

Historicizing Marxist Humanism:
Dialogue and the Exchange of Ideas between the Praxis Circle and Beyond: The Events of
1968

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Abstract

“1968” is increasingly approached from transnational and global perspectives, where the focus of research is placed on the entangled nature of protest and social movements across national and continental boundaries. For example, in *Europe’s 1968*, edited by Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, the contributors to the text assert that “1968” was a central year of political convergences, social solidarity, and shared European experiences in the twentieth century. Yet, they take issue with transnational approaches that often bring about a reading of the “process of European integration backward,” thereby writing 1968 into “a neat story of globalization.”

As a result, transnational approaches can disclose a teleological reading of European history. Simply, the moments of 1968 resulted in the moments of 1989. Taking inspiration from this problem—as raised by the editors of *Europe’s 1968*—I will discuss the context of Yugoslavia, which seems at odds with the notion of transnational approaches leading to integral histories of Europe. As a way to negotiate this issue, this thesis addresses the particular case of Yugoslavia as a space of exchange between European leftist intellectuals within the wider context of the events of 1968. Thus, the paper will decenter historical as well as political-theoretical reflections on 1968 from the binaries of East and West and shift the continental dialogue between European leftist intellectuals to Korčula, an island in the Yugoslav Adriatic. I will ask how the journal *Praxis* and its associated Korčula Summer School facilitated an intellectual space in which critical Marxist (or generally “Left”) intellectual trends interacted within, and in relation to the events of 1968. I will also highlight the immediacy of reaction by the Summer School toward the Soviet-led invasion of Prague that occurred on the same day as the proceedings: 21 August 1968. Therefore, by reading the multiple events of 1968 through these virtual and real spaces of exchange (*Praxis* and Korčula, respectively), it problematizes the “transnational” as well as 1968 as a turning point in Yugoslav history.

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Introduction

Today's socialism is not only an idea, but a reality in many countries. As it spread across the world, especially after World War II, socialism brought about many changes not only within its own structure, but also in the structures of capitalism. Certain socialist tendencies are even unstoppably piercing their own way into those capitalist countries that are in principle against socialism—and nobody would stop these tendencies.¹

Socialism arrived in Yugoslavia in crisis not because of the failures of politics (the failures of “economic reform” only helped to realize socialist systemic deficiencies), but because of the crisis of a specific conception of workers self-management, because of the crisis of the system itself, as it was constitutionally defined and socially implemented.²

These two quotations, taken from the Marxist Humanist philosophical journal *Praxis*, capture two contrasting moments in the intellectual history of socialism.³ The first quotation expresses hope in the future of socialism worldwide, while the second quotation, given seven years later, portrays the crisis of Yugoslav socialism. These quotations thematically frame the direction of this thesis: the shifts in intellectual attitudes between hope and crisis surrounding the possibility of international socialism over the events of 1968, as discussed by contributors to the journal *Praxis*.

Although numerous debates around the possibility of international socialism existed in the postwar years, this study focuses on those discourses as captured in the Yugoslav Marxist Humanist journal *Praxis* and its associated summer school on the Adriatic island of Korčula. During their decade-long existence (1963–74), these hubs of intellectual exchange represented fruitful socialist intellectual platforms, were described as having both genuine “Yugoslav” and international characters, and gathered intellectuals from “East” and “West” alike. Their activity coincided with the period in which Yugoslavia had created a possible “third way” beyond “Eastern” models of Soviet-type socialism and “Western” liberal, capitalist democracy. By the 1960s, Yugoslavia proclaimed a more democratic, self-managing socialism, as well as a foreign policy marked by its

¹ *Smisao i perspective socijalizma* [Ideas and Perspectives of Socialism], *Praxis* (1965), 5.

² “Trenutak Jugoslavenskog socijalizma” [Moments of Yugoslav Socialism], *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1972): 310.

³ “Marxist Humanists” will be interchangeably used with “critical Marxists,” denoting their critical position towards the Stalinist interpretation of Marxism.

leadership in the Non-Aligned Movement. Within Yugoslavia, cultural liberalization emerged after the Tito-Stalin Split (1948) and was tied to a seemingly more flexible socialism. Space for public critical thought likewise opened. From 1952 to 1954, this space was filled in part by a group of sociologists and philosophers around the journal *Pogledi*. Although this journal shuttered after three years of existence, the format stuck with those Marxist Humanists.

Ten years later, *Praxis*—the intellectual successor to *Pogledi*—began to raise critical attitudes toward the implementation of self-management as well as theoretical issues concerning the character of the international Marxist movement. This influence spread widely, both in Yugoslavia and abroad, in non-dogmatic Marxist circles. Thus, *Praxis* is often seen as one of the central ideological inspirations behind the first major riots and expressions of dissatisfaction with the government in socialist Yugoslavia in 1968.

To be clear, the journal *Praxis* and the gatherings of critical intellectuals at the Korčula Summer School were all commonly inspired by the writings of the “young Marx” and the concept of alienation developed in Marx’s pre-1844 writings. The *Praxis* group saw the early writings of Marx as more intellectually flexible than Marx’s later “scientific” production. Thus, the journal did not challenge socialist values and morals in Yugoslavia but aimed to strengthen them through criticism of the state’s shortcomings. Yet, according to some interpretations, the journal and the student movements it inspired within Yugoslavia played a decisive role for the country’s dissolution. In 1991, philosopher Miladin Životić⁴ gave the following summary of the consequences of the Yugoslav student movements in 1968:

1968 did not bring any direct and indirect results in the field of political changes. But it triggered a new sensibility, a new social atmosphere, a new spiritual situation that enabled the disintegration of the really-existing socialist regime. Without changes in the way of thinking, there is no change in the social system. 1968 triggered exactly that ... It created a generation that started to think differently, to

⁴ Miladin Životić was one of the founders of the oppositional Belgrade Circle of 1992. But, as Borislav Mikulić points out, at the end of the 1980s Životić had also joined the nationalist circle around Mihailo Marković as part of the “intellectual elite of the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution.’” Borislav Mikulić, “Politikum praxisa: filozofija u ogledalu vlasti [The ‘political’ of praxis: philosophy in the mirror of power],” in Borislav Mikulić, Mislav Žitko, eds., *Aspekti Praxisa. Refleksije uz 50. Godišnjicu* [Aspects of Praxis. Reflections on 50th Anniversary] (Filozofski fakultet sveučilišta u Zagrebu: Zagreb, 2015), 93.

critically open itself to the world in which it lived, which, despite all the tortures that it withstood, could not be manipulated anymore ...⁵

Given Životić's view, one could propose that critical thinking and an "opening to the world" in 1968 ended up in a series of violent wars, economic and social crises, and displaced individuals in each member state of the former Yugoslavia. The paradox of this interpretation hangs on the assertion that a new, critical "sensitivity" was created in 1968.

While there have been a few studies on 1968 in Yugoslavia from the national perspective, as well as on *Praxis* and Korčula Summer School, they often run in parallel without much interaction.⁶ Secondly, if approached together, none of these themes are placed in a transnational perspective. In addition, the events of 1968, *Praxis*, and the Korčula Summer School are taboo themes in Yugoslav historiography,⁷ where 1968 is seen as the beginning of the end for Yugoslavia, and the critical project of the intellectuals around *Praxis* is analyzed as being nothing but an illusion.⁸ The politics of memory surrounding the student movements of 1968 are still brushed aside in local historiographies of the former republics of Yugoslavia, partially due to the emergence of countervailing nationalist historiographies, but also due to the numerous understandings and diverging interpretations of that year's events. The role of critical Marxists was, like in other post-socialist contexts, regarded as irrelevant.⁹

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to propose a new avenue of analysis which can be a fruitful starting point for the future research. Inspired by transnational approaches, my study critically rethinks the idea of the "transnational 1968" by linking it to the intellectual history of

⁵ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die »Rote Universität«: Studentenbewegung und Linksoption in Belgrad, 1964–1975* (Hamburg: Verlag VSA, 2011), 8. Originally cited in Miladin Životić, "Studentske demonstracije 1968. i 1991. – Sličnosti i razlike [Student demonstrations 1968 and 1991—similarities and differences]," *Treći program* 23 (1–2), 45.

⁶ Cf. Nebojša Popov, *Sloboda i nasilje. Razgovor o časopisu Praxis i Korčulanskoj letnjoj školi* [Freedom and Violence. Conversations about the journal Praxis and Korčula Summer School] (Res Publica, Belgrade 2003); Božidar Jakšić, *Buka i bes: o pravu kritičkog mišljenja* [Noise and Anger: On the Right for Critical Thought] (Edicija Braničevo, Požarevac 2005); Milan Kangrga, *Šverceri vlastitog života: Refleksije o Hrvatskoj političkoj kulturi i duhovnosti* [Smugglers of Their Own Life: Reflections on Croatia's Political Culture and Spirituality] (Split: Kultura & Rasvjeta, 2002); Božidar Jakšić, *Praxis: Mišljenje kao diverzija* [Praxis: Opinion as a Diversion] (Službeni glasnik: Beograd, 2012).

⁷ Marko Zubak, "Praxis-Critical Thinking and Social Change Under State Socialism," *Studia Universitatis Petru Maior: Series Historia*, 8 (2008), 200.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁹ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: the Poverty of Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1990).

Marxist Humanism. This is not a *longue durée*, diachronic reconstruction of the intellectual thought of Marxist Humanism or the events of 1968. Rather, this study offers a reconstruction of a specific synchronic moment when the intellectual development of Marxist Humanism was confronted with the “major crisis,” “turning point,” or “watershed” experienced by the pan-European (and non-European) protest movements by the end of 1968.¹⁰ By focusing on the case of *Praxis* and their summer school, it is possible to reconstruct the convergences and divergences of ideas and reactions to the events of 1968 among an international group of intellectuals. My hypothesis is that in the moment of crisis that culminated with the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the plurality of opinions on the construction of international socialism, deemed positive in the previous years, brought about less negotiable views about socialism. Therefore, when talking about the intellectual history of 1968, we could argue that it signified both the “hope” and the “disillusion.” Put differently, as this thesis argues, 1968 offered hope towards the internationalization of Marxism, but it also dissolved in the period after the invasion of Prague.

Literature Review

The Transnational 1968 and the “Missing Case” of Yugoslavia

In recent years, scholarship on the protest movements of 1968 has significantly widened by embedding the events in an international context, and more specifically, by analyzing those events from transnational and global perspectives.¹¹ Thus, the majority of synthetic monographs and collected editions employ transnational methods as a way to move beyond the insular framework of the nation-state, to deconstruct it, and thus to analyze events *across* the borders of a state. But

¹⁰ Cf. Maud Bracke, *Which Socialism, Which Détente? West European Communism at the Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968* (CEU Press: Budapest, 2007).

¹¹ Cf. Chen Jian et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protests and Nation Building* (London: Routledge, 2018); Martin Klimke et al., eds., *Between Prague Spring and French May: Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011); Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: a History of Protest and Activism, 1956-77* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Carole Fink et al., eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.); ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Promises of 1968: Crisis, Illusion, and Utopia* (CEU Press: Budapest, New York, 2011); Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007); ed. Anna von der Goltz, ‘Talkin’ ‘bout my generation’: *Conflicts of generational building and Europe’s ‘1968’* (Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen, 2011); eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, Detlef Junker, *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998).

while it is widely accepted that the protest movements of 1968 cannot be taken in isolation from one another, the meaning of “transnational 1968” is partly embedded in contemporary political discourses.

Despite the fact that the experience of 1968 is widely seen as a “truly European” one,¹² much of the scholarship still studies 1968 from the perspective of Western Europe, while simultaneously preserving the Cold War bipolarity of a distinct “East” and “West.” It is remarkable to see that scholarship on 1968 only started to integrate former “Eastern bloc” countries not more than a decade ago. However, while the West in 1968 has been described in terms of “progressive tendencies,” the “East” is interpreted in terms of the failure to throw off communism. Even then, the common narrative states that 1968 paved the way to 1989, that is, the protests in ‘68 made the democratic transitions in ‘89 possible.

Some recent studies on 1968 incorporate studies on Eastern bloc countries (e.g., *Between Prague Spring and French May Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980*; *1968 in Europe: a History of Protest and Activism, 1956–77*, etc.). While these appear to be studies of transnational approaches to social movements and protests, they often read like an encyclopedia of the events of 1968 without overarching analyses. One study, *1968: The World Transformed*, incorporates Czechoslovakia, Poland, America, France, and even China, and aims to interpret 1968 as a global or transnational phenomenon, providing an explanation of the “simultaneity of the crises that erupted throughout the world.”¹³ Thus, the claim for a deep “transnational” character of 1968 is seen in the fact the activists throughout the world “operated as part of formal and informal networks of communication and collaboration.”¹⁴ The authors agree that the goals of the movements varied widely (which appears to be an obvious conclusion, due to the their different political, economic, and cultural contexts), yet it still appears problematic to keep distinctions like: “in the Communist world, they fought against authoritarian governments and for liberal democracy; in the West, they

¹² Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds., *1968 in Europe: a History of Protest and Activism, 1956–77* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2.

¹³ Carole Fink et al., eds., *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998), 3.

¹⁴ Ibid.

fought against social repression, hierarchical structures, the tyranny of consumption, for personal emancipation and ‘true’ participatory democracy.”¹⁵

What characterizes the “transnational 1968” is still deeply dependent on analyses that operate through an East-West dichotomy. To that end, and by decentering the analysis of the “transnational 1968” from Paris and Prague to an island in the Yugoslav Adriatic, I aim to problematize the contemporary literature on the transnational 1968. Therefore, the critical perspective of this thesis is to problematize ideas about 1968 as the year of “the year of European convergences” by including the case of Yugoslavia, which is almost completely absent in the contemporary literature dealing with the “transnational 1968.”

While the student protests in Yugoslavia have been described as being “between East and West” or as a “hybrid,” Madigan Fichter has observed that such characterizations of 1968 in Yugoslavia often reinforce the much discussed and negative discourse of “balkanism.”¹⁶ That is, Yugoslavia’s simultaneous engagement with the local and the global contexts of 1968 can be interpreted as the indication of imperfect Europeanness of the Balkans, or, to quote Larry Wolff’s seminal work *Inventing Eastern Europe*, Yugoslavia is “Europe but not Europe.”¹⁷ To add to Fichter’s argument, one could also say that while moving away from the nation-state, and so decentering “1968,” transnational approaches do not critically approach “symbolic geographies” or “mental maps.” Instead, they often unintentionally reinforce the anachronistic mental maps projected onto the period by later generations of historians.

The above-mentioned literature implies that the case of Yugoslavia does not fit “logically” into the mold of clean transitions from “Eastern bloc” to “European Union” after 1989 for three reasons. First, due to Yugoslavia’s unique position in the Cold War: after the Tito-Stalin Split of 1948, Yugoslav communists developed their own “road to socialism” based on the self-

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Madigan Fichter, “Yugoslav Protests: Student Rebellion in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo in 1968,” *Slavic Review*, no.1 (2016): 101.

¹⁷ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1994), 7.

management of the proletariat in the early 1950s and, from the early 1960s, non-alignment in foreign policy. Second, the student protests across Yugoslavia in 1968 were seen as ideologically closer to the West than the East, yet more correctly understood as a hybrid (clearly captured in the phrase “Down with the red bourgeoisie!”). Namely, the students did not criticize the Yugoslav socialist system itself but demanded the implementation of a more *genuine* socialism already promised by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia—that is, actual self-managing socialism. Third, and finally, while the dissolution of Yugoslavia was understood to be a part of the general reordering of Europe following the end of Cold War, it was an exceptional case: horrendous violence accompanied the “victory of democratic forces over communist regimes.”¹⁸ How could this have taken place? To paraphrase Tony Judt, the soul of communism did not die in Yugoslavia after the invasion of Prague in August ‘68.¹⁹ Yet, if we agree with philosopher Miladin Životić’s interpretation above, the 1968 student movements in Yugoslavia opened the space for critique, which was partly framed by the critical Marxists whose struggle was not to subvert socialism, but to internationalize it.

Varieties of Critical Marxism

This thesis is partly envisioned as an exercise in the intellectual history of Marxist Humanism. While the historiography on 1968 and the intellectual history of the Left, or the New Left, are sometimes combined, these narratives often run in parallel, without much integration.²⁰ However, the New Left played a crucial role in the Western context, but the stakes and demands of the Leftist intellectuals on the East, as well as in Yugoslavia, are often neglected. What dominates is often the idea that critical Marxists or Marxist “revisionists” (“revisionism” as a pejorative term used by the Communist parties to describe those individuals who started to criticize the “failures in political,

¹⁸ Nadège Ragaru, “Missed Encounters: Engaged French Intellectuals and the Yugoslav Wars,” *Südeuropa* no. 61 (2013): 501.

¹⁹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).

²⁰ While these authors focus exclusively on the Western 1968, they do speak about the meaning of the New Left in the context of student movements. Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney, *Transnational Moments of Change. Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* (Lanham, MD and Oxford, 2004), Ingrid Glitcher-Holtey, *Die 68er Bewegung: Deutschland, Westeuropa, USA*, (München: C.H. Beck, 2001).

economic, cultural and social life,” in the period following Stalin’s death)²¹ failed in their attempts to reform socialism from within. What follows is a brief outline of the problematic aspects of this literature that the thesis will address.

In present studies that emphasize European integration to the Western democracies as teleological, approaches to the role of critical Marxists in East Central and Southeastern Europe is analyzed from the perspective of the “demise of Communism” and the “failure of the Left.” One such an example is Vladimir Tismaneanu’s 1988 book, *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: The Poverty of Utopia*, which is a further elaboration of an article he originally published in *Praxis International* in 1983.²² Tismaneanu’s aim is to demonstrate that Marxist revisionists, the critical intellectuals in East Central Europe who returned to the “young” humanist Marx, were all too naive in their ventures. He describes them in a positive light insofar as they strove to “rescue the dialectic from the dogmatic chains defended by mummified bureaucrats,”²³ yet their flaw was to use Marx against Marxism. Although the chapters provide the reader with general knowledge about Marxist Humanists, Tismaneanu avoids contextualizing and historicizing their writings.

Another study of the subject is James H. Satterwhite’s *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe* (1992).²⁴ While helpful and thoroughly descriptive study of the “national” cases of Marxist Humanism, the choice of the representation of revisionism in the context of East Central Europe ends up being a “movement” independent of historical and social constellations, somehow existing only within the history of philosophy. Satterwhite explains that the Marxist Humanist movement developed in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and

²¹ Michal Kopeček, “Socialist Democracy or Revolutionary Consciousness? The Prospects and Limits of ‘Revised’ Marxism in Central Europe in the 1950s and 1960s,” paper delivered at the conference *Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies*, European Studies Centre, St. Antony’s College Oxford, (24–26 May 2002), 3.

²² *Praxis International* was a journal co-edited by Mihailo Marković and Richard J. Bernstein, after its predecessor, *Praxis: A Philosophical Journal*, ceased publications. The new journal had a different orientation and in fact kept only the name *Praxis*. *Praxis International* was established in 1981 and was published until 1994 under the same name. From 1994 it is published as *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*.

²³ Tismaneanu, *The Crisis of Marxist Ideology in Eastern Europe: The Poverty of Utopia*, 64.

²⁴ James H. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe* (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 1992)

Poland “along similar lines at roughly same time.”²⁵ Both Tismaneanu and Satterwhite portray revisionism as a movement independent of historical and social constellations, somehow existing only within the history of philosophy. Analogously, Martin Jay’s investigation from 1984 delineates between Western Marxism and (critical) East European Marxism, claiming that critical Marxist intellectuals such as Leszek Kolakowski and Karel Kosík simply “absorbed and adapted” the already developed thoughts of Western Marxists.²⁶ In addition to this, the practice of using categorizations and dichotomies to mark the difference between various Marxisms, which presumes their universal applicability, is maintained in a recent study entitled *Il marxismo occidentale: Come nacque, come morì, come può rinascere* [Western Marxism: How it was Born, How it Died, How it Can be Reborn] (2017). Domenico Losurdo presented Western Marxism as utopian in contrast to the constructive type in its Eastern counterpart. Moreover, Losurdo, in David Broder’s language, aimed to present the “arrogant, colorblind Eurocentrism [of Western Marxism] incapable of acknowledging the world-historical achievements of Eastern Marxism.”²⁷

Raymond Taras’ edited volume *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* complicates the narrative that what “undermined Marxism in the Soviet bloc was the coexistence of the ‘two Marxisms’ ... the ‘scientific’ Marxism adopted by the socialist states and the ‘critical’ Marxism appropriated by those opposed to monolithic Muscovite ideology.”²⁸ The volume complicates this position by contextualizing the critical Marxists’ struggles and demands, and showing that their critiques took different forms, yet at the same time argues that the volume represents the “intellectual roots of the Soviet bloc’s collapse.”²⁹

My study follows the theoretical considerations and approaches to Marxist Humanism, or critical Marxists, as developed by Michal Kopeček in *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: zrod a počátky*

²⁵ James H. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*, 5.

²⁶ Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: the Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

²⁷ David Broder, “Eastern light on Western Marxism,” review of Domenico Losurdo’s *Il marxismo occidentale: Come nacque, come morì, come può rinascere*, *New Left Review* 107 (2017): 138.

²⁸ Raymond Taras, *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* (M.E. Sharpe, Inc.: New York), 4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

marxistickébo revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953-1960 [Finding the Lost Sense of Revolution: The Birth and Beginnings of Marxist Revisionism in Central Europe, 1953–1960] (2009). In a comparative examination of the period between 1953 and 1960, which, in Kopeček's view, represents the initial stage of the formation of Marxist revisionism in communist Central Europe, Kopeček clarifies the term “revisionism” that represents the critical Marxist intellectuals who opposed Stalinism and dogmatic versions of Marxism-Leninism. Unlike Tismaneanu, Kopeček does not regard the aims and demands of the leading figures of Marxists revisionism in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia as inconsequential failures. Instead, he approaches these figures as important manifestations of differentiation in the seemingly communist monolith and, secondly, places them within the possible roots of the later opposition movements in Central and Eastern Europe. In my study, by using Kopeček's framework, I argue that the character of Marxism Humanism in Yugoslavia thus differed from that of Marxist Humanism from abroad (e.g., France, the USA, Germany, Hungary), resulting in multiple, often divergent understandings of central concepts in their political languages.

Theory and Method

Zeitschichten and Contextualism

This subchapter explicates the principal theoretical and methodological considerations of the thesis. Because of the main object of my study—that is, the journal *Praxis*—my theoretical considerations rely on three mutually related points: (1) the situatedness of a historian, (2) layers of history, (3) contextualism, and 4) transnational approach. The first two aspects are taken from Reinhart Koselleck's reflections on the practice of writing history as well as the relationship between theory and history; the discussion on contextualism is drawn from Quentin Skinner's writings. Thus, these aspects apply to the objects of study, my own position as a narrator, and the political implications of writing history.

First, in order to critically approach the meaning of “transnational 1968” in the present literature and my own historical study, I follow Koselleck’s emphasis on the situatedness of a historian. For Koselleck, a historian is always rooted in his or her own perspective and conversely the observations and conclusions made are unavoidably framed by a historian’s own perspective.³⁰ One could raise an issue with this remark, claiming that such a view of history and history writing leads into relativism and so the loss of shared meaning. History, from a positivist perspective—which often underlines and leads historians’ approaches even today—ought to stipulate coherence and meaning. Thus, from this positivist perspective, arguing that history is nothing but a collection of various perspectives dethrones its position as a meaningful source for relating and identifying the past, present, and future. However, this would be a poor interpretation of Koselleck’s vision of history, and also an apologetic position towards positivism. Namely, as Koselleck explained: “This does not mean, however, that a historical event can be arbitrarily set up in this or that manner. The sources provide control over what might not be stated.”³¹ At the same time, while it appears obvious, the quality and quantity of evidence can never amount to the facticity of events, “that is, every event is historically established and presented on the fiction of actuality, reality itself is past and gone.”³²

This brings us to chronology and the layers of history. While my thesis deals with 1968 and is organized around chronological moments, e.g., the dialogues between intellectuals at the Korčula Summer Schools of 1967 and 1968, it does not approach history as a chronological pattern of events that implies continuity of causes. We can call this “physical time” or “natural time” which exists outside of our experiences. However, Koselleck argued that natural chronology is empty of sense with respect to history, which is why Kant demanded that chronology be arranged according to history and not history according to chronology.³³ Thus, such an understanding of history is not

³⁰Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik* (Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 310. Cf. John Zammito, “Koselleck’s Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History,” *History and Theory*, no. 1 (2004): 135.

³¹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Columbia University Press: New York, 2004), 111.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 106.

linear, and rather depends upon sequences of causal events. On this understanding, history becomes more multilayered and complex.³⁴

History, or in Koselleck's terminology *Historik* (in German, methodology of history), is a "study of the conditions of possible histories."³⁵ Hence, when a historian writes history, she necessarily relies on "...quite diverse temporal reaches of historical movement."³⁶ Historical description is a narration, and as such borrows from different levels of historical movement. Koselleck argued that historians ought to speak "not of one historical time, but rather of many forms of time superimposed one upon the other."³⁷ There he referred to Herder who stated that "any mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time; this persists even in the absence of any other; no two worldly things have the same measure of time ..."³⁸ Historical time therefore comprises diversity of layers that offer run in parallel, but at times can depend upon each other. Therefore, my thesis is organized through Koselleck's concept of *Zeitschichten*—layers of time—"... which, like a geological model, gestures towards several layers of time [*Zeitebenen*], of differing duration and differentiable origin, which are nonetheless present and effectual at the same time."³⁹

The third important aspect that leads my thesis is the relevance of context. That is, in analyzing and interpreting the texts published in the journal *Praxis*, I pay close attention to the context from which the author is speaking. When intellectuals gathered at the "transnational" space of the Korčula Summer School use the notion "socialism"—which appears at first glance as a universal—they do not necessarily mean the same thing. The inspiration for such an approach comes from Quentin Skinner's "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," published in *History & Theory* (1969). Skinner transforms the method of looking at ideas in terms of a set of utterances formulated by an author with the intention of communicating a certain meaning to an

³⁴ One could say that a similar complex understanding of history or time is found in Edmund Husserl's concept of time-consciousness as well. According to Husserl, the experience of *now* is always interlinked with the past and future.

³⁵ Koselleck, *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik* (Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 99. Cf. John Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History," *History and Theory*, no. 1 (2004): 125.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 9. Translated by John Zammito, "Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History," *History and Theory*, no. 1 (2004): 125.

audience.⁴⁰ Consequently, the task of the historian of ideas is to uncover the intention of the author's writing in his work. Taking this proposed method as a frame of reference, my treatment of the texts acknowledges the embeddedness of ideas in the context. This will show that when speaking about the meaning-laden concept of self-managing socialism, what intellectuals mean differs based on their immediate experience of the context in which they live. Hence, for instance, while speaking about the notion of workers' movement, or of alienation, meanings would resonate differently depending upon how a speaker uses the term. This does not mean that their conceptualizations are utterly alien to each other. One could ask about the fact that when these intellectuals are gathered at Korčula, a different context from their own, and discuss topics which are not part of their own contexts—i.e. the invasion of Prague by the Soviet troops in August 1968—what happens with their context? I believe that their specific rootedness in different intellectual, cultural, political contexts dominates, yet they still partly manage to bridge these limits and, so to speak, think together through one event, but in a multiplicity of ways.

At the same time, this study aims to contribute to transnational approaches to history. Thus the context (as a place), seen as the “local and contemporaneous” in terms of a static, determining factor, is rethought. This leads to the transnational approach and the history of ideas. In the essay “Ideas on the Move: Context in Transnational Intellectual History,” Edward Baring argues that in transnational studies, “[t]he prefix ‘trans’ implies that our histories cannot be tied to one place, and that to understand a text, we have to connect it to ideas, texts, and intellectual movements happening elsewhere.”⁴¹ Studying “ideas in context” emphasizes location and situatedness, but what happens once we approach the ideas in a transnational space, such as the Korčula Summer School? I find Baring's proposal to think of context not in spatial terms, but in terms of an archive very helpful in making sense of the dialogues that occurred on Korčula. Namely, he takes the

⁴⁰ Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory*, no.1 (1969): 49. Although not entirely rejecting contextualism, Skinner denotes the pitfalls of being led to think that past authors, their writings, and thought, can be seen as deriving from and simply “mirroring” their specific societies or class positions.

⁴¹ Edward Baring, “Ideas on the Move: Context in Transnational Intellectual History,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, no.4 (2016): 568.

notion of “archive” from a French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, who describes an archive as acting simultaneously in two ways: it helps us remember, but it is also a form of forgetting—“because what is in an archive is out of our sight.”⁴² Thus, Baring takes from this that an author has two separate relations with a context. He engages in a context, by affirming the conventions, rules, “language games”—that is, what we can find in Skinner’s understanding of a context—but Baring adds another layer. Since “the contents of an archive ‘lie mostly in the shadows,’ first the author has to call up that context, indicating to the reader which conventions and assumptions are being brought into play.”⁴³ While context plays a central role in the utterance of ideas, one could also add another layer of interpretation that, to an extent, can bracket the context. Thus, the intellectuals at the Korčula Summer School, while coming from various intellectual, cultural, and political contexts, can simultaneously do both—be part of their context, and be outside of it—depending on the wider social stakes involved.

To address the question of “critical thought” in Yugoslavia leading to 1968 and after, I am inspired by the study of “transnational history.” The value of this approach to history lies, according to Patricia Calvin, in that it “...allows us to reflect on, while at the same time going beyond, the confines of the nation.”⁴¹ That is, I adopt the understanding of “transnational” not in order to narrate the encounters between intellectuals from Yugoslavia and abroad in terms of relationships that are “progressive and co-operative in character.”⁴¹ At the same time, the usage “transnational” in this thesis does not aim to stress the convergences that resulted in 1968. Thus, I follow Patricia Calvin’s critique of the “transnational” which can “result in a teleological history of globalization in which modern societies grow increasingly enmeshed.”⁴⁴ As my conclusion will show, the transnational approach to 1968 in Yugoslavia is problematic for the very reason that one could identify parallel and contesting narratives when speaking about the transnational intellectual

⁴² Ibid., 573.

⁴³ Ibid., 574.

⁴⁴ Patricia Calvin, “Defining Transnationalism,” *Contemporary European History* no.4 (2005): 424.

encounters in Yugoslavia. Precisely for this reason, I should draw attention to some general tendencies in literature dealing with 1968 from a transnational perspective.

The merit of using a transnational approach is that it does not preserve the strict dichotomy between East and West. At the same time, overemphasizing convergence as the main marker of the transnational nature of 1968 runs the risk of ignoring differences and falling prey to teleological narration. Gilda and Warring clearly explain that the “transnational” interpretation has had an immense impact since the accession of former “Eastern bloc” countries to the European Union. This trend in historical narration is intertwined with contemporaneous politics, and one could argue that European integration, in the atmosphere of the so-called failure of state socialist regimes, aims to unify the history of both halves of the divided continent and present 1968 as the year of East-West convergence. Yet, since this integration was headed by neoliberal policies, which as a political project aims to create a social reality that suggests itself as the already-existent one, as Fredric Jameson suggests,⁴⁵ one ought to historicize 1968 and avoid the assumption that there is a logical process that brings 1968 to 1989. Thus, the political implications of writing history, depend on the very questions that are posed by a given line of research.⁴⁶

Sources

The crux of my sources rest on two types of materials: the published journal *Praxis* and archival, unprinted material. To reconstruct dialogues between intellectuals, I primarily focus on the journal *Praxis*, both in its Yugoslav and international editions. Specifically, I focus on the publications around 1968—that is, 1966–71. I focus on three essential Korčula Summer School years: 1967, 1968, and 1969. All three summer schools—“Creativity and Objectification” in 1967, “Marx and Revolution” in 1968, and “Power and Humanity” in 1969—are recorded by the journal *Praxis*. However, it ought to be emphasized that the thesis reflects critically on these sources and does not

⁴⁵ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 263.

⁴⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, “On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History,” in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2002), 14.

take them at their face value. The main reason is that some aspects—presentations or dialogues—might have been omitted in the journals as possible self-censorship due to the journal’s precarious position in Yugoslavia. In general, I believe that *Praxis* did not remove critical positions within their work, since parts of the dialogues in which the criticism is evident was published.⁴⁷ In addition to the presentations given at the summer school, the journal also compiled reflections on the summer schools written by the participants themselves and published either in the foreign newspapers and magazines, or as a part of the journal *Praxis*. Moreover, the journal recorded the discussions that took place either during the panels or at the end of the summer school.

The second large part of my source base is archival, found within the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. In the archive, I viewed the Rudi Supek Fond, a collection of documents, lecture manuscripts, and pieces of correspondence, among other items, which belonged to Rudi Supek, one of the founding members of the journal *Praxis*. This archival collection of various types of correspondence is important in order to reconstruct and analyze the robust dialogue that existed between Yugoslav Marxist intellectuals and the like-minded intellectuals from both “East” and “West,” including the United States. The letters sent to Rudi Supek personally, but also officially to the journal *Praxis*, point to the intellectual networks and integration of these intellectuals prior to and after 1968. Furthermore, they also add a more nuanced understanding of their dialogue.

To reconstruct the wider international context and also to examine the “perceived” image of the journal *Praxis* and its school, I rely on archival data found at the Open Society Archives in Budapest. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) interestingly did not broadcast to Yugoslavia, yet it extensively monitored the internal news outlets and used them primarily for their own institutional circulation. From 1966 onward, with varied intensity—mainly depending on the urgency of the events in Yugoslavia—the RFE Research Department covered the events, issues,

⁴⁷ For example, Tihomir Zvonko in the “General Debate” at the Korčula Summer School criticized the atmosphere at the school, given the following reasons: “I believe that the presentations were not sensitive to pluralism which has been so heatedly advocated. Someone intervened adding that the society can no longer be built on the idea of a monolith, but of pluralism. We have for that preconditions, because we have six republics in Yugoslavia, and this means practicing pluralism from the very beginning. However, the possibilities for pluralism ought to exist not only in the political realm, but also in the realm of thought. Clearly, not all people think in the same way, and at the same time it is normal that we count on that in practice, too.” *Praxis* no.1–2 (1968): 92.

and debates that involved critical Marxist intellectuals in Yugoslavia. To contextualize the atmosphere of the summer school itself, as well as these international dialogues, I also rely on the archival collection of *Praxis* created by Prof. Ante Lešaja deposited at Korčula's City Library "Ivan Vidali" and also available online.

Due to the scope of the MA thesis, I can provide neither a comprehensive overview of each change in these discussions, nor thorough accounts of the individual intellectual backgrounds from which these intellectuals came. Therefore, it allows only for a fragmented, but highly representative image of a much more complex issue.

Thesis Outline

One may take an issue with my decision to focus on the Korčula Summer School and the journal *Praxis* when discussing the student movements in Yugoslavia. Moreover, one cannot really speak of "the Yugoslav 1968" without qualifying what it means, since the protests in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo cannot be so easily lumped together. However, the aim of this thesis is not to present the journal *Praxis* as a direct ideological expression of these movements, although the language used by the students did resonate with the journal. Further, the study also does not aim to provide a comprehensive study of 1968 in Yugoslavia, with all its internal differences.⁴⁸ Rather, the aim of this thesis is to point to one aspect of the multifarious and complex narratives of the Yugoslav 1968 by reflecting on the "transnational 1968" through its representation and discussion in the unique international and left-oriented intellectual hub of *Praxis* and its summer school on the island of Korčula.

⁴⁸ Cf. Boris Kanzleiter, *Die »Rote Universität«: Studentenbewegung und Linksoption in Belgrad, 1964–1975* [The Red University: Student Movements and the Leftist Opposition in Belgrade] (Hamburg: Verlag VSA, 2011); Nebojša Popov, *Društveni sukobi—izazov sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*. [Social confrontations—challenges to sociology: The "Belgrade June," 1968] (Službeni glasnik: Belgrade, 2008); Ralph Pervan, *Tito and the Students: The University and the University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, (University of Western Australia Press: Nedlands, 1978); Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012); For the student movement in Slovenia: Jure Ramšak, "Radicalization of the Criticism of "Real" Self-Management Socialism. Student Movement in Slovenia 1971-1974, *Südost Forschungen* no.74 (2015).

The thesis is organized in three core chapters. Chapter 1, “Čemu Praxis? (and the Korčula Summer School?),” sets the groundwork for the overall focus of this thesis. It lays out two essential aspects: the international character of *Praxis* and Korčula, as well as their contents. The first subchapter, “‘Struggle of Opinions’ and ‘Critique’ as the Driving Forces of Yugoslav Socialism,” places the journal and the school within the specific context of Yugoslav socialism. The following two subchapters analyze the intention of both *Praxis* and Korčula as spaces for dialogue. Chapter 2, “Treating Hope in the Wake of Crisis, 1967–68,” focuses on the notion of self-managing socialism and the dialogue concerning the internationalization of socialism. At the same time, in parallel, while the discussions concerning the internationalization of socialism appear cloaked in hope, there is an emergence of economic crisis in Yugoslavia. Chapter 3, “1968 *Zeitschichten*: Poland, Paris, Yugoslavia, Prague,” interacts with Chapter 2 more simultaneously than the chronological organization of the thesis suggests. In fact, they should be understood as overlapping. Chapter 3 focuses on the events of 1968 through the journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School. The narratives of hope (following May in Paris, the Prague Spring) and disillusionment (stifling of the Prague Spring) are mutually co-existent.

In addition, the thesis points toward a shift in the political language of Marxist Humanism due to the historical crises of 1968, with respect to the various visitors and presenters at the school as well as in the journal. Briefly explained, the gist of this change is that the social movements that emerged around Europe prior to and during the spring of 1968 offered hope and reaffirmed positions concerning the “internationalism” of socialism as well as the integration of Europe. After the collapse of the Paris protests, the appeasement of student demands in Yugoslavia, and the stark political failure of the Polish case—above all the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968—the revolutionary prospects across Europe dramatically diminished. From the international Marxist Humanist perspective, positions become more rigid and thus not open to negotiation as they were before. Yet the conclusion of my thesis is that while Yugoslav critical Marxists were in dialogue with intellectuals from both “East” and “West”—and nurtured the idea of so-called

socialist humanism—the official “Left” rhetoric in Yugoslavia was picked up by nationalists. It is not by chance that the “Yugoslav 1968” thus does not match the overarching narrative of European integration after 1989 that was seen as a result of the transnational movements and solidarity in 1968. Being a *sui generis* case, in which the Left kept its presence in politics after 1968 but began to accommodate nationalism in the following decades, the “Yugoslav 1968” fits neither West nor East, which soon became integrated into Europe.

Chapter 1:

Čemu Praxis? (and the Korčula Summer School?)

In 1963, a group of professors affiliated with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb (and later also the University of Belgrade) envisioned a new philosophical journal, as well as an associated summer school on the island of Korčula.⁴⁹ The idea behind the journal and the school emerged from discussions at an international philosophical symposium held in Dubrovnik in 1963, entitled “Progress and Culture,” organized by Zagreb philosophers Milan Kangrga and Gajo Petrović. The symposium acted as a way to gather well-known Marxist intellectuals and philosophers from across Europe, including, among others, Erich Fromm, Henri Lefebvre, and Lucien Goldmann.⁵⁰ This practice—to overcome the East-West binary of the Cold War through an international exchange of Marxist ideas—set the stage for the emergence of *Praxis* and the format of the summer school on Korčula.

Both the summer school and the journal (published in a domestic Serbo-Croatian edition as well as an international edition in French, German, and English) acted as spaces of exchange, gathering renowned representatives of contemporaneous trends in global Marxism, including philosophers and sociologists, but also non-Marxists, and those simply interested in the theoretical dialogue between “East” and “West.” *Praxis* and its associated summer school therefore acted as intellectual mediators between Marxist strands of thought emerging in the divergent contexts of the postwar “bloc” system.

Praxis and the Korčula Summer School were described by their founders and associates as bastions of critical thought in Yugoslavia—which did not aim to undermine the Yugoslav socialist system. Ivan Kuvačić, a Croatian Marxist sociologist and a member of the advisory board of *Praxis*,

⁴⁹ The founding members of the journal were Milan Kangrga, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, Branko Bošnjak, Danko Grlić, and Predrag Vranicki, who were at the time members of the Croatian Philosophical Society as well as professors at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. In Milan Kangrga, *Šververi vlastitog života: Refleksije o Hrvatskoj političkoj kulturi i duhovnosti*. (Split: Kultura & Rasvjeta, 2002), 31.

⁵⁰ Milan Kangrga, *Šververi vlastitog života*, 212.

argued that notwithstanding the internal political and cultural changes in Yugoslavia—e.g. the Tito-Stalin Split in 1948, the refutation of the “theory of reflection” by critical Marxists at the Bled Conference in 1960, the opening of institutions of education towards modern literature including Camus, Bloch, Sartre, Fromm—the cultural and intellectual links with the West intensified in the period between 1964 and 1968. In academia, scholarships from the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung as well as the Fulbright Scholarship enabled many Yugoslav scholars and students to study abroad and be exposed to diverse intellectual strains and approaches.⁵¹

The entanglement of intellectuals around *Praxis* with the “West” dated even earlier, however. For example, Milan Kangrga, one of the main founders of *Praxis*, worked in Heidelberg prior to 1964 on an academic exchange funded by the Humboldt-Stiftung. As the Second World War broke out, Rudi Supek had been studying clinical psychology in Paris. Indeed, Kuvačić is right to point out that in the period between 1964 and 1968, a larger amount of Yugoslav academics took part in intellectual exchanges—due to the availability of scholarships—but also because the period prior to 1964 was characterized by “awakening and dynamism in Western Europe and America,” primarily framed by the inceptions of radical student movements.⁵² In this context, and from Kuvačić’s perspective, the Korčula Summer School and journal *Praxis* are part of a wider trend of intellectual exchange that was being established across Europe by the mid-1960s.⁵³ Thus, the journal and the school played crucial roles for this “opening” for the very reason that they formed concrete and regular places of encounter and exchange. On the pages of *Praxis*, philosophers oriented toward Marxist Humanism could debate on common topics from their desks in Paris, Prague, Budapest, Belgrade, New York, and beyond. At the Korčula Summer School,

⁵¹ ed. Nebojša Popov, ed., *Sloboda i nasilje*, 39.

⁵² Ibid., 39.

⁵³ It should be noted that Korčula Summer School was naturally not the only place where intellectuals met. In the journal itself, one can read impressions of *Praxis* members concerning various other meetings, for example, the “International conference ‘Dynamics of social structure in socialist societies and the problems of humanism,’” organized by the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade and the Instituto Gramsci di Roma, which took place in Herceg Novi, Montenegro, in 1968.

Yugoslav intellectuals and students could meet face-to-face with their colleagues from the West and East and exchange ideas, books, and glasses of wine.⁵⁴

Božidar Jakšić, another *Praxis*-affiliated sociologist from Belgrade, recounted the institutionalized opening to the West as part of the general market reforms of the early 1960s—which, however, started to show damaging results for the Yugoslav economy soon after their implementation.⁵⁵ People were encouraged to go to the West and work as *gastarbeiters*, which, according to Jakšić, “represented the most significant social and political safety-valve [in Yugoslavia]: the dissatisfied can freely leave and monetarily help the lives of their families.”⁵⁶ Hence, Jakšić retrospectively argued that while foreign analysts (as well as citizens of other socialist states) believed that the Yugoslav system significantly differed from other socialist countries—i.e., that it was more open and liberal—this was only an illusion. Differences existed, Jakšić continued, and the “Yugoslav political elite understood that if it allows unhappy and dissatisfied citizens to leave to Western countries to work, it will reduce social tensions.”⁵⁷ Jakšić thus described a darker side of the period which is generally understood as the heyday of Yugoslav self-managing socialism.

In the economy, this began with the Workers Council Act of 1950 that formally established the system of economic self-management, but also with the Newspaper Publish Act of 1956 that gave “publishing enterprises, radio stations, and film studios the right to organize and to control their own affairs.”⁵⁸ As Gertrude J. Robinson writes in her analysis of the Yugoslav media, during her research trip to Yugoslavia in 1964: “For the first time a democratically elected workers’ council and a managing board, not a group of party representatives, decided selection, layout, and content”—leading to the space for a critical journal like *Praxis* to appear.⁵⁹ Madigan Fichter points out, the most concrete and visible feature of an opening in Yugoslavia was the dismissal of

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gertrude J. Robin, *Tito’s Maverick Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Yugoslavia*, (University of Illinois Press: Campaign, 1977), 28.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Aleksandar Ranković in 1966.⁶⁰ Ranković, the Head of State Security, led the conservative centralist faction in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), and his fall from favor finalized the triumph of the faction within the LCY that promoted decentralization.⁶¹ To that end, one can add that the 1968 student movements in Yugoslavia are, paradoxically, an intrinsic feature of the general relaxation as well as decentralization process.

1.1. “Struggle of Opinions” and “Critique” as the Driving Forces of Yugoslav Socialism

Before situating the overall intention of the editors of the journal *Praxis* in international contexts, it is important to firstly explicate the fact that Yugoslav socialism was understood broadly as a critique of Soviet-type socialism. It is important to add that Yugoslav socialism in the period after 1948 could be described as “national” socialism, furthermore, as Michal Kopeček argues, if we shift the discussion to the question of legitimization, the link between nationalism and communism becomes clear. Certainly, Marxist doctrine played a central role in legitimizing Communist regimes, but the doctrine could not stand as the only way of legitimation.⁶² On the other hand, the most important legitimizing political appeals were in some way linked to local national or cultural traditions.⁶³ The paradigmatic example is Tito’s sentence: “No matter how much each of us loves the land of socialism, the USSR, he can, in no case, love his country less, which is also developing socialism.”⁶⁴ Moreover, Milovan Đilas wrote in 1957 that “today, national communism is a general phenomenon in Communism.”⁶⁵ According to Djilas, communism, in order to maintain and legitimate itself, must become national.

After 1948, the Yugoslavs developed their most idiosyncratic concept—workers’ self-management. This project handed over all sectors of the economy—from education, health

⁶⁰ Madigan Fichter, “Yugoslav Protests: Student Rebellion in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo in 1968,” 103.

⁶¹ Tihomir Cipek, “The Croats and Yugoslavism,” in ed. Dejan Djokic, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (Hurst & Company: London, 2003), 80.

⁶² Michal Kopeček, “Socialist Democracy or Revolutionary Consciousness? The Prospects and Limits of ‘Revised’ Marxism in Central Europe in the 1950s and 1960s,” 2.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Walter A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Basic Contradiction?* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 131.

⁶⁵ Milovan Djilas, *The New Class* (New York: Praeger, 1957), 181.

services, and cultural activities—to self-managing organizations represented and run by employees and citizens. The Yugoslavs, according to Gordon Skilling, viewed communism as pluralistic; as “a house of many mansions.”⁶⁶ Yet, from the Soviet Union’s perspective, Yugoslavia was perceived as exaggerating the particularities of the nation and was accused of departing from the universal Marxist-Leninist way of socialist revolution. As an answer to that, the Yugoslav Communists claimed that their own path to socialism was in fact a *practical* implementation of Marxism in society. Hence, from its very inception, self-management was intended to replace the state, which had been decentralized in 1974, and was, it seemed, withering away. In fact, this meant that the functions of the Yugoslav federal state were reduced at the expense of increased powers of the republics.

While our focus is not Yugoslavia and its politics in the period after the split with Stalin, it is nevertheless important to highlight some of the main features of the Yugoslav socialist system in order to contextualize *Praxis* and so understand its motivations. During the VI Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1952, not only was the name changed to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, thereby downgrading the role of the Bolshevik-style “Party,” but the Congress also institutionalized the so-called struggle of opinions. In its program, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, expressed its adherence to undogmatic Marxism, through the notion of “struggle of opinion”:

We, the Yugoslav communists, are convicted that the struggle of opinion and creative competition of social practice of socialist forces strengthens socialism, develops social thought, while the existing epochal contractions of transition from capitalism into socialism, are disentangled, solved, and overcome.⁶⁷

Finally, the Program stated the following—initiating the motto of “criticism of all existing conditions” as formulated in 1964 by the founders of the journal *Praxis*:

In order to carry out our historical role in creating a socialist society in our country,

⁶⁶ Gordon H. Skilling, *Communism National and International: Eastern Europe After Stalin* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1964), 8.

⁶⁷ “Program Saveza Komunista usvojen na Sedmom Kongresu Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije, 22.-26. Aprila, 1958 [The Program of the League of Communists adopted on the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, 22–26 April, 1958]” (Komunist: Belgrade), 8.

we must spare no pains to that end, *we must remain critical of ourselves and our work*, be uncompromising towards all kinds of dogmatism, and stay faithful to the revolutionary creative spirit of Marxism. Nothing that has been created can be *so sacred to us that it cannot be transcended and superseded by something still freer, more progressive, and more human*.⁶⁸

Thus, it is fair to argue that gathering of philosophers and sociologists around *Praxis* was initiated by the general shift in politics in socialist Yugoslavia. That is, the Yugoslav Communists institutionalized a political and public space where self-criticism, that is, the criticism of Yugoslav socialism, was necessary for the progress of the Yugoslav society.

1.2. Journal Praxis: Permanent Critique and Internationalism

The philosophical orientation of the journal *Praxis* was Marxist Humanism or, more broadly, critical Marxism. Since definitions of Marxist Humanism and critical Marxism deserve their own papers, I will just mention few of their main characteristics. Firstly, these political languages were vigorous in their criticism of Stalinism. Secondly, their positions came from a different interpretation of Marxism which aimed to revive the “original” and “authentic” Marx. The *Praxis* philosophers held the common theoretical position that there was no epistemic break in Marx’s philosophy. Instead of a discontinuity between a “young Marx’, preoccupied with Hegel, humanism, and in particular with human alienation, and a ‘mature Marx,’ whose concern was to elaborate a strictly scientific view of social life...” given in *Das Kapital*, they maintained that there is a continuity that ties all of Marx’s work together.⁶⁹ Thirdly, this reconceptualization of Marxism supplied the *Praxis* philosophers with various concepts and methodological tools—humanism tied with alienation—that allowed them to think of “praxis” as the free creative activity of man. To explain what this meant for Marxist theory, I will briefly explain the confrontation between “dogmatists” and the proponents of an avant-garde, “creative Marxism,” that happened at the Bled Conference in Slovenia in 1960.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 259.

⁶⁹ Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington & London, 1977), 32.

At the Bled Conference, which gathered prominent Yugoslav Marxists intellectuals, an important feature of dialectical materialism was profoundly undermined, namely the theory of reflection, which rests on the idea that the objective world of matter exists and has a structure of its own, and is therefore prior to and independent of human activity.⁷⁰ The philosophers of the *Praxis* circle argued that this theory of reflection “leads to a positivist, passive, conservative, and apologetic stance toward one’s own social reality, while the introduction of the category of praxis means the establishment of a critical and creative dimension in the socialist world.”⁷¹ In other words, the theory of reflection limits the possibility of criticism and self-critical positions—a theory which the proponents of the “avant-garde” Marxism found to be in contradiction with the official policy of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia.

If matter governs consciousness, according to the members of *Praxis* circle, the result is the primacy of the knowledge of truth (that exists outside of human beings) over practice, and thus represents a regression from Marx’s revolutionary theory of praxis.⁷² Gajo Petrović, member of the *Praxis* circle, noted that this issue commenced with Engels, who in his essay on Feuerbach posed an artificial and strict dichotomy between materialism and idealism. And more importantly, it was Lenin who further paraphrased Engels, and claimed that the main question for materialism is the question concerning the existence of things which are outside the human mind. Accordingly, the theory of reflection presupposes the existence of objects outside of us—and that our ideas are nothing more but the mental image-reflections of these objects.⁷³ In Petrović’s view, this theory contradicts Marx’s theory that man is a creative being of praxis. The theory of reflection ultimately stifles the creative role of humans in shaping their reality, as it propagates that they are just objects of external forces and laws.

Milan Kangrga, in his memoirs, recalled that in 1965 the editorial board of *Praxis* received a fifty-page essay, from a then not-yet-well-known Louis Althusser who, in Kangrga’s words

⁷⁰ Ibid., 31–36.

⁷¹ Ibid., 35.

⁷² Ibid., 92.

⁷³ Ibid., 90.

“considered himself a Marxist (and others in France considered him a Marxist, too).”⁷⁴ However, the type of Marxism promoted by Althusser was regarded by Gajo Petrović and Kangrga as being written from the “Stalinist-positivist” position.⁷⁵ The Yugoslav philosophers returned the essay to Althusser, refusing to publish it in *Praxis*. This act shows not only their unquestionable stance towards Stalinism but also supports the idea that only humanist positions could embrace most passionately the principle of self-management.

In a short excerpt from Predrag Vranicki, *Praxis* philosopher at the University of Zagreb, it is made clear that self-management was a doctrine univocally supported by Marxist Humanists:

This conception [of self-management], as we have seen, emerges from the specifically Marxian interpretation of history: man, the alienation of man in modern society, and the overcoming of that alienation and of the entire bourgeois society by socialist development. The conception of workers’ and social self-government is the logical and necessary consequence of conceiving man as a historical being of practice.⁷⁶

However, while the founders of the journal *Praxis* shared some basic theoretical ideas and assumptions, it is difficult to think of the *Praxis* circle as a homogenous group, even less a movement. As Božidar Jakšić wrote, “the thought of Gajo Petrović, for example, *philosophically* differs greatly from the speculative thought of Milan Kangrga. Kangrga differs from Grlić, Grlić from Vranicki, Vranicki from Bošnjak, and so on.”⁷⁷ Moreover, it is fair to claim that even the

⁷⁴ Kangrga, *Šververi vlastitog života*, 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Kangrga also added that Althusser later published this same essay in Parisian *La Pensée*, a magazine founded by the intellectuals associated with the French Communist Party. Kangrga claimed that Althusser’s Stalinist-oriented essay was not rejected did not seem like a surprise to them, for it was “... not only symptomatic, also but characteristic for the level of so-called, West-Marxism, where precisely Althusser became a “star” and one of the most significant representatives of that Stalinist-oriented Marxism in Europe.”

⁷⁶ eds. Branko Horvat, Mihailo Marković, Rudi Supek, *Self-governing Socialism: a reader. Volume 1: Historical Development, Social and Political Philosophy* (1975), 464.

⁷⁷ Božidar Jakšić, “Praxis-Kritički Izazovi” [Praxis-Critical Challenges], in Dragomir Olujić Oluja, Krunoslav Stojaković, eds., *Praxis: Društvena kritika i humanistički socijalizam. Zbornik radova sa međunarodne konferencije o jugoslovenskoj ljevici: Praxis-filozofija i Korčulanska ljetna škola (1963-1974)* [Praxis: Social Critique and Humanist Socialism: The Collection of Papers from the International Conference about the Yugoslav Left: Praxis-Philosophy and Korčula Summer School (1963-1974)], (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Belgrade, 2012), 46. Similarly, Lino Veljak, a philosopher who also published in *Praxis* in 1974, argues that the “Orientation Praxis did not represent a homogenous philosophical school.” Lino Veljak, “Smije li se govoriti o današnjoj aktualnosti „Praxisa“?” [Can we talk about today’s relevance of Praxis?], in *Praxis: Social Critique and Humanist Socialism: The Collection of Papers from the International Conference about the Yugoslav Left: Praxis-Philosophy and Korčula Summer School (1963-1974)*, 126.

meaning of their “humanist orientation” did not signify the same thing.⁷⁸ However, if we are to speak of the common points of reference concerning their conceptual and theoretical inspirations, then one ought to mention the works by a Hungarian Marxist philosopher György Lukács as well as Ernst Bloch, a German Marxist philosopher.⁷⁹

This allows us to place *Praxis* in a wider perspective and also make sense of the international environment they created by bringing like-minded philosophers to the island of Korčula. It is also important to stress that the case of the Praxis circle in Yugoslavia is however not an isolated and unique phenomenon. That is, a different interpretation of Marxism came about right after World War II, when Ernst Bloch entertained the importance of Hegel’s dialectical subject-object in the contrast to the “scientific” doctrine of Stalinist Marxism, which had previously rejected all aspects of Hegel in Marx. Gerson S. Sher points out that Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch both held the position that while Marx criticized Hegel, he never renounced “the dialectic in its humanized form, nor did he ever lose sight of the reality-constituting role of the active human subject—perhaps the most important lesson that classical German idealism had to offer.”⁸⁰ This lends credence to the interpretation that *Praxis* was a part of the so-called “West European” Marxist tradition, if we are to follow Martin Jay’s and Perry Anderson’s delineations between Western and Eastern Marxism, and the assertion that the “philosophy of praxis” is a part of the Western Marxist tradition. For instance, Oskar Gruenwald writes that *Praxis* drew inspiration from the “rich Western cultural heritage.”⁸¹ At the same time, according to many scholars, including Gruenwald himself, it would be too easy to claim, for instance, that *Praxis* simply adopted the critical theory approach of the Frankfurt School.⁸² As Oskar Gruenwald, in his study on *Praxis*, wrote:

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ György Lukács’s *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein: Studien über marxistische Dialektik* [History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics] (1923) revived the influences of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s dialectics on Karl Marx. Ernst Bloch’s study *Subjekt-Objekt: Erläuterungen zu Hegel* (1951) is a study of Hegel and dialectics. This is also emphasized by Luka Bogdanić, “Čemu *praxis*? Ili o historijskom porijeklu i mjestu *Praxisa*, [Why Praxis? Or about the historical genealogy and place of Praxis?] in *Aspekti Praxisa: Refleksije uz 50. Obljetnicu*.

⁸⁰ Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*, 65.

⁸¹ Oskar Gruenwald, “The Praxis School: Marxism as a Critique of Socialism?,” *East European Quarterly* no.2 (1981): 232.

⁸² Cf. Nenad Stefanov, “The Secrets of Titograd in 1989: On Entanglements and Fragile Networks between the Intellectuals of West Germany and Socialist Yugoslavia,” *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, no.1 (2014): 61–79.

Avant-garde Yugoslav Marxist humanist thought is a major, creative, powerful, *sui generis* reconstruction of the entire Marxist-Leninist *Weltanschauung*. As such, it is not reducible to either existentialism, phenomenology, Kantianism, personalism, intuitionism, pragmatism, analytical philosophy, the Frankfurt School, or to Marxist-Leninism, for that matter.⁸³

It should be mentioned that this reconceptualization of Marxism was in fact shared by others in socialist states like Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. These four countries comprise the case studies compiled by James H. Satterwhite in *Varieties of Marxist Humanism*, who wrote that what critical Marxist groups in each country shared is the development of the “critical use of Marxist thought as a basis for a rejection of the official ideology.”⁸⁴ Their further developments differed drastically according to their respective contexts.

Going back to the Yugoslav context, having the wider perspective in mind, one could still take Gruenwald’s characterization of *Praxis* as a *sui generis* case. Particularly, this emerges in the context of the student movements in Yugoslavia in 1968. That is, the humanist ideals which were placed as the leading principles of action, became a “...mobilizing parole of Yugoslavia’s ‘avantgarde’ for the very reason that the alienated individual as well as the anonymity of social relations were the starting intellectual positions of the alternative culture which manifested itself in the occupation of Belgrade University in June 1968.”⁸⁵

To return to the journal itself, the very first edition of *Praxis* clearly articulated its envisioned agenda. The editors’ main guiding principle was that Marxist philosophy is conceived as the “ruthless criticism of all existing conditions.”⁸⁶ Marxism is the “thought of revolution” and revolution was understood as the essence of the practice—and to the editors, this was not a mere philosophical fancy. Their role as Marxist intellectuals was to actively engage with the relevant and existing issues in Yugoslav society. The editors of *Praxis* emphasized their shared conviction that

⁸³ Gruenwald, “The Praxis School: Marxism as a Critique of Socialism?,” 242.

⁸⁴ Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe*, 4.

⁸⁵ Boris Kanzleiter, Krunoslav Stojaković, “1968 u Jugoslaviji – Studentski protesti između Istoka i Zapada,” [1968 in Yugoslavia – Student movements between East and West] *Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije* (2008): 463.

⁸⁶ Gajo Petrović, “Čemu Praxis? [Why Praxis?]” in *Praxis*, no.1 (1964): 4.

socialism is the *only* humane exit from the crisis in which humanity found itself, and that “Marx’s thought is the most adequate theoretical basis and inspiration of revolutionary action.”⁸⁷ Clearly, the Yugoslavs were aware in 1964 that the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 as well as the Polish Uprising in 1956 were forcefully stifled.

At the same time, having as a basis the LCY’s own agenda, which overlapped with their own, the editors of *Praxis* were convinced that an authentic and humanist socialism—whose development was hindered by the dogmatic interpretation of Marxism, imposed by Stalin—was viable in the future. However, as early as 1964, one could still implicitly recognize the understanding of Praxis intellectuals vis-à-vis the politics of LCY. That is, in the article “Čemu Praxis? (Why Praxis?)” they acknowledged that their contemporaneous world was “still a world of economical exploitations, national inequality, political unfreedom, spiritual emptiness, world of pauperism, hungriness, hatred, war, and fear.”⁸⁸ For that reason, the intellectual engagement with Marxism and a persistent critical approach to the contemporary world would shed light on the roots of these problems and ultimately help to solve them. Yet when the editors of *Praxis* philosophized about the abstract notion of “the world,” they necessarily started from their immediate Yugoslav contexts, and hence did not think about “the world” in the abstract. We could argue that the “world” did not exclude socialist Yugoslavia—that is, Yugoslavia also had to solve its own problems of national equality, political unfreedom, and the like. This is clear in the continuation of the text:

One ought not downgrade the conscious efforts of those progressive social forces that aim to overcome contemporary inhumane conditions and to achieve a better world. One ought not forget the significant results achieved in this struggle. However, one ought not overlook that neither in those countries, where there are efforts for the achievement of a genuinely humane society, the inherited forms of inhumanity are not overcome and they generate deformations which did not exist earlier.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 3–4.

To that end, they approached the problems of the modern world not from their national, Yugoslav perceptive, but placed them within a wider socialist internationalism. In the essay “Why Praxis?” they clearly explicated their dedication to internationalism. Marxism and socialism are strictly international, and hence the editors of the journal univocally rejected any kind of nationalism, which they saw as the antipode of the universalistic tenets of both humanism and Marxism. The following sentences captures the impetus of *Praxis*:

The Croatian Philosophical Society publishes the *Praxis* journal, and its seat is in Zagreb. It is reflected in the composition of the editorial board too. However, the problems of Croatia today cannot be discussed separately from the problems of Yugoslavia, and the problems of contemporary Yugoslavia cannot be isolated from the big questions of the contemporary world. Neither socialism nor Marxism is something strictly national, so Marxism cannot be Marxism, or socialism, socialism, if we enclose ourselves in narrow national frames.”⁹⁰

The journal *Praxis*’s devotion to internationalism was also reflected in the journal’s Advisory Council, founded in 1966, and which included Marxist and non-Marxist intellectuals from England, the United States, East and West Germany, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. As Gerson S. Sher pointed out, the members of the Advisory Council were active participants in both *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School, hence the Council was not simply a showcase used for the domestic and international prestige.

The journal managed to gather and engage the international intellectual community actively.⁹¹ So far, I have not yet found the number of subscriptions to the journal nor the number of the copies made. However, it is still possible to establish, with the available primary sources, the general interest in the journal as well as the need to engage in its international platform. The archival data shows that the interest stemmed from various reasons—clearly Marxist intellectuals aimed to discuss what they saw as an alternative to both capitalism and Soviet-type socialism, but also various journalists as well as non-Marxists showed their interest in *Praxis*.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁹¹ Gajo Petrović, “O međunarodnom izdanju „Praxis“ (1970–1973). Izvještaj Redakcije „Praxis“ podnesen na godišnjoj skupštini Saveza filozofskih društava Jugoslavije [About the international edition of Praxis. Report presented at the annual gathering of the philosophic societies of Yugoslavia],” *Praxis* no.6 (1973): 745–758.

Namely, in 1967, Rudi Supek, one of the co-founders of the journal *Praxis*, received a letter sent by Yorick Blumenfeld, a writer from New York who at the time wrote for *Newsweek*.⁹² Blumenfeld asked Rudi Supek for his assistance in writing an “extensive article on *Praxis*.”⁹³ While expressing his gratitude about the wonderful time he had during the lunch with Supek in Zagreb during the spring of 1967, Blumenfeld finished the letter with: “In the meantime, if there is anything I can do for *Praxis*, beyond giving it good publicity—please do not hesitate to write me at *Newsweek*.”⁹⁴ While it is impossible to establish whether these were just words of courtesy or a genuine intention to offer his help if needed, one could still argue that Blumenfeld’s letter demonstrates that the journal was not overlooked outside of Yugoslavia.

Blumenfeld’s motivation could have been purely journalistic, aiming to present a case to the American public in which the critique of socialism from a Marxist point of view is possible. At the same time, Marxist thinkers indeed showed interest in the journal, as is clear in the following examples. Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, attended the very first Korčula Summer School in 1963 and since then actively participated in each gathering on Korčula. In his letter to Supek, Lefebvre openly expresses his interest as well as wish to have the revised version of his speech at Korčula published in the journal *Praxis*. A final example is a letter by Norman Birnbaum, an American sociologist, who sent his review of a book which “caused a stir in America as the ‘definitive’ history of sociology.”⁹⁵ Birnbaum further mentioned that he originally wrote this book review for the *New York Review of Books*, however, he asked Supek whether *Praxis* would be interested in publishing it: “If you wished to publish it, then, you would in fact be publishing it first—and I will give it to no one else unless I hear from you that you do not want it.”⁹⁶

⁹² *Newsweek* is an American weekly magazine, established in 1933.

⁹³ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 13 August 1967.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 15 January 1968.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

There is a plethora of possible reasons why someone would want to publish an essay in a Yugoslav Marxist journal. These samples indeed show general interest as well as active participation in a “virtual dialogue” facilitated by *Praxis*. And while *Praxis* was considered from outside as an important Marxist journal, in Yugoslavia it faced various attacks, from both left and right. Some Yugoslav Communists, as early as 1965, argued that the essays published in *Praxis* in fact negated everything that had been achieved in Yugoslavia.⁹⁷

1.3. Korčula Summer School: Facilitating an International Dialogue between “East” and “West”

It seems that without the “international” aspect of both the journal and the school it is impossible to grasp the significance of *Praxis* for 1968. That is, the key to their approach to “socialism” was international, and to achieve that they believed that Yugoslavia ought to serve as an example to other socialist and non-socialist countries, for Yugoslavia was, in their minds, the “first successful implementation of an integrated system of workers’ self-management.”⁹⁸

As already mentioned, the idea for both the journal and the school came from the international symposium “Progress and Culture,” which took place in 1963 in Dubrovnik. The following year, 1964, until 1973, the summer school hosted by *Praxis* was organized on the Dalmatian island of Korčula. The seminars and lectures took part in the Cultural Center of old town Korčula—a Medieval walled city with Venetian Renaissance architecture.

The Korčula Summer School facilitated a need for face-to-face dialogue between Yugoslav Marxist Humanist intellectuals and their colleagues from abroad. Thus, the summer school ought to be approached as a space that gathered intellectuals and acted as a point of mediation through which actors from diverse contexts could, notwithstanding differences in their cultural and

⁹⁷ Miko Tripalo, “Uloga i zadaci Saveza Komunista u provođenju ekonomske politike i razvijanju socijalističkih društvenih odnosa” *XIX konferencija Saveza komunista grada Zagreba*, (Zagreb 1965) [Role and tasks of the League of Communists in processing economic reform and developing socialist social relations,” XIX Conference of the League of Communists of City of Zagreb] in Hrvoje Klasić, *Yugoslavia and the World, 1968* (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012).

⁹⁸ Branko Horvat, “A new social system in the making: Historical origins and development of self-governing socialism,” in eds. Branko Horvat, Mihailo Marković, and Rudi Supek, *Self-governing Socialism, Volume One: Historical development. Social and Political Philosophy*, (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1971), 36–7.

intellectual backgrounds—as well as their respective experiences of 1968 (i.e., in Paris, Warsaw, Prague, Belgrade, Zagreb)—think in an intertwined manner about the movements and protests of 1968. This is where, it is possible to test Koselleck's concept of *Zeitschichten* as well as the importance of the context understood as an archive. At the same time, concerning the historical approach to Korčula, it must be mentioned that dynamics created by real-time encounters, dialogues, and debates differed from those “virtual” encounters in the journal *Praxis*.

In 1964, Henri Lefebvre wrote about his experience at the summer school for *France observateur* and characterized Korčula Summer School as “the most convenient meeting place for people who mutually understand, who have the same language and same preoccupations, but who still differ in their experiences and their ideas.”⁹⁹ While Lefebvre's remark stresses the importance of Korčula for the dialogue between intellectuals of various contexts, at the same time one ought to reflect on it. Namely, the questions that Lefebvre's remark triggers are: What is the consequence for the dialogue that existed in Korčula if while speaking the same *language* (that is the theoretical language of Marxism) the participants' ideas were colored by their respective experiences? Keeping this question in mind, we now turn to the initial goals and aims of the school, as envisioned by its organizers, the *Praxis* philosophers.¹⁰⁰

The description of the goals of the summer school can most straightforwardly be found in the *Praxis* alongside the other dedicated sections of the journal.¹⁰¹ Specifically, I will look at the following texts published in the journal *Praxis*: “Information about the aims and work of the Korčula Summer School” in *Praxis* 2 (1971); “Ten years of Korčula Summer School (1963–1973)” in *Praxis* 5–6 (1973), which also consisted of the presentations of that year's Summer School; and finally, an unpublished text addressed to the authorities in 1962 and entitled “Proposal for funding

⁹⁹ Ibid., 165.

¹⁰⁰ The intention is also reflected in the choice of themes: in 1963: “Progress and Culture;” 1964: “Idea and Perspectives of Socialism;” 1965: “What is History?;” 1966: Did not happen; 1967: “Creativity and Objectification;” 1968: “Marx and Revolution;” 1969: “Power and Humanity;” 1970: “Hegel and Our Time, Lenin and New Left;” 1971: “Utopia and Reality;” 1972: “Freedom and Equality;” 1973: “Civil Society and Socialism;” 1974: “Art and the Contemporary World.”

¹⁰¹ That is the journal included not only the published essays, but also book reviews, reports from various conferences, republished materials and similar.

the permanent philosophic-sociological seminar/Summer School/.”¹⁰² The first two texts were written after the experiences of 1968 in Yugoslavia and abroad, and hence, one could inquire whether these events made the organizers rethink the role and aim of the school. As it will be shown, at least in these texts, Korčula Summer School’s character was not changed or rethought in light of the political events of 1968.

Each text was of a different nature. The first from 1971, “Information about the aims and work of the Korčula Summer School,” was a text printed in English, French, and German, with the intention of *informing* the majority of the participants of the Korčula Summer School about the aims and the work of the school.¹⁰³ Why publish a text of this kind in *Praxis* only now? One could only infer that this aspect was questioned, criticized, or polemicized, hence the organizers felt the need to express their view and what they envisioned Korčula to be and what ends it ought to serve.

The text offers various details about the school. In addition to the account concerning the founding of the school—it was financed by the funds dedicated for the academic and intellectual activity—the text emphasizes that the school is in accord with the principles of the Yugoslav self-management system. That is, the “content of the work of the School is exclusively the responsibility of its own organizers.”¹⁰⁴ Such statement too emphasized the autonomy of the school from any political ideology. Therefore, the school clearly positioned itself as being outside the influences of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia, something which would imply Korčula Summer School to be a showcase for the international prestige of Tito’s Yugoslavia abroad.

Instead, the school was categorized as an academic institution. To *Praxis* intellectuals it was important to emphasize that the school, while it serves primarily as a platform for engaging in the abstract philosophical and theoretical discussions, does not neglect its social engagement as one of crucial aspects of its activity.¹⁰⁵ To that end, the school’s main intention was, in the words of the organizers, to stimulate the dialogue which is essential for Marxist theory. They found issue with

¹⁰² HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Manuscripts, Korčula Summer School Proposal, 1962.

¹⁰³ “Information about the aims and work of the Korčula Summer School,” *Praxis* no.2 (1971): 299.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 300.

the fact that the intelligentsia from the socialist countries is isolated and lacks encounters with the intellectuals of non-socialist countries.¹⁰⁶

In their struggle to de-dogmatize Marxist thought, Yugoslavs believed that the genuine revolutionary and progressive thought “ought not to avoid confrontations and discussions,” and we may add “struggle of opinions,” if it want to avoid being regressive.¹⁰⁷ Only through dialogue and debate can Marxist thought be rendered in terms of a critical reflection and not a positivist accumulation of knowledge.¹⁰⁸ Writing in 1971, that is, after the student movements in Yugoslavia, the invasion of Prague, and in the midst of the Croatian national uprising, the Korčula School organizers addressed their readers maintaining that Marxism devoid of confrontation inevitably leads socialism into a dead-end, much more “than the failed economic reforms.”¹⁰⁹ While not naming the explicit cause, it is fair to say that this concerned primarily their assessment of the situation in Yugoslavia at the time, where the experiment of self-management was already in crisis. In addition, the existence of both the journal and the school was itself in danger.

It is remarkable, however, to see the persistent hope in the language of the text, notwithstanding the contextual issues mentioned above. That is, the organizers of the summer school seemed still hopeful and “...convinced that it is in the interest of the development of Marxist and socialist thought to have a dialogue between East and West.”¹¹⁰ That is, to the editors of *Praxis* and the organizers of the summer school, 1968 was not seen as an end-point or turning point in the history of Marxism. Dialogue, they persisted in their conviction, would benefit both the socialist and non-socialist countries. Although after 1968—specifically after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which had been regarded as the turning point in the history of Marxism—the relations with other state socialist countries deteriorated. That is, the moment of the invasion of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Enabling a “struggle of opinions” as a guarantee of progress was also put forward by Branko Horvat in his text on the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative, translated by Dejan Djokić and published in his edited volume *Yugoslavism: History of a Failed Idea 1918–1992* (Hurst & Company: London, 2003). It is worth noticing that the Association was founded in 1989 by the former-Yugoslav anti-nationalist intellectual élite. Branko Horvat was the President of the Council of the UJDI (Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative).

¹⁰⁹ “Information about the aims and work of the Korčula Summer School,” 302.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Prague was clearly in sharp contrast with the period of reappraisal in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev visited Belgrade. Still, the *Praxis* editors noted that “we know that these Marxists [i.e., Marxists from other socialist countries] want to come to our school and that today’s hindrances cannot last long.”¹¹¹ To understand the weight of the persistence of this conviction it is worthwhile comparing this statement with that of Ágnes Heller, given in an interview in 1978. She recalled:

1968 was a year of optimism. The prospect of Europe unified under democratic socialism seemed a real possibility at the time. We anticipated that within such an international context, the economic reforms then being launched in Hungary would initiate a social transformation of the system. However, as I have already said, our optimism proved to be based on illusions, as the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia finally showed. August 1968 marked the end of our reformist illusions and aspirations.¹¹²

Heller’s remark speaks of a different narrative vis-à-vis the conviction on the side of the Yugoslav intellectuals. However, while the journal continued with its publications, and Korčula Summer School still gathered international intellectuals well until 1974, Zagorka Golubović, a member of Praxis from Belgrade, retrospectively envisions the cleavages and differentiations that started to appear. She remembers that 1968 was “probably the most decisive year in post-war development, causing the party elite to decide to switch off liberalization.”¹¹³ Golubović’s interpretation is that 1968 was marked by events that “... consisted of open discontent with the results of the reforms that had been implemented (and stifled) and with the direction society was taking.”¹¹⁴ One event that displayed the open and mass scale dissatisfaction was by the students and professors at the Belgrade University—which she emphasizes cannot truly be called a “student movement” for large majority of professors took part in demonstrations.¹¹⁵ The final signal for the Communist leadership to stop further liberalizations was the nationalist movement in Croatia in 1971.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ágnes Heller, “Marxist Ethics and the Future of Eastern Europe,” *Telos: Critical Theory and the Contemporary*, no.38 (1978): 160.

¹¹³ Zagorka Golubović, “Yugoslav Society and “Socialism”: The Present-Day Crisis of the Yugoslav System and the Possibilities for Evolution,” ed. Ferenc Fehér, Andrew Arato, *Crisis and Reform in Eastern Europe* (CEU Press: Budapest, 1991), 409.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 410.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

The following text in which the role of the school was articulated was an introductory note for the 1973 Korčula Summer School given by Rudi Supek. Supek pointed out that the theme—“Civil Society and Socialism”—decided upon by participants themselves (as it was the case with other years), reflected the mutual and international concerns. The theme manifested the “universal significance” notwithstanding the participants’ socialist or non-socialist contexts. We can paraphrase and say that the aim of Korčula was to annul the diverse regional concerns of the participants and unite them in thinking “universally.” The thrust of this idea is seen in Supek’s expression of the main aim of the school:

... to grasp, through confrontation and exchange of opinions, that which unites people, and that which sets them apart, in their way towards one better system of human society, one just and free status of humanity.¹¹⁷

While the school aimed to bring international intellectuals who shared the positions of creative Marxism and were also personally engaged in achieving genuine socialism, Supek also accentuated what he perceived to be the tangible Yugoslav character of the school.¹¹⁸ The participants were, in his words:

... imbued with the spirit of brotherhood and unity, the achievement of our fight against fascism, as well as the spirit of internationalism, the idea of the large community of all peoples, whose realization took proletariat as its historical mission.¹¹⁹

Thus, the role of the school, as seen by its organized, seems to have remained unshaken by the Croatian Spring of 1971 and the Yugoslav student movements of 1968. How important was the invasion of Czechoslovakia for the program and goals of Korčula Summer School, and could one could speak of a “crisis” in the dialogue of the Left? After the invasion, the attendance of intellectuals from the Eastern bloc dropped—Ágnes Heller and other members of the Budapest

¹¹⁷Rudi Supek, “Deset godina Korčulanske letnje škole (1963–1973) [Tenth anniversary of Korčula Summer School],” *Praxis*, no. 5–6 (1973): 564.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 566.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

School never attended a session after 1968.¹²⁰ However the dialogue between the Western Marxist intellectuals and the Yugoslavs existed and became even more robust.

What seems to be the case is that the main character of the school—it being international—was not seen to be the most dominant aspect from the start. This could be the case because the 1962 memorandum entitled “Proposal for opening a permanent philosophical-sociological seminar/summer school” was addressed to the Yugoslav authorities, and not to a wider public, as the previous two texts had been. Hence, the document, written by Rudi Supek, aimed to offer a viable justification for the need of an institution such as the Korčula Summer School. The reason was purely practical and educational. During the summer holidays, the school would facilitate the interaction and networking between Yugoslav academicians, professionals, as well as students with outstanding academic achievements. The rationale was to strengthen the ideological education not only of the professors, but of those who, after having left the universities, lost their contact with intensive studies of Marxism.¹²¹

Similarly to what he would say in his opening remarks at the Korčula Summer School in 1973, Supek explained that the core conception of the school was to nurture and develop a tight cooperation between the Yugoslav republics, and so undermine—the already emerging—particularistic tendencies in the federation. It appears that the interactions and encounters with the foreign philosophers arrived as an unexpected outcome of the School’s engagement—most likely due to the events of 1968, which made the School more widely known to the Western public. As the example below shows, the Korčula Summer School started to attract not only Marxist intellectuals from the West, but also students. For instance, in 1972, a Danish student from Copenhagen, Nils Mortensen, addressed the following letter to Rudi Supek:

Dear Professor Supek,
The Yugoslav Embassy in Copenhagen have [sic] helped us in getting information
about the summer school at Korčula this summer 27.–31. August. The embassy

¹²⁰ Author’s interview with Ágnes Heller, 23 January 2018.

¹²¹ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Manuscripts, “Prijedlog za osnivanje stalnog filozofsko-sociološkog seminara/Ljetna škola, December 1962. [Proposal for opening a permanent philosophical-sociological seminar/Summer school],” 1.

told us they have talked with you by telephone and that you wanted us to contact you. We are 8 students, studying sociology at the University of Copenhagen...¹²²

It should be highlighted that this letter points to an important aspect of the status of the Korčula Summer School in Yugoslavia after 1968. Namely, it stresses the willingness of the Yugoslav Embassy, and so the political elite, to facilitate contacts between foreign participants (from the West, in this case) interested in the School and the *Praxis* philosophers, even after the 1968 student protests. Already in this period, the East European press wrote negatively about *Praxis*. In July 1971, the issue of *Filozofskie nauki*, a Polish journal, called them “philosopher revisionists” while the East Berlin *Neues Deutschland* “once claimed that Dubček’s Prague Spring was born on the premises of Praxis.”¹²³

Finally, it is worthwhile looking into the nature of the international dialogue that existed at Korčula. It is not by chance that Harold W. Cruse in his letter addressed to Rudi Supek on 10 November 1971, in expressing his “heartfelt gratitude for having spent a month in Yugoslavia,” wrote the following:

... Also, I am afraid that Europeans have not an adequate enough background on the subject of blacks in the U.S ... From the American point of view, I believe that much of European Marxism is still wedded to many fixed categories which are rather irrelevant in the United States. Let me add that I found Korčula school very instructive because it allowed me to arrive at some new conclusions about the radical movement in the United States...¹²⁴

Cruse’s letter highlights the importance of different contexts in thinking about Marxist theory. At the same time, it expresses the ambiguity of the importance of this very context and so the possibility of having a mutual dialogue. As I outlined in the section on theory and method, the importance of the diversity of contexts plays a major role in understanding their debates and

¹²² HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondences, 29 June 1972.

¹²³ RFE-HU OSA 300-32-1 “Problems of Praxis, the Philosophical Bimonthly,” 28 March 1972.

¹²⁴ The letter continued: “Please accept my fond regards and pass them on to your wife, Veshna (American spelling!) and your fine family that I met at Orebic. Tell them that I am still sipping on the plum brandy that I brought home with me, but that I would rather have another bottle of Travaritsa (the brandy with the herbs!). With fond regards, Harold Cruse.” Harold Cruse was an author of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967), a vocal social critic and a professor at the University of Michigan. HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 10 November 1971.

discussions. Each speaker came with certain preconceived notions that, although couched in similar conceptual language, had divergent meanings. In a concrete case, the following chapter will turn to the debates around the form of self-management that ought to be implemented as genuine socialism. Depending on the intellectual background—and political context—from which these speakers arrived in Korčula, their responses likewise carried heterogeneous understandings of the meaning of self-managing socialism.

Chapter 2:

Treating Hope in the Wake of Crisis, 1967–68

The move towards international intellectual engagement went hand in hand with the general Yugoslav “opening.” According to Ivan Kuvačić, a Croatian Marxist sociologist and a member of the advisory board of *Praxis*, the cultural and intellectual links with the West that intensified in the period between 1964 and 1968.¹²⁵ This “opening,” however, had its dark side, which was recounted by Božidar Jakšić, another *Praxis* affiliated sociologist from Belgrade. Jakšić argued that the institutionalized (that is, in the academic sense) opening to the West, was mainly due to the general economic reforms in the early 1960s, which, however, soon after their implementation started to show the damaging results for the Yugoslav economy as well as politics.¹²⁶

Before we move to the dialogues between the intellectuals gathered at the Korčula Summer School in 1967, a few words about the general context of Yugoslavia in the period after the implementation of workers’ self-management. It has already been mentioned that the introduction of self-management in Yugoslavia implicitly challenged the monistic conception of world communism which was propagated by Stalin. Consequently, Yugoslavia became the first socialist state to argue for a pluralistic vision of “different socialist paths.”¹²⁷ Self-management was understood as the basic principle of the “genuine” implementation of Marxism in society.¹²⁸ What that meant can be seen in the following documents that signified the institutionalization of self-management in Yugoslavia. The “Basic Law on the Management of State Enterprises and Holding

¹²⁵ Nebojša Popov, *Sloboda i nasilje. Razgovor o časopisu Praxis i Korčulanskoj letnjoj školi*, 39. Kuvačić mentioned the two major scholarships: Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung as well as the Fulbright Scholarship, which enabled many Yugoslav scholars and students to study abroad and so be exposed to diverse intellectual strains and approaches.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹²⁷ H. Gordon Skilling, *Communism: National and International*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 7. As Skilling pointed out this was the case until 1957, after when Hungary also embarked on its “own path” as well as Poland.

¹²⁸ Ernest Mandel, a Trotskyist economist, wrote in 1974 that “The idea of self-management is, from the very start, a confusing one. What most people instinctively understand by it, is a society in which relatively small groups, like workers in a single factory, organize all aspects of the running of their individual units. Quite clearly, this simplistic view of self-management is not of Marxist origin, but rather has its roots in Proudhon and anarcho-syndicalism.” Ernest Mandel, “Self-Management: Dangers and Possibilities,” *International*, no. 4 (1975).

Companies by Work Collectives,” enacted on June 27, 1950, promulgated the social property and explicated the general ideal of workers’ self-management in Yugoslavia:

Factories, mines, and communications, transport, trade, forestry, communal and other state enterprises as public property, are managed by work collectives in the name of the social community within the framework of the state economic plan and on the basis of rights and responsibilities determined by the laws and other legal regulations. Work collectives carry out this management through workers’ councils, and management, boards of enterprises and of holding companies, in which several enterprises are merged.¹²⁹

Moreover, Article 6 of the Constitution of Yugoslavia, promulgated on April 7, 1963, stated more specifically the idea of the workers’ councils and the management of the factories:

Only work and the results of work shall determine a person’s material and social position. No one may directly or indirectly gain material or other advantages by exploiting the work of others. Self-management in the work organization shall include in particular the right and duty of the working people to:

- 1) Manage the work organization directly or through organs of management elected by themselves;
- 2) Organize production or other activity, attend to the development of the work organization, and determine plans and programs of work and development; ...
- 7) regulate and promote their working conditions: organize labor safety and recreation, provide conditions for their education and advance their own and the general standard of living; ...¹³⁰

Yet, already by 1964, at the time when *Praxis* started publication, the prospects of self-management was a challenge within the League itself. That the tight link between the theory and praxis was perceived as too idealistic to achieve, is pointedly presented by the following remark, given at the VIII Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia:

We know that old is not good, but how the new should look like we do not really know. Look at our efforts. We only know the basic principles. We proclaimed the principles of self-management as the principle that ought to deliver us from the

¹²⁹ “Basic Law on the Management of State Enterprises and Holding Companies by Work Collectives, June 27, 1950,” in *Self-Governing Socialism: Historical Development, Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 256.

¹³⁰ “Constitution of Yugoslavia, April 7, 1963,” in *Self-Governing Socialism: Historical Development, Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 258–259.

crisis of the old system, but what we see is that the new economic system is difficult to achieve in its praxis and in theory.¹³¹

To add to that, in Vladimir Unkovski-Korica's analysis of the economic and political crisis that emerged at the end of 1970s and 1980s, the period between 1950s and 1960s was of crucial importance.¹³² Namely, as early as 1958, speeches included negative characterizations of the Yugoslav situation: "At the last meeting, Comrade Marinko suggested ... our the brotherhood and unity was in question ..."¹³³ The question of brotherhood and unity, put in Unkovski-Korica's words, was the nationalist problem placed "...once again at the center of Yugoslav politics, entangled with conflicts over the party's relationship with the working class, the country's economic model, and the extent of the latter's openness to international competition."¹³⁴ As Unkovski-Korica argues, in 1964 Yugoslavia had "its first of many debt-service crisis," a debt that reached 800 million dollars.¹³⁵ The Korčula Summer School, the journal *Praxis*, and the prospects of international socialism ran in parallel with a period of economic and political crisis, as well as a period of "cultural experimentation and search for an alternative within the existing ideology."¹³⁶ To that end, we now turn to the discussions of self-management on the Adriatic island.

2.1. Theory in Practice: Self-Management

*Marxian thought is not alone sufficient, but it is indispensable for understanding the present-day world. In our view, it is the starting point for any such understanding, though its basic concepts have to be elaborated, refined, and complemented by other concepts where necessary. It is part of the modern world, an important, original, fruitful, and irreplaceable element in our present-day situation.*¹³⁷

¹³¹ From the speech of Maksimilijan "Maks" Baće, Croatian partisan, who later participated in Croatian spring in 1971. Quoted in Luka Bogdanić, "Čemu Praxis?," 25.

¹³² Vladimir Unkovski Korica, *The Economic Struggle for Power in Tito's Yugoslavia. From World War II to Non-Alignment* (I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd: London, New York, 2016).

¹³³ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 214–15.

¹³⁶ Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation?: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (Hurst & Co.: London, 2002), 22.

¹³⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982 [1966]), 341–42.

While the intellectuals publishing in the journal *Praxis* and participating at the Korčula Summer School shared a common point of departure—that is a critical, undogmatic Marxism—this sub-chapter suggests that the particular analyses and understandings of various concepts diverged between these intellectuals once they were related to the real and concrete possibilities of the implementation of the ideas such as self-management. This sub-chapter shows two aspects of these intellectuals’ dialogue. While the encounters at the Korčula Summer School in 1967 were not without misunderstandings and disagreements, these differences in thought and conceptual plurality were understood as a need to elaborate, clarify, and supply Marxist philosophy with other concepts. At the same time, the multiplicity of positions was seen as supplying Marxism with critical overtones.¹³⁸

This sub-chapter explores a small fragment of a much more multi-layered and complex discussion of self-management in the context of the journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School. Both of these spaces, virtual and real, gathered like-minded Marxist and leftist intellectuals who shared an undogmatic, humanist philosophical orientation, as well as the wish to humanize their societies in the spirit of Marx. But as a consequence, notions such as self-management, freedom, or alienation, did not carry identical meanings across contexts. That is, participants often spoke from their own particular social contexts, be it the “West” or “East,” thereby emphasizing the embeddedness of their conceptual thinking. At the same time, as my chapter will make it clear, these thinkers aspired to universal discussions.

The particular concept discussed in this sub-chapter is economic “self-management.” First of all, it is necessary to explain the reason why I decided to focus on the idea of self-management. It has been often argued that the failure of 1968 to an extent represented the end of “certain illusions about the nature and limits of Marxist politics in the East and West.” That is, numerous Marxist intellectuals abandoned their Marxism after the entry of Warsaw Pact tanks in Czechoslovakia. This chapter follows the period in which the hopes for the achievement of self-

¹³⁸ Predrag Vranicki, “Kolokvij o kritici političke ekonomije [Colloquium about the critique of political economy],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1968): 212.

managing socialism, as an alternative to both capitalism and Soviet-type socialism, was possible. Another reason to include the discussions on self-management has to do with the fact that the political failures of 1968 in the so-called Eastern bloc were often linked with the idea that workers minimally participated in the movements that were led by revisionist intellectuals and that it consequently “showed how little the language of even revisionist Marxism held for the working class.”¹³⁹ But my chapter shows that the intellectuals in the context of the Korčula Summer School did discuss the idea of self-management, which was tightly linked with the working class in Yugoslavia.

The concept of self-management was a concept understood widely, though with different definitions. The discussions of self-management around 1968 were especially important. Boris Kanzleiter quotes the leader of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and Spanish Civil War veteran Veljko Vlahović who in May 1968 assessed the protests around the world as positive events. The slogans for “*autogestion*”¹⁴⁰ in the demonstrations in Paris showed that “Yugoslavia’s workers’ self-managing socialism was heading along the right lines.”¹⁴¹ What self-management meant in the context of Yugoslavia will be explained in the following pages. Since the focus of this chapter is on the journal *Praxis*, and specifically the sessions of the Korčula Summer School in 1967, it is important to note that, while these two spaces were described as the centers for an exchange of socialist ideas at the international level, it would be too reductive to speak of this exchange without acknowledging the intellectual and conceptual divergences between these thinkers. Clearly, it is difficult to expect a uniformity when conceiving of numerous different Marxist positions with regard to a single concept such as self-management.

¹³⁹ Bradley Abrams, “From Revisionism to Dissent. The Creation of Post-Marxism in Central Europe after 1968,” ed. Tismaneanu, *Promises of 1968*, 180.

¹⁴⁰ In 1964, Lucien Goldmann, Romanian-born French Marxist, composed a film script for a documentary about Yugoslav workers’ self-management for the Western audience. The documentary was never realized, while the script is kept at the EHESS Archives in Paris.

¹⁴¹ Boris Kanzleiter, “1968 in Yugoslavia. Student Revolt between East and West,” in eds. Martin Klimke, Jacco Pekelder, Joachim Scharloth, *Between Prague Spring and French May. Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 85.

An illustrative figure of this multiplicity of interpretations is Dušan Pirjevec, a Slovene resistance fighter, as well as a Marxist philosopher, who opened his presentation at the summer school in 1967 with the words: “I speak from my own personal experience.”¹⁴² Furthermore, he explicitly pointed at the difference between the role of intellectuals in Western Europe and America, and in the East and Yugoslavia.¹⁴³ This position was representative of the various approaches in relation to the topic of self-management, as these were often dependent upon the participants’ presuppositions. It is precisely this plurality of interpretations that informed their analysis of the “functioning” or “malfunctioning” of self-management as both ideal and practice. In addition to their intellectual backgrounds, it is fair to say that the participants’ respective experiences of living and working in different cultural, political, and economic contexts were decisive factors that colored their views of self-managing socialism. The importance of the context ought not to be understood as essential, but, one could generalize, its importance depended on the different stakes of each participant involved in these discussions.

In a 1966 interview, Lucien Goldmann, a French Marxist, described the implementation of self-management in Yugoslavia as the crucial aspect through which the influence of the “Yugoslav comrades ... increased year by year in Western socialist thought.”¹⁴⁴ To Goldmann, but also other critical Western and Eastern Marxists, the notion of self-management was perceived as having crucial importance for international socialist theory. Arnold Künzli, during the 1967 Korčula Summer School, within the discussion theme entitled “Workers’ movement and self-management,” maintained that the general atmosphere built by the philosophers and sociologists gathered around the journal *Praxis*, both from East and West, showed that self-managing socialism was the only genuine socialism in which man can fully develop his freedom.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, it is not by chance

¹⁴² Dusan Prijevec, “*Revolucionarna misao i identitet* [Revolutionary thought and identity],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1968), 82.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Lucien Goldman, “Dimenzije i smerovi aktuelne filozofske misli [Dimensions and directions of the current philosophical thought],” originally in *Odjek*, 1 November 1966, and republished in *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1967): 254.

¹⁴⁵ Arnold Künzli, “Samoupravljanje u getu [Self-management in a ghetto],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1968): 3–4.

that the topic of self-management was greatly discussed in the context of the Summer School and the journal.

2.2. European Integration and International Socialism

Before I present a small snapshot of the self-management discussion at the summer school, in order to grasp the general dynamics of the intellectuals' discussions of self-management, it is useful to frame these issues in the more general context of European integration and internationalization of socialism that took place from the late 1940s onward. It should also be mentioned that these two aspects—European integration and the internationalization of socialism—are not the only guidelines that can frame and make sense of the discussions in *Praxis* and on Korčula. However, in reading the journal *Praxis* from 1967, it seemed that these guidelines were primary factors in setting the motivation and direction of exchange concerning the particular case of Yugoslav self-management. At the same time, one ought not to forget the political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia, which ran in parallel to these discussions and were deemed to stem from the economic reforms and introduction of self-management itself.

It should be clarified that the left-oriented intellectuals gathered at Korčula in 1967 did not envision the European Union as it is today, but rather saw that socialism and European integration went hand in hand. Instead, some of these intellectuals shared the belief that European integration would prove the possibility of mutual co-existence between socialism and capitalism, such that capitalism would move towards more “humane” systems. Others, maybe more radical, were convinced that socialism would indeed become ever more present once capitalist countries, and their workers' movements, developed better conditions for the peaceful transition from capitalism into socialism. Rudi Supek, one of the founders of the journal *Praxis*, noted that the question of integration of Europe was not only a practical political question (including economic and technological issues), “but it is first and foremost a question of a spiritual unity.”¹⁴⁶ He continued

¹⁴⁶ Rudi Supek, “Intelektualci i problem integracije Evrope [Intellectuals and the problem of European integrations],” *Praxis* no.3 (1967): 381.

arguing that it is self-explanatory that the socialist idea is an intrinsic part of common European values.¹⁴⁷

Only a global and international dialogue could help to find the solutions for the contradictions of Marxism as well as socialism in practice. Contacts were sought out, and dialogue seemed to be the necessary solution to these problems. Umberto Cerroni, an Italian jurist who wrote extensively on Marxist thought as well as legal matters in the USSR, wrote a review of *Praxis* (review of the *Praxis* 1–2, January–April 1967), expressing the need and importance for such a journal “in the moment in which socialism needs an integral mobilization of its intellectual sources.”¹⁴⁸ One illustrating example of the growing and spreading contacts and connections of these like-minded intellectuals is the following letter by Lucien Goldmann to Rudi Supek written on May 30, 1967:

My dear Supek, I write to tell you* that Steven Marcus, the editor of the *Partisan Review*, would be very eager to come to Korčula with his wife this summer. I would be grateful if you would send him an invitation (he would take care of his own travel and living expenses, of course) as he runs a such an important magazine in the United States. In addition, he is an excellent friend and very friendly.¹⁴⁹

Another letter sent by a professor at the Free University in Berlin, Ossip K. Flechtheim, begins with:

Dear colleague Supek, for a long time now I am receiving the copies of the journal *Praxis*, which I read with great profit and pleasure. I would be glad to myself make a contribution ... I am sorry I could not come this year to Korčula, but I hope I will be able to catch up next year. In September, I was at the International Futurologist conference in Oslo, where I also met your colleague (Mihailo) Marković.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Umberto Cerroni, “Program *Praxisa* [The program of *Praxis*],” *Praxis* no.3 (1967), 435. The text was originally published in *Rinascita*, *Settimanale fondato da Palmiro Togliatti*, 31 March 1967. *Rinascita* was an Italian political and cultural magazine founded by leader of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti, and consequently main the media outlet of the PCI.

¹⁴⁹ *The original letter has the expression “t’écris,” implying the informal, familiar “you,” just like the German “dir.” HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence. *Partisan Review* was a magazine launched in 1934 by the Communist Party, USA.

¹⁵⁰ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 28 September 1967.

More importantly, this need and the initiative for the dialogue did not appear out of thin air. According to Rudi Supek, an editor of the journal and one of the main founders of the School, expressed that in 1967 the conditions for dialogue between intellectuals of socialist and nonsocialist countries were generally perceived as “as being never better.”¹⁵¹ The reason for that, Supek explained, is that on the one hand socialist countries began to reject dogmatic Marxism-Leninism after Stalin’s death in 1953, and on the other, socialist thought gained presence and strength in Western countries.¹⁵² Disregarding the ideological differences between the capitalist and socialist countries, Supek maintained that “there is an emergence of one, still not clearly defined, feeling of European solidarity which is getting stronger and stronger.”¹⁵³ It is fair to argue that disregarding the national elements of the international student movements of 1968, this solidarity reached its peak the following year.

Supek’s inference was not simply based on his personal observations as someone who was, by then, already deeply immersed in the contacts with intellectuals both from the East, and the West, and who lived in a fairly open Yugoslavia. Supek’s opinion is rightly underpinned by the fact that there were seminars and discussions, imagined and organized as platforms to think about the unity of the European continent. More specifically, the Institute of European Community for University Studies (which was an organ of the European Economic Community) conducted a series of seminars in university centers that were dedicated to the problems of European integration in political, economic, and cultural aspects.¹⁵⁴ According to Supek, the theme of the “European seminar” in Munich was “Open Europe?” which attracted a large number of students making the event packed with the visitors. These seminars invited presenters with different ideological views, for instance the sub-theme “The Opening of European Marxism” was introduced by Lucien Lombardo Radice, professor at the university in Rome as well as the member of the Communist

¹⁵¹ Rudi Supek, “Intelektualci i problem integracije Evrope [Intellectuals and the problem of European integrations],” *Praxis* no.3 (1967): 373.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹⁵⁴ By the time Supek wrote this article, there were three seminars, first in Great Britain in Brighton, second in Munich (West Germany) and third in Grenoble (France). Supek and Tadić attended the last two.

Party of Italy. The seminar in Grenoble took part from January 25–28, 1967 and was entitled “The Presence of Europe in the World,” with the particularly relevant sub-theme “The Future of the European Community and Eastern Europe,” discussed by intellectuals, politicians, and economists, who came from Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, and Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁵

The same year, Rudi Supek received another letter of invitation for the European Seminar which was to take place at the University of Cambridge, in April 1967. In the letter, the organizers expressed the goal of these gatherings:

Dear Sir, the Committee of Student European Associations of Great Britain has much pleasure in announcing its Seventh Annual European Seminar. The programme will be of great significance to all thinking people interested in the future of Europe. Broadly speaking, the Seminar will cover the economic and social life of Europe and one aim of the conference will be the reduction of tension in Europe through improved mutual understanding.¹⁵⁶

Supek’s contemporaneous interpretation as well as the example of these seminars gives us one way to historicize the fact that so many intellectuals were able to discuss the same topic, even if they came from different intellectual positions and social contexts.

2.3. Korčula Summer School 1967: Approaches to Self-Management

The discussions above about the general understanding of self-management in Yugoslavia as well as the framework of the European integrations and aims towards internationalization of socialism, lead us to the discussions at the Korčula Summer School of 1967. The main theme of the gathering was “Creativity and Objectification” (*Stvaralaštvo i postvarenje*) and its proceedings were published in the journal *Praxis*.¹⁵⁷ Reconstructing the discussions that took place in the context of the school

¹⁵⁵ Rudi Supek, “Jugosloveni na Evropskom seminaru [Yugoslavs at the European seminar],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1967): 240.

¹⁵⁶ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, April 1967.

¹⁵⁷ The sub-themes of the Korčula Summer School of 1967 were: 1. Freedom and planning; 2. Bureaucracy, technocracy and individual freedoms; 3. Workers’ movement and self-management; and 4. Cultural creation and social organizations. The participants (that is those who presented the papers) included: Hans Dieter-Klein (Vienna), S. Moris James (Carbondale), Arnold Kaufmann (Ann Arbor), Andrija Krešić (Belgrade), Rudi Supek (Zagreb); Agnes Heller (Budapest), Giuseppe Semerari (Bari), Jan Szewczyk (Warsaw), Robert Tucker (Princeton), Zador Tordai (Budapest), Ivan Varga (Budapest), Ivan Babić (Zagreb), Joseph Berke (London), Serge Jonas (Paris), Arnold Künzli (Basel), Serge Mallet (Paris), Ivo Urbančić (Ljubljana), Jindrich Fibich (Prague), Vladimir Filipović (Zagreb); Albert William Levi (St.

and having in mind the wider context of the European integration as well as the internationalization of socialism, I will focus on the issues triggered by the problems of self-management. Specifically, I engage with the presentations given by Svetozar Stojanović, a member of the Praxis circle from Belgrade; Ernest Mandel, a Trotskyist political economist from Brussels; and Arnold Künzli, a philosopher and radical democrat from Basel. Their presentations evaluated the notion of self-management from different perspectives. All three presenters assumed their role as intellectuals to be critically involved with the real-life problems and argued that their theoretical observations are not abstract ponderings, but instead express the “conclusions of the real possibilities and tendencies” of self-management in their respective societies.¹⁵⁸ Their positions fall nicely within the very aim of the journal *Praxis* as well as the summer school, which adds to the intellectuals’ understanding of their own role in contributing to the solutions of the contradictions of the modern world.

Svetozar Stojanović explicated that real socialism cannot exist without social self-management and social property.¹⁵⁹ One could argue that this was a shared idea among these intellectuals gathered at Korčula. Stojanović and other critical Marxists, mainly from the East, shared the opinion that the system based on the state property and state’s management of production as well as social life, cannot rightly call itself “socialist.”¹⁶⁰ Instead, it is an etatist kind of socialism or a system that Stojanović called the “modern class system” differing little from capitalism. Stojanović remarked, however, that still in 1967 it was an “unfortunate case that many Marxists, even after Stalin’s death, are still convinced that the communist and socialist society can genuinely be built and developed only around an all-powerful state.”¹⁶¹ But in contrast to such a

Louis), Vojin Milić, (Beograd), Dušan Pirjevec (Ljubljana). In *Praxis* no. 5–6 (1967), and *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1968). On another note, it should be added that Branislav Jakovljević argues that the “doctrine of creativity was later taken up by the striking students in 1968 but also by their [Praxis] opponents, like Veljko Vlahovic.” Branislav Jakovljević, *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia, 1945-91* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 2016), 181–82.

¹⁵⁸ Svetozar Stojanović, “Društveno samoupravljanje i socijalistička zajednica [Social self-management and socialist community],” *Praxis* no.5–6 (1967): 685.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 680.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 681.

conception of an unprecedented role of the state, Stojanović was convinced that self-management is the only kind of socialism which can bring about a genuine transition from capitalism to communism. Not all participants would agree with this idea, as they would require Stojanović to qualify his idea of what constituted “self-management.” Mainly the questions often raised in the discussions of self-management—prior to 1968 and after—could be formulated as: What should the economic background be in order for self-management to actually work? Can self-management be implemented in scarce societies? Does the material background of a country dictate the successful implementation of self-management?¹⁶²

Specifically, Rudi Supek reviewed a book by French ecologist and political theorist André Gorz entitled *Difficult Socialism*, published in 1966. Supek emphasized Gorz’s argument that self-management—referring to the Yugoslav case—cannot exist in resource-scarce societies, since distribution cannot be democratic and so the intervention of a planned economy is unavoidable.¹⁶³ Gorz argued that in circumstances of low technological development and resource scarcity, which still defined Yugoslavia, self-management is liable to failure. Gorz’s rationale is that workers would soon become aware that their material needs could not be satisfied, and thus they would either stay active in self-management, to an extent becoming technocrats, or they would lose interest in self-management and become passive in its development.¹⁶⁴

To Stojanović, while aware of Gorz’s analysis, fifteen years of experience in Yugoslav socialism showed that the practice of self-management is not any longer a matter of theoretical speculation. From his perspective, Yugoslavia can rightly serve as a theoretical laboratory where one could critically analyze the aspects of this practice, and so extract theoretical generalizations. For Stojanović, it was problematic that George Lichtheim, a German-born intellectual who defined

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ André Gorz, *Difficult Socialism*, (Rudi Supek), *Praxis* no.5–6 (1967): 839.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 838.

himself as socialist, argued that the idea of workers' self-management was a "syndicalist utopia"; Stojanović added that he never mentioned the Yugoslav experience.¹⁶⁵

Disregarding the issue raised by Gorz, which concerned the economic preconditions of self-management's viability, Stojanović's main contentions centered on the demystification of two misconceptions about self-management. The first misconception opposed self-management to etatism; the second equated self-management with the decentralization of the state.¹⁶⁶ To him, both have detrimental consequences. It is evasive to simply contrast self-management to etatism, because we cannot then delineate between larger social and smaller group self-management. Stojanović adopted the position of the Praxis philosophers' general critique of the functioning of self-management in Yugoslavia. That is, that the practice of self-management disclosed the tendency that some or few self-managing groups exploit and so damage the potential of the Yugoslav social unity. The result of this is a disintegrated and atomized working class that begins to show egoism, particularism, and concurrency. Linked to that is the second misunderstanding: self-management as complete decentralization of the state.¹⁶⁷ Stojanović addressed this issue from his Yugoslav perspective, implicitly referring to Edvard Kardelj's conception of the withering away of the state as based on economic self-management understood as political decentralization. In Stojanović's view, such definition of self-management ultimately leads to the fragmentation of society. Therefore, it is naïve to believe that only decentralization can lead from economic etatism to a self-managing integration of society.¹⁶⁸ Hence the economy in the socialist society cannot solely be based on the market: it ought to be coordinated, directed, and planned. Socialist society, Stojanović explained, differs both from the alienated state as well as the anarchistic market.

¹⁶⁵ Svetozar Stojanović, "Društveno samoupravljanje i socijalistička zajednica [Social self-management and socialist community]," *Praxis* no.5–6 (1967): 682. Stojanović refers to Lichtheim's book *Marxism in Contemporary France* (1966).

¹⁶⁶ It should be noted that (among the critical Marxists at least) decentralization was generally understood as a process that first and foremost aims to dismantle centralist, bureaucratic governmental structures. However, many intellectuals on Korčula or elsewhere worried that decentralization leads to "anarchy." As Đuro Šušnjić said, "one should not equate decentralization and democratization, just like no centralist regime is not by default a bureaucratic," in "Međunarodna naučna konferencija Dinamika društvene strukture socijalističkog društva i problemi humanizma [International conference 'Dynamics of social structures in socialist society and the problems of humanism']," *Praxis*, no. 1–2 (1968): 204.

¹⁶⁷ Svetozar Stojanović, "Društveno samoupravljanje i socijalistička zajednica," 683–84.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The second speaker at the Korčula Summer School, Ernest Mandel, a Trotskyist political economist, presented a paper entitled “Freedom and Planning in Capitalism and Socialism.” Mandel’s argument was that socialism needs economic planning because that is its main condition for achieving personal freedom for all individuals. Economic planning in socialism gives freedom to individuals “to such a degree that was never possible in the most bourgeois society.”¹⁶⁹ Unlike Stojanović, Mandel did not differentiate between the “type” or a “kind” of socialism he spoke of. In his presentation, Mandel did not use the notion of “etatism.” Instead he simply compares socialism with capitalism through the notion of freedom. Coming from the Western context, Mandel focused on the meaning of planning in capitalist countries, arguing that planning and individual freedom cannot be reconciled in that context.

While reflecting on the contemporaneous situation in the West, Mandel argued that the classic Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy was “consciously or unconsciously” accepted by public opinion in the West.¹⁷⁰ His argument was buttressed by an actual usage of the words. The usage of the word “ghetto,” Mandel explained, was historically understood as an institution which, during the Middle Ages as well as the Nazi period, lawfully and administratively coerced the Jewish minorities.¹⁷¹ In 1967, Mandel argued, “today we use the word to describe the living conditions of American Blacks, which are formally and legally free to live wherever they please.”¹⁷² Mandel here did not speak about the idea of freedom in the abstract but ties it to a concrete example. His specific understanding of freedom is crucial here. Mandel maintained that the high material life standard of the workers in the industrialized capitalist countries (which he referred to as imperialist) barely made the workers “free.”¹⁷³ Freedom, to Mandel, cannot be linked with the higher and advanced life standard that is based on the material goods. The worker in the West is not “free” despite that the fact that capitalist countries gave him basic social insurance—although Mandel conceded that

¹⁶⁹ Ernest Mandel, “Sloboda i planiranje u kapitalizmu i socijalizmu [Freedom and planning in capitalism and socialism],” *Praxis* no. 5–6 (1967): 697.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 695.

social welfare is an important step toward the achievement of freedom. However, this is not enough, since a higher standard of living in the political conditions of the West only brought about, in his words, “new forms of alienation and unfreedom.”¹⁷⁴

In contrast to Mandel, Arnold Künzli, a philosopher and radical democrat from Switzerland, focused on the particular issue of the “workers movement” within the general tensions between variants of capitalism and socialism, and the apparent answer to this tension in self-management. In his presentation entitled “Self-managing in a ghetto,” Künzli asked: Can one speak of a genuine workers movement in the parliamentary-democratic part of the so-called West?¹⁷⁵ The answer to this question seems to be crucial for the future of self-management as a widespread practice and a common way of organizing societies. But, at the same time, the answer to such a question depends on the understanding of what constitutes a “workers’ movement.”¹⁷⁶ Künzli aimed to historicize this notion and so argued that the workers’ movement in its classical political conception (as Künzli explained, the dominated and exploited proletariat that plots the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist relations, as well as the unavoidable class solidarity and international solidarity of the workers) does not exist in the then-contemporaneous West.¹⁷⁷

From a position that he describes as “radical realism,” Künzli argued that the values which characterize Western parliamentary democracies—such as individual liberties—are cherished by the working class. And so the fundamentals of Marxist philosophy, Künzli argued, that predicted the sharpening of the class struggle, failed in that sense. He quoted Herbert Marcuse who had “many years ago, already assessed the possibility that in the foreseeable future of today’s Communist party outside of the Soviet realm—and maybe even within—could become the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 696.

¹⁷⁵ Arnold Künzli, “Samoupravljanje u getu [Self-management in a ghetto],” *Praxis*, no.1–2 (1968): 4. It should be noted that the similar discussion was held during the 1964 Korčula Summer School “Idea and Perspectives of socialism.” There, Herbert Marcuse, argued that there is no possibility for the revolution in the highly developed countries, because the technological industry created such conditions that had hindered man from actually feeling alienated. What more, even “the radical movements, avant-garde movements, of political and cultural kind are easily absorbed by the system, thereby transforming it and making it stronger.” Herbert Marcuse, “Perspektive socijalizma u razvijenom industrijskom društvu [Perspectives of Socialism in a Highly Developed Industrial Society],” *Praxis: Smisao i perspektive socijalizma*, 169.

¹⁷⁶ Künzli, “Samoupravljanje u getu,” 3.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 4–5.

inheritors of the traditional social-democratic parties.”¹⁷⁸ In addition, the notion of alienation in the West has long been jettisoned by real, concrete historical developments. That is, the more productive the worker, the more he could purchase and consume—not less. Künzli’s conclusion was that the alienation of labor in capitalist economies had lost its radical, Marxian character. Künzli claimed:

Whoever in the so-called West today philosophizes about the notion of alienation ... that person has a distorted consciousness. The worker is not in any existential crisis: he might even get himself a car, and a vacation on the Adriatic. He is secure from anything and everything. The state and his employer give him guarantees for his pension and other benefits.¹⁷⁹

Similarly to Stojanović and Mandel, Künzli’s argument is not a mere philosophical and abstract rumination, but is supported by the most immediate example—that is, the example of the chemical workers in Basel who were the best paid workers in Switzerland and beyond. Yet, the study, as Künzli argued, showed that despite a five-working-day law, the workers still worked on Saturdays as taxi drivers, leaving only Sunday as their day off.¹⁸⁰

These presentations, although I take them as a paradigmatic examples of the difficulty that existed in the context of the intellectual exchanges, are just an aspect of a more complex discussion of self-management that took part in the journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest that, while aspired to develop the theory of self-management at the universal level, the intellectuals clearly, approached the problematics of self-management from their own perspectives.¹⁸¹ More precisely, participants often spoke from their own particular social contexts, using the phrases such as “the Western world,” the “Eastern world,” and the “Yugoslav experience,” thereby emphasizing the embeddedness of their conceptual thinking. At the same time, as this overall chapter made it clear, these thinkers aspired to universal discussions.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Künzli quoted Herbert Marcuse’s *Die Gesellschaftslehre des sowjetischen Marxismus* (Dortmund: Neuwied 1964), 225.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸¹ Svetozar Stojanović, “Društveno samoupravljanje i socijalistička zajednica,” 681–82.

Tihomir Zvonko's statement given during the final general discussion at the Korčula Summer School in 1967 verbalized the central issue during this session, and it pointed toward the perceived need to clarify the concepts, similarly expressed in the opening quotation by Lefebvre:

We all speak about freedom, but what do we mean by freedom? What we first have to do is clear up and clarify these concepts, because we all, in some way, spoke about the path into future as the path into freedom. But we do not even know what freedom is. And, consequently, that means that we do not really know what we want. Thus, our aims and goals are put into question, that is, our status. And from there we cannot step any step ahead.¹⁸²

In the context prior to the crises of 1968, this critical plurality of voices was deemed positive, and pointed toward a need to work out new theoretical conceptions that could solve the issues that emerged in the practice of self-managing socialism. Instead of divisions of Marxist thought and misunderstandings, these different positions showed, in Predrag Vranicki's words, that "the Marxist theoretical forces in Europe are far more strong and argumentative than was the case a decade ago. The debate about the real possibilities of today's socialism has just begun."¹⁸³ Yet, after the 1968 crisis, the divergences that were latently present in the discussions became more visible and polarized. In the words of János Kis, György Bence, and György Márkus, in the post-1968 period, critical Marxists from the "East" and "West" still expressed themselves in the terminology of socialism. Yet, they had:

... diametrically opposed ideas toward the realization of socialism. That is, one side insisted that socialism cannot be realized without adherence to the principle of tolerance and the continuous operation of the institutions of representative democracy, while the other unmasked tolerance as a form of manipulative repression and demonstrated that representative democracy is merely the mask of what in fact are anti-democratic mechanisms. One side stressed the need for differentiated pay scales, while the other demanded that wage categories be done away with.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Tihomir Zvonko, "Generalna debata [General debate]," *Praxis*, no.1–2 (1968): 92.

¹⁸³ Predrag Vranicki, "Kolokvij o kritici političke ekonomije [Colloquium about the critique of political economy]," *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1968): 212. This colloquium was held from 14 to 16th September 1967, in Frankfurt am Main as the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Marx's *Das Kapital*.

¹⁸⁴ György Bence, János Kis, György Márkus, *Hogyan lehetséges kritikai gazdaságtan? (The Way Towards a Critical Economics/How is Critical Economics Possible?)*. Budapest: T-Twins Kiadó, 1992. Published in 1972. Thanks to Prof. János Kis for providing me with his English translation, which I have reproduced here.

However, it is difficult to place Yugoslavia in either of these demands. The statement written by the students and the professors at the Belgrade University, and published by the special edition of the journal *Praxis* demanded the implementation of the social self-management from the bottom to the top.¹⁸⁵ The statement further read: “We do not fight for our narrow material interests,” which shows that the character of the student demonstrations in Belgrade was in accord with the socialist ideas, as well as the Yugoslav idea of the “brotherhood and unity.”¹⁸⁶ The student movements in Yugoslavia did not challenge the political system—but demanded more genuine implementation of its socialism.

¹⁸⁵ “Drugovi radnici, građani i omladinci [Comrade workers, citizens, and youth]] *Praxis, Dokumenti Jun-Lipanj 1968* [Documents: June 1968], 84.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

Chapter 3:

1968 Zeitschichten: Poland, Paris, Yugoslavia, Prague

We are against the increasing enrichment of individuals at the expense of working class. We are for social property and against the attempts to implement STOCK CAPITALIST COMPANIES. We are hurt by the fact that many thousands of workers have to leave to serve and work for world capital. With our knowledge, with our flights and love, we want to build our socialist society. We are appalled that the bureaucratic interests tend to destroy the brotherhood and unity of our people. We are not going to allow them to confront the workers and students. The interests of the working class are general interests and those are the only real interests of socialism. Our program is the program of the most progressive forces of our society—the program of the LCY and the CONSTITUTION. We demand its consistent implementation.¹⁸⁷

These were the demands signed by the students of the Red University “Karl Marx” in Belgrade and addressed to “comrade Tito” on 4 June 1968. In Boris Kanzleiter’s words, they leave no doubt that the students were ultimately pro-socialist and pro-Yugoslav. The striking participants included the “Marxist Humanists” such as Zagorka Golubović, Miladin Životić, as well as Svetozar Stojanović, who argued that the “demands for the democracy” were connected with the “ideas of equality.”¹⁸⁸ The “national question” was not on the agenda of the movement. Instead, the student movement in Belgrade in 1968, characterized itself through the “anational Yugoslavism” and “aimed to principally affirm the idea of federal Yugoslavia.”¹⁸⁹

While the previous chapter aimed to portray the international dialogue at Korčula Summer School in 1967, where we pointed out that the main driving force was the prospect of internationalization of socialism, which ran in parallel with the economic crisis in Yugoslavia, still seen as a viable alternative, this third chapter focuses on the events of 1968. While the core of the chapters circles around the invasion of Prague by the Soviet forces on August 21, 1968, the aim of the chapter as a whole is to point out at the different narratives that run in parallel to one another,

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸⁸ Svetozar Stojanović in *Treći program* (1991). Quoted in Boris Kanzleiter, *Die »Rote Universität«: Studentenbewegung und Linksopposition in Belgrad, 1964-1975*, 11.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

and that collided, metaphorically speaking, at the sessions of Korčula Summer School between 14–24 August 1968.

Going to the general context of the Yugoslav student protests of 1968, it is fair to argue that if we speak about the “transnational 1968,” then we speak about the students engaged with the events of Paris, Bonn, Berlin, as well as Warsaw and Prague. To get a sense of the character of the students’ demands and experiences in the Yugoslav context, it is useful to look at some indicative examples. Fredy Perlman stated that they were regarded as being similar to those in the “West”:

... like their comrades in capitalist countries, Yugoslav students demonstrated their solidarity with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and their opposition to United States militarism. When Rudi Dutschke was shot in Berlin as a consequence of the Springer Press campaign against radical West German students, Yugoslav students demonstrated their solidarity with the German Socialist Student Federation (SDS). The Belgrade student newspaper carried articles by Rudi Dutschke and by the German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch.¹⁹⁰

Perlman writes that the forms of organization of the student protests and struggle in Yugoslavia followed the example of Paris. Conversely, the Yugoslav student movements did not ignore the events in Poland in 1968—that is, the sacking of the professors and expulsion of students from the University of Warsaw—nor the entrance of the Soviet troops in Prague on 21 August 1968, the same day that year’s *Praxis*-led Korčula Summer School was held.¹⁹¹

As an example, on April 1968, the Belgrade student magazine *Student* published a letter of support to Polish students and professors, condemning the Polish government’s undemocratic undertakings against the professors and students, which were, as the text argued, “irreconcilable with the principles of socialist democracy.”¹⁹² Furthermore, the authors—who were students—referred to themselves as “young Marxists” who could not grasp the fact that a socialist country

¹⁹⁰ Fredy Perlman, *Birth of a Revolutionary Movement in Yugoslavia* (Kalamazoo: Black & Red, 1969). Taken from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/perlman-fredy/1969/revolutionary-movement-yugoslavia.htm>, accessed on 9 April 2018.

¹⁹¹ “The telegram sent by the participants of the school to comrade Tito,” *Praxis*, no. 1–2 (1969): 310.

¹⁹² “*Student*,” no. 15, 23.4.1968, Belgrade,” *Praxis, Dokumenti Jun-Lipanj 1968*, 37.

tolerated anti-Semitic tendencies. These young Marxists used phrases such as “humanist society,” and “free critical thought,” clearly echoing the rhetoric of the philosophers and sociologists gathered around *Praxis*.

This was not by chance, for the group of forty-five Belgrade intellectuals, including the members of the Belgrade-part of *Praxis* circle—Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, Zgorka Pesic-Golubović, Svetozar Stojanović, Dragoljub Mićunović—wrote a letter of protest which had been also re-published by *Praxis*. The letter, too, deplored the racial discrimination by the Polish government which in “... this historical moment, when serious struggles and efforts are being made in order to prove the possibilities of a democratic socialism...”—can only serve the political forces of the far-right.¹⁹³

The Praxis professors closely followed the developments in the West as well. On 25 April 1968, on the behalf of the *Praxis* editorial board, Rudi Supek and Branko Bošnjak wrote a letter to Otto Brenner, a German trade unionist and politician. Supek and Bošnjak expressed their concerns with the “newest development in Germany,” adding that the constitutional state emergency can help the social causes and prevent the progress of the “old and well-known reactionary forces [that] aim to prevent any democratic movement with the terrorist features, as the assassination attempt at Rudi Dutschke showed.”¹⁹⁴ At the end they called upon Brenner to do everything he can in order to prevent the negative anti-democratic political actions.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, in parallel, the media that brought together Marxist intellectuals—the journal *Praxis* as well as the Korčula Summer School, were facing discontinuation due to a dire financial situation. That is, the expected financial support promised in 1967 was not given and was even reduced in comparison with the previous years.¹⁹⁶ As a result, in its May-June edition of 1968,

¹⁹³ “Protest beogradskih intelektualaca povodom događaja u Poljskoj [Protest of the Belgrade Intellectuals Against the Events in Poland],” *Praxis* no.3 (1968): 253.

¹⁹⁴ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 25 April 1968.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. The letter most likely referred to the firebombing of the two department stores in Frankfurt-am-Main, by Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, members of the Baader-Meinhof group.

¹⁹⁶ “Uz najnovije finansijske teškoće Praxisa [With the Newest Financial Difficulties of Praxis],” *Praxis* no.3 (1968): 231–232.

Praxis was published in an unusual small number of pages. The explanation was found in the first pages of the edition:

While the journal enjoys genuine sympathies and support of a wide amount of readers and progressive public sphere, reactions of those who hold key positions in our public life were often diametrically opposed ... We were promised that the economical discrimination would finally stop and that the journal would get the much needed financial means for the continuation of its publications ... Although the journal increased its subscriptions as well as circulation, it finds itself in a hopeless financial position.¹⁹⁷

Radio Free Europe (RFE), although it did not broadcast to Yugoslavia, closely followed the development of the situation linked with the survival of the journal. One of the RFE reports entitled “Publication of the Yugoslav Magazine Praxis Continued” dated 12 August 1968, captured the uncertainty about whether *Praxis* would continue publication. The report disclosed the economic hardships of the journal and suggested that the cause of these problems is “a hidden censorship from the authorities.”¹⁹⁸ Specifically, the subsidies, promised to be given to the journal by the Croatian Republic Committee for Cultural Activity, were radically reduced.¹⁹⁹ This resulted in a deadlock situation because the journal “could not manage to cover the overall increase in publication costs.”²⁰⁰ As the report further states, the “controversial” Yugoslav philosophical magazine *Praxis*, contrary to the rumors—claiming that it might cease with its publications—nevertheless continues publishing new numbers.²⁰¹

The previous, second chapter framed the discussions at Korčula Summer School in 1967 from the perspective of the need to internationalize socialism by focusing on the “internationalization of socialism” as well as the “integration of Europe.” At the same time, it also pointed out at the simultaneously latent and open economic crisis in Yugoslavia. The present third chapter frames the discussions at Korčula Summer School in 1968 from the perspective of the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports (HU OSA 300-8-3): “Publication of the Yugoslav Magazine Praxis Continued,” 12 August 1968, 1.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 2.

²⁰¹ Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports (HU OSA 300-8-3): “Publication of Praxis to be stopped?” 22 April 1968.

multiplicity of parallel intellectual narratives—from the Yugoslav Marxist Humanist perspective, the crisis of the journal *Praxis* itself and consequently the continuation of Korčula Summer School, the Yugoslav student movements and a demand for genuine self-management, the perspective of the student movements abroad (in Paris), the Polish case, and finally the culmination of the Prague invasion—which urged the present participants of the summer school to rethink more critically the meaning of socialism. And these intellectual discussions held on Korčula and published in *Praxis* can be approached from diverse perspectives. In this particular context, it is useful to approach them through the debates and then-existing concerns about the “redefinition of Left” and “new tendencies in socialism.”²⁰²

The idea of “redefining the Left” was introduced by Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, an advocate of a humanist interpretation of Marx, and, later, a vocal critic of communism. In Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér’s words, Kolakowski opened the space to discuss the redefinition of “Left,” or more specifically, the “rebirth of the ‘Eastern Left’” in his essay of 1957, entitled “The Concept of the ‘Left.’”²⁰³ There, Kolakowski argued for the need to resurrect the utopian dimensions of the Left as a way of rejecting and contrasting ossified Marxism-Leninism and its “scientific theory” of socialism. Writing in 1957, Kolakowski anticipated the moments of 1968 by also claiming that the category of “Left” transcended borders, that is, it is an intellectual endeavor, and not a single, defined political movement, party, or a group of parties.²⁰⁴ This conceptualization is necessary in order to avoid the crisis in which the Left had plunged—that is, the Left was static in the West and distorted in the East as the result of “Stalin’s crimes.” Hence, what Kolakowski defined to be the ideal type is “leftist socialism,” which meant the regeneration of the Left via utopian ideals, which had been lost in the stifling atmosphere of Stalinist “bureaucratization.”²⁰⁵ And this is precisely accomplished through “praxis,” or the combination of

²⁰² Although here I point out that this was Kolakowski’s term, the same was used by Danko Grlić in “Marginalije uz Čehoslovačku i nove tendencije u socijalizmu,” in *Praxis* no.1–2 (1969): 316.

²⁰³ The English version of this text appeared in 1968, in *The New Left Reader* edited by Carl Oglesby.

²⁰⁴ Leszek Kolakowski, “The Concept of the ‘Left,’” in *The New Left Reader*, ed. Carl Oglesby (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 145.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

the “*vita contemplativa and vita activa*.”²⁰⁶ Kolakowski thus argues that utopia is a necessary and indispensable concept of the “revolutionary Left, and the latter is a necessary product of the social Left as a whole.”²⁰⁷ This “utopian dimension” was defended on three provisos: the orientation of the political activity of the Left must be anticapitalistic, “the Left must promote a republican position that opposes social privileges, national dependences, and any type of racism; and finally, the Left ought to emphasize its relationship to the Enlightenment legacy as a project of emancipation.”²⁰⁸ Kolakowski’s explications of the Left ought not to be taken as a singular, contained frame of thinking, but as a part of much larger tendencies that traversed various contexts in this particular moment in history.

3.1. March in Poland 1968

The events in March in Poland 1968 prompted the editorial board of *Praxis* to get engaged in the situation by political and social means. The Polish student riots were followed by the dismissal of the group of professors from the Warsaw University—Leszek Kolakowski, Bronisław Baczko, Włodzimierz Brus, Maria Hirszowicz, Zygmunt Bauman, and Stefan Morawski—and some students were expelled from the university. The professors were the victims of an anti-Semitic campaign in which revisionism was equal to “Zionism.”²⁰⁹ To understand the reactions of the intellectuals associated with the journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School, we should keep in mind the discussions from the previous chapter—which described the efforts towards internationalization of democratic and participatory socialism as an alternative to both capitalism

²⁰⁶ Ibid. I should also add that Kolakowski’s essay stands in the same intellectual tradition as Ernst Bloch’s *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918) and *The Principle of Hope* (1954).

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 148.

²⁰⁸ Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, *Eastern Left, Western Left: Totalitarianism, Freedom and Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 16. Quoted in eds. Costica Bradatan, Serguei Alex Oushakine, *In Marx’s Shadow: Knowledge, Power, and Intellectuals in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: Lanham, 2010), 45.

²⁰⁹ Katarzyna Bielinska-Kowalewska, “Kako je Poljski revizionizam ‘mimošao’ tzv. Praxis-filozofiju, [How did Polish revisionism “by-passed” the so-called Praxis-philosophy],” in *Praxis: Društvena kritika i humanistički socijalizam. Zbornik radova sa međunarodne konferencije o jugoslovenskoj levisi: Praxis-filozofija i Korčulanska ljetna škola (1963-1974)* [Praxis: Social Critique and Humanist Socialism: The Collection of Papers from the International Conference about the Yugoslav Left: Praxis-Philosophy and Korčula Summer School (1963-1974)], Dragomir Olujić Oluja, Krunoslav Stojaković, eds. (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Belgrade, 2012), 274.

and etatist socialism, as well as the aim to clarify the concepts needed in order to work out and so tightly link theory with practice.

While it faced economic hardship and the uncertainties towards its own existence, in the same number *Praxis* published the protest concerning the dismissal of the professors of the Warsaw University. *Praxis* reported that as the news about their dismissal came on 27 March 1968, the editorial board reacted swiftly and convened a meeting the following day, writing a statement that was sent to the “responsible in Poland, Polish Embassy in Belgrade, and a significant number of weekly and daily newspapers in Yugoslavia, and abroad, and to all members of the advisory board of *Praxis*.”²¹⁰

The editorial staff of *Praxis* declared that it felt as their duty to publicly condemn such an action of Polish government. The language used in the statement mirrored the overall *Praxis* orientation, that is, “democratic, humanist socialism is the only progressive perspective for the contemporary mankind, and as such it cannot successfully develop without free and equal exchange and struggle of opinion.”²¹¹ The impingements on philosophical and sociological thought only damage the perspectives of socialism—it damages the image of socialism and consequently it diminishes its chances to internationalize. One could argue that the editorial board *Praxis* identified with the Polish intellectuals, insofar as their free and unhindered functioning and publishing as a journal was approaching its end. They condemned the administrative measures toward Polish professors, whom “The Statement” portrayed as Marxists that brought a significant contribution to the development of creative Marxism.²¹² In its conclusion, the statement of protest demanded from the Polish authorities to revise their decision concerning the dismissal of the six Marxist philosophers and sociologists.

This was the first genuine social engagement of *Praxis*. In order to mobilize the intellectual community, the editorial board collected the letters of support of the statement, by almost all

²¹⁰ “Izjava redakcije časopisa Praxis [The Statement of the editorial board Praxis],” *Praxis* no. 3 (1968): 233.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

²¹² *Ibid.*

members of the Advisory Board. The statement together with the letters were published in both the Yugoslav and the international editions. As one could anticipate, the intellectual community reacted in solidarity. The letters sent to the editorial board varied in content—from those simply agreeing that their names be included in the list of that agrees with the issued statement, to those letters that reflected on the present situation of socialism through the events in Poland. Thus, on one level, it is fair to argue that the statements disclosed a sense of unity insofar as they all gathered in the pages of *Praxis* to show solidarity to their colleagues in Poland. In addition, it is possible to argue all of the letters—at least, those published—recognized the damaging effects which the administrative anti-Semitic measures, may have on the development of Marxism as a thought, and ultimately, socialism.

In the rest of this chapter, I reflect on this moment by interpreting it as an impetus of international intellectual exchange that condensed the space of discussion about the events in Prague from numerous other cities (e.g., Paris, West Berlin, Berkley, Belgrade, Budapest, etc.) to the small Dalmatian island of Korčula. At the same time, in respect to the Yugoslav's responses, the discussion of Prague is colored by their recent experiences of the Yugoslav student movements. My interest is to contextualize the interactions between intellectuals by tying them to the specific circumstance of attending the Korčula Summer School and hearing news of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and specifically Prague, by Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, East German, and Bulgarian forces. I will inquire into the practical responses and the theoretical-intellectual reactions by the participants at the summer school as triggered by the invasion of Czechoslovakia on 21 August 1968.

3.2. Korčula in August 1968: The Traumatic Experience

On the island Korčula, under the olive trees, philosophers. Helped by the sun and the blue sea and sky, under the fortress of the free city, wrinkled, white, and well-combed Ernst Bloch gives introductory words, opening the Korčula Summer School. Marx and Revolution, Revolution and Marx, History and Revolution, Revolution Today. From the early morning, they speak about the alienation and liberation of man, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, Serge Mallet, Lucien Goldmann,

Arnold Künzli, Thomas Bottomore, Eugen Fink, Kostas Axelos. Can one change the world in August? [...] On the beach, the wisdom of Europe walks in underwear. Herbert Marcuse, lifted polemical nose, cuts the bay with his speed boat, with the energy of rebellion of the students from Berkeley. [...] Never until then have we heard so much laughter, nor so much happiness on the faces of our professors!²¹³

Nikola Tadić, a student of the Praxis philosopher Gajo Petrović, recollects his experience of the Korčula Summer School in August 1968. Tadić's poem captures the radical shift from the idyllic and anticipative atmosphere that was present in the years between the early sixties and 1968 to the crisis and disillusionment that followed the events in the autumn of that year. His poem, however, narrates the experience of the summer school in Korčula, and about the moment in which the participants, after they just arrived at the morning sessions, heard the radio announcing the entrance of Soviet tanks in Prague:

On Korčula philosophers were speechless! [...] We ignored the sound of seagulls, no one acknowledged the rising of the sun. Is the world only a dungeon—do we again have the times of extremes? [...] And while I was sailing on a ferry boat back to Pljesac, traveling on a dusty road to Dubrovnik, unfinished and unsettled—*de omnibus dubitandum*²¹⁴—I realized that we are all subordinated slaves to ideas, laws, violence, destiny. Yet I did not give up and I did not resign to cynicism. Philosophizing about a man and his liberation, the attempts to free the man will not stop until the world ends. The god of Hope is not dead yet, although this summer will soon die just like our youth.²¹⁵

The tone of this poem indeed captures the trauma of 1968 as played out on the island of the Yugoslav Adriatic. As Ágnes Heller recollects, on the morning of 21 August 1968, she and her group arrived at the Cultural Center in Old Town Korčula, where the discussions and presentations of the summer school took place. As the proceedings began and carried on, participants were informed of an “upheaval” from Yugoslav radio.²¹⁶ And although there are no video or voice

²¹³ Nikola Tadić, “Kolovoz na Korčuli 1968. [August on Korčula, 1968],” in Nikola Tadić, *Filozofski seminar* (Merkur MGM: Sisak, 2002), 94.

²¹⁴ *De omnibus dubitandum est* is a book written by a Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. This Latin phrase translates to “everything must be doubted.”

²¹⁵ Nikola Tadić, “Kolovoz na Korčuli 1968,” 96.

²¹⁶ Author's interview with Ágnes Heller, 23 January 2018.

recordings of the August 1968 summer school that could assist in reconstructing this particular event,²¹⁷ by looking at the published proceedings, reports, documents, and presentations given at the summer school in the immediate aftermath, one can reconstruct the intellectual atmosphere. 1986, in Gerson S. Sher's words, was particularly marked by the presence of Herbert Marcuse and Ernst Bloch, "...following the revolutionary outbursts in Western Europe, America, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia."²¹⁸ The Korčula Summer School and the journal *Praxis* thus help to analyze the intertwined practical and theoretical reactions to this historical moment.

To understand the position of *Praxis* philosophers and sociologists, it should be noted that on 22 April 1968, Radio Free Europe reported that the journal *Praxis* would "probably be forced to stop publication."²¹⁹ Thus, this adds another level of dynamism vis-à-vis *Praxis* relation to the Yugoslav student movements. The reasons were financial, but ultimately political, as the journal depended on governmental subsidies that were not allocated, forcing the journal to plunge into debts of roughly eight thousand dollars.²²⁰ Furthermore, on 1 July 1968, just more than a month before the sessions begun, Radio Free Europe reported that the *Praxis* philosophers were accused by Vladimir Bakarić, Communist leader of the Croatian Republic, as being "directed by the American democratic group for the struggle against Communism."²²¹ The report further reads that *Praxis*' influence in the student riots in Zagreb during the spring of 1968 was "extremely strong."²²²

Thus, the sessions held at Korčula in 1968 should be understood both as underlined by the internal struggle of the journal with the authorities in the light of the Yugoslav student movements, as well as within the broader European crisis—that is, the sacking of Polish professors earlier in 1968, the Paris May, riots in Western Germany, and the general, "global" student movements in

²¹⁷ I did find a short 6 minutes video taken at the Korčula Summer school, which includes the footage from 1968. However, the quality is too poor and there is no sound.

²¹⁸ Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*, 55.

²¹⁹ "Publication of 'Praxis' to be Stopped?", 22 April 1968. HU OSA 300-8-3-10136; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

the United States, Japan, and beyond, culminating in the entrance of Soviet-led forces in Czechoslovakia.

3.2.1. Pragmatic Reactions to the Events of 21 August 1968 on Korčula

On August 21st, a communique published by TASS (the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) announced its military intervention in Czechoslovakia, claiming that the five states who joined the action “decided to meet the request of the fraternal Czechoslovak people.”²²³ This intervention triggered immediate and various responses. To illustrate the plurality of responses, I will work through some representative samples from various sources.

Radio Free Europe’s Research Department reported that the East German public opposed Czechoslovakia’s occupation. The report reads:

While there are reports of growing demonstrations of support for the Czechoslovak leadership and anger at the Warsaw Pact invasion by the East German public, the GDR’s official voices continue to justify the action against Czechoslovakia and present a picture of strong support for the move inside the socialist camp and throughout the world.²²⁴

Junge Welt, the paper of the East German Youth organization, responded to the invasion by comparing it to the events of 1938, claiming that, while in 1938 fascist forces entered Czechoslovakia to destroy it, on August 21st, socialist armies came in order to save the country as well as retain peace in Europe.²²⁵ In short, the report pointed toward the consequential and immediate answers to this crisis, which caused various fractures, confusion, and accusations directed toward both Warsaw Pact forces as well as the Czechoslovak leadership.²²⁶

²²³ HU OSA 300-8-3-14833.

²²⁴ “GDR Reaction 23-26 August: East German Public Opposing,” 26 August 1968. HU OSA 300-8-3-1997; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²²⁶ A good example for the fraction is that of Bettina Wegner, a member of the musical group Oktoberklub (part of the FDJ-Singebewegung, the official youth organization in the GDR), who upon hearing about the invasion, started making pamphlets urging the public to reproach the invasion. The general stance of the Oktoberklub was, however, in support of the invasion. Thanks to Cornelia Bruhn.

Yugoslav radio also transmitted news concerning the invasion of the troops. The news reached Korčula where the sessions have already been taking part. Upon hearing about an “upheaval” from Yugoslav radio, the participants discussed this event in an atmosphere of utter dismay and decided to write a declaration of protest to be signed by everyone present.²²⁷ The declaration was signed by Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Serge Mallet, Arnold Künzli, Lucien Goldman, Tom Bottomore, Eugen Fink, Iring Fetscher, Kostas Axelos, Jürgen Habermas, Ágnes Heller, Norman Birnbaum, and numerous others. To show the scope of this international atmosphere, those signatures were signed by people from New Haven, New York, Split, Zagreb, Belgrade, Birmingham, London, Köln, Ljubljana, Paris, Sarajevo, Nantes, Budapest, Tübingen, La Jolla, Leiden, Glasgow, among others.

The intellectuals regarded the entry of forces into Czechoslovakia as antisocialist and antidemocratic, since in their minds, the politics of force propagated by the Soviet Union is incompatible with an idea of defending the socialist countries. Clearly, their position comes in direct opposition to those of *Junge Welt*, as already mentioned. Furthermore, they were unified in their belief that the Czechoslovak people unanimously supported the reform leader, Aleksandar Dubček, a position that the press agencies of most Warsaw Pact states denied. Finally, the declaration emphasized that if their demand of troop withdrawal from Prague is not fulfilled, the Soviet Union ought to take responsibility for its isolation from the rest of the global socialist movement, which would never accept such politics of aggression. The signatories also expressed their full support to the people of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, who started an immense fight for the achievement and realization of authentic socialism.²²⁸

In addition to the declaration signed by all of the participants at Korčula, there was a declaration signed separately by the Hungarian delegation—to Heller’s memory, the first public opposition the Hungarian government since 1956. In her memoirs, Heller writes that after reading the declaration in front of the participants of the school, Ernst Bloch, by then mostly blind, stepped

²²⁷ Author’s interview with Agnes Heller, 23 January 2018.

²²⁸ “Les participants de l’école d’été de Korcula à l’opinion publique mondiale,” *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1968): 488.

onstage and kissed her forehead. This gesture was, to everyone present, a sign of a blessing for this protest.²²⁹

Staying loyal to Lezsek Kołakowski's credo of combining the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, the participants' gesture was wrapped in a political dimension, for they also sent a telegraph to the leader of socialist Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. In it, they asked him to do everything in his power to protect the interests of socialist Czechoslovakia. The final sentence of the telegram reads: "Confident, comrade President, that you with your immense international status and unique support of all of our people, as well as the whole progressive global public, will do anything in your power for the interests of socialist Czechoslovakia and her independence, we are sending you our comradely greetings."²³⁰ Sadly, it appears that Tito never replied to this telegraph.

The question concerning the impact of these declarations is indeed a relevant one. I will just briefly mention that the Radio Free Europe Research Department published a report entitled "Leading Marxist Philosophers Protest Against the Invasion of Czechoslovakia." Published on 26 August 1968, the report writes that according to a Western journalist who took part in the symposium, the appeal compares "the situation of Czechoslovakia with that of Vietnam," and the Soviet aggression "with that committed by Hitler's Germany."²³¹ Furthermore, the report further reads that on the initiative of Professor Ossip Flechtheim and Dr. Osewdcuk-Korab from the Free University in Berlin, a "Solidarity Committee for the Aid of Czechoslovak Intellectuals" was set up.²³² This detail was omitted by *Praxis*. Finally, Zdenko Antić, a contributor to RFE, observed that

²²⁹ Agnes Heller, *Der Affe auf dem Fahrrad. Eine Lebensgeschichte* (Berlin-Wien 1999), 303. Quoted in ed. Dragomir Olujić Oluja, Krunoslav Stojaković, *Praxis: Društvena kritika i humanistički socijalizam. Zbornik radova sa međunarodne konferencije o jugoslovenskoj ljevici: Praxis-filozofija i Korčulanska ljetna škola* (1963-1974).

²³⁰ "The telegram sent by the participants of the school to comrade Tito" in *Praxis* no.1–2 (1969): 310. And in the International edition of the journal *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1968), "Telegramme adressé au camarade Tito par les participants d l'école d'été de Korcula," 491.

²³¹ "Leading Marxist Philosophers Protest against the Invasion of Czechoslovakia," 26 August 1968. HU OSA 300-8-3-10196; Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute: Publications Department: Background Reports; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, 1.

²³² *Ibid.*, 3. I am thankful to Professor Ostap Sereda for drawing my attention to the mistake in the name of Dr. Osewdcuk-Korab. Namely, this was Bohdan Osadcuk, whose pseudonym was Alexander Korab. Born in a Ukrainian family and studied at the Humboldt University in Berlin, where he collaborated with the Polish émigré circle of Jerzy Giedroyc in Paris. In my correspondence with Prof. Sereda, he pointed out that "In Ukrainian émigré circles (which were dominated by far-right OUN group) [Osadcuk] had a reputation of being a pro-polish thinker who was looking for possible anti-Soviet allies among European liberal and left circles."

the school was “particularly well attended this year,” being a host to also about 300 students from “Yugoslav, West German, Austrian, French, Italian, and British universities.”²³³ Milan Kangrga, one of the founders of the journal and the School, recalled that in 1968 the school attended five-hundred participants, “and particularly foreign students.”²³⁴

It is fair to argue that the reactions from the intellectuals on Korčula were instantaneous and political toward the invasion. Furthermore, in the following *Praxis* issue from 1969, one can see that the intervention was not only discussed in the socialist circles of state socialist countries, but also beyond. *Praxis* republished Bertrand Russell’s report on the international conference on Czechoslovakia in Stockholm on 1–2 February 1969, where he claims that the invasion of Czechoslovakia made the fight against American imperialism more difficult, and that this was not simply caused by the fight for the independence of one people under Soviet domination, but because it indicated the spontaneous birth of original forms of direct democracy that intended to strengthen socialism and self-management in Czechoslovakia.²³⁵ The report remarked on the global dimensions and the far-reaching consequences of this intervention.

The practical responses, which I have described here in the form of declarations, a letter to Tito, and the organization of various conferences and meetings as a way to castigate the intervention may partly be explained by referring to the underlying tendencies and aspirations in this particular moment. It is mainly one issue that concerns the shared assumption that the invasion of Czechoslovakia might weaken the chances of socialism to actually “internationalize” and thus to expand to capitalist countries. the general feeling was that the contemporaneous and most dominant form of socialism, strengthens the common Cold War understanding that socialism, and also communism, are necessarily bureaucratic and authoritarian.²³⁶ As I have shown in the previous chapter, this Cold War mentality was gradually weakening in the period immediately preceding the

²³³ “Leading Marxist Philosophers Protest against the Invasion of Czechoslovakia,” 26 August 1968, 3.

²³⁴ Milan Kangrga, *Šverceri Vlastitog Života: Refleksije o hrvatskoj političkoj kulturi i duhovnosti*, 217.

²³⁵ “The report of Russel’s conference about Czechoslovakia,” *Praxis* no.1–2 (1969): 313.

²³⁶ The dominant type of socialism, meaning the type of socialism as practiced by the Soviet Union and consequently the “Soviet-type socialist state,” in the language of Hungarian political theorists and philosophers, János Kis and György Bence, writing under the pseudonym Marc Rakovski. Marc Rakovski, *Towards an East European Marxism* (Allison & Busby: London, 1978).

events of 1968, as differentiations in the so-called socialist world became visible. Therefore, leftist intellectuals were even able to conceive of an integrated Europe that would exclude the dismantling of socialism. The second concern, linked to the first one, was the perceived weakening of the working movements in capitalist West in their fight against the imperialism, which directly influenced the curtailment of the struggle against authoritarianism in the countries of Eastern Europe. And the final concern, directly prompted by the Prague crisis, is the weakening of the fight for national and social independence in the so-called Third World.

And although these are a sample of the pragmatic reactions and ways of showing solidarity and mutual concern toward the violence and aggression engendered by the Soviet-led invasion, what appears to be the case is that the intellectuals gathered in Korčula thought about the localized Prague crisis in a more global manner. On Korčula, the participants of the summer school discussed the event in Prague, but also the student movements in Paris and West Berlin, as well as the events in Poland, thereby transcending their national frameworks and participating in what can clearly be described as a transnational dialogue.

While this section showed the practical responses to the invasion of Prague, the next one looks at the manner in which intellectuals conceptualized this concrete historical event. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was not an internal, self-enclosed geopolitical event, but rather triggered serious theoretical reflections about the role of Marxist Humanism and critical Marxism beyond the confines of the event itself.

3.2.2. Theoretical Responses: Rethinking Socialism, between “Utopianism” and “Realism”

Based on the discussions held at the symposium that year, but also from the observations of the participants, the theme of the 1968 summer school on Korčula could be summed up as the then-present meaning of “revolution,” and consequently the relevance of Marx’s thought. Clearly, one could not be separated from the other, but they did mark points of contention among the intellectuals. These two overlapping formulations are expressed in the articles written by two

participants at the Korčula—Helmut Fleischer, a West German philosopher, and Lucien Goldmann, a Romanian-French philosopher and Marxist theorist. These two reports, published in newspapers and republished in *Praxis*, are telling of the plurality of ideas, conceptions, and responses to the immediate events that traversed various contexts. Regardless of their cultural backgrounds, a dialogue existed. At the same time, it appears impossible to categorize such heterogeneous positions in any clean manner. What can be deduced, however, is that the event of the Prague Spring was a crucial moment for the what we can refer to as “the Left.” Hence, seen through a moment of crisis, Kolakowski’s essay from 1957 (and republished in 1968) was not only rethought, but the question of the character of today’s socialism was raised.²³⁷ That is, the historical context mediated these discussions in a precise way, and therefore they cannot be described as logical outcomes of a self-contained theoretical system. In the following analysis, I will merge the observations by these two participants with the texts and presentations published in the journal in order to delve deeper into the theoretical layers of their discussions.

Praxis republished one of Fleischer’s articles published for *Die Zeit* in late 1968, where he recounted his impressions from the summer school. In his words, the meaning of “revolution” was heavily debated from various perspectives, that is, immediately prior to the entry of the Soviet forces in Prague.²³⁸ For instance, while some, like Herbert Marcuse, still believed in the revolutionary possibility of widespread student movements, others reflected more on the difficulties and hindrances that had weakened the mobilization of the “forces of progressive change.”²³⁹ Herbert Marcuse, who was already by August 1968 a “spiritual father” of the student movements in the West, but also in Yugoslavia, as his book *One-Dimensional Man* was published in Serbo-Croatian the same year, gave a presentation entitled ““The Realm of Freedom and the Realm of Necessity: A Reconsideration.”²⁴⁰ Marcuse took as a motto of this talk the inscriptions on the

²³⁷ Leszek Kolakowski, “The Meaning of the Concept of the ‘Left,’” in *The New Left Reader*, ed. Carl Oglesby (Grove Press, New York, 1968).

²³⁸ Helmut Fleischer, “Karl Marx u Jugoslaviji [Karl Marx in Yugoslavia],” *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1969): 638.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ For the importance of Herbert Marcuse for Yugoslavia, cf. Filip Kovačević, “Marcuse in Yugoslavia,” *Radical Philosophy Review* 1 (2013): 205–222.

walls of the Sorbonne in Paris that, to him, illustrated the essence of the present situation. “*Soyez réalistes / Demandez l'impossible*,” to Marcuse, marked a “turning point in the development of established societies, and perhaps not only in capitalist societies.”²⁴¹ More importantly, he took the student movements to be an important aspect for the Marxist theory, without which “no re-examination of Marxian concepts today is possible.”²⁴² Marcuse emphasized that he in no way believed that the students by themselves constitute a revolutionary force, and that he never argued that they are replacing the working class as the revolutionary force.²⁴³ The experience of May in Paris entitled him to regard student movements as still a “leading minority,” that is, “a militant minority which articulates what is still unarticulated and repressed among the vast majority of the population.”²⁴⁴ If we return to Marcuse’s earlier presentations in Korčula—when he talked about the relationship between the omnipresence of alienation and the contentment individuals feel while alienated—then the students managed precisely to break from their “false consciousness.” In August 1968, Marcuse was still hopeful that the student movements were not isolated, but rather that they represented social forces capable of “articulating and developing the needs and aspirations of the exploited masses in capitalist countries.”²⁴⁵

The student movement had redefined socialism, and this redefinition of socialism by these militant students living in the capitalist West takes into account particular factors of the material, technical, and cultural development that had not yet received “adequate attention in Marxian theory and strategy.”²⁴⁶ In pointing to the innovation that the student movements triggered in theoretical discussions, Marcuse’s unique position is to argue that the new redefinition of socialism, and thus a re-examination of Marxism, cannot be described as “socialist humanism,” something which these intellectuals discussed in 1965 during an international symposium organized by Erich Fromm, of

²⁴¹ Herbert Marcuse, “The Realm of Freedom and the Realm of Necessity: A Reconsideration,” International edition of *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1969): 20.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

which I already wrote in the previous chapter.²⁴⁷ Marcuse's argued that the youth and activists of 1968 movements throughout the Western countries, are harshly criticizing the concept of humanism and socialist humanism as a bourgeois ideology.²⁴⁸ The militant youth is in opposition to the idea of humanism, for, to their minds, it denotes sublimation of freedom and equality which the students no longer tolerate because it is no longer necessary for human progress. The idea of humanism is "inseparable from the repressive idea of the person or personality who can 'fulfill himself' without making excessive demands on the world, by practicing the socially required degree of resignation."²⁴⁹ To Marcuse, clearly, this was a misunderstanding for this criticism to his mind could not be applied to socialist humanism which had become in his words, "a political weapon in the struggle against oppressive modes of socialist construction."²⁵⁰

While the discussion of the student movements attracted wider attention, the possibilities of democratization in the context of self-management, as in Yugoslavia, were also ardently discussed. Furthermore, Fleischer recalled that during his lecture, Ernst Bloch "anticipated the puzzlement of the historical moment" one week before the Soviets entry into Prague shattered many fresh hopes.²⁵¹

Lucien Goldmann, attracted to the idea of *autogestion* (workers' self-management), but seeing the difficulties in applying it in the capitalist context, was a regular attendant of the symposium and kept personal contacts with the members of the Praxis circle. He also composed a film script in 1964 for a never-realized documentary about Yugoslav experiments in workers' self-management.²⁵² In 1968, he wrote about his impressions from Korčula.²⁵³ He observed that the positions among the participants could be distinguished in four general, and often overlapping orientations in that regard: utopian, metaphysical, ethical, and scientific. With regard to the place

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 22.

²⁵¹ Helmut Fleischer, "Karl Marx in Yugoslavia," *Praxis*, no. 3–4 (1969): 638.

²⁵² Cohen Mitchell, *The wager of Lucien Goldmann: tragedy, dialectics, and a hidden god* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 269.

²⁵³ Lucien Goldmann, "Filozofi na Korčuli [Philosophers on Korčula]," originally published in *La Quinzaine littéraire*, no. 57 (1968): 16–30, and republished in *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1969): 641.

of student movements, which was obviously the most debated topic, Goldmann reports that while Marcuse adopted an optimistic position calling for the need of radical and qualitative change of the capitalist structure of society, he criticized the humanistic conception as too vague, arguing that self-management is only a tool, while the real aim is the radical transformation of the man. Bloch, wrote Goldmann, greeted this evolution in Marcuse's thought as it brings him closer to his own thought. Namely, what Marcuse delineates is self-determination as a qualitative difference of a socialist society, which is not to be identified with *Selbstverwaltung* or *autogestion*. These terms are in Marcuse's understanding tied with the form of administration, that is, self-management as introduced in Yugoslav's factories. But to Marcuse, a "mere change in the form of administration is not yet a qualitative difference."²⁵⁴ Goldmann, together with Serge Mallet, French politician and author of the *The New Working Class* (1963), stood against these analyses, and defended the belief that student movements, in developed countries, presented the first manifestation of a radical historical change that characterizes the demand for new social relationships.

Svetozar Stojanović, a member of the Praxis circle from Belgrade, presented a paper on the "Prospect of Socialist Revolution in the Present Time" within the sub-theme "Revolution Today." From the content of Stojanović's presentation, it is possible to deduce that the invasion of Prague already happened, but perhaps more importantly for Stojanović's interoperation—the student demonstrations across Yugoslavia also happened. Interestingly, Stojanović did not reflect on the student protests in his presentation. Instead, he quoted Sartre's magazine *Les temps modernes*, which, in an article written for the May–June number of 1968, stated that "[in] the future, we will know that socialist revolution is not impossible in one country of Western Europe, perhaps not even in two or three!"²⁵⁵ He interpreted this by arguing that the post-Prague 1968 situation represents on the one hand "desperation, but at the same time it inspires big hopes."²⁵⁶ He observed that the Czech case put all the Marxists against the wall—hence he called on the Marxist thinkers "to

²⁵⁴ Herbert Marcuse, "The Realm of Freedom and the Realm of Necessity: A Reconsideration," 25.

²⁵⁵ Svetozar Stojanović, "Prospect of Socialist Revolution in the Present Time," *Praxis* no.1–2 (1969): 199.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

disclose the etatist myth of socialism, or to helplessly run in circles asking ourselves how is that [the invasion of a socialist state by other socialist states] in socialism possible?”²⁵⁷ To Stojanović, the Czechoslovak crisis helped subvert the inadequate formula concerning the “crisis of socialism” for it lost its relevance because “we speak about the system that constantly gives births to crises,”²⁵⁸ and moreover the idea of socialism with “heavy deformations” also lost its grip, for “there are so many of them [deformations] that they already had to transform themselves into a new quality.”²⁵⁹

Clearly the experience of Yugoslav student movements was a part of his reflections. After all, the crisis in Yugoslavia was tangible—social and economic dissatisfaction of Yugoslav societies, which I mentioned spoke of in the first chapter. Moreover, Ljubomir Tadić, Mihailo Marković, close associates with Praxis, spoke to the students in May the same year. Ljubomir Tadić proclaimed the need to “revive the political activity among the students, adding that the demands for the university reforms are just a step towards a reform of the whole society.”²⁶⁰

Student protests in Yugoslavia did not aim to dismantle socialism, neither did Stojanović’s analysis go in that direction. To Stojanović, Czechoslovakia had objective conditions for the victory of a genuine socialism. He compared it to Yugoslavia, and claimed that Czechoslovakia had much better preconditions for a humanist socialism, since it “is a developed industrial country with a developed culture and strong democratic traditional with which it aimed to establish a creative-critical continuity.”²⁶¹ Stojanović assessed that Czechoslovakia could provide an example of socialism for the developed countries, and that the occupation will make the struggle more difficult in the West for the so-called democratic path into socialism.²⁶² Prior to the Prague Spring, argued Stojanović, Yugoslavia had the “monopoly” on the “socialist avant-garde in Europe” while Czechoslovakia from January 1968 opened up the possibility of cooperation but also competition with Yugoslavia in initiating revolutionary changes.²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 191.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavija i svijet, 1968*, 112.

²⁶¹ Svetozar Stojanović, “Prospect of Socialist Revolution in the Present Time,” *Praxis* no.1–2 (1969): 193.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

Danko Grlić, in his essay “Marginalia with Czechoslovakia and New Tendencies in Socialism,” clearly stated that the consequences of Prague are responsible for the difficulties in discussing the meaning of what constitutes “new tendencies in socialism.” If “Czechoslovakia was thought to be a progressive and new tendency that emerged on the political horizon and was then forcefully stopped, he wonders how we are to understand today’s socialism?”²⁶⁴ His question, I believe, captures the shared feeling of ambiguity and disbelief that struck in the moment of the Prague invasion. That is to say, this event forced the critical intellectuals of generally “Left” persuasions to rethink with more skepticism about what socialism really meant. It is beyond doubt that the philosophers gathered at Korčula argued envisioned socialism to be a humanist socialism, which, to Grlić, had real chances to be achieved in Czechoslovakia, and also in Yugoslavia. The “new tendencies in socialism” specifically meant the humanist tendencies in socialism. In the event that stifled these hopes and understandings of the notion of socialism, in Grlić’s mind, it became impossible to understand “what today’s socialism means”; and hence, it becomes more useful to speak of socialism not in terms of one universal project, but in terms of a type—“the one that is propagated by USSR or Czechoslovakia.”²⁶⁵ One could wonder why Grlić omitted the example of Yugoslav socialism.

Why this ambiguity? His perspective was informed by the entry of the troops who claimed that contra-revolution led by the communist party of Czechoslovakia which was threatening the real socialist revolution. To Grlić, as it was to many participants at Korčula, the reverse was the case—the genuine and humane revolution was threatening contra-revolution that had been reigning for years in the countries of the Eastern Bloc. In addition, Grlić’s text emphasized that Marxist terminology had become increasingly muddled and ambiguous by the invasion of Prague. He argued that many things are being done in the name of the revolution, socialism, and Marx, “which are hundreds of miles far, not only from Marx, socialism, but from

²⁶⁴ Danko Grlić, “Marginalije uz Čehoslovačku i nove tendencije u socijalizmu [Marginalia with Czechoslovakia and New Tendencies in Socialism],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1969): 316.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

any pre-Marxian ideas, democratic pre-socialist ideas.”²⁶⁶ Thus Grlić emphasized the need to theoretically struggle against such misuses of Marxist theory.

Additionally, what seems to be the case is that Grlić’s worry about the drama which was taking part in Czechoslovakia at the time of his lecture, and which he regarded as being the most difficult drama of socialism in the history, was informed by simultaneously local and global concerns—and this was where the theme of internationalization of socialism loomed large. That is, he regarded 1968 as an important year for socialism as it allowed for the possibilities of socialism to develop into something new and different from what it had signified before. But linked with this conceptual change of the meaning of socialism, Grlić spoke of the need to “meddle into the internal affairs” of the South African Union and Czechoslovakia, and other countries in order to actively engage for the true initiation of humanist and revolutionary movement...²⁶⁷ The other side of Grlić’s concern, and this view was shared by many participants, was that the Czechoslovak case was subversive not simply for the USSR but also for the right-wing movements, because it also proved that democracy could well be linked with the genuine socialism. Put it differently, it was impossible to place the case of Czechoslovakia, which Grlić described as creative-humanist Marxism, in the same basket with the dogmatic-Stalinist type.²⁶⁸ It was an example that contradicted right-wing claims about socialism—that it is totalitarian, a reign of terror, and a destruction of everything individual—whereby Marxism is identified as an ideology of inhumane conditions.²⁶⁹ That is, the Prague Spring made it difficult to criticize socialism on a more global scale, for the very reason that the Czechoslovakia aimed at redefining the very understanding of socialism. Czechoslovakia and the Prague Spring “rescued” socialism from being equalized with Stalinism and totalitarianism, as this had often been the case. The events of August 1968, however, dispersed such positive views of socialism.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 319.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 323.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 320.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Such an analysis of August 1968 allowed Grlić to draw a conclusion arguing that the events in 1968 (that is, the student movements across the globe, Prague Spring and finally the invasion of Prague), although on the surface seemingly different in content and form, disclosed that the “new tendencies in socialism which are arising in the East and West are not all too different.”²⁷⁰ Instead of being divided and fragmented, 1968 to Grlić showed that the world was becoming increasingly unified, more than it ever was. The student movements, he said, although they did not include on their flags the name of Dubček (as they did Lenin, Che Guevara, and Mao) still objectively acted from the position of a non-institutional, free, and self-managing socialism.²⁷¹

Finally, unlike the majority of the now-known interpretations of 1968 in Czechoslovakia, this socialist humanist experience that tragically ended, Grlić maintained, will retain its importance and significance for the whole democratic Left. The immediate proximity with the event aligned his position as one of hope and belief that genuine socialism is still possible to reach: “Hope is now needed more than ever.”²⁷² To him, and possibly other Praxis philosophers, as tragic as the Czechoslovak case was, it also had its bright side—it would never be erased from history.²⁷³ And precisely the experience of the Prague Spring and its humane idea of socialism would, in Grlić’s mind, persist and so trigger important conditions for the internationalization of socialism in the future.

But the same experience triggered different opinions and conceptualizations. Namely, in the same number, *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1969), Arnold Künzli, philosopher and a radical democrat from Basel, took the event of Prague in order to argue for the irrelevance of Marx’s theory, specifically his conceptualization of revolution and his understanding of man. To Künzli, the fact that the Soviets entered Prague confirmed the inadequacy of Marx’s theory of revolution, namely that changes in relations of production will transform man. He bitterly asked: “Were these Marx’s New Men who were in the Soviet tanks that entered Czechoslovakia?” He goes on and says: “And if

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 323–4.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 324.

²⁷² Ibid., 324.

²⁷³ Ibid.

anyone claims that fifty years is too short of a time to reach this transformation in man, who could manage to justify such a belief with the newest lies of Soviet propaganda and the shootings in Prague in his ears?”²⁷⁴

Yet, Künzli’s argument is not an argument against socialism as such. The experience of Prague helped him to formulate a criticism of the henceforth, in his eyes, naively utopian socialism. He claims that this event confirmed that it is high time that socialism disavows its destructive dialectical thinking and philosophizing about the creative power of negation, and ought to start, he says, just like they tried in Czechoslovakia, to render a new and realistic model of socialist society such that it also does not transfer itself into capitalism.²⁷⁵

Künzli’s text, similarly to that of Grlić, shows the intrinsic links of the events of 1968 through which these Marxist intellectuals formulated their positions. That is, Künzli referred to the previously unthought-of scenario of student riots in developed states such as France, which almost “led to a revolution.”²⁷⁶ Yet his overall analysis of the events in Paris are negative. He argued “One ought not to interpret the recent events in France so optimistically”:

Not only had the party that calls itself Marxist acted pronouncedly in a counterrevolutionary manner, but even worse, it happened precisely when it was expected: because the Left did not offer any constructive alternative, and the modern, differentiated industrial country, after three weeks of general strike, needs order, it easily attracted the majority of people to side with the only establishment that was at hand, that is, the already existing one.²⁷⁷

Yet, Mihailo Marković interpreted these events in Paris in the most positive manner, claiming that they managed to prove to the intellectuals that it was too early to disregard the working class as still capable of revolutionary action in the West. That is, the student movements acted as catalysts which managed to gain “consciousness” despite the wealth and good life of their developed countries. But, to Künzli, the experience of both Prague and Paris allows for the conclusion that

²⁷⁴ Arnold Künzli, “Protiv Parsifal-socijalizma [Against Parisfal socialism],” *Praxis* no. 1–2 (1969): 262.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 266.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 265.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 267.

Marx's model of revolution does not match the realities. After the experience of the invasion of Prague, it became obvious that the classical model of revolution as imagined by Marx was already shattered by the October Revolution. The utopias and ideas about the Kingdom of Freedom, or New Man, became simply irrelevant and empty formulas that cannot offer any constructive position for the Left.²⁷⁸ Künzli proposed that socialists ought to eliminate the notion of revolution and instead talk about "radical democratization."

This notion, which would replace the outdated concept of revolution, would presuppose different processes in different contexts. That is, in the West, the notion of radical democratization would mean the implementation and expansion of the democratic self-management in the economic process. To Künzli, this would ultimately mean the annihilation of the private disposal of capital on the one hand, and it will keep the democratic political structures as well as civic freedoms, on the other. But in the East, "radical democratization" would entail something else. It would presuppose the introduction of the democratic political structures, while social self-management and socialist economic processes would be preserved. In the Eastern context, Künzli added, "precisely this was tried in Czechoslovakia."²⁷⁹

Therefore, what Künzli argued for is, in his words, a pragmatic and immediate grasp on the realities at hand. He references Marcuse's presentation which began with the motto coming from Sorbonne: "Be realists / Demand the impossible!" and clearly breaks with what he sees as utopian thinking by claiming "*Soyons réalistes, demandons enfin—mais radicalement—le possible!*"²⁸⁰

In the following *Praxis*, no.3–4, in the section entitled "Discussions," the editors published "A reply to Arnold Künzli," a text in which Nenning responded to Künzli's presentation in Korčula in 1968. Nenning disagreed with Künzli's claim that the Left ought to erase the notion of revolution as it cannot serve the Left in talking about the contemporary issues which face both the developing Eastern bloc and the developed West. His reply is: "My apologies, but I am afraid that the new

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 268.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 269. "Let's be realists, let's demand finally and radically, the possible!."

revolution would not care for such a demand [that is, to remove the concept of revolution from the “language” of the Left] (*applause*).²⁸¹ Put differently, Nenning believed that the “new” revolution cannot be captured with the categories of the old one, thereby disclosing the recognition of the need to historicize the Marxian concept of revolution. At the same time, Nenning questions the possibility of resistance in modern society, and so he also points to the weakness even of this newly emerging revolution that swept Europe and the rest of the world. Specifically, he metaphorically explained his position: “I think society built rubber walls against which it is impossible to strike—maybe you, here in Yugoslavia, did not yet arrive at these rubber walls against which you are striking, but in our society it is like that: you can discuss, write, read, demonstrate, whatever you want, in real life nothing changes.”²⁸² Out of this seemingly no-way-out situation, Nenning proposed a solution. His solution is diametrically opposed to that of Künzli—instead of erasing the notion of revolution, he wants the “new generation to improve and revolutionize revolution.”²⁸³

In parallel, the reason why the Yugoslavs did not mention the case of the student movements in Yugoslavia, and commented on them, could be the reason that they saw Prague as the most crucial damage to the prospects of socialism. Yet it is hard to believe that the student protests, in which some of the individuals associated with *Praxis* were directly involved, was not a part of their thinking. Yet the incident that occurred at Korčula Summer School is enough of a reason to be cautious in their open remarks. That is, during the night, the group of students led by Šime Vranić, painted the medieval walls of Korčula in red with the communist paroles, such was *Marx* and *Communist Youth* [Komunistička Omladina]. According to Milan Kangrga, “the whole town was against us [Praxis]...and the local authorities told us that they will cancel the hospitality and that they will not allow any illegal activities.”²⁸⁴ To Kangrga’s memory, the youth accused the

²⁸¹ Günther Nenning, “Odgovor Arnoldu Künzliju [A reply to Arnold Künzli],” *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1969): 602.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 602–3.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 603.

²⁸⁴ Nebojša Popov, *Sloboda i nasilje*, 55.

Praxis philosophers gathered at Korčula to be simply “acting revolutionaries.”²⁸⁵ But the philosophers around the Praxis circle, including Nebojša Popov from Belgrade, regarded that student action as vandalism.²⁸⁶

Gerson S. Sher wrote that in the period after 1968 the presence of Marxists from other countries of Eastern Europe “dropped sharply, but this was more than compensated for by increased participation of Yugoslavs, Western Europeans, and Americans, including increasing number of students.”²⁸⁷ Yet what also seemed to have changed, was not only the decreased attendance of the intellectuals from Eastern Europe, but also the very nature of the discussion at the Korčula Summer School. After the collapse of the Paris protests, the appeasement of student demands in Yugoslavia, and the stark political failure of the Polish case—above all the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968—the revolutionary prospects across Europe dramatically diminished. From the international Marxist Humanist perspective, positions become more rigid and thus not open to negotiation as they were before.

That in the period immediately after 1968, the plurality of voices and ideas, seen as defining the critical edge of the rekindled, critical, Marxist thought, was not regarded as positive by all the participants. Arnold Künzli, a philosopher who was a regular participants at the Korčula Summer School, in his minutes, observed that the Korčula Summer School in 1968 served as “a good mirror of the divergences that started to be sharper and deeper on the Left.”²⁸⁸ While Korčula Summer School had always been defined by the completely free discussions, Künzli observed that the 1969 sessions were characterized by a radically expanded spectrum of divergent thinking as well as more conflictual dialogues among the Leftists gathered at the Korčula Summer School. As Künzli reported, “not only that the old left was challenged by the new trends, but within the very New Left there were the signs of quarrel.”²⁸⁹ Such impression, allowed Künzli to conclude that the

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*, 55.

²⁸⁸ Arnold Künzli, “Sa letnje škole jugoslovenskih marksista na Korčuli [From the Yugoslav Marxists’ Summer School at Korčula],” *Praxis* no. 5–6 (1969): 889.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

Korčula Summer School in 1969 “once more showed the crucial difference between the Eastern and Western New Left thought.”²⁹⁰ The reason for the conceptual divergences, as Künzli observed, was that Western Marxism lacked first-hand experience with Stalinism. The New Left in the West saw only fallacies and deformations of democracy and capitalism.²⁹¹ Therefore, the struggles of the New Left in the West were directed towards a practical activism and a more radical theoretical dogmatism.²⁹² The Western Marxists would without hesitation deny the values that existed in the West—for instance, the civil society and civil liberties. At the same time, the New Left on the East, having experienced Stalinism and etatism, saw this type of socialism as a perverted kind of socialism that denied values of the rights which were fought and won in the civil revolution.²⁹³ Hence, the New Left in the East strove to revive those values and to link them with the democratic freedoms and the respect for the individual. The same account was given János Kis, György Bence, and György Márkus in the quotation in the second chapter. It should be added that Yugoslavs and their approach to socialism was also attacked. Namely, the Yugoslav Praxis philosophers argued that socialist practice represents “the attempt to prove that the marriage between socialism and democracy is not a misalliance.”²⁹⁴ Künzli reported that after explaining the possibility of linking socialism and democracy Danko Grlić was challenged by a German student who replied: “such practice is an empty practicism.”²⁹⁵

Finally, in this chapter, I reflected on the moment in 1968 by interpreting it as an impetus of international intellectual exchange, while realigning the place of discussions about the events in Prague from cities (Paris, West Berlin, Berkley, Belgrade, Budapest, etc.) to the small Dalmatian island of Korčula. My interest is to contextualize the interactions between intellectuals by tying them to the specific circumstance of attending the Korčula Summer School and hearing the news about the invasion of Czechoslovakia, but specifically Prague, by Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, East

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 891.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 890.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

German, and Bulgarian forces. What appears to be the case is that the philosophers while aspiring to the universal language of socialism, often spoke from their own contextual positions, thereby emphasizing the different contexts from which they were stemming. In 1970, Veljko Cvjetičanin, during his lecture at the Korčula Summer School, reflected on the diversity in the understanding of the meaning of socialism. He argued that,

Today, there exists a couple of empirical alternatives which are regarded as socialist: Russian and Chinese model, which are both etatistic and bureaucratic. Self-managing model of socialism which, at least here, [in Yugoslavia] is reviving individual and group behavior which is in accord with egoistic motives. And finally, model of socialism of the communist parties in the West which advocates the return to Marx and classical Marxism. Concerning this model, there is a danger that it is impossible to integrate many needed new ideas on the old theoretical basics.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Veljko Cvjetičanin, "Nekoliko teza o Lenjinu u suvremenim uvjetima socijalizma, [A few theses about Lenin in the contemporary conditions of socialism]," *Praxis* no. 5–6 (1970): 979.

Conclusion

Ferenc Fehér and Ágnes Heller, Marxist philosophers from Hungary, published a study entitled *Eastern Left, Western Left* in 1987. In the introduction, they posed these questions:

What kind of relationship exists, if any at all, between the political forces in the “West” and the “East” that can be called, and call themselves, leftist? Is there a dialogue, or even an alliance, between them? Is this relationship characterized by a reciprocal solidarity or, on the contrary, a lack of comprehension for each other’s respective values, interests and strategies?²⁹⁷

Inspired by such questions, this thesis aimed to portray 1968 as a moment of both hope and disillusion. While the philosophers aspired towards an international Marxist dialogue and towards the prospects of an international socialism, 1968 simultaneously emphasized the difficulties in achieving such a goal for the very reason that the intellectuals from the East, West, and Yugoslavia differed in their conceptual language. The participants continuously emphasized that the question of what is socialism or capitalism, humanism, and alienation, cannot be asked in an abstract manner. That is, these notions can only make sense within concrete social structures and conditions.

The intention of my thesis was to focus on the dialogues that existed and how they played out in the Korčula Summer School and on the pages of *Praxis*, introduced in the first research chapter. The idea was to read these dialogues on their own terms, but also to place them within a wider socio-political context of Yugoslavia, its international embeddedness, and to highlight the complexities of how these intellectuals interpreted the meaning of socialism and their own roles as intellectuals. Consequently, the themes that emerged in the texts solidified around the project to internationalize socialism. The second chapter dealt with the discussions in *Praxis* in 1967 and explained the need among the intellectuals to polish, refine, and to clarify the concepts used by Marxists coming from different contexts. Further, in 1967 the internationalization of socialism

²⁹⁷ Ágnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, *Eastern Left, Western Left: Totalitarianism, Freedom and Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 2.

meant to internationalize self-managing socialism as a context-dependent phenomenon, not just socialism in the abstract.

The third chapter aimed to present deeper challenges of Marxist Humanist terminology as well as the difficulty of negotiating with the very contexts from which the presenters at Korčula came. The importance of the “Eastern,” “Western,” or “Yugoslav” experiences became more dominant than was the case in previous years. 1968 thus presented a point in which these differences *could* have dissolved, as Danko Grlić’s text showed, yet they did not. Moreover, Yugoslavia’s position as mediator between East and West was beginning to be challenged and then became a *sui generis* case in the following years, moving away from East or West altogether.

The legacy of Marxist Humanism in the former Yugoslavia is therefore heavily disputed in contemporary historiographies of the former republics. The underlying universalist character of Marxist Humanism’s social-democratic tendencies in the 1960s seemed to create an intellectual defense against “ethno-centrism, every stressing of one’s own social group or nation at someone else’s cost.”²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, by the end of 1980s and at the beginning of 1990s, some fifteen years after *Praxis* had been shut down in 1974, and in the context of the breakdown of Yugoslavia, Mira Bogdanović points out that the Praxis circle “practically overnight turned coats” and “turned into nationalists and/or liberals.”²⁹⁹

In 1986, an ideological shift among Serbian communists was marked by the so-called SANU Memorandum, a nationalist political manifesto, and the rise of a new political faction around Slobodan Milošević within the League of Communists of Serbia. It is also well known that Mihailo Marković, one of the most prolific and internationally-renowned Praxis members, propagated Serbian nationalism from the middle of the 1980s onward. He co-authored the “Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts”³⁰⁰ in 1986, which according to many

²⁹⁸ Rudi Supek, “Some contradictions and insufficiencies of Yugoslav self-managing socialism,” in eds. Mihailo Marković, Gajo Petrović, eds., *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Netherlands: Springer, 1979), 270.

²⁹⁹ Mira Bogdanović, “The Rift in the Praxis Group: Between Nationalism and Liberalism,” *Critique* 43 no.3–4 (2015): 461.

³⁰⁰ Also known as the SANU Memorandum.

stirred up Serbian nationalism. Moreover, from 1990 to 1992, Marković was the Vice-President of Slobodan Milošević's Serbian Socialist Party (SPS). A minority, mainly in Zagreb stayed by their Marxist Humanist convictions. As Laura Sector writes, "The fault lines along which not only *Praxis* but the Yugoslav nation would later splinter were invisible to the group's foreign admirers back in the 1960s."³⁰¹

As Hannes Grandits and Holm Sundhaussen observe, when dealing with the history of a country which no longer exists, it is often the case that the most important features that define the analysis are precisely those which explain (apparently) why the country no longer exists.³⁰² In the case of Yugoslavia, in the post-1990s, the focus had clearly been on the nature of ethno-nationalism, and the economic crisis as an outcome, among many other factors, of self-management. The bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia at the very end of the Cold War, as Vladimir Unkovski-Korica notes, was "accompanied by the claim that there is no alternative to liberal democracy and market capitalism."³⁰³ Hence, given teleological interpretations, it is possible to claim that the 1968 student movements marked the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia after 1989.

Given such a narrative, we would interpret the Yugoslav 1968 as an inception of a new critical sensitivity that marked the beginning of the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia on the ethnic and religious basis. Or we could read it "backward," arguing that because Yugoslavia disintegrated violently, critical thought in 1960s could not be affirmative in contributing to the translation from socialism into democracy, not even to speak about the possibilities of some type of existing socialism, perhaps propagated by *Praxis*. Such interpretations of the role of critical thought—formulated from the Marxists positions—is deemed as being futile from the outset. While such interpretations can be well argued, they can also be easily disputed for the very reason

³⁰¹ Laura Sector, "Testaments Betrayed," *Linguafranca: The Review of Academic Life*, no. 6 (1999): 1.

³⁰² Hannes Grandits, Holm Sundhaussen, "Jugoslawien in den 1960er Jahren: wieder einen teleologischen Forschungszugang [Yugoslavia in 1960s: Yet Another Teleological Research]" in *Jugoslawien in den 1960er Jahren. Auf dem Weg zu einem (a)normalen Staat?* [Yugoslavia in 1960s. Towards (a)normal State] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 3.

³⁰³ Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, "Self-management, Development and Debt: The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Experiment," in eds. Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks, *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia*, (Verso: London, 2015).

that it appears, as much as the evidences may show, that the critical thought brought about violence and wars. To that end, this thesis aimed to show the trouble of approaching an event such as 1968 as a turning point and from the transnational perspective that bases itself on reading history “backward.” The fact that the Yugoslav case is often omitted in the literature on 1968 is due clearly to the fact that the Yugoslav historiography is still unsure how to put the critical thought of *Praxis* in a clean, logical narrative. However, I would end that such positivist aims clearly lead into a deadlock which either forces the historian to “forget” important aspects of history—e.g. Praxis and their struggles and demands within the socialist Yugoslavia, or to make counter-intuitive conclusions—that they brought about the demise of Yugoslavia.

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