his vice president, endeavoured to clarify any misconceptions about the organization's genuine objectives and its ability to endure beyond the war, despite facing

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[444] Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke*.
[445] Chiara Bonfiglioli ‘’Women’s political and social activism in the early Cold War era, the case of Yugoslavia,’’ Aspasia 8, (2014): 1-25
[446] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*.
[447] Batinic.

numerous challenges.[448] Đilas stressed the importance of public understanding regarding the Anti-fascist Women's Front, emphasizing that it was not merely a transient political tool formed solely for combating the Nazis, but rather a steadfast organization established to serve broader national movements in the fight against imperialism. He emphasized that the AFŽ would persist even after the defeat of Germany and its collaborators. While many perceived the organization as destined to dissolve, associating it solely with charitable activities such as knitting clothing items, Đilas insisted that comrades (drugarice) needed to dismiss such beliefs and grasp the genuine significance of the organization's activism in the current context. He asserted that the AFŽ would undoubtedly evolve in terms of its purpose, program, and activism, but it should perpetually remain a widespread fighting organization that attracts the masses, becoming an even more potent entity to lead the ongoing struggle for the betterment of the Yugoslav people's lives. AFŽ members observed that older Serbian AFŽs, established from the war's outset, were gradually fading, primarily due to exhaustion and waning enthusiasm, while those in newly occupied territories were notably active. While Đilas partially agreed with this viewpoint, he elaborated that this reasoning was not entirely valid and that comrades (drugarice) failed to recognize that the primary cause of these circumstances was the uneven uprising, which changed once Bosnia became the central battleground.[449]

It is crucial to note that Party leaders like Đilas regarded mere rhetoric and legislative advancements towards women's equality as insufficient. He criticized bourgeois feminists for their lacklustre advocacy for equality, likening them to pacifists who would abandon their principles once an imperial war broke out, or to so-called democrats who praised democracy only until the masses became involved. Therefore, he claimed, that equality of AFŽ's women, and women in general, could not be disputed given their active participation in the National Liberation War. Yugoslav women, fighting alongside men as equals for the liberation of their homeland, had demonstrated their courage and capability. Their equality became an inherent aspect of the liberation struggle, Đilas asserted. Addressing equality necessitates amplifying women's involvement in the public life of the people's government,

[448] Milovan Đilas, "Izgledi na razvoj Antifašističke Fronte Žena [Prospects for Development of Anti-fascist Women's Front]," *Žena u borbi* 1, no. 3–4 (1943): 3–6.
[449] Đilas.

not merely as "representatives of women", but as exemplary members of the nation. By doing so, they would garner support from other organizations in their efforts to dismantle conservatism and reactionism, which hinder the advancement of women's equality. Women should be placed in key roles within the organization, thereby earning admiration and backing from other women and the entire nation. This positions them as leaders and educators of the nation's finest individuals, and as nurturing figures who will offer their most outstanding daughters for the cause of liberation and a brighter future.[450] These speeches exemplify the communist officials' vocal support for the partisan women, their perceived equality with men, and rightfully deserved positioning in the society that cherishes brave and hardworking socialist women seen as role models for other women and all Yugoslav citizens, the narratives readily promulgated in the war press and public speeches.

Similarly, in his speeches to the Anti-fascist Women's Front, Josip Broz Tito often emphasized the pivotal role of the revolutionary war in liberating Yugoslav women, as well as the Yugoslav Communist Party's steadfast belief that women's transformed societal status would be upheld or even improved in post-war liberated Yugoslavia.[451] The Yugoslav Communist Party has consistently acknowledged the significance of involving women in different aspects of the revolutionary war,[452] and their representation in the media addressing Yugoslav women was a common occurrence during the war.

To some degree, the inclusion of women in combat units signalled the beginning of their struggle against traditionalism and prejudices regarding their roles, both within their family households and within Partisan units.[453] According to Jelena Batinić, the extensive involvement of women in the communist-led Yugoslav Partisan resistance stands out as one of the most remarkable aspects of the Second World War. Additionally, she highlights scholars' insights that the wars of the twentieth century have "exposed the fluidity of gender systems and, thereby, accentuated their dynamics," offering a fertile ground for

[450] Đilas.
[451] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.
[452] Ždralović, "II DIO: 1941–1945. Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena."
[453] Ždralović.

analysing gender dynamics.[454] Furthermore, Wiesinger suggests that research exploring the correlation between violence and construction, particularly in relation to gender perceptions, has uncovered prevalent conflicting narratives about women combatants in both primary sources and secondary literature. This discovery has opened avenues for their critical examination and analysis. Consequently, the depiction of a woman brandishing a weapon and partaking in violence has been subject to ridicule by certain authors, possibly stemming from a patriarchal framework that positions women as the "weaker" sex, opposed to such actions. The discourse surrounding women in combat may be influenced by diverse historical contexts and approaches to the subject. However, the interpretation of women participating in warfare often diverges into two perspectives: either as an ultimate act of liberation for women or as their exploitation for the benefit of others.[455]

The Party's officials actively promoted this narrative of emancipation and the transformation of gender roles. For instance, Tito would directly address anti-communists and conservatives, reassuring them that their belief that women would return to traditional domestic roles and be sidelined from decision-making after the war was completely unfounded. He stated, "However, women, comrades (drugovi i drugarice), have proven their maturity, showcasing their competence not only in domestic chores but also in combat with guns in hand, demonstrating their capability to govern and wield power."[456] In his report from early 1945, Đuro Pucar Stari, the secretary of the executive board of the National Liberation Front of Bosnia and Herzegovina, asserted that Yugoslav women were prepared and capable of undertaking any task, regardless of its complexity. This included responsibilities such as motherhood and managing households, as well as providing assistance and actively participating as soldiers in the war effort.[457] He proclaimed that the National Liberation Movement would bring together all women in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the banner of the Anti-fascist Women's Front, advocating for the idea of a new woman, prepared to face any challenge in the liberation and rebuilding of the homeland.[458]

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[454] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*.
[455] Wiesinger, "Rat partizanki - Žene u oružanom otporu."
[456] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*. p. 411
[457] Đuro Pucar Stari, "Naša žena u oslobodilačkom ratu [Our Woman in Liberation War]," *Nova Žena*, no. 1 (1945): 4–5.
[458] Jahić, *Muslimansko žensko pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini*.

The inclusion of women in partisan units brought about a profound change not only for the men within those units but also for their adversaries and the broader community. Observing women engaged in combat, fighting alongside a predominantly male military force, was an unprecedented occurrence in a region deeply entrenched in patriarchal traditions. While enemy soldiers often found themselves even more astonished and shocked upon realizing that significant losses were inflicted by women, Major William Jones, the first British officer to visit Tito's Partisans, expressed his surprise and admiration simultaneously, stating: "It was a strange yet most impressive sight when girls of eighteen and twenty went into battle with men... They were scattered throughout the ranks among the men, beautiful, healthy, strong girls, both dark and fair... the reality seemed fantastic."[459]

During the war, numerous Yugoslav women willingly joined the partisan ranks, but an examination of the rhetoric employed by Partisan leaders for recruitment and morale-boosting purposes offers a compelling analysis. Batinic illustrates that their approach was shrewdly crafted by blending traditional Balkan culture with a revolutionary narrative emphasizing emancipation and gender equality. Yugoslav communists fervently advocated for women's involvement in societal affairs on par with men, championing equal rights and opportunities. Additionally, they frequently drew upon heroic figures from patriarchal folk traditions, revered freedom fighters from South Slavic folklore, to mobilize the masses in a modern context. Importantly, they tailored their narrative specifically for women by incorporating imagery of legendary heroines to attract them to mobilization and "validate the 'partizanka' (female Partisan) in the eyes of the populace."[460]

As the concept of women warriors gained momentum, Vladimir Nazor, the Croatian poet, heralded the emergence of a "new type of women", referring to the female Partisan fighters. In his impassioned speech, he depicted them as the greatest contribution to wartime Yugoslavia, offering a definitive resolution to the "woman question" in the region. Addressing his audience, he proclaimed, "Above all of those women about whom the history of our peoples speaks and our folks' poems sing, like the Serbian mother of the nine

[459] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*. p. 1
[460] Batinic.

Jugovićs and the Croat Mother Margarita, the most radiant is the character of the Partisan woman… When our today's man says to a woman: 'Comrade!', it is not a conventional word, used customarily or out of curtesy – it is the word whereby the Partisan man admits that the Partisan woman is his equal in everything. For us, the woman question has been solved."[461] The poet likened the Partisan women to the legendary female Amazons, almost as if they were reborn in the Yugoslav territories. In this manner, Nazor delivered his address to the peasants from a liberated area in Croatia in 1944. His speech was extensively disseminated by the Partisan press and quoted in the subsequent decades, marking the inception of the glorification of female Partisans and their iconic portrayal in the public consciousness.[462]

4.2.3 Women's Magazines During the War

Women's press, fully edited by women, was taking an active role in showing the valour of Partisan women in the revolutionary war and disseminating the Partisan women's iconography. During the National Liberation Movement, it was estimated that 25 women's magazines were published. They served as an efficient tool for both mobilisation and cultural and educational uplift of women. The first such publication was "Žena u borbi" (Woman in Struggle), a newsletter issued by the Anti-fascist Women's Front from Croatia.[463] Certain magazines' editions were duplicated multiple times in different illicit printshops. Each duplicate was distributed from one group to another or conveyed by women activists to numerous villages, thus expanding the magazines' reach among women significantly.[464]

The press was controlled by the party, but women had significant agency in describing their experiences. Occasionally, however, high-ranking male politicians had to give their own validity to women's efforts. For example, Vlado Bakarić, the Political Commissar of the Croatian National Liberation Army, provided a statement for the magazine, asserting that the world admired not only the vigorous liberation fight of the Yugoslav people against aggressors but also the bravery of Yugoslav women in the national liberation war. Bakarić proceeded to recount the tale of a selfless Yugoslav woman, fully

[461] Batinic. 26
[462] Batinic.
[463] First wartime women's magazine published amid 1942. The journal has proven to be very effective in mobilizing the women of Lika and posed as an example for other wartime journals issued by various AFŽ forums. See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_Antifascist_Front_of_Croatia
[464] "Pomoć narodnoj vlasti u organizaciji pozadine na oslobođenoj terirotiji [Assistance to the People's Government in the Organization of the Background on the Liberated Territory]."

committed to the war, ready to sacrifice herself and everything she held dear. Initially, women were perceived as nurturers of the army and a source of reliance in the most challenging moments, but they later engaged in the most visible form of combat, rifles in hand, and "sacrificed their lives at the altar of the homeland". He stated, "Our country has produced many 'heroes in skirts'; our women have significantly contributed to the glory of our military. Holy are the memories of our fallen women – attackers, bombardiers, combatants." Women demonstrated their patriotism to the entire world, proving their equality with men in their fight for homeland liberation. Bakarić concluded with a steadfast belief that the Yugoslav National Liberation Army would realize Tito's pledge, promising women a better future as a reward for their sacrifices.[465]

Furthermore, Žena u borbi reported on stories pertinent to the National Liberation War, glorifying Partisans and their patriotism during the fight against multiple enemies, as well as the achievements of the Soviet Union and Allies and the progression of the Second World War.[466] Women were writing about that but also to validate the righteousness of women's decision to fight for the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement and promote education, political, and cultural literacy among women. [467] The importance of communist-led women's magazines was greatly valued for their role in educating women, particularly those from rural backgrounds, about aligning themselves with the right side in the war and thereby achieving self-liberation. A critical depiction of the previous regime, susceptible to fascist propaganda, was widespread, identified as the primary cause of the significant illiteracy and backwardness among women. It was believed that the old regime aimed to keep the masses obedient by keeping them ignorant.[468]

Women's magazines like "Žena danas" (Woman Today)[469] and "Ženski svijet" (Women's World)[470] congregated young anti-fascist women in Belgrade and Zagreb

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[465] Vlado Bakarić, "Žena u borbi - Borba [Woman in Struggle - Struggle]," *Žena u borbi* 1, no. 1 (1943): 1.
[466] Otmar K., "Uoči dvogodišnjice domovinskog rata [On the Eve of Second Anniversary of Homeland War]," *Žena u borbi* 1, no. 1 (1943): 8–9.
[467] Jela Bičanić, "Njegujmo stvaralačku snagu masa [Let Us Cherish Creative Power of Masses]," *Žena u borbi* 1, no. 1 (1943): 10–11.
[468] Bičanić.
[469] Women's magazine published in the period 1936-1940. While in the narrow sense this magazine represented social and political illustrated magazine, meant for entertainment and general education of women, in the broader sense it represented a mimicry of the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist voice of the illegal Yugoslav Communist Party. See, Stanislava Barać, *Časopis Žena Danas (1936-1940): prosvećivanje za*

respectively, resulting in constant banning by the authorities. Nonetheless, women continued to gather around these magazines and persisted as an example of empowerment, as well as fallen heroines, forming the foundation for the establishment of the Anti-Fascist Women's Front.[471] According to women themselves, the Anti-fascist Women's Front was born of war and the urgent need for women to be politically and culturally educated to lead the movement, connect organizations, and unite scattered committees around a single centre. A new kind of women's press emerged amidst war. This new press, like the entire organization, had a bottom-up establishment, created to serve the needs of the masses of women gathered around the AFŽ. The creation of magazines like "Žena u borbi", "Riječi žene" (Woman's Words), "Primorke" (Coastal Women), "Udarnice" (Crash Women Workers), "Dalmatinke u borbi" (Dalmatian Women in Struggle), and "Drugarice" (Women Comrades), just to name a few, provided an unprecedented opportunity for women from different areas of the country to read messages directed exclusively to them.[472]

According to an article in Žena u borbi, Yugoslav women viewed these magazines as a light in the darkness emerging from the liberation fight, which could be jeopardized by both Nazi forces and domestic traitors, determined to keep women in obscurity and slavery that had already lasted for centuries, and who felt disillusioned that Yugoslav women had finally joined the national liberation fight and realized who was the primary culprit for their ignorance, backwardness, and inferiority. [473]

Women, some of whom had never written more than a simple letter, expressed a burgeoning desire to contribute more extensively to the magazines. One woman voiced, "Comrades, I wish to write to you about everything I endured due to the bloody invader and their servants; I want to share every detail of my difficult life."[474] An article author from

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revoluciju: zbornik radova, Serija: Istorija srpske književne periodike / Institut za književnost i umetnost 34 (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2022).

[470] Progressive women's magazine published in Zagreb, Croatia during 1939-1941. This magazine was published by women for women that drew their inspiration from the French magazine *Les Femmes* (1934-1939), newsletter from the World Union of Women Against the War and Fascism (*Comité mondial des femmes contre la guerre et le fascisme*) published in Paris in 1934. See, https://www.kartografija-otpora.org/hr/punktovi/?marker_id=386&proj=5

[471] Bičanić, "Njegujmo stvaralačku snagu masa [Let Us Cherish Creative Power of Masses]."

[472] Bičanić.

[473] Bičanić.

[474] Bičanić. 10

Žena u borbi portrayed these women's stories as simply penned yet steeped in love towards the national army, the Communist Party, and the National Liberation Movement, which, in their view, would guide women and the entire nation towards a brighter future. Another magazine reader, a 60-year-old woman, shared that the publication had inspired her to learn to read and write. Numerous women came forward, confessing that they would finally be able to express themselves through literacy, freedom, equality, and participation in the people's government, and through the confidence that all of this would be preserved because the weapon (power) was now also in their hands.[475] The women's press played an invaluable role in education and political and cultural emancipation of women, promoting literacy as a fundamental prerequisite for successful participation in the National Liberation Movement and, concurrently, self-liberation.

Women's magazines also functioned as a means of commemorating Partisan women's fallen comrades who perished in battles or in concentration camps. The portrayal of a resilient young woman, who endured centuries of hardship, particularly since the outbreak of the Second World War, permeated the women's wartime publications. With her unwavering determination and resilience, she chose to confront adversaries who considered her inferior. Women were called upon to join the struggle alongside their oppressed counterparts. For the first time in Yugoslav history, women and men found themselves in a similarly vulnerable and subordinate position, necessitating a unified effort. However, women did not wait for an invitation; they willingly joined the war effort on their own accord.[476] Sara Bertić, a young student whose primary aim in life was to assist working peasants, bravely faced the fascist firing squad with her final words: "I fought for justice, I will die for justice...," while her mother stoically witnessed the horrific event.[477] The loss of these young women was mourned, but above all, utilized as a reminder of how women were and should be fighting for their homeland's liberation. Their sacrifices were glorified and seen as a foundation for the future heroines of the Yugoslav liberation war.[478] All these media created for women and by women also played the foundation for education efforts

[475] Bičanić.
[476] Slavonka, "One su dale svoje živote... [They (These Women) Sacrificed Their Lives]," *Žena u borbi* 1, no. 3–4 (1943): 23.
[477] Slavonka. 23
[478] Slavonka.

during the war, when the textbooks were non-existent and literate women were teaching other women to read and write by using these exact texts from the Partisan press.

4.2.4 Concluding Remarks

The onset of the Second World War signalled a significant shift in the status of Yugoslav women within society. In a deeply conservative Yugoslav and global context, the emergence of women onto the wartime stage, particularly in combat roles, represented an unprecedented development. Initially relegated to roles as nurturers and support personnel from the rear, women gradually began to assert themselves on the battlefield. Although with some reluctance, the Yugoslav Communist Party began to open its doors to women joining the ranks of the Partisans, marking a historic milestone. As the conflict increasingly focused on Bosnian territory, a growing number of Muslim women started to enlist in various capacities, challenging not only external aggressors but also domestic conservative prejudices. Furthermore, Yugoslav communists led their National Liberation Movement with a narrative of women's liberation, promising both women and the public a brighter future in the new socialist society achieved through revolutionary struggle. The Partisan revolution also provided a unique opportunity for primarily illiterate combatants, including Muslim women from rural areas of Bosnia, to receive education through literacy and educational courses aimed at familiarizing them with politics, military strategy, and communist ideology. This initiative played a crucial role in educating illiterate Partisan women, with wartime women's press serving as more than just a source of information. It also served as educational literature, propagating desired ideologies, and attracting more women to join the Yugoslav Partisans in their fight for the liberation of their homeland.

Coming together under the auspices of the Anti-fascist Women’s Front, which precipitated a historical shift in favour of women, Yugoslav Partisan women found themselves articulating their political views independently for the first time. However, despite the Yugoslav communists' vehement opposition to patriarchal norms, traces of patriarchy persisted, impeding women's advancement not only within the Partisan ranks but also within the Party. While the Party's efforts to integrate women into the communist system during the war were not fully realized, the decision to include women as combatants and officers marked an unprecedented era of gender relations in Yugoslavia, presenting Muslim women with an active role and the potential for increased inclusion in the future.

Ultimately, the educational and literacy programs organized by the Anti-fascist Women's Front initiated a path to education for Muslim women, a trajectory that continued beyond the war's end. This marked a new era of social transformation in the lives of Muslim women in Yugoslavia, catalysed by the initiatives of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

4.3 Education During the Second World War

The state of education for Muslim girls during the Second World War can be understood within the broader context of elementary education at that time. Owing to a scarcity of specific sources and literature on this topic, my analysis of their educational situation primarily focuses on the interplay of policies and ideologies from three key entities: the Croatian pro-Nazi government, the Muslim community, and the Yugoslav Communist Party, particularly concerning their stances on women and emancipation. After all, the reach of the Party in war education was not negligible.

To comprehend the Yugoslav communists' perspective on modernity, as evidenced through education and secularism, drawing parallels with the Enlightenment movement of the 18th century unveils significant similarities. These similarities inspired the ideology of Yugoslav communists, which spearheaded unprecedented reforms. Although the initiation of these reforms can be traced during the wartime period, their theoretical foundations had existed long before. Notably, a positive perception of "Yugoslavism" and Yugoslavia itself, along with the attainment of transnational legitimacy, became increasingly prominent and valuable from around mid-1943. Yugoslavism, defined as "a belief in the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural unity of the South Slavs, or support for their unification," had diverse manifestations even before the establishment of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1919, as discussed in the preceding chapter.[479] It was perceived as analogous to the "progressive" ideals of the 18th-century Enlightenment, embracing liberal democracy and revolutionary socialist radicalism. This perception extended from the era of Napoleonic rule over the South Slav territories until 1924. Therefore, the communists' Yugoslavism served not only as a revolutionary catalyst, igniting enthusiasm and influencing wartime strategies that shifted the tide of the conflict between 1941 and 1945, positioning itself on the victorious side of

[479] Djilas, *The Contested Country*. p. 15

the civil war. It was also a crucial element in maintaining power, seen as a direct consequence of its "progressive" ideological framework.[480]

As elucidated by Aleksa Djilas, the close association between Yugoslavism and progressive ideologies finds its roots in an early alignment with Enlightenment principles. Djilas suggests that according to one interpretation of the Enlightenment, this movement advocated for the supremacy of reason, sometimes referring to scientific rationality and at other times to a quasi-religious concept of reason capable of establishing an ideal social order. Furthermore, most interpretations assert that the Enlightenment promotes secular education and advocates for equality among various religions and denominations, vehemently rejecting the backwardness associated with ignorance, religious obscurantism, and clericalism inherited from the Dark Ages. Traditionalism and authority based on divine right and noble lineage are also strongly opposed. The primary objective of the Enlightenment is to educate the masses and emancipate them from the superstitious beliefs of the past.[481] Although it overlooked the significance of tradition, history, and collective memory, the Enlightenment revealed invaluable traits of various national identities. Only by transcending individual traditions, religions, and historical narratives was it possible to discern the shared characteristics of the South Slavic peoples—Croats, Slovenes, Bosnian Muslims, and Serbs. By shedding their imperial legacies, a new homogeneity emerged, offering great potential for the formation of a new community—the South Slavic (Yugoslav) nation.[482]

During the war, the Yugoslav communists aimed to institute a reformed education system rooted in communist ideology throughout the liberated territories, making it universally accessible regardless of nationality or gender. As detailed in preceding chapter, the interwar era in Yugoslavia featured an educational environment rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. However, the outbreak of global conflict severely disrupted this already delicate system, compounding its difficulties through extensive infrastructure damage and the mobilization of teaching personnel. Even before the war, Yugoslavia faced

[480] Djilas.
[481] Djilas.
[482] Djilas.

considerable shortages of schools and educators, a predicament exacerbated by the conflict.[483]

4.3.1 The Party's Education Opportunities During the War

Prior to the war, education for girls and women primarily cantered on basic literacy, domestic skills, or vocational training, such as agricultural or factory work, which did not align with the gender equality vision of Yugoslav communists. To address this disparity, the Party collaborated with anti-fascist groups to provide educational programs for women, even preceding the outbreak of war. In clandestine settings, women were introduced to Marxist theories and literature, while larger legal gatherings focused on educating masses of women about the Party's strategies against fascism and conflict. Conferences and counselling sessions were organized by the Party to further these educational efforts, with notable instances including counselling sessions in Split, Croatia, and Montenegro in 1940, accompanied by a specialized course for women in the same year. A continuous initiative involved the establishment of Marxist discussion groups across the country, providing women with opportunities to explore Marxist literature. This educational outreach, both before and during the war, played a crucial role in spreading Marxist ideology among communist women. Moreover, in Croatia, associations dedicated to women's education included groups focusing on the history of the Soviet Communist Party, a tradition dating back to 1933. The education of women workers primarily took place through syndicates in major urban centres, facilitated by the creation of women's sections within these organizations. Examples include sections within industries such as blacksmithing, textiles, and domestic services, with early establishments dating as far back as 1936 in Zagreb, demonstrating a concerted effort to enhance women's educational opportunities across various sectors of society. [484]

The Yugoslav communists were also actively involved in engaging with women at universities even before the war. In 1934, they established a youth section within the Women's Movement in Zagreb, which later expanded to Belgrade in 1936. This section brought together students who were informed about contemporary political events through

[483] "Vaspitni rad među ženama [Educational Work Among Women]" (Belgrade: Archive of Yugoslavia, 1940), The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[484] "Vaspitni rad među ženama [Educational Work Among Women]."

lectures and discussions. A similar endeavour was initiated in 1935 in Zagreb, specifically targeting university-educated women. The approach to women's education varied depending on their backgrounds. In urban areas, education was facilitated through organizations dedicated solely to women's education. For rural women, particularly those in farming communities, the "Village Circle" (Seljačko kolo) was established, led by communist women. These comrades (drugarice) would visit villages, offering courses and lectures covering political, educational, cultural, and health-related topics, often utilizing film screenings for effective communication. The Village Circle's outreach extended to all villages in Croatia and Bosanska Krajina[485].[486] Communist and other anti-fascist women played a significant role in these pre-war educational endeavours and also took the lead in teaching efforts within liberated territories and Partisan units, with a particular emphasis on women from rural regions.

Experience of these women in publishing, as explored before, was also valuable. Just in Bosnia and Herzegovina where majority of targeted Muslim women lived, the AFŽ published magazines such as "Žena kroz borbu" (Woman Through Struggle) in Eastern Bosnia, "Žena na putu slobode" (Woman on the Path of Freedom) in Herzegovina, "Nova žena" (New Woman), "Front slobode" (Front of Freedom), and "Hercegovka" (Herzegovian Woman).[487] These publications aimed to disseminate political messages among women, tailoring their content to reflect the unique characteristics of each Yugoslav republic. I would use magazine Nova žena as an example, whose publishing activities mainly took place in Sarajevo between 1945 and 1946, with a few issues published in Belgrade. Like other women's magazines during the war, Nova žena portrayed women as equal participants, liberators, nurturers, and as part of a unified Yugoslav identity. These recurring themes shaped the image of the new Yugoslav woman promoted through wartime media.[488] Another innovative approach was the use of "Wall Papers" (Zidne novine), which reported

[485] Bosanska Krajina is a geographical region, a subregion of Bosnia in western Bosnia and Herzegovina.
[486] "Vaspitni rad među ženama [Educational Work Among Women]," 2.
[487] Bojana Đokanović, Ivana Dračo, and Zlatan Delić, "PART III: 1945-1990 Women in Socialism – From Accelerated Emancipation to Accelerated Re-Patriarchalisation," in *Women Documented. Women and Public Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20th Century* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Centre, 2014).
[488] Nova žena could be found in the online archives of the Anti-fascist Women's Front. https://www.afzarhiv.org/. see also, https://viewpointmag.com/2018/09/30/the-creation-of-the-new-yugoslav-woman-emancipatory-elements-of-media-discourse-from-the-end-of-world-war-ii/.

on current events in a fast fashion.[489] For those considered "more advanced" the literature used for women's education was diverse and rich, encompassing works like "Babel: Women and Socialism," Fanina Halle's "Woman in the Soviet Union," Soviet magazines and illustrations, Marxist literature, and progressive French publications.[490] The core of the educational efforts were, however, crash courses.

From the beginning of the conflict the Party harboured emancipatory aspirations, emphasizing the promotion of basic literacy. However, this mission was met with significant challenges, and often prejudices towards Muslim and peasant women.[491] Peasants from East Bosnia, who assisted the retreating Partisans from Serbia during the winter of 1941-1942, were specifically observed as "backward", "ignorant" and "raw", and their "political unconsciousness" was the most frustrating for the Party.[492] Vladimir Dedijer, a high ranking Partisan, wrote in his diary about the Bosnian peasant fighters, saying, "In the volunteer units, 99 percent of the fighters are peasants. And these peasants politically are completely backward," Dedijer remarked. On another occasion, he referred to them as "a very raw element." Reports from Partisans, such as that of Gojko Nikoliš, the head doctor of the Partisan medical corps, depicted Bosnian volunteers with descriptions like "horrible cultural backwardness, overgrown hair and beards, scruffy and scabby."[493]

Similar sentiments were echoed in other regions, such as Bosanska Krajina or Sandžak[494], with also predominantly Muslim populations. Serbian Partisan testimonials often painted these individuals as "vulgar", "rude", and "politically backward", especially when referring to peasant women. According to a report by Milan Đilas after the Serbian Partisans' retreat to Sandžak, "Our people were too advanced for such primitive conditions…Our women could not accept the centuries-old backwardness of the Moslem housewives, whom they rounded-up and dragged to conferences".[495]

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[489] "Vaspitni rad među ženama [Educational Work Among Women]."
[490] "Vaspitni rad među ženama [Educational Work Among Women]."
[491] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*.
[492] Batinic.
[493] Batinic. p. 33.
[494] Sandžak is a historical geo-political region located in the southwestern part of Serbia.
[495] Batinic, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans a History of World War II Resistance*.

The prevalent illiteracy among peasants, particularly among women, presented a significant obstacle for the recruitment endeavours of the Yugoslav Partisans. The degree of illiteracy varied across the Yugoslav regions, with Kosovo leading with a staggering 93.9%, closely followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina at 83.9%. Communicating the program or communist ideology to people largely cut off from external influences was nearly impossible for the Yugoslav communists. Similarly, members of the AFŽ struggled to convey the threats posed by both foreign and domestic adversaries and the ideals of the National Liberation Movement to these women. A narrative cantered on class warfare and anti-imperialism was foreign to their everyday experiences. Dedijer recounted an incident from a 1942 conference in eastern Bosnia, where an AFŽ woman's attempt to address the audience faltered. Her speech was perceived as disjointed and unsuitable, filled with terminology unfamiliar to her peasant audience: "She babbled some foreign phrases to the peasant Muslim women: 'Tsarist absolutism, counterrevolutionary bands, chicanery, the Moscow metro, conductors, harassed women, state institutions, state institutions...' and so forth."[496]

Moreover, the communist rhetoric, especially concerning the improvement of women's lives and the assurance of gender equality, often fell on deaf ears among peasant women. Communist representatives frequently lamented the perceived unawareness of these women regarding their role in the national revolution and its wider implications. This included the idea that the war was a path to their self-liberation and the acquisition of rights.[497] Such lack of understanding was not only prevalent among unrecruited women but was also observed among those actively involved in the war within the AFŽ. Communist officials noted that even Partisan women seemed to have limited insight into the true significance of their struggle and its enduring impact on women's societal status.[498]

In order to promote literacy and women's liberation through struggle alongside that, the AFŽ's initiatives in orchestrating educational courses during the war marked a groundbreaking period, beginning from the very inception of the organization. The inaugural conference by the AFŽ members took place on July 5, 1942, following their first nine-day

[496] Batinic. 34
[497] Batinic.
[498] Batinic.

course.[499] The conference report revealed the event ignited immense enthusiasm among women from various villages in the Bosnian region of Kordun. The women, proudly bearing flags emblazoned with the central red star, lined up in anticipation, eagerly waiting for their fellow attendees from the course to start their speeches. Speeches focused on the role of the AFŽ, but also about the women in the Soviet Union. The conference's inclusion of poetry recitals, crafted by peasant women, and the closing with the "Women's Anthem" (Ženska himna), underscored the transformative dimensions of the movement. The fact that village women spoke publicly for the first time speaks volumes about the conference's impact. It not only offered a platform for expression but also a promise of educational opportunities.[500]

The AFŽ was committed to educating as many women as possible. Alongside basic literacy courses, they also offered specialized training for selected activists.[501] Those individuals were among the most devoted to the AFŽ and the Party. It was anticipated that they would bring back this freshly acquired knowledge to the organization and bolster the cause even further. Prioritizing combativeness and loyalty over extensive knowledge, even if it was minimal, was paramount. Nonetheless, the organization recognized the varying capacities of different women to learn and ensured that the knowledge acquired by those attending courses was somewhat commensurate with their abilities.[502] Participants initially gained fundamental knowledge before advancing to more complex studies, which included interacting with AFŽ press materials, embodying the principle of ongoing learning. The introductory courses primarily attracted members from local and municipal boards before being expanded to include other committee members eager for knowledge. The AFŽ advocated for tailoring course programs to address the specific needs of various regions, with significant involvement from main, provincial, and regional boards in designing these tailored educational curricula. This approach highlighted the AFŽ's dedication not only to

[499] "O našem zboru [Regarding Our Assembly]," Izveštaj o radu AFŽ-a (Belgrade, 1942), Fond 141 AFŽ, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[500] "O našem zboru [Regarding Our Assembly]."
[501] Vanda Novosel, "Konferencija: Naši kursevi anti-fašističkog fronta žena i finalni utisci o AFŽJ, 1943 [Conference: Our Courses of Anti-fascist Women's Front and Final Impressions About AFŽJ, 1943]" (Belgrade: Archive of Yugoslavia, 1943), The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[502] Novosel.

expanding educational opportunities but also to ensuring their pertinence and efficacy in empowering women across diverse local settings.[503]

Moreover, AFŽ presented a programme of a lower-level course from one of their organisations that could serve as a model for others. The program consisted of the following: 1. National Liberation War: This section covered the goals and characteristics of the war, including: a) The capitulation of Yugoslavia, uprisings, the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia, the National Liberation Army, and Partisan squads of Yugoslavia. b) The role of the Yugoslav Communist Party in the National Liberation War. c) The role of the Soviet Union in the ongoing liberation war. d) The Anti-Hitler coalition: comprising the Soviet Union, England, and America. e) The identification of domestic traitors, governments in exile, and other reactionary factions and groups. f) The vision of a Democratic Yugoslavia of equal nationalities – covering the goals of the National Liberation Movement, the significance of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia), and national councils, among other topics. 2. Women's equality: This section addressed: a) The status of women in capitalism and under fascism. b) The role of women in the first socialist country of the USSR. c) The involvement of women in the National Liberation War, emphasizing their importance for the National Liberation Movement and the equality of women – discussing the outcomes of the National Liberation struggle. 3. AFŽ – as a mass organization of the National Liberation Movement: This part focused on: a) The tasks assigned to the AFŽ, encompassing political activities, assistance to the National Liberation Army, support in organizing the rear, and other related tasks. b) The structure and functions of the organization. c) The organizational relationships of the AFŽ with other political entities. The AFŽ also included topics such as monarchy, the concept of federation and its principles, as well as what constitutes Yugoslavia as a federation. Additionally, women were instructed in military and political matters using maps.[504]

The organization acknowledged that periodic revisions to their program were inevitable, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of the organization itself over time. Despite these changes, the core focus on women's political education would remain

[503] Novosel.
[504] Novosel.

consistent, encompassing daily conferences, lectures, meetings, roundtables, and similar events. The AFŽ emphasized the importance of women understanding the organization's perspective on domestic and foreign policies, as well as the roles of the USSR and the government in exile. Fulfilling these objectives was viewed as essential to sustaining and advancing the organization's primary mission of politically empowering women.[505]

4.3.2 Education in Bosnia During the War

The extent of the AFŽ's educational initiatives in Bosnia becomes particularly striking when contrasted with pre-war statistics. These figures revealed that 87.65 percent of Bosnian women and 56.46 percent of men were illiterate. This educational gap was significantly wider between rural peasants and urban residents, primarily due to the scarcity of schools in many rural areas. The educational policies of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had resulted in a staggering 70 percent illiteracy rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 1941, indicating that education was predominantly accessible to a wealthy minority and highlighting the overall low level of education among the population.[506]

The regions unaffected by conflict did not fare much better during the war. From the beginning, the Bosnian education system was significantly shaped by the policies of the Independent State of Croatia, departing from those of the former Yugoslavia.[507] Disenchantment with the previous educational system provoked by the nationalistic and discriminatory politics towards the Muslim communities, focusing on pro-Serbian/Orthodox, tone-deaf curricula tailored to propagate desired political agenda and subdue Islamic teachings and thought, was reflected through the media.[508] Schools and curricula underwent a transformation to align with the ideology of the new Ustasha regime, which involved a shift to extolling Croatian nationalism and Nazi Germany's values. This adaptation saw Bosnian schools altering their spelling conventions, holiday celebrations, and significant dates, along with introducing new curricula and textbooks. In high schools, the focus of language studies shifted from English and French to German and Italian, mirroring Croatia's

[505] Novosel.
[506] Hadžimusić, "Opismenjavanje stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine u periodu narodnooslobodilačkog rata (1941-1945)."
[507] Hadžimusić.
[508] Hamdija Mulić, "Našoj školi svanut će ljepši dani [Better Days Will Dawn for Our School]," *Novi Behar* 14, no. 2a–3 (July 1941): 55–57.

foreign policy alignments. The Ustasha's newly established Ministry of Education set up a dedicated department for state elementary schools, known as "pučke škole", or regiment schools. Besides these state-run institutions, there were private elementary schools and Catholic elementary schools managed by nuns, which benefited from the close relationship between the state and the Church. Meanwhile, Muslim students had the option to attend mektebs. Reflecting a common trait of authoritarian regimes, including the preceding Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Croatian government aimed to use the educational system as a key tool for disseminating its pro-Nazi ideology. The 1941/42 academic year marked the introduction of a revised school plan and program tailored to the Ustasha state's objectives. Although the elementary school curriculum saw no significant overhaul, "national subjects" like Croatian language, history, and geography were emphasized. The Croatian language was positioned as the cornerstone of all educational efforts. In history, the focus was exclusively on Croatian history, while geography lessons were concentrated solely on Croatian territories,[509] which did not differ from the interwar Yugoslav government's organization of the educational system that favoured their own nationalistic agenda. The ravages of war severely impacted the already limited educational infrastructure and workforce. Additionally, a significant number of teachers and students were arrested, or they abandoned their educational pursuits to join the National Liberation Movement.[510]

On the opposing side, the Partisan movement established three core objectives for their educational division, aimed at eradicating illiteracy. These included the elimination of adult illiteracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adapting primary education to the challenging conditions of war, and training teachers for literacy courses and elementary schools. The first initiative to combat illiteracy began with the formation of the initial combat units, marking the onset of wartime education efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These units were referred to as the "first literacy schools" or "first people's schools" (Prve narodne škole), where educational activities were conducted alongside military operations. In these settings, soldiers were often seen reading proclamations, disseminating radio news, reproducing printed texts, and even practicing writing while on guard duty. In addition to

[509] Hadžimusić, "Opismenjavanje stanovništva Bosne i Hercegovine u periodu narodnooslobodilačkog rata (1941-1945)."
[510] Hadžimusić.

military units, initially, Party organizations were the primary facilitators of cultural events. However, over time, these responsibilities shifted to literacy organizations and other governmental entities. Meanwhile, the Communist Party laid down fundamental directives for the battle against "darkness and ignorance," emphasizing the importance of enlightenment through education.[511] As already stated previously, since a significant number of women were part of the Partisan units, they were also engulfed in these efforts.

By the conclusion of 1942, the educational department in the Livanj region had made notable advancements in training teachers for literacy courses. These initiatives provided young instructors with the necessary skills to teach reading, writing, and basic mathematics to both children in elementary schools and illiterate adults. Notably, educators Nijaz Alikadić and Cecilija Čabo, based in Livanj, developed an innovative manual titled "Partizanska abecedarka" (Partisan Alphabet). This manual served a dual purpose: it offered lessons for teaching children the alphabet while simultaneously promoting the ideals of the National Liberation Movement. With the expansion of elementary schools, Alikadić and Čabo proceeded to create a more comprehensive manual known as "Livanjski bukvar" (Livanj's Alphabet Book) or "Partizanski bukvar" (Partisan Alphabet Book). This new publication, spanning 32 pages, focused on alphabet instruction and included an additional 12 pages featuring short stories and lessons. It incorporated texts that conveyed the principles and accomplishments of the Partisan struggle to students, effectively integrating education with the promotion of socialist values and ideologies.[512]

Beyond the confines of Partisan units, the Anti-fascist Women's Front played a pivotal role in the educational sphere of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The courses offered by AFŽ were frequently regarded as distinctive educational institutions, essential for empowering women for meaningful engagement in the country's public and political arenas.[513] As detailed by Amila Ždralović, Lydia Sklevicky classifies the educational initiatives of the AFŽ into three specific tiers. The initial tier involved arranging literacy courses for women, a program that commenced prior to the official formation of the AFŽ. Ždralović and

[511] Hadžimusić.
[512] Hadžimusić.
[513] Đokanović, Dračo, and Delić, "PART III: 1945-1990 Women in Socialism – From Accelerated Emancipation to Accelerated Re-Patriarchalisation." p. 68.

Sklevicky emphasize the substantial influence of these endeavours, underscoring how mothers acquired literacy skills alongside their children and the adept use of motivational slogans and imagery in promoting the courses, such as "Death to illiteracy – education is a weapon against the enemy."[514] The second tier concentrated on politically educating women, acquainting them with the National Liberation Movement, principles of equality, and encouraging their autonomous engagement. The third tier encompassed women's involvement in and advocacy for the women's wartime publications. Across diverse social settings, women's education has consistently stood out as a pivotal element in facilitating their equitable involvement in societal affairs, guaranteeing them comparable opportunities to men in every sphere. Ultimately, when examined from this perspective, the cultural and political initiatives of the AFŽ substantially advanced the continued liberation of women in society, throughout and following the Second World War. This impact transcended mere educational efforts, playing a foundational role in shaping a more just post-war society.[515]

The efforts of the AFŽ even inspired many targeted women to express a strong desire to enrol and participate in the courses organized by the organization, often conveying such sentiments directly to the educators. For instance, Desa Kovačević, a member of the local board from Vrlika in Bosnia, made a courageous decision to leave her home and attend a health course in Bihać. Reflecting on her family's inability to understand her aspirations, Kovačević lamented, "Imagine, comrades, at home they do not comprehend my yearning for education. They fail to grasp the significance of this revolution for us women. It is frustrating how they remain oblivious. How can they live like that?" Demonstrating exceptional performance in her course, she aimed to pursue further education, this time focusing on political matters.[516] The story of Marija Vidović provides another poignant perspective. A board member from Dalmatian-Kotor, she tragically lost her life at the hands of fascists shortly after acquiring the ability to read and write. In her inaugural letter, she expressed her determination and pride: "I am honoured to dedicate my first letter to you. Remember when I promised to learn how to write? That day has arrived. You cannot deny me the opportunity to attend the Livno course now. I must participate in the very first one

[514] Ždralović, "II DIO: 1941–1945. Drugi svjetski rat i iskustva bosanskohercegovačkih žena."
[515] Ždralović.
[516] Novosel, "Konferencija: Naši kursevi anti-fašističkog fronta žena i finalni utisci o AFŽJ, 1943 [Conference: Our Courses of Anti-fascist Women's Front and Final Impressions About AFŽJ, 1943]." p. 1.

available… With revolutionary greetings, Marija." In occupied territories, some Partisan women bravely conducted courses, traversing from village to village despite challenging circumstances to evade detection by enemy forces.[517] The narratives of these women, alongside numerous others spanning all age groups, mirrored a collective endeavour to foster increased involvement in this revolutionary educational initiative. The AFŽ recognized that although these courses indicated progress, the absence of comprehensive planning and a standardized program hindered swifter advancement. These accounts underscore the resilience and resolve of women in seeking education and advancing the revolutionary agenda amid significant turmoil.

Occasionally, these stories served as effective means to differentiate the progressive nature of the communist partisan movement from the contrasting Chetniks. For instance, during a regional conference in Bosanska Krajina, Sava Damjanović remarked on the Chetniks, characterizing them as a "disorganized group of cattle" that expressed surprise at witnessing Partisan women confidently signing their names. She advocated for an increase in reading materials as a response to that.[518]

Education within Partisan units often took place in improvised facilities and programs within the territories they controlled. Despite efforts to standardize these initiatives, they often varied widely, encompassing political and military instruction, vocational training, or basic literacy programs. Although these educational opportunities were frequently limited in scope and reach, they served as vital resources for women striving to pursue education amid the turmoil of war. In liberated territories or within their own ranks, Partisans made significant efforts to sustain educational practices by organizing various cultural and educational activities despite continual disruptions by enemy forces. These spontaneous initiatives eventually evolved into more organized forms of work following the emergence of the "Partisan written word" through pamphlets, newsletters, and propagandist brochures. This correspondence later evolved into well-organized Partisan newspapers. The first Partisan war newsletter in Bosnia and Herzegovina was "Gerilac" (Guerrilla), published after the first successful Partisan combat action in Bosanska Krajina in

[517] Novosel.
[518] Novosel.

August 1941, continuing throughout the war to inform about significant warfare events and NOP propaganda.[519] In conjunction with this form of communication, a new type of cultural teams emerged within each unit, tasked with arranging various events across rural areas, including recitals, songs, theatrical performances, lectures, and promotions for the NOP cause. These events quickly became the most popular and effective cultural gatherings, attracting numerous young individuals to join the NOP movement.[520] Numerous women encountered a lack of educational opportunities, worsening pre-existing gender inequalities in accessing education. In the midst of turmoil, self-education became a crucial alternative.

Ultimately, women's emancipation and liberation from the shackles of traditionalism and patriarchy represented one of the main objectives during the National Liberation Movement in Yugoslavia.[521] However, one could argue that this objective was not entirely achieved through the activism of AFŽ during the war years. Sklevicky uses the example of the Croatian AFŽ to illustrate the importance of discussing the organization's tasks at the time, and how the Party failed to achieve equal and complete inclusion of women into their ranks. These tasks included: 1) Supporting the National Liberation War effort by aiding the army through food and monetary donations, charity work, and organizing the rear to ensure normalcy in liberated areas. This involved implementing social policies such as caring for children, the wounded, disabled, and others in need. 2) Personal goals and positioning within the organization could be defined as achieving political and cultural emancipation, as well as integration based on equal treatment within the National Liberation Movement and the struggle for the establishment and consolidation of a new society.[522]

These tasks were interrelated and commenced with the political empowerment of women to become autonomous political entities with democratic principles, entailing either passive or active participation in the election of members of the people's government bodies from the inception of the NOP. Cultural emancipation involved enabling women to comprehend and utilize all aspects of political empowerment fully. This necessitated women's education or cultural enrichment through diverse courses, including hygiene,

[519] Gajić, "Kulturna aktivnost u Bosni i Hercegovini u toku narodnooslobodilačkog rata."
[520] Gajić.
[521] Sklevicky and Rihtman-Auguštin, *Konji, žene, ratovi*.
[522] Sklevicky and Rihtman-Auguštin.

health, history, and more, which were organized even in occupied territories, as well as encouraging reading and involvement in women's magazines. However, Sklevicky argues that most communist leaders and task implementers failed to perceive political emancipation as an exercise in political free will, and cultural emancipation as a process crucial to the third task: the equal integration of women into the people's government. A "sectarian" approach towards women during their induction into the NOP or the Communist Party was criticized, impeding the complete fulfilment of the third task.[523]

4.3.3 Concluding Remarks

The Second World War had a profound and disruptive effect on the education of girls and women in Yugoslavia. The conflict led to the closure and destruction of numerous educational institutions, as well as the mobilization of teachers and students for the war effort, exacerbating existing gender disparities. Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, certain women found alternative avenues to pursue their education, particularly in regions controlled by the Partisans, the Communist resistance movement. These clandestine and improvised educational initiatives led by the communists and the Anti-fascist Women's Front, while often constrained in scope, offered women opportunities to continue their studies, primarily focusing on political, military, and vocational training essential for participation in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement. This resilience amidst wartime challenges underscores the adaptability and resolve of women, particularly those from Muslim communities, to persist in their education under adverse circumstances.

The education of Muslim girls during the Second World War can be understood within the broader context of elementary school education. However, due to the scarcity of sources and literature specifically addressing this topic, I examined girls' education through the political and ideological frameworks of the Croatian government, the Muslim community, and later the Yugoslav communists concerning women's emancipation and elementary education. Despite persistent efforts by the KPJ's Partisans and the AFŽ to promote education and create conditions for elementary schooling in liberated territories, the number of girls attending elementary schools remained minimal during the war due to pervasive conservatism propagated by the Croatian pro-Nazi government and many Bosnian

[523] Sklevicky and Rihtman-Auguštin.

Muslim intellectuals. Significant disparities in the education of Muslim girls only became evident after the establishment of the Yugoslav socialist state in the post-war period. Nonetheless, the educational initiatives and activities during the war were invaluable in initiating Muslim women into broader emancipatory efforts led by the Yugoslav Communist Party in the future.

5 Education in Socialist Yugoslavia

In this chapter I will analyse education of Muslim girls and women in socialist Yugoslavia following the Second World War. The period saw a radical transformation of the Yugoslav society, with the grand emancipatory project and complete overhaul of existing educational system. New education was universal, based on new principles, and aimed to be equally accessible for both girls and boys. Since Muslim women were at the centre of socialist modernization project, this chapter will scrutinise new position of women in the nascent state. I will analyse the legal changes that enabled the reform of the educational system and its effects on the Yugoslav Muslim community, while focusing on the educational introduction of the Muslim girls.

I argue that the friendly dynamic between the communist authorities and the Islamic Religious Community had a beneficial impact on the Party's educational efforts, which aimed to challenge traditional gender order even amidst a backdrop of entrenched patriarchal values. However, this chapter will also reveal that, despite the revolutionary strides in education and workforce participation, many communists continued to perpetuate conventional stereotypes about Muslim women and their societal roles, indicating a tension between the modernizing impetus and lingering traditional perceptions.

In this chapter I will also conduct a detailed examination of the textbooks and curricula created to educate the youth as they begin their journey as citizens of the new state. My investigation will concentrate on the language in arts and social studies materials at the elementary school level, dissecting the discourse employed in their development. This analysis is premised on the understanding that language is not just a means of communication but also an instrument of power, inherently prioritizing certain narratives over others.[524] Furthermore, I will analyse the role of policymakers and educational stakeholders, investigating how they infused their ambitions and visions for nation-state construction into specific educational policies.

Due to the lack of literature on the elementary education of the Muslim girls, I will use popular women's magazines as one of my main sources to bridge the gap. In an attempt to answer my own questions, I will shed some light on this specific niche. A great

[524] Arystanbek, "Sex Education (or the Lack Thereof) in Kazakhstan."

contribution to KPJ's emancipatory campaigns was given by the women's magazines. These magazines were published by the party, and were mostly written by women authors, comprised of articles on various topics relevant to women of this era. The party was utilising magazines to propagate the word about the rebuilt of the country and socialism including women as much as possible, encouraging other women to join, get educated and become even greater patriots. Gordana Stojaković tried to elaborate what women's press or magazines truly meant and what kind of content they entailed without using stereotypical forms of their definition. In the broad sense, she continued, this kind of press encompassed from trivial to professional, scientific and political topics targeting miscellaneous audience of the female gender.[525] Though the study of women is not new, examining women through the lens of their personal experiences, as depicted in these magazines, offers a more nuanced and distinctive comprehension of the world as perceived through their eyes. Hence why this women's media represents a valuable source of the matters pertaining solely to women, observed through their own unique perspectives.

Some of the main magazines I am analysing are "Zora" (The Dawn)[526], "Žena danas" (Woman today)[527], "Nova žena" (A New woman)[528], and "Islamski Glasnik" (Islamic Gazette)[529]. These magazines discussed women's attendance of literacy, hygiene, and other

[525] Gordana Stojaković, *Rodna perspektiva u novinama Antifašističkog fronta žena (1945-1953)* (Novi Sad: Zavod za ravnopravnost polova, 2012).

[526] Zora was an organ of the Anti-fascist Women's Front organization for Serbia, published in the period 1945-1961 in Belgrade. See, https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/135497/Krhka-zenska-emancipacija.

[527] This magazine was initially operating between 1936 and 1940, established by the group of young left-wing women mostly students from the University of Belgrade that were either members or sympathizers of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Žena danas had a great contribution in the anti-fascist movement during the 1930s, as well as subsequently in the work of AFŽ and the Yugoslav Communist Party. One of the key members was Mitra Mitrović. See, https://ifdt.bg.ac.rs/events/revolucija-i-emancipacija-mitra-mitrovic-i-zena-danas-1936-1940/ The publishing work of the magazine was reestablished in 1943-1944 with 'four war issues'. It's existence was concluded in 1981. The magazine was created as a feminist newsletter of AFŽ of Yugoslavia that alongside the women's emancipation propagated antifashism and pacifism, that is communism. See, https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr-ec/Жена_данас_(часопис).

[528] The magazine Nova Žena performed its publishing activities in the period 1945-1946 and was established by the AFŽ of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The primary consumers of the journal were women in the villages and towns, that the organization tried to bring closer to literacy and attract to and familiarize with the AFŽ's ideology and work. See, https://viewpointmag.com/2018/09/30/the-creation-of-the-new-yugoslav-woman-emancipatory-elements-of-media-discourse-from-the-end-of-world-war-ii/. See also, http://www.afzarhiv.org/items/browse?collection=5&page=2.

[529] Islamski Glasnik was an official newsletter of the Islamic community in SFRJ with the first issue published in 1933, the year of its establishment. It was initiated by the Supreme Leadership of the Islamic Community in Belgrade. The magazine was published regularly until 1945. In the next five years, the work of the magazine was stopped until 1950, when it resumed its publishing activities. See, https://islamskazajednica.ba/index.php/islamska-zajednica/glasnik.

courses, acclamations of the work of the Anti-fascist women's front, news from the politics pertaining to the Communist Party, and the world events during and after the end of fascism. The most relevant for me among these articles were the ones describing the educational processes and policies in general, but most importantly the ones of the Muslim women and girls, which were in minority. I will examine the language used in these publications, the message it sent, and the way the popular narrative circulating in the media at the time has influenced the public perception of the Muslim girls and women's education. My understanding of language aligns with Teun A. van Dijk's argument that significance of language in actual usage implies an indispensable connection to the social dimension of language.[530] That is to say, the language use has proven to be inseparably corelated to the "interactional functions and social contexts of the verbal communication: language and discourse thus mark or 'indicate' their relevant social parameters and are treated as manifestations of social action of a specific kind."[531]

Furthermore, Ramanathan and Bee Hoon have scrutinized Van Dijk's influential conceptual framework, commonly referred to as "Van Dijk's ideological square," which is constructed upon four principles enabling nuanced ideological analysis to delineate varying ideological positions portrayed through media. These four principles are as follows: 1) Highlight positive attributes about "Us"; 2) Highlight negative attributes about "Them"; 3) Downplay negative attributes about "Us"; 4) Downplay positive attributes about "Them". These four principles encapsulate a comprehensive contextual strategy of portraying oneself positively while portraying others negatively.[532] They were frequently employed in the media, whose primary objective is to disseminate information about world events to a broad audience.[533]

Through an examination of discourse in textbooks, educational policies, women's magazines, and texts by Yugoslav officials, this chapter looks at how women, particularly Muslim women, were instrumentalized to advance a wider social strategy. Muslim girls and women were frequently spotlighted in media discussions, being a critical concern for the

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[530] Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse Analysis: Its Development and Application to the Structure of News," *Journal of Communication* 33, no. 2 (1983): 20–43.
[531] A. van Dijk. p. 22
[532] Renugah Ramanathan and Tan Bee Hoon, "Application of Critical Discourse Analysis in Media Discourse Studie," *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015): 57–68.
[533] Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes*.

Yugoslav Communist Party. The nature of these discussions and the arguments put forth by both the Party and Muslim community leaders reveal the Party's intent to integrate Muslim women into the socialist modernization project, creating active members and upholders of the new, modern society according to their own ideology, alongside the Muslim community's willingness to engage with these new norms. Finally, this chapter illustrates how numerous Muslim girls and women seized upon these newfound opportunities to forge meaningful careers for themselves.

5.1 Building a New Socialist Society

As the Yugoslav communists emerged victorious in the civil war and liberated Yugoslavia, with Soviet assistance, they became the sole political authority. They seized this opportunity to transform Yugoslav society into a socialist state modelled after the Soviet Union.[534] As per KPJ's notion of consolidating the socialist state, it was imperative for the state apparatus to be overseen by the Party, which led the proletariat.[535] According to Marko Fuček Yugoslav socialists aimed to foster greater interaction between the state and society while striving to establish a socialist society that would nurture future generations inclined to reject the state itself. Following the widespread devastation wrought by the Second World War, the KPJ concentrated on rallying the nation to rebuild the war-torn country and establish the framework for a new system.[536]

In the new state, the Yugoslav Communist Party's primary goal was the political, social, and cultural modernization of what they considered a backward society under the slogan of "brotherhood and unity".[537] This slogan resonated deeply with the diverse Yugoslav population during the state's socialist transformation. It would also be the cornerstone of the new education system. It symbolized a bond among Yugoslav nations ('brotherhood') highlighting their Slavic roots and a version of Pan-Slavism, and "unity" represented the integration of these nations, fulfilling their longstanding aspirations and

[534] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.
[535] Fuček, "Konsolidacija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma kroz ideološke aparate države."
[536] Fuček.
[537] Dennison I. Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (Berkeley: Published for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, by the University of California Press, 1977).

interests.[538] Dennison Rusinow contends that this sense of unity began to emerge during the war against a common adversary, with tales of Partisan valour becoming legendary, highlighting the struggle for the liberation of all Yugoslav compatriots and the wider world. The narrative of the Partisans would subsequently become intertwined within post-war educational frameworks. Influenced by Marxist principles and the Leninist-Stalinist notion of "building socialism" in developing nations, Rusinow added, the agenda involved transforming a predominantly agrarian, undereducated, and illiterate society into an industrialized and literate one. Lastly, in pursuit of these objectives, the new government concentrated on advancing socialist, cultural, and political ideologies, with the aim of guiding the Yugoslav people from socialist democracy toward communism.[539]

5.1.1 Soviet Influences

The Marxist and socialist ideology embraced by the Yugoslav Communists bore significant influence from Lenin and Stalin. Given that many were educated in the Soviet Union prior to the establishment of the socialist state in Yugoslavia after Second World War, it was unsurprising that the early Yugoslav systems closely resembled Soviet strategies. These strategies encompassed swift industrialization and the centralized mobilization of resources.[540] Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party persisted in applying their own adaptation of Stalinist reforms within the Yugoslav context, which also extended to reforms in gender relations. According to Ivan Simić, Yugoslav communists endeavoured to transfer, negotiate, and implement Stalinist gender policies that influenced legal transformations in Yugoslavia, particularly during the extensive modernization efforts following the Second World War. Generally, the absorption of Soviet ideas, whether through Soviet literature, pamphlets, or direct education in Moscow, held significant sway over Yugoslav communists before, during, and after the war. Their interpretation of these concepts laid the groundwork for how Yugoslav communists planned to reshape society through reform.[541]

At the political level, a significant event in Yugoslav socialist history unfolded in mid-1948 with the outbreak of the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict over Yugoslav foreign policy.

[538] Vesna V. Godina, "The Outbreak of Nationalism on Former Yugoslav Territory: A Historical Perspective on the Problem of Supranational Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 4, no. 3 (1998): 409–22.
[539] Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*.
[540] Rusinow.
[541] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.

Ultimately, Stalin expelled the Yugoslav Communists from the Comintern. Ivo Banac observes that the entire conflict caught Tito off guard. Tito's attempts to showcase the loyalty of the Yugoslav Communist Party to Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist doctrine, as proclaimed at the KPJ's Fifth Congress in July 1948, proved unsuccessful in bridging this divide.[542] Tito's aspirations for regional autonomy, and Stalin's aim to create a monolithic socialist bloc under Soviet control were at the core of the conflict.[543] The discord between Tito and Stalin not only triggered internal strife within the KPJ but also profoundly influenced women's emancipation efforts and the future direction of Yugoslav educational policies, which veered away from those of the Soviet Union. Within the Party, Stalin's supporters were actively persecuted and labelled as national adversaries. They endured trials and severe penalties, such as the loss of voting privileges and forced labour. Numerous women who had served as Partisans during the war faced repercussions if found culpable. Following their incarceration, these women encountered challenges in reintegrating into society and the workforce.[544]

5.1.2 Woman Question

Despite the conflict with the Soviet Union, in addressing the issue of women's rights and reforming gender relations, the KPJ predominantly relied on Marxist and Soviet ideological frameworks. Alastair McAuley simplifies the Marxist perspective on women's rights by explaining that it views women's subordinate position under capitalism as resulting from their reliance on men within the bourgeois family structure. According to this view, abolishing private property would alter traditional family dynamics, freeing women from domestic roles and facilitating their involvement in various social, economic, and political spheres. Thus, the socialist revolution was regarded as a means to eliminate gender inequality and the exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie.[545] These ideas were

[542] Banac, *With Stalin against Tito*.
[543] Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*.
[544] Đokanović, Dračo, and Delić, "PART III: 1945-1990 Women in Socialism – From Accelerated Emancipation to Accelerated Re-Patriarchalisation."
[545] Alastair Mcauley, "Review: The Woman Question in the USSR, Woman in Russia. by Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus," *Slavic Review* 38, no. 2 (June 1979): 290–93, https://doi.org/10.2307/2497088. p. 290.

repeated numerous times by the leading Yugoslav communist women in their reports and media speeches.[546]

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia actively sought to reshape many aspects of women's lives in the socialist society, emphasizing a balance between new responsibilities and support mechanisms such as increased availability of kindergartens and maternity leave. Among the diverse roles women assumed post-war, the figure of the woman worker (radnica) was particularly exalted.[547] Women were expected to be deeply engaged in the rebuilding of the war-torn nation and the restoration of its infrastructure. They were depicted as "working heroes"—volunteers who were self-aware and independent, possessing strong, muscular bodies devoid of traditional feminine traits. These images, which dominated billboards, movie magazines, and socialist illustrations, not only presented a stark departure from conventional representations of women but also posed a challenge to male dominance and traditional patriarchal family structures, unsettling even to the creators of these new icons of womanhood. [548]

5.1.3 The Constitution of 1946

Initially, Yugoslav communists endeavoured to achieve such women's equality through radical legal reforms inspired by the Soviet model. Simić highlights that in the USSR, Article 122 of the 1936 Soviet Constitution granted women equal rights across various aspects of life, encompassing employment, education, social security, as well as provisions for maternal and child welfare, and access to maternity care facilities. Similarly, the Yugoslav 1946 Constitution, particularly Article 24, reflected these Soviet principles, extending analogous rights and liberties to women. This was aligned with Article 23, which guaranteed fundamental women's rights, such as the right to vote and hold any state office, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, educational attainment, or place of residence, for all

[546] Vida Tomšič, "Postoji li kod nas žensko pitanje [Does Woman Question Exist in Our Society]," *Žena danas*, no. 99 (September 1952): 1–2.
[547] Katz, "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1945."
[548] Katz. p. 149.

citizens aged 18 and above. Regarding education, the new constitution separated church and state, firmly placing education under state jurisdiction.[549]

Through the adoption and minor adaptation of the Soviet constitution, Yugoslav communists sought to overhaul a legal framework that would grant them the authority to transform what they perceived as a deeply conservative and patriarchal society. However, these reforms, implemented abruptly, encountered resistance in a society ill-prepared for such drastic changes. The imposition of Soviet-style laws, particularly those pertaining to gender equality, marriage, divorce, and abortion, directly challenged existing norms and encountered significant opposition, as detailed by Simić.[550] The resistance intensified notably when these reforms were introduced to the Yugoslav Muslim community. The enduring Islamic traditions within this community posed a significant challenge to the socialist project's endeavours to confront the "Muslim woman question", with targeted measures directed at this group specifically during the KPJ's emancipatory activities.[551]

5.1.4 The Idea of Backwardness

The notion of "Oriental backwardness", pertaining to the Muslim population and especially women, and the imperative for reform in gender relations were not exclusive to Yugoslav communist ideology; they were widespread across the Balkans and Europe, drawing notable influences from Turkey and the USSR. The transformative reforms spearheaded by Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s, which modernized the deeply entrenched religious symbols of Ottoman society into a secular Republic of Turkey, served as a significant source of inspiration for Yugoslav communists. This influence notably shaped their approach to addressing the "Muslim women question", as discussed in the initial chapter. Following the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia, this sentiment found resonance in the media as well. For instance, Yugoslav magazines praised Kemal Ataturk's profound impact on the lives of Turkish women, which prompted the author of a relevant article to reflect on their changed perceptions. Witnessing a modern, emancipated society where women enjoyed equality and freedom from patriarchal constraints left a lasting

[549] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*; Katz, "O društvenom položaju žene u Bosni i Hercegovini 1942.-1945."
[550] Ivan Simić, "Soviet Model for Yugoslav Post-War Legal Transformation: Divorce Panic and Specialist Debate," *Annual for Social History,* no. 2 (2015): 83–101.
[551] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*. p. 155

impression.[552] Similar narratives were found in magazines like "Nova Žena" and "Naša Žena", as the Soviet approach to the Muslim women question in Central Asia was also highly regarded. Yugoslav magazines readily translated Soviet texts, and wrote about Soviet Uzbekistan,[553] or general reforms initiated by the Soviet state, but led by very orientalist notions.[554]

The Yugoslav Communist Party viewed the entire Yugoslav nation as being in a state of backwardness and widespread illiteracy. However, given the high levels of illiteracy and the specific living conditions of Muslim girls and women, this issue posed a significant challenge for the Party. The situation prompted the Party to enact an educational law mandating compulsory elementary education for both boys and girls, thereby integrating Muslim girls into the schooling system from a young age. Moreover, the issue of illiteracy was a frequent topic of discussion in socialist women's media, with particular emphasis on its prevalence among Yugoslav Muslim women and the urgent need to eradicate this outdated practice. The authors of these articles were typically women who supported the communist idea of rapid emancipation and encouraged non-Muslim women to take action to promote literacy among their Muslim counterparts. The government often cited data from 1931 regarding literacy rates, stating that only 15 percent of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina were literate. For example, before the war, only three girls attended elementary school in Cazinska Krajina, but by 1945, this number had increased to 556 girls and 1387 boys.[555]

The communists believed that while enrolling individuals in schools was an initial step, the true integration of Muslim girls and women into modern Yugoslav society necessitated their unveiling—shedding the final vestige of "orientalism" and Ottoman influence.[556] As Nova Žena articulated, through the narrative of people's liberation, Muslim women were trailblazing a path toward their own emancipation and enhancing their

[552] "Sa puta po Turskoj - Bez zara, feredže [From the Trip Around Turkey - Without Zar, Ferezhe]," *Zora*, no. 112 (1955): 8.
[553] "Žene Sovjetskog Uzbekistana [Women of Soviet Uzbekistan]," *Zora*, no. 15–16 (December 1946): 18–19.
[554] V. I. Lenjin, "Sovjetska vlast i položaj žena [Soviet Government and Women's Positioning]," *Zora*, no. 44 (April 1949): 10–11.
[555] Mila Bajalica, "Bosna i Hercegovina neće ostati nepismena [Bosnia and Herzegovina Will Not Stay Illiterate]," *Nova žena*, no. 2 (April 1945): 7.
[556] Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism."

previously dire circumstances.[557] A report from May 14, 1946, by the AFŽ in Sarajevo, addressed the organization's efforts in engaging Bosnian women, particularly Muslims, in the Party's activities, cultural and political engagements, and the adherence to its directives. The report, however, highlighted the sluggish progress and disappointing participation among these women, largely hindered by the conservative influence of their religious leaders, which obstructed their public engagement and overall liberation.[558]

5.1.5 The Matter of Veiling During Socialism

According to communists, traditional values attributed to Islam were holding women captive by restricting their access to the public world, by imposing the veiling and denying their basic rights to education and employment.[559] The KPJ's main culprits for this unfavourable positioning of Muslim women were their fathers and husbands, male authoritative figures that kept their daughters and wives in "slavery" and "perpetual darkness", by hiding their faces behind the veil and disallowing their presence in the public sphere. They were disregarding the detail that some women were in fact active opponents of unveiling due to various cultural, religious, and personal reasons. As Simić observed, Muslim women were perceived as victims of outdated practices within Muslim communities and religious customs that were labelled as "oriental" and "foreign", associations linked with the Ottoman past and considered "inferior". Consequently, Muslim women, particularly those from rural backgrounds, were regarded as the most "backward" in the entire country in the eyes of the Party.[560]

By relegating Muslim women to the lowest rung of this newly established social hierarchy, the KPJ essentially created a class of disadvantaged individuals who were seen as urgently requiring intervention from their socialist compatriots. Asserting a position of moral superiority, the Party held itself responsible for emancipating these women from the constraints of patriarchy and ensuring them the same rights and equality enjoyed by non-Muslim women. This perspective regarding Muslim women originated within Yugoslav communist circles but was also evident in other contexts such as Kemalist Turkey, the Soviet

[557] Bićanić, "Muslimanke u borbi [Muslim Women in Combat]."
[558] Milošević Ljubica and Tatlić Nadira, "Glavnom odboru AFŽ-a za B. i H. [To the Main AFŽ Board for Bosnia]" (Sarajevo: Okružni odbor AFŽ-a Sarajevo, May 14, 1946), Fond 141 AFŽ, The Archive of Yugoslavia. Archive of Yugoslavia
[559] Simić, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*.
[560] Simić.

discourse in Central Asia, Riza Shah's Iran, socialist Bulgaria, and even in the writings of British rulers in the Middle East.[561] Simić stated that the narrative of backwardness permeated the ruling parties of the regions mentioned, suggesting that the media played a significant role in legitimizing the discourse.[562]

Although the Yugoslav communists showed interest in the Kemalist reforms of the Republic of Turkey, it appears that their ideological inspiration mainly stemmed from the Soviet approach to this issue in Central Asia. Adrienne Edgar elucidates those Soviet policies regarding Muslim women in Central Asia led to a radical transformation of their lives.[563] The Bolsheviks viewed Islamic communities in the Soviet Union as culturally "backward" and believed they required extensive emancipation efforts, with a primary focus on Muslim women. This process of emancipation involved implementing legal measures to safeguard women from forced marriages and arbitrary divorce, providing extensive educational opportunities, and empowering rural women to achieve economic independence.[564] Edgar contends that the Bolsheviks were resolute in their efforts to eliminate outdated practices and customs that marginalized and oppressed women, viewing it as integral to the construction of socialism. One of the most widely publicized demonstrations of this stance was the campaign against veiling, which reached its peak with mass public unveilings in 1927. The act of veiling was seen by the Bolsheviks as symbolic of what they considered Muslim backwardness.[565] The parallels between the principles of the Soviets and the Yugoslav Communists regarding the "Muslim woman question" are glaringly apparent, except for the implementation, which varied in numerous aspects explored later in this chapter. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav communists drew considerable inspiration from the interwar Soviet approach to addressing the Muslim woman question in Central Asia, a topic that has received significant scholarly scrutiny.[566]

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[561] Simić.
[562] Simić.
[563] Adrienne Edgar, "Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 252–72.
[564] Edgar.
[565] Edgar.
[566] Aside from Edgar, see also, Paolo Sartori, "Towards a History of the Muslims' Soviet Union: A View from Central Asia," *Die Welt Des Islams*, A Muslim Interwar Soviet Union, 50, no. 3/4 (2010): 315–34. M. A. Tolmacheva, "The Muslim Woman in Soviet Central Asia," *Central Asian Survey* 12, no. 4 (January 1993): 531–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/02634939308400836. Marlène Laruelle, ed., *Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities*, Eurasian Studies Library, VOLUME 9 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018).

Consequently, it is crucial to delve into the origins of the "Muslim woman question" in the Soviet Union. In the late nineteenth century, within Central Asian Muslim cultures under Russian Imperial control, many women engaged in agriculture and urban occupations adhered to the practice of veiling (covering their hair, face, and body) when venturing outside their homes. By the 1920s, as these cultures evolved into the states of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and other Central Asian republics, the issue of women's veiling became a subject of public debate and a national concern requiring government intervention. Drastic anti-veiling policies and persecution by Soviet authorities led to the gradual disappearance of this custom during the Soviet era, only for it to resurge in the early 1990s.[567] However, according to Paolo Sartori, insufficient research has been devoted to Soviet Muslims during the period following the Second World War under the governments of Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Sartori elaborated that Adeeb Khalid, one of the scholars who addressed the post-Second World War Muslim situation, viewed Islam as "a component of the national cultural heritage of the titular republics". Researchers have also examined Muslims' religious life during this period, but their studies have relied solely on documentation originating from the state apparatuses that controlled it.[568] Therefore, I primarily focused on analysing the influence of the Soviets on Yugoslav gender reforms, which originated from the interwar era when significant changes were implemented in the execution of gender policies concerning Soviet Muslim women.

Considering the indispensable role played by AFŽ in the nascent socialist state and their dedication to implementing KPJ's policies, such as unveiling campaigns, it is essential to begin the discussion on veiling by elucidating the significance of this women's organization in Yugoslav society. Following the culmination of the Second World War, at the inaugural Congress of Anti-fascist Women's Front of Yugoslavia held in Belgrade in 1945, Tito issued directives to the organization pivotal for the nascent socialist state. These directives encompassed the imperative to uphold brotherhood and unity, continue the struggle against adversaries of the new state, engage in the reconstruction efforts of the country, prioritize women's education, undertake humanitarian initiatives for war veterans and families who lost loved ones during the war, support orphaned children, and instil in the

[567] Kamp and Borbieva, "Veiling and Unveiling in Centra Asia - Beliefs and Practicies, Tradition and Modernity."
[568] Sartori, "Towards a History of the Muslims' Soviet Union: A View from Central Asia."

youth the ethos of the People's Liberation Struggle (Narodnooslobodilačka borba).[569] In the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina present at the congress, out of 176 women, 44 were Muslim.[570] While addressing the AFŽ and women in general at the congress, Tito emphasised the importance of peace, new directives for the rebuilt of the country, as well as the accomplishment of the women's rights that were provided by the People's Liberation War, giving this speech an ideological and politicised tone.[571]

In Yugoslavia, similarly to Soviet's Zhenotdel, AFŽ played a pivotal role in implementing the Communist Party's directives, notably in organizing educational, unveiling, and literacy initiatives during and after the war. Vida Tomšič, a prominent Slovenian lawyer, former partisan, and high-ranking communist figure, emerged as a central figure within the AFŽ. Holding significant positions within both Yugoslav federal government and Slovenian republican institutions, she led the AFŽ from 1948 to 1952. Chiara Bonfiglioli underscores Tomšič's continuation of her wartime activism into the post-1945 period, advocating for women's political, social, and economic parity in Yugoslavia. Her approach, blending Marxist principles with institutional agendas, reminiscent of contemporary "gender mainstreaming", prioritized economic and social progress alongside women's involvement in policymaking as pathways to liberation.[572]

Further discussions on the AFŽ's role in the political and educational emancipation of women underlined the importance of educational enlightenment as a prerequisite for the adoption of the political knowledge,[573] which implied unveiling for Muslim women. Illiterate and poorly educated women, which mainly referred to Muslim, were frequently portrayed as potential threats to national security and as vulnerable targets susceptible to exploitation by enemies. As explained by an author in an article from Zora magazine, ignorance provides fertile ground for manipulation by adversaries, and women were often utilized as conduits for spreading propaganda due to their perceived gullibility and cultural and political backwardness. However, the modern Yugoslav woman is actively pursuing literacy and

[569] Jasmin Jajčević, "„Uz Tita i Partiju". Djelatnost Antifašističkog fronta žena Bosne i Hercegovine i njihove reakcije na propagandu Informbiroa tokom 1948. i 1949. godine," *Historijski pogledi* 4, no. 5 (May 2021): 102–29.
[570] Jajčević.
[571] Jajčević.
[572] Chiara Bonfiglioli, "On Vida Tomsic, Marxist Feminism, and Agency," *Aspasia* 10, no. 1 (2016): 102–68.
[573] Nada Bogdanović, "Pojačajmo rad na političko-prosvetnom uzdizanju žena [Let Us Intensify Work on the Political and Educational Upbringing of Women]," *Zora*, no. 13 (September 1946): 6.

political empowerment to guard against the deceit of reactionary factions and to assert her rights bestowed upon her by the socialist revolution.[574] The narrative emphasizing the significance of literacy and education at the national level was pervasive in the media. Women were depicted as susceptible to naivety and ignorance, which was perceived as a potential threat to the integrity of the entire state. To prevent this scenario, it was deemed imperative for every Yugoslav woman to attain literacy and political acumen.

Jasmin Jajčević highlighted the distinctive socio-political influence of the AFŽ in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a region characterized by diversity and intricacy. Despite their notable contributions, women encountered difficulties stemming from the diverse expectations placed upon them as comrades, workers, mothers, and housewives, often marginalizing them within society.[575] In a similar vein, Mihaela Miroiu criticized communism for providing a constrained form of women's emancipation, as it did not fully free women from traditional family obligations and state patriarchy. The ideology disregarded feminist viewpoints, exemplified by the initial Aleksandra Kollontai's advocacy for women's emancipation as a fundamental aspect of the communist revolution.[576] Finally, Ivana Pantelić offered a critical perspective on the AFŽ, recognizing its contribution to post-war reconstruction and women's political representation. However, she observed that the organization's influence was primarily symbolic within an authoritarian society, with its initiatives frequently subordinate to the Communist Party. Nonetheless, the AFŽ's significance as the inaugural entity facilitating women's autonomous organization and public engagement remained unparalleled and indispensable, enduring even after its disbandment in 1953.[577]

A significant focus of AFŽ efforts in the new socialist state was the unveiling campaigns in Muslim communities, addressing the conflict between traditional customs and communist socio-economic reforms.[578] The campaign commenced with the adoption of the

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[574] Bogdanović.
[575] Jajčević, "„Uz Tita i Partiju". Djelatnost Antifašističkog fronta žena Bosne i Hercegovine i njihove reakcije na propagandu Informbiroa tokom 1948. i 1949. godine."
[576] Mihaela Miroiu, "Communism Was a State Patriarchy, Not State Feminism," *Aspasia* 1 (2007): 197–201, https://doi.org/doi:10.3167/asp.2007.010110.
[577] Ivana Pantelić, "Antifašistički Front Žena Jugoslavije i njegovo ukidanje - Primer patrijarhalnog (dis)kontinuiteta," *Antropologija*, no. 1 (2020): 73–90.
[578] Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism."

"Resolution on the Movement of Muslim Women for the Removal of Zar" (Rezolucija o pokretu muslimanki za skidanje zara) during the Second Congress of AFŽ of Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 13 and 14, 1947. The drafting committee of the resolution included Zehra Muidović, Sida Omerbašić, Mara Mitrov, and Antonija Mandžić. A year later, at the Second Congress of AFŽ of Yugoslavia, held from January 25 to 27, 1948, the activism expanded, highlighted by the declaration from the Education Minister of the People's Republic of Serbia against veiling as a hindrance to progress. The Congress endorsed a "Report on the AFŽ's Initiatives and Objectives" (Referat o radu i zadacima AFŽ), with a focus on literacy and veil removal. The issue of women's illiteracy was contextualized within the practice of veiling, with fervent communist efforts aimed at eradicating what they perceived as a backward oriental legacy that hindered Muslim women from realizing their full potential. The Party equated veiling with illiteracy, viewing it as a primary barrier to the dissemination of educational practices within the Muslim community. Through these educational endeavours, the AFŽ and the communists sought to underscore the detrimental consequences of veiling and persuade Muslim women and their families to relinquish what they regarded as a regressive tradition.[579]

Tea Hadžiristić argues that the Party utilized the AFŽ as a vehicle for implementing a ban on veiling, symbolizing the establishment of new identities for women in the nascent socialist state. The act of unveiling, particularly among Muslim women, represented the repudiation of the former Oriental system and heralded a "cultural revolution" for women, entailing enhanced educational opportunities, workforce participation, and heightened political consciousness. According to Hadžiristić, the state employed the bodies of Muslim women as symbols of advancement toward state consolidation and the promotion of secularism and multiethnic unity.[580] Additionally, Angeles Ramirez underscores that exerting control over female bodies plays a pivotal role in shaping Muslim identities and overseeing Muslim communities in Europe, where regulations regarding Muslim women's attire, such as veiling, serve as mechanisms for population management. Specifically, both legal measures, whether prohibiting or mandating the covering of Muslim women, represent a

[579] E. Pavelkić, "Drugo rođenje Haše Šašivari [Second Birth of Haša Šašivari]," *Zora*, no. 53 (January 1950): 20–21.
[580] Hadžiristić, "Unveiling Muslim Women in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Body between Socialism, Secularism, and Colonialism." p. 185.

method of population discipline,[581] which aligned with the Party's intentions of creating a homogenous society.

The KPJ's advocacy for unveiling and its corresponding efforts received endorsement from the highest Muslim religious authority, with religious officials publicly supporting the notion of Muslim women's emancipation through unveiling, often providing historical justifications. In the article titled "Pokrivanje žene u Islamu" (Covering Women in Islam), Hadži Ibrahim Fejić, the reis-ul-ulema or religious leader of the Muslim community, delved into the historical origins of veiling in Islam. He portrays pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula as a harsh, anarchic environment where women were degraded and objectified. Fejić argues that Islam brought about transformative changes that bestowed respect and education upon women instead of subjugation and ignorance. In contrast to the practices during Muhammad's era, where women could display their faces and were esteemed as educators alongside men, contemporary misconceptions wrongly suggest that Islam mandates veiling and restricts women's fundamental rights.[582] This narrative, often echoed by progressive media, is what Fejić seeks to rectify. Along with Fejić, Husein Talić[583] also advocated for modern interpretations of Islam and gender equality initiatives that echo the efforts of their forerunner, Ibrahim Čaušević, during the interwar period. By engaging with the media, these religious leaders aimed to reform outdated perceptions within parts of the Muslim community, demonstrating that Islam, contrary to widespread belief, has historically been a force for women's empowerment and enlightenment, not their oppression.

Finally, in 1950, the Socialist Yugoslav government officially outlawed the burqa or the veil.[584] Marko Božić notes the uniqueness of this law, given the logistical complexities of the Yugoslav federation. Initially, Bosnia, followed by Montenegro in 1950, and later Macedonia and Serbia in January 1951, legally banned the full-face veil. Božić shows that no similar federal nationwide legislation has been voted before and in the years to follow. The

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[581] Ramírez, "Control over Female 'Muslim' Bodies: Culture, Politics and Dress Code Laws in Some Muslim and Non-Muslim Countries."
[582] Hadži Ibrahim Fejić, "Pokrivanje Žene u Islamu [Covering of Woman in Islam]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 4–7 (1950): 99–104.
[583] "Govor pretsjednika Uleme medžlisa u Sarajevu Husein ef. Talića [Speech of the President of Ulema Medžlis Husein ef. Talić in Sarajevo]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (October 1950): 222–24.
[584] Božić, "The Law Unveiled: On Burka Ban, Kanzelparagraph and Militant Secularism in the Socialist Yugoslavia."

legislation of these republics was similar in content and structure, reflecting a unified response to a common challenge rather than state-specific considerations. The laws, titled "Law on Ban of Wearing the Zar and the Ferezhe," comprised four concise paragraphs outlining general prohibitions on full-face veiling and related penalties. Four penalties stemmed from the two prohibitions – "two infractions, and two criminal offenses", so the government's approach to veiling was not just regulatory but criminalizing, leading to the persecution of those who either practiced veiling or imposed it on others.[585]

This position was codified in a publicly declared law in Serbia. Article 1 of this legislation explicitly prohibited the wearing of veils and ferezhe, as well as any form of face covering for women. Article 2 extended this prohibition to encompass the coercion or compulsion of women into veiling, as well as the support or promotion of veiling practices. The penalties were stringent, as detailed in Article 3, which prescribed a three-month prison sentence or a fine of 20,000 dinars for individuals found wearing a veil or compelling family members to do so. Article 4 heightened these penalties, imposing imprisonment with forced labour or a fine of 50,000 dinars for anyone coercing women into veiling through force, intimidation, or any other method, including exploiting religious sentiments or perpetuating backwardness to advocate for veiling.[586]

The procedures for implementing and adjudicating this law were outlined in Articles 5 and 6. Article 5 entrusted the executive boards of city or regional people's committees with overseeing administrative-criminal proceedings in cases of veiling violations, while Article 6 conferred jurisdiction to county courts for more serious infractions. Lastly, according to Article 7, the law would come into effect thirty days after its publication in the official gazette. This legislation not only established a legal framework but also marked a significant transformation in societal perceptions regarding the roles and rights of women in the developing Yugoslav state.[587] In Bosnia and Herzegovina, home to the largest Muslim community in the federation, the law was first to be adopted in late September 1950.[588]

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[585] Božić.
[586] "Iz zakona o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže [From the Veiling Prohibition Law]," *Zora*, no. 66 (1951): 4. p. 4.
[587] "Usvojen je zakon o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže [A Law Prohibiting the Wearing of Zara and Ferezhe Has Been Adopted]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 278–79.
[588] Božić, "The Law Unveiled: On Burka Ban, Kanzelparagraph and Militant Secularism in the Socialist Yugoslavia."

The discourse surrounding the law also holds significant importance as it shaped perceptions of Muslim women. Numerous Muslim officials have voiced their opinions as to why this new law was beneficial not only for Muslim women but to Muslim community as a whole. An influential Muslim publication, the Islamic Gazette (Islamski glasnik), covered the enactment of the law and a session of the National Assembly of NR Bosnia and Herzegovina. Proposed by Minister Džemal Bijedić, the law aimed to eliminate cultural submissiveness and backwardness among Muslim women, advocating for their full rights, equality, and increased social engagement. The law's provisions outlined prohibitions on veiling and penalties for non-compliance, highlighting the administrative and judicial procedures for enforcement. Minister Džemal Bijedić presented the report of the Legislative Committee and introduced the proposed legislation.[589]

Bijedić underscored the law's significance, proposed by the government on behalf of the Muslim community, following a widespread movement against veiling. He highlighted Muslim women as central to this movement, recognizing veiling as an obstacle to their cultural and political emancipation and access to rights in the socialist state. The law, thus, was not only a legal measure but also a reflection of the broader societal shift towards women's equality and active participation in Yugoslavia's cultural, political, and agricultural spheres.[590]

He has also highlighted that veiling and facial covering were significant barriers to the liberation and cultural progression of Muslim women. He criticized the old Yugoslavian treatment of Muslim women but acknowledged the emergence of initiatives during the interwar period that gradually introduced Muslim women to public life. These efforts, he noted, were more the result of individual endeavours and women's survival struggles than societal or state intervention. Additionally, he pointed out the reactionary forces of the period that vehemently defended conservatism and the veiling of Muslim women. He asserted that the Law on Ban of Wearing the Zar and the Ferezhe represented a crucial step

[589] "Usvojen je zakon o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže [A Law Prohibiting the Wearing of Zara and Ferezhe Has Been Adopted]." *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 278–79.
[590] "Vlada predlaže skupštini zakon o zabrani nošenja zara izražavajući želje narodnih masa [The Government Proposes to the Assembly a Law on Banning the Wearing of Zar Expressing the Wishes of the Masses]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 279–80.

in discarding this cumbersome aspect of the past to embrace a modern and progressive future.[591]

During the Assembly session, other speakers also emphasized the law's importance. The vice president of the Bosnian government, Avdo Humo, expressed strong support for the new law, highlighting its significance for the entire Republic. He argued that the law would help Bosnian Muslims shed a burdensome part of their history that impeded Muslim women's progress. Humo criticized the veiling as a symbol of primitivism and backwardness, born out of Bosnian feudalism, which kept women uneducated, illiterate, and confined to domestic life.[592]

Other notable Bosnians, such as Dr. Zaim Šarac added that despite significant economic changes, harmful remnants of the past, like veiling, persisted in people's consciousness. He pointed out that not all areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina practiced veiling, which was all the more reason to oppose this symbol of limited freedom and oppression. He cited labour market statistics to illustrate the correlation between veiling and the lower participation of women in the workforce. Šarac used the statistic of the working women at the end of 1949 stating that out of 24.9 percent of women active in the labour market FNRJ, 34.2 percent was in Slovenia, 18.9 in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and under 10 percent in Kosovo. He explained that beside other factors in the industry, the percentile of working women was evidently declining in the areas where the Muslims were inhabited.[593]

Minister Hasan Brkić, president of the Council for Manufacturing Industry, remarked that social democracy in Yugoslavia was not just a formal declaration of citizens' rights but also their practical realization in building a new socialist order. He emphasized that the government should legislatively eradicate the covering of Muslim women to enable them to enjoy the same benefits as their non-Muslim counterparts in the socialist system. According to him, a great number of other Yugoslav women were entering positions in people's committees, in worker's councils, as well as in the number of the high profile social and political functions. Hence why, Brkić has argued, it was essential that the current

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[591] "Vlada predlaže skupštini zakon o zabrani nošenja zara izražavajući želje narodnih masa [The Government Proposes to the Assembly a Law on Banning the Wearing of Zar Expressing the Wishes of the Masses]."
[592] "Govor potpretsjednika vlade druga Avde Hume [Speech by the Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade Avdo Humo]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 281–85.
[593] "Govor ministra D-r Zaima Šarca [The Speech of the Minister Dr. Zaim Šarac]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 285–87.

government by using legislative measures eradicate the covering of the Muslim women, so they become liberated to follow the footsteps of other non-Muslim women and embrace all the assets provided for them by the new socialist system.[594]

Vice president of the presidium of the National Assembly, Sulejman Filipović, delved into the history of veiling, linking it to women's societal status. He referenced August Babel and Engels, discussing the historical enslavement of women and the emergence of gender-based class oppression. Filipović explained that the question of unveiling is as old as the question of veiling when observed through the prism of the women's positioning in the society. Women have always played an invaluable role in the progress of one society, however, as August Babel explained, women became slaves even before the emergence of slaves. He explained this phenomenon via events during feudalism when the increase of the civilization demanded expansion of the work force. This led to enslaving of the women and overpowered. As per Engels, the first class opposition in the history could be equated with the emergence of antagonism between men and women in their marriage, and the first class oppression coincided with the women's oppression by men.[595]

Education emerged as a pivotal topic during the discussions. Dušanka Kovačević, Minister of Education and leader of AFŽ in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contended that veiling symbolized widespread illiteracy, subjugation, and discontented motherhood among Muslim women. She highlighted the high rates of child mortality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, attributing them to conservative practices such as veiling that deterred women from seeking professional assistance. Kovačević also noted instances of young girls being compelled to veil and inherit their mothers' illiteracy. Consequently, the enrolment and attendance of Muslim girls in elementary schools remained notably low and problematic, with many villages witnessing no attendance of girls in schools. Finally, Kovačević asserted that those opposing unveiling were essentially opposing women's education, educated motherhood, and the progress of the younger generation.[596]

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[594] "Govor druga Hasana Brkića [Speech of Comrade Hasan Brkić]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 287–91.
[595] "Pokrivanje žene nije poteklo od muslimana [Covering of Women Did Not Originate from Muslims]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 291–99.
[596] "Pokrivanje žene nije poteklo od muslimana [Covering of Women Did Not Originate from Muslims]." p. 297-298.

Additional activists voiced their perspectives as well. Member of Parliament Mehmedalija Tufekčić provided statistics regarding the growing number of Muslim women opting to discard veiling, underscoring a notable trend observed across different regions. He also drew attention to the considerable presence of such women during the Assembly session.[597] MP Dušanka Ostojić addressed the eagerness observed among Muslim women, particularly among the younger demographic, to forgo veiling. She underscored the difficulties associated with enforcing the law and highlighted the significant role of mass organizations, notably the National Youth, in educating and assimilating veiled women and girls into the societal fabric. Ostojić regarded their integration as vital for ensuring their equitable involvement in socialist society.[598]

Following the enactment of the Law on Ban of Wearing the Zar and the Ferezhe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, similar trends emerged in other Yugoslav republics. The National Assembly of NR Serbia passed a law prohibiting veiling in 1951, a topic that became a focal point in Serbian media. Mitra Mitrović, Serbian Minister of Education, stated that the law aimed to eliminate injustices towards Muslim women and dissolve privileges tied to birth and inheritance. The law was presented as beneficial for Muslim women's cultural, health, moral, political, and agricultural progress, mirroring positive outcomes observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[599]

The media, including the magazine Žena danas and Zora, highlighted the importance of the law. Žena danas published an article encouraging Muslim, Turkish, and Albanian women to embrace a culturally active life[600], while Zora shared stories of veiling in Kosovo and its hindrance to women's progress. The articles also mentioned resistance to the law, particularly from conservative sectors, citing letters and narratives emphasizing the supposed virtues of veiling. It was said that the conservative supporters of veiling, albeit rare, were still trying to hinder the enacting of the law just like in Bosnia. "Unveiled women

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[597] "Primjeri zaostalosti žena pod zarom [Examples of Backwardness of Women Under the Zar]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 302.
[598] "Delegacija žena koje su skinula zar, na sjednici Narodne Skupštine [A Delegation of Women Who Took off Their Veils at the Session of the National Assembly]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–10 (1950): 302–5.
[599] "Svanuo je i njima dan (Muslimanke će koristiti sva prava koja socijalizam pruža ženama) [The Day Dawned for Them too (Muslim Women Will Utilize All the Rights that Socialism Provides for Women)]," *Zora*, no. 66 (1951): 5. p. 5.
[600] "Bez mraka feredže [Without the Darkness of Ferezhe]," *Žena danas*, no. 81 (March 1951): 0.

are the destroyers of the society!" or "our faith demands that women are covered" were the alleged narratives still transmitted among the Albanian men.[601]

The campaigns for unveiling in the People's Republic of Macedonia, another Yugoslav republic with the larger Muslim population (mostly Albanian and Turkish), were conducted without preplanned structure and organisation, just like everywhere else at the beginning of the 1950s. Spearheaded by the progressives from the republic, the action of unveiling was accepted by some women and in certain villages women were voluntarily removing the veils even before the law was officially passed.[602] Pamela Ballinger and Kristen Ghodsee described abandonment of the veil as an voluntary act constant with the Yugoslav women's newfound empowerment and perceived sense of agency as socialist subjects. Muslim women, as women of the national minorities, were seen as actors in "casting off the symbols of 'the wretched past'".[603]

However, this request faced resistance in most places, being perceived as an attack on the Muslim community. Despite the delicate nature of the issue, the unveiling campaigns were executed in a direct manner through political speeches and persuasion during conferences held in cities and villages, which resulted in bad reception by the. Consequently, the number of unveiled women remained notably low, except in certain areas where political directives and measures were more stringent. Nonetheless, a law prohibiting the wearing of veils and any form of face or body covering was enacted in NR Macedonia on December 1st, 1951. The implementation of this law was met with widespread resistance and violent protests. Given the initial reaction of the Muslim population, many women continued to live in seclusion even after removing their veils due to personal shame and disapproval from their husbands. Instead of veils, coats and kerchiefs became the preferred attire, a traditional dress code among the Albanian minority women in Macedonia that persists to this day.[604]

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[601] D. S., "Donesen je zakon o zabrani nošenja zara i feredže [The Veiling Prohibition Law Was Passed]," *Zora*, no. 65 (1951): 6.
[602] Achkoska, "Lifting the Veils from Muslim Women in the Republic of Macedonia Following the Second World War."
[603] Ballinger and Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism."
[604] Achkoska, "Lifting the Veils from Muslim Women in the Republic of Macedonia Following the Second World War."

The government recognized that unveiling did not fully emancipate Muslim women, especially Albanian.[605] Violeta Achkoska noted efforts to integrate women into social and cultural life through cultural, educational, and ideological activities. Mandatory eight-year elementary education for Muslim girls was introduced, but religious indoctrination and exclusivity posed challenges. Despite being provided with the special schools and schools with curricula instructed in the languages of the minorities, girls were still facing great obstacles in receiving the elementary education. Achkoska mentioned legal actions taken against parents who violated the mandatory education law, with Albanian girls often attending school only until age ten.[606]

Interestingly, Đermana Šeta argued that underdevelopment and illiteracy were not direct consequences of veiling but indicators of gender relations within society and the Muslim family hindering women's education and public participation. She posited that veiled women could be active societal members under different circumstances, suggesting that true emancipation lies in creating conditions for equal opportunities.[607]

After veils disappeared from Yugoslav, mostly urban, streets, clothing remained an important marker of belonging. The emergence of a new middle class in Yugoslavia was defined less by socioeconomic status and more by modernity, cultural norms, and lifestyles. This newfound identity was shaped and exhibited through shopping patterns and other social behaviours that signified belonging to the burgeoning modern and cosmopolitan society Yugoslavia aimed to become. In an era where consumption and leisure were indicative of prosperity, which included the introduction of social welfare such as healthcare and social insurance, women took on the role of domestic pioneers of social modernization. They were tasked with guiding their families to embrace contemporary trends and transition into "modern citizens". According to Polona Sitar, clothing played a pivotal role in this shift, serving as a medium through which individuals' identities and loyalty to the state were articulated and negotiated. She perceived clothing not merely as attire, but as a comprehensive representation of a person, encompassing adornment and communication

[605] Achkoska.
[606] Achkoska.
[607] Đermana Šeta, *Zašto Marama? Bosanskohercegovačke Muslimanke o Životu i Radu Pod Maramom* (Sarajevo: Centar za napredne studije: Centar za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije, 2011).

that reflects daily expression, with fabric being a central component of this interpersonal dialogue.[608]

Concerning the practice of veiling, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1990 and the subsequent period of severe conflicts and instability in the region, there was a notable shift in Islamic religious expression. Although beyond the scope of my research, it is worth mentioning this post-socialist transition regarding veiling. Andreja Mesarič delved into this phenomenon through the concept of "Islamic revival", focusing on the "symbolic aspects of dress in the endeavour to redefine the role of Islam in Bosniak identity". Mesarič contends that while veiling persisted during socialist Yugoslavia, particularly in rural areas, the term "revival" can aptly describe not only the growing religiosity and its public expression in contemporary Bosnia, but also an "opt-in system" where Muslim women personally choose to practice Islam. Therefore, as she concludes, in this context, it is crucial to analyse contemporary piety and veiling less through the prisms of religion, ethnicity, and politics, as was previously common, and more through individuals' personal preferences.[609]

Additionally, as outlined by Nora Repo, the notion of the "Islamic woman" tends to divorce Muslim women from their historical and social contexts, thus constructing an idealized image that Westerners often conflate with reality. Furthermore, some women may opt not to adhere to religious practices altogether or choose to emphasize only select religious symbols. Repo posits that religious symbols and imagery function as a tool for shaping an individual's concept of gender roles. It is commonly believed that women, irrespective of their belief system or formal religious affiliation, exhibit a higher degree of religiosity in expression and practice compared to men.[610] This argument additionally explains why Muslim women were specifically targeted in KPJ's religious persecutions and passionate endeavours to eradicate remaining religious symbolisms in the society meant to celebrate agnosticism, science, and uniformity.

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[608] Polona Sitar, "Stiletto Socialism - Social Class, Dressing Up, and Women's Self-Positioning in Socialist Slovenia," *Aspasia* 14 (2020): 104–23.
[609] Mesarič, "Wearing Hijab in Sarajevo."
[610] Nora Repo, *An Islamic Mosaic - Women's Identities in Transition: Albanian Muslim Women in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förl, 2012).

5.1.6 Concluding Remarks

From its outset, the Yugoslav Communist Party undertook the task of modernizing a society deeply entrenched in patriarchal customs, influenced by imperial and later, monachal rule. Drawing inspiration from Soviet models, the Party initiated extensive reforms aimed at constructing a socialist system in line with communist ideals. This overhaul encompassed an ambitious project of emancipation targeting all aspects of society, particularly reforming gender relations. However, the journey proved more intricate than initially envisioned, encountering resistance from proponents of the existing order. Attaining gender equality and societal transformation demanded patience and a nuanced approach, often conflicting with the swift pace of socialist revolution. While the Party made significant strides in modernizing legal frameworks and advancing gender equality and women's rights, diverging from the Soviet Union's coercive methods and acknowledging cultural diversity, these changes occasionally felt forced and artificial, ultimately serving the broader goal of establishing socialism.

After the Second World War, the Yugoslav communist government embarked on an extensive emancipation effort, focusing particularly on women, especially those of the Muslim faith. The onset of socialist modernization heralded a new era of enlightenment and societal reform in Yugoslavia, harnessing women's bodies for the advancement of the entire nation. Within the socialist paradigm, a new archetype of woman emerged, characterized by modesty, and dedicated labour; she was simultaneously a mother and an activist, advocating for the preservation of the new system. Her appearance reflected an "ascetic" aesthetic, underscoring her elevated role in society, devoid of concern for superficial appearances.[611] All Yugoslav women were anticipated to conform to this standard, which emphasized homogeneity and a lack of distinguishable religious affiliation within society. The veil stood in contrast to this expectation, symbolizing a departure from the prevailing norm.

By mobilizing the Anti-fascist Women's Front, an organization emblematic of women's struggles for equality and inclusion since wartime, the Party initiated unveiling campaigns of significant magnitude following the enactment and enforcement of laws

[611] Achkoska, "Lifting the Veils from Muslim Women in the Republic of Macedonia Following the Second World War."

prohibiting and penalizing veiling and any form of body covering. Through ideological and political strategies, Yugoslav authorities sought to eradicate veiling, perceived as a symbol of a bygone era hindering the emancipation and education of Muslim women. Any form of body covering was seen as a barrier to knowledge, literacy, health, hygiene, employment, and societal participation. Veiling was attributed to every negative aspect of Muslim women's lives, hence the urgency to eliminate it.

Despite encountering initial resistance to stringent measures, a considerable number of Muslim girls and women began to forsake this tradition and other conservative customs during the socialist era, significantly improving the quality of their lives. Education levels, starting from a young age, saw significant enhancements, with Muslim girls becoming regular attendees at elementary schools. This marked an unprecedented change, a progression that had been evolving since the interwar period and finally reached fruition with the advent of socialism. However, in certain Muslim communities, such as the Albanian context, the process of women's emancipation faced numerous obstacles that impeded the educational integration of Muslim girls into the schooling system. Even after unveiling, girls and women still encountered isolation due to personal shame and the prevailing conservative attitudes of their fathers and husbands.

5.2 Socialist Emancipation Through Education

In the aftermath of the war, an alarming rate of illiteracy necessitated urgent educational reforms. These reforms were twofold: establishing a new education system and focusing on adult education, with an initial emphasis on the latter. The reconstruction era envisaged women embarking on new professions, reflecting socialist ideals of equality, and contributing actively to rebuilding the ravaged nation. More than physical labour, such as driving and infrastructure repair, women's education in literacy, culture, and politics was crucial for their integration into the new socialist system.[612] Jutta Allmendinger underscores the significance of educational opportunities in facilitating mobility within the labour market, stressing the interplay between institutional frameworks and individual career

[612] Vida Tomšič, "Uloga žene u socijalističkoj izgradnji [The Role of Woman in the Socialist Construction]," *Žena danas*, no. 93 (March 1952): 1, 7.

trajectories. This intricate ecosystem, comprising incentives, limitations, and decisions, plays a pivotal role in shaping outcomes, influencing both individual advancement and broader societal contexts.[613] In Yugoslavia, women were both agents and subjects in their personal and national emancipation, embodying a dual role.[614] One significant stride towards gender equality was financially empowering women by opening up the labour market, following the Soviet model. Yet, this alone did not address all challenges, notably the education gap for certain women's groups, highlighted by Nada Cazi. She underscored the primary role of accessible elementary education in fostering women's economic and social independence.[615]

During the educational reform period, the Party embarked on a comprehensive initiative to include adults in their emancipatory agenda, recognizing the significant prevalence of illiteracy and lack of education among the adult population. For those deemed too old for elementary education, the party organized literacy courses, primarily targeting peasant women due to the higher illiteracy rates in rural areas. In addition to their agricultural responsibilities and household chores, peasant women began assuming new public roles within their village communities. Participating in domestic courses aimed at equipping them with household management skills as heads of their families, these newfound responsibilities within the village framework fostered a sense of belonging to a larger community, thereby motivating them.[616] Furthermore, the Anti-fascist Women's Front encouraged peasant women to acquire literacy skills and political awareness, enabling them to actively engage in society. Many women from rural areas willingly embraced these new responsibilities, integrating literacy courses into their daily lives.[617] The media documented that in 1946, out of 144,005 individuals who gained literacy skills, 106,201 were women. Reports showcased Albanian women's determination to travel long distances to attend school and acquire literacy. Once educated, these women enthusiastically shared their knowledge with others who were illiterate. They expressed profound happiness at

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[613] Jutta Allmendinger, "Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes," *European Sociological Revie* 5, no. 3 (December 1989): 231–50.
[614] Ballinger and Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism."
[615] Cazi, *Društveni položaj žene - Kako slaviti naše praznike 08. mart, međunarodni dan žena*.
[616] "Više rada na selu! [More Work in the Village!]," *Žena danas*, no. 34 (1945): 25–26.
[617] Milenija Isajlović and Olga Jovanov, "Posle rada na njivi u Dom Kulture [After Field Work to Cultural Center]," *Zora*, no. 20 (April 1947): 17.

achieving literacy, an objective previously overlooked by the former government. The author reporting on the story underscored the vision of a future where both genders would be literate and well-educated, ensuring that mothers prioritized their children's education for a more educated generation.[618]

In addition to literacy instruction, these programs covered women's hygiene, childcare, basic science, sewing, diverse factory skills, and even fashion. Among Muslim women, courses addressing hygiene and literacy were especially notable due to their connection with the issue of veiling.[619] Women from various Muslim communities in the region, such as Albanian and Turkish women in Skopje, were also participating in literacy courses, expressing satisfaction at being able to learn in their native languages.[620] In relation to Muslim women's willingness to participate, phrases like "fight/struggle against illiteracy" and "fight/struggle against darkness" were frequently used interchangeably in newspaper headlines when discussing their activism in addressing the issue of illiteracy among Muslim women.[621] This interchangeable usage reflects the Yugoslav communist perspective on veiling and illiteracy, both being equated with darkness or backwardness, with one considered a cause and the other a consequence. These titles often attributed agency to Muslim women, such as "Muslim Women in Struggle Against Illiteracy" or "Muslim Women Against Darkness," aiming to demonstrate to the audience that they were reclaiming control over their lives, contrary to the prevalent notion of weakness and powerlessness associated with Muslim women.

Moreover, the gendered aspect of these adult education courses was not incidental. Alastair McAuley's comparison of the educational systems of the U.S.S.R. and others reveals a consistent perpetuation of gender inequalities. He points out a prevalent tendency where women are often confined to maternal roles, with less focus on their professional

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[618] Lj. P., "Prosveta - Opštenarodno dobro [Education - National Welfare]," *Zora*, no. 14 (October 1946): 10.
[619] "Pokret Muslimanki Kosova i Metohije za skidanje feredža [Movement of Muslim Women of Kosovo and Metohia for Unveiling]," *Žena danas*, no. 48 (June 1947): 15.
[620] "Za svoje prosvećivanje - Analfabetski tečajevi za Albanke i Turkinje [For Their Enlightenment - Illiteracy Courses for Albanian and Turkish Women]," *Žena danas*, no. 38–39 (1946): 18.
[621] For example, Bićanić, "Muslimanke u borbi [Muslim Women in Combat]." "Naše žene u borbi protiv nepismenosti [Our Women in the Struggle Against the Illiteracy]," *Žena danas*, no. 41–42 (May 1946): 16. "Žene Kosova i Metohije u borbi protiv zaostalosti [Women of Kosovo and Metohia in Struggle Against Backwardness]," *Zora*, no. 29 (January 1948): 18. Z. K., "Šiptarke odlučno polaze u novi život [Albanian Women Are Confidently Commencing New Life]," *Zora*, no. 61 (September 1950): 4.

aspirations compared to men. This reflects a broader societal pattern where educational approaches not only reflect existing social gaps but also shape political identities and tensions.[622] Arystanbek's presentation of R. Connell's discourse delves into how state ideologies bolster gendered behaviours, thus sustaining male dominance.[623] Moreover, academics like N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias further explore how women within patriarchal societies promote nationalist objectives by taking on roles as cultural transmitters and biological reproducers.[624] While the regime proudly proclaimed that "one of the greatest achievements won by the peoples of Yugoslavia in their fight for liberation was undoubtedly the emancipation of women from ages-long injustice and oppression",[625] it remains crucial not to overlook the importance of extensive literacy programs, despite their differing objectives for men and women. These endeavours offered an extraordinary opportunity for hundreds of thousands of women (with over 400,000 participants just in 1946) to gain fundamental literacy and skills, paving the way for opportunities beyond traditional agricultural work and household duties. Empowered by their newfound ability to read, many of these women moved to burgeoning urban areas, finding employment, and charting new trajectories for their lives.[626]

5.2.1 Soviet Education Model

The new education system for elementary school-age pupils bore many resemblances to the Soviet model, emphasizing Marxist scientific principles, promoting physical preparedness, and instilling socialist ideology through education. According to Zoya Malkova, the former head of the Department of Contemporary School and Education Sciences at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Soviet education theory asserted that the development and advancement of human abilities require favourable conditions and appropriate educational standards. Malkova underscores that the historical suppression of individual thought was supposedly brought to an end with the introduction of Karl Marx's

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[622] Mcauley, "Review: The Woman Question in the USSR, Woman in Russia. by Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin, Gail Warshofsky Lapidus."
[623] Arystanbek, "Sex Education (or the Lack Thereof) in Kazakhstan." p. 14
[624] Arystanbek. p. 12
[625] Ballinger and Ghodsee, "Socialist Secularism." p. 15
[626] Blaženka Mimica, "Pod rukovodstvom partije, žene Jugoslavije postale su aktivni I svijesni borci za socijalizam [Under the Party's Leadership Women of Yugoslavia Became Active and Conscious Fighters for Socialism]," *Žena danas* 56 (August 1948): 2,3,4.

theory of scientific communism. Following the socialist revolution in the U.S.S.R. in 1917, there commenced an era dedicated to establishing a socialist system. This era was characterized by the considerable challenge of crafting an educational system intended to mould young minds in accordance with socialist ideology. The educational framework established under the tenets of scientific communism purportedly laid the groundwork for a comprehensive approach to education. This system prioritized physical, mental, and polytechnical training, closely integrating it with the productive labour of young individuals.[627] The Soviet education theory, according to Malkova also claimed that despite encompassing societies with diverse historical, national, and socio-economic backgrounds, the global socialist system shared fundamental characteristics. These included "high degree of dynamism, an uninterrupted growth in the material well-being and spiritual level of all members of society, and an ongoing realisation of the principle of the social equality".[628]

Inspired by Soviet methodologies, Yugoslav communists embarked on structuring their educational system according to socialist ideology, integrating the fundamental principles of communist education. In the culturally rich landscape of Socialist Yugoslavia, establishing a comprehensive and universally accessible educational framework posed a notable challenge. Samuel Farmerie portrays Yugoslavia as a nation distinguished by its two scripts, three distinct religious traditions, four primary languages, five major ethnic groups, and six republics, including two autonomous regions. This intricate tapestry of cultures presented hurdles to both educational advancement and national cohesion.[629]

Despite largely following the example set by their Russian counterparts, as already explained, Yugoslav Communists deliberately deviated from the Kremlin's Russification strategy. This departure was especially apparent under Tito's regime, which exhibited a higher level of acceptance toward cultural diversity compared to the Soviet model. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia demonstrated this inclusive approach through its constitution and legislation, as well as its language policy for schools. Instruction was

[627] Zoya Malkova, "DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES," *Youth and Work*, 1979, 65–83.
[628] Zoia Alekseevna Mal'kova, "Education in the Countries of Socialism," *Soviet Education* 30, no. 6 (December 8, 2014): 34.
[629] Farmerie, "Education in Yugoslavia."

provided in the four primary languages, along with nine others serving as mediums of instruction.[630]

In formulating the ideological groundwork for their fresh educational system, Yugoslav socialists found themselves in a challenging position, requiring them to reassess their tumultuous history and reconstruct and restructure themselves according to their own principles.[631] For the Yugoslav population, memories of the war were not erased; instead, they were glorified as a unifying force and a struggle for a brighter future. However, the previous animosities among different nationalities were significantly suppressed and concealed beneath the vigorous current of reform and reinvention of the Yugoslav realm.

5.2.2 Schoolbooks and Curricula

Through history, textbooks and curricula wielded significant influence as channels for promoting the state's prevailing political and educational ideologies. Beginning at the elementary level, these resources serve as vital tools in implementing governmental agendas, shaping young minds to conform to desired social, cultural, and political paradigms. Academic focus is, however, primarily placed on the examination of history textbooks, analysing how portrayals of the past impact current and future discourse, and vice versa. In the Yugoslav context, a distinct pattern emerged wherein history curricula closely mirrored the prevailing political climate rather than adhering to objective historical truths, tailored to reinforce favoured narratives rather than presenting an impartial account. This manipulation of historical facts played a pivotal role in moulding national identity and delineating allies and adversaries of the state. Dubravka Stojanović underscores how, in Yugoslavia, the present actively shapes and governs the past through revisions of history textbooks, thereby shaping the collective memory of the nation.[632] Moreover, according to John Georgeoff, communism, perceiving itself as a "science of society", may have identified the most efficacious method of utilizing history for political purposes. By comparing the proliferation of nationalist rhetoric in elementary and high school history textbooks in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria—two Balkan, Slavic, and communist states, Georgeoff highlights both parallels and distinctions in how these nations shaped knowledge through educational

[630] Farmerie.
[631] Arystanbek, “Sex Education (or the Lack Thereof) in Kazakhstan.”
[632] Stojanović, *Prošlost dolazi - Promene u tumačenjima prošlosti u srpskim udžbenicima istorije 1913-2021*.

materials, illustrating the common conviction that educating forthcoming generations was a central objective of the emerging socialist educational framework.[633] Additionally, Mersija Fetibegović contended that Yugoslav Marxist education sought to foster socialist citizens and pioneers beyond national confines. He underscores the endeavours to form and reconcile a supranational Yugoslav identity, alleviating tensions between nationalism and socialism propagated through widespread education.[634]

The Yugoslav historical narrative depicted in textbooks also exhibited a pronounced anti-Ottoman stance, akin to that found in socialist Bulgaria. For example, Dino Mujadžević notes that an anti-Ottoman sentiment endured in Croatian history textbooks throughout the socialist period and beyond, fuelled by a potent nationalist fervour. This sentiment was further stoked by the prevalent belief in the perceived disadvantaged status and hardship endured by Christians, Croats, and other South Slavs under Ottoman rule.[635] This narrative had significant repercussions for local Muslim populations, who were discouraged from recognizing their historical roots and connections to the Ottoman era.

Interestingly, the new curriculum in Yugoslavia was in fact constructed around the concept of "Brotherhood and Unity". It aimed to move beyond past divisions, seek out positive examples, and forge a socialist future, seamlessly integrating these principles into the educational system where students were taught their significance for the Yugoslav populace.[636] As Vesna Godina explains, the slogan represented a principal value for the Yugoslav students, and its potential destruction was described as one of the two greatest perils for the socialist Yugoslavia. The textbook on "Defence and Protection" outlined that the "destruction of brotherhood, unity, and equality of nations and nationalities" was considered a major risk, second only to challenges to the "socialist self-management system", deemed the foremost peril to the socialist state.[637] This unique subject called "Defence and Protection", taught across the country from the 1960s, was probably the most

[633] Georgeoff, "Nationalism in the History Textbooks of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria."
[634] Fetibegović, "Channelling Nationalisms: Yugoslavisms in Croatian and Serbian Schoolbooks in the 60s and 70s."
[635] Mujadžević, "The Image of Ottomans in Croatian Historiography: Changing Narratives in Elementary School Textbooks in Croatia—1980s to 2000s."
[636] Godina, "The Outbreak of Nationalism on Former Yugoslav Territory: A Historical Perspective on the Problem of Supranational Identity."
[637] Godina.

openly ideological, although the ideas of brotherhood and unity were incorporated in other core subjects such as history and geography. Nevertheless, pupils were learning basic military techniques, going beyond standard classroom teachings.[638]

Textbooks, poetry, literature, physical exercises, arts, excursions, and every aspect of school life were saturated with an ideology that exalted Tito as the paramount figure of the nation. The curricula drew heavily from the "epic traditions of the Yugoslav past," educating children about the heroic struggles of the People's Liberation War and significant events from contemporary history.[639] As an illustration, a specialized textbook was provided for the study of the National Liberation Struggle (NOB), designed for students in the upper eight-year elementary school level. The book comprised texts detailing the history of the unification of the South Slavs during the monarchy, presented from Tito's viewpoint, as well as the monarchy's pro-fascist policies. It also covered the inception of the people's uprising led by Yugoslav Communists and the progression, accomplishments, and triumph of the NOB.[640] Specifically, this textbook instructed children about recent historical occurrences from the perspective of Yugoslav communists, highlighting the adverse effects of the preceding imperialistic and bourgeois regimes, thereby delineating a clear dichotomy of good versus bad, "us" against "them". Furthermore, it placed particular emphasis on the efforts undertaken by the nascent socialist state to rehabilitate and reconstruct the territories of the Yugoslav peoples, as well as to restore power to the hands of the working class, which had long been disregarded. As Snježana Šušnjara explains, children were instructed in the art of despising enemies and adoring Partisans. Since Tito was revered as a national hero, children frequently absorbed his teachings, including one of his famous sayings: "Work as if peace will always be here and be prepared as if war would start

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[638] Godina.

[639] Šušnjara, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Communist Regime: An Outlook on Educational Policy."

[640] *Pomoćni materijal za izučavanje istorije NOB-e naroda Jugoslavije - Za učenike viših razreda osmogodišnjih škola [Auxiliary Material for Studying the History of the NOB of the People of Yugoslavia - For Students of Higher Grades of Eight-Year Schools]* (Valjevo: Podružnica Društva istoričara, 1956). Similar approaches were observed in the history textbook published in Sarajevo, Bosnia, where significant emphasis was placed on interpreting global historical events through the lens of scientific thought. See, Krunoslava Topolovac and Marija Pavlić, *Istorija - Udžbenik za V razred osnovne škole [History - Textbook for the Fifth Grade of Elementary School]*, 9th ed. (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, OOUR Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1986).

tomorrow," derived from the Latin expression "Si vis pacem para bellum", meaning if you want peace, prepare for war.[641]

According to the textbook aimed at guiding history teachers in providing effective history education, the Yugoslav national history held particular significance in the realm of education due to the enduring struggle of the Yugoslav people against adversaries throughout history. However, the author noted that this struggle was previously consistently depicted as defensive and just, never unjust or aggressive. Consequently, students were required to confront the harsh realities of the past and the mistreatment endured by Yugoslav peasants and workers in order to foster appreciation for the present. The primary objectives for history teachers in the classroom were to acquaint students with the history of Yugoslavia, thus providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the present in the socialist state. Additionally, teachers aimed to introduce students to the history of the Yugoslav people's struggle for liberation and independence against both foreign and domestic foes, encouraging them to develop admiration and loyalty toward the socialist homeland. Ultimately, it was the teachers' responsibility to reinforce the ideals of brotherhood and unity, along with the achievements of the National Liberation War, while instilling in students an unwavering animosity toward imperialism and all adversaries of the socialist homeland.[642]

The inaugural book in elementary school student's educational journey, known as "Bukvar" (Alphabet book), designed to teach letters, was also deeply infused with Yugoslav socialist ideology.[643] The opening page prominently featured a large image of Tito surrounded by children clad in Pioneer uniforms, with one student holding his hand and kissing his cheek. This introduction immediately acquainted children with the figure intended for adoration and reverence above all others. Specifically, when tasked with composing their first sentences in the textbook, the provided words and accompanying images were those of mother, father, and Tito. This conveyed to the youngest learners the significance of their homeland's leader, prioritized just after their immediate family.

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[641] Šušnjara, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Communist Regime: An Outlook on Educational Policy."
[642] Josip Demarin, *Metodika nastave istorije - Udžbenik za učiteljske škole [History Teaching Methodology - Textbook for Teacher Training Schools]* (Beograd: Nolit, 1956).
[643] See, Šefkija Merzić, Muhamed Muradbegović, and Milan Marković, *Bukvar za osnovnu školu [Alphabet Book for Elementary School]*, 5th ed. (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, OOUR Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1986).

Furthermore, the illustrations throughout the book depicted both boys and girls, bearing names from Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian backgrounds, engaging in stories that celebrated all Yugoslav nations and the national holiday, the Day of the Republic.

Similarly, the narrative extolling Tito, Yugoslav communists', and Partisan achievements during the National Liberation War was conveyed through the Serbo-Croatian language textbooks. These textbooks were mandatory for all nationalities and were used in the sixth grade of elementary school, taught in Albanian[644], as well as in the eighth grade of elementary school, taught in Albanian and Turkish[645]. The textbook designed for sixth graders attending Albanian schools prominently featured Tito's image on the first page, alongside depictions of other Partisan heroes. These images introduced various texts recounting the National Liberation War, emphasizing the secure future of the country under Tito's leadership, and conveying to students their duty to study diligently and behave well. It conveyed the message that such behaviour would foster the growth of loyal socialist citizens prepared to uphold the legacy of their fallen fathers, brothers, and sisters who fought in the National Liberation War. Similarly, the textbook for eighth graders, taught in Albanian and Turkish, followed a comparable pattern of visual representation. It included images of courageous fallen Partisans and monuments erected in their honour. The texts and poems intended for language practice recounted stories of the fierce battles and triumphs of Yugoslav armies against their adversaries. The content of these elementary school textbooks, and the language used to perpetuate desired narratives, offer insights into the indoctrination and shaping of children's minds within the confines of a specific ideology from a young age.

During the latter half of the 1960s and the early 1970s, there was a rise in the publication of textbooks in various languages spoken by the nationalities of Yugoslavia.[646]

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[644] Vojislav Okiljević and Vlatko Malović, *Udžbenik srpskohrvatskog jezika za VI razred osnovne škole sa nastavom na šiptarskom jeziku [Schoolbook of Serbo-Croatian Language for the Sixth Grade of Elementary School Instructed in Albanian Language]* (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1962).

[645] Nikola Kočiš and Fazli Syla, *Udžbenik srpskohrvatskog jezika za VIII razred osnovne škole sa nastavom na albanskom i turskom jeziku [Schoolbook of Serbo-Croatian Language for the Eight Grade of Elementary School Instructed in Albanian and Turkish Language]* (Priština: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva Socijalističke Autonomne Pokrajine Kosova, 1979).

[646] "Izdavačka delatnost udžbenika i priručnika," Prosvetna i kulturna delatnost narodnosti u SFRJ/Radjeno za potrebe Saveznog saveta za obrazovanje i kulturu (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja, November 15, 1968), Yugoslav archives.

The resolution of this lingering issue inherited from the previous administration, which left it in a precarious state, was achieved through accommodating the diverse needs and capabilities of different nationalities across the country's territories. This accommodation was based on factors such as personnel and financial resources, as well as the understanding and utilization of the benefits gained through integration and relationships with neighbouring countries. According to the Party's report on publishing activities, the outcomes of these efforts were positive. The list of textbook publishers included issuing offices with departments for producing schoolbooks in Albanian in Priština, departments for books in Hungarian, Slovakian, Romanian, and Ruthenian in Novi Sad, a department in Rijeka, the newspaper publishing company "Edit" providing schoolbooks in Italian, the publishing company "Prosvetno delo" from Skopje dedicated to books in Turkish, and Daruvar and Zagreb supplying textbooks in Czech.[647]

The publishing of the textbooks in Albanian language was also on the incline per report, especially from the year of 1962, when the task was undertaken by the special issuing office in Belgrade that influenced the opening of the publishing department in Priština. It was noted that in the first 17 years following liberation until 1962, only 161 schoolbooks had been published in Albanian. However, in the subsequent five years, under the new educational system, a total of 317 books were published in the Albanian language. During the period between 1962 and 1967, the publication of original schoolbooks for Albanian language classes, as well as history books, progressed. Nevertheless, one of the main challenges reported was that a significant number of students were not purchasing the necessary books for optimal educational progress, both for children and adults.[648]

5.2.3 New School Network

One of the primary objectives of the new educational policies was to establish a comprehensive network of schools, as the majority of existing schools had been either completely or partially destroyed during the war. As detailed in earlier chapters, the school network was already deficient before the war, presenting an additional challenge to the regime striving for rapid modernization. To address the shortage of elementary schools, new ones were hastily constructed, often under improvised conditions. Classes were also

[647] "Izdavačka delatnost udžbenika i priručnika [Publishing Activity of Textbooks and Manuals]."
[648] "Izdavačka delatnost udžbenika i priručnika [Publishing Activity of Textbooks and Manuals]."

held in factories, open fields, and military barracks to accommodate the growing demand for education.[649] Examining regions with substantial Muslim populations, the government achieved notable progress. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new socialist administration effectively doubled the number of schools in a remarkably short time after the conflict. Despite significant wartime destruction, the school count increased from 1,092 before the war (in the 1939/40 academic year) to 2,100 by 1952/53. Female student enrolment reached 103,033 during the same period. In Kosovo, the expansion of the school network was even more remarkable, with the number of schools rising from 250 in 1939 to 862 by 1952. In this period, 103,033 female students were registered. Similarly, the landscape of elementary education in the Republic of Macedonia underwent significant changes, with the number of schools fluctuating before ultimately increasing from 850 to 1,519. This expansion culminated in a female student population of 64,361 during the final period of statistical analysis.[650]

Proliferation of schools offering elementary and higher elementary education in various national languages was an additional crucial element to highlight the swift reformation of the educational system. For instance, schools conducting classes in Albanian experienced growth from 852 in the 1958/59 academic year to 917 by 1963/64. Muslim children in Bosnia spoke the same language as others, so there was no need for special instruction. However, the data also shows that those teaching in Turkish witnessed a decline from 85 to 60 elementary schools over the same period, as a consequence of the massive immigration to Turkey in the early 1950s.[651] In subsequent years, the number of schools teaching in Albanian continued to rise, reaching 1,040 by 1969/70 and 1,109 by 1973/74. In contrast, Turkish language schools saw minimal variation in their numbers, inching up from 56 to 64 between these years.[652] Towards the end of the socialist era, the count of schools catering to these two linguistic groups remained relatively stable, with Albanian-language

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[649] K. Sarwar Hasan, "Communist Yugoslavia and Its Muslims," *Pakistan Horizon* 5, no. 4 (December 1952): 171–88.
[650] *Statistički Godišnjak FNRJ 1954 [Statistical Annual of the FNRJ 1954]* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1954).
[651] *Statistički Godišnjak SFRJ 1965 [Statistical Annual of the SFRJ 1965]* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1965).
[652] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1975 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1975]* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1975).

schools increasing from 1,161 to 1,190, and Turkish-language schools fluctuating slightly from 64 to 60 from the 1979/80 to the 1983/84 period.[653]

A pivotal aspect of establishing the new educational system was the training and recruitment of teachers, a workforce significantly reduced during the war. Schools, particularly in the countryside were struggling with recruitment and retention, and given the harsher conditions of the village environment, the unwilling teachers were compensated with free lodgings and fuel for heating for their work while there.[654]

Federal-level statistics reveal a remarkable increase in the teacher count, from 2,519 in the 1938/39 school year to 10,021 by 1952/53 in elementary eight-year schools. In regions with substantial Muslim populations, 1954 data highlighted gender-specific teacher numbers. Bosnia and Herzegovina had 2,217 female and 2,152 male teachers; the Republic of Macedonia reported 1,485 female and 1,527 male educators; whereas Kosovo displayed the most pronounced gender disparity, with 490 women versus 1,421 men teaching in elementary schools.[655] The KPJ considered the importance of female teachers in the belief that a woman possessed natural predisposition to nurture and educate primarily as a mother, and subsequently to accept it as her duty and take the role of the educator of an entire nation.[656]

The education of all Yugoslav nationalities and minorities in their native languages was considered a key priority for the Yugoslav communists, prompting them to invest in teachers. The idea, in theory, was to foster their cultural heritage and values while educating pupils in the spirit of brotherhood and unity, respect for national rights and cultural uniqueness, and reinforcing their sense of belonging to the socialist society of the Yugoslav people.[657] The cadre of teachers in schools offering instruction in the Albanian

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[653] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1985]* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1985).
[654] Sarwar Hasan, "Communist Yugoslavia and Its Muslims."
[655] *Statistički Godišnjak FNRJ 1954 [Statistical Annual of the FNRJ 1954]*.
[656] Lj Purić, "Narodna učiteljica [People's (Female) Teacher]," *Zora*, no. 10 (June 10, 1946): 8.
[657] "Društveno-politički i pravni položaj stručnog obrazovanja narodnosti u Jugoslovenskom sistemu vaspitanja i obrazovanja [Socio-Political and Legal Positioning of Vocational Education of Nationalities in Yugoslav System of Upbringing and Education]," Problemi obrazovanja stručnih kadrova iz redova pripadnika narodnosti SFRJ (stručno-analitički rad) [Problems of Educating Professional Staff from the Ranks of the Nationalities of the SFRJ (Professional-Analytical Work)] (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih

language saw steady growth over the years. Starting from 3,091 teachers in 1958/59, the number escalated to 4,535 by 1963/64, [658] reached 8,658 in 1969/70, and further increased to 11,275 by 1973/74.[659] By the late socialist Yugoslavia period, the count of Albanian language teachers surged to 13,959 in 1979/80, and peaked at 15,337 by 1983/84.[660] Conversely, the number of teachers in Turkish language schools experienced minimal growth, a consequence of previously discussed events, with teacher numbers modestly rising from 310 to 322,[661] and ultimately to 339[662] by the end of the statistical survey period.

The socialist government described the Yugoslav educational system as distinctive, inclusive of all nationalities, and providing equal conditions and rights for students, irrespective of the language of instruction. All children were going to public schools, regardless of their parents' wealth, while the main difference in terms of schools' equipment depended on if they were in major cities or in the countryside.[663]

Minority rights included equality before the law, political participation, equal access to public services, education, and cultural institutions, freedom in scientific and artistic endeavours, and rights to media, public assembly, and national identification as citizens of the SFRY.[664] The 1963 constitution, specifically Article 43, ensured cultural and educational rights for minorities, allowing them to use their languages and preserve their cultural identity. Similarly, the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, under Article 59, guaranteed the rights and protection of cultural development and language use for nationalities and minorities within the republic. Other republics, including Montenegro, Macedonia, and the autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, incorporated similar provisions. In regions predominantly inhabited by Albanians or Turks, elementary schools offered instruction in

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pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], September 1967), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[658] *Statistički Godišnjak SFRJ 1965 [Statistical Annual of the SFRJ 1965]*.

[659] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1975 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1975]*.

[660] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1985]*.

[661] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1975 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1975]*.

[662] *Statistički Godišnjak Jugoslavije 1985 [Statistical Annual of Yugoslavia 1985]*.

[663] Sarwar Hasan, "Communist Yugoslavia and Its Muslims."

[664] "Društveno-politički i pravni položaj stručnog obrazovanja narodnosti u Jugoslovenskom sistemu vaspitanja i obrazovanja [Socio-Political and Legal Positioning of Vocational Education of Nationalities in Yugoslav System of Upbringing and Education]."

native languages with Serbo-Croatian as a compulsory part of the curriculum, leading to the establishment of multilingual schools.[665]

5.2.4 The Legislation of the Education Policies

Legal foundation for the new education system was brought quickly after the war. Initially, post-World War II elementary education adhered to laws established in 1929 during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia era, which mandated free education. This framework required eight years of schooling, starting with four years of elementary education, followed by options for continuation into civil, high school, or vocational education.[666] The new socialist government, as part of its cultural revolution, was tasked with overhauling these laws to reflect the new socialist societal norms. The existing requirement of only four years of elementary education was extended to seven years as an interim measure, laying the groundwork for the eventual establishment of an eight-year elementary education system, aligning with the ideals of the Yugoslav socialist society.[667]

Sanja Petrović Todosijević points out that the 1945 educational policy in Yugoslavia was modelled after the Soviet educational system, highlighting significant Soviet influence in the immediate post-war years. Despite this, key figures in the Yugoslav communist movement often emphasized the unique characteristics of Yugoslav education, thereby establishing a certain degree of separation from Soviet practices. For instance, Mitra Mitrović, the inaugural Minister of Education in the People's Republic of Serbia, argued in her 1946 article "Kome i kakvo obrazovanje" (For Whom and What Kind of Education), that questioning whether Yugoslav education was communist and misguided, was attributed to reactionary forces and the foreign press searching for Soviet influences within the school curriculum. She underlined that while Yugoslav policies bore similarities to those of the Soviet Union, the educational laws and policies were specifically tailored to meet the needs and conditions of the Yugoslav people.[668]

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[665] Gabor Janoši, “Ustavna i statutarna načela i praktička rešenja pitanja obrazovanja narodnosti u pojedinim opštinskim statutima [Constitutional and Statutory Principles and Practical Solutions of the Educational Question of Nationalities in Certain Municipal Statutes],” Problemi ostvarivanja osnovnog obaveznog obrazovanja narodnosti (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja, December 1967), Yugoslav archives.
[666] Petrović Todosijević, *Reforma Osnovnoškolskog Sistema u Srbiji 1944-1959*.
[667] Petrović Todosijević.
[668] Petrović Todosijević.

The Mandatory Seven-Year Education Law, enacted in October 1945 as part of the government's revolutionary reforms, was largely deliberated internally within the Party without extensive legal frameworks. However, as the regime managed to stabilize itself, it slowly moved away from crash courses towards more long-term educational planning. These discussions, initiated by the Party's highest authority in December 1949, included not only Party members but also a diverse group of professionals such as teachers, professors, psychologists, and educators. So, a new law mandated an eight-year elementary education, reflecting the culmination of both domestic and international deliberations by the Committee for Educational Reform. It marked a pivotal moment in the modernization of Yugoslavia's educational system. This journey towards educational reform was accompanied by several key legislative and institutional developments, including the 1950 laws facilitating the transition to self-management, the founding of the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Philosophy in Belgrade, the enactment of various education-related laws from 1951 to 1955, and the establishment of the Federal Institute for Education (Savezni zavod za prosvetu) in 1955, all contributing to a comprehensive overhaul of the educational landscape in Yugoslavia.[669]

This Institute for education engaged in in-depth discussions on the critical need to enhance elementary education. One of the Institute's reports highlighted the primary goals for elementary education: to introduce an eight-year program targeting young learners to eradicate illiteracy comprehensively, to encourage extended school attendance, and to engage as many active students and their parents as possible. Efforts were directed towards fostering a vibrant school culture, improving conditions for such an environment, strengthening the school's parental role, particularly in extracurricular activities, and ensuring that education was closely connected to community needs. Special emphasis was placed on teaching students about labour, self-management, and the pursuit of their interests, alongside emphasizing the continuous educational and cultural role of schools in eliminating illiteracy. [670]

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[669] Petrović Todosijević.

[670] Nedeljko Savić, “Osnovno obrazovanje [Elementary Education],” Saveznom savetu za obrazovanje i kulturu (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], October 24, 1968), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

The same period also saw the regime being able to remove religious education from schooling, and Yugoslav communists devised a Marxist approach to teaching social sciences and humanities. A Trade Union was established by the government with the primary goal of enhancing educational quality, but also improving the political education of the teaching staff. This approach involved de-emphasizing the accomplishments of former regimes, critiquing rote memorization and verbalism, and advocating for an education system that prepares students for real-life challenges.[671]

One of the most important education reforms was announced in 1958. It was also supposed to include newly framed Yugoslav self-management in the economy, which was encompassing all spheres of society. Farmerie highlights that the General Law on Public Education (1958) comprehensively governed education in Yugoslavia, aiming to unify the educational framework, standardize teaching methodologies across schools, achieve a coherent educational objective, and prepare students for life and work through education. The law required that all children between the ages of seven and fifteen receive education. Nonetheless, the realization of these ambitious goals frequently encountered obstacles, including insufficient infrastructure, constrained financial resources, conservative viewpoints, and the residual effects of the Second World War's destruction.[672]

Despite tremendous efforts, reports show persisting challenges in Yugoslav educational system. For example, the Resolution on the development of education and upbringing based on self-management principles, adopted by the Educational and Cultural Council and the People's Council of the Federal Assembly on March 25 and 26, 1970, evaluated the educational system in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, rationality, and responsiveness to needs. A primary concern addressed by the Resolution was school accessibility, particularly in less developed regions. Children in economically disadvantaged areas often struggled to attend classes regularly due to inadequate infrastructure, a challenge that was notably acute in elementary schools. Another significant issue identified was the high number of students failing to graduate or repeating grades, with statistics from

[671] Šušnjara, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Communist Regime: An Outlook on Educational Policy."
[672] Farmerie, "Education in Yugoslavia."

1959-1967 highlighting the extent of grade repetition.[673] The Resolution sought to tackle these issues by examining children's personal circumstances, parental responsibilities, and daily household tasks.[674]

Constant reforms of the system could point to system failures, and the strong beliefs of Yugoslav communists that system can only be fixed with top-down approaches. In 1968, a symposium on Yugoslav elementary education was convened to assess the advancement in rationalizing and modernizing elementary education. Between 1965 and 1970, reforms in the educational system were guided by the examples of countries like the United States, Italy, Great Britain, the USSR, Sweden, Germany, and France, which acted as benchmarks for improvement.[675] A key aspect of this modernization effort was the inclusion of the languages of all nationalities in the elementary school curriculum.[676]

According to Jana Bačević, the most notable educational reforms took place in the early 1970s with the implementation of "vocation-oriented" education. This initiative aimed to establish a direct link between schooling and the job market, equipping students with practical skills and knowledge relevant to future employment prospects. It was a response to the pressing need for a new workforce to address significant economic difficulties in the country.[677] During this period, characterized by the Yugoslav communists gradually diverging from strict Soviet ideologies, there was a simultaneous decline in anti-religious campaigns reminiscent of those in the 1950s. Božić highlights that religion began to be perceived not as a threat but as a social phenomenon capable of coexisting within a socialist state. Interestingly, this era also witnessed the incorporation of Marxism, an atheistic doctrine,

[673] "Program rada Jugoslovenskog zavoda za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja za 1968 godinu [Work Program of the Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues for the Year 1968]" (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], August 1, 1967), The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[674] "Dostupnost obrazovanja [Accessibility of Education]," Načela i stavovi o efikasnosti u rezoluciji savezne skupštine o razvoju vaspitanja i obrazovanja na samoupravnoj osnovi [Principles and Views on Efficiency in the Federal Assembly Resolution on the Development of Education and Training on a Self-Management Basis] (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], July 20, 1970), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[675] "Savremena tendencija usavršavanja sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja [Modern Tendency of Improving Educational System and Upbringing]," Izveštaj o realizaciji zadataka u temama za Savezni savet za obrazovanje i kulturu (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], 1970), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.
[676] "Program rada Jugoslovenskog zavoda za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja za 1968 godinu [Work Program of the Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues for the Year 1968]."
[677] Bacevic, *From Class to Identity*.

into the high school and university curriculum. Marxism became a compulsory subject throughout all four years of the newly introduced "vocation-oriented" high school education, illustrating a nuanced interaction between ideological changes and educational policies.[678]

5.2.5 Concluding Remarks

The educational reforms initiated following the conclusion of the Second World War underwent an evolution from the initial legislation passed in 1946, a result of the revolutionary transition from the old state to the new. Initially, the system heavily mirrored Soviet educational principles; however, over time, the KPJ gradually distanced its ideology from the Kremlin, establishing a unique socialist self-management system that accommodated the intricacies of Yugoslav society, including education. Given the widespread illiteracy, particularly among women, and the lack of infrastructure resulting from the previous state and war devastations, the KPJ's primary focus was to integrate adults into educational campaigns and overhaul elementary school education entirely. Special emphasis was placed on promoting women's literacy and education, especially in rural areas. Female teachers were highly esteemed and in demand, reflecting the communist belief that women's primary role was that of a mother and educator, essential for the upbringing of children and the nation as a whole. This gendering of roles persisted from interwar Yugoslavia, perpetuating prejudiced notions regarding women and their societal roles.

Over the years, the number of schools and teachers increased across all six republics, with particular attention paid to schools and curricula delivered in minority languages. The number of schools, teachers, and textbooks in Albanian, for example, consistently grew over time. Conversely, those serving the Turkish minority either remained stagnant or declined due to migration trends and the emigration of the Turkish population in the 1950s. The passage of the General Education Law in 1958 marked an unprecedented reform of the schooling system, introducing comprehensive education and solidifying eight-year elementary education for children of all nationalities.

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[678] Božić, “Catechism without God: Legal Basis and Ideological Premises of Teaching Marxism in Schools of Socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991.”

However, the new educational system was conceived and structured to serve as a tool for propagating the socialist ideology of the Party. Tito and the Yugoslav communists regarded elementary education as vital for maintaining the socialist order. Shaping young minds in accordance with the desired ideology was seen as essential for cultivating future loyal socialist citizens who would uphold the legacy of the National Liberation Movement (NOP). This was evident from an analysis of the school textbooks and curricula developed during the KPJ's era. From their earliest exposure to education, children were immersed in stories and examples from the National Liberation Movement and Tito's imagery. Language textbooks introduced students to the language through short stories and poems related to the revolutionary struggle of the Yugoslav communists. In history books, they learned about the injustices of the previous government and other enemies of the state, as well as the bloody battles and sacrifices of the Partisans for the liberation of all Yugoslav people. The KPJ openly articulated their intentions in educating the nation through young girls and boys, delineating the correct path to follow and identifying those that were not aligned with the Party's ideology.

5.3 Muslims in Socialist Education System

Before delving further into the KPJ's management of Muslim girls' and women's education, it is crucial to elucidate the dynamic between the Party and the Yugoslav Muslim Community. This relationship commenced during the Second World War when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia reinstated Bosnia and Herzegovina as a distinct territorial entity and acknowledged the presence of the Muslim community, albeit without religious or national delineations. Xavier Bougarel contends that what initially appeared as a cordial rapport would soon be tested by the Communist decision to dissolve the Muslim Committee (Muslimanski odbor), a component of the National Liberation Front, leading to subsequent hostility towards the Islamic Community. In an effort to "modernize" the Bosnian Muslim populace, the Party implemented several transformative measures in 1947, including the nationalization of waqfs, the disbandment of Sharia tribunals, and the closure of medresas, thereby eroding the distinctive identity and institutions of the Bosnian Muslim community. Nevertheless, with Bosnia and Herzegovina being established as one of the six republics within the Federation a few years prior, it marked a pivotal moment for the affirmation of

Muslim national identity. Consequently, Bosnian Muslims developed a strong allegiance to Tito's Yugoslavia, embracing socialist modernization initiatives supported by a burgeoning Muslim community elite, comprising of republican leaders, local communist functionaries, intellectuals, and ulemas.[679] The dynamic between these two entities progressed through different phases, characterized by both positive and negative aspects, yet ultimately creating a favourable atmosphere for the effective execution of the KPJ's ambitious emancipatory initiatives. Throughout the entire period, the relationship with the religious authority, the Islamic Religious Community, remained predominantly positive, as they also received substantial financial support for their endeavours.

5.3.1 Islamic Religious Community's Support to Education

The government found valuable allies for its new education policies within the Islamic Religious Community, leveraging its flagship publication, the Islamic Gazette (Islamski glasnik), to discuss education and child-rearing practices. Serving as the primary magazine within the Muslim community, the Islamic Gazette effectively conveyed the perspectives of Bosnian Muslim leadership on various issues. It shed light on the dynamic relationship between the KPJ and the Muslim community, particularly concerning women's education and the campaign against veiling. The KPJ aimed to foster a positive relationship with Muslim communities, navigating the divide between modernist factions and the more conservative ulema, who were gradually marginalized. For instance, in a 1950 article titled "Islam and Education" by Husein Talić, the then-president of Ulema-Medžlis in Sarajevo, the synergy between Islam and education was explored, emphasizing their inseparable connection. Talić underscored Islam's emphasis on knowledge, aligning with communist advocacy of scientific principles and secularism. Furthermore, he argued that Islam had been a civilizing influence, providing education, dignity, and industriousness to both Muslim men and women, thus liberating them from their previously "barbarous" state prior to the advent of Islam.[680]

In his other speeches, Talić highlighted the critical issue of widespread illiteracy within the Muslim community, which was more pronounced than in other Yugoslav

[679] Bougarel, "Bosnian Muslims and the Yugoslav Idea."
[680] Husein Talić, "Islam i prosvjeta [Islam and Education]," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva* 1–3 (March 1950): 13–17.

populations, and he urged engagement with the educational system.[681] He delineated crucial measures to harmonize with the broader Yugoslav society, which encompassed: 1) facilitating the educational, cultural, political, and social advancement of religious officials to empower them in fulfilling their responsibilities to both the Islamic community and the nation.; 2) offering the community religious education grounded in authentic Islamic scholarship, while dispelling antiquated and harmful traditions. He underscored Islam's appreciation for science and culture, advocating for their incorporation into education, and asserted Islam's endorsement of freedom, progress, and democracy, opposing obscurantism perpetuated by ill-informed religious figures. Lastly, he emphasized that religious officials should embody citizenship, serving as models of dedication to their community and nation.[682]

Other articles within the Islamic Gazette underscored the importance of child education for the entire nation as well. Authors frequently commended the socialist government's dedication to educating every citizen throughout all republics as an integral aspect of the nation's socialist evolution. They cited state efforts in reconstructing schools and placing a premium on the well-being of young students. One writer poignantly observed, "those who prioritize the education of their children, prioritize their future," accentuating the newfound emphasis on ensuring equitable education for all children.[683] In another article titled "Enrolment of Children in Primary Schools and Adults in Literacy Courses", situated within the wider scope of activities by the Supreme Islamic Leadership in the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, a firm commitment to education within the Muslim community was prominently highlighted. The narrative strongly advocated for the compulsory schooling of both male and female Muslim children, as well as the involvement of adults and seniors in literacy initiatives. The author of the article pointed out that in 1947, the Supreme Islamic Leadership instructed religious organizations to vigorously support the

[681] "Govor pretsjednika Uleme medžlisa u Sarajevu Husein ef. Talića [Speech of the President of Ulema Medžlis Husein ef. Talić in Sarajevo]."
[682] "Govor pretsjednika Uleme medžlisa u Sarajevu Husein ef. Talića [Speech of the President of Ulema Medžlis Husein ef. Talić in Sarajevo]."
[683] Salih Ljubunčić, "Odgoj djece u socijalističkoj izgradnji [The Upbringing of Children During the Socialist Construction]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 10–12 (December 1951): 343–49.

pursuit of education for all Muslim individuals, irrespective of gender.[684] These actions illustrate a synergistic rapport between Muslim community leaders and the Communist Party, supporting the latter's educational emancipation initiatives.

Additionally, significant importance was given to the crucial role of parents in instilling in their young children a strong sense of loyalty to their homeland, thereby preparing them to become active participants in socialist society. Parents were entrusted with the responsibility of prioritizing the well-being of their children, recognizing that this would ultimately contribute to the welfare of society as a whole. It was expected that parents would steer their children towards their future careers, while also nurturing their emotional and physical well-being, eliminating detrimental behaviours, and enhancing their intellectual capabilities to prepare them for their roles within society.[685] Facing notable literacy obstacles, the Executive Board of the Ilbije Association in the People's Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based in Sarajevo, issued a plea for the universal enrolment of Muslim boys and girls in primary education. They recognized instances where Muslim girls were not enrolled in primary schools, highlighting this as a concern requiring attention at all societal levels.[686]

5.3.2 New Education System and Laws

The advent of the socialist system in Yugoslavia brought about substantial educational reforms, notably affecting Muslim girls and women. These changes, spearheaded by the Yugoslav Communist Party, incorporated a law into the constitution mandating elementary education for all, including Muslim girls. Another significant change was the secular nature of the educational system, modelled after Soviet principles, with only minor adjustments made in the following decades. However, the relationship between the

[684] "Upisivanje djece u osnovne škole i odraslih u analfabetske tečajeve [Enrollment of Children in Elementary Schools and Adults in Literacy Courses]," *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u FNRJ* 1, no. 1–3 (1950): 72.
[685] "Više pomoći u pravilnom vaspitanju omladine [More Help in the Proper Upbringing of the Youth]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 5–7 (July 1952): 115–18.
[686] "Rad naših jedinica na kulturno-prosvjetnom polju (Izvještaj o radu izvršnog odbora udruženja Ilmije NRBiH u Sarajevu, u periodu od 5-IX-1951 do 26-VIII-1953 godine) [The Work of Our Units on the Cultural and Educational Field (Report About the Work of the Executive Board of the Association Ilmije From NRBiH in Sarajevo, in the Period From 5-IX-1951 Until 26-VIII-1953)]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–11 (November 1953): 282–84.

communist government and the Muslim community remained relatively positive, mitigating the need for coercion witnessed in the Soviet context.[687]

With the implementation of the new educational system, elementary schooling not only became mandatory for all individuals but initially spanned seven years before being extended to eight years in the academic year 1950/1951.[688] This legislation required girls to attend school from the age of seven, which posed a challenge to the traditional practice in certain Muslim communities of discontinuing girls' education upon reaching puberty, coinciding with the commencement of veiling. In the new socialist state schools, education was secular, with girls and boys being taught together, marking another significant change.

Despite the compulsory nature of this schooling and the threat of fines for non-compliance, resistance persisted among Muslim families, particularly in rural areas, influenced by conservative attitudes that prioritized the education of sons. For instance, while teaching at an elementary school in a predominantly Muslim village, educator Nafija Dreca observed the notable absence of female students. Recognizing the local reluctance towards girls' education, she took the initiative to visit their families at home, successfully persuading them to allow their daughters to attend school. For Nafija, enabling the education of these girls represented a significant personal accomplishment,[689] while the government utilized such narratives in their publications to mobilize support for girls' education among others.

The religious leader, Reis-ul-Ulema Fejić, endorsed the new educational initiatives and campaigned for the empowerment and literacy of Muslim girls and women. However, the government encountered considerable obstacles in implementing these educational policies uniformly across all communities despite the support of the Muslim religious officials.[690] Numerous Muslim families were still resisting the implementation of the new educational policy, frequently prohibiting girls from attending school. Simić elucidates that, alongside the state schools' disapproval and the elimination of religious education, as well

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[687] Ivan Simic, *Soviet Influences on Postwar Yugoslav Gender Policies*, 1st ed. 2018, Genders and Sexualities in History (Cham: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[688] Simić.
[689] A. Mančić, "Učiteljica Nafija Dreca [Teacher Nafija Dreca]," *Žena danas*, no. 72 (1950): 6–7.
[690] Fejić, Ibrahim, "Pokrivanje Žene u Islamu."

as the poor conditions of the school infrastructure, families from the rural areas preferred sending their sons to receive education due to biases against their daughters. Moreover, apart from financial instability, significant factors contributing to decreased school attendance that encompassed illness, inadequate health conditions, elevated mortality rates, mental and physical disabilities, lack of accessibility to schools, parental financial struggles, excessive domestic duties for girls, conservative parental mindsets, migration, and insufficiently trained educators.[691]

For those going to schools, there were other forms of gender segregation. For example in rural areas, teachers often tailored girls' education to their anticipated roles as future homemakers and caretakers.[692] The concept aimed to incentivize families to enrol girls in schools by implementing curricula tailored to be perceived as "beneficial" for their future domestic roles.[693] Nevertheless, despite the growing number of women in educational institutions, access to elementary education for girls, especially in isolated rural regions, remained problematic for at least two decades of socialist transformation.

The involvement of Muslim girls in elementary education was also considered vital for nation-building, both at the level of individual republics and for Yugoslavia as a whole. It was intended to showcase the country's progress and modernity, signalling its departure from a troubled past. Another objective, as suggested by Aizada Arystanbek, was that the link between nation-building and widespread education is associated with the homogenization of the population.[694] This theory finds relevance in the context of the newly formed communist state of Yugoslavia and its efforts to mould the populace into a loyal and patriotic collective ready to actively contribute to the construction of the socialist state. The aim of the new educational system and curriculum was to cultivate a new generation of socialists, fostering reverence for the state, the Party, and Josip Broz Tito.

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[691] Gabor Janoši, "Pitanje osipanja učenika narodnosti u toku osmogodišnjeg školovanja [The Issue of Dropping Out of Ethnic Students During the Eight-Year Schooling]," Problemi ostvarivanja osnovnog obaveznog obrazovanja narodnosti (Beograd: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja, December 1967), Yugoslav archives.

[692] "Velike mogućnosti za obrazovanje žena u Jugoslaviji [Big Possibilities for Education of Women in Yugoslavia]," *Žena danas*, no. 96 (June 1952): 10.

[693] "Velike mogućnosti za obrazovanje žena u Jugoslaviji [Big Possibilities for Education of Women in Yugoslavia]."

[694] Arystanbek, "Sex Education (or the Lack Thereof) in Kazakhstan."

As observed in other socialist nations, the promotion of socialist ideology became increasingly prominent through the initiation of young children into various social organizations under the supervision of the Party. The initial step, often referred to as Tito's Pioneers, typically involved first graders and continued until they transitioned to another organization where they would become part of the People's Youth. Muslim girls in elementary schools, along with pupils of all genders, were included in these activities. The pioneer organization was tasked with coordinating a range of events, educational and sports activities, and public gatherings. Its aim was to foster camaraderie among children by encouraging them to spend quality time together.[695] In reality, internal reports revealed that Muslim girls were frequently marginalized, directed towards activities associated with future domestic duties, while boys were steered towards technical pursuits. Local youth organizers faced criticism for their biases against Muslim girls. Moreover, even within the upper echelons of the organization, Muslim girls were labelled as "culturally backwards" and deemed challenging to collaborate with.[696] Despite the substantial growth in the number of girls and women enrolled in elementary and higher educational institutions throughout the entire post-war period, altering some of these entrenched perspectives would require decades of infrastructure development and workforce initiatives in rural areas.[697]

5.4 Religious Education in Socialist Yugoslavia

One of the fundamental principles adopted by the new Yugoslav state after the Second World War was the legal separation of church and state, following the Soviet model, which confined religious affairs to the private lives of citizens. According to Paul Mojzes, this led to the exclusion of religion from the public sphere, relegating it strictly to the private domain of individuals. Religious freedom was simplistically interpreted as the choice to worship or not. The next principle involved the party, as the vanguard of the proletariat, in

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[695] Igor Duda, *Danas kada postajem pionir: djetinjstvo i ideologija jugoslavenskoga socijalizma*, CeKaPISarnica / Biblioteka Centra za kulturološka i povijesna istraživanja socijalizma, br. 7 (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2015).

[696] "Informacija o radu organizacije Narodne omladine sa ženskom omladinom [Information on the Work of the People's Youth Organization with Female Youth]," June 6, 1951, Collection 114 - SSOJ, Box 72, The Archives of Yugoslavia; "Zadaci Narodne omladine u borbi za socijalistički preobražaj sela [The Tasks of the People's Youth in the Struggle for Socialist Transformation of the Countryside]," 1951, Collection 114 SSOJ, box 95, The Archives of Yugoslavia.

[697] "Velike mogućnosti za obrazovanje žena u Jugoslaviji [Big Possibilities for Education of Women in Yugoslavia]."

the task of diminishing the influence of religion and supporting individual and societal liberation from superstitions and outdated religious exploitative practices.[698]

However, the Party's stance on religion was not fixed. Between 1945 and 1953, despite professing religious freedoms, the Party undertook harsh measures against religious organizations, particularly targeting the Catholic and Orthodox churches and their practices. These measures included imprisonments, nationalization of property, and even executions. A prevalent narrative in the media portrayed the church as "an instrument of the capitalist rulers" in the former capitalist Yugoslavia, serving to keep the masses in a state of obedience by anchoring them in the past.[699]

Between 1953 and 1965, the communist regime moderately relaxed its position, although punishments and unfounded accusations remained common in specific regions. As detailed later in this chapter, pressures on religious communities to refrain from involvement in education persisted, hindering their efforts to educate their clergy. The period from 1965 to 1971 is frequently regarded as a "golden age" in church-state relations, characterized by increased autonomy granted to the church by the government and a hands-off approach to its internal matters.[700] During the period of eased restrictions, the government reduced its interference in church affairs, permitting the publication of journals and books, expanding the activities of theological schools, granting clergy freedom of travel, and allowing religious education on church premises. Following the Party's purge of "nationalists" and "anarcho-liberals" amid internal conflicts over the national question, religious groups, particularly the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, came under increased scrutiny. This resulted in a renewed tightening of control over the church, a supervision that faltered in the mid-1980s.[701]

Still, the KPJ's approach toward the church stood out distinctly from that of other socialist countries. The Party recognized and championed the ethnic, national, and religious diversity of Yugoslavia, a stance that was rather unique considering the typically adversarial relationship between communist ideology and religion. Despite the inherent opposition

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[698] Paul Mojzes, "Religious Liberty in Yugoslavia: A Study in Ambiguity," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 6, no. 2 (1986): 23–41.
[699] Tatjana Marinić, "Ne dopustimo da nam popovi zaglupljuju decu [We Must Not Allow Priests to Make Our Children Stupid]," *Žena danas*, no. 97 (July 1952): 14.
[700] Mojzes, "Religious Liberty in Yugoslavia: A Study in Ambiguity."
[701] Mojzes.

between the said two, Yugoslav communists recognized the significance of maintaining positive Church-State relations. For instance, Stella Alexander discusses conferences organized by the Party and the messages conveyed by speakers regarding religious affairs in the Yugoslav socialist state. These conferences, as outlined by Alexander, primarily aimed to reconcile republican legislation on Church-State relations with the 1974 constitution. This necessity arose partly due to strong objections from religious publications regarding certain proposed legal provisions. For example, "Glas Koncila", a Catholic publication, exposed a controversial clause in the Macedonian draft law seeking to criminalize religious education for individuals under 18. This proposal sparked considerable controversy, particularly within the Muslim community, leading many families to withdraw their children prematurely, usually at the age of 15, to enrol them in newly established religious schools. Faced with escalating discontent among various religious groups, the KPJ swiftly withdrew the contentious draft and initiated conferences to express support for religious freedom. These gatherings served as a strategic manoeuvre to alleviate tensions and demonstrate the Party's commitment to respecting religious expression.[702]

As previously noted, the rapport between the KPJ and the Islamic Religious Community was comparatively stronger than with other religious organizations, albeit policies affecting them also impacted Muslim communities, irrespective of whether they were initially intended for other denominations. Ultimately, Yugoslav laws were universal, and the approach toward education was standardized. However, the KPJ's relationship with the Muslim community notably improved when Yugoslav communists engaged with the Non-Aligned Movement, which comprised numerous nations of the Muslim faith. Consequently, Yugoslav Muslims became an asset leveraged for the country's foreign policy objectives. For instance, many travelled to other Muslim-majority countries, where they were exposed to new ideas.[703]

5.4.1 Education and the Islamic Religious Community

[702] Stella Alexander, “Church-State Relations in Yugoslavia: Recent Developments” (Annual General Meeting, Keston College, Oxford, 1978), 238–40.
[703] Mekic, *A Muslim Reformist in Communist Yugoslavia*.

The standardized policies and approaches applied to other religious institutions influenced the manner in which religious education was delivered. As previously discussed, Yugoslav education post-World War II adhered to secular principles. Marko Božić elucidates that Article 25 of the inaugural Yugoslav socialist Constitution of 1946 delineated the separation of state and church, with further details provided in Article 38, which explicitly mandated the division between school and church.[704] Education was also intended to be guided by Marxist principles. The perspective of Yugoslav communists on this issue was encapsulated in Tito's declaration: "Our socialist approach entails the practical application of Marxist principles adapted to the specific circumstances of our country in this particular phase of its development. This ideology is not our dogma, but rather a tool for management and guidance in every situation, regardless of its complexity. Any deviation from these principles, regardless of the pretext, constitutes revisionism and betrayal of the working class and of the progressive-minded humanity at large."[705]

Similarly, Reis-ul-Ulema Fejić concurred that religion had been separated from the state following the People's Liberation struggle, asserting that it had obtained the right to evolve within its own domain guided by the constitutional principles of the government.[706] He contended that the Islamic community had found its position within the new socialist state and that its primary objective was to serve its people through constructive endeavours.[707] Now serving as the sole religious community for the entire country, the IVZ's primary goal was to uphold religious life among its members.[708] According to Dragoljub Đorđević, while the Waqf Commissariat oversaw religious education and economic matters, the Ulema Medžlis served as the primary body responsible for directing religious and religious-educational affairs. The Ulema Medžlis was tasked with designing curricula and

[704] Božić, "Catechism without God: Legal Basis and Ideological Premises of Teaching Marxism in Schools of Socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991."
[705] Marko Božić, "Catechism without god: Legal basis and ideological premises of teaching Marxism in schools of socialist Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1991," *Pravni Zapisi* 13, no. 2 (2022): 607–29, https://doi.org/10.5937/pravzap0–40586. 608
[706] Hadži Ibrahim Fejić, "Naša prva riječ [Our First Word]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 1–3 (March 1950): 5–7.
[707] Fejić.
[708] Dragoljub B. Đorđević, Dragan Todorović, and Ljubiša Mitrović, eds., *Islam at the Balkans in the Past, Today and in the Future* (International Conference Islam at the Balkans in the Past, Today and the Future, Niš: Punta, 2007).

syllabi for religious schools and instructional courses, which were subject to approval by the Supreme Religious Presidency but ultimately fell under the control of the KPJ.[709]

Within the Muslim community, children of elementary school age typically begin their education in mektebs. Here, they are initially introduced to the Arabic alphabet, along with basic reading and writing skills. As they advance to the second grade, they delve into the study of the Qur'an and the exploration of Islamic traditions.[710] However, with elementary education becoming compulsory for all, questions arose regarding the inclusion of religious classes within the curriculum, yet available data on this matter is scarce. In August 1947, a Federal Inspection Commission initiated a thorough examination of the Ministry of Education's records to assess student participation in religious education. The objective of the audit was to determine the actual number of students attending religious classes, the presence of students in regions lacking designated religious instructors, the accuracy of student attendance records, and the locations where religious education took place. The findings from this nationwide inspection uncovered discrepancies in the Ministry's data, often presenting a different scenario from the actual situation on the ground. For example, a lower secondary school (gimnazija) in Skopje reported that 483 students were enrolled in religious classes, a figure that was found to be exaggerated. Conversely, while the Ministry indicated a significant decline in interest in religious studies, the actual decrease was not as pronounced. Specifically, in the People's Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry asserted that no religious classes were conducted in any elementary schools in Travnik. However, inspections revealed that 19 schools did offer such classes, with 550 out of 2,930 students participating.[711]

During the 1949/50 school year, Muslim religious classes were predominantly conducted in mektebs, while religious education was offered in only 3 to 4 elementary schools in most regions. In 42 vakuf jurisdictions, 312 mektebs were operational, while they

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[709] Đorđević, Dragan Todorović, and Ljubiša Mitrović.

[710] "II Vjersko prosvjetni referat (Izveštaj Ulema Medžlisa o njegovom radu u periodu od 1 septembra 1949 god. do 1 juna 1950 godine) [II Religious and Educational Report (Report From Ulema Medžlis About its Work in the Period Between September 1, 1949 Until Jun 1, 1950]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 4–7 (July 1950): 169–88.

[711] "Izveštaj o proveravanju podataka posećivanja verske nastave [Report on Verification of Data on Attendance at Religious Classes]" (Belgrade: Savezna kontrolna komisija, Inspektorat za opšte upravne poslove [Federal Control Commission, Inspectorate for General Administrative Affairs], 1947), The Archive of Yugoslavia.

were largely absent in the majority of other jurisdictions.[712] Attempts to implement religious classes in different Bosnian mektebs encountered numerous challenges. There were frequent cases of religious teachers resigning due to insufficient incentives, despite having official approval to teach. While authorities allowed for religious education, they criticized clergy members who independently organized classes outside the approved curriculum, often in an unorganized fashion, and exerted influences deemed negative or oppressive by the Party on the students.

Various types of mektebs were established to accommodate diverse educational needs and circumstances. Regular mektebs, known as "mekteb Ibtidaije", typically consisted of two grades and employed more educated mualims (religious teachers). These institutions followed a structured curriculum based on specific textbooks and recognized pedagogical methods. Conversely, sibjan mektebs lacked a formal curriculum and pedagogical structure, often relying on mualims with limited expertise. Additionally, seasonal mektebs, predominantly located in remote rural areas, operated primarily during the winter season, providing unstructured classes without the use of textbooks.[713]

Moreover, Ulema Medžlis reported that the sanitary conditions in most mektebs were substandard, worsened by the government repurposing mekteb buildings for other uses. In certain cases, the government closed mektebs that admitted children over the age of seven, the age at which they were expected to transition to elementary school. Owing to the generally poor state of the facilities, the government eventually prohibited even younger children from attending mektebs. Despite these obstacles, initial data from the 1949/50 academic year indicate that between 2,000 and 3,000 students continued to attend mektebs under these adverse conditions and with minimal state assistance.[714]

Amid state-imposed restrictions on mektebs, Muslim religious leaders sought to rationalize these limitations by referencing the psychological assessments of children's

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[712] "II Vjersko prosvjetni referat (Izveštaj Ulema Medžlisa o njegovom radu u periodu od 1 septembra 1949 god. do 1 juna 1950 godine) [II Religious and Educational Report (Report From Ulema Medžlis About its Work in the Period Between September 1, 1949 Until Jun 1, 1950]."

[713] "II Vjersko prosvjetni referat (Izveštaj Ulema Medžlisa o njegovom radu u periodu od 1 septembra 1949 god. do 1 juna 1950 godine) [II Religious and Educational Report (Report From Ulema Medžlis About its Work in the Period Between September 1, 1949 Until Jun 1, 1950]."

[714] "II Vjersko prosvjetni referat (Izveštaj Ulema Medžlisa o njegovom radu u periodu od 1 septembra 1949 god. do 1 juna 1950 godine) [II Religious and Educational Report (Report From Ulema Medžlis About its Work in the Period Between September 1, 1949 Until Jun 1, 1950]."

readiness to grasp complex Islamic teachings between the ages of 5 and 7.[715] They contended that children of such a young age lacked the cognitive ability to learn a foreign language with a complex alphabet and advanced concepts. They argued that contemporary psychology suggested that the optimal age for initiating formal education in reading, writing, and analytical thinking was 7—the same age at which children commenced government-mandated elementary education. The curriculum in mektebs was deemed too demanding for young learners, overwhelming them with an excessive amount of information inappropriate for their age. Consequently, the elementary education system was structured to ease children into learning, drawing on their pre-existing experiences from preschool and family life. This perspective was prevalent among Muslim religious authorities during the socialist reformation of the educational system, reflecting their understanding of the Yugoslav Communist Party's efforts to cultivate a generation distanced from religious influences.[716]

Magazines for women were also proliferating negative stances towards religious education for young children. For instance, Nova Žena magazine featured an article on the outcomes of a survey conducted during the 1955 World Congress for the Protection of Children, which, among other issues, addressed religious education for youth. The survey, involving 500 congress participants, revealed that 93.4 percent opposed mandatory religious education for young children. Conversely, 28.6 percent believed parents should have the authority to decide on their children's religious education, while 25 percent felt that the children themselves should make this decision. The article suggested that those advocating for religious education rights harboured conservative views. The article argued that, despite the global trend of separating church and state, including in Yugoslavia, clergy still exerted considerable influence which is to be opposed. To ensure children's rights to holistic development—physically, mentally, and spiritually—the article explained to women that society needed to protect children from religious coercion and indoctrination at a vulnerable age when they cannot make informed choices. This narrative underscored the

[715] Hasan Dikić, "Povodom obustavljanja rada u mektebima [Regarding Suspension of the Work in Mektebs]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 1–4 (April 1952): 25–31.
[716] Ljubunčić, "Odgoj djece u socijalističkoj izgradnji [The Upbringing of Children During the Socialist Construction]."

importance of keeping religion separate from young students' education, aligning with practices in supposedly modern, secular nations and socialist Yugoslavia.[717]

Changes were also observable in the operations of medresas. Traditionally, medresas in the Balkans function as intermediate-level religious schools offering both religious and secular education akin to classical gymnasiums. However, the introduction of a new comprehensive educational system posed significant challenges for these establishments. For example, Sarajevo's Gazi Husrevbegova medresa experienced a reduction in its institutional significance as its graduates were barred from progressing to higher state educational institutions, leaving them with no option but to pursue further education within the Islamic community.[718] Despite these challenges, the medresa adapted and endured, largely thanks to the efforts of Sulejman Kemura, the editor of the Islamic Gazette, who remained at the helm of Gazi Husrevbegova medresa until ascending to Reis-ul-ulema after Fejić's death in 1957. Kemura explained that the medresa's mission was to equip students with essential societal skills, foremost among them fostering a profound love for their country. He also emphasized the medresa's role in combating superstitions that could impede cultural and educational emancipation.[719]

In November 1951, an important medresa was established in Priština, marking a significant development in the region's educational landscape. The institution attempted to keep comprehensive educational approach, with the head teacher personally delivered all scientific courses to the students. Throughout the academic year, pupils were well supplied with notebooks and general textbooks. However, there was a notable scarcity of religious textbooks, prompting the religious instructors to teach the curriculum orally. The medresa was also supposed to foster a sense of brotherhood and unity.[720] During the 1954/55 school year, the Priština Medresa reported an enrolment of 18 students. While these numbers were modest, there was an encouraging uptick in state support, particularly in providing clothing and essentials to underprivileged students. Nonetheless, the medresa faced

[717] Miroljub Jevtović, "Iz ankete na Svetskom kongresu za dečju zaštitu - Da li ste za obavezno religiozno vaspitanje? [From the Poll on the World Congress for the Protection of Children - Do you Support Mandatory Religious Education?]," *Žena danas*, no. 125–126 (1955): 16.
[718] Sulejman Kemura, "Uloga Gazi Husrevbegove medrese u stvaranju vjerskih službenika [The Role of Gazi Husrev-beg's Medrese in Creation of Religious Officials]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 1–3 (1950): 27–31.
[719] Kemura.
[720] Ahmed Mustafa, "Rad medrese u Prištini [The Work of Medrese in Priština]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 8–12 (December 1952): 343–44.

significant operational hurdles, notably the prohibition against employing imams. This restriction posed a serious threat to the institution's viability, as meeting this staffing requirement was crucial for its continued existence.[721] By the end of the period in question, only these two religious high schools remained operational.

The landscape of Islamic education witnessed significant transformations with the appointment of Husein Đozo, a renowned Islamic modernist, as the head of Religious and Educational Affairs within the Muslim community from 1960 to 1980. In this role, Đozo oversaw all official educational institutions under the community's umbrella. A major reform initiated during his tenure was the reduction of the study period in these medresas from eight to five years. This change was necessitated by a national law that mandated an eight-year state elementary education, which had become the norm for most children. Đozo's leadership marked a pivotal phase in the adaptation and modernization of Islamic educational institutions, aligning them more closely with the broader educational framework of the country while still maintaining their religious essence.[722]

5.4.2 Concluding Remarks

The dynamic between the Yugoslav Communist Party and religious institutions evolved through various phases. Every stage marks the period of the Party attempting to create what they considered to be a modern socialist society based on science and not, according to them, antiquated superstitious customs stemming from religiosity. During this transformative era, the government diverged from its initial commitment to guarantee religious autonomy for all faith groups, impacting how religious education was administered and placing religious schools in a vulnerable state. Despite facing state opposition, the Yugoslav Muslim community endeavoured to comply with the Party's mandates, championing the values of brotherhood and unity. They strove to maintain their religious educational institutions, focusing on modernizing Islamic teachings and emphasizing the significance of science, aligning with the atheistic underpinnings of communist ideology.

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[721] "Stanje Niže medrese u Prištini (Izveštaj o radu Islamskog starešinstva IVZ za NR Srbiju u periodu od 12 maja 1953 do 8 aprila 1955 godine) [The Condition of Lower Medresa in Priština (The Report about the Work of the Islamic Authorities of IVZ for NR Serbia in the period from 12 May 1953 until 8 April 1955)]," *Islamski glasnik*, no. 5–7 (July 1955): 201.

[722] Mekic, *A Muslim Reformist in Communist Yugoslavia*.

Muslim religious leaders highlighted the crucial role of education and the enlightenment of the Muslim populace, particularly children, as fundamental to the nation's future, resonating with the Party's ethos. The narrative around elementary education for Muslim girls, while less documented, suggests their integration into the broader educational reforms. These reforms promoted inclusivity, mandating education for both genders and facilitating girls' access to state schools where they received secular education. From an early age, children were groomed to play their part in the socialist state, imbued with communist values and the ethos of unity and brotherhood.

5.5 New Educational Opportunities for Women in Higher Education

In the wake of First World War, Yugoslav higher education emerged from a period marked by profound social, political, cultural, and ethnic turmoil, which fuelled academic inequities and divisions across class and nationality lines. The aftermath of Second World War ushered in a new socialist paradigm under the Party's leadership.[723] The concept revolved around the notion that amidst substantial reconstruction and progress, there existed a pronounced demand for academically qualified young individuals. This education was intended to be freely accessible to all, part of a universal system. Over the years, extensive deliberations focused on the role of universities in Yugoslav society, the optimization of higher education, and the characteristics of academic programs, encompassing both general and specialized fields.[724] Some of the key reforms included the abandonment of standardized study durations, entrance examinations, scholarships, and the integration of students into the labour market and institutional self-management. Efforts were also made to connect disjointed elementary education to high school and university levels.[725]

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[723] Nikša Nikola Šoljan, "The Saga of Higher Education in Yugoslavia: Beyond the Myths of a Self-Management Socialist Society," *Comparative Education Review* 35, no. 1 (February 1991): 131–53.

[724] Zlatko Jarković, "Međusobni odnosi i povezanost stupnjeva obrazovanja u sadržajnom i organizacionom pogledu [Mutual Relationship and Connection of Levels of Education from the Perspective of Content and Organization]," Izveštaj o javnoj diskusiji o tezama o razvoju i usavršavanju sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja u SFRJ (kraj aprila-sredina oktobra 1968) (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski zavod za proučavanje školskih i prosvetnih pitanja [Yugoslav Institute for the Study of School and Educational Issues], 1968), Fond 318, The Archive of Yugoslavia.

[725] Jarković.

The likelihood of women pursuing education beyond secondary school varied significantly across different ethnic groups, influenced by their respective cultural attitudes. For instance, the Party institutions were often reporting that within the Kosovo Muslim community, there was resistance to women obtaining secondary education, as a higher level of education in women was not traditionally valued in the context of marriage. Still, the educational struggles encountered by minority ethnicities began to ease with the implementation of a new educational system. As I have shown previously, this system provided schooling in minority languages and established many new schools in regions predominantly inhabited by these minorities. Besides ethnicity, through the entire period it was observed that the decision for a girl to pursue further education was influenced by regional factors, with rural families often holding more conservative views regarding women's roles and education.[726]

Particularly important for the Muslim community was the establishment of new universities in Skopje and Sarajevo, which welcomed women into all programs. Namely, all postwar Yugoslav universities had to open their programs to women, which was a significant departure from the interwar period. New universities, relatively closer to their home, meant that more families allowed their young women to move there and get education. Another crucial support for education of all pupils, but particularly of Muslim women was that Yugoslav higher education had no tuition fees, while the government instituted scholarships for students at vocational and higher education institutions.[727] In 1950, for example, a considerable portion of the 8,000 state-subsidized students at the University of Belgrade were women, especially those lacking parental financial support and demonstrating academic diligence. While the advent of children's allowances led to the phasing out of stipends, support persisted for orphans and financially disadvantaged students through provisions like free dormitory housing. For many women, this not only opened the

[726] Joy B. Reeves, "Social Change in Yugoslavia and Its Impact on Women," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 20, no. 2 (1990): 125–38.
[727] "Velike mogućnosti za obrazovanje žena u Jugoslaviji [Big Possibilities for Education of Women in Yugoslavia]."

opportunity to study despite not having financial means, but it was the first time for many of them to leave their homes and live independently.[728]

Many women managed careers unimagined before, as noted by Darja Zaviršek's work. For instance, individuals such as Nika Arko, who emerged from a working-class background to attain the position of deputy director of the Council for Health and Social Policy, traced her origins to the Anti-Fascist Women's Front. Similarly, figures like Marija Jančar, initially a schoolteacher from a peasant background, eventually ascended to the role of school director, embodying the ideal of the socialist woman and serving as an inspiration to rural social work students.[729]

There were also similar examples among Muslim women, and the Party was using its media to promote these women so as to show that social mobility was possible and desirable. For example, Nafija Dreca, a Muslim teacher in a Serbian village with a Muslim majority, was revered as both an exceptional educator and a community role model, encouraging education for all children, particularly girls. Her story was supposed to encourage other women to follow, and use new opportunities created by the Party.[730] These examples are not coincidental. The statistical data shows that a significant number of women still gravitated towards education, social work, and certain healthcare sectors, areas traditionally aligned with perceived feminine attributes.[731] The uneven distribution of educational opportunities led to the stratification among women themselves. Women of various nationalities in Yugoslavia faced unique obstacles compared to their peers. Furthermore, as Joy Reeves explained, education could inadvertently become a mechanism for fostering and justifying social inequalities. Although Yugoslav education was purportedly accessible to everyone, the gap between ideal and reality was significant. Reeves highlights that both young women and men often selected their fields of study based on their family's socio-economic background, which, in essence, shaped their educational ambitions and opportunities for higher education advancement. This issue was known to the Party

[728] "Velike mogućnosti za obrazovanje žena u Jugoslaviji [Big Possibilities for Education of Women in Yugoslavia]."
[729] Darja Zaviršek, "Engendering Social Work Education under State Socialism in Yugoslavia," *British Journal of Social Work* 38, no. 4 (June 2008): 734–50.
[730] Mančić, "Učiteljica Nafija Dreca [Teacher Nafija Dreca]."
[731] *Statistički Godišnjak FNRJ 1991 [Statistical Annual of FNRY 1991]* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1991).

leadership in charge of education, for which they tried to enhance educational accessibility and initiate certain reforms that were never enough to tackle disparities and deepening social stratification.[732]

Taken the entire socialist period together, however, Yugoslav communists significantly advanced women's higher education attainment. Data from 1945 to 1986 indicate that a remarkable 461,994 women, or 40.4% of university graduates in Yugoslavia, completed their higher education during this period.[733] In republics with significant Muslim populations such as Bosnia and Macedonia, the total number of female students often matched the number of men, while in the region of Kosovo the number of women lingered around 33% during the 1980s. The discrepancy was higher in the post-graduate education, as during the entire socialist period 4,427 women obtained their doctorates, which was about 5 times less than men. Nevertheless, in the interwar period women with doctorate were very rare and hard to find. Women also managed a significant number of teaching posts at these higher education institutions, reaching about a third of educators in Bosnia.[734]

5.5.1 Concluding Remarks

The main objective of the KPJ, from their birth during the interwar era, until the realisation of the long-awaited socialist state, was to completely transform the society that still lived under the norms of the old patriarchal system. They started with the reforms of the laws, by implementing the new constitutions heavily inspired by the Soviet policies. Using the bottom-up approach, the Party was transforming the political structures and established the "dictatorship of proletariat", putting the working class and oppressed on the display. Through the implementation of the legislative measures and resolving of the issue of the underprivileged, the gender reforms came to play. As one of the main principles of Marxism portrayed in the general disposition of women in one's society being an indicative of an overall situation of progress, the Yugoslav Communist Party was adamant to establish the system of equality between the sexes, and work on general betterment of the Yugoslav women. Using the media, like women's magazines, helped tremendously in transmitting of the desired socialist narratives that consequently shaped the public perception of both

[732] Reeves, "Social Change in Yugoslavia and Its Impact on Women."
[733] Reeves.
[734] *Statistički Godišnjak FNRJ 1991 [Statistical Annual of FNRY 1991]*.

women and men. The creation of the notion that only strong, educated, working women could uplift the nascent ideology, has created additional support for the construction of the communist state. I argue that the Party's agenda behind the great emancipatory project was indeed in the consolidation of the socialist state and construction of communism, however, this agenda also gave birth to the unprecedented gender reforms, that changed women lives from their core.

However, despite positioning themselves as modernizers, a claim they largely substantiated, some remnants of the old traditional system, which the Communist Party vigorously sought to eliminate, persisted, particularly in their approach to addressing the "woman question". The same narratives that perpetuated the inferior or complementary status of women to men's superiority in significant societal roles were still evident in socialist Yugoslavia. Despite the celebration of women as warriors during the war and as workers in its aftermath, the concept of their reproductive role, as both mothers of their own children and of the entire state, remained prominently emphasized in Yugoslav society. Notwithstanding being staunch supporters of socialism, working women, teachers, and mothers bore a heavy burden that was expected of them.

The resolution of the "Muslim woman question" posed a specific challenge to the Party, since it supposedly required a rather different approach than the general "woman question". One of the critical aspects of this matter certainly was the Muslim girls' inclusion from an early age into the educational Yugoslav system. Another one was to eradicate the illiteracy among the adults. Given the still quite stern traditionalism within the Muslim community, the Party was relying on their amicable relationship with the Muslim religious leaders and tried to leverage their influence on the Muslim families to allow their female children and adult women to receive education alongside their male counterparts. For example, the official Islamic Gazette published articles in support of women's education from the onset.

During that endeavour the communists had to face the "obstacles" in the form of veil and Islamic religious tradition that were challenging the modernising reforms. I observed this process through the general reformation of the socialist educational system, its secularisation, and their approach to the general "woman question", while accentuating the Muslim perception on the women's emancipation through education as well. The

Yugoslav communists' agenda of the massive emancipatory project was met with a huge defiance at the beginning from certain groups of traditionalists, to which the Party replied with radical measures. This inherent notion that the oriental legacy was the culprit for the "backward" position of the Yugoslav peoples had to be resolved by any means possible, making the Muslim women its epicentre. A Muslim woman had to be educated and unveiled in order to become a warrior, worker, mother, teacher and a loyal supporter of the socialist state, just like women of other confessions. While the agenda behind the emancipation of the Muslim girls and women remains the same just like in the case of the non-Muslim women, the Yugoslav Communist Party has achieved what other governments before them never had. The Muslim women were finally getting included into the society, and by regaining their visibility they were given unprecedented opportunities that were unheard of thus far.

And finally, with the establishment of the socialist state, the communist government observed a growing need for university-educated professionals in the labour market. These positions were vital for the rebuilding of the new state, leading the Yugoslav government to also encourage women to pursue higher education. Many Muslim women used this opportunity as well, despite their career paths being heavily gendered. Many managed to obtain higher education and careers unimaginable before. Still paths for women to obtain higher education was harder, particularly in rural communities. Highly educated women were stigmatized and faced unfavourable marriage prospects although over time, these attitudes have shifted.

6 Conclusions

This dissertation examined the educational policies, debates and practices aimed for Muslim girls and women within the context of Yugoslav society, examining how these approaches were shaped by ever changing social, cultural, and political circumstances. The core of the analysis is the interaction between Muslim communities and the changing Yugoslav governments and regimes, and their impacts on education.

Beginning with the interwar period, this research analysed the dynamics of how various factions within the Muslim community and the Yugoslav government influenced the education opportunities of Muslim girls. The issue of women's education gained particular prominence with the establishment of the Yugoslav state. However, the findings reveal that the education of Muslim girls was obstructed by a highly nationalistic and inequitable state, as well as internal discord within the Muslim communities. Very often, education was not prioritized for investments and resources, despite the rhetoric. Schools frequently lacked basic infrastructure and trained teachers. At the same time, the attendance of girls was lower in all religious communities, but particularly in regions with predominantly Muslim populations.

Within Muslim communities, particularly in Bosnia, the new modernist elite clashed with the conservative opposition in how to approach the "Muslim woman question" to which education of girls was often the centre of the debate. Discussing the position of Muslim women in the society became so polarizing, that no effective solution was found within the Muslim communities themselves. Modernists also connected the issue of veiling with the lack of education, leading to even more disagreements. This contention between the two parties, albeit never resolved during the interwar period, and especially not in favour of Muslim girls' and women's education, marked a pivotal moment of public debates surrounding the emancipation of Yugoslav Muslim women, increasing their visibility in the years to follow. All these discussions were also part of a broader trend in Muslim societies, which Yugoslav elite followed carefully. Turkey was particularly important due to its historical connections, although similar Kemalist reforms were not applied in the interwar Yugoslavia. They were carefully observed and fiercely debated. However, the veiling persisted, and more importantly, the state did not apply the same level of investment in women's education.

This research also looked at a differing schooling situation in urban and rural areas, pointing how various private educational institutions also offered teaching to Muslim girls. These institutions were heavily gendered, but at least offered some opportunities to gain basic literacy and skills. The analysis shows a contention between the official state policies, which intended to enrol pupils in regular elementary schools, while many still attended religious schools with a traditional curriculum. Some of these schools even operated underground. It also shows the distrust that some parents had towards the new state's education system. Indeed, as the analysis demonstrated, a new Yugoslav educational system heavily favoured Christianity, while the state-approved curricula was Serbian-centric. Nevertheless, in rural areas, even such schooling opportunities were unachievable for many.

The lack of educational opportunities due to communal resistance, poor infrastructure, lack of appropriate schools and stereotypes about women's education, led to further economic deprivation of Muslim women. Mass illiteracy and poverty also often followed by state-led policies that particularly discriminated certain groups of population such as Albanians and Turks. While Bosnian Muslims faced threats of being assimilated into Serbian and Croatian identities, these other ethnic groups faced additional marginalization, exacerbating the obstacles to education for Muslim girls. Furthermore, this compounded their sense of being outsiders even within the Muslim communities.

This dissertation shows that Muslim women were not passive in all these debates and processes. Muslim women were increasingly asserting their agency, a trend evident in their active participation within diverse organizations and media outlets dedicated to promoting education for girls and women. They were volunteering, organizing educational courses, and writing pieces on the need for change and more educational opportunities. These Muslim women came from various backgrounds and perspectives, some were leaning towards modernist Islamic views and some towards conservative, but they were generally discontent with the state of women's education.

Other women who were writing about Muslim women's education were some of the first Yugoslav feminists. They ran their own magazines, often having a reach beyond the local Muslim communities. The rise of women's publications, being part of global trends related to women's emancipation in the 1920s and 30s, significantly influenced the perception of what a *modern* Yugoslav women should be like. At the core of that European

modernity idea was the education of Muslim girls and women. Some of these magazines such as "Ženski pokret" attempted not only to address the issue of women's illiteracy theoretically, but also organized volunteering and educational activities, making first attempts at connecting feminist activism with the local Muslim populations.

The second part of this thesis examined the situation regarding education during the Second World War. It looked at impacts for Muslim women both within the communist Partisan movement and in regular schools in the occupied areas. The focus is on Bosnia, as the region saw constant warfare activities and dramatic changes. After 1941, the centre of the Partisan guerilla warfare was in Bosnia, while the Partisan movement recruited significant number of Muslims, including Muslim women themselves.

The findings indicate that Muslim women's involvement with the Partisan movement initiated a novel path to education, radically different. It was promoting completely novel ideas about women's position in the society, based on Marxist teachings. In the Partisan units, women were given the same rights as men, being a radical empowerment for many. That change was initiated by the Communist Party for the war purposes, but the consequences were broader. As the conflict progressed, the Party was also organizing new government structures, but also massive educational crash courses during any peaceful moment. Many Muslim women used this unprecedented opportunity to receive basic education through such courses organized by the Party's women section. These programs, often cantered on basic literacy and Marxist political education, but they positioned Muslim women equally alongside men. Not only that these courses were universal – albeit in practice there were still stereotypes about women's needs – but they introduced women to the concepts of socialism and the promise of gender equality. Even if it is questionable to what extent the local population grasped such ideas, many still learned basic literacy, and were certainly empowered.

Beyond the Partisan units and liberated territories, the educational opportunities were grim and not just due to the war devastation. Bosnia was annexed by the pro-Nazi Croatian state, which did not invest much in schooling infrastructure, while the existing one was supposed to serve the new ideology. Curricula was radically changed to incorporate the fascist ideology, which had heavy impact on women. New teachings were even more conservative and discriminatory towards women, imitating the Nazi education elsewhere.

Ultimately, in the chaos of the war and devastation, even more Muslim girls missed on education than before.

In the last part, this dissertation explored the socialist period and its profound changes to education. I examined the Yugoslav Communist Party's emancipatory campaigns in relation to education, and how Muslim religious authorities positioned themselves in this dynamic. I have also analysed the relationship between the Party and Muslim communities, and how it informed the education of the Muslim girls. However, as Yugoslavia emerged from the war with immense devastation of the economy and infrastructure, this part also looked at tremendous efforts put by the Party to rebuild the school network, with the ultimate goal to eradicate illiteracy and offer new educational opportunities for everyone. And finally, I delved into the public narratives surrounding the empowerment of Muslim women through education, which reflected the prevailing political climate and influenced educational policies.

The findings reveal that the education of Muslim girls and adult women was seen as a priority for the Party in the first decade after the war. The socialist state included Muslim girls in mandatory elementary education and launched campaigns to get them enrolled in schools. New schools were secular, without gender segregation, and with the completely new curricula. These novel curricula were not only promoting unity and inclusivity for all nationalities, but it was also imbued with the socialist ideology, celebrating the communist leadership, and the Yugoslav communists' achievements during and after the war. The statistical data shows that the schooling network grew rapidly, with significant resources also poured into educating new teachers. Schools were also opened in the languages of the national minorities, allowing Muslim communities to educate their children in their mother tongues. After stabilizing elementary education, the state directed more resources towards higher education, establishing new universities in regions with predominantly Muslim populations. The number of university graduates from Muslim backgrounds also grew rapidly. For the Yugoslav Communist Party this was a benchmark of the state's advancement, but also functioned as a means of cultivating new generations prepared to embrace the desired political ideology and uphold the socialist system. At the end of the analysed period, Muslim women exhibited notable improvements in literacy, educational levels, and professional achievements.

The dynamics surrounding religious education underwent significant changes. Initially, the Party enforced stringent restrictions on religious education in the immediate aftermath of the war. However over subsequent decades, it adopted more lenient approaches, primarily outside the formal educational institutions. The Party's approach to religious freedoms also experienced fluctuations. For instance, the Party instituted a ban on wearing the veil and launched an aggressive campaign to remove veils in the early 1950s. By framing the veil issue within the context of female illiteracy, these initiatives portrayed the abandonment of such religious practices as crucial for educational progress. Consequently, veils gradually disappeared from Yugoslav streets. However, as Yugoslavia shifted its foreign policy towards the Non-Aligned movement, which included numerous Muslim countries, the regime eased its stance, providing greater opportunities for religious education among Muslim students. Many were sent abroad for education, and some religious schools were refurbished and reopened. Nonetheless, regular schools did not offer religious education classes for any community.

Research also indicates that during times of religious repression in socialist Yugoslavia in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Muslim religious leaders largely collaborated with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its atheistic ideology, despite discontent among certain groups of Muslim populations. In addition to the socialist-leaning women's press, examined in this study, which reflected the Party's aims of enhancing education and inclusivity for Muslim women, religious figures within the Muslim community were also actively expressing their views on the matter in mainstream media. Their stances not only echoed that of the Party but also portrayed a strong alignment with socialist modernization ideals regarding gender reforms. Religious scholars, for instance, emphasized the harmony between socialist education, science, and Islamic principles. Even though many traditional religious practices persisted within Muslim communities, much of the opposition to the educational advancement of girls and women disappeared over time, eventually leading to a cultural shift where it became not only acceptable but encouraged for Muslim women to pursue higher education and engage in professional occupations. Notwithstanding the notably sluggish pace of this progression in certain regions, the concept of an educated Muslim woman eventually gained acceptance.

Taken together, this dissertation illuminated how Muslim girls and women fared in three very different educational frameworks across three distinct periods. It also positioned Muslim women within both regional and global discourses, as educational policies were not developed in national isolation in any of the observed cases. It showed how various international debates, from the Kemalist Turkey to the Soviet Union, informed Yugoslav society and impacted the lives of many. Ideas about Muslim women, their position in society, and their education travelled across borders and were then adapted and used for the local needs.

At the same time, Muslim girls and women in Yugoslavia navigated a multi-layered identity landscape, where their intersectional experiences were shaped by their status as women, Muslims, and members of various ethnic minority groups. While navigating their multiple identities, Muslim girls and women were experiencing multifaceted discrimination. In such a context, this work showed the development of educational systems and policies in times of uncertainty, analysing dominant narratives. It showed the long battle for access to educational opportunities, highlighting moments when Muslim perspectives were both considered and overlooked. Often Muslim women's voices were not heard in heated debates, but as this research showed, they existed, were active, and were even part of broader transnational trends. Sometimes in this dissertation I had to resort to using indirect means to get to these voices. But Muslim women discussed women's social, cultural, political, and economic positions, calling for changes and shaping these contexts. Some defied the hegemonic state policies. They were criticizing the governments' enforced policies stemming from the prejudiced ideologies, while participating in other endeavours that promised to improve women's positions. These Muslim women's voices were telling the story of their own struggle for better opportunities, and they were slowly changing the society and entrenched societal norms that disadvantaged Muslim girls.

And finally, this study concludes with the end of Yugoslavia. The ensuing conflicts, crimes, and devastation had a profound impact on Muslim girls and women, significantly altering the educational landscape once more, warranting further scholarly investigation. For future research, it is crucial to examine the persistence and discontinuities of socialist educational policies, as well as the shifts in social mobility, opportunities and the resurgence of religion in the post-socialist context.

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