

## “SORORAL GREETINGS” FROM THE WEST

Western Women in the Czechoslovak Press, 1948-1968

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This contribution examines press reports covering the topic of women in the Western bloc published by Czechoslovak print media between 1948 and 1968, against the backdrop of the Cold War. The author bases her analysis on the assumption that foreigner stereotypes always reflect one's own values and opinions, and goes on to present reasons for Czechoslovak media publishing items on Western women. Thus, when Stalinism was in full swing, the press focused on motherhood and active peace promoting as traits common to women in both East and West. The author concludes that this happened in order to legitimize for their female and male readers the concept of what constitutes a socialist woman. Moreover, reports that women in the West suffered economic exploitation served as evidence that socialism was superior to capitalism. With Czechoslovakia opening up, in a social sense, after 1956, the population came in contact with new models of femininity which opened new horizons for individual life plans and fostered intensive debates

on the extent to which Czechoslovak men and women did enjoy equal rights. However, with the focus of press coverage comparing the situation of women in West and East switching away from common values toward common problems, and with differing and sometimes clashing femininity models being highlighted by this time, cracks began to appear in the concept of universal friendship joining woman-kind across the borders of the political blocs.