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978-1-107-09107-8 - Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance

Jelena Batinić

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Women and Yugoslav Partisans

This book focuses on one of the most remarkable phenomena of World War II: the mass participation of women, including numerous female combatants, in the communist-led Yugoslav Partisan resistance. Drawing on an array of sources – archival documents of the Communist Party and Partisan army, wartime press, Partisan folklore, participant reminiscences, and Yugoslav literature and cinematography – this study explores the history and postwar memory of the phenomenon. More broadly, it is concerned with changes in gender norms caused by the war, revolution, and establishment of the communist regime that claimed to have abolished inequality between the sexes. The first archive-based study on the subject, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans* uncovers a complex gender system in which revolutionary egalitarianism and peasant tradition interwove in unexpected ways.

Jelena Batinić is currently a Fellow in the Thinking Matters Program at Stanford University. She is a historian specializing in modern Eastern Europe, World War II, and gender history. Her work has been published in edited volumes and journals including the *Journal of International Women's Studies* and *Journal of Women's History*. She has been a Mellon/ACLS Recent Doctoral Recipients Fellow and Postdoctoral Fellow in Stanford University's Introduction to the Humanities Program.

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Stanford University



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Note on Translation

All translations from the South Slavic languages to English are mine unless otherwise indicated. In contrast to English, there are three grammatical genders in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. There are no satisfactory English equivalents for nouns that indicate a person's sex, such as *partizan* (Partisan, male) and *partizanka* (Partisan, female), or *drug* (comrade, male) and *drugarica* (comrade, female). I indicate a person's sex by adding woman/female or man/male to the noun, for example, Partisan women, male comrades, female fighters.

There are two terms, *komitet* and *odbor*, in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian that correspond to the English word "committee." In World War II, the term *komitet(i)* was reserved for party committees, while *odbor(i)* was used for organs of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFW) and the people's government. To mark the distinction, I have decided to keep the English "committee" when referring to *komitet*, and to use "council" for *odbor*. The following text thus mentions "party committees," "AFW councils," and "national-liberation councils."

For translations of South Slavic national and geographic appellations, I have decided to adopt the system proposed by Ivo Banac.¹ For adjectives, Croat, Serb, and Slovene indicate one's ethnonational origin, for example, Croat leader, Serb woman, Slovene politician. By contrast, the adjectives Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian refer to the *land*, the *language*, and other notions that assume a long history, for example, Serbian army,

¹ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 17–18.

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Croatian coast, Slovenian language. For nouns, I use Serb(s), Croat(s), and Slovene(s). Therefore, Croatian Serb refers to a person of Serb ethnonational extraction who lives in Croatia; Bosnian Croat refers to an ethnically Croat person who is from Bosnia, and so on.

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