

MARXIST HUMANISM AND THE “HUMAN BEING” IN TIMES OF CRISIS

A DISSERTATION

In

HISTORY

By

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Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no material accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.¹

¹ Parts of the Introduction, Chapter II and Chapter III have been based on my published articles: Una Blagojević, "Phenomenology and existentialism in dialogue with Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s," *Studies in East European Thought* 75 No. 3 (232): 417-436 and Una Blagojević, "The Cunning of Crisis and the Yugoslav Marxist Revisionists," in *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (1st ed.; London: Routledge, 2024), and on the article published during my Junior Fellowship position at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Una Blagojević, *Reconstructing Marxist Humanism(s) in Yugoslavia*, *IWMPost*. Accessed 29.December 2024: <https://www.iwm.at/publication/iwmpost-article/reconstructing-marxist-humanisms-in-yugoslavia>.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Una Blagojević, candidate for the PhD degree in Comparative History declare herewith that the present thesis titled “Marxist Humanism and the ‘Human Being’ in Times of Crisis” is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 11 June 2025

Una Blagojević

Abstract

This dissertation explores the intellectual development of Yugoslav Marxist humanists through the concept of crisis, in order to understand how the ethnonationalist political stances of some of these intellectuals aligned with the humanist philosophical perspectives they simultaneously advanced, particularly in relation to their conception of human being. Specifically, the dissertation addresses the swift shift from universalist, humanist positions—defending civic and human rights—towards particularistic, nationalist demands and integral ethnonationalism. This alleged paradox is the main topic of this dissertation: Why did the internationally connected and humanist-oriented intellectuals around the journal Praxis, who were deeply concerned with human dignity, adopt integral ethnonationalist philosophical and political positions? What was their intellectual path to developing a language of human rights, and how did they address the issue of ‘human being’ in their discourses?

In addressing these questions, the contribution of this dissertation is threefold. On the most general level, 1) it decenters the notion of humanism from the circle of philosophers and sociologists and expands the framework of analysis of Marxism in postwar Yugoslavia. Furthermore, (2) it contributes to the emerging literature that historicizes and contextualizes human rights discourse beyond Western Europe, and beyond liberal visions of human rights visions of human rights by examining the synthetics of Marxist, personalist, and existentialist approach to ‘human.’ Finally (3), the dissertation is a genealogy of Marxist humanism in socialist Yugoslavia via the concept of crisis.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters: Chapter I, ‘The Rights of ‘Human Being’ in Socialist Yugoslavia,’ serves as an introductory chapter discussing how the language of rights of human beings was at the core of the Yugoslav critique of Stalinism. Chapter II, ‘Crisis of Marxist Philosophy and the Emergence of Different Epistemologies of Human Rights,’

discusses the philosophical aspects of ‘human being’ and the emerging divergences between Yugoslav official interpretations of Marxism and the critical Marxists intellectuals around the journal *Praxis*. Chapter III, ‘Culture in Crisis: Intellectual and Political Action in the 1960s,’ thematizes the ambiguity of internationalism and national belonging found among Marxist humanists. Chapter IV: ‘Crisis of Society: Contrast Between the Principles and Reality’ discusses the new phase in the contestations concerning ‘humanism’ with student movements in Yugoslavia being seen as announcing new values and ‘genuine’ humanism in the Yugoslav society in contrast to social stagnation. The last chapter, Chapter V, ‘Historicization of the Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism, Reexaminations and ‘Demise of Humanism’’ looks at the theoretical and political challenges faced by the intellectuals, including antihumanism.

As a whole, the dissertation addresses contestations of the humanist approaches to Marxism arising from the crisis of Marxist philosophy, which led to the diversity of interpretations of humanism and the concept of ‘human being’. In the context of crisis discourses and the multi-ethnic, multi-national makeup of socialist Yugoslavia, these interpretations could lend themselves to ethnonational political and philosophical positions. These were not merely theoretical inconsistencies, but rather they aligned closely with the Marxist humanist language as developed by the circle of *Praxis* intellectuals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Abstract</i>	1
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	3
<i>Table of Contents</i>	6
<i>Introduction:</i>	9
Historiography	19
New histories of human rights	19
The Yugoslav Praxis Circle and Marxist Humanism	22
Framework, method, and sources	28
Crisis Discourses	28
The Intellectual History of Marxist Humanism	31
Note on Sources	34
Outline of the Chapters	37
Chapter I: The Rights of the ‘Human Being’ in Socialist Yugoslavia	39
Responses to the Crisis: Self-determination and self-government encompassing human rights	41
Protecting the rights of man [čovjek]/human rights in Yugoslavia: between the West and the East	48
Self-management and socialist democracy	55

The new Constitution as an expression of the humanist principles of socialist Yugoslavia	60
Freedom of thought, “struggle of opinion,” and the early contestations	66
Conclusions	78
<i>Chapter II: Crisis of Marxist Philosophy and the Emergence of Different Epistemologies of Human Rights</i>	<i>80</i>
Developing a theory of self-government and worker’s dignity	88
Spiritual Crisis and the Idea of Human Perfectibility: Socialism is Personalism	99
Crisis of European Humanity: Phenomenological and Existentialist Themes.....	112
The Ideology of the Scientific and Technological Revolution.....	120
Conclusion.....	133
<i>Chapter III: Culture in Crisis: Intellectual and Political Action in the 1960s</i>	<i>136</i>
Internationalist/local approaches to Marxism: Korčula Summer School as a space of international encounters	141
Human rights in the constitution of 1963 and the ‘indirect’ consequences of the Yugoslav national question crisis	157
Internationalism and national belonging: humanist ambiguities	165
The Crisis of Philosophy: Intelligentsia in socialism and its role in solving of the ‘cultural crisis’: “the vocation of the intellectuals is a critique”	180
Conclusion.....	188
<i>Chapter IV: The Crisis of Society: Contrast Between the Principles and the Reality</i>	<i>189</i>
A New Phase in <i>Praxis</i> : Critique of Bureaucracy, Technocratism, and ‘Traditional’ Political Organizing	191

Youth and the Student Movements in the World: Humanism and New Values as a Response to Social Stagnations.....	202
1968 in Yugoslavia: The Demand for Constitutionally Granted (Human) Rights	215
“It came down to the question: Where next?”: Post-1968 reflections among the philosophers and their decision for organized engagement	221
Conclusion.....	226
 <i>Chapter V: Historicization of the Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism, Reexaminations and ‘Demise of Humanism’</i>	 227
Curtailing freedoms, mismanagement of self-government: crisis of the system and human rights in danger.....	232
Reexaminations: the end of ideals or of ideology? Discussions on liberalism and communism	252
New Left/Old Left in the 1970s: Different Visions of Humanism	271
The demise of a human being?: Antihumanism on the rise and the weakening of intellectual references.....	283
Conclusion.....	290
 <i>Conclusion: Human Being in Crisis—Marxist Humanism with a ‘Nationalist Face’....</i>	 292
<i>Bibliography</i>	305
Archival Sources	305
Primary Sources	305
Secondary Sources	316

Introduction:²

In her 1999 article “Testaments Betrayed,” American journalist Laura Secor reflected on the surprise among many Western academics at the rapid shifts in the positions of critical Marxist intellectuals from Yugoslavia, in the context of the country’s violent breakup in the 1990s. She asked: “Who could have known that one of the *Praxis* philosophers would later become vice president of (Slobodan) Milošević’s party—and its chief ideologue during the Bosnian war?” This question referred to the Marxist intellectuals associated with the Yugoslav philosophical journal *Praxis* (1964–1974), who also organized the international Korčula Summer School, held annually between 1963 and 1974 on the Dalmatian island. The school was attended by many prominent intellectuals of the ‘New Left,’ including Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Lucien Goldmann, and Henri Lefebvre, among others.

During the decade when they published *Praxis*, these intellectuals had been vocal in their promotion of critical and anti-dogmatic approaches to Marxist theory while stressing the importance of personal autonomy, dignity, morality, freedom, and the creativity of human beings. At their summer school on the island in the Dalmatian Adriatic, they gathered an international community of philosophers and sociologists in the context of Cold War international politics. By 1984, these intellectuals organized the *Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Expression* that proposed a plan for the establishment of the rule of law in Yugoslavia, a similar action to that found in other socialist countries at the time. In their agenda, they also argued for the importance of respect for civil and human rights, drawing their frustration from the situation in the province of Kosovo, where according to them, “there was a threat to elementary personal security and integrity.” More specifically, in the 1980s, they

² The first part of the introduction was published in a short essay written for the Institute for Human Sciences. Una Blagojević, “Reconstructing Marxist Humanism(s) in Yugoslavia”, IWMPost, No. 13 Spring/Summer 2013. <https://www.iwm.at/publication/iwmpost-article/reconstructing-marxist-humanisms-in-yugoslavia>. Accessed November, 4, 2024.

criticized the Yugoslav socialist system for not protecting the human rights of Serbians living in Kosovo. Some of the *Praxis* members, including Mihailo Marković, saw themselves as defenders of human rights, and not as nationalists, while at the same time employing racialized civilizational hierarchies claiming that Yugoslav integration had been made impossible due to the civilizational differences between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens.³ Like intellectuals in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, the intellectuals also proposed the democratization of the Yugoslav socialist system as the only way to exit the political, economic, and moral crisis that had encompassed Yugoslav society. For the Serbian intellectuals, however, democratization mainly involved a return to the previous stage of Yugoslav socialism and undoing the confederation established in 1974, in which Kosovo and Vojvodina, previously autonomous parts of Serbia, gained similar rights to the full-fledged republics.

By the 1980s, most of the Belgrade *Praxis* members had already moved from universalist and humanist intellectual positions to (ethno)nationalist and particularistic intellectual and political positions. Marxist thinkers who had been calling for the disintegration of the state throughout the 1960s (that is, for surpassing the state as an oppressive organization and replacing it with self-governing bodies) were by the 1980s arguing in favor of a strong Serbian state as recourse against the humiliation and crisis of a specifically Serbian “national spirit.” In addition, these intellectuals argued that the Yugoslav Communist Party (League of Communists of Yugoslavia, LCY) had never managed to free itself from the logic of Bolshevism, which they saw as being inherently disrespectful of human rights.⁴

³ Kosta Mihailović, “Razgovor o Kosovu [Conversations about Kosovo],” *Theoria: časopis Filozofskog društva Srbije*, No.1-2 (1987):146.

⁴ Mihailo Marković, “Odnos između političkih i socijalno-ekonomskih ljudskih prava [The relationship between political and socio-economic human rights],” *Theoria* (1987): 3–13, here 3.

From 1948, expelled from the ‘socialist bloc’ and accused of revisionism and nationalism in the context of the emerging ‘Cold War’ that defined international relations,⁵ the Yugoslav communist leadership argued that it was focused on building peace in international relations and humanist democratic socialism at home, promoted self-determination and world peace at the United Nations, and argued for the inclusion of social rights in the Human Rights chart. In defining their socialist practice (through self-management), the Yugoslavs were also developing a critique of Stalinism, which stood for the crisis of Marxism. Conceptualizing Stalinism as a crisis allowed not only the political leadership but also the intellectuals at universities and institutes across Yugoslavia to argue for the need to rethink and revise Marxism-Leninism in order to fit the current needs of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Yugoslav state. To add yet another layer of analysis, Yugoslavia combined historically different regions at varying levels of development, each with its different historical and cultural genealogies. Following the idea of self-management in the economy and self-determination in politics, the Yugoslav leadership was set on developing a version of Marxism that was in contrast to what they perceived as dogmatic Stalinism. Moreover, in such a context, the Yugoslavs sought an alliance with the Third World; from the 1950s, Yugoslavia became one of the leading members of the Non-Aligned Movement, which would be formally established in Belgrade.⁶ Thus, the importance of a ‘human being’ and the language of ‘rights of man’ in Yugoslavia was shaped by the Yugoslav Communist Party’s expulsion from Cominform in 1948, and the subsequent critical positioning towards the USSR as an oppressive, dogmatic,

⁵ Edvard Kardelj, “Uloga i zadaci socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije u borbi za socijalizam” [The role and tasks of socialist league of the working people of Yugoslavia in their fight for socialism], *Komunist* V, no. 2–3 (1953): 63–119, here 63.

⁶ James M. Robertson, *Mediating Spaces: Literature, Politics, and the Scales of Yugoslav Socialism, 1870–1995, Between* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), 23. See also, Paul Stubbs, ed. *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020) and Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985* (Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

bureaucratic type of socialism that limited Yugoslav autonomy and self-determination in politics, and stifled the free development of human beings in a more theoretical sense.

In showing how the centrality of *čovek*, or a ‘human being’ in Yugoslav self-managing socialism was developed in connection to Yugoslav communists’ claims to self-determination and Yugoslavia’s own path to socialism, the new, post-1948 official discourse of Yugoslav socialist democracy aimed to reframe the liberal understanding of ‘democracy,’ as well as the so-called ‘sham’ of socialist democracy of the Soviet type. This radical shift by the Party towards ‘humanism’ inspired the generation of young philosophers and sociologists born in the 1920s, who participated in the People’s Liberation War, and saw the project of socialism as an emancipation of human beings [*opšteljudska emancipacija*]. However, increasingly from the 1960s onwards, the circle of philosophers and sociologists gathered around the journal *Praxis*, while starting from the positions of the LCY, would gradually move away from Marxist positions towards a synthesis of Marxism, existentialism, personalism, and phenomenology in their approaches to a ‘human.’

In the late 1980s in Serbia, the “heart of the awakening of nationalism was Kosovo.”⁷ The Serbian intellectual opposition in the mid-1980s argued for “Serbian national entitlement to Kosovo,” arguing for the need to curtail the “province’s self-rule, despite Albanian demographic preponderance.”⁸ These critical intellectuals in Yugoslavia, as Jasna Dragović-Soso highlights, had not only failed “to create a genuine alternative to Yugoslavia’s moribund communist system and negotiate a democratic, compromise solution to the country’s complex ‘national question,’ but they had actually set a precedent for the disintegration of the common

⁷ Radina Vučetić, “Kosovo 1989: The (Ab)use of the Kosovo Myth in Media and Popular Culture,” *Comparative Southeast European Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2-3 (2021): 223–243, here 223.

⁸ Radina Vučetić, “Kosovo 1989: The (Ab)use of the Kosovo Myth in Media and Popular Culture,” *Comparative Southeast European Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2-3 (2021): 223–243, here 223.

state.”⁹ In 1986, Belgrade-based *Praxis* member Mihailo Marković—alongside other Serbian intellectuals, most notably Dobrica Ćosić, arguably a key figure in Serbia’s nationalist revival—co-authored the “Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,” or SANU Memorandum, after its abbreviation in Serbian.¹⁰ The SANU Memorandum, as historian Nick Miller observes, used the “most flamboyant nationalist imagery in making its point, which was that Serbs in Kosovo were persecuted not just in normal everyday terms familiar to all Yugoslavs, but in ways that were rooted in historical processes and national essences.”¹¹ Thematizing an all-encompassing crisis that had taken over Yugoslavia, the authors of the Memorandum argued that the political crisis “came close to the critical point of the total destabilization of Yugoslavia,” pointing out that Kosovo is “the most obvious sign.”¹² From the perspective of this critical intellectual opposition, the Serbian emigration from Kosovo stood as a proof of an “inadequate and undemocratic response by the Yugoslav [communist] regime.”¹³ The Memorandum stressed that Yugoslav ideology, which had placed nationality and territoriality as the highest principles, brought about this crisis. For Mihailo Marković, such a position was not an intellectual dissonance, but a continuity of his lifelong Marxist humanist endeavor. Marković also wrote the program for Slobodan Milošević’s Serbian Socialist Party, noting in his memoirs that this was the moment of the self-realization

⁹ Jasna Dragović-Soso, “Intellectuals and the Collapse of Yugoslavia: The End of the Yugoslav Writers' Union,” in Dejan Djokić, ed. *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (London: Hurst & Co), 268–285, here 285.

¹⁰ The intellectual development of Ćosić, Mića Popović, and Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz is comprehensively analyzed in Nick Miller’s *The (Non)Conformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944–1991* (Central European University Press: Budapest, New York, 2007).

¹¹ Nick Miller, “Where was the Serbian Havel?” ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu and Bogdan C. Iacob, *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (CEU Press, 2012), 373.

¹² SANU Memorandum, 1986, 9. Accessed from Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf>. Accessed 15 February 2025. See also, Nenad Stefanov, “Producing and Cracking Kosovo Myths. The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Emergence and Critique of a New Ethnonationalism, 1984–1990,” *Comp. Southeast Europ. Stud.* No. 2-3 (2021): 335–354.

¹³ Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the Nation: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, 115.

of an intellectual and what his colleagues and himself referred to as *praxis*.¹⁴ Marković compared the writing of the program for Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) to Erich Fromm's authorship of the program for the American Socialist Party.¹⁵ Building on the argument by Jasna Dragović-Soso and others who had pointed out that intellectuals created the discourses that led to the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, this dissertation explains the apparent 'turn' by situating its analysis in the recent historiography of human rights.

This alleged paradox is the main topic of this dissertation, which will aim to answer the following questions: Why did these internationally connected, and humanist-oriented intellectuals adopt integral ethnonationalist ideological and political positions? And more specifically, how did Marxist revisionists approach the issue of the "human being" or "man" in their discourse? What was their intellectual path to developing a language of human rights? These questions are mutually intertwined, and they are meant to enhance our understanding of how the ethnonationalist political position of some of these intellectuals fit into the humanist philosophical standpoint that they simultaneously advanced. The dissertation follows the swift turn from universalist, humanist positions and the defense of civil and human rights towards a particularistic, 'national' cause and integral ethnonationalism by some of the transnationally connected critical Marxist intellectuals, who used the language of human rights in the 1980s in order to justify their claims. The focus however is not on the 1980s, as the dissertation is interested in the intellectual developments of the concept of 'human' in the period preceding the radical transformations in the 1980s. The overall argument of this dissertation is that the 'humanism' advanced by these philosophers, in contrast to the official Marxist humanism, was broad enough to accommodate ethnonationalist and particularistic standpoints. This draws on

¹⁴ Mihailo Marković quoted in Latinka Perović, *Dominantna i neželjena elita: Beleške o intelektualnoj i političkoj eliti u Srbiji (XX-XXI vek)* [Dominant and Unwanted Elite: Notes on the Intellectual and Political Elite in Serbia (20th-21st Century)], (Dan Graf: Beograd, 2015), 47.

¹⁵ Mihailo Marković and Božidar Jakšić, "Neobjavljeni intervju-Praxis kritičko mišljenje i delanje," *Filozofija i društvo* 21 No. 1 (2010): 3–16, here 8. Mihailo Marković was also elected for the vice-president of Socialist Party of Serbia in 1990-1992.

the existing literature discussing socialist human rights, in which the language of human rights is seen not as a “linear movement” going towards the clear program of liberal democracy, but as having different meanings for different people. As historian Ned Richardson-Little explains: “for some, it was about rescuing the old utopias; for others, about creating an altogether new utopia; and for others still, human rights were just another strategy for survival.”¹⁶

The contribution of this dissertation is threefold. On the most general level, 1) it decenters the notion of humanism from the circle of philosophers and sociologists and expands the framework of analysis of Marxism in postwar Yugoslavia. Furthermore, (2) it contributes to the emerging literature that historicizes and contextualizes human rights discourse beyond Western Europe, and beyond liberal visions of human rights. Finally (3), the dissertation is a genealogy of Marxist humanism in socialist Yugoslavia via the concept of crisis.

On the most general level, the dissertation decenters the notion of humanism from the circle of philosophers and sociologists around the journal *Praxis* and its affiliated Korčula Summer School and expands the framework of analyses of Marxism in postwar Yugoslavia to a broader network of intellectuals contributing to the language of human rights. The main representatives of critical Marxism or Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia had fought in the National Liberation War (1941–45) and then began their intellectual development tightly linked to the LCY. These intellectuals would consistently argue that Marxism was first and foremost a theory of liberation, where liberation was not seen from an economic or political perspective, in terms of power struggle, but as a “full development of each individual.” Therefore, one of the key findings of the dissertation is that humanism functioned as a broad, umbrella concept shared by diverse actors with different aims and stakes. The dissertation unpacks this humanism, which could, briefly put, drew its intellectual inspiration from classical

¹⁶ Ned Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 265.

Marxist texts (and especially Marx's "Early Works [Rani radovi]"), but also from other philosophies dealing with the human being—for example, personalism and existentialism. As it will be seen in the following chapters, for the Party, humanism served as a way of reorienting itself away from the Soviet Union and of asserting a distinctive Yugoslav path to socialism that cared for a human being and is not oppressive. This version of humanism remained grounded in classical Marxism, with an emphasis on material conditions. For the intellectuals gathered around the journal *Praxis*, humanism provided mainly a way of reintegrating Marxism into the canon of Western European philosophical thought and of supplementing Marxism with contemporary philosophies. While the *Praxis* circle has occupied much of the attention in the historiography as the most well-known representative of the Marxist humanist stream, and has often been contrasted with the 'orthodox' Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later, League of Communists of Yugoslavia), the dissertation shows that the landscape of Marxist humanism was far more diverse than previously acknowledged.

Secondly, and as I explain more in detail in the historiography section, the dissertation fits within the existing and emerging literature on human rights that deconstructs the understanding of human rights as universal, natural, and timeless, as well as it decenters the human rights discourses away from and beyond Western Europe, but also outside liberal traditions. Eetu Vento argues that the history of human rights literature is characterized by conflicting understandings about "who has used the term, when, and what they meant when using it."¹⁷ The divide still exists between those who argue that the proliferation of human rights language came from the West, and those who argue for the need of recognizing the role of non-Western actors in the process of the proliferation of this language.¹⁸

¹⁷ Eetu Vento, "The Global Institutionalization of Human Rights Discourse: A Cross-national Analysis of the Language used in the International Labour Conference during the Cold War," *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* (2024): 1.

¹⁸ Eetu Vento, "The Global Institutionalization of Human Rights Discourse: A Cross-national Analysis of the Language used in the International Labour Conference during the Cold War," *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* (2024): 2.

Following ongoing research in the field that aims to rethink the ‘liberal’ reading of dissident human rights theory, and to highlight the existence of multiple chronologies of human rights discourses, this dissertation focuses on the case of Yugoslavia, and more specifically, establishes a link between critical approaches to Marxism in Yugoslavia and the development of human rights. However, while recent literature mainly focuses on the 1970s as a ‘big bang’ of human rights in history, in particular historian Samuel Moyn’s interpretation, scholars like Steven Jensen and Michal Kopeček argue that the ‘roots’ of human rights had already appeared in the 1960s. By introducing the case of Yugoslavia to the literature of human rights, this dissertation shows the emergence of the language of human rights already in the 1950s, more specifically in the context of Yugoslavia’s expulsion from the Cominform. Moreover, the dissertation dates this development to people who were not taken seriously as actors (whose political commitments were fundamentally anti-fascist and Marxist) in the development of human rights discourse and politics. That is, in contrast to Samuel Moyn’s arguments in his *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, this dissertation argues that the concept of human rights existed well before the 1970s.¹⁹ More importantly, it argues that this concept did not need to ‘wait’ for the universalist ideologies like socialism and anticolonialism to lose their grip—rather, this notion mediated Marxism in Yugoslavia. That is, by introducing the Yugoslav case—situated outside the Soviet bloc and active in the Non-Aligned Movement from the late 1950s—the dissertation adds depth and complexity to these ongoing historiographical debates. By engaging with this literature, the dissertation shows how competing understandings of the human *being* and *humanism* functioned as a central site of conceptual struggle. It argues that humanism in socialist Yugoslavia could encompass, on the one hand, universalist claims—such as world peace and solidarity with humanity as a whole—

¹⁹ Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

and, on the other, be linked to specific socialist practices and political positions. This ambiguity is key to understanding how a seemingly universal discourse could enable both emancipatory and exclusionary projects. In contributing to the ongoing debates and studies of human rights discourses in socialist countries, the dissertation also points out that personalism, existentialism, and phenomenology, while related in their concerns over a ‘being’ or ‘person,’ nevertheless could also have different perspectives and alternative agendas. For Yugoslav *Praxis* intellectuals, these philosophical perspectives were important as they all thematized crisis and thus they could combine them in a way which allowed them to argue for the primacy of a human being (both in theory and in practice) and to thematize the crisis of humanity.

Finally, the *Praxis* intellectuals’ development of human rights language as dissertation suggests, evolved in opposition to the official discourse of human rights, characterized by classical Marxist interpretations. Their insistence that Marxism and Marxist philosophy are in crisis, brought them closer to personalist and anthropological positions that in turn allowed for a larger spectrum of interpretations of human rights, which would also include ethnonationalist positions, something which was more difficult with more ‘orthodox’ Marxist positions that emphasized the materialist interpretation of history. The dissertation also shows that their Marxist positions were becoming increasingly Marxist only by virtue of being critical towards their existing realities.

Which brings me to the final, third contribution that ties the above interventions together, and that is the discourse of crisis and the concept of crisis. ‘Crisis’ is utilized in the dissertation as an umbrella concept to trace the genealogy of Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia. By focusing on the transformation of the emancipatory and humanist language of ‘reinvigorated’ Marxism, the dissertation situates Marxist humanism in the context in which it was articulated and in relation with different articulations, identifying the interlocutors of this political language as well as its shifting horizons of expectation. The split with Stalin was

immensely important for Marxist humanists, as well as the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in 1956. In the understanding of Italian Communist Lucio Lombardo-Radice, this Congress presented a critique of a monolithic understanding of communism, and thus “opened the new historical epoch,” which was “nevertheless, poorly theoretically based.”²⁰ Instead of arguing for theoretical correctness, this dissertation instead replaces it with the concept of “crisis,” which encompasses precisely the sentiment of both the theoretical openness as well as the challenges and uncertainties it brought. The crisis of Marxism was a notion that was introduced by the Party in the wake of 1948 Yugoslav expulsion from the Cominform. For philosophers around the journal *Praxis*, crisis became a main interpretative device and lens through which they developed their theoretical positions. They used crisis in order to develop a new approach to Marxist thought, combining it with other philosophies of crisis, which simultaneously made their theoretical positions unstable. That is, the crisis of philosophy, spirit, and (European) humanity was conceptualized by these intellectuals in different contexts, and they shifted between the general and universalist assessments of this crisis to their own local and situated contexts.

Historiography

New histories of human rights

As explained, this dissertation contributes to the emerging historiography of human rights. As the authors of *Decolonization, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights Politics* explain, the history of human rights shows two-fold tendencies: on the one hand, “a global human rights discourse proclaimed individual rights above and beyond the state. On the other, an older rights language from the French Revolution, bestowed rights inherited primarily

²⁰ Lucio Lombardo-Radice, “Pluralizam u marksističkoj koncepciji [Pluralism in the Marxist Concept],” *Naše teme* (1965): 896.

in national citizenship.”²¹ Historians Ned Richardson-Little, Hella Dietz, and James Mark further show that recent years have seen the historiography on human rights move beyond Western-centered narratives, and thus include the role of Eastern European state socialism, although still marginally. A growing number of scholars have begun to argue that the Eastern Bloc was not simply a region that was passively absorbing the idea of human rights from the West, but a “site where human rights ideas were articulated and internationalized as well as contested.”²² That is, while the region was not simply a passive recipient of the triumph of what Michael Ignatieff called “one global human rights culture,”²³ and as more scholars started complicating the picture of Western-imposed human rights norms, the scholarship on human rights still privileges “the perspective of Western diplomats and activist networks while eliding socialist human rights claims or downplaying their relevance.”²⁴

There are important corrections to this picture. In *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany*, Ned Richardson-Little argues that human rights were used rhetorically in East Germany by both state and civil society actors before the 1970s (and the Helsinki Accords). Indeed, as he claims, the ruling Socialist Unity Party used them as a propaganda tool against West Germany and as a means to build international legitimacy, while East German citizens invoked human rights to demand freedom of movement, expression, and religion. Richardson-Little further explains that historians, instead of approaching the history of human rights solely as the universal struggle for

²¹ Roland Burke, Marco Duranti, and A. Dirk Moses, “Introduction: Human Rights, Empire, and After,” in *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, ed. Petra Goedde, William I. Hitchcock, and Akira Iriye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1.

²² Ned Richardson-Little, Hella Dietz, and James Mark, “New Perspectives on Socialism and Human Rights in East Central Europe since 1945,” *East Central Europe* 46, no. 2–3 (2019): 169. See, Celia Donert, “Whose Utopia? Gender, Ideology and Human Rights at the 1975 World Congress of Women in East Berlin,” in *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, eds. Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

²³ Ned Richardson-Little, Hella Dietz, and James Mark, “New Perspectives on Socialism and Human Rights in East Central Europe since 1945,” *East Central Europe* 46, No. 3 (2019): 170.

²⁴ Richardson-Little, Dietz, and Mark, “New Perspectives on Socialism and Human Rights,” *East Central Europe* 46, No. 3 (2019): 169.

individual freedom, started to rediscover “social and political movements that have challenged or contradicted liberal conceptions of rights.”²⁵ The conclusion of such more recent perspectives is that while human rights “acted as the “lingua franca of global moral thought” in the late twentieth century, it was a language with many dialects—not all of which were mutually intelligible.”²⁶ In looking at the case of the GDR, he argued that before the 1970s, human rights were much more closely connected with the “establishment of national power and the assertion of state sovereignty as part of Afro-Asian demands for decolonization and self-determination.”²⁷ Therefore, as historian Michal Kopeček claims, during the Cold War the socialist countries joined “forces with third world liberation movements,” while they “actively promoted a critique of racism, colonial and segregationist regimes, and the anti-social exploitation of labour by capital.”²⁸ Moreover, human rights inevitably come out in the context of decolonialization, as the “anti-imperial pronouncements, the universalism of human rights blended with calls for a universal principle of international justice.”²⁹

The Yugoslav case adds to this recent scholarship. In its self-legitimization, the Yugoslav Party leadership created an organic connection between self-governing socialism and the unique experience of the Revolution, which had a specifically ‘Yugoslav’ character. As this dissertation argues, the language of human rights in Yugoslavia was intertwined with the national path to socialism, Yugoslav workers’ rights, and the humanist and internationalist approach to Marxism-Leninism, which the Yugoslavs argued had been stifled by Stalin’s socialist practice. The dissertation, however does not focus on the legal discussions concerning human rights but analyses the approach to ‘human’ and ‘humanism’ as a site of competing

²⁵ Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship*, 11.

²⁶ Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship*, 11.

²⁷ Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship*, 29.

²⁸ Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights between Political Identity and Historical Category: Czechoslovakia and East Central Europe in a Global Context,” *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, 4 (2016): 9.

²⁹ Paul Betts, “Rights,” in *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization*, eds. James Mark, Paul Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 190.

conceptualizations. ‘Humanism’ could encompass both the whole of humanity and the instance of world peace but could also be linked to the specific practice of socialism, not least a worker’s self-management that ‘organically’—at least, insofar as theoreticians like Edvard Kardelj would argue—evolved from the specificities of the Yugoslav Revolution. By inquiring into the meaning of ‘human’ and the context in which the critical philosophers developed their Marxist humanist positions, the dissertation contributes to an extent to the emerging human rights literature by showing how the proponents of the universal ideals of emancipation of a human being, regardless of national belonging, swiftly turned towards integral ethnonationalism. Furthermore, the dissertation focuses closely on the 1960s, which had, according to Steven L.B. Jensen, “remained almost a forgotten decade in human rights historiography.”³⁰ The Yugoslav example demonstrates not only that human rights history can be traced to the early period of post-1948 split with the Soviet Union, but also that the concept of human rights mediated Marxism and was often in dialogue with it.

The Yugoslav Praxis Circle and Marxist Humanism

This dissertation is a study of the intellectual history of Marxist Humanism, and as such, it intervenes in the historiography of *Praxis* in specific, and Marxist Humanism in general. There are a few books on the topic that this dissertation engages with. For example, James H. Satterwhite’s *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe* (1992),³¹ Raymond Taras’ edited volume *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* (1992), provide an important overview of the similar developments of Marxist thought in East Central Europe. More importantly, theoretical

³⁰ Steven Jansen, *The Making of International Human Rights: The 1960s, Decolonization, and the Reconstruction of Global Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6. See also, Roland Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

³¹ James H. Satterwhite, *Varieties of Marxist Humanism: Philosophical Revision in Postwar Eastern Europe* (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 1992)

considerations and approaches to Marxist Humanism or critical Marxists, as developed by Michal Kopeček in *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: zrod a počátky marxistického 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), are essential in this study.³² Kopeček approaches the leading figures of Marxist Humanism 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 using framework developed by Kopeček, this dissertation shows that the character of Marxism Humanism in Yugoslavia resulted in multiple, often divergent understandings of central concepts in their political languages (e.g., human). Drawing on the important findings by Zhivka Valiavicharska in *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2021), where she examines the development of Marxist humanism in post-Stalinist Bulgaria and shows that the rise of humanism also opened the discursive and political conditions for the rise of ethnonationalism in Bulgaria, the dissertation introduces the case of Yugoslavia with its complex ethnic composition. Moreover, similarly to Valiavicharska’s conclusions, the dissertation shows the duality of humanism—which presented itself as a radical reform of socialist ideas and practices, and at the same time due to its Eurocentric frameworks, “reproduced the colonial premises, anthropocentric binaries, and patriarchal logic of European humanist thought.”³³

As such, this dissertation contributes to the historiography on *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School, most of which was written during their existence, after they ceased to

³² Raymond Taras (ed.), *The Road to Disillusion: From Critical Marxism to Postcommunism in Eastern Europe* (M.E. Sharpe, Inc: New York, 1992); Michal Kopeček. *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953-1960* (Argo: Prague, 2009).

³³ Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless history: political imaginaries and their discontents in post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2021), 10.

function, as well as in the period after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The majority of monographs, however, deal with the philosophical aspects of these institutions, independent from the wider historical context.³⁴ Thus, in many cases what is missing is a historical contextualization of the ideas and demands of these philosophers and sociologists, and a historical distance in order to critically engage with the intellectuals' ideas and activities. Furthermore, it remains unclear what *Praxis* is, and who 'belongs' to it. The journal was started mainly by one circle of friends gathered around the Philosophical Institute at the University of Zagreb, but with the goal of establishing a Yugoslav and an international platform. The literature on *Praxis* highlights the differences between the Zagreb and the Belgrade groups. Yet again, the divergences that might have existed have often been conceptualized by *Praxis*-affiliated intellectuals—and it is not by chance that Mihailo Marković, himself a part of the Belgrade group, expressed this difference in the following way:

A group centered on the Belgrade philosophy department emphasizes the relevance of scientific results for philosophy and insists that only those philosophical views which are based on objective truth are progressive. It therefore concentrates on modern science, logic, and methodology, and in social philosophy, it insists on basing criticism on concrete, reliable knowledge. The other group, centered at Zagreb, advocates the independence of philosophy from the sciences and concentrates on studying the ideas of the young Marx and their roots in Hegel and also on contemporary philosophical anthropology.³⁵

In English, the most authoritative and comprehensive study on *Praxis* remains Gerson Sher's 1977 text, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia*. The book offers significant insights that can help historians understand the importance of the group around

³⁴ See also Žiga Vodovnik, "Democracy as a Verb: Meditations on the Yugoslav Praxis Philosophy," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 14 (4): 433–452; Mira Bogdanović, "The Rift in the Praxis Group: Between Nationalism and Liberalism," *Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory*, no. 3-4 (2015): 461–483; Christian Fuchs, "The Praxis School's Marxist Humanism and Mihailo Marković's Theory of Communication," *Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory* no. 1-2 (2017): 159–182; Zagorka Golubović, "Praxis-filozofija: različita tumačenja i kritike [Praxis-philosophy: different understandings and critiques]," *Theoria* no. 1-2 (1988): 9–20; Božidar Jakšić, *Praxis: Mišljenje kao diverzija* [Praxis: Thought as a diversion] (Službeni glasnik: Beograd, 2012); 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.

³⁵ Mihailo Marković wrote a chapter "Yugoslav Philosophy" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Paul Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 363.

Praxis in the context of socialist Yugoslavia.³⁶ And while Sher's horizons of expectation could not have given insights into the events of the 1980s and 1990s, the notions of "dissent" or "dissidence" are ambiguous in the context of Yugoslavia, and this dissertation will refrain from using these concepts in relation to *Praxis*. Further, Oskar Gruenwald's 1983 book, *The Yugoslav Search for Man: Marxist Humanism in Contemporary Yugoslavia*, stressed the *Praxis* philosophers' instrumental role in conceptualizing and criticizing the socialist experiment in Yugoslavia.³⁷ While this could be the case from a specific perspective, viewed in a certain moment in history, at the same time, the contextualization and temporal changes of their philosophical stances is not present, and thus the dissertation shows that while they were important in conceptualizing Marxism in Yugoslavia, the project of Marxist humanism was a much broader phenomenon that deserves more contextualist attention. Moreover, the literature on *Praxis* does not engage in a comparative and transnational approaches—in this dissertation, the international intellectual dialogues are crucial for understanding of the development of these intellectuals' ideas.

Mira Bogdanović has reflected on the ideological rift within the Belgrade *Praxis* circle. The so-called Belgrade 'eight' were scholars purged from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1968, in the context of the student movements, and were later suspended from the University of Belgrade in 1975. They had "contested the Party's ruling and challenged it at the highest Communist Party levels, professing their allegiance to Marxism and communism."³⁸ On the other hand, as she explains, there were the liberals, who identified communism and nationalism with Slobodan Milošević, thus pitting against these ideologies modernization as identified with "liberal democracy, political pluralism, human rights, and the

³⁶ Gerson Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

³⁷ Oskar Gruenewald, *The Yugoslav Search for Man: Marxist Humanism in Contemporary Yugoslavia* (South Hadley, Mass.: J. F. Bergin Publishers, 1983).

³⁸ Mira Bogdanović, "The Rift in the Praxis Group: Between Nationalism and Liberalism," 462.

market economy.”³⁹ While on the general level we could argue that the *Praxis* group split between liberals and nationalists, such claims also ignore the fact that *Praxis* intellectuals, including the nationalist ones, argued for the importance of political pluralism—or at least ideological pluralism—as well as human rights. This dissertation, while building on the insights of Bogdanović and other existing literature on *Praxis*, contributes to our knowledge on *Praxis* by showing the language of ‘human’ (and human rights) was at the core of their intellectual development—and that also the nationalists argued for the importance of human rights in Yugoslavia, human dignity, and the freedom of the individual.

The intellectual gain of shifting the perspective on the project and history of *Praxis* from accounts focusing on its failure or romanticizing its achievements is that it allows me to decode the meanings of their debates and texts, which were historically embedded, and which functioned and influenced key aspects of Yugoslav political, social, and cultural life. Therefore, in order to revisit the place of Yugoslav critical Marxists in the intellectual history of Yugoslavia, and thus in East-Central Europe (ECE), I take as an important element the international character of the spaces of both the journal and the summer school. Thus, I approach *Praxis* from the perspective of their international/transnational entanglements and the use of crisis discourses, which is also linked to their use of the language of ‘a human’ and humanity.

Both the journal *Praxis* and its associated Korčula Summer School were described by their Yugoslav organizers—philosophers and sociologists—as well as by participants, as key spaces of encounter between East and West during the Cold War. These platforms enabled the exchange of ideas on critical topics of the time, including socialism, democracy, freedom, alienation, the role of technology, and the emergence of a new class. Yet one of the findings of the dissertation can contribute to the growing literature that deals with the links between post-

³⁹ Mira Bogdanović, “The Rift in the Praxis Group: Between Nationalism and Liberalism,” 463.

colonial countries, Non-Aligned Movement, and socialism via the concept of internationalism. As it will be seen this concept held multiple meanings— For *Praxis* and those around it, given their critical stance toward the Party, internationalism tended to mean European internationalism. For the Party, by contrast, internationalism was closely tied to a politics of solidarity with movements for national self-determination. The dissertation highlights the lack of participation of intellectuals from the ‘Global South’, raising an issue concerning the European ‘bias’ among the *Praxis*, showing that the ‘international’ dialogues took place mainly between the West and East, as the intellectuals operated with the European conceptual framework of ‘human being’ and humanism. To emphasize this point, the dissertation relies on the findings by Bojana Videkanić in her *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945-1985*, where she uses a concept of ‘nonaligned modernism’ that developed between the end of the WWII and into the late 20th century in Yugoslavia. Unlike Western or Stalinist modernism, “nonaligned modernism and related forms were deeply enmeshed with politics precisely because they rested on emancipatory ideas of anticolonialism and economic and cultural emancipation.”⁴⁰

Discussing the collapse of socialism, in *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe*, James Mark, Bogdan C. Iacob, Tobias Rupprecht and Ljubica Spaskovska, show that self-determination was indeed an important element that led to the fall of the socialist regimes.⁴¹ Yet, this dissertation adds to such a narrative by showing that when discussing self-determination, the Yugoslav intellectuals did not refer to the Soviet Union, demanding self-determination of Yugoslavia from it since Yugoslavia was outside of the ‘Soviet bloc’ since 1948. Instead, the discussions concerning self-determination were mainly connected to the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, as they argued for the right of all suppressed,

⁴⁰ Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945-1985* (Montréal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 10.

⁴¹ Cf. James Mark, Bogdan C. Iacob, Tobias Rupprecht and Ljubica Spaskovska, *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

colonized peoples to have the human right to self-determination. In Yugoslavia, while such arguments did not immediately translate in action—nevertheless in 1968 they played an important role in the Kosovo Albanian student movement. Praxis intellectuals, however, while emphasizing the necessity of freedom for the development of human being, did not see self-determination of Kosovo Albanians or even Montenegrins as valid—in their view, this meant disintegration of the country along the national lines. Thus, by the late 1970s they have started to perceive the Brioni Plenum (July 1966) as the beginning of the end of the Yugoslav disintegration.

Framework, method, and sources

Crisis Discourses

Reinard Koselleck's seminar work *Critique and Crisis* (1959) was translated to Serbian only in 1997, by Zoran Đinđić, a student of Critical Theory who would become part of the Serbian opposition movement in the 1990s.⁴² While not stretching this 'coincidence' too far, this dissertation highlights that Đinđić's professors from *Praxis* used the concept of critique and crisis to frame their intellectual agenda. Koselleck, a German conservative thinker,⁴³ understood crisis as deriving from the urgency of a situation during the experience of change, that is, during a shift from one state to another. Moreover, according to Koselleck, since the last third of the 18th century, this use of "crisis" also entailed an "epochal concept pointing to

⁴² Zoran Đinđić was a student of *Praxis* philosophers, who rejected praxis philosophy noting that "they kept his generation in the 'spiritual Marxist ghetto.'" He also argued that their neo-Marxism which started as a critique of Stalinism, returned to its theoretical source, Marxism which kept the traditional approach to 'civil society'. Latinka Perović, "Uvod Zoran Đinđić i srpsko društvo [Introduction: Zoran Đinđić and Serbian society]," in *Zoran Đinđić: Etika odgovornosti* [Zoran Đinđić: Ethics of responsibility], edited by Latinka Perović (Beograd: Biblioteka Svedočanstva, 2006), 32–33. See also Marjan Ivković, "Praxis's Philosophy's 'Older Sister': The Reception of Critical Theory in the Former Yugoslavia," *Zeitschrift für Politische Theorie*, 2 (2017): 271–280.

⁴³ See, Bruno Quélenec, "'Light on the enlightenment' or 'counter-enlightenment'?: Rereading Reinhart Koselleck's *Critique and Crisis* in its context(s)," *History of European ideas* (2021). DOI: 10.1080/01916599.2021.1937886:

an exceptionally rare, if not unique, transition period.”⁴⁴ Crisis thus indicated a historically imminent transitional phase—yet, the outcome of this transition depended on the specific diagnosis offered. His concept of history, according to Niklas Olsen, was to “depart from all utopian notions of history as a singular, unified, and goal-directed process,” and instead it “aimed to outline certain fundamental existential structures of the human condition and to take account of the social relations existing among human beings in order to understand (historically) and contain (politically) the potential conflict in human societies.”⁴⁵

The dissertation relies on the findings of the project *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?*, which emphasized that while crisis has been an ideological notion, it has often functioned in ECE humanities and social sciences as an analytical concept as well. In the 1980s for example, the discussions by reform communists and dissident writers turned to crisis in order to describe the “increasingly obvious socioeconomic dysfunctions of the state socialist systems.”⁴⁶ The dissertation follows the volume’s findings of taking the discourse of crisis seriously, insofar as the dissertation approaches crisis as an “attempt to reassert control of the situation by inserting the experience of the extraordinary into a framework where it can be normalized, even if this ‘normalization’ might also mean the routinization of the extraordinary.”⁴⁷ Moreover, the dissertation looks at the ways in which authors use and conceptualize the concept of crisis not just as a way of “describing reality,” but also as a means of mobilization. More importantly, the analytical lens of the concept of crisis, which can be framed by different speakers without any consensus of what constitutes the term, allows me to see different usage of the idea of crisis which is

⁴⁴ **CRITIQUE AND CRISIS**

⁴⁵ Niklas Olsen, “Carl Schmitt, Reinhart Koselleck and the foundations of history and politics,” *History of European Ideas* 37:2 (2011): 197.

⁴⁶ Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (eds), *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?* (London: Routledge, 2024), 3.

⁴⁷ Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (eds). *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?* (London: Routledge, 2024), 9.

permanently contested and in flux, “having always flexible meanings and remaining always context-sensitive.”⁴⁸

Agustín Cosovschi’s *Les sciences sociales face à la crise: Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980–1995)* [Social Sciences Facing Crisis: An Intellectual History of Yugoslav Dissolution (1980-1995)] is particularly relevant for my study, insofar as it thematizes crisis through the social scientists’ participation in debates about crisis in Yugoslavia, specifically from 1974. Focusing on the period of late socialism, Cosovschi identifies the shifts in political language over 1980s—from the increasing abandonment of the central Marxist concepts such as class or self-management, in favor of the language of social society, and the articulation of the perspective on nationalism as an ideology “analogous to communism in its authoritarian and manipulative approach to the masses.”⁴⁹ Moreover, as Cosovschi shows, crisis opened a space for “critical reflection and thus fueled the imagination of Yugoslav intellectuals.”⁵⁰ Discussing sociologists, he shows that they did not directly “condemn the ideological principles on which Yugoslav system was based, but they launched strong criticisms against the direction taken by the country.”⁵¹ This dissertation explores the period preceding the one examined in Cosovschi’s account, tracing the concept of crisis in the early 1950s.

The concept of crisis⁵² is used here also to organize the dissertation temporally, starting with the crisis of Marxism announced by the leadership of the Communist Party. The crisis of Marxism was initially announced in order to move away from the Soviet type of Marxism and

⁴⁸ Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (eds). *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?* (London: Routledge, 2024), 10.

⁴⁹ I thank my colleague Adela Hincu (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana) for providing her unpublished review of the book. Forthcoming in the journal.

⁵⁰ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* [Social Sciences Facing Crisis: An Intellectual History of Yugoslav Dissolution (1980-1995)] (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 56.

⁵¹ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 56.

⁵² Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 1998).

socialist practice. The crisis was thus framed as a “transformative moment to create a socialist future,” in this case one differing from the Soviet interpretation. However, the crisis later became framed as a systemic crisis, one that necessitated political transformation.⁵³ This can clearly be observed in 1968 in Yugoslavia and beyond, when the concept of crisis became a common means of describing the political and cultural situation from the perspective of *Praxis* intellectuals. While the Party no longer referred to the crisis, especially in the context of introducing the Law on Self-management, the critical intellectuals around the journal *Praxis* continued describing the situation of Marxist philosophy as being in crisis by shifting between their local and global contexts. Ultimately, they used the crisis in order to describe the systemic crisis of socialism in Yugoslavia from the 1970s onward.

The Intellectual History of Marxist Humanism

The dissertation reconstructs the emergence and formation of the political language of Marxist Humanism in Yugoslavia. Relying on the theoretical findings of the linguistic contextualism of the Cambridge School and Reinhart Koselleck’s *Begriffsgeschichte*, this dissertation develops a syncretic methodology in approaching the research question of why, in comparison with the other intellectuals in East-Central Europe who developed liberal nationalist positions (which also involved their critique of nationalism), the internationalist position of *Praxis* led some of its members to accept ethno-nationalist intellectual and political positions.⁵⁴

Thus, the dissertation analyzes the intellectual group and generational sensitivities that developed around the journal *Praxis* and its associated Korčula Summer School between its

⁵³ Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (eds). *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?* (London: Routledge, 2024), 19.

⁵⁴ Malvin Richter, “Reconstructing the History of Political Languages: Pocock, Skinner and the Geschichtliche Grundbegriff” *History and Theory*, no.1 (1999): 38–79; J.G.A Pocock, “The concept of a language and the metier d’historien: some considerations on practice,” In *The Languages of political theory in early-modern Europe*, edited by Antony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” *History and Theory* Vol. 8 No. 1 (1969): 3–53.

inception in 1964 and its dissolution in 1974. In its time, *Praxis* was considered the “most influential and numerous” among similar schools of revisionist Marxist thought that also existed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.⁵⁵ While the intellectuals in these countries could be approached as counterparts—they read young Marx, placed the ‘human being’ at the center of their theoretical analysis, and often collaborated—they did not have analogous epistemological frameworks; their solutions to common problems in the post-World War II context were very divergent.

Furthermore, I view *Praxis* not only as a journal but also as a signifier that was able to merge different philosophical and intellectual traditions coming from both ends of the East-West geopolitical binary. I approach *Praxis*, through its contributions, as an intellectual space that translated modes of political thinking from outside Yugoslavia into the political languages of Yugoslav Marxist humanism. Hence, in a presentation in 1958, Radomir Lukić, author of the *Introduction to Sociology* (1957), who was not part of *Praxis* (that is, not part of its editorial board nor he published in the journal) but who collaborated with Belgrade-based *Praxis* philosophers, argued that: “While Slovenia, as a part of Austria, close to Vienna and Trieste, was developing according to the development of capitalism in Central Europe, Macedonia was under the ‘yoke’ of the feudal Turkish empire.”⁵⁶ Such expressions disclose not only the self-positioning of these intellectuals, but they also show that the intellectuals also operated with the civilizational hierarchies, seeing some parts of Yugoslavia as ‘backward’. The dissertation places these intellectual debates and discussions within a long-term perspective, keeping in mind the position of these intellectuals.

⁵⁵ Balázs Trencsényi, Michal Kopeček, Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčić, Maria Falina, Mónika Baár, and Maciej Janowski, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Vol. II: Negotiating Modernity in the ‘Short Twentieth Century’ and Beyond. Part I and II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 377.

⁵⁶ Radomir Lukić, “Društveni uslovi razvoja sociologije u Jugoslaviji, (Sociologija, kod nas i u svetu) [Social conditions for the development of sociology in Yugoslavia, (Sociology in Yugoslavia and in the world)], *Sociologija*, No.2 (1959): 99.

Consequently, from the perspective of intellectual history, the dissertation analyses how French existentialism was read among these intellectuals, and how reading and translating the ideas and works of Martin Heidegger or Herbert Marcuse resonated with intellectuals; that is, *how* they read his work through their own intellectual frames, all while using a seemingly “international” or “transnational” language that could be understood by those outside of Yugoslavia, but also outside one’s own local context. However, thanks to the contextual reading of the sources, the dissertation shows that the ideas elaborated by these intellectuals cannot be seen as static or unchanging from the 1950s to the 1980s. While these modes of political thinking were transforming, I intend to capture the crucial moments as well as the medium-term processes by which this thinking changed and the consequences of these changes.

When reading philosophical texts historically, it is important to recognize that some concepts framed in universal terms were deeply influenced by the local contexts and specific concerns of the time, but also the positionality of the thinkers. For instance, when intellectuals discussed universal concepts like freedom, human emancipation, or alienation, these ideas were often shaped by particular local experiences. The challenge was thus to read the subtext of these texts and to see the tension between their universal aspirations and their local, historically grounded meanings.

Furthermore, this dissertation is also inspired by entangled histories and the histories of transfers between East and West. I was particularly interested in the theoretical and historiographical dimensions of these transfers—specifically, what it meant for Yugoslavia to have been ‘turning’ toward the West from the early 1950s onward? What were the implications of Yugoslavia’s departure from the Soviet bloc and its pursuit of an independent socialist path? How were these developments reflected in the intellectual sphere, and what were their outcomes? The goal was to trace the different consequences of this orientation towards the

West, while also exploring how this shift intersected with the intellectuals' engagement with Yugoslavia's role within the Non-Aligned Movement—or lack thereof.

Note on Sources

In reconstructing Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia, the dissertation relies on a wide range of primary sources, which include periodicals, books, and other printed sources, as well as personal and public archives, through which it was possible to recount the writings and debates of the *Praxis* circle. The main body of my sources are texts written by *Praxis* intellectuals in the period between 1964 and 1974, and this mainly includes their essays written in the journal *Praxis*, as well as their published monographs. Moreover, I also relied on articles and monographs written by those intellectuals who were not directly affiliated with the journal *Praxis*.

When it came to other journals, I read *Naše Teme* [Our themes] a journal published by the Central Committee of the People's Youth of Croatia. This journal included articles by Rudi Supek, Predrag Vranicki, Vanja Sutlić, Danilo Pejović, among others. One important aspect of the journal was some of the themes which did not enter the discussions in *Praxis*: for instance, the question of colonialism and third world countries, as well as the issue of women's position within Yugoslav society, which allowed me to see the limits of *Praxis* engagement with the topics outside Europe and the West. Their philosophical languages and outlooks from the 1950s were mainly immersed in the Western philosophical traditions, in reading phenomenology and existentialism (such as Heidegger and Sartre). However, already in 1961, *Naše Teme* published articles and discussions concerning African cultural and political affairs. Nevertheless, *Naše Teme* still presented the Western philosophical canons to the Yugoslav public. This was visible in *Naše Teme* that presented the readings of "journals from abroad" which mainly included those from France, Germany, Britain, and the United States, as well as the Soviet

Union. They published articles engaging with the history of philosophy in England, Germany, and France. The journal also closely followed the prospects of European unification, as well. Zdenko Rajh (1904–1990), who was one of the founders of the Radio Belgrade in 1944, and who graduated at the Law Faculty in 1959, for instance, published articles concerning the unification of Europe, “Contemporary aspirations towards the unification of Europe,” and already in 1959 published a monograph *The Challenges of European Unification: utopias and Realizations*.

Further sources include, Zagreb based *Pogledi: časopis za teoriju društvenih i prirodnih nauka* [Pogledi: Journal for the Theory of Social and Natural Sciences], Belgrade-based journal *Filozofija: jugoslovenski časopis za filozofiju i sociologiju* [Philosophy: Yugoslav journal for philosophy and sociology], published by the Philosophical Society of Serbia whose main editors also included Miladin Životić and Ljubomir Tadić, *Sociologija: časopis za sociologiju, socijalnu psihologiju i socijalnu antropologiju* [Sociology: Journal for Sociology, Social Psychology and Social Anthropology], published by the Yugoslav Sociological Association; *Gledišta: Časopis Beogradskog univerziteta* [The Views: Journal of the University of Belgrade], *Komunist* [The Communist], journal of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, *Marksističke sveske: eseji i istraživački problemi* [Marxist Notebooks: Essays and Research Problems], journal of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo, *Socijalizam. Organ centralnog komiteta Saveza Komunističke Jugoslavije* [Socialism: Journal of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia], *Savremenost: časopis za društvena pitanja* [Contemporaneity: Journal of Social Issues] published by the Provincial Conference of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People in Novi Sad [Pokrajinska konferencija Socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda], *Književne novine: organ Saveza književnika Jugoslavije* [Književne novine: Organ of the Association of Writers of Yugoslavia],

Jugoslavenski pregled: Informativno-dokumentarne sveske [Yugoslav Survey: Informative-Documentary Notebooks] and others.

To place these articles and published works in a bigger contextual picture, I also consulted the archival collection of the Rudi Supek Fond in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. The Fond contains archival material not found to the same extent in other archival collections, including a large number of various types of documents: from letters, documents, essays, and presentation notes concerning the operations of the journal *Praxis* and the Korčula Summer School, to Supek's personal invitations and presentations at home and abroad, as well as documents relating to his visiting professorship in the United States. The Supek Fond also consists of various documents and materials related to his work at the Institute for Social Sciences of the University of Belgrade, and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Zagreb. In this fond I also used documents saved by Supek and published by *Bilten*, journal of the Presidency of the League of Communists as well as *Aktuelni politički pregled* [Current political overview] published by *Stručna služba CK SKJ* [Professional service of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia]. I have used these documents in my dissertation not only in order to see how the group and the Korčula Summer School was perceived by the 'officials,' but more importantly it also allowed me to read the recorded discussions that occurred during the group's meetings, which were not necessarily found in other places.

Other archival fonds that I surveyed are housed in the Archive of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. There, I looked at the Yugoslav Society for Sociology (1959–1993), as well as the personal fond of Ljubomir Tadić (unfortunately, I lost all the documents from this archive due to the external hard drive failure, so I was not able to reference any of them in my dissertation), including the fond of the Institute of Social Sciences [Institut Društvenih Nauka, IDN]. In addition, I also consulted the personal fond of Mihailo Marković at the Historical Archive,

Belgrade, and looked at the correspondence between György Lukács and *Praxis* at the Lukács Archives in Budapest before it was closed by the Hungarian government in 2018. In the State Archive in Slovenia, I looked at the recorded discussion among intellectuals at the *Kafana Mrak* [The Dark Tavern]. Finally, I also used the source kept at the archive of the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS), Lucien Goldmann's script of the unrealized documentary film '*Autogestion*'.

Outline of the Chapters

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter One ("The Rights of the 'Human Being' in Socialist Yugoslavia") sets the framework of the dissertation by showing the centrality of the 'human being' in the discourses of Marxist humanism that were developed by the Party. The interest in the human being and humanism thus was not just professed by the *Praxis* intellectuals; it started earlier, when the LCY was expelled from Cominform and the ideological crisis that followed its aftermath. The humanist conceptions of Marxism could be found in laws, such as the Law on Self-government. The chapter shows that the ideological crisis in Yugoslavia, following the LCY's expulsion from Cominform, was to be resolved with the introduction of different legal and theoretical frameworks in socialist Yugoslavia that focused on 'human beings.' Chapter Two ("Crisis of Marxist Philosophy and the Emergence of Different Epistemologies of Human Rights") explores how the concept of 'human' was addressed by the intellectuals around the journal *Praxis*, and how they created a synthesis of Marxism, personalism, and existentialism. This approach to human being raised specific questions and concerns which differed from that of the official discourse. The chapter shows that the starting point of their philosophical thinking was closely connected to the perception of the 'crisis' of Marxist philosophy. Chapter Three (Culture in Crisis: Intellectual and Political Action in the 1960s), looks at the discourses concerning internationalism, nationalism, and culture, which served as the interface for the discussion of 'humanism' and human rights. The

chapter covers the discussions concerning the ambiguities regarding internationalism and national belonging in the humanist accounts of *Praxis* intellectuals. Chapter Four (“The Crisis of Society: Contrast Between the Principles and the Reality”) analyses more open contestations of the practices of socialism in Yugoslavia by the intellectuals around the journal *Praxis*, including the student revolt of 1968. The contestations partly included the intellectuals’ approach to their own role in a socialist society, as well as the thematization of the impending crisis within Yugoslav society. Finally, Chapter Five (Historicization of the Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism, Reexaminations and ‘Demise of Humanism’) engages with the aftermath of the 1968, and the reexaminations of the intellectuals around the journal *Praxis*, who attempted to provide a cause of the existing crisis of the Yugoslav socialism. Their recounting overlapped with the challenge of the rise of theoretical anti-humanism.

Chapter I: The Rights of the ‘Human Being’ in Socialist Yugoslavia

The main focus of this chapter is to set the framework of the dissertation, by demonstrating the importance of a ‘human being’ or *čovek* in socialist Yugoslavia, and the existence of the rights of human beings in the discourses as early as the 1950s. This is important for the development of the dissertation around the links between Marxist humanism, ethnonationalism, and conceptions of ‘a human’ (and subsequently human rights). The discourses of a human being, or the rights of man, with universalist overtones, could fit into the ideas of both Marxist humanism and ethnonationalism. In the background, the dissertation shows that this was not just a ‘Yugoslav’ story, but that similar issues were being raised in Bulgaria: Political theorist and art historian, Zhivka Valiavicharska shows that “socialist-humanist philosophy and culture in Bulgaria opened the conditions for the rise of ethnonationalism, and that it welcomed the construction of an ethnically homogenous nation.”⁵⁷ While these cases are not analogous, and had different consequences, the case of Yugoslavia points to the ramifications of the conceptions of ‘humanism’ and ‘human being’ in the discourses and different contexts between the 1950s and 1970s.

As a whole, the chapter thus sets the framework for the dissertation insofar as it shows the emergence of the concept of humanism in Yugoslavia in the early 1950s, which should be traced primarily to the criticism of the Soviet Union. This included both its socialist practice and its interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia’s solution to the problem of legitimacy (that is, the creation of Yugoslavia’s own brand of socialism, workers’ self-management). By locating the ideas of ‘humanism’ in the official discourse of the CPY (later the League of Communists of Yugoslavia), the chapter problematizes the later debates of Marxist humanism among the 1960s Marxist Revisionist

⁵⁷ Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 91.

circle gathered around the journal *Praxis*: as it will be later developed, the ‘official’ discourse of humanist Marxism promoted by the Party leadership was more materialist and classically Marxist than was the case with critical Marxist intellectuals gathered around the journal *Praxis*, who moved away from the traditional contents of Marxist vocabulary towards a synthesis of personalism, existentialism, and critical theory.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a general context surrounding the ‘human being’ (and ‘socialist’ human rights) in Yugoslavia, closely linked to humanism or new humanism, on the one hand, and to the crisis of Marxism on the other. Following the state’s expulsion from Cominform in 1948, the Yugoslav leadership found itself in a crisis, and not just because it was isolated from its allies. In ideological terms, the leadership perceived a crisis as it was supposed to justify the fact that Yugoslavia, while still a socialist country and up to that point a faithful follower of Soviet-type Marxism-Leninism, was no longer in Cominform. Tito stated that: “No matter how much each of us loves the land of socialism, the USSR, he can, in no case, love his country less.”⁵⁸ The chapter investigates how the notion of the ‘human being’ in Yugoslavia was closely connected to the experience and the postwar narrative of the Yugoslav Revolution, self-determination (an important aspect of the future Non-Aligned Movement), and self-managing socialism. These elements, embodied in the language of the human (and consequently socialist human rights), can help us later understand the path taken by critical Marxist intellectuals who based their ideas on different epistemologies of the rights of man. At the same time, as will later be seen, from the mid-1970s the intellectuals increasingly harked back to the experience of the Yugoslav Revolution, which they linked with the specific national experiences.

⁵⁸ Walter A. Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Basic Contradiction?* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 131.

In the last section, the chapter looks at the early contestations concerning the principle of the ‘struggle of opinion,’ initiated by the Party for the very reason of introducing a democratic, human-oriented approach to Marxist thought. While welcomed by the intellectuals, the contestations already started to emerge in the early 1950s, due to the different conceptualizations of the ‘right to critique’ and the ‘right to free dialogue’ about important aspects of socialist life in Yugoslavia.

Responses to the Crisis: Self-determination and self-government encompassing human rights

As pointed out earlier, the Yugoslav path of development was partly in response to the ideological vacuum that occurred after the expulsion from the Cominform. Marxist thought and socialist practice were supposed to be ‘cleansed’ from Stalinist misinterpretations. In this process, self-determination and self-government as theoretical conceptions became crucial. They also encompassed important concepts of freedom, independence, and autonomy, as well as the equality promoted by the Yugoslav leadership. As historian James M. Robertson argues,

At a national scale, the aftermath of the Tito-Stalin split reconfigured the country’s political-economic space, with profound consequences for the future coherence of the federation. These transformations grew from the new ideology of self-management socialism that Yugoslav theorists like Edvard Kardelj, Milovan Đilas, and Boris Kidrič formulated from 1949–53. In place of the centralized model of Stalinism, self-management socialism instead pursued the decentralization of administrative powers, the expansion of participatory forums in the economy, and the strengthening of the autonomy of social collectives from the state.⁵⁹

Thus, the “anti-state momentum” in Yugoslavia was reflected at the federal level and through the strong process of administrative decentralization, which passed economy, education, and culture from the hands of the federal government to the governments of the republics, and which thus “contributed to strengthening the power of the local political elites.”⁶⁰ Finally, these

⁵⁹ James M. Robertson, *Mediating Spaces: Literature, Politics, and the Scales of Yugoslav Socialism, 1870–1995* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), 159.

⁶⁰ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 27.

transformations also affect the treatment of the national question: the Party was gradually abandoning the classic and unitarian idea of ‘Yugoslavism,’ which aspired to the creation of a new Yugoslav national identity.⁶¹

In this context, Yugoslavia’s participation in the international dialogues concerning the rights of man can be traced to the early 1950s.⁶² For instance, Branko Jevremović, a representative of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia at the UN Commission of Human Rights, gave a lecture at the Kolarac People’s University in Belgrade at the beginning of the 1950s, on the topic of the international protection of the rights of man.⁶³ Moreover, the importance of international law was seen as a “strong tool of the Yugoslav people” in their “defense of national existence and conception of internal social and economic arrangements and the international position of Yugoslavia as a state community of *naroda* [nations] and *narodnosti* [nationalities] in this part of Europe.”⁶⁴ Slobodan Milenković, professor at the Law Faculty at the University of Belgrade, traced the traditions of Yugoslav international law back to Giga Geršić (1842–1918) and others, highlighting that Geršić and his contemporaries represented the interests of small and weak states. In citing specifically Geršić, Milenković argued that Geršić foresaw the main postulates of socialist Yugoslavia, by arguing that “unconditionally hiding under the skirt of one or the other big forces does not look useful, because among the big forces, there is no Platonism... it is much more natural that small states nurture stronger links and genuine friendship between themselves, because their interests are

⁶¹ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face a la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 27. See also, Tomaž Ivešić, *The Rise and Fall of Communist Yugoslavism. Soft Nation-Building in Yugoslavia* (Routledge: London, 2024).

⁶² Ivan Čulo however argues that “the study and engagement with human rights in the Croatian context began and lasted longer in emigration than in the homeland.” Ivan Čulo, “Ljudska prava u hrvatskoj emigrantskoj misli (1945–1990)[Human Rights in Croatian Émigré Thought (1945–1990)]” *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 46/2(92) (2020): 439–643, here 440.

⁶³ Branko D. Jevremović, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka: predavanje održano na Kolarčevom Narodnom univerzitetu* [International protection of the rights of man: lectures from the Kolarac People’s University] (Beograd: Narodni univerzitet, 1951).

⁶⁴ Slobodan Milenković, “Razvoj doktrine međunarodnog javnog prava u Jugoslaviji [Development of the doctrine of public international law in Yugoslavia]” *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Nišu*, 21 (1981): 121.

often the same.”⁶⁵ Writing after the introduction of the 1974 Constitution, Milenković pointed out that self-determination was historically one of the most important aspects of international thought, as “the only correct and rational basis for the international legal framework is nothing other than the demand that every nationality [*narodnost*] has a possibility to form their state and to be unified in one state community.”⁶⁶

At the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1952, workers’ self-governance was officially established in Yugoslavia and seen “as a key moment in the development of socialist social relations.”⁶⁷ In addition, the principle of peaceful coexistence was established as the foundation of the foreign policy of Yugoslavia.⁶⁸ Moreover, the Party changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia to highlight its new ideological position in Yugoslav society, but also a change in its method of political action.⁶⁹ The following year, in 1953, Yugoslavia adopted a new Constitution which ushered in radical changes to the Yugoslav political system. Social self-management became the basic principle of organization in the economy and social offices in the local government, county, republics, and federation.

As part of the general de-Stalinization of Yugoslavia, a new General Law on People’s Committees of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia was passed on June 24, 1949. The Association of Lawyers of the People’s Republic of Serbia described the law as having organically evolved from the experience of the Yugoslav Revolution during WWII. In its booklet, the Association explained that the peoples’ committees [*narodni odbori*] had already been formed during the antifascist struggle and the revolution, thus making the “local

⁶⁵ Slobodan Milenković, “Razvoj doktrine međunarodnog javnog prava u Jugoslaviji [Development of the doctrine of public international law in Yugoslavia],” *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Nišu*, 21(1981): 122.

⁶⁶ Slobodan Milenković, “Razvoj doktrine međunarodnog javnog prava u Jugoslaviji,” *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Nišu*, 21 (1981): 122.

⁶⁷ Editorial, “Tribina mladih [Youth forum]” *Savremenost* Vol. 1, No. 1 (1971): 81.

⁶⁸ Jakovina, Tvrtko. “Yugoslavia on the International Scene: The Active Coexistence of Non-Aligned Yugoslavia.” In *Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective (1918–1991)* in *Jugoslavija u istorijskoj perspektivi* edited by Latinka Perović, Drago Roksandić, Mitja Velikonja, Wolfgang Hoepken and Florian Bieber. Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2017), 461–514.

⁶⁹ “Tribina mladih,” *Savremenost*, no. 1 (1971): 81.

government the main organ of state power in the socialist state.”⁷⁰ In the language of the Party, the local government expressed the democratized space of decision-making, which was in contrast to the Soviet Union’s oppressive state apparatus. During the debate in the Federal People’s Assembly on the draft of the new Law on People’s Committees, Edvard Kardelj argued:

Of course, it is not enough for us that the masses participate only in people’s committees and people’s assemblies. In many of our factories, for example, where an enterprising and prudent director realizes that his success depends on the effort and initiative of the workers, a new form of self-government begins to develop spontaneously... this spontaneous form must be further developed and transformed into a permanent form of direct participation of workers in the management of our companies.⁷¹

While not explicitly discussing human rights, the General Law on People’s Committees—which politicians and lawyers argued was a reformulation of the 1946 law—essentially constituted a new law that indicated the importance of “care for the human being” [*staranje o čoveku*]. As the Association of Lawyers highlighted, the law stipulated that “the development of the material base of a socialist country and socialist culture must be developed alongside care for the human being, the worker.”⁷² Implicitly, this meant that while economic progress and the material base were crucial aspects of the development of socialism, in order for socialist development to be democratic, it must take into consideration the human being [*čovek*]. Thus, at least in the language of the law, humanism or care for human beings was supposed to be applied at every phase of the building of socialism in Yugoslavia.⁷³ Article 25 of the Law ensured the application of citizens’ constitutionally granted rights by ensuring their free voting rights, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom to demonstrate. Next to that,

⁷⁰ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People’s Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 1.

⁷¹ Quoted in *Deset let delavskega samoupravljanja. Članki in reportaže, 1950-1960* [Ten Years of Workers’ Self-Management: Articles and Reports, 1950-1960] (Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1960), 15.

⁷² *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People’s Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 34.

⁷³ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People’s Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 34.

the law was supposed to ensure the equality of women with men in all fields of social-political, economic, and cultural life.⁷⁴

In the fourth annual Yearbook on Human Rights in 1949, prepared and published by the Secretariat of the United Nations, the first part—which concerned personal liberties, political rights, economic and social rights, and educational and cultural rights⁷⁵—included a report on the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. The acts that referred to human rights that were promulgated in 1949 concerned precisely the aforementioned General Act concerning People’s Committees of May 28, 1949, which was to “ensure the observance of democratic principles in the organization and work of local organs of state government in all people’s republics.”⁷⁶ The basic aims, powers, and duties included raising the general standard of living, raising the level of education, protecting minors, mothers, and children, raising the level of national health, implementing the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens by ensuring the free exercise of electoral rights and the rights of association, free press, assembly, and demonstration, applying the principle of the separation of church and state, and ensuring the equality of women with men in all spheres of social, political, economic, and cultural life.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Yearbook also published the decree on the establishment and functioning of cultural and educational institutions in Yugoslavia, noting that this decree encompassed the accessibility of education for all citizens in Yugoslavia, but also a guarantee of freedom in scientific and intellectual work.⁷⁸

The Association of Lawyers reflected on this new law by discussing the specific Yugoslav version of self-government, which they considered not only a better version of ‘socialism’ in contrast to the USSR, but also superior to the ‘bourgeois’ conceptions of self-

⁷⁴ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People’s Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 41.

⁷⁵ *Yearbook on Human Rights for 1949* (New York: United Nations, 1949), xv.

⁷⁶ *Yearbook on Human Rights for 1949* (New York: United Nations, 1949), 249.

⁷⁷ *Yearbook on Human Rights for 1949* (New York: United Nations, 1949), 250.

⁷⁸ *Yearbook on Human Rights for 1949* (New York: United Nations, 1949), 252.

government.⁷⁹ According to the Association, bourgeois self-governance was an illusionary activity.⁸⁰ This type of self-government kept the hierarchy between the state and the lower levels of decision-making. As such, the bourgeois self-government was only an illusion of the self-governing of the people.⁸¹ The lawyers distinguished the bourgeois-democratic self-government from the people's committees, insofar as they were not being "tutored by the higher, central organs, and their jurisdiction at the local level is not lower nor subordinated."⁸² The Yugoslav self-governing system, they argued, was a system of genuine democratic decision-making, which indeed granted to all Yugoslav citizens the right to decide and participate in governance, notwithstanding one's background and material position. This was what made socialist democracy genuinely democratic. Yugoslav socialist democracy was therefore seen as a more perfect version of both liberal democracy and socialist democracy of the Soviet type. These democracies, while giving formal rights to people, in fact failed to place the human being at the center.

Self-determination also expressed this principle in international relations. Tito visited India and Burma at the end of 1954 and the beginning of 1955, a key step in the development of "mutual cooperation" [*zajednička saradnja*] between Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned countries.⁸³ Citing historian Darko Bekić, the trip represented "an intellectual catharsis of its own kind, through which Tito got rid of his Balkan selfishness and Eurocentric horizons, and overnight he had become a citizen of the world and a world leader."⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People's Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 43.

⁸⁰ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People's Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 43.

⁸¹ *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People's Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 44.

⁸² *Naši narodni odbori—lokalni organi državne vlasti socijalističke države* [Our People's Committees—Local Organs of State Authority in a Socialist State] (Izdanje Udruženja pravnika Narodne Republike Srbije, 1949), 46.

⁸³ Aleksandar Životić and Jovan Čavoški, "On the Road to Belgrade: Yugoslavia, Third World Neutrals, and the Evolution of Global Non-Alignment, 1954–1961," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 18, No. 4 (2016): 79.

⁸⁴ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u Hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949–1955* [Yugoslavia in the Cold War: Relations with the Great Powers, 1949–1955] (Zagreb: Plava biblioteka, 1988), 674, Cited in Aleksandar Životić

Discussions on topics concerning self-determination in the countries of the ‘Global South’ were not only found among the high-ranking politicians, but also at other levels of Yugoslav social and political life. For example, the Central Committee of the People’s Youth and the Central Board of the League of Students of Yugoslavia organized an international meeting on the theme “Peace, the fight against colonialism, and assistance to the undeveloped countries.”⁸⁵ The discussions circulated around questions of the struggles for peace, the fight against colonialism and neocolonialism, disarmament, help to the undeveloped countries, the role of the United Nations, coexistence, and finally, the role of the youth and its international cooperation.⁸⁶ Next to harshly denouncing colonialism and neocolonialism, according to Latinka Perović (1933–2022), at the time the president of the Conference for the Women’s Social Activity of Yugoslavia, the seminar highlighted the importance of overcoming the bloc-division of the world. Discussing the UN, representatives of the youth organization in Yugoslavia argued that the best way one could assist the underdeveloped countries was through the mechanism of the UN. Some representatives of the student organizations, however, expressed their doubts in the UN as a world organization, which they suggested was under the influence of many developed imperialist-colonial countries. While there were some doubts about whether the UN was an organization that could impartially assist undeveloped countries,

and Jovan Čavoški, “On the Road to Belgrade. Yugoslavia, Third World Neutrals, and the Evolution of Global Non-Alignment, 1954-1961,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 18, No. 4 (2016): 79–97, here 81.

⁸⁵ Published by the journal *Socijalizam. Organ centralnog komiteta Saveza Komunističke Jugoslavije* [Socialism: journal of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia] in 1960. The organization from the following countries participated: Algiers, Argentina, Ceylon, Colombia, Republic of the Congo (or Democratic Republic of the Congo), Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, West Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Palestine, Poland, Dominican Republic, Senegal, Tunisia, United Arab Republic, Uruguay, United States of America (USA), Zanzibar, Yugoslavia.

⁸⁶ Latinka Perović, “Socijalizam međunarodni omladinski i studentski seminar Mir, borba protiv kolonijalizma i pomoć nerazvijenim zemljama,” [Socialism: International Youth and Student Seminar on Peace, Struggle Against Colonialism, and Aid to Underdeveloped Countries], *Socijalizam. Organ centralnog komiteta saveza komunista Jugoslavije*, No. 5, Vol III (1960): 102. The members of the board included Zvonko Brkić, Krsto Buljajić, Krste Crvenkovski, Vojin Guzina, Kiro Hadži Vasilev, Ivan Laća, Miloš Minić, Latinka Perović, Milentije Popović, Radoslav Ratković, Veljko Vlahović and Boris Zihlerl.

at the meeting, it was affirmed that as an organization “becoming more and more universal,” it offered the appropriate mechanisms for helping undeveloped countries.⁸⁷

Self-determination and self-management were part and parcel of the Yugoslav Marxist language after 1948. We could say that ‘human rights’ were part of the political language, but they did not operate as widely as the notion of self-management did. At the same time, we can say that human rights were adjacent to self-management and self-determination, as the notion of ‘humanism’ functioned as an intellectual interpretation of the practices of self-government and self-management. Moreover, self-management was the political language of reform, while humanism was a part of the political imagination. Humanism was thus an overarching ideal about human dignity and emancipation, and less about political strategy and political practice. Thus, while these two notions intersected, they did not have a symmetrical relationship.

Protecting the rights of man [čovek]/human rights in Yugoslavia: between the West and the East

The discourse on human rights existed in Yugoslavia as early as 1953, as it can be seen in a short booklet on the *International Protection of the Rights of the Human Being* [Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka]. This section analyses the Yugoslav approach to human rights—which criticized both the Soviet Union’s disrespect of human beings and which aimed to expose the impossibility of genuine human rights protection in the liberal democracies. The author of this booklet was a lawyer Dušan Janićijević who positioned Yugoslavia between the approaches to the rights of man in Western capitalist states and those of the Soviet Union, showing the

⁸⁷ Latinka Perović, “Socijalizam: međunarodni omladinski i studentski seminar Mir, borba protiv kolonijalizma i pomoć nerazvijenim zemljama,” 105. In 1960, Perović was already a president of the Conference for Women’s Social Activity of Yugoslavia, and from 1968 she would become a Secretary of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia until she was removed from her position as a liberal, alongside Marko Nikezić. See Marino Badurina, “Who Were the Liberals and Conservatives in Yugoslavia in the Late 1960s and Early 1970s? Conflict Between Centrist Factions,” *Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju* No.4, 34 (2023): 571-590. See also, Milivoj Bešlin and Petar Žarković “Srpski liberali i Hrvatsko proljeće: hrvatsko-srpski odnosi i novi koncepti Jugoslavije krajem 1960-ih i početkom 1970-ih [Serbian liberals and Croatian spring: Croatian-Serbian relations and new conceptions of Yugoslavia at the end of 1960s and beginning of 1970s],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 53 3 (2021): 791–820.

limitations of both.⁸⁸ The main intention of the book was to argue for the importance of respecting the rights of man (it should be noted that he used the terms *prava čoveka* [rights of man/human being] and *ljudska prava* [human rights] interchangeably), which he saw as a culmination of the general progress of humanity. It was beyond doubt for Janićijević that international protection of human rights, while a novel phenomenon in the history of humanity, was the highest achievement of human beings. As he claimed: “Only with the establishment of two important international organizations, the League of Nations and the United Nations, was there the efficient achievement of that which henceforth was found only in the theoretical works or projects of some scientists or some unofficial institutions.”⁸⁹

In other words, Janićijević praised the internationally organized protection of the rights of man, arguing that the long-standing ideas and theories had finally become a reality. Until that moment, “all protection of human beings, and the protection of their rights, was a subject of the internal legal system of every country independently of one another.”⁹⁰ That is, an international law was an immense step in universalizing these rights. According to Janićijević, the starting point in the history of human rights were the bourgeois revolutions in the West: the American Bill of Rights and, in particular, the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and the Citizen. After managing to dismantle the feudal system, the formal democracy began: as he explained, it is known that the states which “previously entered the path to democratic development (in the bourgeois sense of the word), had and have a specific tradition in view of the development of specific democratic institutions: first of all, institutions which ensure and protect the rights of man.”⁹¹ While recognizing the importance of these acts and the bourgeois

⁸⁸ In 1955, Janićijević was the co-editor of the publication *Revizija Povelje Ujedinjenih nacija (dokumentacioni materijal)*, [Revision of the United Nations Charter (documentary material)] published by the Institute for International Politics and Economy, Belgrade.

⁸⁹ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 5.

⁹⁰ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 5.

⁹¹ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 9.

revolutions in their struggle for human rights, Janićijević critically examined the formal democracy in these countries. Namely, the bourgeoisie proclaimed “total equality before the law”; with that began the government of formal democracy, which included a “whole array of individual rights and freedoms,” including the “right to life, to freedom, to equal treatment before the law, freedom of consciousness, faith, and so on.”⁹² To Janićijević, however, this system was only formally democratic because it was above all a system of government by one class, which naturally protects its own class interests. Janićijević’s explanation of the development of human rights follows the logic of class struggle, whereby the struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of its rights also affected the bourgeois legal system. As a result, the bourgeoisie was forced to add some human rights laws to its system which included the freedom of assembly and organization, as well as an entire social law (social help, social insurance, and so forth). This was, as Janićijević explains, a compromise into which the bourgeoisie was forced to enter as a result of the proletariat’s fight for its rights.

We can argue that he represented the history of human rights as a natural development of the class struggle seen from a Marxist perspective: without the proletariat, the bourgeoisie would not have made concessions in adding some of the human rights to its list of rights. Prior to the demands of the proletariat, human rights primarily existed to ensure the ownership of the capital, and to protect the bourgeois class. At the same time, he acknowledged that the Western states that had gone through “the bourgeois revolutions” were the ones that indeed had “a certain tradition, in the sense of the development of specific democratic institutions—those institutions which safeguarded and ensured the rights of man.”⁹³ That is to say, implicitly, he connected these Western states which have had bourgeois revolutions to economic progress, but added that the very fact that they were the “leading forces” in history because of these

⁹² Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 7.

⁹³ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 9.

experiences, did not stop them from disrespecting human rights. However, he did not wish to claim that the classic bourgeois democracy was a cause of these regimes, for the very reason that fascism was a complete negation of the achievements made in the struggle for human rights.

From his Marxist perspective, however, Janićijević criticized the formal democratic regimes of those Western countries which enjoyed democratic progress, and believed that they had reached their limit, yet, to his mind, there were still limitations in the sense of applying human rights.⁹⁴ Thus, the accent was not on whether these human rights were part of these countries' legal system; instead, the accent was put on how universally or not these human rights were 'used' and 'applied.' Therefore, he made the distinction between the formal and institutional establishment of human rights discourse in these countries and the actual and practical application of these rights on the local but also international levels. The clear discrimination was that, as he pointed out, women in many cases did not enjoy human rights equally like men, especially political rights (voting rights) but also social (for instance, in many countries women's salaries were lower than man's even though they would do the labor). Next to excluding women from the practice of human rights and next to gender inequalities in the West, another important critique of the Western countries' application of human rights was a racial and national discrimination in those countries who had national and other minorities. The paradox of these states, as Janićijević explained, was that they gave "full freedom" to their citizens, while at the same time "violating the rights of the minorities."⁹⁵ Janićijević criticized the United States, where the principles of democracy were transformed into a formality because of the racial segregation and discrimination. Similarly, the French Republic proclaimed the equality of "everyone living in the territories of France," yet in practice those living in the

⁹⁴ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 19.

⁹⁵ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 10.

colonies or the former French colonies were not treated differently; there was an inequality based on race. Put differently, Janićijević pointed out the inconsistencies existing in the universal declarations of human rights and the fact that, when applied to real cases in particular contexts, they were in fact not genuinely practiced and applied.

Janićijević pointed out that such contradictions and inconsistencies did not occur only in the West but also in socialist countries. While the socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917 created the preconditions for the creation of “a genuine socialist democracy in which the respect of human rights would reach its maximum,”⁹⁶ Janićijević also criticized the application of human rights in the Soviet Union. Namely, only during a short period of the existence of Soviet Union, the development of human rights was on the right path. This was mainly expressed in the *Declaration of the Rights of Working and Exploited People* (1918). This declaration presented as he put it “basis for the acknowledgment and respect of the basic rights of citizens of the USSR.”⁹⁷ He also acknowledged that human rights as conceptualized in the Soviet Union did not have a universal character as they excluded the capitalist class. While he criticized the disrespect of the human rights of national minorities and races in the Western countries, Janićijević did not hold the same view when it came to class—as his argument was that, due to the fact that the “large masses of people” were enjoying these rights in the USSR, one could not really speak about the “violation of basic rights of human beings in Russia” at the time. More important for Janićijević was the fact that respect for human rights during this short period was expressed in Lenin’s principle of the rights of people to self-determination. Janićijević’s intention was similar to that of Hermann Klenner, a legal scholar from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) who, in his 1964 work *Studies on Basic Human Rights*, aimed to

⁹⁶ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 12.

⁹⁷ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 12.

“construct a comprehensive new history and philosophy of socialist human rights.”⁹⁸ However, in contrast to Klenner, Janićijević did not reject the achievements of the bourgeois revolutions when it came to human rights, while also not arguing that they were the highest expression of these rights. Instead, his point was to claim that the important institutions were formed through these revolutions, which is consequently an achievement of the universal history of humanity. Instead of praising the Russian Revolution of 1917 and claiming that the abolition of capitalism immediately meant that humankind was “freed from all economic, ideological, and political chains, and [that] as a result, a new form of human rights would also be fulfilled,” Janićijević argued that this progressive element of the Revolution was halted by Stalin.

Furthermore, Janićijević argued that the development of socialist democracy and the rights of man in the Soviet Union was halted with Stalin’s imposition of bureaucracy and despotic rule, which reduced human rights to a minimum, analogous to the feudal and despotic tsarist Russia.⁹⁹ From that moment on, all the acts and constitutions that proclaimed the rights of man were just an illusion, they were quite different from reality. The Constitution of 1936 was reduced only to declarations and had “nothing to do with the reality of the country.”¹⁰⁰ Especially problematic for Janićijević was the disrespect of the national equality of the people of the Soviet Union. The right of people to self-determination as one of the basic rights of human beings was, he contended, only an empty formula in the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹ “Every attempt to achieve these rights would end up in the liquidation of the people [who made the attempt], transferring the entire people to some faraway part of the USSR, and any movement for the

⁹⁸ Ned Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity and Revolution in East Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 79.

⁹⁹ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 13.

¹⁰⁰ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 14.

¹⁰¹ Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 16.

usage of their own national rights would be stifled.”¹⁰² Next to the disrespect of national rights and self-determination, other rights were also violated in the Soviet Union—from political rights (voting), to economic and social rights (the right to work and so forth).

Janićijević followed the logic found in different discourses at the time, as we will see later, in theoretical discussions in which the philosophers and sociologists criticized both Western bourgeois philosophy and dogmatic Marxism in the Soviet Union. He showed that Western capitalist countries and the Soviet Union—different systems with different historical trajectories of human rights—limited the human rights application and in some cases, even violated them. Human rights and democracy were seen by the Yugoslavs as being tied together: democracy had a universal reach (on a state level, at least) in terms of allowing everyone to enjoy human rights and to participate in the affairs of a country in which they were citizens.

It should be mentioned that Yugoslavs indeed aimed to popularize such ideas outside Yugoslavia, as it can be seen in the journal *Internationale Politik* printed in German language (as well as in Serbo-Croatian, English, and French). There, Milan Bartoš (1901–1974), professor at the Faculty of Law, at the University in Belgrade, and one of the most prominent Yugoslav experts in international law, in his text “*UNO-Charta und aktive Koexistenz* [UN Charter and active coexistence]” criticized the racist and hierarchical understanding of international law and a notion of civilization. Discussing the international law, he lamented:

It was indeed a sad moment in the history of humanity when a great American politician, representative of the very influential school in the US, openly declared in 1945 at the San Francisco Conference that only states which belong to a civilization like that of the European or American countries could be admitted as members of the future organization.¹⁰³

Thus, he presented a critique of the international order, arguing that while there is a formal declaration of equality (as expressed in the UN Charter), the power asymmetries still persist.

¹⁰² Dušan Janićijević, *Međunarodna zaštita prava čoveka* [International Protection of Human Rights] (Narodna knjiga: Beograd, 1953), 16.

¹⁰³ Milan Bartoš, “UNO-Charta und aktive Koexistenz [UN Charter and active coexistence], *Internationale Politik* No. 126-128 (1955): 19.

Moreover, the racial and civilizational hierarchies still exist even when discussing such universalist documents like the UN Charter. Thus, Bartoš called for a more genuine and inclusive international legal system that would be based on active coexistence and not on the dominance of some nations and the oppression of others.

In other sources, we can also see that human rights discourses were referenced in the early 1960s, in relationship to the position of women in contemporary society, as illustrated in Vida Tomšič's text "Problems of the social position of women."¹⁰⁴ Tomšič, a prominent communist politician, women's activist and Marxist feminist, who also fought during WWII, highlighted the political rights gained by women thanks to the Declaration of Human Rights as well as the UN Charter. At the same time, she also stressed the issues women were facing in both capitalist and socialist societies. Namely, as she claimed, "we can say that the main difference between progress and conservatism...is not so much in the acceptance or rejection of women's equality, as much as it is in the relation towards all the consequences that emerge from that in the family and household."¹⁰⁵ Tomšič argued that it was not controversial to demand women's equality, as it was a well-accepted right, but the difference between the regimes was in the degree to which this equality was applied.

Self-management and socialist democracy

The Yugoslav Self-management and socialist democracy created another distinctive element in the debates that included either explicitly or implicitly theoretical perspectives on the rights of man, and conceptualizations of a 'human being.' The Yugoslav self-management project, as historian Goran Musić stresses, "is inseparable from the insistence of the Titoist

¹⁰⁴ Vida Tomšič was a Slovenian lawyer, former partisan, and high-ranking communist politician, and as Chiara Bonfiglioli writes, she had "a fundamental role in shaping welfare policies in socialist Yugoslavia." See Chiara Bonfiglioli, "On Vida Tomšič, Marxist Feminism, and Agency," *Aspasia*, Vol.10 (2016): 1.

¹⁰⁵ Vida Tomšič, "Problemi društvenog položaja žena [Problems of the social status of women]," *Socijalizam, Organ centralnog komiteta saveza komunista Jugoslavije*, No 5-6 Vol IV (1961): 9.

revolutionary leadership on the rights of the socialist states...to seek their own paths of development, independent from the model endorsed by the Soviet Union.”¹⁰⁶ The political leadership and the former partisans found an inspiration in the reading of the Marx’s writings on the Paris Commune and Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*—arguing that “state ownership of means of production as simply the lowest form of social ownership, which, if not transcended soon after the revolution, would lead inevitably to centralized control by the state bureaucracy of the produced surplus value and thus to the establishment of state capitalism.”¹⁰⁷

The 1950 Law on Self-Management was proclaimed by officials to be one of the most democratic laws in the history of socialist Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁸ Among other things, this law guaranteed the working-class protection from “bureaucratism and particularism.”¹⁰⁹ Particularism was used by the officials mainly to refer to nationalism, chauvinism, and localism. ‘Particularistic tendencies’ were regarded as a constant danger in a multiethnic Yugoslav society, which had already experienced the “exploitation of nation(s) by others” during the interwar period. Next to giving workers decision-making power, the law was supposed to protect them from the abuse of power by one group over another within Yugoslav society. At the time, ‘particularism’ and its consequences were analyzed with regard to the Soviet Union, in which the Russian dominant nation was stifling the rights of other people. The Yugoslavs often referred to Marx’s claim that a “nation which is oppressing another nation cannot be free.” It should be however noted that the Party at the time did not reject the existence

¹⁰⁶ Goran Musić, “Yugoslavia: Workers’ Self-Management as State Paradigm,” in *Workers’ Councils from the Commune to the Present*, edited by Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), 173.

¹⁰⁷ Goran Musić, “Yugoslavia: Workers’ Self-Management as State Paradigm,” in *Workers’ Councils from the Commune to the Present*, edited by Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), 173-174.

¹⁰⁸ “Iz govora druga Tita u Narodnoj Skupštini FNRJ povodom predloga osnovnog zakona o upravljanju državnim privrednim preduzećima i višim privrednim udruženjima od strane radnih kolektiva 26. juna 1950. godine” [From a speech by Comrade Tito in the National Assembly of the FPRY on the proposal of the fundamental law on the management of state economic enterprises and higher economic associations by labor collectives, June 26, 1950], 70.

¹⁰⁹ Particularistic tendencies were also referred to any groups with specific and particular characteristics; for instance, the bureaucracy could also be a particularistic tendency.

of these particularisms (religious, national) in Yugoslav society. The political leadership viewed them as the “ideological remnants of the past,” which still existed in different fields of social life. As Edvard Kardelj explained, these particularisms “bring damage when they work in the direction of weakening the internal unity of our peoples, the unity of the working masses, or when they compromise the system of democratic social self-management in the economy and other fields of social activity.”¹¹⁰

In order to distance itself from the Soviet model—which, according to officials, represented a “bureaucratic caste” that monopolized the socialist idea and the interpretation of Marxism—the mentioned law was supposed to be a guarantee of the protection of Yugoslav citizens against bureaucratism, which they saw as analogous to a capitalist state in which decision-making occurred only among groups of politicians. As the Slovenian communist Edvard Kardelj, one of the prominent ideologues of self-managing socialism, explained, society in the Soviet Union was only an “executor of the political and economic ideas of this specific ‘caste,’ the Communist Party.”¹¹¹ Yugoslav communist theoreticians like Kardelj, but also Milovan Đilas, Boris Žiharel, and others, argued that self-management had a democratizing and decentralizing effect, and thus they posed it as a direct opposite to the interwar integral Yugoslavism that ignored the cultural and local specificities of the Yugoslav peoples.¹¹² Moreover, the law on self-management also fixed the importance of the individual’s own role in building Yugoslav socialist democracy. Put differently, the political, ideological, and other activities of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was not to be seen as the sole activity in building socialist democracy: instead, according to Tito, “every one of its individually taken

¹¹⁰ Edvard Kardelj, “Uloga i zadaci socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije u borbi za socijalizam” [The role and tasks of socialist league of the working people of Yugoslavia in their fight for socialism], *Komunist V*, No. 2–3 (1953): 63–119, here 66.

¹¹¹ Edvard Kardelj, “Uloga i zadaci socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Jugoslavije u borbi za socijalizam” [The role and tasks of socialist league of the working people of Yugoslavia in their fight for socialism], *Komunist V*, no. 2–3 (1953): 63–119, here 66.

¹¹² Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation. Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford University Press), 134.

member, notwithstanding what kind of job he is doing...” was responsible for it.¹¹³ The leadership framed the building of democracy in terms of its citizens’ responsibility, who constantly had to remind themselves that the stakes of building democracy were high since, especially in the immediate postwar context, “it is always possible that her [the democracy’s] external and internal enemies undermine her.”¹¹⁴

Self-management, as represented by the leadership, more importantly, had an essentially humanist character. The Yugoslav communists believed that only through workers’ collectives, the process of gradual emancipation of the human being could finally start. As Jovan Đorđević (1908–1989)—a lawyer and leading theoretician on self-management, who received his doctorate in political and legal sciences in Paris in 1935, and later taught at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade—explained, the task was the “achievement of full human freedom, that is, a condition in which a human being will truly be a human being, that what according to his or her humanist, human nature, he or she actually is.”¹¹⁵ In referencing Hegel, he argued that through a socialist self-managing system a human being “becomes freedom—when he is nothing else but what he is and what he can become—as Marx had thought us, when he stops being a tool of property of others—that is when he becomes the only subject of all relations, activities, and ‘rights’ in a society.”¹¹⁶ We can see that non-Marxist philosophy, specifically Hegelian philosophy, previously deemed idealistic, was reconciled with Marxist, materialist philosophy in these early years by the party intellectuals. Đorđević’s insight was not an isolated one, as Hegelian ideas were also advocated by Marxist philosophers in important positions,

¹¹³ *VI Kongres KPJ* [VI Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia] (Kultura Beograd 1952): 77–78.

¹¹⁴ *VI Kongres KPJ* [VI Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia] (Kultura Beograd 1952): 78.

¹¹⁵ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 10.

¹¹⁶ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 10.

including Dušan Nedeljković (1899–1984), who served as rector of the University of Belgrade (from 1947 to 1949) and later a professor of philosophy.¹¹⁷

In discussing the concept of democracy, the political leadership did not disregard the importance of legal and political equalities which, “despite their formal nature, still have a general and universal value. This includes an emphasis on certain rights and freedoms of human beings and citizens which retain their importance even in post-revolutionary societies, as well as the principle of the controlling and limiting governmental power.”¹¹⁸ Edvard Kardelj argued that when one speaks about the “crisis of democracy,”¹¹⁹ this refers to the crisis of the specific concept and specific practice of democracy and less about the crisis of democracy in general. It is about problematizing those frames and political forms of democracy which are too tight for “the ever-growing power of the masses, for their need to express their wish not only during electoral contests, but also in decisions on their workplace, the conditions and results of labor, and also the continuous effect on global political decisions, all decisions which have to do with their important life interests.”¹²⁰ For Kardelj, socialism and democracy were seen as tightly connected. Democratic rights and freedoms were the imperatives of socialism, and the Yugoslav leadership argued that this was the “thought and action” of the socialist revolution. Kardelj suggested that socialism had to offer far broader democratic rights and human freedoms than those provided by the bourgeois parliamentary system. While not denying the significance

¹¹⁷ Dušan Nedeljković studied at the Sorbonne in Paris during the interwar period and upon his return worked as a professor of philosophy at the University of Skopje. Nedeljković was as an important authority in Marxist philosophy in the early years of postwar Yugoslavia. Due to a political attack by Milovan Đilas he was removed from his position at the University and moved to the Institute for Ethnology. He was a mentor of *Praxis* philosopher Mihailo Marković.

¹¹⁸ Edvard Kardelj, *Socijalizam i demokracija*. Izbor priredili Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin; predgovor Adolf Bibić [Edvard Kardelj, *Socialism and Democracy*. Selection prepared by Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin; foreword by Adolf Bibić] (Zagreb: Globus, 1980).

¹¹⁹ Edvard Kardelj, *Socijalizam i demokracija*. Izbor priredili Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin ; predgovor Adolf Bibić [Edvard Kardelj, *Socialism and Democracy*. Selection prepared by Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin; foreword by Adolf Bibić] (Zagreb: Globus, 1980).

¹²⁰ Edvard Kardelj, *Socijalizam i demokracija*. Izbor priredili Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin ; predgovor Adolf Bibić [Edvard Kardelj, *Socialism and Democracy*. Selection prepared by Branko Caratan, Vjekoslav Mikecin; foreword by Adolf Bibić] (Zagreb: Globus, 1980), xi-xii.

of traditional “bourgeois freedoms and rights,” socialist society had advanced significantly by strengthening the social position of the working person, which was from their perspective a fundamental aspect of ensuring that the working class is not exploited. In addition to the classical freedoms and rights, Kardelj claimed that socialism’s self-managed democracy prioritized and guaranteed the fundamental freedom of individuals above all else.

The new Constitution as an expression of the humanist principles of socialist Yugoslavia

While the Law on Self-Management officially put Yugoslavia on its own path to socialism, giving the ‘factories to the workers’ as Tito famously announced,¹²¹ and started the decentralization from the state towards local governments, the new Constitution spelled out specifically the rights of Yugoslav citizens that, as will be seen, combined the language of universal human rights with Marxist terminology. As explained in a booklet introducing the new Constitution, it was grounded in the teachings of the classics of Marxism; at the same time, the new Constitution positioned itself on the ideas and heritages of the American, French, and October Revolutions, as well as of the Paris Commune, thereby creating a link with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹²² According to its authors, it represented a synthesis of all the progressive and democratic forces in human history.

Additionally, the new Constitution radically differed from the previous one (which was essentially a copy of the Soviet Union’s Constitution) in that it established the principle of self-government of the working people as the cornerstone of Yugoslav political, social, economic, and cultural life. With this principle, as Jovan Đorđević explained, the etatism in all crucial

¹²¹ Josip Broz Tito, “Workers Manage Factories in Yugoslavia,” June 26, 1950. Marxists Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/tito/1950/06/26.htm> Accessed 24 February 2025.

¹²² *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića* [New Constitution of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia—constitutional law from 13.1.1953 and Constitution from 31.1.1946 (parts which were not abolished), with the afterward of Dr. Jovan Đorđević] (Beograd: Izdanje službenog lista FNRJ, 1953), 126.

aspects of social life in Yugoslavia was defeated, such that the “entire character of the political establishment is changed.”¹²³ The Constitution highlighted that “the self-governing of working people cannot be genuine as long as a human being [čovjek] and citizen [građanin] does not feel free and does not have civil rights.”¹²⁴ Reformulated Yugoslav socialist democracy, as expressed by the new Constitution, encompassed and ensured the “democratic rights of human beings and citizens.”¹²⁵ Đorđević, who participated in the drafting of the Constitution, highlighted that “basic human rights,” which were not included in the old Constitution, were included in the new one.¹²⁶ That was the right to labor (*rad*), which ensured that nobody who wished to work would be unemployed. This crucial “human right,” as Đorđević argued, ensured that even in cases in which a person would be for different reasons unemployed, they would be legally entitled to a minimum wage that would ensure their subsistence.

The socialist democracy that was granted by the new Constitution was described by Đorđević not as some “ideal state” or as “a utopia according to which the reality has to be subordinated.”¹²⁷ Instead, this socialist democracy was only a “fuller” democracy than that one guaranteed by the Constitution of 1946, and it was an “act of political realism.”¹²⁸ As Đorđević claimed in his text *Džavno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* (The state system of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1954), the function of the Yugoslav state was profoundly limited and as such it ceased to be an ‘absolutist state.’ In contrast to the Soviet Union, the new Constitution ensured “a type of socialist democratic ‘natural rights’ which

¹²³ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 94.

¹²⁴ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 94–5.

¹²⁵ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 95.

¹²⁶ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 95.

¹²⁷ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 123.

¹²⁸ Jovan Đorđević, “Pogovor” [Afterword], in *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti), sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića*, 128.

represent not just the limitation of state power but also an affirmation and form of transfer of earlier social functions to society, thereby putting the state to sleep and drawing it into the society about which Engels spoke.”¹²⁹

What were the main humanist principles of the new Yugoslav Constitution? The equality of all people before the law, notwithstanding their nationality (*narodnost*), race, and religion, was firmly asserted. Citizens’ right to vote was also guaranteed, and the secrecy of the voting system was protected.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Article 24 guaranteed the equality of women with men in all fields of social, economic, political, and social life. Women had the right to equal pay and received specific protection in their working environment. Article 25 guaranteed freedom of consciousness and freedom of religion and confession. The constitution guaranteed the right to personal inviolability, with Article 28 underlying that no citizen could be exiled from Yugoslavia. The Constitution also ensured the freedom of scientific and artistic work.¹³¹

The new Constitution relied on the humanist ideas found in young Marx, as per Đorđević’s reconstruction. While he did not belong to the *Praxis* circle, such statements and interpretations show how complex Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia was. By arguing that the Constitution was an embodiment of humanist ideas, he legitimized his Marxist humanism in a specific context. As Đorđević explained, “On the basis of these new individual democratic rights starts the process which young Marx marked as the ‘return of human nature to producer and citizen,’ human nature which was alienated by the private and state capitalist property, economic, and political centralism and bureaucratism of the old state.”¹³² The individual rights of the human being (right to personal freedom, inviolability of personality, equality before the

¹²⁹ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 10.

¹³⁰ *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti)*, sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića, 57.

¹³¹ *Novi Ustav Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije—ustavni zakon od 13.1.1953, i Ustav od 31.1.1946 (dijelovi koji nisu ukinuti)*, sa pogovorom dr Jovana Đorđevića, 61.

¹³² Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 31.

law, freedom of consciousness and religion), were already ensured by the 1946 Constitution. But under the new Constitution the personal liberties of human beings were ensured: that is, one could not be considered guilty until a verdict was delivered in a court of law. Thus, the principle of *habeas corpus* sanctioned coercion against “the individuality and soul of man.”¹³³ Next to personal rights, the Constitution guaranteed the “classical rights of citizens, or the political rights (freedom of thought, expression, press and information, freedom of assembly).”¹³⁴

Yugoslav socialist democracy thus relied, at least formally, on these rights and rules, which protected individual liberties and freedoms. Yet Đorđević saw these rights as separate from humanism which was a necessary ingredient of Yugoslav socialist democracy. As he claimed, these constitutionally guaranteed classical rights were not sufficient to create the actual liberation and emancipation of human beings. What was needed, and what Yugoslav “socialism with a human face” provided, was a new type humanism. As already implied, humanism was here mainly traced to Marx’s early writings in which he also discussed human liberation and alienation. As Đorđević explained: “Every democracy must start from humanism, or it is no longer democracy.”¹³⁵ Humanism was thus a necessary ingredient of Yugoslav socialism and something that radically distinguished it from the Soviet type of socialism, which in the eyes of the Party and critical intellectuals did not provide any care for man, instead placing the state apparatus as its goal. As will be later discussed in detail, party intellectuals like the Slovenian philosopher Boris Žihl (1910–1976) were also discussing the importance of humanism in Yugoslavia, relying primarily on the readings of young Marx.¹³⁶

¹³³ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 29.

¹³⁴ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organization of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1954), 30.

¹³⁵ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organisation of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, 1954), 32.

¹³⁶ Boris Žihl, *O Humanizmu in socializmu* [On humanism and socialism] (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1965).

Humanism as a term, and more specifically socialist humanism was introduced to Yugoslavia by the Party, in the context of the CPY's critique of Stalinism. Moreover, what made socialist democracy humanist in the case of Yugoslavia, was that it was a political system that was directed towards the "withering away of the state."¹³⁷ Thus, the Yugoslav—or, as Dejan Jović writes, "Kardeljst"—interpretation of Marxism, which saw Soviet socialism as revisionism, "linked elements of the national tradition with a strict implementation of the Marxist notion of the withering away of the state."¹³⁸ Đorđević claimed, citing Marx, that communism is nothing else but the realization of humanism.¹³⁹

By looking at the new Constitution, formulated in the post-1948 context, we can see that Marxist humanism or "creative Marxism"¹⁴⁰ in the 1950s was part of the general turn of Yugoslavia's communist leadership towards self-managing socialism. In such a setting, Yugoslav intellectuals and politicians identified with the humanist perspectives of Marxism and a relatively open intellectual life.¹⁴¹ Next to the Institute for Social Sciences in Belgrade,¹⁴² between 1951 and 1957 in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the

¹³⁷ Boris Žihel, *O Humanizmu in socializmu* [On humanism and socialism] (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1965), 2.

¹³⁸ Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia, A State that Withered Away* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), 4.

¹³⁹ Jovan Đorđević, *Državno uređenje Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* [State organisation of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Izdanje udruženja pravnika Jugoslavije, 1954), 72.

¹⁴⁰ Creative Marxism is a term often used to delineate the 'non-dogmatic' Marxist interpretations from the 'dogmatic'.

¹⁴¹ Veselin Golubović, *S Marksom protiv Staljina: jugoslovenska kritika staljinizma, 1950–1960* [With Marx against Stalin: Yugoslav critique of Stalinism, 1950–1960] (Zagreb: Globus, 1985), 18.

¹⁴² The Institute was first established in 1948 and worked as a 'party school' before it was formally established as the Institute for Social Sciences (IDN) in September 1957. In *Uredba*, one can see the tasks which included, among others, "development of research methods, work on the professional development of the cadres... scientific cooperation with other institutions in the country and abroad." The members of the Board included various prominent intellectuals, theorists, and politicians, who would be part of the dialogues found in this dissertation. Some names worth mentioning were Jovan Đorđević; Jože Goričar (1907–1985), a Ljubljana-based sociologist, "founder of Slovenian sociology," and a doctoral mentor of Ivan Kuvačić and Ljubomir Tadić, members of the core *Praxis* intellectual circle; Milka Minić (1915–2000), who became a minister of education in the 1950s, and later in the 1960s, a director of the Yugoslav Institute for the workers' movement; Vuko Pavićević (1914–1978), a Belgrade-based philosopher; Predrag Vranicki, a Zagreb-based philosopher and one of the core members of the *Praxis* circle; and Boris Žihel (1910–1976), a Ljubljana-based intellectual, also a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia since 1930, who served as a director of the Institute of Social Sciences, as well as the Director of the Institute of Sociology and Philosophy of the University of Ljubljana, which he founded. Goran Bašić (ed.), *Institut društvenih nauka. Od crvene akademije do institucije od nacionalnog značaja* [Institute of Social Sciences. From Red Academy to an Institution of National Importance] (Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka, 2022), 34–35.

philosophers and sociologists established or reestablished interwar philosophical societies, which also facilitated discussions in Marxist philosophy and humanism. These institutions will be important in the following chapters of this dissertation as they gathered intellectuals together, some of whom would become a part of the *Praxis* circle. Their theoretical engagement, inspired by the introduction of humanist principles in socialist Yugoslavia and the general criticism of Marxist theory that was adopted from the USSR, would gradually move from criticism of Stalinism towards criticism of the Yugoslav implementation of Marxism. Namely, they would argue that socialism in Yugoslavia has not managed to liberate itself from Stalinist remnants.

The critique of the Soviet Union, the introduction of worker's self-management in 1950, and the revision of the "Organization and Tasks of the Party" in 1952, had immense consequences on the future intellectual and cultural production in Yugoslavia. The encouragement of seeking and experimenting with different ideas and systems of thought also came from the politicians themselves, as Josip Broz Tito claimed in 1950:

But today we alone are building socialism in our own country, we do not use any more templates, but we are directed by Marxist science, and we are taking our own path, keeping in mind the specific conditions in our country. The templates we have used until today brought us a great deal of hardship and we can still feel their heavy consequences, since they have been uncontrollably entering into the practice of our people, and now it is difficult to cast them aside, although the people would wish to do so. At the very last moment, we took on all the necessary measures that could help us in stopping such a damaging practice.¹⁴³

Thus, the officials presented Marxism not as a dogma (which, they argued, it was in the case of the Soviet Union), but as a *tool* that can be used for governing [*rukovođenje*] and for orienting their socialist practice in concrete situations. In rethinking Marxism in Yugoslavia,

¹⁴³ Iz govora druga Tita u Narodnoj Skupštini FNRJ povodom predloga osnovnog zakona o upravljanju državnim privrednim preduzećima i višim privrednim udruženjima od strane radnih kolektiva 26. juna 1950. godine, [From the speech of Comrade Tito in the National Assembly of the FNRJ on the occasion of the proposal of the basic law on the management of state economic enterprises and higher economic associations by labor collectives on June 26, 1950], 66. Published originally in *Komunist* No.4-5, 1950.

the “struggle of opinion” was introduced by the Party as a direct opposite to the top-down imposition of Marxism-Leninism by the state. However, as will be seen in the following section, as early as 1953, critical intellectuals started to challenge the very practice of “struggle of opinion” in Yugoslavia, arguing that while it had been announced by the Party, it nevertheless remained an “empty phrase.”

Freedom of thought, “struggle of opinion,” and the early contestations

The extensive democratization of society and the expansion of liberties gave a push to creativity in all fields of arts, science, and education.¹⁴⁴ The 1950s were marked by the elimination of Zhdanovism, dogmatism, and pragmatism in the arts. Edvard Kardelj’s speech at the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana in 1949 was the first public and explicit critique of the Soviet model of culture.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Petar Šegedin (1909–1998),¹⁴⁶ the Zagreb-based writer who introduced existentialism to Croatian novels and was also a member of the wider *Praxis* circle, contributed with his presentation to the critique of these early discussions on culture at the Second Congress of Writers of Yugoslavia (26–28 December 1949). Later, in 1951., at the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the free struggle of opinion was proclaimed, while the Sixth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1952 finally canonized this principle.

While this will be developed in the second chapter, it should be noted that the philosophical and sociological engagement in Yugoslavia between 1950 and 1960 encompassed discussions of classical Marxism but also included various pre-Marxist or non-Marxist schools of thought. During this period, many philosophical and sociological books

¹⁴⁴ Editorial, “Tribina mladih [Youth forum]” *Savremenost* Vol. 1, No. 1 (1971): 81.

¹⁴⁵ See, Maja Korolija, “Yugoslav science during the Cold War (1945–1960): socio-economic and ideological impacts of a geopolitical shift,” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, Article number: 913 (2023):7.

¹⁴⁶ Petar Šegedin was also a president of *Matica Hrvatska* and the Croatian Writers’ Association.

from the West were translated into Serbo-Croatian, while journals covering literature, philosophy, sociology, and the arts discussed and reported on the various publications from Western countries. This early entanglement with Western literature and scholarship also entailed the understanding that Marxist philosophy was not only in a relationship with the philosophy that came before it, but that it was directly its extension. Gajo Petrović (1927–1993),¹⁴⁷ one of the members of the *Praxis* circle in the 1960s, argued in 1950 that there was a crucial link between pre-Marxist and Marxist philosophy that needed to be examined rather than ignored.¹⁴⁸

As we will see, the content of the ‘struggle of opinion’ and the goal of assessing Marxism and socialism critically became an issue of contestation among the intellectuals, as well as party politicians. ‘Struggle of opinion’ inevitably stood for freedom of expression, debate, and democratic participation. This was also an example of the translation of human rights into political participation: that is, the demand for the plurality of ideas and opinions. In the first example, we will see how the intellectuals criticized practices in socialist Yugoslavia from the perspective of the rights they received with the implementation of the ‘struggle of opinion’ and the Constitution. In the context in which a critical approach to Stalinism was not just allowed but also encouraged by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav philosophers and sociologists of the future *Praxis* circle began their contributions to the ‘open questions of Marxism’ in Yugoslavia. During the early 1950s, the starting position of intellectuals was the Party’s argument that the USSR had seen “the strengthening and the turning of bureaucracy into a privileged caste, which lives on the account of society as a

¹⁴⁷ Lino Veljak describes Gajo Petrović as being a Croatian, a Serbian, and a Yugoslav philosopher. His mother was Croatian, and he lived in Zagreb, while his father was Serbian. One of his main interests was the question of *čovjek* or the human being. See Lino Veljak, “Uz 30. Obljetnicu smrti Gaje Petrovića [On the 30th anniversary of the death of Gajo Petrović],” *Tragovi* 6, No. 2 (2023): 139-147.

¹⁴⁸ Veselin Golubović, *S Marxom protiv Staljina: Jugoslovenska filozofska kritika staljinizma 1950-1960* [With Marx against Stalin: Yugoslav philosophical critique of Stalinism 1950-1960] (Globus, Zagreb, 1985), 83.

whole.¹⁴⁹ Some of the early contributions to these discussions included the Slovenian party ideologue and philosopher Boris Žihler's "O nekim problemima države prelaznog perioda" [On some problems of the state in the period of transition], philosopher Ljubomir Tadić's "O klasnoj borbi u prelaznom period" [On the class struggle in the period of transition],¹⁵⁰ or Najdan Pašić's "Izvrtaње marksističkog učenja o državi u teoriji i praksi savremenog revizionizma" [The distortion of Marxist learning about the state in the theory and practice of contemporary revisionism].

The point of contestation was the necessity of practicing the 'struggle of opinion' while at the same time ensuring 'ideological unity' and sticking to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In this early period, however, it would be difficult to talk about any major epistemological divergences between the future *Praxis* group and the party intellectuals. The intellectuals especially welcomed the resolution adopted at the Sixth Congress of the CPY in 1952 that expressed the need to further the democratization of schools and scientific institutions. The resolution highlighted that such democratization went hand in hand with the "progressive tendencies of economic, democratic, and social development in Yugoslavia."¹⁵¹ The Resolution also stipulated the utmost importance of the "struggle of opinion" needed for the progress and development of science and culture in Yugoslavia. The struggle of opinion was essentially a democratic practice, which was supposed to "express the strength of the argument" and "give equal rights to those who have diverging opinions."¹⁵² The plurality of

¹⁴⁹ Predrag Vranicki, "O nekim pitanjima marksističke teorije u vezi sa Ždanovljevom kritikom Aleksandrova," *Republika*, VI, II, 7 (1950): 401-424.

¹⁵⁰ Ljubomir Tadić (1925–2013) was a lawyer and philosopher, member of the circle *Praxis*, whose doctorate was a thesis on the philosophical basis of Hans Kelsen's theory of state. Najdan Pašić (1922–1997) was a legal and political scientist, and a director of the Institute of Social Sciences as well as a professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade.

¹⁵¹ "Iz rezolucije VI Kongresa KPJ o zadacima i ulozi Saveza Komunisti Jugoslavije: u pogledu škola i naučnih ustanova" [From the resolution of the VI Congress of the CPY on the task and role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia: concerning schools and scientific institutions], *Pogledi*, No. 2 (1953): 65.

¹⁵² "Iz rezolucije VI Kongresa KPJ o zadacima i ulozi Saveza Komunisti Jugoslavije: u pogledu škola i naučnih ustanova" [From the resolution of the VI Congress of the CPY on the task and role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia: concerning schools and scientific institutions], *Pogledi*, No. 2 (1953): 65.

ideas was thus to be tolerated and was in fact seen as needed. More importantly, the starting position for everyone aiming to engage in a critique was supposed to be “a struggle for socialism and socialist democracy, for the brotherhood and unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia, for their independence and unhindered international development.”¹⁵³ Therefore, while the plurality of ideas and opinions was a precondition for the progress of socialist thought, from the perspective of the Party, it inevitably opened up a space for critical voices towards socialism itself.

However, as early as 1953, Rudi Supek (1913–1993), the Croatian sociologist and philosopher and one of the main founders of the 1960s journal *Praxis*, criticized the insufficient implementation of the principle of ‘struggle of opinion,’ which he believed had to do with the fact that freedom of thought was to be respected in practice. In defending this principle, Supek argued for the full autonomy of cultural workers in Yugoslavia, who would not be sanctioned for their opinions. In his criticism, however, it is possible to note that Supek argued not simply for the existence of a multiplicity of ideas and opinions, a plurality of ideological positions. The emphasis was first and foremost on personal autonomy.

As an intellectual, Supek positioned himself as someone whose main task was to develop a ‘struggle of opinion’ in Yugoslavia which would consequently contribute to the new socialist culture that was supposed to be in contrast to the “past Soviet practice of conducting cultural life from above, that is from the political forums.”¹⁵⁴ Culture, as Supek claimed, was an autonomous sphere and was supposed to be left to the intellectuals, rather than being governed by politicians and state officials. Supek criticized the persisting “club mentality”

¹⁵³ “Iz rezolucije VI Kongresa KPJ o zadacima i ulozi Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije: u pogledu škola i naučnih ustanova” [From the resolution of the VI Congress of the CPY on the task and role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia: concerning schools and scientific institutions], *Pogledi*, No. 2 (1953): 65.

¹⁵⁴ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, No. 12 (1953): 907.

which he found in the cultural sphere, which showed the “signs of sclerosis”¹⁵⁵ in Yugoslav society, thereby turning the ‘struggle of opinion’ into an empty phrase. Supek concluded that from one “extreme of socialist-dogmatic conformism,” the situation in Yugoslavia had moved to another one: to “petty-bourgeois or anarcho-individualist nonconformism.”¹⁵⁶ Instead of opening up the space for a genuine dialogue and search for the solutions to the ‘problems of Marxism’, the theoretical discussions in Yugoslavia, he suggested, were limited only to discussions around individual problems and quarrels.

Referring to the ideas of Georgi Plekhanov, a founder of the social-democratic movement in tsarist Russia, Supek claimed that what was crucial for a healthy political and cultural development was that “freedom of thought is necessarily supplemented with the freedom of mutual convergence and divergence [*zbližavanje i razilaženje*].” For Plekhanov and Supek, actual freedom of thought could only be expressed in a situation in which “an idea brings people together, but also in a situation in which people are allowed to part in their way of seeing.” Implicitly, we could claim that Supek spoke about the formation of different ideological positions, such that the freedom of thought, as Supek explained, necessarily includes the freedom of assembly for ideological reasons. Where there is no such freedom, there is necessarily a monopolism in ideas, “which will bring about the thesis of uniform thinking [*jedinstveno mišljenje*], or a thesis concerning the chaos of individual thinking [*mišljenje*], but no under no circumstances a thesis of the struggle of opinion from the formed ideological fronts.”¹⁵⁷ Supek thus advocated for the right of the struggle of opinion *proper*, which was according to him a struggle on the level of “ideological fronts”; although he did not express it openly, this meant involving different ideologies, not only Marxism. The struggle of

¹⁵⁵ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, No. 12 (1953): 903

¹⁵⁶ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, No. 12 (1953): 907.

¹⁵⁷ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, No. 12 (1953): 907.

opinion which brings to “sclerosis” and “stagnation” was that conducted at the level of independent struggles regarding some specific theoretical problems. He argued for a democratic elaboration and struggle of opinion, which would involve different ideologies that did not put the unity of the revolution in question. Supek argued that the “achievement of the major social goals” in Yugoslavia ought not to be a hindrance to cultural differentiation and confrontation, which at the same time, he argued, was the only way towards the achievement of these goals.¹⁵⁸

In describing the situation in Yugoslavia, Supek proposed that notwithstanding the existence of struggle of opinion, the intellectuals were still unfree in voicing their own positions. He pointed out one case in which an intellectual who acted in line with his constitutional right, expressing his own options and ideas, was sanctioned and fired from the cultural institution. He expressed that the employee “did not want to give up their citizen’s freedoms to publicly criticize that which another colleague published.”¹⁵⁹ While the constitution granted personal rights and freedom of thought and consciousness, Supek’s intervention aimed to show that in practice, the constitutional rights were not applied and defended by the Yugoslav state. Struggle of opinion existed, yet it was not implemented because of the potential problems that one would face if expressing one’s positions that were not in accord with those prescribed. There was a fear among the wider circles of cultural workers, fear of the “ruling group.” Supek called for the enabling of completely free critical activity by making the organs of public opinion independent. These organs of public opinion, as Supek saw it, were often under the pressure of bureaucratic or monopolistic elements.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, no. 12 (1953):906

¹⁵⁹ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, no. 12 (1953): 908

¹⁶⁰ Rudi Supek, “Zašto kod nas nema borbe mišljenja?” [Why is there no struggle of opinion in Yugoslavia], *Pogledi*, no. 12 (1953): 911

It should be highlighted that Supek did not demand anything outside of the already expressed rights and ideas found at the level of the Constitution, but also in the major organizations, such as the Socialist League of the Working People of Yugoslavia (SSNRJ). The Declaration of the Socialist League stated that it represented an autonomous democratic political league in which all of its members were equal and joined [*udruženi*] on the basis of a common [*zajedničkog*] socialist goal.¹⁶¹ More importantly, it was a political platform whose main principle was the “struggle of opinion.” As the Declaration stated: “the entire work of the SSNRJ is developed on the basis of free discussion, critique, and struggle of opinion.”¹⁶² In its formulation, the SSNRJ represented itself as an organization that was not monopolistic, but which gathered individuals “notwithstanding their individual ideological understanding,” yet who agreed on the basic goals, which meant the “conservation of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia as an independent socialist country, developing and deepening the brotherhood and unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia on the basis of real equality, fighting for the further development and building of democratic socialist social relations.”¹⁶³

Nevertheless, Supek and his colleagues, who would later form the circle *Praxis*, were already seen in the 1950s by some Yugoslav officials as problematic. A case in point is a report made by the Yugoslav State Security Administration [*Uprava državne bezbednosti*, UDBA] on the journal *Pogledi* [The views]. The report elaborated on the positions of the philosophy professors at the University of Zagreb who were affiliated with the journal *Pogledi* and, at the same time, members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The report singled out Supek as problematic, as he “attacked the leadership of the Yugoslav Academy and some of the novelists who are holding the monopoly in our scientific, public, and cultural life.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ “Deklaracija o ciljevima i zadacima Socijalistickog Sveza Radnog Naroda [Declaration on the goals and tasks of the Socijalist League of Working People],” *Komunist*, No. 1-2 (1953): 129.

¹⁶² Deklaracija o ciljevima i zadacima Socijalistickog Sveza Radnog Naroda, *Komunist*, No. 1-2, (1953): 192.

¹⁶³ Deklaracija o ciljevima i zadacima Socijalistickog Sveza Radnog Naroda, *Komunist*, No. 1-2, (1953): 192.

¹⁶⁴ “Report on the editorial board of ‘Pogledi’ and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

According to the report, Supek demanded that “everyone should be invited to solve everything and to give their thoughts about everything, not taking into account political, moral, and other qualities of the individuals” about whose “sympathies for socialism one can say little or nothing.”¹⁶⁵ Not only were his demands viewed as unrealistic, but according to the report, Supek was not a trustworthy socialist either. He came from a well-off family who, during the period of old Yugoslavia, already had various “opportunistic positions” in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. He studied in Paris and returned to Yugoslavia in 1950, thus spending the entire occupation in France as a member of the French Communist Party (PCF). Arguably, he was a close friend of a certain Draga Vasić, a Spanish war volunteer and later a confidante of the French police, and was thus seen as a traitor by the Communist Party. When ordered to sever ties with him, Supek refused. Supek would be arrested in 1942, and taken to Buchenwald concentration camp the following year; he was imprisoned there until 1945, when the camp was liberated.

Concerning his activity in Yugoslavia, it was problematic as he did not look favorably upon the role of the Party and took influence from Western ideas, while his membership in the PCF also “left an impression on him as well.”¹⁶⁶ *Pogledi* also gathered other problematic intellectuals, including the ‘*ibeovac*’¹⁶⁷ Danko Grlić (1923–1984), philosopher who was imprisoned at *Goli Otok* between 1950 and 1952, and who published a discussion on Nietzsche in the journal.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the UDB report also mentioned the “already known idealist

¹⁶⁵ “Report on the editorial board of 'Pogledi' and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁶⁶ “Report on the editorial board of 'Pogledi' and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁶⁷ This was a term often used to label supporters of the Cominform, or Informbiro, during the split in 1948 between Yugoslavia and the USSR.

¹⁶⁸ Danko Grlić published “Pokušaj Nietzscheove rehabilitacije [An attempt at Nietzsche’s rehabilitation],” in *Pogledi*, where he argued for the need to rehabilitate Nietzsche’s philosophy within the Marxist framework. He connected Nietzsche’s ideas with contemporary existentialist thought, and while critical to some of the aspects of Nietzsche’s ideas, he nevertheless argued for the importance of non-Marxist intellectuals for the development of Marxist humanism. In her memoirs, Eva Grlić (1920–2008), Danko Grlić’s wife who herself was imprisoned at *Goli Otok*, and who was previously a secretary with the Yugoslav Partisans, described her husband’s family as highly well off, with an uncle who also served in the NDH, and a father that did not like the fact that his “son

[Vladimir] Filipović,” who was a professor at the University of Zagreb, and a mentor of many of the future *Praxis* philosophers. Milan Kangrga, according to the report, fought on the side of the Independent State of Croatia [*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH] between 1941 and 1945. When he was suggested for membership to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia by Predrag Vranicki (1922–2002), philosopher, his colleague and friend, Kangrga “expressed openly, that there would have not been a NOB (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, National liberation struggle of Yugoslavia), nor partisans, had the *domobrani* (Croatian Home Guard) not assisted them,” also adding that “not all *ustaša* should be condemned as there were some good among them.”¹⁶⁹ The report painted these intellectuals as highly controversial, highlighting their contentious ideological positions, but also pointing out at their murky past. All the mentioned philosophers and professors would in the 1960s form a circle *Praxis*.

The journal *Pogledi* was conceptualized by the editors as a platform in which these intellectuals would strengthen and expand the socialist democracy in Yugoslavia through their contributions and through the discussions of the relevant topics. However, the report argued, the publications in the journal showed that these intellectuals simply attacked everything in Yugoslavia which they believed was not functioning, “without regard and consideration to the circumstances that conditioned some aspects of social, political, and economic life in Yugoslavia.”¹⁷⁰ Therefore, from the position of the report, the journal and its founders were accused of being merely critical of any achievements of Yugoslav socialism, without providing a proper context.¹⁷¹ From the position of the intellectuals, it was their duty to question the *status quo* and to argue for more democracy in the public sphere.

would marry a Jewish woman” according to Eva Grlić’s memoirs. Eva Grlić, *Sjećanja i neobjavljene priče* [Memories, and unpublished stories] (V.B.Z.doo: Zagreb, 2021).

¹⁶⁹ “Report on the editorial board of ‘Pogledi’ and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁷⁰ “Report on the editorial board of ‘Pogledi’ and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁷¹ “Report on the editorial board of ‘Pogledi’ and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

Moreover, the journal *Pogledi* was also linked to Milovan Đilas' positions, which had influenced the intellectuals publishing in the journal: the members of the journal were targeted as supporting, albeit silently, the theories and ideas of Đilas. As proof of this, the UDB report mentioned Predrag Vranicki's publication in another journal, *Naprijed* [Forward] (8/15.1.1954), in which he alluded to the possibility of the existence of a two-party system in socialism, while Vanja Sutlić (1925–1989) lamented the unclear position of intellectuals in Yugoslav socialism, thus implicitly arguing for the need to affirm their role. The authors also mentioned Rudolf Bićanić (1905–1968),¹⁷² who argued that “it is not by chance that during the time of the publications of Đilas's articles, Supek also started publishing on the topic—I see this as the first steps to the road of socialist democracy. Supek hit at the heart of corruption, political immorality, and careerism. Dictatorship cannot last for long, without also creating a society in which it will itself disappear [*istrunuti*].”¹⁷³ Finally, Vladan Desnica (1905–1967), a writer whom the report labeled as a *četnik*, stated that there was finally someone “brave enough to make critical remarks and reveal the truth about Krleža and his circle.”¹⁷⁴ Desnica expressed his support of Supek, whom he described as one of “the rare, honest supporters of socialist democracy,” and noted that, “despite the nondemocratic system, Supek was able to manifest a liberal spirit.”¹⁷⁵

The conclusion of the UDB report was that *Pogledi* and the group of intellectuals around this journal had deeply problematic biographies and political histories. Indeed, the report presented the intellectuals as having anti-socialist and anti-Marxist positions. They had already, as the report noted, “split from the line and political praxis of our League of

¹⁷² Željko Karaula, “Tribute to the Biography of Rudolf Bićanić (1905–1968),” *Radovi Zavoda za znanstvenoistraživački i umjetnički rad u Bjelovaru*, No. 10 (2016): 201–228.

¹⁷³ “Report on the editorial board of 'Pogledi' and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁷⁴ Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), was a leftist, avant-garde writer and intellectual playing a key role in the interwar political and literary controversy on the Yugoslav literary left. See, Ivana Perica, “‘Social literature swindlers’: the r/evolutionary controversy in interwar Yugoslav literature,” *Neohelicon* 45 (2018): 240–280.

¹⁷⁵ “Report on the editorial board of 'Pogledi' and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

Communists.” For this reason, the report proposed that this group be taken as an “object of serious concern.”¹⁷⁶

At the same time, the expressions of critique concerning the gap between the practice and the new principles of socialist Yugoslavia (granted by the Constitution and laws) did not just come from the critical intellectuals; we can also find instances of criticism within the party intellectuals as well. What differed was the goal of their critique: for Supek, the goal was allowing dialogue and struggle of opinion between different ideologies (the existence of pluralism in ideological positions). The Party intellectuals were preoccupied with the form of criticism and self-criticism, which would on the one hand develop Marxist ideas in Yugoslavia, without challenging the minimum principles upon which the socialist federal state of Yugoslavia was formed: socialist self-management, alongside brotherhood and unity.

What was discussed at the second plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was precisely the issue of constructive critique needed for what the communists saw as a “continuous fight” against a Stalinist version of bureaucratism. As stated in the report of the meeting: “There is too little care for the development of real, constructive critique from socialist positions in the fight against bureaucratism and various other negative phenomena which are hindering further development of socialist relations.”¹⁷⁷ The problem the communists saw in practice with the silencing of critique in Yugoslavia, was that this silencing is faced with giving up space “for politically negative critiques that are based on antisocialist positions (positions of capitalism, nationalism, particularism, and similar).”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ “Report on the editorial board of ‘*Pogled*’ and the positions of certain members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the Faculty of Philosophy, 1954,” HR-HDA-1780.

¹⁷⁷ “Svim organizacijama saveza komunista Jugoslavije [To all organizations of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia],” July 7, *Komunist* (1953): 455.

¹⁷⁸ “Svim organizacijama saveza komunista Jugoslavije,[To all organizations of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia],” July 7, 1953, *Komunist* (1953): 455.

Discussing this issue, Veljko Vlahović (1914–1975), a prominent figure in the Communist Party of Montenegro, in his text published by the *Komunist* [The communist] pointed out the problem that a number of communists in Yugoslavia were still used to being ideologically educated “through formulas, which create template-like ideological construction.”¹⁷⁹ Speaking from his position as a Party authority, Vlahović lamented that such ideological education hindered the building of socialism—such practice of taking the ready made formulas regarding socialism was a practice found in the Soviet Union according to the Yugoslavs. At the same time, he warned that some Yugoslav communists, in rejecting the “templates and molds... also completely rejected the ideological construction.”¹⁸⁰ Vlahović pointed out the issue of the transitional period from Stalinist dogmatic practices and template-type of pedagogy towards a non-template-like education and ideological construction. For him, the main issue of this transition was the existence of a “certain void when the old templates were not exchanged with the new elastic formula of ideological upbringing which would correspond to the needs of the contemporary development of socialist thought and socialist forces in Yugoslavia.”¹⁸¹ What he meant by this “new elastic formula” is not clear, but he highlighted that he did not argue for simply “exchanging old templates with new.” Vlahović and the Party did not want to give up the importance of ideological unity, nor allow the complete pluralism of ideological positions in Yugoslavia, for the very reason that such a situation would easily be used “by anti-socialist forces, overtly or covertly, bringing their own ideologies, especially in those places where there were gaps in the ideological struggles.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Veljko Vlahović, “Pojave o kojima treba govoriti [Phenomena that need to be talked about],” *Komunist* (1953): 481.

¹⁸⁰ Veljko Vlahović, “Pojave o kojima treba govoriti [Phenomena that need to be talked about],” *Komunist* (1953): 481.

¹⁸¹ Veljko Vlahović, “Pojave o kojima treba govoriti [Phenomena that need to be talked about],” *Komunist* (1953): 481.

¹⁸² Veljko Vlahović, “Pojave o kojima treba govoriti [Phenomena that need to be talked about],” *Komunist* (1953): 481.

The lack of critique was seen as hindering the development and the political activity of the League of Communists, but also as hindering the development of social and intellectual life in Yugoslavia. This issue was acknowledged both by Rudi Supek and intellectuals around the journal *Pogledi*, but also by some Party members like Veljko Vlahović. At the same time, the Central Committee argued for the need to retain ideological unity in the organizations of the League of Communists. This did not entail direction from above, but it was stressed that unity could be maintained through public discussion and through the “crushing of the incorrect positions” that could be found in the press.¹⁸³ This tension between having the rights to fully express one’s own opinion and ideological positions, and the need to keep ideological unity intact, would be a recurring topic in Yugoslav political and cultural life.

Conclusions

To sum up, the chapter showed that the emergence of the language of ‘human’ after 1948 was to a great extent influenced by criticism of the Stalinist theory of Marxism-Leninism and the Soviet approach to socialist practices. The ideological crisis in Yugoslavia, following its expulsion from Cominform which brought about an ideological vacuum, was to be resolved by the political leadership through the introduction of different legal frameworks which would pave the way for a Yugoslav type of socialism which focused on ‘human beings,’ in contrast to the USSR. ‘Care for the human being’ was expressed not only in practical ways (through self-managing socialism), it was also part and parcel of the language used to argue for a different type of socialism. The concept of ‘human’ thus tightly followed the Yugoslavs’ official rereading of Marxism, which was supposed to free Yugoslav theory and practice from dogmatic, artificial, and template-like interpretations of Marxism-Leninism. Inevitably, the

¹⁸³ Veljko Vlahović, “Pojave o kojima treba govoriti [Phenomena that need to be talked about],” *Komunist* (1953): 456.

‘human being’ was in this process also linked to the specific ‘national’ or ‘supranational’ road to socialism. At the same time, illustrated by Janicijević’s discussion of the rights of man, Yugoslav discussions aimed to contribute a better, third way of conceptualizing these rights, building on the achievements of both Western and Soviet experiences of expanding the rights of human beings.

Socialist democracy, self-government, and self-determination were all connecting tissues to the rights of man in Yugoslavia, and to the theoretical approaches to the ‘human’ in Marxism. As interpreted by the intellectuals and party leaders, the ideas of ‘young’ Marx and his humanistic principles were embodied in the Law on Self-Management in the 1950s, as well as in the Constitution of 1953, which granted liberties and rights to Yugoslav citizens as members of the socialist community, but more importantly, as individuals too.

The last section focused on the more practical responses to these granted rights and most importantly to the principle of ‘struggle of opinion,’ which also expressed the critique of Stalinism in Yugoslavia: the need and the duty to publicly discuss all matters connected to socialist life. The intellectuals who would go on to establish the journal *Praxis* in the 1960s demanded the wider application of the ‘struggle of opinion,’ which was very soon understood by the Party as a threat to the dissolution of ‘ideological unity.’ As will be seen in the following chapter, the reason was the different approach to the solution of the crisis of Marxism seen by these critical intellectuals, who argued for the need to expand the Marxist theoretical frameworks by introducing non-Marxist philosophies, such as personalism and existentialism. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the reception of personalism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s corresponded to the general humanist turn in Marxist interpretation, and many intellectuals of the younger generation published on the topic.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Ivan Čulo writes about the reception of personalism in Yugoslavia from the mid-1960s, arguing that Emmanuel Mounier’s personalism and personalism as a whole philosophical current was used as a supplement to Marxism. While that was indeed the case, I argue that through this synthesis the intellectuals did not necessarily stay on their Marxist positions but in fact became preoccupied with interests and questions which moved them away from

Chapter II: Crisis of Marxist Philosophy and the Emergence of Different Epistemologies of Human Rights¹⁸⁵

As mentioned in the introduction, the period between 1950 and 1960 was marked by the “Yugoslav return to Marxism,” where the official discourse relied mainly on the classics of Marxism (going back to the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin) but also those Marxist philosophers who were anathematized Marxists, like Karl Korsch, György Lukács, Rosa Luxemburg, and others.¹⁸⁶ This period, as described by Miloje Petrović, an author of *Savremena jugoslovenska filozofija* (Contemporary Yugoslav philosophy, 1979) was also important for the fact that it was a period of theoretical differentiations based on “interpreting the original [*izvornih*] works of the classics of Marxism.”¹⁸⁷ Therefore, it is important for the dissertation to highlight that this decade was indeed characterized by an emerging diversity of interpretations, which was a response to the crisis of Marxism after 1948. This situation also perpetuated a related crisis in terms of the difficulty of formulating a unified interpretation of Marxist thought in Yugoslavia. Instead, I argue that Yugoslav Marxist thought exhibited a diversity that encompassed various degrees of revisionism in Marxist theory.

As will become clear in the following pages, the editors of the philosophical journal *Filozofija: jugoslovenski časopis za filozofiju i sociologiju* [Philosophy: Yugoslav journal for

Marxism. Ivan Čulo, “Recepcija Emmanuela Mouniera u Hrvatskoj i bivšoj Jugoslaviji od sredine 60-ih godina do kraja 20. Stoljeća [The Reception of Emmanuel Mounier in Croatia and the Former Yugoslavia from the Mid-1960s to the End of the 20th Century],” *Diacovensia : teološki prilozi*, Vol. 26 No. 3 (2018): 359–381.

¹⁸⁵ A large section of this chapter is based on my published articles: Una Blagojević, “Phenomenology and existentialism in dialogue with Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Studies in East European Thought* 75 No. 3 (232): 417–436 and Una Blagojević, “The Cunning of Crisis and the Yugoslav Marxist Revisionists,” in *East Central European Crisis Discourses in the Twentieth Century: A Never-Ending Story?*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi, Lucija Balikić, Isidora Grubački, and Una Blagojević (1st ed.; London: Routledge, 2024).

¹⁸⁶ Miloje Petrović, *Savremena jugoslovenska filozofija: filozofske teme I filozofska situacija 1945–1970* [Contemporary Yugoslav philosophy: philosophical topics and philosophical situation 1945–1970] (Subotica: Radnički univerzitet 'Veljko Vlahović,' 1979), 22.

¹⁸⁷ Miloje Petrović, *Savremena jugoslovenska filozofija: filozofske teme I filozofska situacija 1945–1970* [Contemporary Yugoslav philosophy: philosophical topics and philosophical situation 1945–1970] (Subotica: Radnički univerzitet 'Veljko Vlahović,' 1979), 22.

philosophy and sociology] stressed in 1967 that the starting position of the journal was the “authentic thought of Marx.”¹⁸⁸ However, while not denying the relevance of Marx’s thought for socialist societies, the editors also argued for the need to further develop it “in its specific conditions of the present-day historical moment, in dialogue with other relevant and important philosophical directions which can be inspirational.”¹⁸⁹ That is to say, the main journal of the Yugoslav Philosophical Association stressed that the development of Marxist thought was not only limited only to the *Praxis* journal; instead, the entire Yugoslav Philosophical Association adopted such a view. The journal presented their agenda by arguing that it was necessary to engage with various forms of positivism and philosophy of existence, not just because “they are the central orientation in today’s philosophy, but because they can be seen in our Marxist philosophy as well.”¹⁹⁰ The editors wrote that Marxism is closer to “existentialism and its revolt against the impersonality [*bezličnost*] and the nonhumanity of today’s industrial civilization,” for the very reason that for this philosophy, just as it was for Marxism, humanity and the human being were the central point of reference. At the same time, the editors of the journal argued that contemporary Marxist thought should not fall for “the tendency of irrationalism that is found among some philosophers of existentialism.”¹⁹¹ Such statements therefore affirmed the need to engage with different philosophical directions, while at the same time remaining critical towards them. In addition, the journal stressed that it represented a Yugoslav character, which had been there from the very beginning of the journal’s publication. Yet, they found it necessary to highlight the fact that this was not just a consequence of the Yugoslav Philosophical Association, but was rather due to the actual and active collaboration between Yugoslav philosophers, highlighting that: “The true negation of nationalism is in its essence an aspiration [*težnja*] towards one concrete universality, towards human totality [*celovitost*], and

¹⁸⁸ “Redakcija [Editorial],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 3.

¹⁸⁹ “Redakcija [Editorial],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 4.

¹⁹⁰ “Redakcija [Editorial],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 4.

¹⁹¹ “Redakcija [Editorial],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 4.

openness which is the condition of the free and rich life of every specific national community.”¹⁹² It is not by chance that the editors emphasized the Yugoslav character in 1967, as the same year the Zagreb journal *Telegram* published the “Declaration about the name and status of the Croatian literary language.” Signed by many prominent writers, it demanded the equality of the Croatian language within the Yugoslav Federation and a full affirmation of the Croatian language in all spheres of life.¹⁹³

The overall argument of this chapter is that in response to the announced crisis of Marxist philosophy, the critical intellectuals gathered around *Praxis* created a synthesis of different philosophies, whereby they moved away from the classical Marxists’ interests and questions, including regarding economic aspects and class. Their interest turned more to anthropological concerns, as well as to the psychological dimensions of the human being—a dimension they saw as lacking in the general approach to Marxist thought and socialist practice. In their revisionism, the idea of the transformation of societies was tightly linked with the crisis of Marxist philosophy, as well as their positionality as intellectuals whose duty was to offer solutions to this theoretical impasse which they perceived as being closely related to the practice of Yugoslav self-management. Towards the 1970s, they would have a “minimalist” Marxist position mainly based on reaffirming the critical potential of Marxism, following their main motto: “the critique of everything existing.” This crisis of Marxist philosophy should also be placed within the context in which the intellectuals around *Praxis* made a clear distinction between themselves, and the “nationalists”—for example, the authors of the “Declaration.” The crisis of Marxism and the crisis of socialism, in *Praxis*’ view, was increasingly linked with what they perceived as the growing nationalism in the Yugoslav Federation. This includes the

¹⁹² “Redakcija [Editorial],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 5.

¹⁹³ See, Vanya Ivanova, “Language Policy and National Equality in Socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1974),” In *Multilingual Europe, Multilingual Europeans* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 81–111.

debates concerning the right to self-determination of the Kosovo Albanians for example, as well as the emerging demands for the status of Croatian language as a separate language.

The shared understanding among these critical Marxists was that Marxism was in crisis because it had turned into a dogma (as it became “stabilized”) and thus ceased to be a “living thought” which was to be in a constant evolution and transformation. At the same time, their focus on human beings resulted in their engagement with personalism, phenomenology, and existentialism, thus changing their conceptions of time as well. Instead of the more classical Marxist view of history as being governed by universal laws, in which a society goes through different stages of development, they approached history more in terms of Ernst Bloch’s category of “not-yet” and of a constant potentiality of developing human beings.¹⁹⁴ While for the party politicians Yugoslav socialism was developing towards a ‘higher’ stage, the *Praxis* intellectuals deemed it essential to place greater emphasis on the human being’s possibility of development. As philosophers they argued for the open-endedness of such development, that is, they were against any claims and theories which would argue that the Yugoslav society has reached a stage which could be seen as sufficient enough to defend.

Not discussing direct political debates but focusing mainly on the philosophical background and the themes that emerged in their engagement with the contemporary philosophies (personalism, existentialism, critical theory), the chapter also analyses these intellectuals’ understanding of the place and role of philosophy in a socialist system, as well as their own role as intellectuals. Connected to that, the chapter looks more closely at the development of Marxist philosophy in Yugoslavia, and as such it is thematically organized around the overarching concept of “crisis.”¹⁹⁵ The crisis of philosophy, spirit, and (European)

¹⁹⁴ See, Ernst Bloch, *Geist der Utopia*, [*The Spirit of Utopia*], translated by Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2000).

¹⁹⁵ To locate the main sources of the chapter, and as pointed out in the previous chapter, the institutions were the main sites of the production of knowledge as they were established with the goal of reformulating and revisiting Marxist thought. Some of these places included the mentioned Institute of Social Sciences (IDN) which transformed from the party school founded in 1948, the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology in Ljubljana

humanity, was conceptualized by these intellectuals in different contexts, and they shifted between the general, and universalist assessments of this crisis to their own local and situated contexts. Such shifting dynamic has created theoretical instability and volatile positions.

However, in their analyses of the problems of human beings, freedom, alienation, and technology, the *Praxis* philosophers furthered their humanist philosophical orientation that mainly included personalist and existentialist approaches. The *Praxis* philosophers adopted French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's claim:

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.¹⁹⁶

Lefebvre was a regular interlocutor of the Yugoslav *Praxis* intellectuals, and in refining and elaborating on concepts like revolution, alienation, and so on, they came closer to having more affinities and similarities to Western Marxism (also called by some neo-Marxism, neo-Hegelianism, or intellectual Marxism—which historically meant the intensive recourse to Hegel and the early writings of Marx, in the 1920s and 1930s).¹⁹⁷ As Christoph Jünke argues in his study:

Whether Ernst Bloch or Herbert Marcuse, whether Max Horkheimer or Theodor W. Adorno, whether Henri Lefebvre, Jean-Paul Sartre, or other comparable thinkers: these intellectual renewers, mostly independent of each other, draw on Hegelian subject-object theory, in order to free themselves from the mechanistic

(Inštituta za sociologijo in filozofijo pri Univerzi v Ljubljani, ISF) established at the end of 1950s, the Institute for the research of society in Zagreb, inaugurated in 1964 (*Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, IDIS), but also Philosophical Associations in Serbia, Croatia, for example. Croatian Philosophical Society was established in 1957, while in Serbian Philosophical Society was reestablished in 1951. These were also the centers where the new generation of intellectuals was developing different approaches to Marxism, encouraged by the proclaimed crisis in Marxism as a result of Stalinist distortions. See, Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave* (1980-1995) (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 35.

¹⁹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982 [1966]), 341–42.

¹⁹⁷ Christoph Jünke, *Leo Kofler's Philosophy of Praxis: Western Marxism and Socialist Humanism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2022), 19.

and deterministic tradition of thought that underlay social-democratic Marxism as well as Stalinist-deformed Soviet Marxism in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁹⁸

The Hegelian perspective was not exclusively adopted by *Praxis* intellectuals but was found in a wider circle of Yugoslav intellectuals, including even some party officials and intellectuals. *Praxis* intellectuals nevertheless took this Hegelian perspective further, in seeing the constant dynamism between the human being and the world around them. This necessitated their dialogues with other philosophies and moved from the classical Marxist approach of seeing the relationship between the human being and their environment in terms of materialism and class struggle—thus grounding human beings and the world around them in the material and concrete. While theoretically elaborating these concepts, *Praxis* intellectuals embedded themselves through their dialogues at the Kočula Summer School, in discussions concerning the development of capitalism in the Western countries. They argued that this development, impossible to predict by Marx, was both oppressive and bureaucratic (as was the case with the socialist countries), but moreover, it was also creating a specific type of human being—“a gleeful robot,” “an automaton,” as I will explain in the next section. Especially from 1965 onward, *Praxis* intellectuals also started to apply a similar logic to their analysis of socialist Yugoslav society, put forward a political critique of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia with respect to self-management and the emergence of a market society, as will be analyzed further in Chapter Three. Gradually, the crisis which they conceptualized as being brought about by the Stalinist approaches to socialism and Marxism, was translated to the Yugoslav context and the LCY’s own practices of socialism, which they saw as halting in bringing about the promised reforms in the Yugoslav society, which were supposed to include the humanist goals and ideals of socialism and democracy.

¹⁹⁸ Christoph Jünke, *Leo Kofler’s Philosophy of Praxis: Western Marxism and Socialist Humanism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2022), 19.

The philosophical references of these intellectuals were eclectic (and involved also those thinkers, like Plekhanov, who were previously discredited by the official discourse of Marxism-Leninism), yet on the issue of human rights, personalism in particular served as a framework (next to existentialism) in which the meaning of humanism was defined and contested. The engagement with both personalism and existentialism occurred in the early 1950s, as a result of the comparatively early de-Stalinization in Yugoslavia, and the general turn towards Marxist humanism initiated by the Party leadership through its program, laws, and policies. In this initial period, the “official” interpretation of Marxism and the interpretation of Marxism by those intellectuals that would in the late 1960s and 1970s come to an open conflict with the Party leadership did not differ in terms of language: they all viewed Marxism as humanism and adhered to its basic principles, adopting the concept of alienation as an important aspect of Marxist theory. However, humanism, a concept tightly linked to human rights, developed alongside the official discourse and then as an opposition to it.

For intellectuals, the discussions and theoretical insights on humanism essentially meant inquiring into the kind of socialism that would represent and stand for a more “humane society in comparison with other social systems.”¹⁹⁹ This served them as a way of rethinking the principles and concepts on the basis of which the socialist society was being built, including their own. As Zagorka Golubović explained, the main issue was to see whether the principles upon which a socialist society was built were defined from a humanist perspective.²⁰⁰ *Praxis* intellectuals were inspired by the contemporary analyses of capitalist societies, which, as they themselves highlighted, looked very different than in Marx’s time. Thus, the issue of the relationship of socialism and capitalism in Marxist theory, from their perspective, was also inevitably transformed. They demanded a clear definition of socialism—as the working class

¹⁹⁹ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1965): 3

²⁰⁰ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1965): 3

in the developed countries had higher and higher levels of participation in the distribution of social wealth, thus the capitalist society became far more “open” and socially mobile. This also meant that the working week was reduced to fewer hours, while elementary free education and the systems of social insurance and health protection were introduced. Moreover, many democratic forms of government were being developed, and some forms of worker participation were established in industries.²⁰¹ All these considerations and developments made it necessary from the point of view of *Praxis* to redefine the meaning of socialism as well as of capitalism.

The philosophical and theoretical disagreement on the type of humanism acceptable to Marxist interpretations can be found in the fact that the intellectuals argued for a more pronounced diversification of Marxist thought which would synthesize the insights of those theories not seen as Marxist in a classical sense. Especially important for them were personalism and existentialism, which brings us back to the issue of how their development of the language of human rights was different from the official socialist human rights discourse, which was entrenched in a Marxist reading of human beings. The main point of divergence was their approach to a person or a human being that was seen as a starting point—the development of the philosophy of man (or human being), was at the forefront of their philosophical endeavors, which resulted in distancing themselves from the materialist understandings of history and other basic principles of Marxist philosophy.

In discussing the intellectual origins of human rights discourse, Samuel Moyn brings personalism close to the history of human rights, precisely because it linked “spiritualism and humanism, and not infrequently to European identity” and as such “meant a repudiation of the rival materialisms of liberalism and communism.”²⁰² Emmanuel Mounier, one of the main

²⁰¹ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1965): 5.

²⁰² Samuel Moyn, “Personalism, Community, and the Origins of Human Rights,” in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010), 88.

representatives of personalism, was not by chance an implied reference of these Marxist humanists—as “he proposed going back to where modernity started out in the Renaissance and trying again with a genuine humanism that freed Europe of the secular and liberal mistake of individualism.”²⁰³ Historically, as an intellectual movement in the 1930s, personalism advocated a “third way” between liberalism and socialism, but as Benedetto Zaccaria shows, it also influenced the process of European integration.²⁰⁴

Praxis’ discussions on modern technology and the crisis of humanity were inevitably linked to the loss of human dignity and freedom, which brought them closer to the concerns raised by the personalists. According to them in such a context of intensified modernization, the human beings, from their perspective, were losing their essence and becoming alienated, which was for them not only a social problem, but first and foremost existential and moral. This was not happening only in developed, capitalist societies, but also in their own Yugoslav socialist society which had, to their mind, started the path towards capitalist relations through the introduction of the 1965 Economic Reform. Next to the increased trade relations with the European Economic Community, the Reform was crucial for Yugoslavia to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the Community in 1968.²⁰⁵

Developing a theory of self-government and worker’s dignity

The introduction of the Law on Self-Management in 1950 and the Program of the LCY in 1958 was marked by growing proclamations regarding the freedom of creativity, pluralism in the creative orientations, and struggle of opinion—which were becoming dominant positions in

²⁰³ Samuel Moyn, “Personalism, Community, and the Origins of Human Rights,” 88.

²⁰⁴ Benedetto Zaccaria, “Personalism and European Integration: Jacques Delors and the Legacy of the 1930s,” *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 3, No. 33 (2024): 982-1001.

²⁰⁵ Ivan Obadić, “A Troubled Relationship: Yugoslavia and the European Economic Community in détente,” *European Review of History*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2014), 239–348, here 329.

philosophy, science, literature, and culture as a whole.²⁰⁶ Self-management was defined by Edvard Kardelj as the closest to the original ideas of Marx about the revolutionary role of the working class and the withering away of the state. As the leadership highlighted, unlike the Soviet version of socialism, the Yugoslav kind was socialism dedicated to human beings and people, having thus a humanist character. *Borba*, an official gazette of the Yugoslav Communist Party, published Tito's statement: "With terror, nothing good can be created and this is where we departed from the revisionists from the East."

Self-management was widely discussed among the intellectuals. The journal *Naše teme*, *časopis mladih o društvenim zbivanjima*, which was published by the Central Committee of the Peoples Youth of Croatia [*Centralni komitet Narodne omladine Hrvatske*]²⁰⁷ gathered many intellectuals from Zagreb who would in 1961 establish a philosophical journal *Praxis*. In 1957 in *Naše teme* Zagreb based philosopher, and later a core member of the circle *Praxis*, Predrag Vranicki (1922–2002) published the article "Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju uopće [Thoughts on workers' and social government in general]," in which he presented the shared views of these critical intellectuals on the question of self-management. "Labor is the essential definition of a human being, that is, his basic need. In the wage-labor relationship [*najamni odnos*] labor becomes only a tool of man's individual existence, a tool for satisfying a number of needs that are being born as a result of this contradiction."²⁰⁸ The Marxist perspective is clear insofar as a human being was closely linked to the concept of labor, and as such Vranicki's ideas were not far at all from the main discourse of the LCY. Therefore, labor was at the basis of human dignity. At the same time, his article was polemic, as he argued

²⁰⁶ Veselin Golubović, *S Marxom protiv Staljina: Jugoslovenska filozofska kritika staljinizma 1950-1960* (Globus, Zagreb, 1985), 16.

²⁰⁷ In the 1950s the editors included: Ivo Bojanić (main editor), Vinko Bilić, Nevenka Gertner, Tomislav Golubović, Duje Katić, Mladen Kljenak, Ante Marin, Vjekoslav Mikecin, Miloš Nikolić, Pero Pirker, Krešo Piškulić, Josip Sentija, Vlado Skarica, Mladen Vujčić, Josip Vuk.

²⁰⁸ Predrag Vranicki, "Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker's and social management]," *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957): 145s

that a broader aim of socialism was needed than simply a “right to labor”—that is, “liberation from all unfreedoms, alienations, limitations, paradoxes, inhumanities, and idiocies of contemporary history.”²⁰⁹ For Vranicki, thus, the main task of socialism was not to simply cancel out the private ownership over the means of production (for the very reason that this would be what state capitalism did, implicitly referring to the USSR) instead, it would be the annihilation of those “social realities and consequences of these relations which characterize the modern man of the bourgeois character: it is the alienation of a modern human being from all fields of his or her life.”²¹⁰ That is, the change in economic position of a worker would not be sufficient for the liberation of the working class—what was needed was a transformation of the character of human being.

In his text, Vranicki quoted Edvard Kardelj extensively, arguing that socialism in its development ought to liberate human beings from all political and economic pressures and tutorship. He cited Kardelj on the issue of self-management, as well, which as he maintained would provide a “new social-economic basis which will in the final consequence be only a form of the withering away of the state as a tool of government, a tool of power.”²¹¹ More importantly for the intellectuals, it was not to claim that workers’ councils were some specifically Yugoslav path into socialism, although as Vranicki agreed, there were also elements of nationally specific moments. Instead, workers’ councils stood for new social relations, a form without which there could not be any development of socialism.²¹²

At the same time, Vranicki also discussed the same issue as the *Praxis* intellectuals in the early 1960s, and that is the relationship towards the leadership’s understanding of the

²⁰⁹ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957): 146

²¹⁰ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957): 144

²¹¹ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957): 149.

²¹² Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 no2 (1957): 149.

transition or the “process.” While the leaders maintained that socialism was a process and therefore it was impossible to expect that by introducing self-government all “contradictions” would be immediately resolved, Vranicki insisted that with this process, “socialism must start straight away, and should safely guide it.”²¹³ This different approach to the development of socialism in Yugoslavia, would become a main point of contention and provide a basis upon which the Praxis intellectuals would demand greater democratic freedoms and respect for personal dignity in Yugoslavia.

In defining “democracy” and its relationship to socialism, Jovan Đorđević argued that it was a very condition of self-management. Democracy was to be understood as “a form and an element of the social being of socialism.”²¹⁴ In approaching the problem of the perceived disbalance between the principles of democracy and its practice in Yugoslav society, Đorđević claimed that these appeared predominantly due to the “relative underdevelopment of the material and cultural from the spheres of the [Yugoslav] society as a whole.”²¹⁵ The existing and relative “backwardness” of the Yugoslav state was used to justify the difficulties in achieving the idealized state of democratic participation. The underdevelopment of Yugoslavia was seen as a realistic hinderance towards the development of democratic relationships, but also “the resilient resistances of our own previous phase of development which was dominated by the forms and relations of etatistic bureaucratism.”²¹⁶ In other words, Đorđević spoke about the period of Yugoslav socialism which was influenced by Stalinist practice, to have also been a hinderance to these developments, and moreover, the existence of the “leftovers” of such practices in 1960s Yugoslavia. Next to writing on the system of self-government and

²¹³ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 no2 (1957): 148.

²¹⁴ Jovan Đorđević, *Socijalizam i demokratija* [Socialism and democracy](Savremena administracija, Beograd, 1962), 5.

²¹⁵ Jovan Đorđević, *Socijalizam i demokratija* [Socialism and democracy](Savremena administracija, Beograd, 1962), 5.

²¹⁶ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše Teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957): 149.

constitutional rights, Đorđević was also an editor of *Ljudske slobode i prava: Deklaracije i osnovni dokumenti* [Human freedoms and rights: Declarations and the basic documents] which was published by the Association of Jurists of Yugoslavia in 1968. Đorđević was the representative of the official discourse, and his example shows that the experts in Yugoslavia, outside of the *Praxis* circle, were not ignorant of the problems of insufficient development of socialist democracy, and were not uncritically examining the problems and reasons of these issues. However, unlike them, the *Praxis* intellectuals were constructing a general critique of the Yugoslav society, pointing to the insufficient development of democratic practices, turning their critique mainly towards the political establishment which they saw increasingly as insufficiently democratized and insufficiently de-Bolshevized.

Moreover, critical and scientific examinations of the issues and problems of democracy in Yugoslavia and self-government existed in various constellations. In expanding their analyses beyond the economic aspects of self-management, various Yugoslav institutes organized debates and discussions at which they raised issues and the need of ensuring social cohesion among the workers' collectives. Thus, the interest went beyond the circle of *Praxis*, and the psychological consequences on the workers can be found in different fields of study and research (including industrial psychology and sociology).²¹⁷ The psychological aspect of self-management was supposed to improve interpersonal relations. The study conducted by the *Institut društvenih nauka: Odeljenje za sociologiju* [Institute of Social Sciences: Department of Sociology] in 1963 entitled *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker's self-management: development and problems], presented the results of the analysis of the decade-long experience in self-management in Yugoslavia. According to the results, self-managing practices transformed the "individual relations between people" such that the

²¹⁷ See Una Blagojević and Adela Hîncu, "Productivity, the humanization of work, and the future of labor: insights from industrial psychology in late socialist Yugoslavia and Romania," *Labor History* 2024.

producers developed feelings of general equality and social responsibility.²¹⁸ The cooperation between the workers also became stronger as well. Self-management was developing “self-management-oriented attention” among the workers, it had “woken up the personal dispositions, interests, and activities of the worker,” and primarily it made the workers more attuned to the problems of their working environment. In this way, people started to be more directed to each other, seeking ways to collaborate and to develop more intense communication and social connections.²¹⁹ “Through this praxis of dynamic interpersonal relations, there was an emergence of a new ethical form of behavior and system of values.”²²⁰ The possibility to freely express one’s opinion, according to the study, “created the relationship of trust, honesty and friendship, human solidarity and respect.”²²¹

The Institute asserted that during its existence, self-management contributed to a change the psychology and habits of the workers, as it encouraged them to take initiative and to voice their own positions and opinions. An important aspect of workers’ self-management was education. This was the least developed aspect, as it was claimed that the factories were full of workers who came from the villages and who had a very low level of general culture and education, which then limited their social and production activities. Consequently, this also reduced the space for further advancement and democratization of self-management.²²² Thus, in order for self-management to be truly democratic, the report considered education to be crucial. Here the authors referred to Marx’s *Capital*, in which he emphasized that the main factor in the humanization of labor is education. Moreover, the study also referred to Georges

²¹⁸ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker’s self-management: development and problems], 1963, 96. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

²¹⁹ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker’s self-management: development and problems], 1963, 96. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

²²⁰ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker’s self-management: development and problems], 1963, 96. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

²²¹ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker’s self-management: development and problems], 1963, 96. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

²²² *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* (Worker’s self-management: development and problems), 1963, 101. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

Friedmann's work, more specifically *Razmravljen rad* [*Le travail en miettes*] translated to Serbo-Croatian in 1959, and *Problèmes humains du machinisme industriel* (1956).²²³

Yugoslav sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers often reinterpreted Georges Friedmann's engagement with the "technical environment" of a modern human being. According to Friedmann, many new inventions and technologies have transformed modern societies, and more importantly, changed relations between individuals: "We are confronted here by a phenomenon of vast proportions, innovating working hours, life in the street, in the home, leisure both by day and night."²²⁴ In his work, he discussed the accelerated technological change that has been hitherto unknown—its impact on man was one of the main themes of social psychology and sociology. He added that

whatever may have been the technological achievements of mankind, before the industrial revolution, the end of the eighteenth century, shall we say, constitutes a break or even a jump: it makes the beginning of a new era in the psycho-sociological conditioning of man by his environment, and a beginning of what we can the technical environment.²²⁵

Friedmann, however, did not see this as being a specific issue of modern developed countries, such as the US for example—instead he argued that the "technical environment is a universal phenomenon extending to Britain, France, Germany... and recently in Soviet Russia."²²⁶

Moreover, from the early 1960s, Yugoslav sociologists and philosophers were engaged in developing the idea and practice of self-management, but also in promoting it abroad, through their Korčula Summer School, but also through lectures given at various Western universities. This 'promotion' however was not only limited to the academic centers, but some of the intellectuals engaged also with the official efforts of representing Yugoslavia's

²²³ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950 to 1960* [Worker's self-management: development and problems], 1963, 96. AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka, 101. For the context, see Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

²²⁴ Georges Friedmann, "Technological Change and Human Relations," *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1952): 99.

²²⁵ Georges Friedmann, "Technological Change and Human Relations," *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1952): 100.

²²⁶ Georges Friedmann, "Technological Change and Human Relations," *The British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 3, No. 2 (1952): 100.

achievements abroad. In the early 1960s, Rudi Supek took part in two projects which in different ways aimed to present the Yugoslav achievements of self-management to the international public. The first project was the Yugoslav participation in 1961 at the international exhibition dedicated the one hundredth anniversary of the national liberation of Italy, organized in Turin. The title of this international (EXPO 61) exhibition was “Man and His Work—A Century of Technological and Social Developments: Achievements and Prospects.”²²⁷ The second project was a collaboration with Lucien Goldmann, a French-Romanian Marxist theorist of Jewish descent interested in making a documentary film about Yugoslav self-management specifically for the Western public.

Supek proposed that the focus of the exhibition in Turin should be the human being in the processes of production. He argued that the interest of contemporary industrial sociology and psychology around the question “the human factor” was so vast, that even “the capitalist companies in the US proclaimed that the goal of production is to fulfill the needs of individuals within the working community.”²²⁸ Therefore, as he explained, Yugoslavia had an exceptional position and role, and was the only country able to give a concrete response to the question being asked in other countries as well: “What is the position of a human being in a developing society?” In the proposal, Supek wrote the following about the exhibition:

The exhibition must have a humanistic orientation—it cannot be a shallow and false glorification of “technological development,” but it ought to show that it is precisely the technological development that made some questions on the position of man in production more pressing, to which we are forced to respond by radical social reforms.

Reflecting on the planned exhibitions of other participants, Supek stressed that they will not critically reflect on concrete problems of modern industrial civilization, and for that reason:

The task of Yugoslavia is to act critically towards contemporary technological achievements and to show everyone energetically that the question of the status of

²²⁷ The participants at the exhibition included Chile, Great Britain, Spain, Tunisia, USSR, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Netherlands, Romania, Switzerland, Hungary. Supek Fond HR-HAD-1780.

²²⁸ Supek Fond HR-HAD-1780.

the producer in contemporary industry is solved neither by hygienical measures nor by improving the life standard as such.

The structure of the exhibition also points out the dimension of engagement and thinking about self-management, which reflects the official discourse. Namely, the exhibition suggested by Supek would include three main aspects: 1) the general, universal problems of a modern human being that is faced with the issues of technological civilization; 2) the theory of self-management taken from the writings of Karl Marx, but more importantly, elaborated by the Yugoslav communist leadership; and finally, 3) the practice itself.²²⁹

The concept of the exhibition clearly stressed the image that Yugoslavia wished to present of itself—the aim was to show its success in placing attention on the human being, the worker, and worker's position in the process of production. This is well seen in the slogan which was supposed to be part of the exhibition: “A worker too has the human right to be a producer, to plan, to organize, produce, and decide about the purpose of his product.”²³⁰ The basic idea of self-management in Yugoslavia was to focus on the dignity of the worker, and of the human being in general—something which was not the case, according to Supek, for the Western countries and the rest of the socialist states.²³¹

Existential questions of “Who are we? Where are we going?” were envisioned as hanging above the entrance to the exhibition room which was supposed to be decorated with the the photomontage presenting the problems of “industrial civilization.” In addition, inscriptions showing the problem of large organizations in which the human being was “reduced to a machine,” would read as follows:

His job consists of seven different operations, he is doing them every five minutes for seven hours. He needed just three days to learn this job.

²²⁹ Supek Fond HR-HAD-1780.

²³⁰ Supek Fond HR-HAD-1780.

²³¹ *Radničko samoupravljanje: razvoj i problemi 1950-1960: rezultati analize dokumenata* [Workers' self-management: development and problems 1950-1960: results of document analysis](Beograd: Institut društvenih nauka, 1963), AJ, fond. 48, Institut Društvenih Nauka.

Photo: A column of workers entering the factory, and then a column [of workers] leaving.

Comment below the photograph: Every day at seven o'clock they gather at the entrance to the factories to stamp their ticket and disperse to their workplaces. Every day at three o'clock they go through the exit of the factory to disperse to their homes. They are a mass. Are they also a community?²³²

The overarching claim was that in Western societies, the working man had the freedom to vote, but not the freedom to directly manage his own production process. This way, the worker in the Western countries simply “gives his voice to be managed by others” and therefore becomes a “simple voting number.”²³³ The result was that the worker was politically alienated. Moreover, the pure technical and mechanical organization of the factory life creates a mass society easily manipulated due to their social alienation. Thus, the *Praxis* intellectuals argued, alongside the political leadership, that it was not sufficient to have a multiparty system to “solve the problem of human freedom”—this view was to their minds, superficial and apologetic. In that way, while arguing for the importance of workers’ democracy, they made a distinction between formal democracy and the real democracy that can be found only in the system of self-management.

In 1961, after Lucien Goldmann returned from Yugoslavia, where he visited the Pula Film Festival as well as a few factories and the Korčula Summer School, he contacted Supek and asked him to collaborate in the making of a documentary film on Yugoslav self-management—*Autogestion*.²³⁴ Goldmann wrote a plan for the documentary film, in the period in which, as he highlighted, there was a growing interest in Yugoslav self-management.²³⁵ Hence, the main purpose of the film was to make ‘Western’ audiences aware of the particular

²³² 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²³³ Predrag Vranicki, “Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the worker’s and social management],” *Naše teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957):145.

²³⁴ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²³⁵ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

and important social reality of Yugoslav self-management, which was seen by Goldmann as “profoundly different than anywhere else.”²³⁶ Goldmann expressed that the film would be much more “superior to theoretical works,” since it could reach “a much wider audience” because of the immediacy with which it could show the lived aspects of workers’ participation in Yugoslavia.²³⁷ Furthermore, the film could also visually express a radically new and different characteristics of the Yugoslav worker, which were the result of workers’ self-management.²³⁸ That way, as Goldmann highlighted, the spectator would be able to see and compare the worker and the citizen in the Western world with one in Yugoslavia. Goldmann wished that the film would not be just a presentation of a contemporary situation in Yugoslavia for the Western audience, but more importantly, that it would provide “a sociological analysis of the functioning of self-management in Yugoslavia.” Writing to Supek, Goldmann therefore stressed the importance of collaborating closely with the Yugoslav sociologists on his project.²³⁹ The plan was to shoot the film in Yugoslavia during 1965, and from its inception, it was supposed to be an international collaboration between three film houses: one French (*Argos Films*), one Belgian (*Les Films Henri Storck*), and one Yugoslav (*Filmske Novosti*), which signed a contract in 1964. *Filmske Novosti* was a company under direct state control that had an enormous role in mobilizing support for the Non-Aligned Movement.²⁴⁰

The critical Marxist intellectuals like Rudi Supek—who were already seen as problematic intellectuals, as the previous chapters show—were nevertheless engaged in the promotion of self-management, and in conceptualizing its essence to be presented to the international public. It is important to highlight this since the intellectuals saw in self-management the emancipatory potential, the solution to the problem of modern, automatized

²³⁶ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²³⁷ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²³⁸ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²³⁹ 154 EHE 3, ‘Autogestion’.

²⁴⁰ See, Radina Vučetić, “We Shall Win: Yugoslav Film Cooperation with FRELIMO,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* [Online] (2019): 118.

society, and technical environment. In their reinterpretation, self-government was at the core of the humanist project. Socialist self-government encompassed the personalist accounts of self-determination and human dignity, as will be seen in the following section. What is also evident from the exhibition's concept, and what will also be a topic in the following chapters, is the crisis of humanity in the face of technological advancement. At the same time, the concept aimed to show how the intellectuals engaged and embraced the idea of self-management as a practice that ought to be presented to those living in the "West."

Spiritual Crisis and the Idea of Human Perfectibility: Socialism is Personalism

The concept of crisis was often employed by critical intellectuals as an analytical framework. For example, Predrag Vranicki described the 1950s as a decade of "crisis, wars, violence, and racial and national discrimination."²⁴¹ The overarching theme that entered the intellectual discourses through the Party's initiation of the critique of Stalinist interpretations of Marxism was the role of technology (that was deemed by the Yugoslav party leadership and the critical intellectuals as the "crisis of Marxist thought") was the general crisis of humanity, especially in the context of the Cold War (e.g., at worst, the threat of nuclear war). It should be noted that personalism, existentialism, phenomenology, and Marxism are all crisis ideologies. They could be used by these intellectuals synoptically, thereby seeing them as compatible in terms of their humanistic thrust, although they were not, nor did they have compatible answers to the humanist dilemmas.

The intellectuals therefore spoke about the phenomenon of crisis that existed also after WWII although in a new shape. This crisis of spirit existed due to a huge gap between the theory and practice. From the intellectuals' philosophical perspective, the problem of

²⁴¹ Predrag Vranicki, "Misli o radničkom i društvenom upravljanju [Thoughts on the workers' and social management]," *Naše teme*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1957):145.

“technical civilization” put forth the problem of humanity—“it was an urgent problem, the problem of humanity, the problem of humanness,” as Vladimir Filipović pointed out.²⁴² Filipović (1906–1984) belonged to the older generation of philosophers and had also held his position at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb during WWII.²⁴³ During the interwar period he published *Osnovne tendencije u savremenoj filozofiji* [Basic tendencies in contemporary philosophy] in 1935, where he engaged with the ideas of Kant, including neo-Kantian schools, positivism, materialism (including that of Marx), but also with new Italian idealism (Croce, Gentile), the phenomenology of Husserl, as well as with the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger.²⁴⁴ His intellectual background mainly involved engagement with contemporary philosophy, for instance publishing a review of *Revolt of Masses* by Jose Ortega y Gasset in *Hrvatska revija* (main journal of *Matica hrvatska*, a Croatian literary and cultural society established in 1842 as *Matica ilirska*, whose goal was the development of Croatian national consciousness) in 1942.²⁴⁵ In his text *Towards the Idea of Humanity*, he grounded his demand for humanism upon the permeating spiritual and ontological crisis in which the people of Europe and the world found themselves as a result of not-too-distant “catastrophes.”²⁴⁶ This spiritual crisis was therefore a universal problem, a topical issue, illustrated by German

²⁴² Vladimir Filipović, “Prilog ideji humaniteta [A contribution to the idea of humanity]” in Branko Bošnjak, Rudi Super (eds), *Humanizam i socijalizam* [Humanism and socialism], (Naprijed: Zagreb, 1963), 175–190. The same article was published in German: Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 81–97. As I did not have the access to the version in Croatian, I used the one published in German.

²⁴³ Filipović’s mentor was Albert Bazala (1877-1947), a well-known philosopher from Zagreb who was forcefully retired during the establishment of the Independent Croatian State (NDH). He returned to his position after the war, under the communist leadership. Filipovic worked during the Independent Croatian State, becoming from 1939 university docent. After 1945 he was the only older philosophy professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, as Bazala died already in 1947. He became a full-time professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in 1957 and was there until he retired. See, Ivana Skuhala Karasman, “Bibliografija Vladimira Filipovića [Bibliography of Vladimir Filipovića]” in Erna Banić-Pajnić, Mihaela Girardi-Karšulin, Ljerka Schiffler (eds.), *Vladimir Filipović: život i djelo (1906 – 1984)* [*Vladimir Filipović: life and work (1906-1984)*] (Zagreb: Institut za filozofiju, 2008), 205–216.

²⁴⁴ Zdravko Posavac, “O filozofiji Vladimira Filipovića [On the philosophy of Vladimir Filipović]” *Prilozi* 76 (2012): 265–314, here 269.

²⁴⁵ Vladimir Filipović, “Knjiga o suvremenom čovjeku (prikaz djela José Ortega y Gasseta, *Pobuna masa*”, *Hrvatska revija* 2 (1942): 92–94.

²⁴⁶ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 81.

philosopher Martin Heidegger, also discussed in his *Letter on Humanism*, to which Filipović referred.²⁴⁷ The spiritual crisis thus encompassed:

The historical moment was such that, unfortunately, we are forced to live as witnesses of an era whose actions were so contrary to the idea of humanity that after the end of WWII, for the first time in world history, international criminal law principles for crimes against humanity, had to be established in the statute of an international military court.²⁴⁸

Moreover, next to the catastrophe of WWII, Filipović also implied the “catastrophe” of Stalinism, and the violations of the “basic principles of human existence” done in the name of the people.²⁴⁹ According to him, anti-humanity was a dogma that had enabled the “triumph of brutality in our era, which we have all lived through.... This dogma was proclaimed, taught, accepted, and put into practice.”²⁵⁰ The catastrophe of WWII he described as “a catastrophe of European culture,” which had “caused all optimism to be destroyed in a flash.” As Filipović argued, “instead of brotherhood and love, hatred was taught, and the theory of enmity was cultivated and proclaimed, instead of praising the dignity of the individual human personality, non-conformism was called criminal, in a word, the universal idea of humanity was theoretically rejected.”²⁵¹ Thanks to the existence of such anti-humanist theories, the past catastrophes were capable to spread horror and brutality. Moreover, “in our time, without these theories, the practice of barbarism, would never have been so universal, and especially on such soil where the idea of humanity, the idea of humanness, had been cultivated by a long tradition.”²⁵² As Filipović indicated, humanity was far from being safe from the anti-humanist trends that had dominated the not-too-distant past.

²⁴⁷ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 81.

²⁴⁸ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 82.

²⁴⁹ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 82.

²⁵⁰ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” *Wissenschaft und Weltbild* 17 (1964): 83.

²⁵¹ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 83.

²⁵² Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 83.

These calamities that Filipović and his contemporaries had experienced, made “everyone aware that man’s freedom and dignity are threatened, that is to say, the very existence of a human being.”²⁵³ This was precisely the feeling of a spiritual and ontological crisis as he mentioned, out of which people were seeking a way out, “a way to return to humanity.” Agreeing with Stefan Zweig, the Austro-Hungarian author who thematized the state of European society in the 1920s, and 1930s, and who had noted that their era is one “in which the human being was on the one hand divinely created, while on the other hand he behaved like a devil,” Filipović made a point that this was precisely the reason why the question of humanity was the most prominent problem of his time.²⁵⁴ More importantly, while describing it as a universal problem of humanity, he located the problem of humanity specifically within European cultural space, or as he argued, this was a theme “interwoven with the entire development of European history, as its fundamental problem, as its original problem, as well as the general task of all cultural creativity and the realization of true human existence.”²⁵⁵ Such positions were not unusual among the humanist-oriented intellectuals around *Praxis*. We could argue that such positions could in the moments of impending crisis also manifest themselves in terms of the exclusion of ethnic groups which they saw as harboring ‘uncivilized’ and ‘backward’ characteristics.

Furthermore, Filipović conceptualized the human being in terms of a potentiality to develop—what distinguished the human being from other species for Filipović was not that people could evaluate “how something is” and the *status quo*, but that they could look towards the future and ask “how it should be”—this was a crucial difference, the idea of the perfectibility of humans and future-orientedness. He asked “Are not all ideals of education and training precisely ideals of a preconceived future tomorrow?... Do political programs do not

²⁵³ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 84.

²⁵⁴ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 84.

²⁵⁵ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 85.

mean a more humane future?”²⁵⁶ As a philosopher, for Filipović it was important to legitimize the task of philosophical anthropology and philosophy as connected with the issues of humanity—he maintained that only these disciplines could understand the concerns, tasks, and goals of concrete life.

Speaking from the perspective of Marxism, Filipović argued, similarly to his *Praxis* colleagues, that human beings create not only things and the conditions around themselves but also, and more importantly, themselves. A human being is thus a product of individual will and power, which can be manifested in certain forms in given historical and social contexts. Uniting, on the one hand, the universal reach of human beings with their localized limitations, Filipović underlined that a human being is a historical and social being: “Marx’s conception of history is not fatalistic and his theory of ‘productive forces’ and ‘production relations’ does not remain in the sphere of simply materialist transformations.”²⁵⁷ Filipović criticized Marxists who did not see this duality, arguing that only Marxists who “vulgarize Marxism” could arrive at such fatalistic conclusions. In his reading, Marxism thus included both the spiritual component as well as the materialistic.

Filipović also disclosed Sartre’s approach to human existence, arguing that “alienation is the idea of humanity,” as without it, humanity would be meaningless. In past economic and social forms, the human being had become alienated from its essence—and thus it must free himself from its labor, from technology, that turned him into mere means of production and a component of a machine that is used and sold like any commodity on the market.²⁵⁸ The goal of a human being was “to free itself from the alienated necessity of events, from this depersonalization, and must consciously find its way back to the natural essence of a human being, in which the meaning and value of his life lie.”²⁵⁹ The continuous struggle of “finding

²⁵⁶ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 85.

²⁵⁷ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 91.

²⁵⁸ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 92.

²⁵⁹ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 92.

its essence,” which has been compromised, seems to be the character of humanity for him. The goal of a human being is to become “a master of its fate, of its activity.”²⁶⁰ The essence of self-government was precisely to allow the socialist citizens to regain their fate and their own activity—to decide and to participate in the production processes, not simply by selling their labor, but by deciding about the products of their own making. Self-government was therefore primarily to assist a human being on its way to de-alienation.

The economic reforms, as the *Praxis* members would continuously remind the authorities, were always to be in tune with humanity. As I will show later, the issue would arise precisely with the economic reforms in Yugoslavia which did not, according to these intellectuals, follow humanism as a highest principle. Yet *Praxis* intellectuals, including Filipović, defined socialism as a political theory that must demand that all “economic reforms be placed in the service of a new morality, a morality which sees the highest value in the form of the free human personality.”²⁶¹

What was the intellectual background of Filipović’s and his colleagues’ interest in placing a human being and a person at the core of socialist practice? The intellectuals were greatly influenced by the ideas of personalism. Personalism offered a theoretical perspective that could encompass both the notion of an individual (in the ‘bourgeois’ sense) as well as the communal dimension of a human being.²⁶² Moreover, personalism expressed “a belief in the primordial uniqueness of the human being,” enshrined with intellectual capacities that separate human beings from other beings.²⁶³ The reception of personalism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s corresponded to the general humanist turn in Marxist interpretation. Dragan Jeremić (1925–1986), an assistant to the Marxist philosopher Dušan Nedeljković, published an article on

²⁶⁰ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 92.

²⁶¹ Vladimir Filipović, “Zur Idee der Humanität,” 92.

²⁶² Johan De Tavernier, “The Historical Roots of Personalism,” *Ethical Perspectives* Vol. 16, No. 3 (2009): 361–392, here 386.

²⁶³ Peter Emmanuel A. Mara “Understanding Man as a Subject and a Person: A Wojtyan Personalistic Interpretation of the Human Being,” *Kritike* 1, no. 1 (2007): 87–95, here 87.

“Personalism or One Philosophy at the Crossroads” in 1955,²⁶⁴ while Zagorka Golubović (1930–2019), a future *Praxis* member, discussed the personalism of Emmanuel Mounier in an article published by the main outlet of the Serbian Philosophical Society in 1960.²⁶⁵ At the newly formed Korčula Summer School in 1964, Filipović argued that in the very theory of personalism, one can find the meaning of socialism—but not in the “idea of an abstract, aristocratic, individualistic personalism.”²⁶⁶ He aimed to establish the very importance of personalism, emphasizing that an “individual that discovers and realizes the spiritual values, either in the field of science, or in the field of arts, or in the sphere of moral activity or philosophy, does this not only for oneself but for all humans [*za sve ljude*].”²⁶⁷ It was the goal of socialism, according to Filipović, to “achieve the ideas of socialist personalism, in its universal, and that would mean real, actual meaning.”²⁶⁸ As Marxists, however, Filipović and his colleagues did not subscribe to the theological approaches to personalism, which were rooted in the notion that a human being is a divine being. Instead, the framework of their thinking was grounded materialist and dialectical perspectives. Filipović argued that the goal of socialism was to remove all forms of exploitation, thus liberating humans from “necessity in the sphere of material goods, and creating conditions for the freedom of everyone.”²⁶⁹ For Filipović, freedom in the “sphere of humanity, that is to say, in the sphere of the spirit, is a sphere which is beyond subject and is universal.”²⁷⁰ In other words, the proper freedom of a human being was not confined to its individual desires, but is an abstract, spiritual freedom that encompasses the entire humanity.

²⁶⁴ Dragan Jeremić, “Personalizam ili jedna filozofija na raskrsnici [Personalism or One Philosophy at the Crossroads],” *Savremenik: mesečni časopis* Vol. 1, No.6 (1955): 744–757.

²⁶⁵ Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, *Personalizam Emaniela Munieja* [Personalism of Emmanuel Mounier] (Beograd :Srpsko filozofsko društvo, 1960).

²⁶⁶ Vladimir Filipović, “Socijalizam i personalizam” [Socialism and personalism], in *Smisao i perspektive socijalizma* [The meaning and perspectives of socialism], eds. Danilo Pejović and Gajo Petrović (Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo: Zagreb, 1965), 51.

²⁶⁷ Vladimir Filipović, “Socijalizam i personalizam,” 51–52.

²⁶⁸ Vladimir Filipović, “Socijalizam i personalizam,” 52.

²⁶⁹ Vladimir Filipović, “Socijalizam i personalizam,” 52.

²⁷⁰ Vladimir Filipović, “Socijalizam i personalizam,” 52.

Incorporating personalist accounts, for *Praxis* intellectuals, socialism as a political system was a ‘tool’ of realizing personal freedom and dignity. At the same time, anthropological considerations were also crucial in their approach to personhood and a human being. Zagorka Golubović aimed to establish the “foundation for a Marxist socio-cultural anthropology and elaborate its essential presuppositions and concepts.”²⁷¹ She was against sociology and culturalism in modern social science, which in her words “reduce human phenomena to structural and institutional categories, and substitute the riches of concrete, real life with its forms and quantitative expressions.”²⁷² Thus, approaching human beings from the institutional or the cultural point of view misses the deeper meaning of ‘personhood.’ Both of these approaches were also linked to Marxist perspectives. Yet for Golubović, human history was a “continuous result of the creative impulses of peoples and generations, and as an endless effort to overcome what has already been achieved, in order to make better and more convenient conditions for human living.”²⁷³ The idea of development, of perfectibility, and the need to move beyond the status quo in order to perfect the conditions of human life and of human beings as such, motivated her theoretical inquiries in a similar way as they did with Filipović.

Instead of seeing history as an “inevitable flow of necessity” governed by laws, as a traditional or a more classical approach to the Marxist view of history would, Golubović argued for the need to include the “human” in history. She placed this inquiry in a general interest of modern philosophy and sociology that pleaded to reconsider the problems of man in the “light of changed socio-cultural conditions and in the context of new human potentialities, which has grown in contemporary civilization.”²⁷⁴ For that reason, she referred not only to Marx, but also

²⁷¹ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 3.

²⁷² Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 4.

²⁷³ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 4.

²⁷⁴ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 5.

Rosa Luxemburg, György Lukács, Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Leszek Kołakowski, Karel Kosík, Zygmunt Bauman, and others.

What was a human being and human nature for Golubović? It was not a metaphysical category, an ahistorical pattern, or in Hegelian terms, an absolute idea.²⁷⁵ Instead, in studying human nature, the starting point for her was the “real, concrete human being, but not as isolated and unrepeatable units, without roots, for man is generically grounded and socio-culturally conditioned.”²⁷⁶ Therefore, a human being and human nature were not static definitions, but dynamic concepts. Moreover, following the theoretical consideration of Marx, and revisiting his concept of human nature, she argued that human nature can be considered on three levels: anthropological (as a generic being, that is a being that always creates one’s own life by praxis); socio-cultural—as individual in a social setting, that is different from other individuals by his or her place in the social division of labor, and roles he or she is taking, and is influenced in his or her development by the social stratum and subculture to which it belongs; and personal—as a developed personality in whom “both generic and socio-cultural inheritance are combined in the character of the unique subject.”²⁷⁷

Thus, similarly to Filipović, Golubović saw human nature not as a static collection of fixed characteristics of human beings, but as a “reservoir of potentials and possibilities which makes human life unique...”²⁷⁸ In this she was also in agreement with the French existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, for whom existence preceded essence—meaning that humans were not born with any fixed nature and purpose. That is, human nature is what it was—what has already been expressed as its characteristics during the history of mankind, but also of those potentialities that indicate what man can become. Here, for Golubović the concept of alienation

²⁷⁵ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Bgrade, 1971), 5.

²⁷⁶ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Bgrade, 1971), 5–6.

²⁷⁷ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Bgrade, 1971), 7.

²⁷⁸ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Bgrade, 1971), 7.

in Marx was crucial as a “reverse to mechanical interpretation of human history.”²⁷⁹ Namely, it implied that human history as a man-made phenomenon is “contradictory in itself, producing at the same time human results and dehumanization of some products and certain parts of a society.”²⁸⁰ Therefore, what makes a human depended on a number of socio-cultural but also personal conditions: the level of the given historical, socio-cultural possibilities in a given epoch, the cultural tradition which is the “accumulated achievements in a given society, on the character of social relations in a given society, and on the qualities and needs of the individuals.”²⁸¹ What is important thus to highlight is that in her conceptions, Golubović brought closer together the cultural aspect of the emergence of the personality, which has to be added to the more mechanical or external conditions of the epoch.

For Golubović, thus, culture plays an important role in grasping human nature. As she claims:

culture is a continuous process and results in humanization of man and his environment, achieved by successive transformation of human images into a new world which is created according to the measure of man, increasing thus human abilities to solve existential problems and developing new human potentialities.²⁸²

Golubović, implicitly following Emmanuel Mounier, argued that a human being was an antithesis of the individual (in the bourgeois sense), and, similarly, that the community was an antithesis of modern society. For her, just like for the personalists, the family was the first and the most natural community, which can also be seen in her defense of family in socialism in her book *Moralni problem u odnosima između muškarca i žene* [On Moral Problems in the Relationship Between Men and Women] from 1962.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 8.

²⁸⁰ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 8.

²⁸¹ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 8.

²⁸² Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 9.

²⁸³ At the time much was discussed about the crisis of the family institution and marriage—and indeed as Golubović agreed, a type of family inherited from class society was in crisis—this was seen not just in the fact that there were many divorces, but also in the way that relations in the family are developing. She defended marriage and family as social forms that are necessary but agreed that they must undergo a complete transformation. Zagorka Pešić [Golubović], *Moralni problem u odnosima između muškarca i žene* (Beograd: Izdavačko preduzeće Rad, 1962), 20–29.

Her engagement with personalism also directed some of her questions in her book *On Moral Problems in the Relationship Between Men and Women*, insofar as she was interested in the fact that there was something universal about being a human and that a human being is always in relation to another (not just an object among other individuals—but a person that has a spiritual, moral, and relational dimension of human existence). For her, the goal of socialism was first and foremost a free and consciously developed personality; thus the relationship between men and women was supposed to primarily be built on this respect of personality, and on the achievement of the possibility of the full development of both men and women.²⁸⁴

She reflected on these relationships of men and women in postwar Yugoslavia, framing them in the context of the general transition from capitalism to socialism—there is an imbalance on the one hand between politics and legislation (meaning that women did receive equal rights in Yugoslavia), and old relations between people and old moralities.²⁸⁵ There was a constant battle between old and new forms, and these battles are the most delicate and difficult in the realm of morality and in the realm of the most intimate relationship between people. Citing young Marx, she underlined that it was exactly the relation of man towards women that was the most natural relation between human beings.

However, *homo duplex*, formed and shaped by capitalist relations, still existed in Yugoslavia—and what this proved is that simply changing political and economic aspects of society does not directly change the social and moral aspects of the people. As she argued, men in the institutions or their work are striving to achieve new, socialist relations towards social community and individuals, while at home they stay conservative, keeping the old patriarchal relations. While the Yugoslav legal system was democratic, as it made men and women equal in rights and duties, still some of these legal formations cannot be realized if, alongside the

²⁸⁴ Zagorka Pešić [Golubović], *Moralni problem u odnosima između muškarca i žene* (Beograd: Izdavačko preduzeće Rad, 1962), 35.

²⁸⁵ Zagorka Pešić [Golubović], *Moralni problem u odnosima između muškarca i žene* (Beograd: Izdavačko preduzeće Rad, 1962), 8–9.

material-economic foundation, they do not also have the support of appropriate moral norms. This aspect of transformation and change was to Golubović a crucial one, and without it, everything else fails.²⁸⁶

Culture for Golubović also carried in itself possible nationalist interpretations as she understood “culture” in a broad sense—that is, it did not just have an instrumental meaning (knowledge, norms, experience, that help individuals and society solve practical problems, etc.), but it was more than that.²⁸⁷ Culture for Golubović helped in “answering certain existential questions on the philosophical level, such as: what is the meaning of human life, what direction should be taken in order to humanize the human world, what kind of images are worthwhile for human progress, etc.”²⁸⁸ This was her critique of Marxist interpretations of class relations and struggle in their definitions of “culture” as a superstructure. Such an understanding of Marxism, which explained history solely through the terminology of the class struggle, as she argued, ignored Marx’s concept of human nature and consequently the categories of praxis and alienation.

Golubović’s references did not include only French personalists and existentialists but also others, including Russian philosopher, theologian, personalist and Christian existentialist, Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), another implicitly or explicitly referenced philosopher among the *Praxis* group. Personal freedom was at the core of Berdyaev’s philosophy.²⁸⁹ For him, “every philosophy, theology, morality, and political theory had to begin with the irreducibility and inviolability of the human person.”²⁹⁰ As he was close to the Orthodox Church, for him

²⁸⁶ Zagorka Pešić [Golubović], *Moralni problem u odnosima između muškarca i žene* (Beograd: Izdavačko preduzeće Rad, 1962), 5–7.

²⁸⁷ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World In an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 9

²⁸⁸ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World In an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta, Begrade, 1971), 10

²⁸⁹ He was born in an aristocratic family, was active in the Russian Social Democratic movement, and later ‘converted’ to Marxism. As Ana Siljak write in Marxism’s rejection of the enslaving qualities of capitalism would remain a core part of Berdiaev’s philosophy until his death.” See Ana Siljak, “The Personalism of Nikolai Berdiaev,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought*, eds. Caryl Emerson, George Pattison, Randall A. Poole (Oxford University Press, 2020), 310

²⁹⁰ Ana Siljak, “The Personalism of Nikolai Berdiaev,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought*, eds. Caryl Emerson, George Pattison, Randall A. Poole (Oxford University Press, 2020), 314

personalism rested on a Kantian foundation, as noted by Ana Siljak. In his text, “Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism,” Golubović’s colleague and *Praxis* philosopher Mihailo Marković (1923–2010) interestingly included also Berdyaev, describing him as a staunch critic of the Soviet Union, as well as a critic of Western democratic systems. In these systems, as Marković read Berdyaev, “democracy” and “rights” were nothing but a façade. As an illustration, he cited a passage by Berdyaev on the nature of liberal democracy:

Democracy was until now formal and not real... However, formally understood democracy hides, masks a real struggle of classes, and often is an organ of class rule... Political democracy gives a human being political rights but does not give him real possibilities to use these rights because these possibilities are found in the social-economic and not political sphere. Political and juridical equality is combined with large social and economic inequality. And voting rights cannot help either. This is a real myth about equality created by the French Revolution.²⁹¹

In contextualizing his ideas, Marković characterized Berdyaev primarily as a personalist, and as someone for whom “the sacred is neither the society, state, nor a nation—but a human being.”²⁹² Reinterpreting Berdyaev, Marković highlighted that he saw Marxism and other types of materialism as reifying human beings into things. Thus, according to Berdyaev, the human being is but a “necessary brick for the construction of the communist society, the human being is just a tool.”²⁹³ Marković challenged the personalist critique of Berdyaev as it started from “arbitrary premises, and thus, it misses a point” of Marx, as Marx never wished to entrench ‘totalitarianism’ as an ideal of the future society. As Marković explained, Marx saw the relationship between individual and society in a dialectical way of mutual conditioning—which was different “to the personalist-anarchistic primacy of personality, and also different to

²⁹¹ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni zapadni filozofi o Marksizmu” [Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism], *Kniževne novine*, no. 52 (1953): 2.

²⁹² Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni zapadni filozofi o Marksizmu” [Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism], *Kniževne novine*, no. 52 (1953): 3.

²⁹³ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni zapadni filozofi o Marksizmu” [Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism], *Kniževne novine*, No. 52 (1953): 3.

Stalinist totalitarianism, in which a human-individual is a tiny, insignificant particle faced with one ‘absolute value’ in front of which everything falls—the bureaucratic state.”²⁹⁴

The approach of *Praxis* philosophers to Marxism and the themes they were engaging are reflected in their main references—from Berdyaev, Mounier, Bertrand Russell,²⁹⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, Erich Fromm, and others—in their critique of Marxism in the name “of personhood [*ličnost*], in the name of human being [*čovek*], human being’s spiritual values, and absolute freedom.”²⁹⁶ Their philosophical engagement therefore expressed plurality—by being focused on the motifs of “human being,” “person,” “humanity”—they inevitably joined the crisis of humanism with different philosophies in a syncretic way. While Marković in the mentioned text would question some of these ‘Western’ intellectuals’ positions for being overly individualist and subjectivist, he nevertheless agreed with them in their defense of the human being and in their argument that a human being ought to be at the core of any theoretical and political considerations. In their criticism of Soviet totalitarianism, as *Praxis* intellectuals saw it, existentialists and personalists put forward the question of personhood and personality, the human being’s existence, destiny in the world, freedom, and dignity.

Crisis of European Humanity: Phenomenological and Existentialist Themes

In thematizing the crisis of spirituality and the crisis of personhood in the face of the catastrophes of the Second World War, but also of the impending possibilities of extinction due to the Cold War, *Praxis* philosophers thematized the idea of a crisis of Europeanness and European culture. This subchapter looks more into their engagement with phenomenology and existentialism and the themes that this engagement brought. Phenomenology had a tradition in

²⁹⁴ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni zapadni filozofi o Marksizmu” [Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism], *Kniževne novine*, No. 52 (1953): 3.

²⁹⁵ For Marković, for instance, Russell was important insofar as he was a humanist.

²⁹⁶ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni zapadni filozofi o Marksizmu” [Contemporary Western philosophers about Marxism], *Kniževne novine*, no. 52 (1953): 2.

the Yugoslav space from the interwar period, and one of the students of Husserl was Zagorka Mićić (1903–1982). This tradition continued through various interactions with phenomenologists and existentialists at the summer school at Korčula. Existentialism and phenomenology were important theoretical frameworks for these intellectuals, as they helped them to conceptualize the crisis of humanity.²⁹⁷ Phenomenology and existentialism are not synonymous, yet they share a focus on the crisis of humanity. They are both concerned with navigating through the human conditions, although they approach these concerns differently.

Firstly, existentialist literature was very much in circulation in the early 1950s. Boris Žiherl reflected on this issue in 1953 in his text “Existentialism and Its Social Roots,” published in *Nova misao* [New thought], the journal founded in the same year by Milovan Đilas, who would become persona non grata in a few years. Žiherl and Đilas, alongside Kardelj, formed the inner circle of the Yugoslav Communist Party during the 1930s, and held important positions during and after WWII. Žiherl came to be the principal of the ideological and didactic school of the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade (1948–1950), and later the first Director of the Institute of Social Sciences. Next to being a high-ranking party and state functionary, he was also one of the main communist ideologues who dealt with the history of Marxism and philosophy. He was one of the only theorists in Yugoslavia in 1952 to claim that the USSR was a class society, although Gerson Sher called him a “dogmatist in matters of philosophy,” and one of the defenders of “dialectical materialism.”²⁹⁸

In the early 1950s, the polemic between Zagorka Mićić (1903–1982) and Dušan Nedeljković was one of the instances that introduced wider debates concerning the rethinking of Marxist philosophy in Yugoslavia. This debate can be approached as an instance of the

²⁹⁷ Daniel Komel, for example, argues that the ideas of Heidegger helped address a broader crisis—and specifically how people understood and related to history and the present.

²⁹⁸ Gerson Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 8. See, Boris Žiherl, *Dijalektički i istorijski materijalizam* [Dialectical and historical materialism] (Beograd: Rad, 1951).

conversation with other traditions—that is, starting with Marx and bringing in other philosophies in the dialogue. Zagorka Mičić, a well-known phenomenologist, opened up the debate, and argued for a more “scientific” and rigorous approach to Marxist theory and science—that is, one that would not appear ideological and dogmatic. In his lectures at the People’s University Kolarac, Dušan Nedeljković aimed to rethink the classics of Marxism and to develop a critical approach to Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Nedeljković, for example, followed Lenin’s critique of economism that emphasized the importance of consciousness for the development of the workers’ movement, yet at the time Mičić saw the critique of economism as unpersuasive and simply a way to stress the importance of philosophy. The critique of economism would be later widely adopted by other Yugoslav Marxist intellectuals, most prominently by Ilija Kosanović in his *Dijalekticki materijalizam: uvod u osnovna pitanja marksizma* [Dialectical materialism: an introduction to the basic questions of Marxism, 1956]. However, Mičić did not disapprove of the critical positions towards Marxism-Leninism, as much as she urged Nedeljković to clearly and more critically elaborate the type of dialectics that he had in mind.²⁹⁹ Her criticism was not a malicious attack but came from her genuine wish to put into practice a public struggle of opinion in philosophy, as covered by the previous chapter. Mičić spent the early 1930s in Freiburg studying phenomenology under Edmund Husserl, becoming part of an inner circle of his students there at the time, including Jan Patočka, Eugen Fink, Roman Ingarden, Ludwig Landgrebe, and Fritz Kaufmann.³⁰⁰ Her dissertation about Husserl’s philosophy was published as a book in 1937, and Eugen Fink, a

²⁹⁹ Una Blagojević, “Phenomenology and existentialism in dialogue with Marxist humanism in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Studies in East European Thought* 75 No. 3 (232): 417-436.

³⁰⁰ Dragan Prole, “The beginnings of phenomenology in Yugoslavia: Zagorka Mičić on Husserl’s Method,” in *Early phenomenology in Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. W. Plotka and P. Eldridge, (New York: Springer, 2020), 204.

phenomenologist who would later be in close contact with the *Praxis* philosophers in the 1960s, wrote its foreword.³⁰¹

In fact, as Dragan Prole points out in discussing interwar communists and members of the Yugoslav surrealist movement and authors of the *Outline for the Phenomenology of Irrational* (1931), Koča Popović (1908–1922) and Marko Ristić (1902–1984), phenomenology was not part of the leftist and Marxist engagements in the interwar period. As discussed by Prole, Ristić included Husserl's philosophical project in the title of his book *Draft for a Phenomenology of the Irrational* (1931), yet his ideas were clearly influenced by the Marxist materialist approach, as the first sentence clearly stated a position different from Husserl: "Thought is the product of matter."³⁰²

In this rethinking of Marxism-Leninism, which they maintained was in crisis, Yugoslav intellectuals also used phenomenological and existentialist ideas. Mičić is an important figure insofar as Eugen Fink (1905–1975) would also be a regular visitor at the Korčula Summer School and a close friend of *Praxis* philosopher Danko Grlić. Moreover, as an intermediary, Eugen Fink was, "at least in part, also responsible for the first analytical reception of Heidegger's thought in Yugoslavia."³⁰³ Fink also earned his doctorate under Husserl and Heidegger.³⁰⁴ During the winter semester of 1966/1967 at the University of Freiburg,

³⁰¹ Zagorka Mičić, "Sećanja na susrete sa Huserlom [Memoirs of meeting with Husserl]," *Književna kritika* 2(4) (1973): 144.

³⁰² Cited in Dragan Prole, "Recepcija fenomenologije u međuratnoj Jugoslaviji, [Reception of phenomenology in the interwar Yugoslavia]." In *Tradicije nastave filozofije* [Traditions of teaching philosophy], ed. Dragan Prole, (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Novom Sadu), 11.

³⁰³ Daniel Komel "The influence of Heidegger's thought on the development of philosophy in ex-Yugoslav countries." *Human Studies* 41 (2018): 646. Furthermore, see Zvonko Posavec, "O kraju filozofije u djelu Martina Heideggera [On the end of philosophy in the work of Martin Heidegger]," *Praxis* Vol VIII No.1 (1971): 17–24, Ivan Urbančić, "Bit nihilizma kao bit metafizike [The essence of nihilism as the essence of metaphysics]," *Praxis* Vol VIII No.1 (1971): 3–16, and Branko Despot, "Što jest pitanje? [What is the question?]," *Praxis* Vol VIII No.1 (1971): 25–30.

³⁰⁴ Ronald Bruzina, *Edmund Husserl and Eugen Fink: Beginnings and Ends in Phenomenology, 1928–1938*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Heidegger and Fink organized a joint seminar, Heraclitus Seminar, where they reflected on the beginnings of Greek philosophy.³⁰⁵

In the period immediately after 1948, existentialist philosophy was labeled by the party intellectuals as “bourgeois,” “decadent,” and “nihilistic,” despite its growing popularity. Boris Ziherl also emphasized that historically, existentialism had always emerged during periods of deep crisis and destruction. As he explained, existentialist ideas emerged in the period after the French Revolution, the First World War, the October Revolution, and the Second World War. However, while the intellectuals insisted on the existence of a spiritual crisis and the crisis of European humanity, Ziherl believed that the term “crisis” could not be to describe the Yugoslav system, especially in the context of the establishment of the workers’ councils and the introduction of workers’ self-management.³⁰⁶

Existentialism was indeed seen as a philosophy that appears in the contexts of the “lost wars or crisis”. As Vanja Sutlić pointed out, “On such soil grows existentialism—an adequate self-awareness of the bourgeois man of our time, which by no means reduces itself solely to this specific historical origin, but within it expresses the problematic of the bourgeois man in general.”³⁰⁷ In the early period, Rudi Supek also critically engaged with existentialism—here he mainly referred to Sartre, welcoming his adoption of Marxist social critique, but he also accused Sartre of denying this critique’s materialist basis. Furthermore, Supek criticized Sartre’s novels that portrayed a member of the Party to be “a man denied his own freedoms... denied his personal life, who was alienated from his humanity.”³⁰⁸ Supek’s claim was that existentialism mystified the very possibility of humanism and socialism by insisting that every

³⁰⁵ See Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus seminar*, (Northwestern University Press, 1993).

³⁰⁶ Boris Ziherl, “Egzistencijalizam i njegovi društveni koreni [Existentialism and its social roots],” *Nova misao* 2 (I) (1953): 323–361, here 331.

³⁰⁷ Vanja Sutlić, “Križa građanskog čovjeka u svijelu egzistencijalizma [The Crisis of the Bourgeois Man in the Light of Existentialism],” *Pogledi* No. 6 (1953):377–384, here 377.

³⁰⁸ Rudi Supek, “Egzistencijalizam i dekadencija [Existentialism and decadence],” (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1950), 21.

kind of determinism is destructive.³⁰⁹ Moreover, he referred to Henri Lefebvre, once an existentialist who claimed that:

The existentialist demagogy and mystifications uncover a type of wild recklessness—a complete Hitlerite climate wrapped skillfully in dark cynicism. Heideggerian existentialism, especially, represents the view of a lone adventurer— isolated in his consciousness. . .³¹⁰

Linking existentialism to Hitlerism, he also inverted Sartre’s claim “existentialism is humanism,” claiming that “Existentialism is not humanism, it is far from any kind of humanism.”³¹¹ Instead, to Supek existentialism was a dangerous philosophical system—in Supek’s words, “a double-edged sword.” Like Marković’s text discussed above, Supek’s text should be understood not as a straight-out rejection of existentialism, but as an engagement with the philosophy in the given context.

Nevertheless, especially in literature, existentialist ideas did circulate as early as the 1950s—and especially in literature. One of the examples includes a controversial narration of the partisan struggle during WWII by Slovenian novelist Edvard Kocbek (1904–1981), who in his *Fear and Courage* published in 1951 discussed the internal struggles of partisan commissars. The novel was harshly criticized by Tone Fajfar (1913–1981), Slovenian partisan and politician, in *Književne novine* [Literary newspapers] in 1952. He argued that Kocbek distorted the “truthfulness of the partisan struggle,” while introducing “a strange philosophy that expressed the thoughts and words of the book’s heroes.”³¹² Moreover, according to historian Aleš Gabrič, in 1952 the critical journal *Beseda* [Word] was supposed to publish a translation of the article in which Sartre called “upon Europe to establish itself as a third force

³⁰⁹ Rudi Supek, “Egizstencijalizam i dekadencija [Existentialism and decadence],” (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1950), 24.

³¹⁰ Rudi Supek, “Egizstencijalizam i dekadencija [Existentialism and decadence],” (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1950), 150.

³¹¹ Rudi Supek, , “Egizstencijalizam i dekadencija [Existentialism and decadence],” (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1950), 109.

³¹² Tone Fajfar, “Edvard Kocbek, Strah in pogum [Edvard Kocbek, Fear and Courage], *Književne novine* 47(5) (1952): 8.

between the West dominated by the United States and the East dominated by the Soviet Union.”³¹³

The conceptualization of the crisis of humanity and humanism among Marxists humanists circled around *Praxis* as the main entry point for their dialogues with both phenomenology and existentialism. The debate between Heidegger and Sartre on the issue of humanism and existentialism was well-known among Yugoslav intellectuals. This can be seen in various instances, such as that of Janko Kos (1931), a Slovenian literary historian, who elaborated on the anthropocentric perspective of Heidegger’s philosophy found in his *Being and Time*, and more clearly in his *Letter on Humanism*. The debate between Heidegger and Sartre resonated with the Yugoslav intellectuals—for Sartre existentialism was humanism as he delivered a lecture in 1945, “Existentialism Is a Humanism,” while in Heidegger’s opinion, “everything had to be rethought more radically, starting with the very notion of ‘humanism,’ itself the marker of an unquestioned presupposition, since Plato, regarding the true essence of man.”³¹⁴ For Heidegger, the unity of metaphysics and “humanism,” which he saw throughout Western thought, was the reason of the impasse that his existentialist philosophy was supposed to overcome.³¹⁵ The theme of nihilism and the hope for the European “spiritual” renewal of Heidegger also brought him to praise Hitler and Mussolini “for having ‘introduced a countermovement to nihilism.’”³¹⁶ Heidegger morally equated the Enlightenment and National Socialism, arguing that modern “technology” and its Western origins were the main culprits. Namely, Heidegger’s view of the “German catastrophe” insinuated that “National Socialism’s depredations were primarily—even exclusively—the result of Western cultural and intellectual

³¹³ Aleš Gabrič, “The younger generation’s magazines in the eyes of the Communist ideologues,” *Review of Croatian History* 15(1) (2019) 35–61, here 46.

³¹⁴ Rocco Rubini, *The Other Renaissance: Italian Humanism between Hegel and Heidegger* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2014), 2.

³¹⁵ Rocco Rubini, *The Other Renaissance: Italian Humanism between Hegel and Heidegger* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2014), 2.

³¹⁶ Richard Wollin, *Heidegger in Ruins: Between Philosophy and Ideology* (Yale University Press, 2023), 44.

influences: ‘humanism,’ ‘Cartesian subjectivity’ and ‘Technics.’”³¹⁷ While Yugoslav intellectuals saw the importance of humanism, they nevertheless used Heidegger’s critique of technology and the thematization of the crisis of humanity.

In 1967, Mihailo Marković opened his essay “Contemporary nihilism and the new possibilities of a human being” [Savremeni nihilizam i nove mogućnosti čoveka] with the following statement: “One doubts everything which was holy—this is what is making more and more a spiritual ‘aroma’ of the epoch.”³¹⁸ He continued by agreeing with Sartre’s argument that in the “world without a god, human existence is difficult, without reason, without sense, absurd.”³¹⁹ The modern society based on technical civilization, and requiring a higher degree of specialization of labor as well as a strict organization of all forms of social life, inevitably carried, according to Marković, the “dangers of dehumanization and depersonalization.”³²⁰ Marković’s depiction of the contemporary status of humanity was that with the growth and expansion of civilization, there was no “growth of warmth, honesty, selflessness, solidarity in human relations,” and instead, the “direction was the complete opposite.”³²¹ The universal penetration of technology was, in essence, a penetration of “routine, artificiality, uniformity, utilitarianism, hyperproduction of cheap stereotypes and surrogates; at the same time this continuous atrophy of humane spontaneity, naturalness, originality, authenticity, intuition... was followed with often brutal desolation of emotional life.”³²²

Warning that Yugoslavia was also joining and participating in the technological civilization, the intellectuals argued for the need to place humanism at the center of political

³¹⁷ Richard Wollin, *Heidegger in Ruins: Between Philosophy and Ideology* (Yale University Press, 2023), 57.

³¹⁸ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni nihilizam i nove mogućnosti čoveka, [Contemporary nihilism and the new possibilities of a human being],” *Filozofija*, No. 1-2 (1967): 13.

³¹⁹ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni nihilizam i nove mogućnosti čoveka, [Contemporary nihilism and the new possibilities of a human being],” *Filozofija*, No. 1-2 (1967): 13.

³²⁰ Zagorka Golubović, “Humanizam i socijalizam [Humanism and socialism],” *Praxis* No. 1 (1965): 6.

³²¹ Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni nihilizam i nove mogućnosti čoveka, [Contemporary nihilism and the new possibilities of a human being],” *Filozofija*, No. 1-2 (1967): 15.

³²² Mihailo Marković, “Savremeni nihilizam i nove mogućnosti čoveka, [Contemporary nihilism and the new possibilities of a human being],” *Filozofija*, No. 1-2 (1967): 15-16.

and economic discussions in Yugoslavia. For them the human personality needed to be revalorized, which was—as they justified their claims, precisely what Marx had required. Yet, as already shown, they also adopted personalist views in their arguments. Therefore, for Golubović an affirmation of the human being did not mean simply a higher life standard, nor simply just a political liberation—instead it required the revalorization of “human needs, which are impoverished, limited only to partial needs, and do not have a genuine human meaning.”³²³ Existentialist ideas helped intellectuals like Golubović formulate their critiques of modern societies, while the phenomenological and personalist accounts offered ways of dealing with the “crisis.”

The Ideology of the Scientific and Technological Revolution

The majority of *Praxis* intellectuals were skeptical of technological optimism and did not embrace technological progress as a phenomenon that would bring about liberation. Nevertheless, they acknowledged technology’s dominance in everyday life. Golubović, inspired by the analyses of Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas, approached the “scientific and technological revolution” as an ideology, that is, “as a means of modern capitalism to mask the substantial contradictions of the class society, which still weigh down America and the other capitalist systems, replacing them by neutral technical terms, and justifying them by the programs of scientific research.”³²⁴ Modern capitalism, according to him, rested on the following contradictions: it had a tendency towards greater differentiation and partialization of works, roles, groups, and organizations, ending thus in the growth of pluralistic interests, goals, and values, and in the atomization of individuals. Furthermore, it also included “a greater monopolization of power... and a sharper split between state and society, producing an increased concentration of political power in the hands of social elites, the so-called ‘political

³²³ Zagorka Golubović, “Humanizam i socijalizam [Humanism and socialism],” *Praxis* No. 1 (1965): 6.

³²⁴ Zagorka Golubović, “Humanizam i socijalizam [Humanism and socialism],” *Praxis* No. 1 (1965): 19.

experts,' in opposition to the masses of people, who are not supposed to take part in making important social decisions, for 'not being competent' in this kind of specialized governing."³²⁵

Praxis intellectuals emphasized that their own present was radically different from the one described by Marx, "since their world was the world of technology."³²⁶ Mihailo Marković, who in the early 1950s described Soviet Marxist philosophy as a philosophy in crisis, "of regress and decadence,"³²⁷ due to the fact that it was entirely monopolized by the state, also engaged in the 1960s with the issue of technology. In his article "Man and technology," he described technology's positive aspects—as being capable of destroying the "natural and patriarchal relationships"—but also pointed out its power and capacity to destroy "spontaneous networks between people." While not explicitly referencing Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto* in which they claimed that the bourgeoisie has "put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations,"³²⁸ Marković implied that technology started acting in a similar logic as that of capitalism, described in the *Manifesto*. As he explained: "In the face of technology, everything is losing its value: belief in god, petit-bourgeois sentimentality, revolutionary idealism, the most important value becomes efficacy..."³²⁹ Technology thus had both progressive and regressive sides. Marković's aim was not to entirely reject technology, but to raise the issue of the uncritical approach to technology and progress, and to propose ways of dealing with the unavoidable technologization of all aspects of a human's life. Philosophy had a unique possibility of being able to adequately engage with the following questions:

What is the role of technology in the world? Is technology a basic evil for the modern man, way of life in which man progressively loses everything human in himself, or is the technology "forgetfulness of human being," the form of inauthentic existence, the important ontological structure of human alienation...

³²⁵ Zagorka Golubović, "Humanizam i socijalizam,[Humanism and socialism]" *Praxis* No. 1 (1965): 19.

³²⁶ Zagorka Golubović, "Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism]," *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1966): 19.

³²⁷ Mihailo Marković, *Revizija filozofskih osnova marksizma u Sovjetskom Savezu* [Revision of the philosophical foundations of Marxism in the Soviet Union] (Srpsko Filozofsko Društvo, Beograd, 1952) 9.

³²⁸ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Harvard University Press, 1955), 2.

³²⁹ Mihailo Marković, "Čovek i tehnika [Human being and technology]," (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta "Đuro Salaj", 1964), 220.

Is technology essentially connected to the creative potential of a human being, and thus something intrinsically linked to what makes us human?³³⁰

In the above quote, Marković referred to Heidegger's insight into technology and its consequences that resulted in the "forgetfulness of human being"³³¹ and loss of authenticity. Moreover, at the time Marković was writing, these positions demonstrated the two extremes of contemporary thinking about the issues of technology. One being Heideggerian and another being a techno-optimism, which was supposed to liberate human beings through unhindered technological progress. These also depended on their different approaches to the question of human beings—one philosophy found the most important goal of humanity in the accelerated industrialization by which societies could achieve a maximal level of productivity and a high living standard. The opposite view saw technology as the main reason for human alienation from the world and the loss of the human being's authenticity. For *Praxis* philosophers, as it will be seen, socialist societies could not simply criticize capitalism by relying on classical Marxist texts, instead, it was crucial to engage with the critique of technology, and thus introduce neo-Marxist analysis of Western technologically advanced societies.

Praxis intellectuals saw Marx both as a philosopher of technology—seeing that the production forces are those that move the entire social development, and as someone who warned about the potentially damaging effect technology can have on human beings. Ultimately, they worried that the alienated human beings would turn to some "primitive" feelings like ethnonationalism, because they would lose their capacity to think critically, becoming thus an easily manipulated mass (reminiscent of José Ortega y Gasset's *Revolt of the Masses*). While he could have not even imagined how the post-WWII societies in developed

³³⁰ Mihailo Marković, "Čovek i tehnika [Human being and technology]," (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta "Đuro Salaj", 1964), 224.

³³¹ As intellectual historian Richard Wollin notes, Heidegger claimed that the sense of "homelessness" and "destitute" were the condition of human beings in modernity. As Wollin explains, Heidegger saw the Allied victory in Germany in 1945 to a part of the long history of the *Seinvergessenheit*, or "the forgetfulness of Being". Richard Wollin, *Heidegger in Ruins*, 2.

countries would look like—as *Praxis* intellectuals claimed, Marx did not envision the future which would be marked by the intensive technologization, electrification, and automatization. As Marković explained, Marx’s “ideal was not a man chauffeur, not a man consumer, not a man who organizes, nor man the ruler of the robots, not even a man cosmonaut.”³³² For him, it was crucial to insist on the importance of the humanist side of Marxist thinking, to avoid the one-sided interpretation of Marx according to which the laws of nature, independent of human beings, are in charge of “moving history forward.” Implicitly, they polemicized with the techno-optimists who focused exclusively on the scientific aspect of Marx’s thought, seeing it as a concrete science. These objective laws as described by the Party intellectuals were independent of the wishes of people, and consequently, the more knowledge a human being had of these natural laws, the more control human beings had over nature.³³³ Therefore, the accession to knowledge that is driven by the need for technological advancement was from their perspective a dangerous position that would inevitably lead the Yugoslav society into a consumer society, easily manipulated and governed by those in power.

Human beings were, as previously mentioned, at the core of their philosophical thinking, and thus the *Praxis* intellectuals’ main concern was about the type of human being created by the uncritical and unending technologization of Yugoslav society. At the same time, the LCY also announced the importance of the human being in socialism, which was according to the officials different from the notion of the “Soviet man,” understood as being artificially imposed from above by the Party. In his article “On the morality of our man today (or about the continuous struggle with oneself),” Ivan Laća, a philosopher, author of the *Role of Consciousness in the Struggle for Socialism* [Uloga svesti u borbi za socijalizam], and party

³³² Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Human being and technology]” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta “Đuro Salaj”, 1964), 229.

³³³ See, *Neki problemi teorije odraza. Referati i diskusija na IV stručnom sastanku udruženja. Bled, 10-11 Novembar 1960* [Some problems of the theory of reflection. Presentations and discussion at the IV expert meeting. Bled, 10/11 November 1960] (Jugoslovensko udruženje za filozofiju, Beograd, 1960)

intellectual, highlighted the existence of the bourgeois understanding of morality in Yugoslavia, yet argued that it would be absurd to prescribe recipes—or templates—on how one should lead his or her life.³³⁴ This type of “fight against the remnants of morality that is foreign to socialism, would without doubt bring about the hindrance and desecration of life.”³³⁵ Such a statement ought to be understood in the context of the Yugoslav adoption of self-management: this was supposed to decentralize the Party authority that was destined to “wither away.” At the same time, Laća did not argue for some anarchistic understanding of morality, according to which there would be no sort of overarching standards; some type of delineation was needed between what was allowed and what was prohibited. Laća quoted Tito: “We are not ascetics, nor do we demand that our people are ascetics, some kind of prophets or saints, but our people must have norms in their personal life.”³³⁶ The main sense of the Yugoslav revolutionary activity, according to Laća, was to establish and instill this norm that would promote truthful, free, versatile, courageous, and proud human beings.³³⁷

However, while the official discourse claimed the importance of free, versatile, and dignified human beings, *Praxis* intellectuals started to gradually diverge from the Party around the issue of technology, broadly speaking, and mechanization and technologization, more narrowly. That is, instead of simply following the idea of Lenin, whose slogan identified electricity as the only remaining step in Russia’s path to Communism—“Communism is equal to Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country”—the intellectuals introduced in

³³⁴ Ivan Laća, “O moralnom liku našeg čovjeka danas (ili o neprekidnoj borbi sa samim sobom)” [On the morality of our man today (or about the continuous struggle with oneself)], *Komunist: Organ Centralnog Komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* 5, no. 11–12 (1953): 834.

³³⁵ Ivan Laća, “O moralnom liku našeg čovjeka danas (ili o neprekidnoj borbi sa samim sobom)” [On the morality of our man today (or about the continuous struggle with oneself)], *Komunist: Organ Centralnog Komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* 5, no. 11–12 (1953): 834.

³³⁶ Ivan Laća, “O moralnom liku našeg čovjeka danas (ili o neprekidnoj borbi sa samim sobom)” [On the morality of our man today (or about the continuous struggle with oneself)], *Komunist: Organ Centralnog Komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* 5, no. 11–12 (1953): 834.

³³⁷ Ivan Laća, “O moralnom liku našeg čovjeka danas (ili o neprekidnoj borbi sa samim sobom)” [On the morality of our man today (or about the continuous struggle with oneself)], *Komunist: Organ Centralnog Komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* 5, no. 11–12 (1953): 836.

their analyses of Yugoslav society a critique of technology. The consequence of this was an implied criticism of the Yugoslav leadership, which would become sharper and more open in the aftermath of 1968. The argument by the Marxist revisionists was that Marx never argued that the emancipatory process of human beings can only be reduced to technological progress. At the same time, they did not reject technological progress as such, but the point upon which they continuously insisted was that such progress must be complemented through its entire process with humanist ideals and aims.

While Yugoslavia was at the time experiencing a rapid industrialization and modernization, given the fact that it was a predominantly agrarian country, for *Praxis* intellectuals the threat of unregulated and uncritical technological advancements was tightly linked with the creation of “a new type of man.” As Marković pointed out, following Herbert Marcuse, this type of man “believes that technology is a condition of happiness—he thinks that all human problems can be solved by appropriate technology.”³³⁸ This new type of human being was thus a perfect consumer in a society characterized by the hyperproduction of technical goods. Marcuse’s analyses in *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man* were utilized by *Praxis* intellectuals to legitimize their claims. Marković referred in particular to his theory of consumer society and his analysis of the role of commodities and consumption in reproducing advanced capitalism and in integrating individuals into it. This passage reflects many of the issues raised by *Praxis* philosophers:

The productive apparatus and the goods and services which it produces “sell” or impose the social system as a whole.... The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life... and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change.³³⁹

³³⁸ Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Human being and technology],” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta “Đuro Salaj”, 1964), 237.

³³⁹ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Routledge, London, New York, 1991), 14.

The mechanization and automation that described the new “technical civilization” was a danger even for a socialist society such as the Yugoslav one, as *Praxis* intellectuals warned. This is clearly seen in Golubović’s complaint that:

At the time when the scientists and humanists in the West are worried about the ever growing difficulties which appear with *razmravljeni rad* [crumbled, broken labor, i.e., a reference to Georges Friedmann’s *Le travail en miettes*], the ever-growing mechanization and automation of the new working processes that although carrying new perspectives are also creating new problems in the sphere of depersonalization and dehumanization of personality, here [that is, in Yugoslavia], it is as if these problems do not exist.³⁴⁰

This indifference and ignorance towards such crucial questions was detrimental according to Golubović and her colleagues. As I will discuss in detail in the following chapter, their insistence on the importance of having such discussions was met with accusations of “abstract humanism.”³⁴¹ However, from their perspective, after the introduction of new economic reforms in 1965, Yugoslavia already experienced partialized, routine, and depersonalized labor that would be—next to the political and economic circumstances—another reason for the difficulties facing Yugoslav society.³⁴² Put differently, Yugoslav self-managing socialism was on the road of becoming just an empty word, nurturing citizens not for freedom and emancipation, but for servility and conformism.

Here, *Praxis* intellectuals followed Marcuse’s view in emphasizing the ability of modern industrial society “to integrate all potential agents of change into one smoothly running, comfortable, and satisfying system of domination.”³⁴³ Marcuse was also seen by some intellectuals in Yugoslavia as arguing that the situation can only be changed if it reaches the worst possible conditions. Hrvoje Lisinski (1935–1971), who published in *Gledišta, Naše teme*, and who translated into Croatian books by Erich Fromm (*Man for Himself*, for instance), captured this aspect in his review of Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization*:

³⁴⁰ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1966): 11.

³⁴¹ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1966): 11.

³⁴² Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1966): 11.

³⁴³ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* Vol. 1, No.1 (1966): 11.

only the total alienation will become even more total, and suppressing will be more and more unbearable. Only a radical worsening of the already bad situation guarantees a huge change. That is, the worse, the better—is the general motto of his [Marcuse's] *Weltanschauung*.³⁴⁴

They draw on Marcuse's and others' ideas of mass culture which, as Golubović explained, offered diversity only in appearance, where in fact it provided “the accepted standards and a uniform culture.”³⁴⁵ In the context of the 1965 economic reform, the intellectuals around *Praxis* increasingly applied such arguments to the Yugoslav society. The editorial board of *Praxis* wrote an “Open Letter to Comrade Avdo Humo” in (most likely) 1967, in which he attacked Avdo Humo (1914–1983), an important communist politician, among others, claiming that there had been a total infiltration of the Western style of mass culture in Yugoslav society.³⁴⁶

He asked:

Is such a loss of interest for the socialist ideals only an expression of the ever growing privatization of life and of dealing with only professional interests or is it an expression of also various influences of a Western fad, Beatles-mania, *bitmištva* [Beat movement], anarchistic nonconformism, aimlessness, ideological vacuum, commercialization of taste, ‘mass culture’, lack of perspective, sensationalism, erotomania, that is giving more and more to our socialist society a stamp that is typical of petty bourgeois and petty-bourgeois degraded culture? Is a mentality that is today spread through newspaper kiosks, through advertisements in magazines and tabloid newspapers, various jukeboxes, and similar devices, capable of delighting a young person with anything connected to some socialist ideal? Should one even seek from such mentality some constructive effort...or a critical thought, or readiness to defend in front of the pressures from inside and outside, the achievements of our socialist revolutions [*tekovine naše socijalističke revolucije*]?³⁴⁷

Similarly, Zagorka Golubović drew on the critique of American society seen as the society of the highest living standards and development—she referred to Talcott Parsons, who called

³⁴⁴ Hrvoje Lisinski, “Eros i civilizacija, Herbert Marcuse [Eros and civilization, Herbert Marcuse],” *Naše Teme* Vol. 9, No. 11 (1965): 1542.

³⁴⁵ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 19.

³⁴⁶ Editorial board of *Praxis*, “Otvoreno pismo drugu Avdi Humi [Open Letter to Comrade Avdo Humo],” 3. [https://praxis.memoryoftheworld.org/Redakcija%20Praxisa/Otvoreno%20pismo%20drugu%20Avdi%20Humi%20\(108\)/Otvoreno%20pismo%20drugu%20Avdi%20Humi%20-%20Redakcija%20Praxisa.pdf](https://praxis.memoryoftheworld.org/Redakcija%20Praxisa/Otvoreno%20pismo%20drugu%20Avdi%20Humi%20(108)/Otvoreno%20pismo%20drugu%20Avdi%20Humi%20-%20Redakcija%20Praxisa.pdf) Accessed October 5, 2024. See, Ante Lešaja, *Praksis orijentacija, časopis Praxis i Korčulanska ljetna škola (građa)* [Praxis orientation, journal Praxis and the Korčula summer school (collection)], (Beograd: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2014), 56.

³⁴⁷ Rudi Supek, “Otvoreno pismo drugu Avdi Humi [Open Letter to Comrade Avdo Humo],” 3.

American society “liberal pluralism”—or “a society with a great concentration of power on the top of social hierarchy, which spread down by means of mass media, but in a form a scheduled behavior of individuals to be directed to a needed line.”³⁴⁸ Such manipulations gave individuals an idea that they have “a choice,” which in fact they did not have.

Moreover, Belgrade-based philosopher Mihailo Đurić (1925–2011), who explored the concept of humanism in his *Humanism as a Political Ideal: An Essay on Greek Culture* [Humanizam kao politički ideal: Ogled o grčkoj kulturi] (1968) commented on the underlying transformation induced by these more recent developments in capitalism, emphasizing the existential crisis of society as a whole and the crisis of the individual that was becoming more and more depersonalized and automatized: “Together with society, [the human’s] spiritual being has also been changed. And it is being more and more changed so that one day we might not be able to even recognize it [the human being].”³⁴⁹ For Đurić, the measuring stick for this change were the achievements of the Enlightenment. He lamented the fact that the old ideals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “the belief in human reason and the ability of every man to freely choose his life path and to develop his personality in all directions, do not have the same strength and attraction they once had.”³⁵⁰ These values were replaced by a different kind of philosophy of man which is in “contradiction with the spirit and letter of classical European humanist philosophy.”³⁵¹ This type of philosophy was, Đurić agreed with C. Wright Mills, a “philosophy of rationality without reason.” Here Đurić also introduced another important scholar at the time, Herbert A. Simon, whose ideas influenced computer science and

³⁴⁸ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 20.

³⁴⁹ Mihailo Đurić, “Problemi društvenog jedinstva [Problems of social unity],” in *Smisao i perspektive socijalizma* [Sense and perspectives of socialism], eds. Danilo Pejović, Gajo Petrović (Zagreb Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 1963), 137.

³⁵⁰ Mihailo Đurić, “Problemi društvenog jedinstva [Problems of social unity],” in *Smisao i perspektive socijalizma* [Sense and perspectives of socialism], eds. Danilo Pejović, Gajo Petrović (Zagreb Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 1963), 141.

³⁵¹ Mihailo Đurić, “Problemi društvenog jedinstva [Problems of social unity],” in *Smisao i perspektive socijalizma* [Sense and perspectives of socialism], eds. Danilo Pejović, Gajo Petrović (Zagreb Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 1963), 141.

cognitive psychology, and who explored the relationship between the irrationality of human beings and a rational organization. His most important studies included, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization* (1947) and *Models of Man: Social and Rational* (1957). Đurić also emphasized that the beginnings of such understandings could already be found in the work by Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction* (1940).

What these studies argued was that the new type of human being acted not according to its consciousness, but by the already given roles and rules of the alienating organization, echoing Erich Fromm's psychoanalytical work on freedom.³⁵² The new human being was emotionless, without autonomous behavior and thinking capacities; he was an automaton. As C. Wright Mills described it in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959):

It is not too much to say that in the extreme development, the chance to reason of most men is destroyed, as rationality increases and its locus, its control, is moved from the individual to the big-scale organization. There is then rationality without reason. Such rationality is not commensurate with freedom but the destroyer of it.³⁵³

According to Marković, such a way of being [*bivstovanje*, which is a translation of the Heideggerian *in der Welt sein*] had its ideology: technicism. As he explained, this was the belief that the main aim of human existence was the control over nature, and that according to this, “technology is the fundamental human value.”³⁵⁴ Modern technical civilization also brought new forms of human alienation which could also not be eradicated in a socialist society. More importantly, it created “artificial human needs” that sought the “cheapest forms of fun, larger amounts of all possible goods.”³⁵⁵ Implicitly following Erich Fromm, *Praxis* intellectuals

³⁵² It should be added that this critique of what Rudi Supek called “abstract organizational rationalism” saturated much of the discussion on workers’ self-management in Yugoslavia. It was contrasted with the humanist idea of freedom and the ideal of a human being that managed to affirm its conditions of existence, without being subjugated to social organization.

³⁵³ C. Wright Mills, *Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 170.

³⁵⁴ Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Man and technology],” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta "Đuro Salaj", 1964), 237.

³⁵⁵ Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Man and technology],” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta "Đuro Salaj", 1964), 242.

argued that in socialism alienated human being and alienated society created these artificial needs that enslaved the individual.

Therefore, the technology changed the character and psychology of the human beings. Through this progress, as Marković illustrated, someone who owned cars and a house and was searching for a better position and a higher pay, now lived further away from the people he cared for. Social contacts become small and very formalized, and this all resulted in asocial behavior and the atomization of societies. Marković however did himself adhere to the “revolt” against technology of figures like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Paul Gauguin, Leo Tolstoy, or Martin Heidegger. Instead, he argued for the duty and obligation of those living in a socialist society, and intellectuals in particular, to become conscious of these damaging effects and to be able to intervene in time and remove the unwanted by-products of technological development.³⁵⁶ In order to avoid but also to correct these negative influences on the Yugoslav society, Marković stressed the need to democratize all fields of social life. This would, according to him, give every individual a possibility to live and act as a free and responsible social being. He demanded also the introduction of a scientific committee that would analyze the results of the accelerated industrialization in Yugoslavia, and thus create concrete politics of technological development.³⁵⁷

Praxis philosophers saw their duty to prevent the development of a mass culture and society that would be susceptible to manipulations and co-optation by the ruling elite. The Belgrade-based *Praxis* philosopher Miladin Životić (1930–1997) announced the importance of intellectuals in a socialist society in his essay “Socialism and mass culture,” stressing the necessity of allowing the creative intelligentsia to take the lead in Yugoslav society. He drew on the liberal critique of modern mass democracy by José Ortega y Gasset, exemplified in his

³⁵⁶ Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Man and technology],” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta “Đuro Salaj”, 1964), 249.

³⁵⁷ Mihailo Marković, “Čovek i tehnika [Man and technology],” (Centar za ideološko-političko obrazovanje Radničkog univerziteta “Đuro Salaj”, 1964), 249.

The Revolt of the Masses (1932), in which he lamented the danger in allowing the masses to gain ever more social power. Životić quoted directly from this book: “Since the masses by definition cannot nor should govern their own existences, and even less so govern with society as a whole, this fact means that Europe now experiences the biggest crisis which can engross peoples, nations, and civilizations.”³⁵⁸ Using Ortega y Gasset’s argument that such crisis had recurred throughout history, Životić essentially aimed to reflect on his present-day circumstances in Yugoslavia.³⁵⁹ By referring to Ortega y Gasset, he explained that there had always been minorities and masses, whereby minorities are individuals and groups of individuals who are specially qualified, while the mass represents an “average man,” a general type. As he continued, the masses “create a mere choir,” and the problem with present-day societies was that there were no protagonists (reminiscent of Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*) that could create change in a society. The reality, according to him, was characterized by averageness and apathy. Životić implicitly referred to the discussions concerning the primacy of collectivism over the individual in a socialist society that stifled creative and independent thinking. He acknowledged Nietzsche’s view on the topic—whom he described as one of the “greatest critics of mass culture of our time”—by adding that individuals who isolate themselves from the masses, like artists or philosophers, can become authentic creators of genuine values for others to follow. For Životić, it was the cultural elite that was supposed to serve as an avant-garde in a socialist society. In the context of the debates on technology, intellectuals could help direct society away from apathy. Next to engaging with the arguments proposed by Ortega y Gasset, he also mentioned other predominantly anti-modernist thinkers who propagated similar views, namely Arnold Toynbee, T.S. Eliot, and Oswald Spengler. Životić wished to contrast the theory of cultural elite proposed by these thinkers with the theory

³⁵⁸ Miladin Životić, “Socijalizam i masovna kultura” [Socialism and mass culture], *Praxis: filozofski časopis; Jugoslavensko izdanje* 1, no. 2 (1964): 258.

³⁵⁹ Miladin Životić, “Socijalizam i masovna kultura” [Socialism and mass culture], *Praxis: filozofski časopis; Jugoslavensko izdanje* 1, no. 2 (1964): 258.

of “people’s culture” that was elaborated and defended by Soviet philosophers. Interestingly, Životić argued that the people’s culture is in fact a defense of “mass culture,” a concept found among Western intellectuals (Irwing Howe, David Riesman, Gilbert Seldes, T.S. Eliot, Ortega y Gasset, Clement Greenberg, and others). It should be noted, as intellectual historian Adela Hîncu shows that the issue of mass culture was researched in other socialist countries like Romania, and that empirical research was mainly conducted by sociologists. She argues that the engagement of sociologists with the “issues of homogenization, differentiation, and passivity illustrates how sociologists were not only offering technical expertise, but could also perform as producers of ideology.”³⁶⁰

For both Marković and Životić, as well as the other members of the *Praxis* circle, the common starting point for their engagement with anti-modernist arguments was the danger they saw in the marketization of socialist Yugoslavia, rapid industrialization, and its intense economic relationship with Western capitalist societies. Their arguments should be read as a warning, although with anti-modernist and elitist overtones, about the importance of the “humanist” aspect of Marxist theory and practices which, in these critical Marxists’ view, were relegated to the background by the Party leadership. Yugoslav socialist practice, from the perspective of these intellectuals, did not bring about widespread participation, but led to apathy. It also did not contribute to the progressive emancipation of human beings, as it started to develop a society which was to their minds analogous to the Western capitalist societies.

The intellectuals did not ignore the Soviet Union in their analyses. Here, their criticism was mainly directed towards Stalinism and Stalin’s theory of the omnipotent state, which to Golubović produced “an alienated government and a new ruling class, allowing the sharper differentiation between the top functionaries and the rest of the people to come.”³⁶¹ Stalinism

³⁶⁰ Adela Hîncu, “Managing Culture, Locating Consent: The Sociology of Mass Culture in Socialist Romania, 1960s–1970s,” *Revista română de sociologie* No. 1–2 (2017): 11.

³⁶¹ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 21.

turned the idea of socialism upside-down, whereby it made people the obedient servants of a powerful state and of the Central Committee of the Party.³⁶² In criticizing the USSR, Golubović and others drew their ideas from Rosa Luxemburg, especially in her polemics with Lenin. Regarding the nature of the Communist Party in a socialist state, they argued that Luxemburg's warnings about the dark future of socialism were justified,³⁶³ specifically her criticism of Lenin's theory of party according to which "a dictatorship of the working class is transformed into the dictatorship of the party over the working class."³⁶⁴ Golubović adopted therefore Luxemburg's idea of socialism, considering it inseparable from humanism and democracy.³⁶⁵ As will later be seen, the *Praxis* intellectuals would criticize the LCY leadership for never dismantling their Bolshevik understanding of the role of the Communist Party as explicated by Lenin. Golubović in her text also referred to Isaac Deutscher, who was wrong in her opinion to claim that bureaucracy in a socialist society is one of the most uncertain ruling classes. To her, the opposite was the case: it had been the strongest one for the very reason that it was not "confronted with a serious political crisis and the fundamental changes in the structure of power since it has come into power."³⁶⁶ Soviet-type bureaucracy had managed to transform "science and culture into *ancilla politicae*," while obedience, loyalty, and servility became the main features of the social character in the USSR.³⁶⁷

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, self-government and self-management were approached by the *Praxis* intellectuals as embodying humanist ideals. In developing the concept of humanism in its relationship to socialism and self-government, and in their aim to redefine the meaning of

³⁶² Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 21.

³⁶³ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 22.

³⁶⁴ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 22.

³⁶⁵ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 22.

³⁶⁶ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 23.

³⁶⁷ Zagorka Golubović, *Man and His World in an Anthropological Perspective* (Prosveta: Belgrade, 1971), 23.

socialism, they adopted other philosophies in their analytical frameworks. These philosophies, just like Marxism, also relied heavily on the sense of crisis in their theoretical reflections. Personalism, phenomenology, and existentialism, while not synonymous philosophical systems, were interested in the “human being” and “humanism” in the face of crisis. More specifically, the crisis to which they were responding was an ontological crisis of the human being. Their theoretical and intellectual development was greatly affected by the literature reflecting on the profound changes in the capitalist countries (i.e., the introduction of social rights), but also by the development of technology, and more specifically its effect on the human being. The overarching theme that was for many of them a starting point was the “crisis of humanity,” and more often the “crisis of European humanity.” These intellectuals conceptualized ‘Europe’ in terms of values, predominantly liberal values and authentic Marxist ideas, excluding the Soviet Union, which they viewed as the bastion of autocratic ideas. As philosophers they also saw Europe as a ‘cradle’ of philosophical thinking, most importantly of the Enlightenment.

Their task as Marxist humanists was to further develop the theory of alienation and dealienation, through which Marx stressed the importance of immanent human needs in the framework of anthropology. This aspect, according to *Praxis* intellectuals, was not sufficiently revalorized in Marxist theory. With their theoretical insights, borrowed from personalism and existentialism, *Praxis* reinterpreted Marx arguing that he was against simplifications of human nature. This was, as Golubović argued, a vulgar understanding of Marxism that reduced human beings to only “one dimension,” treating the human being as a bio-physical being, to which physical existence is the basic problem.³⁶⁸ Instead they viewed humans as multidimensional, and more importantly, as having a constant tendency towards perfectibility. Their synthesis of reinterpretation of Marxism, and Marxist thinkers, with the theories of personalism and

³⁶⁸ Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis* No.1 (1965): 7.

existentialism, provided the main framework of their thinking about the Yugoslav socialist system.

Through the perspective of the immanent crisis of the modern age, they were becoming more impatient in their demands towards the leadership. The focus placed on the economy and politics was a deterrent to them, since the crisis of spirituality, the crisis of humanism, was something urgent to be dealt with and to be included at every step of the economic and political development of the country. Their goal was to provide a solution to the modern age of depersonalization and the loss of autonomy in the age of technological advancement, and they saw this goal as being closely linked to the development of self-government in Yugoslavia. However, as will be seen in the following chapter, from their perspectives', the leadership's humanist reforms halted and gave primacy to the economic ones.

From the theoretical perspective therefore, for *Praxis* intellectuals it was of crucial importance not to divorce the goals and ideals of socialism as a first phase, from the goals and ideals of communism as a second phase. The problem with postponing these ideas for the future was that it placed at risk the entire humanist character of the first phase, thus hindering the possibility of the development of the second phase, as Golubović explained. This would be the main reason for these intellectuals' criticism of the LCY policies—to their minds, the LCY concentrated on building the material base of the society and the political system (something which Golubović and her colleagues at *Praxis* did not deny as important, but asked “whether it can be divided from other aspects of socialism?”), while putting aside the anthropological problems. Golubović argued that many fields of human life in Yugoslavia were not developed from a socialist and humanist conception.

Moreover, personalism, existentialism, and phenomenology, while related in their concerns over a ‘being’ or ‘person,’ nevertheless could also have different perspectives and alternative agendas. Personalist views combined the theological approaches to personhood

which saw the primacy of personal dignity, while existentialism and phenomenology inquired into the condition of a human being. For Yugoslav *Praxis* intellectuals, these philosophical perspectives were important as they all thematized crisis and thus they could combine them in a way which allowed them to argue for the primacy of a human being (both in theory and in practice) and to thematize the crisis of humanity. With this chapter in the background, the following chapter looks at the more specific aspects in which these ideas manifested themselves.

Chapter III: Culture in Crisis: Intellectual and Political Action in the 1960s

Debates on humanism were tightly connected to the perceptions of crisis among the intellectuals. In 1965, Belgrade based novelist Dobrica Ćosić and philosopher Branko Pavlović (1928–1986), who focused mainly on ancient philosophy, engaged in a recorded dialogue on the topic of humanism, “a broad and often used and misused theme.”³⁶⁹ How was humanism conceptualized by Ćosić? Firstly, for him it was crucial to de-centralize the discussions of humanism from Marx—as he expressed, one ought to “cite less Marx when one discusses humanism.”³⁷⁰ This way Ćosić aimed to argue for the new formulation of humanism in his given context, or as he claimed a formulation of “our humanism.” In avoiding the possible issues in discussing “our”, Ćosić explained that such formulation was needed in order to transform the ‘empty talk’ about humanism into something that can be used for ‘action and life.’ Humanism thus had to be reinterpreted in the given context with the problems and questions of that given context.³⁷¹ More importantly, by making such claims, Ćosić also

³⁶⁹ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 573.

³⁷⁰ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 573.

³⁷¹ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 573.

implicitly criticized the present-day Yugoslav party's claims to humanism. Looking from the historical perspective, he underlined that the history of humanity was a history of the 'authority of institutions.'³⁷² In his view, socialist revolution did not change much here—it also established the authority of institutions—which to Ćosić and *Praxis* intellectuals meant in concrete terms, an authority of party, forum, state, and leader. Stalinism, as he pointed out, was the most tragic consequence of this practice and the conception of such authority. Stalinism was a betrayal of the “humanist sense and goal of socialist revolution.”³⁷³

As early as 1965, the Yugoslav revolution was approached by these intellectuals' precisely from the degree of 'humanism' it has achieved. While the revolution in Yugoslavia was on a good way of canceling out and moving beyond the “authority of institutions” thus giving way to the “authority of human beings”—the process was not positively resolved, as assessed by Ćosić. At the time, the criticism was not directed (at least not openly) to the leadership of the Yugoslav Party. As already shown, the practices implemented by the Party were seen as bringing about the liberation of human beings. Ćosić added that it was difficult to achieve a total cancellation of the 'authority of institutions' for the period of two or three decades due to many external “conditionalities, resistances, and hindrances.” However, seeing what these hindrances meant from his point of view, discloses rather a general critique of Yugoslav socialism and its shortcomings: “low material-cultural presuppositions for social and interpersonal relations, the activity of morally-historical authorities of organizations, institutions, forums, and functions... the real social power of authoritarian conceptions, mentalities, and styles, inconsequentiality of socialist self-government and its democracy.”³⁷⁴

³⁷² Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 573.

³⁷³ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 573–574.

³⁷⁴ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965):573–574.

Humanism for Ćosić also had to be spatially and temporally located, in order for it to be a ‘genuine’ humanism. Namely, it had to express the needs and interests of human personality and human community at the given time and in the given context—while at the same time, it had to aspire towards some future anticipations. As he phrased it:

At the same time humanism is a humanism insofar as it expresses also integral needs and interests of human being and humanity, insofar as it contains anticipations, insofar as it is general human ideal and tendency, and that means insofar as it is abstract, that is, unattainable as a program in all conditions and in all measures of time.³⁷⁵

For Ćosić, humanist ideals are by necessity abstract.³⁷⁶ This ‘abstraction’ however had an actual and real essence: as Ćosić argued, it came from the creative vision of humans, the human tendency towards the highest goals, and their project of a more perfect world. Finally, this abstraction came out “of the tragedy of the unrealized potential of the human being.”³⁷⁷

Already in 1965, Ćosić introduced the discourse of the ‘crisis of faith’ in socialism, or the “spirit of the disappointment found among the people.”³⁷⁸ To him, the presence of the spirit of disappointment was not simply

an expression of unsolved human and social problems, expression of some general lack of achievement and imperfection of our society, but this is also a disappointment, and drama, and crisis and the defeat of that naïve, romantic, “Gorkian faith”³⁷⁹ [*gorkoveske vere*] in people, which was sown by the revolutionaries and communists from the noblest motivations, faith which the afflicted, oppressed, unfree people—with their hearts widely open—accepted completely uncritically, unconditionally and emotionally.”³⁸⁰

Ćosić claimed that what this showed was that “comrades” were not always and in everything “comrades,” that not every communist is always and in everything noble, virtuous,

³⁷⁵ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 575.

³⁷⁶ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 575.

³⁷⁷ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 575.

³⁷⁸ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 576.

³⁷⁹ A reference to Maxim Gorky.

³⁸⁰ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 576.

conscientious human being, and that not all “communists,” “proletariat,” and “partisans” are communists.³⁸¹ This was the “disappointment in people” which Ćosić described as a “drama and crisis, and a defeat” of the revolutionary human faith in the possibility of fast achievement of socialist ideals.

This dialogue on humanism coincided with the growing uncertainties in Yugoslav politics. At the beginning of the decade, as a historian Marie-Janine Calic argues, industrial growth decreased significantly, while the problems of finding work started to be a reality.³⁸² Moreover, as a response in 1961, the federal parliament eliminated what was left of state supervision in “enterprises and gave firms the right to dispose of their profits as they saw fit.”³⁸³ In such a situation, the problems that started to emerge were mainly connected to the question of the allocation of resources between the republics. As Calic explains, two extreme positions emerged—on the one hand Croatia and Slovenia demanded more rights for the republics and the expense of the federation and for more domestic competition. The Serbian centralists, who demanded greater state control in order to achieve more efficient macro-economic policy and support poorer areas, opposed these demands.³⁸⁴ Tensions existed between ‘localism,’ which translated to nationalism and separatism, and the unitarianism and etatism of the central government. From the perspective of the Party, these trends “represented a dangerous form of nationalism.”³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Dobrica Ćosić, Branko Pavlović, “Dijalog o humanizmu [Dialogue on humanism],” *Gledišta* VI No.4 (1965): 576.

³⁸² Marie Janine Calic, Dietmar Neutatz, Julia Obertreis, *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s* (V&R Academic, 2011), 70. Dennison Rusinov, *The Yugoslav Experiment: 1948–1978*, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), 111.

³⁸³ Marie Janine Calic, Dietmar Neutatz, Julia Obertreis, *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s* (V&R Academic, 2011), 111.

³⁸⁴ Radomir Lukić explained the foundations of stratification, that is how stratification was conceptualized in Yugoslavia in Kramer, Helen M., and Radomir Lukić, “Social Stratification as a Cause of Social Conflicts in Yugoslavia,” *International Journal of Sociology* 2, no. 4 (1972): 333–63.

³⁸⁵ Hilde Katrine Haug, *Comrades Between Brotherhood and (dis)unity: The Yugoslav Communists' Search for a Socialist Solution to the National Question 1935 – 1980* (Unipub, 2007), 137–144. Marie Janine Calić, Dietmar Neutatz, Julia Obertreis, *The Crisis of Socialist Modernity: The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1970s* (V&R Academic, 2011), 70.

A relative social inequality in Yugoslavia had started to become more pronounced over time.³⁸⁶ Moreover, in 1966, the Yugoslav Sociological Association organized a gathering titled ‘Socialism and Changes in the Class Structure,’ “heralding social inequalities within socialist Yugoslavia as an increasingly widespread field of scholarly interests.”³⁸⁷ The 1960s were characterized by the growing number of studies in which researchers at various Yugoslav institutions analyzed the systematic social inequalities, making them visible and articulating them publicly, through debates as well as through publications.³⁸⁸

Chronologically, this chapter focuses on the (long) 1960s, when contestations between the members of the *Praxis* circle and the official communist leadership started to emerge. It looks at how their engagement with the previously explained philosophies and ideologies that thematized crisis, played out and were converted into action. This is important for the overall theme of the dissertation which engages with the way in which *Praxis* intellectuals approached ‘human beings’ and human rights. The chapter has two main parts—the first one deals with the question of culture and nationalism/internationalism. The second part of the chapter discusses the position of intellectuals in society with regard to the culture.

In this chapter, it will be shown that discussions on culture and national identity in Yugoslavia were an interface for the debates on human rights. The issues of culture and national identity emerged in the 1960s—while the notion of self-determination was crucial in the discussions concerning the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement—the chapter argues that these issues, while not necessarily discussed alongside each other, were nevertheless related.

³⁸⁶ Radomir Lukić et. al., *Promene klasne strukture savremenog jugoslovenskog društva: Drugi stručni sastanak* [Changes in Class Structure of the Contemporary Yugoslav Society: Second Professional Meeting], Belgrade: Jugoslavensko udruženje za sociologiju, 1967. On the topic, see also, Josip Mihaljević, ‘Social Inequalities from Workers’ Perspective in 1960s Socialist Yugoslavia,’ *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest*, Vol. 1 No.5 (2019): 25-51.

³⁸⁷ Rory Archer, “Social Inequalities and the Study of Yugoslavia’s Dissolution,” in *Debating the End of Yugoslavia*, edited by Florian Bieber, Armina Galijaš and Rory Archer (Ashgate 2014), 137.

³⁸⁸ Rory Archer, “Social Inequalities and the Study of Yugoslavia’s Dissolution,” in *Debating the End of Yugoslavia*, edited by Florian Bieber, Armina Galijaš and Rory Archer (Ashgate 2014), 137.

Internationalist/local approaches to Marxism: Korčula Summer School as a space of international encounters

The cultural, political, and economic environment of the 1950s and 1960s generally supported the growth of the Yugoslav intellectual life and benefited largely the development of social sciences. As Naum Trajkovski writes, after the split with the USSR, the “less dogmatic interpretations of Marxism, loosened the grip over social scientific research, debates, and assembling in Yugoslavia already in 1953 and 1954.”³⁸⁹ In 1954, the Yugoslav Sociological Association was established, the first one in socialist Europe, along the Institute of Socialist Sciences in Belgrade in 1957.³⁹⁰ As Agustín Cosovschi notes, depending on the institutional history, institutional traditions, and biographical trajectories of the main representatives, however, each of these institutions also developed different relationships to the state and political power, as well as to Yugoslav society and the global intellectual and scientific scene.³⁹¹ Cosovschi shows that sociology, “partly due to its early academic contacts abroad, most notably through the Fulbright program, was the most consistently critical of the disciplines,” while, “political science was the discipline closest to power on account of its original mission of training cadres.”³⁹² Looking at the discipline of philosophy, it is clear that the intellectuals saw themselves as having a duty to constantly question the status quo, which positioned them in a continuous adversarial relationship with the political power.

In 1962, a circle of colleagues and friends, sociologists and philosophers from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, emphasized the rationale of the specifically international character of the summer school on the island of Korčula, which

³⁸⁹ Naum Trajanovski, *A History of Macedonian Sociology: A Quest for Identity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 42.

³⁹⁰ Naum Trajanovski, *A History of Macedonian Sociology: A Quest for Identity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 42.

³⁹¹ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise: Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* [Social Sciences in the Face of Crisis: An Intellectual History of the Yugoslav Dissolution (1980–1995)] (Karthala, 2022), 32. Moreover, on sociology in

³⁹² Adela Hîncu, “Review of Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise*.” Unpublished manuscript.

they were proposing to the authorities. The professors who were to establish the journal *Praxis* in 1964 highlighted in their proposal that they were aware of the debates concerning the existence of ‘local tendencies’ within Yugoslav academia and society in general.³⁹³ The meaning of ‘local tendencies’ referred to the debates on the nation, socialism and ‘Yugoslavism’. The polemics about “*Jugoslovenstvo*” [Yugoslavism] emerged in the political sphere in the late 1950s, and while ‘Yugoslavism’ still existed, it did not replace the separate national identities and loyalties that existed in the country.³⁹⁴ Nevertheless, for non-Serbs, the concept still had echoes of King Aleksandar’s Yugoslav nation that turned out to be ‘Serbianisation.’³⁹⁵

In contrast to the interwar Yugoslavism, Tito in 1962 affirmed at the Federal Assembly and the Federal Committee of the Socialist Alliance, that when the Party spoke of ‘integration,’ that did not mean “integration of nationalities, and of their assimilation or negation.”³⁹⁶ Edvard Kardelj also argued that the Yugoslav federation was not a framework for “making some new Yugoslav nation, or a frame for the kind of national integration which various advocates of hegemonism... have been daydreaming of.”³⁹⁷ That is, while until 1948, the Yugoslav communists followed the Soviet nationality policy of developing individual nations within the federal state, which could be “socialist in content, national in form,” after the Stalin-Tito split, the leadership was gradually decentralizing the power structures of the federal state, while allocating more power to the individual republics.³⁹⁸

³⁹³ HR-HAD-1780. “Prijedlog za osnivanje stalnog filozofsko-sociološkog seminara/Ljeta škola [Proposal for the establishment of the philosophical-sociological seminar/ Summer School], Zagreb, December 1962, 2.

³⁹⁴ Dennison Rusinov, *The Yugoslav Experiment: 1948–1978* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), 134.

³⁹⁵ Dennison Rusinov, *The Yugoslav Experiment: 1948–1978* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), 135.

³⁹⁶ Dennison Rusinov, *The Yugoslav Experiment: 1948–1978* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), 135.

³⁹⁷ Dennison Rusinov, *The Yugoslav Experiment: 1948–1978* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977), 135.

³⁹⁸ Siniša Malešević, “Grounding Civic Nationhood: The Rise and Fall of Yugoslav Nationalism, 1918–91,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 66, No.1–2 (2024): 8–35.

The first most famous public intellectual debate on the topic of nationalism in Yugoslavism occurred in 1961/62 between Serbian novelist Dobrica Ćosić and Slovene literary critic and philosopher Dušan Pirjevec. This debate is taken to be a manifestation of the shift in abandoning the Yugoslav national identification. Dušan Pirjevec held that the peoples of Yugoslavia should first achieve sovereignty in their republics, while Dobrica Ćosić argued for “socialist Yugoslavism” as a form of “internationalism” that should erase the need for the nation and national identities. Pirjevec criticized Ćosić for harboring “integral Yugoslavism” and argued that he called for the elimination of republics.³⁹⁹ Ćosić at the same time was persuaded that Yugoslavism was a social category and that he was not moving away from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia’s ideological and political line.⁴⁰⁰ Ćosić even accused Pirjevec of entertaining a hidden “vampiric nationalism” in his formulations.⁴⁰¹ It is also important to add that both Ćosić and Pirjevec contributed with their articles to *Praxis* and the discussions at the Korčula Summer School. Ćosić was also closely connected to the Belgrade circle of *Praxis* and contributed in the various discussions with Mihailo Marković, Svetozar Stojanović, Ljubomir Tadić, and Zagorka Golubović.

From the *Praxis* perspective, the reason for the latent nationalism was to also be sought in the insufficient connections between philosophers and sociologists of the different Yugoslav Republics. The paradigmatic example of this is best seen during the roundtable discussion in Zagreb in 1960, where Zagreb-based philosophers invited a few colleagues from Belgrade. The outcome of this debate was seen as both positive—it was perceived as a genuine practice of the ‘struggle of opinion’—but also as negative. Namely, Mihailo Marković lamented the lack of contact between the Yugoslav intellectuals, stressing that: “I think that we must understand

³⁹⁹ Tomaž Ivešić, “The Yugoslav National Idea Under Socialism: What Happens when a Soft Nation-Building Project is Abandoned?,” *Nationalities Papers* 49 No. 1, (2021): 149.

⁴⁰⁰ Agustín Cosovschi, “Between the Nation and Socialism in Yugoslavia. The Debate between Dobrica Ćosić and Dušan Pirjevec in the 1960s,” *Slovanský přehled*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (2015): 41–65.

⁴⁰¹ Jasna Dragović-Soso *Saviours of the Nation: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (McGill Queens University Press, 2002), 38.

each other much better than is currently the case. The reasons for misunderstandings are now even more.” The reason for this lack of understanding had to do, at least from Marković’s perspective, with the fact the intellectuals in different republics read the literature in different languages (mainly German and French, but also English and Italian), which then forced them to develop different philosophical orientations. The second, perhaps more pressing issue, articulated by Marković was that “We do not read each other’s works. It is a fact that we in Belgrade do not read enough works of our comrades from Zagreb, and the other way around. In the future, our meetings will be much more successful if we would start to better understand each other.”⁴⁰² Marković’s argument disclosed the existence of different cultural perspectives framed and shaped by their different intellectual references (French or German, for example), but also he implicitly pointed out at the historical differences that existed in Yugoslavia.

It is not by chance that the proposal for the Korčula Summer School thus came from the circle of Marxist humanist philosophers, eager to demonstrate the need for bringing the intellectuals as well as the students together in the same space, as a way of bridging these mentioned differences. In addition, and equally important for the intellectuals was the fact that the Yugoslavs, from their perspectives, still did not have adequate connections with the “foreign philosophers and sociologists, especially those Marxist-oriented, and who very many times publicly expressed their sympathies for our country.”⁴⁰³ To their minds, the neglect of such connections, would paint an image of Yugoslavs in a way that:

... we are a country incapable of durable cultural cooperation with foreign countries, and we remain, mainly, brave primitives which is obviously completely incorrect, because our connections with foreign Marxists and philosophers have confirmed to us that we do not lag behind the European standard.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰² Mihailo Marković, “Ići dalje a ne ostajati na opštim tvrdnjama [Go further and not stay on general claims],” *Naše Teme* No.1 (1960): 105.

⁴⁰³ Mihailo Marković, “Ići dalje a ne ostajati na opštim tvrdnjama [Go further and not stay on general claims],” *Naše Teme* no.1 (1960): 105.

⁴⁰⁴ HR-HAD-1780. “Prijedlog za osnivanje stalnog filozofsko-sociološkog seminara/Ljeta škola [Proposal for the establishment of the philosophical-sociological seminar/ Summer School], Zagreb, December 1962, 2.

It should be noted that the Yugoslavs saw themselves as part of ‘Europe’. In the text “Istočno nebo [Eastern sky]” published in *Nova misao*, Milovan Đilas argued that “We are Europeans, Westerners, formed in the specific shapes and phases of culture and civilization with our own [phases] and jointly European.”⁴⁰⁵ Đilas however, also saw Yugoslavs as having a similar experience to the ‘Asian peoples’, although different as “we [Yugoslavs] were developed”, but nevertheless “entered the world state”...” from the small Balkan peninsula.”⁴⁰⁶ Đilas stressed that the Yugoslavs are a “civilization of small people, but people with old culture.” This culture was materialized through the “poems and battles, woven in the spirit of our peoples...”⁴⁰⁷.

The *Praxis* intellectuals operated in similar conceptualizations, thus perceiving the growing national(ist) sentiments in the republics as anti-modern and “primitive.” In contrast to that, and as a way of putting Yugoslavia on the map of modern and modernizing countries, international cultural cooperation allowing for the exchange of ideas and knowledge of ongoing international debates among various philosophical streams was expressed as crucial for the development of Yugoslav philosophy. Such outlooks also disclose the general direction of the *Praxis* intellectuals towards the ‘West’ as a way to reinscribe Yugoslav Marxism in the European socialist canon, and Western Marxism, in contrast to the Soviet-dominated one. Moreover, the language used in the proposal corresponded with the general image of Yugoslavia’s political leadership—Yugoslav socialism as the genuine type of socialism and its prime role for international socialism—they addressed the authorities, arguing that “it is known that in keeping such cultural connections with foreign specialists and public workers we are lagging behind Polish colleagues, although our socialist experiences are for [foreigners] in many ways much more interesting.”⁴⁰⁸ In reading between the lines we can infer that what is

⁴⁰⁵ Milovan Đilas, “Istočno nebo [Eastern sky],” *Nova misao* Vol.1 No. 10 (1953): 525.

⁴⁰⁶ Milovan Đilas, “Istočno nebo [Eastern sky],” *Nova misao* Vol.1 No. 10 (1953): 524.

⁴⁰⁷ Milovan Đilas, “Istočno nebo [Eastern sky],” *Nova misao* Vol.1 No. 10 (1953): 524.

⁴⁰⁸ Fond Rudi Supek, HR-HAD-1780. “Prijedlog za osnivanje stalnog filozofsko-sociološkog seminara/Ljeta škola [Proposal for the establishment of the philosophical-sociological seminar/ Summer School], Zagreb, December 1962, 2.

meant here is that, Poland, while having a long and rich tradition of sociology and philosophy, unlike Yugoslavia, did not have the unique experience of self-management.

Therefore, the proposal for the summer school should also be placed in the context of Yugoslavia's increasing cooperation with the 'West' in political, economic, and cultural senses, and the leadership's struggles of distancing themselves from the Soviet version of socialism, as well as the strengthening of links with the NAM.⁴⁰⁹ From the start, the content of the *Praxis* intellectual engagement was presented as 'internationalist,' as can be read in their manifesto: "The journal will discuss not only some specifically Croatian or Yugoslavian themes, but also and in the first place the general problems of contemporary man and contemporary philosophy. And the approach to these themes will be socialist and Marxist, meaning internationalist."⁴¹⁰ Connected to their 'internationalism,' in this dissertation I emphasize that these philosophers and sociologists saw the development of humanist socialism in Yugoslavia as a European project, arguing for the need to recover "European philosophical traditions," which they essentially saw as a "philosophy, which, according to Marx, is a condition for human liberation."⁴¹¹

Thus, the main rationale behind the establishment of the international Korčula Summer School organized by a group of Marxist intellectuals around the philosophical journal *Praxis*, was to facilitate and mediate a dialogue between different streams and interpretations of

⁴⁰⁹ On the context of the 1950s and 1960s period of modernization and large transformations in Yugoslavia, see, Dunja Majstorović, "Windows Towards the West: Exploring the Emergence of Popular Magazines in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and Early 1970s," *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 47(1), (2023): 5-25; more specifically in the field of culture, Dijana Jelača, Kolanović Maša, Lugarić Danijela, eds, *The Cultural life of Capitalism in Yugoslavia: (Post) Socialism and Its Other*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Breda Luthar, Pušnik Marusa eds., *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington: New Academia Publishing, LLC, 2010); Sabina Mihelj, "Negotiating cold war culture at the crossroads of east and west: Uplifting the working people, entertaining the masses, cultivating the nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53(3) (2011): 509–539.

⁴¹⁰ Editorial of the journal *Praxis*, "Why Praxis," No 1 Vol 1(1964). In their manifesto they also explicated that the internationality will be put into practice, by having next to the Yugoslav edition of the journal (in Croato-Serbian language), they will also published international edition (in English, French, and German).

⁴¹¹ Veljko Korać, "Marksov humanizam i filozofska tradicija [Marx's humanism and philosophical tradition]," *Gledišta* Vol. 8 No. 6-6 (1967): 945.

Marxist political thought. The proposal for the establishment of the school was accepted, and the first session of the new school was organized in Dubrovnik in 1963. Already then, the internationally well-known philosophers and thinkers joined the discussions under the theme “Smisao i perspective socijalizma” [Meaning and the perspectives of socialism]—they included the American Marxist philosopher Howard L. Parsons, who wrote a comparative analysis of Marxist thought in ‘West’ and ‘East’ and later in 1967 published a book on Humanist Marxism in Poland and Yugoslavia; Herbert Marcuse, an already celebrated philosopher who presented a critique of Soviet Marxist philosophy in his *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (1958); Serge Mallet, a French sociologist who was a member of *Parti socialiste unifié* (United Socialist Party, founded in 1960), Lucien Goldmann, and Karel Kosík, the Czech Marxist who published *The Dialectic of the Concrete* the same year.

While the numbers of intellectuals from socialist countries were not very high in comparison with those from France, Italy, the USA, West Germany, or the UK, there were intellectuals who came from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and East Germany. Outside of Europe and the US, there were visitors from Argentina, Venezuela, and Japan—one from each country. Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson suggests viewing the school as a space similar to that of the traditional Central European *Kurort*, which was marked by their “internationalism, political engagement, their [intellectuals] privilege, their remove from daily social orders and their intellectual intensity.”⁴¹² On a practical level, the school allowed these intellectuals to establish important social and professional networks that went beyond the context of their meetings on the island.

As a complement to the school, a journal titled *Praxis* was established in 1964—with an idea of creating a platform for the intellectual discussions that continued outside the sessions

⁴¹² Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson, “‘Dionysian Socialism?’: The Korčula Summer School as Kurort of the New Left,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 55 No. 4 (2019): 479-493, here 480.

at summer school. Moreover, in 1971, Gajo Petrović explained that establishing a journal such as *Praxis* was a logical outcome of the existing situation in Yugoslav cultural life in which a philosophical group “achieved high respect in Yugoslavia and has already started to gain a high international reputation.”⁴¹³ The main organizers of the journal included philosophy and sociology professors of the University of Zagreb: Milan Kangrga, Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, Branko Bošnjak, Danko Grlić, Predrag Vranicki, and Danilo Pejović. The members of the Editorial Board included Branko Bošnjak, Veljko Čaldarović, Danko Grlić, Milan Kangrga, Ivan Kuvačić, Danilo Pejović, Gajo Petrović, Zarko Puhovski, Rudi Supek, and Predrag Vranicki. The secretaries were Zlatko Posavac, Boris Kalin, Branko Despot, and Gvozden Flego. While the core group comprised the intellectuals from the University of Zagreb, their colleagues from the University of Belgrade joined as well—Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, Zagorka Golubović, and Svetozar Stojanović. They agreed that *Praxis* ought not to be a specialized philosophical journal, but a journal which also debates the contemporary issues of Yugoslav socialism and the modern world and human.

As an addition to the School, the journal *Praxis*, according to its editors, aimed at stimulating and promoting intercultural philosophical cooperation by discussing contemporary issues. In practice, that also meant an international Advisory Board that included intellectuals from both socialist (Karel Kosík, Leszek Kołakowski, Ivan Varga, Ágnes Heller, and not least Georg Lukács, Zygmunt Bauman, and Julius Strinka) and capitalist countries, although the majority came from the ‘West’ and the United States—Eric Fromm, Howard L. Parsons, Thomas Bottomore, Ernst Bloch, Alfred J. Ayer, Henri Lefebvre, Herbert Marcuse, David Riesman, Jürgen Habermas, Umberto Cerroni, Robert S. Cohen, Marvin Farber, Lucien Goldmann, Enzo Paci, Kostas Axelos, Norman Birnbaum, and others. The intellectual background of these members was diverse—for instance A. J. Ayer, Mihailo Marković’s

⁴¹³ Gajo Petrović, “Čemu Praxis [Why Praxis],” No. 10-11 (1971): 59.

mentor, was a preponement of logical positivism, and drew his ideas from Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and David Hume.

The internationalist perspectives characterized the summer school, although what internationalism meant as we will see was not always clear and at times practical aspects, like language hindered the communication. For instance, American academic John S. Shippee, a professor at California State College, expressed in a letter that while he has not known any “other gatherings where it is possible to hear and discuss the results of advanced and liberated socialist thinking,”⁴¹⁴ he still pointed out the issue of communication. He expressed his difficulty in participating in the discussions at the Summer School, since as he argued, it was necessary to have “a good command of either Serbo-Croatian, or all three of the major Western languages.”⁴¹⁵ For Shippee, who was only competent in two ‘major’ languages, as he wrote, this presented an obstacle. Furthermore, he added, it would be a good idea to invite Yugoslav workers to Korčula, since “We spent a good deal of time discussing the role of workers’ councils, planning and the like, and I think that it would be quite helpful to have the participation of those most directly concerned.”⁴¹⁶ This illustrates the strictly theoretical approach to the questions of socialist practice among the organizers, which would become one of the point of contention among the philosophers and the students in 1968, but also among the philosophers themselves in viewing the role of the school. The example of Shippee, as Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson points out in her analysis of the Korčula Summer School, shows that the participants also questioned the “island setting of the Summer School, and its literal and figurative isolation from mainstream Yugoslav society.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence with John S. Shippee, 16 September 1971.

⁴¹⁵ HR-HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence with John S. Shippee, 16 September 1971.

⁴¹⁶ Cited also in Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson, “‘Dionysian Socialism?’: The Korčula Summer School as Kurort of the New Left,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 55 No. 4 (2019): 479-493.

⁴¹⁷ Kaitlyn Tucker Sorenson, “‘Dionysian Socialism?’: The Korčula Summer School as Kurort of the New Left,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 55 No. 4 (2019): 479.

Furthermore, there were other important reasons that made communication among intellectuals at Korčula difficult. The respective cultural and intellectual backgrounds were not insignificant. For example, Harold W. Cruse, a professor at the University of Michigan, in his letter addressed to Rudi Supek, expressed his “heartfelt gratitude for having spent a month in Yugoslavia,” and wrote the following:

I am enclosing an article which will be an important section of the new book I am now writing... It was not possible for me to have discussed such ideas [ones in the book] at Korčula because of the language problem and the lack of time... 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...⁴¹⁸

Therefore, while these transnational encounters were at the same time “dissolving” the ideological, national, and cultural borders, at Korčula, which was in the words of Erich Fromm a unique place in Europe that gathered intellectuals and allowed them an open dialogue, some of the problems (e.g., race, colonialism, women rights and feminism) were not seen as problems by all, nor did they receive any attention at the School. Moreover, while Yugoslav self-managing socialism was generally perceived by ‘Western’ intellectuals as the most ideal type of socialism, Yugoslav intellectuals did point out the complex perceptions of its practice. For instance, Mladen Čaldarović (1916–2010), a sociologist from Zagreb and a *Praxis* member, the main editor of the Sarajevo based journal *Pregledi*, as well as the main secretary of the *Matica Hrvatska* (from 1964 to 1969), expressed this issue vividly during his presentation at Korčula in 1964:

From Prof. [Lucien] Goldmann and colleague [Serge] Mallet, we heard very important positive and laudatory remarks about the meaning of self-management in Yugoslavia. Still, a more accurate insight gives us critical caveats. Sociological research says that there are dangers in the formation of such forces which may call into question workers’ self-management.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ HDA-1780, Rudi Supek Correspondence, 10 November 1971.

⁴¹⁹ Mladen Čaldarović, “Disolucioni procesi u samoupravljanju [Dissolution processes in self-management],” *Praxis* no.1 (1965): 75–85, here 76.

Another French intellectual, Pierre Naville, sociologist, author of *Psychologie, Marxisme, Matérialisme* (1946), and a close collaborator of the surrealists in the 1920s,⁴²⁰ wrote to Rudi Supek in 1964 sending his regrets that he would not be able to join the Korčula Summer School that year. He further wrote that it “would also have been an excellent opportunity for me to meet colleagues and Yugoslavian comrades. The particular theme of the search for a general model of workers’ management is very interesting to me and the experience that continues in Yugoslavia brings important materials to this reflection.”⁴²¹

The aforementioned Lucien Goldmann, Pierre Naville, and Serge Mallet are paradigmatic examples of the interest of ‘Western’ European intellectuals, and in this case, those from the French context, in the Yugoslav ‘third way’: humanist, self-managed socialism. The interest in self-management brought the topic outside of the Yugoslav borders—in 1970, for instance, there was a conference on the problems and perspectives of Yugoslav workers’ self-management in Amsterdam, which gathered the Yugoslav—Najdan Pašić, Rudi Supek, and others—and the mainly Dutch experts (including also the French and English sociologists, Pierre Naville and Thomas B. Bottomore, respectively), to discuss various aspects of self-management.⁴²² At the same time, it should be mentioned that while Yugoslavia was constructed as the ‘bridge’ between the ‘East’ and ‘West,’ as well as the leader in international cooperation heading the Non-Aligned Movement, critical debates about the implementation of the actual practice of self-management started to appear as early as the 1960s.

In the 1960s, and in the circumstances in which the critical voices concerning Yugoslav socialism started to emerge, and during one of the sessions at the summer school, Svetozar Stojanović (1931–201), a *Praxis* intellectual from Belgrade, argued that socialism was no

⁴²⁰ See, Michael Löwy, “Walter Benjamin and surrealism: The story of a revolutionary spell,” *Radical Philosophy* 80, Nov/Dec (1996): 20.

⁴²¹ HR-HAD-1780, Correspondence with Pierre Naville, 25 February 1964.

⁴²² M.J. Broekmeyer (ed.), *Yugoslav workers’ selfmanagement: Proceedings of a symposium held in Amsterdam, 7-9 January, 1970* (Dordrecht: Riedel, 1970).

longer a clear concept. Such perspective was shared among his colleagues around the *Praxis* circle who organized the first gathering on Korčula and discussed with their interlocutors from abroad the question of the meaning and perspectives of socialism.⁴²³ Their assessment of the situation was clearly expressed in the introductory words “In front of us, there is a whole web of the most diverse tendencies, relations, and actions...”⁴²⁴ Yet, despite the conceptual ambiguity that presented a difficulty in discussing the possibilities and impossibilities of socialism in both socialist and non-socialist countries, Stojanović rather hopefully asserted: “After several decades of severe crisis we can now speak with certainty about a renaissance of Marxism.”⁴²⁵ Simultaneously, as a critique of capitalism, he argued, “Marxism seems to have reached the limit of its capacity for innovation and begun to repeat itself.”⁴²⁶ The perceived stagnation in Marxist thought was a shared position among the critical Marxist intellectuals in the 1960s in and outside Yugoslavia. Stojanović thus, we can argue, attributed this ‘renaissance’ to the work he and his colleague around *Praxis* were doing through the Korčula Summer School and the journal.

While Korčula Summer School defined itself as strictly ‘international,’ at the same time, these debates on the meaning of socialism opened a question of the importance of continuity of ‘national’ socialist traditions in the Marxist humanist circles across the region. The perceived ahistorical approach to Marxism-Leninism which had been cemented by Stalinism and which presupposed uniformity in theory and practice—in the context of the gradual de-Stalinization following Khrushchev’s speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union in 1956—has been countered not only by a ‘return to Marx’

⁴²³ See, 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), 274.

⁴²⁴ Editorial, “Riječ unapred [A word in advance],” *Praxis* No. 2 (1965): 147.

⁴²⁵ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatistički mit socijalizma [Etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1967): 30.

⁴²⁶ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatistički mit socijalizma [Etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1967): 30.

(and Lenin) but also by a return to the indigenous radical and progressive ideas and streams of thought in these individual states. While this was certainly the case in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, it is not a very clear position among the Yugoslav Marxist revisionists. Milan Kangrga, one of the founders of the journal *Praxis*, recounted, as a student in his “search for something positive in the left-wing movement, or in the communist movement, he came to a conclusion that the communist intellectual elite of the interwar period (August Cesarec, Božidar Adžija, Otokar Keršovani, Ognjen Prica) were all Stalinist.”⁴²⁷ That is, from Kangrga’s perspective, Marxists intellectuals from the interwar period could not be an intellectual reference point as they could not be helpful in efforts to ‘re-humanize’ Marxism. The refusal to mention any such influences was well documented by Mislav Kukoč and Božo Kovačević.

In an effort to discover the ‘origins’ of Marx’s philosophical engagement, the Yugoslav Marxists often relied on the contemporary thinkers based in the Western countries and their studies of Marxist thought that included the insights of Rosa Luxembourg, György Lukács, Karl Korsch, and others. The local context and the local intellectuals were missing in this process of rethinking of Marxist thought. Especially curious was the missing case of Miroslav Juhn, a Jewish publicist and politician from Croatia, who was killed at the beginning of WWII. Next to writing about Alfred Adler and his individualist psychology, he also discussed the problem of alienation in the early 1930s.⁴²⁸ In his text published by the journal *Književnik*, Juhn stressed understanding Marx purely through his economic analyses would not only be reductive

⁴²⁷ Nebojša Popov, ed. *Sloboda i nasilje: Razgovor o časopisu Praxis i Korčulanskoj letnjoj školi: Milan Kangrga, Zagorka Golubović, Ivan Kuvačić, Božidar Jakšić, Nebojša Popov, Ante Lešaja* [Freedom and Violence: Conversations about the journal Praxis and Korčula Summer School] (Beograd: Res Publica, 2003), 12.

⁴²⁸ Moreover, Božo Kovačević argues that Juhn is the predecessor of Praxis philosophy, and Mislav Kukoč argues that Richtman and Podhorski are the predecessors. See Mislav Kukoč, “Temelji hrvatske filozofije prakse,” *Prilozi* 39-40 (1994): 407–432 and Božo Kovačević, “Kontroverze marksističke filozofije u predratnoj Jugoslaviji,” *Kulturni radnik*, No. 4 (1977): 183–207. Moreover, as Kukoč writes, Milan Kangrga in an interview published by *Theoria* completely rejects the influences of any local philosophical tradition on Praxis philosophy. Mislav Kukoč, “Temelji hrvatske filozofije prakse,” *Prilozi* 39-40 (1994): 416.

and one sided, but also it would be false. *The Capital*, according to Juhn, came out from Marx's idea of the

Real actuality of man, to which Marx arrived via the historical critique of Hegel's phenomenology and Hegel's science about the state. Without these presuppositions which are the result of his [Marx's] early works, we cannot have an actual understanding of Marxism, and not to speak about historical materialism, since *the Capital* does not give us a sufficient understanding of the general humanist grounding of Marxism which is essential for truthful understanding of the Marxist world view.⁴²⁹

In his contributions, Juhn aimed to prove the overall humanistic basis of Marx's thought. Humanism was at the core of his theoretical development which inevitably brought Marx to place a human being and not the society at the center of his later economic analyses.⁴³⁰ Human being was approached by Marx as a result of his own work. For Juhn it was essential that Marx started from the critique of Hegel's philosophy over the alienation of man, and came to the self-realization of man, to classless society.⁴³¹

Praxis philosophers while not engaging directly, were nevertheless part of the environment in which historical inquiries into socialist thought were taken to be an important aspect of the development of socialist states in general. The rationale behind this was that without the insight into continuity, socialist thought could develop no further. That is, from the perspective of a teleological view of history, it was only possible to measure progress if one knows the past. In Yugoslavia, the Institute for the Research of Workers' Movement in Belgrade would publish, starting with 1964, twelve edited volumes dealing with the history of socialism, both local and global. The goal of these volumes stipulated by the editors was to fill the gap of the insufficient research into the Yugoslav and international workers' movement and socialism. The editorial board explicitly explained the aim of these volumes:

⁴²⁹ Miroslav Juhn, "Filozofske pretpostavke marksove analize društva [Philosophical assumptions of Marx's analysis of society]," *Književnik: hrvatski književni mjesečnik* No. 12 (1934): 521-555, here, 522.

⁴³⁰ Miroslav Juhn, "Filozofske pretpostavke marksove analize društva [Philosophical assumptions of Marx's analysis of society]," *Književnik: hrvatski književni mjesečnik* No. 12 (1934): 521-555, here, 522.

⁴³¹ Miroslav Juhn, "Filozofske pretpostavke marksove analize društva [Philosophical assumptions of Marx's analysis of society]," *Književnik: hrvatski književni mjesečnik* No. 12 (1934): 521-555, here, 525.

Many-sided and deeper knowledge of the past of the socialist movement and the fight for socialism in national and international frameworks make it easier to understand and direct today's contemporary movements, as well as the tendencies and paths of future developments.

The overarching idea was that the contemporaneous events in the socialist countries and the existing 'contradictions' in the socialist world, were creating the need to scientifically illuminate the social-historical and ideational-political [*idejno-politički*] roots of their socialist movement. This was an encompassing project, and the research incorporated the history of the First, Second, and Third Internationals, their role and meaning in the fight of the progressive forces in the world and in Yugoslavia, the genesis of socialist ideas and directions, and similar. One of the prominent contributors was also a *Praxis*-affiliated philosopher Predrag Vranicki. This kind of research had also important political implications, mainly in the debates and practices concerning the reformulation of the links between the national paths to socialism, but also in the context of the growing need for a strong international socialism. The possibility of different paths to full socialism in contrast to a uniform, Moscow-directed socialism, was perceived by these intellectuals in the late 1950s and 1960s to be the only way in which it would be possible to reform and reinvigorate socialist systems. Such positions brought them close to their Italian colleagues, who were invoking Antonio Gramsci to the same ends.⁴³² Yugoslav historian Branko Petranović, elaborated on this point by claiming that "every country, which is developing according to the general laws of the historical epochs, is a unique phenomenon with particular internal organizations, and in specific international conditions which are constantly changing."⁴³³ One could add that—following the formulation that a 'national path to socialism is a precondition for a stronger international socialist movement'—

⁴³² See e.g., Guido Liguori, "Gramsci and the Italian Road to Socialism (1956–59)," in *Gramsci Contested: Interpretations, Debates, and Polemics, 1922--2012* (Leiden: Brill, 2021)

⁴³³ Branko Petranović, Čedomir Štrbac, Stanislav Stojanović, *Jugoslavija u međunarodnom radničkom pokretu* [Yugoslavia in the international worker's movement], (Institut za međunarodni radnički pokret: Beograd, 1972), 138.

it was thus possible to have a wide sphere of possible interpretations of the link between the particular and the universal not only in philosophical but also in historical terms.

It is impossible to disregard the importance of culture in a socialist society as well as the importance of a national identity in Yugoslavia. In 1960, the editors of a Slovenian journal *Perspektive*⁴³⁴ argued that common ideals in the fields of economy and politics were facilitating cooperation among Yugoslav peoples in these spheres; yet in culture, the complete opposite was the case.⁴³⁵ The perceived lack of cultural connectedness among the Yugoslav republics was raised again in 1963, during the meeting organized by university-based journals from Novi Sad, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Skopje, and Sarajevo. Slovenian philosopher and literary historian, Taras Kermauner (1930–2008) reflected on the need to bridge the gap between theory and practice in Yugoslav society, more specifically in the field of culture. For almost two decades, postwar Yugoslavia, Kermauner maintained, was based on the principle of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’, but this was mainly “achieved in political practice, a bit less economics, and much less in cultural practice.”⁴³⁶ The reason for this, according to him, was that “the total negation of the previous culture showed itself to be an illusion, an unreal and anticultural attempt.”⁴³⁷ Kermauner thus separated the political and economic spheres from the cultural one—arguing essentially that while it is possible to eliminate the pre-existing political and economic practices and start building these as entirely new in a different system, it was impossible to eliminate the intimate connection between the past and the present in one’s (national) culture. To sever these, and to subjugate culture to the new politics discontinuous

⁴³⁴ According to historian Lev Centrih, *Perspektive* was a platform that was developing “a critical mindset and theory in Slovenia,” and because of its radicality was subsequently disbanded. Lev Centrih, “The Journal *Perspektive* and Socialist Self-Management in Slovenia: In Search of a New Anti-Stalinist Society. Towards a Materialist Survey of Communist Ideology,” *The International Newsletter of Communist Studies Online* XV no.22 (2009): 69–91, here, 69.

⁴³⁵ Editorial, “Yugoslav polemics about young Marx,” *Perspektive* no. 4 (1960-1): 877.

⁴³⁶ Taras Kermauner, “O ovogodišnjem stražilovskom sastanku [About this year’s Stražilovo meeting],” *Gledišta* No.4, (1963), 34. Originally published in Slovenian journal *Perspektive*.

⁴³⁷ Taras Kermauner, “O ovogodišnjem stražilovskom sastanku [About this year’s Stražilovo meeting],” *Gledišta* No.4, (1963), 34.

with the past, would be a practice he described as coldly administrative and bureaucratic.⁴³⁸ This kind of practice believed wrongly that it was possible to eliminate the past in the field of culture, and that it was possible to achieve culture *a priori*.⁴³⁹

Human rights in the constitution of 1963 and the ‘indirect’ consequences of the Yugoslav national question crisis

The journal *Gledišta: Časopis mladih za društvena pitanja*, published by the Belgrade University, organized a discussion on the draft of the Constitution in 1962. In his contribution to the debate, Veljko Vlahović highlighted the importance of the article dealing with the rights of the citizens. While accepting the existence of the structural, and economic issues which may hinder the quick and full affirmation of these rights (naming mainly, the different developments of the Yugoslav regions and republics which were conditioned by the historical circumstances, the existence of the “strong elements of backwardness,” etc.), he also pointed out at the “subjective” issues hindering the development of the rights. These concerned the existence of the distrust among the citizens towards the efficacy of the system of self-government. According to Vlahović:

There are beliefs that people are still not ready for self-government. Thus, there is a thesis that firstly we must develop consciousness among the people and then self-government. This looks a bit like a thesis put forth by the social-democrats who wish to first develop democracy, and then go onto develop socialist relations.⁴⁴⁰

Moreover, Vlahović expressed clearly his disagreement with the ways in which the rights of the citizens were treated in the international law. As he claimed: “I personally do not agree

⁴³⁸ Taras Kermanuer, “O ovogodišnjem stražilovskom sastanku [About this year’s Stražilovo meeting],” *Gledišta* No.4 (1963): 34.

⁴³⁹ Taras Kermanuer, “O ovogodišnjem stražilovskom sastanku [About this year’s Stražilovo meeting],” *Gledišta* No.4 (1963): 34.

⁴⁴⁰ Veljko Vlahović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 9.

with the division of human rights into classical rights and economic rights of the citizens. The human being must be seen in the totality of his/her functions.”⁴⁴¹ He demanded that this totality of a human being must be expressed in the self-governed society. While the previous Yugoslav Constitution had managed to an extent to express this totality, both in theory and in practice, according to Vlahović, it was necessary to further develop it. According to Vlahović, a human being and a citizen in Yugoslavia was a “producer” and a “member of the commune and a national community,” and also had the role of the “politically conscious being, thus combining: material, political, intellectual, and spiritual interests of a human being as an individual and as a human [čoveka]...”⁴⁴²

Moreover, Vlahović emphasized the new approach to the national question in the Constitution, insofar as the new Constitution affirmed (once again) the existence of nations, but in contrast to the previous Constitution, “within the framework of social self-government, which gives a strong basis to the equality of people.”⁴⁴³ National minorities, on the other hand, according to Vlahović were a consequence of the “earlier relations, earlier practice of the bourgeois-democratic constitutions, in which the members of specific nationalities [narodnosti] were really treated as minorities.”⁴⁴⁴

Svetozar Stojanović, on the other hand, pointed out that the Constitution provided the “right to critique, except when it goes outside the frameworks of socialism.”⁴⁴⁵ His contribution to the debate was to include the formulation which would enable the critique of a person, without labeling this critique as being against socialism. The right to critique, the right to free

⁴⁴¹ Veljko Vlahović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 9.

⁴⁴² Veljko Vlahović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 10.

⁴⁴³ Veljko Vlahović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 11.

⁴⁴⁴ Veljko Vlahović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 12.

⁴⁴⁵ Svetozar Stojanović, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 29.

speech, were the rights systematically argued for by the *Praxis* intellectuals, which would bring them in the conflict with Edvard Kardelj, who even published *Notes about our social critique* in 1966, in which he implicitly referred to *Praxis* intellectuals and their critique as a type of social critique which is “destroying and also not conscious of what in fact is building,” a critique that is blind and disoriented and thus “burdens the conscious human socialist action.”⁴⁴⁶

Ljubomir Tadić (1925–2013) Belgrade-based *Praxis* philosopher who also participated at the debate on the draft of the new Constitution argued for the need to distinguish between social property and personal property: “Social property is a condition of personal liberty, insofar as the personal property is the condition of the personal freedom of a human being.”⁴⁴⁷ He also stressed the importance of personal liberty of a human being “in the sense of a social being”, a theme, as Tadić explained, that goes back from “Aristotle until today.”⁴⁴⁸ Tadić’s views thus imply a more liberal interpretations of property, which was linked to the dignity of a human being and the importance of a ‘person’.

In sum, this brief introduction of the Constitution and the discussions on its draft point out some of the most debated issues among the intellectuals and the political leadership in Yugoslavia. These included the issues of the appearance (and the existence) of nationalism in Yugoslavia, its link with self-government (or self-determination), humanist approaches to the problem of nationalism and internationalism, as well as the role of intellectuals in criticizing the political actions of the leadership from their philosophical perspectives (or, alternatively, the role of intellectuals in highlighting the problems, contradictions, existing in the Yugoslav society). At the time, freedoms and rights of human beings and citizens in Yugoslavia were

⁴⁴⁶ Edvard Kardelj, *Beleške o našoj društvenoj kritici* [Notes about our social critique], (Beograd: Nakladnik, 1966), 7.

⁴⁴⁷ Ljubomir Tadić, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 37.

⁴⁴⁸ Ljubomir Tadić, “Diskusija o prednacrtu Ustava [Discussion about the draft Constitution],” *Gledišta* Vol. 3, No.10 (1962): 37.

approached by the intellectuals as outcomes of Yugoslavia's own struggle in the National Liberation War and the Socialist Revolution. As Koča Jončić, who wrote on the Constitution and the relation among the peoples and national minorities in Yugoslavia highlighted, these rights and liberties existed thanks to the Yugoslavs themselves “and not because of foreign flags and armies”; they were neither “a result of some contracts or negotiations, nor do they represent someone's mercy.”⁴⁴⁹ The idea that the citizens of Yugoslavia have won these rights through their own struggle was an important narrative in the official discourse in Yugoslavia. In that way, these rights, which were impossible to alienate from the citizens in Yugoslavia, represented also an

expression of socialist and democratic relations that are protected by this Constitution, in which human beings are liberated from every exploitation and arbitrariness... The Constitution and the rights granted by it create conditions for the versatile development and free expression and protection of his or her personality and for the achievement of human dignity.⁴⁵⁰

The new Constitution of 1963 ushered a new context and issues among the intellectuals and political leadership. The Constitution started to be conceived in 1961 and went through many debates and discussions that included the wider public—including university centers across Yugoslavia. As Edvard Kardelj highlighted, as such it was a Constitution not just of a state, but also the real “social Charter, the contract agreement between our citizens and peoples about the conditions of their life and work in the path towards the building of socialist society and democratic social life.”⁴⁵¹ On April 7, 1963, after long discussions and preparations, the Federal People's Assembly in Belgrade adopted a new Constitution. In its very first paragraph, the Constitution stated explicitly “the right of every person to self-determination, including the

⁴⁴⁹ Koča Jončić, *Ustav SFRJ i međunacionalni odnosi, Priručna biblioteka za pravna i društvena pitanja* [Constitution of SFRJ and international relations. Manual library for the legal and social questions] (Beograd, Savremena administracija, 1963), 56.

⁴⁵⁰ Koča Jončić, *Ustav SFRJ i međunacionalni odnosi, Priručna biblioteka za pravna i društvena pitanja* [Constitution of SFRY and international relations. Manual library for the legal and social questions] (Beograd, Savremena administracija, 1963), 57.

⁴⁵¹ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 25.

right to secession.”⁴⁵² The Constitution, in order to express its main principles, also included the practical transformation and changing of the Yugoslav federation.

Edvard Kardelj, expressed that at its very basics, the new Constitution started from the contradictions between human beings and societies, that is “between individual and collective interest.”⁴⁵³ His argument, did not much differ from the liberal and democratic understandings of the relationship between individual and society—as he argued that this relationship should not presuppose “a hierarchical relation between individual and social interest,” having one conform to the other. Instead, he viewed the relationship as presupposing the individual’s and the society’s mutual dependence and responsibility.”⁴⁵⁴ Kardelj especially pointed out that the new constitution formulated “rights and duties of a human being”—by defining the social position of a human being more concretely, in the sphere of the economy as well as of political relations. Seeing social and personal in such a mutual dependence, Kardelj stressed, the new Constitution ensured for the given conditions, “maximal autonomy of personality.”⁴⁵⁵ The discussions of individual autonomy (in the tradition of John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant) conceptually overlapped with the general discussions of self-government in Yugoslavia. Kardelj argued that the Yugoslav constitution was unique as it, more than any other system, ensures the rights of man so that human beings would in a bigger “measure become the ruler

⁴⁵² *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 34–35.

⁴⁵³ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 11.

⁴⁵⁴ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 11.

⁴⁵⁵ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 11.

[*gospodar*] of his destiny.”⁴⁵⁶ Yugoslavia’s new constitution ensured that human being is a basic “building bloc of self-management, socialist democracy and personal liberty.”⁴⁵⁷

The communist leadership argued that it was impossible to achieve the progress of socialism without at the same time achieving the progress of democratic and human relations. They conceptualized this to be at the very foundation of the new Yugoslav state: “Our entire Constitution is entangled with these tendencies.”⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, Jovan Đorđević, the president of the Legal advisory of the Federal Executive Council, highlighted that every person has human rights (right to self-government, freedom of creativity, right to happy life, personal freedom, etc.), but that these rights could not be “achieved in the form of isolation, egoism, and loneliness.”⁴⁵⁹ Socialist society was not, as Đorđević referred to the sociological analysis of David Riesman (in collaboration with Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney), *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, that described the US capitalist society. The democracy thus received a different character as: “We can be free and equal if others are as well. We cannot be satisfied if others are suffering. We are not happy if others are unhappy.”⁴⁶⁰

How did the Constitution describe the role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in such a context? The LCY still had an important role granted by the Constitution—it was formulated as the organizer of the National Liberation Movement and the Socialist Revolution in Yugoslavia, and by “necessity of the historical development it became an

⁴⁵⁶ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 11.

⁴⁵⁷ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 11.

⁴⁵⁸ Ekspozicija Predsednika komisije za ustavna pitanja, Edvarda Kardelja, ekspozicija podnet na 33. Zajedničkoj sednici domova Savezne Narodne skupštine, 7 aprila 1963 [Exposition of the Chairman of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs, Edvard Kardelj, exposition submitted to the 33rd Joint Session of the Houses of the Federal National Assembly, 7 April 1963], in *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike* 1963, 13.

⁴⁵⁹ Jovan Đorđević, “Demokratija mora prevazilaziti nesporazume širim i boljim sporazumima, [Democracy must surpass disagreements with wider and better agreements]” *Socijalizam*, Vol VII, No. 1 (1964): 110.

⁴⁶⁰ Jovan Đorđević, “Demokratija mora prevazilaziti nesporazume širim i boljim sporazumima, [Democracy must surpass disagreements with wider and better agreements]” *Socijalizam*, Vol VII, No. 1 (1964): 110.

organized leading force of the working class and working people in the building of socialism...”⁴⁶¹ According to Kardelj, LCY did not “rule instead of the working people, yet it would be obvious that in today’s conditions, a working human being would not be able to affirm himself as a carrier of the socialist transformation of society without such ideological and political factor such as the LCY and without such a social role as it has according to the constitution.”⁴⁶² While the LCY was a necessary ingredient in the new socialist democracy, the new constitution promised that it would ensure that the state system does not grow into bureaucratic centralism, and administrative hierarchies governing the society, or by the whim of any individual.⁴⁶³

Regarding international relations, the Constitution announced peaceful coexistence as the central basis of Yugoslav foreign policy: “Every country has the right to its own political, ideological, and cultural struggle.”⁴⁶⁴ The Yugoslav main principles in international relations, established by the Constitution, included the following: the right of every people to freely decide and build their society and political establishment as well as the right of every people to self-determination and national independence (this included their right to lead the liberation struggle for them to achieve such a goal).⁴⁶⁵ Connected to that, Yugoslavia declared support to the people who were fighting “a just fight for their national independence and liberation from colonialism and national oppression.”⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶¹ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 37.

⁴⁶² *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 16.

⁴⁶³ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 17.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 17.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 38.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 38.

More importantly, the constitution included a section on “Freedoms, Rights, and Duties of Human being and Citizen,” which were defined in terms of natural rights, given to every individual. “Freedoms and rights of human beings and citizens are nonalienated part and expression of socialist and democratic relations. mandatory social insurance to workers, health protection and other rights in the case of sickness, loss or reduction of labor ability, and old age.”⁴⁶⁷ The constitution also granted the freedom of thought and choices, and Article 40 granted freedom of the press and other kinds of information, freedom of assembly and speech. At the same time, it was highlighted that these freedoms and rights cannot be used to “destroy socialist democracy, damage peace, stir up national, racial or religious hate.”⁴⁶⁸ The citizens of Yugoslavia were given the right to express their nationality and culture and to use their language.

Yet the problems of democracy, self-management, as well as the protection of human rights were discussed among the Yugoslav intellectuals, and not just the circle *Praxis*. The political leadership also participated in these debates, as can be seen the sources. For example, the gathering organized in 1963 by the Association of journals of the SR Serbia, and the Cultural Center Belgrade on the topic of ‘Disagreements about democracy’ pointed out the disbalance between the principles of human rights as stipulated in the Constitution and the practice. The editors of the daily major *NIN* started from the positions of the Constitution and Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, which “affirm the human being as the highest value of our society...” noted that democratic forms are “satisfied often only formally, but in reality, the rights of human beings are damaged.”⁴⁶⁹ They mentioned a case in which the

⁴⁶⁷ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 52.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ustav Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije* [Constitution of Socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia] (Službeni list: Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, 1963), 53.

⁴⁶⁹ Debate: “Nesporazumi oko demokratije [Disagreements about democracy],” *Socijalizam*, Vol VII, No.1 (1964): 104. The debate included Jovan Đoršević, the president of the Legal Council of the Federal Executive Council, Pera Pirker, president of the City Assembly of Zargeb, Dragi Stamenković, secretary of the Belgrade City Committee and Branko Jevremović, member of the Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of

individuals who were critical of the practice of the workers' collectives came into "negative relations with the leading personalities," as well as the problem of bypassing the mechanism of self-government in the work of the working organizations.⁴⁷⁰ This shows that the language of rights of human beings was evoked in the public debates well before the 1970s.

Internationalism and national belonging: humanist ambiguities

In the early 1960s, debates concerning national identities and national cultures were on the table among intellectuals, sociologists, and philosophers alike. What characterizes these discussions is the tension between the universalist and internationalist positions and the importance of the local, and national culture and belonging. However, with their synthesis of crisis philosophies that discussed the human being, the *Praxis* philosophers had a range of possible interpretations of the link between the universal and particular, on the one hand, and the possible solutions to this issue, on the other.⁴⁷¹

Oleg Mandić (1906–1979), a sociologist from Zagreb who had attended the *Institut za Društvene Nauke* when it was founded in 1948 and previously studied law in Vienna and Siena, wrote an important book, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* (Appearance and the withering away of the nations) in 1963, pointing out the problem of the "appearances of particularism, localism, national narrowmindedness, and chauvinism, which are hindering our social development."⁴⁷² Mandić was one of the important figures in sociology, arguing for the need to establish the discipline, but on the Marxist positions, while not entirely rejecting the contributions of the

Yugoslavia. Introductory remarks given by Dragoljub Golubović, editor of the journal *NIN* and discussions were led by Miloš Mišović, the main editor of *NIN*.

⁴⁷⁰ Debate: "Nesporazumi oko demokratije,[Disagreements about democracy]," *Socijalizam*, no. 1 vol VII (1964): 104.

⁴⁷¹ To situate this part in the broader discussions on socialist internationalism see also Slobodian Quinn, *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York: Berghahn, 2015); and on the Yugoslav participation in the Non-Aligned Movement, Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945-1985* (Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

⁴⁷² Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 7.

non-Marxists directions. While he was not directly affiliated with the journal *Praxis*, he was their interlocutor and participated in the discussion of humanism and socialism organized by the future *Praxis* intellectuals in Zagreb in 1963.

Mandić considered fetishism of one's own nation to be a version of antihumanism—it was an “antihumanist exclusivity, in which the feeling of national belonging shows one of the main characteristics of a nation, which is the imposition of the tendency for economic expansion beyond the borders of one's own domestic market.”⁴⁷³ He approached the issue of nationalism from the position of historical materialism, arguing that the Yugoslav nations developed depending on the different material conditions in which people of these areas lived. This had as a consequence the fact that they were not equally developed—some were more progressive and others were more backward—which then expressed itself in the national clashes after the unity of the Yugoslav state in 1918.⁴⁷⁴ The path of Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian national formations was different—in the case of Serbia, Mandić wrote about the greater Serbia tendencies among its bourgeoisie, which brought about the idea that a part of Serbian nations were also “Montenegrins and Macedonians.”⁴⁷⁵ As Mandić explained, these tendencies were mainly expressed during the Balkan Wars and reached the culmination in the greater Serbian politics of the Serbian politician Nikola Pašić, and which materialized in the Yugoslav Kingdom as a centralized state.

Mandić however, also pointed out the existence of a humanist element in the creation of the nation-states which could be traced back to the Serbian romantic poet, Đura Jakšić, or the Slovenian modernist writer, Ivan Cankar. He saw their humanist aspect in the fact that they “put an accent on the human being [*čovek*] no matter his or her class and national belonging.”

⁴⁷³ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 21-22.

⁴⁷⁴ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 30.

⁴⁷⁵ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 36.

In the interwar context, he claimed that the general human [*općehumanistički*] moment could be found in the works of Miroslav Krleža, Ivo Andrić, Kočo Racin, and August Cesarec.⁴⁷⁶ In his reinterpretation, during the 1930s, the Yugoslav working movement “finally got rid of the idea of integral Yugoslavism” and started to argue for the idea that the national question could only be solved when all nations were equal in the same federation, provided that they had the right to secede.⁴⁷⁷ Mandić therefore attempted to reconcile the universalist and particularist elements of national identity.

Mandić saw a national culture to be one of the elements found within the concept of nation and as such a crucial factor of internal cohesion of the members of a given nation.⁴⁷⁸ The main issue for him was a question of how the culture of some nation was to be integrated into the ‘culture of humanity’—this was, from the philosophical point of view a question of the relationship between particular, specific and general, universal.⁴⁷⁹

To Mandić, Yugoslav culture encompassed all of the achievements of the national cultures of the Yugoslav people, which expressed the *općečovečanski* [universal human principles] found in them.⁴⁸⁰ The postwar law proclaimed equality among the nations in the federation which was safeguarded by the Yugoslav Constitution. Next to that, according to him, the economic and political equality of an individual, notwithstanding their national belonging was also granted. In comparing Yugoslav national policy with that of the USSR

⁴⁷⁶ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 36.

⁴⁷⁷ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 41.

⁴⁷⁸ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 43.

⁴⁷⁹ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 43.

⁴⁸⁰ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 50.

under Stalin, he noted that the state bureaucracy systematically hindered the national development of “backward people” in Soviet Russia.⁴⁸¹

Mandić’s argument appeared in the context of the “reemerging” issues concerning national identities, and he viewed this to be an inevitable phase of the transition to socialism. The phase in which the Yugoslav society found itself, therefore, carried “the psychological remnants of the past, the economic inequality between nations.”⁴⁸² Thus, Mandić explained the emergence of national debates through the fact that Yugoslavia had not yet achieved the level of modernization in terms of culture, but also in terms of economic equalities. He referenced the new Constitution of 1963, which granted that all the people were equal and which forbade the economic advancement of one social-political community on the damage of others.⁴⁸³ This meant to him that the Constitution weakened the role of the republican organizations, but strengthened the position of the local governments [*opština*], thus creating the conditions for the integration of these local governments into a Yugoslav community without the mediation of republics and political forms of the nation.⁴⁸⁴ Yet, overcoming the national frameworks did not mean creating a new nation, as he noted. He criticized the idea that the nations (he listed: Slovenian, Croat, Serbian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin) were supposed to wither away, for the benefit of creating another nation, a Yugoslav one. This would be “nonsense,” he claimed, since in the existing conditions of socialism, there was no theoretical possibility of “creating a new nation.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 53.

⁴⁸² Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 65.

⁴⁸³ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 66.

⁴⁸⁴ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 67.

⁴⁸⁵ Oleg Mandić, *Postanak i odumiranje nacija* [Appearance and disappearance of the nations] (Narodne novine: Zagreb, 1963), 70.

During the Eighth Congress of the LCY in 1964, Tito highlighted this idea as well. In his discussion concerning the national relations in the federation, he stressed that the Yugoslav leadership adopted the Marxist-Leninist understanding which was based on the principle of equality of all peoples.⁴⁸⁶ He also criticized those communists who “confused the unity of all peoples with the “liquidation of nations and the creation of something new, artificial, that is, one unique Yugoslav nation which looks a bit like the assimilation and bureaucratic centralization, unitarism, and hegemonism.”⁴⁸⁷ Instead, Tito claimed that the Yugoslav community was to be “new type of social community, in which all nationalities find their communal interests.”⁴⁸⁸ To Tito, thus, it was beyond question that the aim was to create a Yugoslav nation—this would be dangerous and would essentially overrun the idea of the equality of all peoples in Yugoslavia. Similarly, at the same congress, Veljko Vlahović emphasized the leadership’s approach to the problem of nationality in Yugoslavia, criticizing those who saw the national question as a “bourgeois prejudice.” Such claims, as Vlahović agreed, disclosed the existence of “unitaristic, bureaucratic-etatistic understandings and conceptualizations” of a nation and national relations. Yugoslav socialism understood by the leadership affirmed nations and national identities in Yugoslavia, and at the same time it promoted the need of “going beyond the national limitedness and narrowness, into a total joining of nations in the progressive social development in the world.”

Without such spontaneous gathering of the Yugoslav nations, which would not be mediated by anyone, Vlahović claimed, there would be “an artificial avant-gardism and

⁴⁸⁶ Josip Broz Tito, *Nacionalni odnosi u svjetlu posljednjih kongresa saveza komunista, iz referata Tita na VIII Kongresu SKJ* [National relations in the light of the last congresses of the League of Communists, from Tito's report at the 8th Congress of the League of Communists], (Belgrade, 1964), 1159.

⁴⁸⁷ Josip Broz Tito, *Nacionalni odnosi u svjetlu posljednjih kongresa saveza komunista, iz referata Tita na VIII Kongresu SKJ* [National relations in the light of the last congresses of the League of Communists, from Tito's report at the 8th Congress of the League of Communists], (Belgrade, 1964), 1160.

⁴⁸⁸ Josip Broz Tito, *Nacionalni odnosi u svjetlu posljednjih kongresa saveza komunista, iz referata Tita na VIII Kongresu SKJ* [National relations in the light of the last congresses of the League of Communists, from Tito's report at the 8th Congress of the League of Communists], (Belgrade, 1964), 1159.

internationalism that disregards national specificities.”⁴⁸⁹ To Vlahović and the leadership, the claim that national differences would disappear right after the revolution was not “scientifically based.” With the Constitution of 1963, he argued, the Yugoslav community was declared to be “an open community, open towards positive world social processes which are today more and more characterized with the strengthening of socialist relations, the higher level of freedom and independence of people.”⁴⁹⁰ Therefore, the responsibility of communists in Yugoslavia and beyond according to him was to constantly fight “for the socialist and humanist content of cultural creations of their people,” as that would be the only way to fight off the nationalist and chauvinist manifestations.⁴⁹¹

Praxis philosophers engaged with the question of national identities and nationalism in their thematic issue in 1965, expressing their universalist views concerning culture. One of their shared starting positions was that the goal of socialism, if it aspires to be a humane society, is to achieve the development of authentic “human culture.” The introductory remarks by the editorial polemicized with the officials’ perspectives that placed an accent on building socialism, while they believed that this would affect the “building” of the culture as well. To *Praxis*, culture could not be approached in mechanistic terms of cause and effect.

As they stated in the introduction, such an idea was illogical and compared similarly to the idea that “it is possible to firstly teach a child to walk, and then also enable him to be birthed.”⁴⁹² For *Praxis* philosophers thus, it was impossible to envision building socialism first focusing on the economy and politics and then creating culture.

⁴⁸⁹ Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1172.

⁴⁹⁰ Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1173.

⁴⁹¹ Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1173.

⁴⁹² Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 351.

That is why it was crucial for the *Praxis* philosophers that in the process of “building socialism,” culture was not ignored, but included in this very process. They highlighted that the Yugoslav Marxists and socialists ought to repeatedly reflect on the “state of culture in [our] Yugoslav socialism.”⁴⁹³ They echoed the claim by Slovenian philosopher and future member of the critical circle around *Nova revija*, Taras Kermauner (1930–2008), that in a socialist society, culture could not develop as an “empty negation of the pre-existing culture” but it could only be built as its continuation and transformation.⁴⁹⁴ ‘Culture’ was therefore not seen in terms of being a part of the materialist world—that could be undone and created anew. At the same time, speaking from their Yugoslav perspectives and relating the meaning of culture to national belonging, they stressed that one could not simply ignore the national aspects of culture either. Being aware of the multinational character of Yugoslavia, and the existence of various collective identities, they stressed that “a culture cannot be nonnational [*nenacionalna*] in the world in which the sense of national belonging moves people in their important decisions and wishes.”⁴⁹⁵ Yet, they emphasized their position, similarly to Mandić, that a national culture could not have the status of ‘a culture’ unless it possessed within it also a supranational, general human content. The editors did not deny the fact that this relationship between national, international, and supranational was complex in any context; they also posed a critical question of whether this relationship could be “simple in our historical space where, even without counting ‘national minorities’ we can count, two alphabets, three languages, five nations, and six republics?”⁴⁹⁶

The position at least described by the editorial team of *Praxis*, therefore discloses the view of culture that goes beyond the material characteristics, but it encompasses also a ‘spiritual’ aspect. This can be seen in them stressing the link between the Yugoslav

⁴⁹³ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 351.

⁴⁹⁴ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 325.

⁴⁹⁵ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 325.

⁴⁹⁶ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 353.

supranational culture and the particular national cultures of all Yugoslav peoples and nationalities. They argued that Yugoslav culture could not be seen as a simple aggregate of these cultures which were ‘accidentally’ lumped into a Federation. Instead, ‘Yugoslav culture,’ from their perspective, was a culture of people mutually “connected not just with their linguistic-ethnic backgrounds and the centuries of economic-political and cultural influences but also by their socialist present.”⁴⁹⁷ Consequently, they argued with the leadership that impeding the development of the national cultures of Yugoslav peoples in the name of one general Yugoslav culture would be damaging to the supranational Yugoslav culture. At the same time, insisting on the absolute autonomy of any particular national culture in Yugoslavia would bring about “its weakening and degradation to a provincial level.”⁴⁹⁸ As a solution, it was necessary to find the right measure of the relation between the ‘general’ (or universal) and ‘particular’ in the Yugoslav culture. It was crucial thus to move beyond the dichotomy of either one universal Yugoslav culture or national identity or a particular national culture or identity. To them, it was necessary to shift the framework of debate and start from the position that both Yugoslav and particular national cultures can only be called cultures insofar as they “have that supranational, universal component.”⁴⁹⁹ By over-emphasizing the right to autonomy and the right to self-determination, as *Praxis* implied in the text, the leadership was inevitably creating spaces for the rise of national sentiments in the context of Yugoslav socialism, which they saw as disclosing Western capitalistic and market-oriented values.

Rudi Supek openly expressed his worry about the appearance of nationalism in Yugoslavia. He asked: “if today we speak about the appearances of nationalism in socialism, then we should ask a question: is this only because of the ‘difficult inherited past’ or is it because of the insufficient presence of future in our present?”⁵⁰⁰ This question disclosed his

⁴⁹⁷ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 353.

⁴⁹⁸ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 353.

⁴⁹⁹ Editorial, “Umjesto uvoda [Instead of an introduction],” *Praxis*, Vol.2, No.3 (1965): 353.

⁵⁰⁰ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 375.

position however, since the “inherited past” was impossible to change, hence the challenge was pointed towards the present and potentially to the LCY’s policies and practice regarding these issues. At the same time, such a position also disclosed the critique of the LCY’s lack of socialist vision and the fact that the intellectuals around *Praxis* perceived its politics as being increasingly stagnant and unrevolutionary.

Supek argued against the perceived ideas concerning the link between nation and national culture. As he claimed, “nationalists often approach culture as a work of one nation.”⁵⁰¹ In sociology, national culture was often mechanically explained in terms of a culture that belongs to a national territory. Such a perspective was shared by his colleague Zagorka Golubović, who argued that this resulted in the reductive concept of culture, as it assumed that culture is simply a tool for the adaptation of the individual to the social conditions. Such a mechanistical approach ignored what Supek and Golubović saw to be a fundamental character of culture, which was the fact that human beings’ labor transforms their surroundings, and is adjusting it to him or herself, by which both the natural and the social conditions are changed.⁵⁰²

Moreover, Supek criticized the approach of cultural historians who held material aspects of culture as the most important. For Supek, the interest of where someone was born or what language they used, was an insufficient and even a false approach to what constitutes national culture. He questioned whether “biological birth was more important for cultural history than spiritual birth.”⁵⁰³ In his critique of the cultural historian’s approach, he asked:

Does Nikola Tesla belong more to Lika than to New York, more to Yugoslav than American science? And who has the most rights to claim Marx: Germans, where he was born, English where he died, Russians where he provoked socialist revolution, or simply, those who believe that they stayed most loyal to his thought?⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965):376.

⁵⁰² Zagorka Golubović, “Socijalizam i humanizam [Socialism and humanism],” *Praxis*, No. 1 (1965): 3–15.

⁵⁰³ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 376.

⁵⁰⁴ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965):377.

With these questions, Supek aimed to show that culture is something that is nonnational and that it belongs to the whole of humanity, it cannot be enclosed within the circle of one's national borders, but it becomes 'culture' insofar as it has universal meanings and value.

Praxis intellectuals interpreted the rise of the national question in Croatia as a consequence of decentralization and self-management. In Croatia, as Supek argued, the core of the national question in Croatia was to be found in the field of literature, implying that literature is the "closest to the people."⁵⁰⁵ The problem however was the existing practice of publishing and publishing houses in Yugoslavia. According to him, the decentralization of the economic activity brought about "the withering away of the needed coordination of the production of books in Yugoslavia."⁵⁰⁶ In addition, such a decentralized economy also allowed the appearance of the market competition among the Yugoslav republics. As a result, the publishing activity was contributing to the creation of the 'consumer mentality' in Yugoslavia, which according to Supek, degraded culture. Supek saw the "struggle for a universal human culture to be identical with the struggle against all forms of authoritarian restriction," as well as "the struggle against the dissipation of the creative potential of man in consumer society."⁵⁰⁷ Thus, while the introduction of self-management in Yugoslavia was supposed to move away from capitalist production, it in fact introduced the competition, consumer mentality, and "degradation of socialist humanism." Supek therefore linked the analyses of the crisis of modern society, the 'loss of human authenticity,' and the insufficiently implemented self-management to his discussion of nationalism in Yugoslavia.

According to Supek, the enterprises that were more skillful in publishing various commercial editions appeared to be the most successful in the Yugoslav market. Those

⁵⁰⁵ Rudi Supek, "Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture]," *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 383.

⁵⁰⁶ Rudi Supek, "Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture]," *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 383.

⁵⁰⁷ Miladin Životić, "Between two types of modern culture," in *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Marković, Mihailo and Petrović, Gajo, eds. (Boston : D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1979): 193.

enterprises could produce large print runs and would thus be able to offer these books at a much cheaper price than their competitors. The market and competition logic that started to exist in Yugoslavia with the economic transformations, was the cause of the growing nationalism in the federation. He illustrated his argument with an example: A Zagreb-based enterprise would print a book in three thousand copies, while Belgrade-based enterprise would print the same book in ten thousand copies.⁵⁰⁸ Consequently, the book printed in Belgrade would appear as the cheaper option on the Zagreb market, and the people in Zagreb would logically buy a Belgrade edition of a book and not the Zagreb one. Such a scenario, according to Supek, led to the issue that “our publishers or novelist would warn us that we were neglecting Croatian culture.”⁵⁰⁹ What this meant was that the Croatian language would be seen as being neglected, since Croats would buy a book published in Serbian. As Supek concluded, this was how the ‘national question’ in Yugoslavia appeared.⁵¹⁰

The leadership, as discussed at the Eighth Congress, emphasized the importance of the new Constitution in the affirmation of the self-governing relations in Yugoslavia. The new Constitution, as Veljko Vlahović pointed out, was an expression of the development of the Yugoslav communists’ position towards national question such that it “affirmed a nation in self-management.” As a consequence, Vlahović highlighted this “gave a new quality to the national question.”⁵¹¹ It was precisely because of the self-government, that the connection and unity of the interests of people and nationalities [*narod i narodnost*] in Yugoslavia was supposed to become stronger. Yet, as Tito pointed out, “brotherhood and unity” became challenged due to the existence of the large differences in the “economic strengths and the

⁵⁰⁸ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 385.

⁵⁰⁹ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 385.

⁵¹⁰ Rudi Supek, “Nacija i nacionalna kultura [Nation and national culture],” *Praxis* Vol.2, No.3, (1965): 385.

⁵¹¹ Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1173.

possibilities of the development.”⁵¹² Thus, the leadership viewed the existence of economic differences and the etatistic elements found in the economic relations and in culture, to be the reasons for the rise of nationalism. To solve it, Tito’s proposal was to work towards the complete abolition of “bureaucratic centralism,” and the affirmation of the political, social, and other functions of republics and autonomous regions in Yugoslavia.⁵¹³ Thus, it meant more decentralization, and more autonomy for the republics and autonomies in Yugoslavia.

In an essay by Predrag Vranicki, published in *Praxis* in 1968, entitled “Socialism and the National Question,” one can perceive the development of a set of shared positions on the topic of political nationalism among the members of the *Praxis* circle. In the text, Vranicki noted: “The final interest of the proletariat and communists could never have been the establishment of such a political institution as a national state since the very existence of the nation presupposes also the existence of all various types of the phenomenon of alienation.”⁵¹⁴ However, he emphasized that national liberation is one of the preconditions of social liberation. To Vranicki, the question of nationalism in the countries that started social revolutions, and specifically the question of multinational states such as Yugoslavia, is an ambiguous one. He emphasized that without the joint fight of the Yugoslavs, it would have been impossible to have socialism in any particular nation within Yugoslavia. He reminded us about the importance of such unity and solidarity: “in today’s insecure and changing world constellation, the abandonment of this unity, of cooperation in the framework of one state means—let us not be historically naïve—the disarmament of our nations in the face of possible cataclysms.”⁵¹⁵ The

⁵¹² Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1173.

⁵¹³ Veljko Vlahović, “Iz referata druga Veljka Vlahovića na VIII kongresu SKJ: neki stavovi o naciji i nacionalnim odnosima, [From the report of Comrade Veljko Vlahović at the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia: some views on the nation and national relations],” (Belgrade, 1964), 1174.

⁵¹⁴ Predrag Vranicki, “Socijalizam i nacionalno pitanje [Socialism and the national question],” *Praxis*, No.4, (1968): 261.

⁵¹⁵ Predrag Vranicki, “Socijalizam i nacionalno pitanje [Socialism and the national question],” *Praxis*, No.4, (1968): 263.

unity of the Yugoslav people and their cooperation ensures the very goal of the socialist revolution. Consequently, the aim of the self-management 'platform' (in contrast to 'national') is the realization of a liberated man as "the basis of the free community of men and peoples."⁵¹⁶

What was the nature of *Praxis* internationalism, if we think about the context of the 1960s, in which the politics of non-alignment was one of the cornerstones of Yugoslav foreign policy?

The journal *Naše teme* had organized a special issue on Latin America in 1966, with contributions by Milovan Baletić, Marijan Barišić, Trivo Indić, Stane Južnić, Ive Mihovlović, Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, Radovan Pavić, Mitar Popović, Stipe Šuvar and others, who discussed the 'third world' which was "struggling against all forms of exploitation" and which was in the process of "building of the universal community of peoples, which will live in peace, equality, and material and cultural equality [*jednakost i ravnopravnost*]."⁵¹⁷ More importantly, the editor of the issue, politician and sociologist Stipe Šuvar (1936–2004), argued that "in schools we are educated in the way which forms European provincials, with European provincial relation towards the world, European provincial criteria and complexes."⁵¹⁸ What lacked in Yugoslavia according to Šuvar is "often elementary and basic knowledge about the peoples 'on other continents'; which after WWII ceased to be colonies, full of darkness and exoticism, but which in front of our eyes necessarily become homelands for many peoples, races, cultures, and at the same time the battlefield of fateful battles for the new relations in the globe and for the progress and socialism."⁵¹⁹ Thus, we can say, outside of *Praxis*, intellectuals did approach the countries of the 'Third world' as important places for the development of

⁵¹⁶ Predrag Vranicki, "Socijalizam i nacionalno pitanje [Socialism and the national question]," *Praxis*, No.4, (1968): 267.

⁵¹⁷ Stipe Šuvar, "U povodu ovog (dvo)broja [On the occasion of this double issue]," *Naše teme* Vol. 10, No.1-2, (1966): 2. In 1961 *Naše teme* also organised a special edition on contemporary Africa

⁵¹⁸ Stipe Šuvar, "U povodu ovog (dvo)broja [On the occasion of this double issue]," *Naše teme* Vol. 10, No.1-2, (1966): 3.

⁵¹⁹ Stipe Šuvar, "U povodu ovog (dvo)broja [On the occasion of this double issue]," *Naše teme* Vol. 10, No.1-2, (1966): 3.

ideas of socialism as well. Furthermore, *Naše teme* also argued that what was seen and heard in the Yugoslav daily politics was not sufficient enough to understand the problems of the contemporary world. Another obstacle was the lack of the experts for people cultures and languages living on the other continents, since these cultures have been “met through mediation from the translation from German, English, Russian or French languages.” According to Šuvar: “As the political and cultural, and especially economic links of Yugoslavia with non-European countries and peoples are getting stronger... the more it seems that one feels more hindrances that come from our insufficient information and preparedness.”⁵²⁰ In addition, the editors highlighted the need to inform the Yugoslav public not just about the political past and the present but about the culture and intellectual life in these countries.

Among the publications in the journal *Praxis* and among the themes discussed at the Korčula Summer School, one does not find such an interest in getting to know about the experiences of socialism in the countries outside of Europe and the United States. The discussions of socialism among the *Praxis* intellectuals did not include input from the intellectuals of the newly de-colonized countries which were closely cooperating with Yugoslavia through the NAM. Nevertheless, In 1965 the Department of Philosophy in Zagreb made Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, an Indian philosopher and statesman, an honorary Doctor of Philosophy.⁵²¹ Vladimir Filipović, who promoted the idea of rewarding Radhakrishnan with a doctorate, was a member of the journal *Praxis* and his speech delivered at the occasion of presenting the doctorate was published in the journal. In this text, Filipović explained the importance of Radhakrishnan to be in his “encompassing and universalist cultural approaches”

⁵²⁰ Stipe Šuvar, “U povodu ovog (dvo)broja [On the occasion of this double issue],” *Naše teme* Vol. 10, No.1-2, (1966): 3..

⁵²¹ Vladimir Filipović, “Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: Doctor Honoris Causa Zagrebačkog Univerziteta [Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Zagreb],” *Praxis* no.6 (1965): 933. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an Indian philosopher as well as a statesman.

which came out as a consequence of his ability to merge “European philosophical thought, and cultural mission, with the problems and meanings of Indian philosophical spirit.”⁵²²

If we look at the sources (that is, published essays in the journal *Praxis*, as well as the manuscripts of the main editors of the journal), they convey that the international outlook of Yugoslav Marxist Humanists designated primarily an intense dialogue with their ‘Western’ colleagues (from Europe and the US). The participants did not include intellectuals and representatives of the Non-Aligned countries (or anyone from the Global South), but also the scope of themes and topics discussed at the summer school and in the journal was limited mainly to ‘European’ questions (for example, the working class in European countries, European socialist parties, and European philosophical Marxist and non-Marxist traditions).⁵²³ Indeed, it is difficult to find in their texts serious reflections and analyses of the existing anti-colonial movements, debates concerning African and Indian socialisms and Marxisms, or practices of self-management in the ‘Third World’ countries. At the same time, the participants at the summer school sometimes pointed out their limits in discussing questions that they assumed to be internationally relevant. For example, Austrian Marxist Franz Marek in his presentation clearly stated that his reflections on the revolutionary strategies would be limited to European perspectives, although he acknowledged that “the European perspectives are undeniably linked with the development of so-called Third World... and although it would be tempting to approach the countries of the Third World as a testing stone for socialist humanism.”⁵²⁴

The universalism and the internationalism of the *Praxis* circle disclosed a European orientation. The need to belong to the European cultural space was expressed through the fact

⁵²² Vladimir Filipović, “Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: Doctor Honoris Causa Zagrebačkog Univerziteta [Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan: Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Zagreb,” *Praxis* no.6 (1965): 935.

⁵²³ See Una Blagojević, “L’histoire intellectuelle globale et les marxistes humanistes yougoslaves,” *Balkanologie: Revue d’études pluridisciplinaires*, Dec 1, 2022.

⁵²⁴ Franz Marek, “Moć i neposredna demokratija [Power and direct democracy],” *Praxis* No.1-2 (1970): 176.

that they aimed to develop Marxism which would reflect the European values of democracy, freedom, and respect for the dignity of human beings. The disregard of the scholars from the ‘Global South’ could be linked to their disinterest into these countries philosophical and socialist practices as they saw European cultural and philosophical heritage to be their main reference point. Simply put, the countries of the Global South to them, could not offer anything in terms of intellectual traditions. More pessimistic reading of this would align with the already made argument that the humanism of *Praxis*, never managed to free itself from the delineation between “humanism against the presumed inhumanity of others.”⁵²⁵ In his article “Decolonizing *Praxis* in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue,” Nikolay Karkov argues that the colonialist dispositions and sensibilities underlie *Praxis*’ Marxist humanism. As one of the examples, he points out that Mihailo Marković’s account of the origins of *Praxis* was traced to the “development of radical philosophy in Yugoslavia to (Serbian) nationalist struggles against the Ottoman Turks.”⁵²⁶ This dissertation while building on Karkov’s text, also points out at the importance of contextualizing such claims, arguing that the professed humanism had different origins, and did not necessarily mean the adoption of the ethnocentric political and philosophical positions.

The Crisis of Philosophy: Intelligentsia in socialism and its role in solving of the ‘cultural crisis’: “the vocation of the intellectuals is a critique”

The relationship between intellectuals and the political leadership in the 1960s was often strained, and it greatly had to do with the perceptions of the position of intellectuals within Yugoslav socialist society. Edvard Kardelj, for example, argued that the intelligentsia emphasizing the “critical consciousness of the society” is the representative of “formal

⁵²⁵ Nikolay Karkov, “Decolonizing *Praxis* in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue,” *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 7(2) (2015): 180–200, here 193.

⁵²⁶ Nikolay Karkov, “Decolonizing *Praxis* in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue,” *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 7(2) (2015): 193.

liberalism” in Yugoslavia.⁵²⁷ In the context of 1967 (the publication of the *Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language*), Ljubomir Tadić approached the question of the role of intellectuals by linking it to the rise of nationalism. He claimed: “The linguistic crisis” in Yugoslavia “as well as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, reminded us that nationalism is again a theme of the day, one of the biggest spiritual obsessions and political preoccupations of the time and alienated world in which we live.”⁵²⁸ In the face of such crisis, Tadić asked whether philosophers could say anything important about this topic, and whether nationalism was their reality as well.

The need to explicate and understand the place of intellectuals in development of socialist relationships in Yugoslavia was expressed at the gathering organized by the journal *Gledište* in 1960. The problem of intellectuals, as the organizers explained, had both theoretical and practical importance—and some of the interests put forward by the organizers were: “What are the social-economic positions of intellectuals in Yugoslav society? Is the contemporary intelligentsia indeed a distinct social stratum, largely different from other segments of society? Lastly, who constitutes the intelligentsia and who should be classified as such?”⁵²⁹

One challenge they encountered when addressing these issues was the lack of a fully developed Marxist theory regarding the intelligentsia⁵³⁰. Nevertheless, Milosav Janićijević, who was one among the first exploring the role of intellectuals in Yugoslavia from historical and sociological viewpoints, provided an overview of the topic by pointing out at some issues.⁵³¹ Janićijević asked whether there had been a shift in the structure of intellectuals

⁵²⁷ Edvard Kardelj, *Beleške o našoj društvenoj kritici* [Notes about our social critique], (Beograd: Nakladnik, 1966), 11.

⁵²⁸ Edvard Kardelj, *Beleške o našoj društvenoj kritici* [Notes about our social critique], (Beograd: Nakladnik, 1966), 5.

⁵²⁹ Editorial, *Gledišta* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 1.

⁵³⁰ Milosav Janićijević, “Jedan pogled na karakteristike nastanka i razvitka jugoslovenske inteligencije [A look at the characteristics of the emergence and development of Yugoslav intelligentsia],” *Gledišta* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 31.

⁵³¹ Milosav Janićijević, “Jedan pogled na karakteristike nastanka i razvitka jugoslovenske inteligencije [A look at the characteristics of the emergence and development of Yugoslav intelligentsia],” *Gledišta* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 31.

following World War II and, if so, what characterized this change. How was intelligentsia different in socialism. Challenging the idea that intellectuals inherently look down on manual labor and remain detached from the masses, he argued that in Yugoslavia, the intelligentsia readily adapted to the changing circumstances. The intellectuals recognized the necessity of aligning their aspirations with those of the masses, working toward their national and social liberation. Moreover, he argued that the scarcity of intellectuals in Yugoslavia hindered their ability to gather into a cohesive group and exert significant societal influence.

What Janićijević observed in his analyses was the decline in the number of graduates in law or philosophy, while there was an increase in those completing studies in economics, medicine, and technical fields, indicating a shift in the professional composition of the Yugoslav intelligentsia. To Janićijević, intellectuals were moving towards expert knowledge. Janićijević also observed that the creative intelligentsia, traditionally perceived as intellectuals, still retained the elite status in the Yugoslav society, with functions not significantly different from those at the end of the nineteenth century. However, he noted the emerging changes in their structure as well. According to him, the role of a writer was no longer measured by the standards established in the past decades; that is—instead of representing the collective aspirations of the people, writers evolved into specialists who created aesthetic values. Janićijević argued that it was not by chance that that contemporary writers were dubbed “the engineers of human souls.” Additionally, while philosophers and social theorists in the nineteenth century focused on creating new systems and visions, their contemporary role has shifted towards that of specialists. Their new task was to organize diverse forms of social, political, and economic activities. Ultimately, philosophers and social scientists have become experts in addressing the various complexities of social mechanisms, focusing their attention towards problem-solving.

Next to this emerging change in the structure of the Yugoslav intelligentsia, the question which had often been raised was: what was precisely socialist intelligentsia? Mihailo Marković noted: “We all agree that we are building a socialist intelligentsia in our nation, and that a considerable portion of our intellectuals can be labeled as socialist.”⁵³² But it was problematic for Marković to use this term, since it had already been previously employed in the USSR, typically in an optimistic manner, categorizing all intellectuals as socialist. Thus, he asked, “should everyone truly be considered a socialist intellectual in socialism, as Jože Goričar,⁵³³ Slovenian sociologist, for instance, would argue—or perhaps not?”⁵³⁴

Mihailo Marković expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of intellectuals, identifying several shortcomings. He lamented the absence of the well-established intellectuals who are proficient in Marxist philosophy, aesthetics, and contemporary arts, highlighting their necessity in combating negative literary trends that were “infiltrating” Yugoslav literature from abroad. Furthermore, he noted a lack of initiative among intellectuals to cultivate “general culture” in Yugoslavia among the masses, attributing it to low rates of reading. Marković also criticized the commercialization of the Yugoslav intellectuals, where the pursuit of profit undermined their sense of purpose in educating and enriching society. Excessive involvement in public discourse was another point of contention, with Marković advocating for a more balanced role as public intellectuals. This still necessitated the importance of respect for the rights of free discussion among the intellectuals, and the ability to freely express one’s ideas. While recognizing the significance of bridging the gap between the working class and

⁵³² Mihailo Marković, “Kriterijumi socijalističke inteligencije [Criteria of socialist intelligentsia],” *Gledišta* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 58.

⁵³³ Jože Goričar (1907-1985), was a lawyer and a sociologist, professor of sociology at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Law, as well as the member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He was an important name in sociology, and in the 1950s and 1960s, Goričar was a mentor to several prominent Yugoslav sociologists, including Ljubomir Tadić, Josip Županov, and Zdravko Mlinar. He was a pioneer of modern Slovene sociology and a president of the Yugoslav Sociological and Philosophical Association.

⁵³⁴ Mihailo Marković, “Kriterijumi socijalističke inteligencije [Criteria of socialist intelligentsia],” *Gledišta* Vol. 1, No. 2 (1960): 58.

intellectuals, he argued that the creative intelligentsia was often diverted from its primary role due to its diverse societal functions.

Ljubomir Tadić, in his article “Intelligentsia in socialism: a contribution to the question of the relationship between Ideology and intelligentsia,” reflected on the theories of the sociology of intellectuals mainly of those authors such as Austrian political economist Joseph Schumpeter, conservative philosopher Arnold Gehlen, and French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron. Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* was translated and published by Belgrade’s *Kultura* in 1960, and Tadić cited him in saying that the problem of intellectuals is a pressing one for the very reason that this groups “creates troubles.”⁵³⁵

Tadić followed Schumpeter in arguing that intellectuals were not a class, in terms of the class of the industrial workers. Instead, the main aspect of the intellectuals as a group was that they were writers assuming a critical position towards their society. Tadić also referred to Arnold Gehlen who believed that the intellectual group included engaged writers, who were characterized by Max Weber’s definition of the so-called “ethics of persuasion,” which can “live only as a speech, expression, agitation, and primarily as a reproach and blame.”⁵³⁶ Gehlen saw the relationship between intellectuals and politics as a struggle of two aristocracies for power.⁵³⁷ Tadić referenced Raymond Aron who argued that intellectuals include only writers and philosophers—in one word, as Tadić explained “those who live for mind and from mind, and not all of those who gained formally highest university qualifications.”⁵³⁸

More importantly for Tadić, the intellectuals were unified by their shared ideals of humanity. Intelligentsia, seen from Tadić’s perspective, then, was formed by a small number of humanist-oriented writers and philosophers—those who were always ready to criticize, protest, and to question the status quo. His views were an expression of the shared perspective

⁵³⁵ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 77.

⁵³⁶ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 77.

⁵³⁷ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 77.

⁵³⁸ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 78.

on the role of intellectuals, and specifically on the role of philosophers as the humanist-oriented intellectuals, among the *Praxis* circle. Such ideas were clearly stated in their journal's agenda. Namely, the following passage illustrates how the *Praxis* intellectuals saw their own role and place in the Yugoslav society:

The philosopher cannot observe all these occurrences indifferently, not because in hard times everybody should help and among others the philosopher too, but because in the roots of all that hardship lie problems whose solution is impossible without the participation of philosophy. But if contemporary philosophy wants to contribute significantly to resolving the contemporary world crisis, it should not be reduced to the study and interpretation of its own history; it shouldn't be the scholarly building of all-encompassing systems; even worse, just an analysis of the methods of contemporary science or description of everyday use of words. If it wants to be the thought of the revolution, philosophy must turn to the important concerns of the contemporary world and man, and if it wants to reach for the essence of everyday life, it should not refrain from seemingly moving away from it, going into the depths of "metaphysics."⁵³⁹

Put briefly, humanist-oriented intellectuals were supposed to assist in solving the problems of modernity. Only with the philosophers' insights could one resolve at least some aspects of the 'contemporary world crisis.' Their focus ought not to be an interest in their own history—looking at the past, but instead it should be future oriented. Thus, what is clear in their agenda is the implied direction of the intellectuals' engagement—not with the interpretation and study and involvement in their own local, and particular frameworks, nor it was about creating some grand narratives (reminiscent of the Marxist interpretation of history). *Praxis* intellectuals saw their role as philosophers and the role of philosophy to be the "thought of the revolution," implying Marx's ideas that "The head of emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat," and that it is to have the role of critique. They saw their role as being critics of all existing conditions.

What were these conditions? As Tadić argued, the intellectuals existed in the "world of technical civilization, which mainly glorifies success and efficiency," as illustrated in the

⁵³⁹ Editorial, "Why Praxis?", *Praxis* no.1 (1964): 3.

previous chapter.⁵⁴⁰ Tadić, therefore, wrote in the context in which the humanist-oriented intellectuals found their role increasingly neglected by society in general, and in the context in which there was pessimism over what the intellectuals' role and 'relevance' in the 'technical civilization' is. Arnold Gehlen, as Tadić pointed out, believed that the intellectuals' role is a 'thing of the past'—or as he put it, “nobility of spirit is a thing of the past.”⁵⁴¹ Yet what *Praxis* intellectuals continuously repeated was that the progress of technology and technologically based science did not equal the progress of humanity. This was the position of positivism, which “aimed to discipline and transform humans by sheer transmittance of knowledge, with *dressage*.”⁵⁴² Using *dressage* as a term for training or instructing highlights Tadić's way of thinking about the potential of technology and positivist science to turn people into “uncritical mass” as the discussion in the previous chapter has pointed out. In such circumstances, the potential of a human being to think rationally and critically, to their mind, completely diminishes. This way of thinking, as Tadić explained, also stemmed from the 'dark side' of the Enlightenment—the side of the Enlightenment in which “positive science became an authority for every philosophy.” Citing political philosopher Leo Strauss, Tadić argued that science was an element of philosophy or modern science that ‘succeeded,’ while “philosophy was the one that stood a defeat.”⁵⁴³

Thus, philosophical thinking, particularly in terms of humanist and critical thinking was in crisis not just in contemporary Western societies but also in socialist societies. Connected to that, the humanist intelligentsia's position in contemporary societies was also in crisis. Tadić's critique however had more to do with his interpretation of Lenin's approach to the intelligentsia, and the one-sided interpretation of Marx's critique of intellectualism. The

⁵⁴⁰ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 79

⁵⁴¹ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 79

⁵⁴² Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 79

⁵⁴³ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 80. He cited, Léo Strauss' *Droit naturel et Histoire* [Natural Right and History](1953).

worker's movement, as Tadić explained, ignored the critical function of intelligentsia in the context of forgetting that the critical function of the intelligentsia did not stop with the act of political takeover of power from the revolutionary party.⁵⁴⁴

The main argument of the text was that critical intellectuals must be taken seriously in a socialist society and that they must be given full freedom of expression. Yet he arrived at such a conclusion by starting with the previously mentioned, non-Marxist, and often conservative Socialist societies were supposed to “cultivate an environment that is anti-ideological” and in which “a free word”—which Tadić described to be a heritage of the Enlightenment, and the natural law critique of absolutist arbitrariness—could exist. Tadić emphasized the importance and power of critique of the “vile consciousness” to be a revolutionary heritage of the “entire humanity and a condition of social progress.”⁵⁴⁵ Philosophy was a discipline equipped with such critique, as Tadić put it: “In order for a human being to become a measure of all things,” philosophy was crucial.

The historical mistake as Tadić argued, was to equalize the activity of what he called “ephemeral political organizations (the proletarian state and communist party)” with the development of the world spirit, that is, historical progress. Thus, in socialist Yugoslavia, the dominant belief was that historical progress was a monopoly of the state and party and that while the state or personalities related to the party could make mistakes, they—as abstract entities—cannot, because they were the carriers of the “absolute knowledge.”⁵⁴⁶ There was a fine line between absolute knowledge and absolute power, Tadić argued. Absolute power aimed towards technical perfection, and valued predominantly efficacy. It “accepts intellectual activity only as a fabrication of myth about its infallibility.”⁵⁴⁷ The intelligentsia thus become a servant to the political apparatus. In such a spiritual and political climate, there was a total

⁵⁴⁴ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 83.

⁵⁴⁵ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 83.

⁵⁴⁶ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 83.

⁵⁴⁷ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 83.

disappearance of the critical “search for truth, and instead of revolutionary dialectics,” there was “a kingdom of political opportunism, lies, and hypocrisy.”⁵⁴⁸

With such characterization of the condition of Yugoslav socialist society, Tadić implicitly criticized the lack of democratic atmosphere and necessary tolerance in the system, in which the intellectuals either become apologetics of the existing system, or they engage with the uncontroversial issues of the society in order to “easily justify and survive the pointlessness of their existence.”⁵⁴⁹ The problem of the intelligentsia in socialism thus was a part of the wider problem of the “unfulfilled tasks of the socialist revolution.” Not even in Yugoslavia did socialist practice manage to escape political alienation, as Tadić assessed it.⁵⁵⁰

Conclusion

This chapter illustrated that the discussions on culture and national identity in Yugoslavia were often an interface for the debates regarding human rights. Among the *Praxis* philosophers, the notions of universalism and particularism were often not clearly defined. The issues of culture and national identity emerged in the 1960s, and while the notion of self-determination was crucial in the discussions concerning the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, these concerns were nevertheless related. *Praxis* intellectuals’ internationalism was mainly characterized by their intellectual orientation towards the Western countries. Moreover, the chapter showed how the crisis of philosophy was also connected to the intellectuals’ approaches to the role of the intelligentsia in socialism which they saw as being increasingly threatened by political power. They argued for the need to retain their autonomy, but also for the need of philosophical perspectives concerning the directions of development of the Yugoslav socialism. By the mid-1960s, the intellectuals had already started viewing the Yugoslav political system as alienating and as going astray from its promises and principles.

⁵⁴⁸ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 83.

⁵⁴⁹ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 84.

⁵⁵⁰ Ljubimor Tadić, “Inteligencija u socijalizmu [Intelligentsia in socialism],” *Filozofija*, No.1-2 (1967): 85.

As shown, philosophers like Ljubomir Tadić argued for the need to cultivate an “anti-ideological” environment that allows the free expression of ideas. The following chapter shows the radicalization of these demands in the context of the intellectual engagement of the New Left in the West and the student revolts in Yugoslavia.

Chapter IV: The Crisis of Society: Contrast Between the Principles and the Reality

This chapter focuses on the crisis of society and the Yugoslav system in general. It shows that the *Praxis* intellectuals intensified their critical approach to the socialist societies, moving closer to the critique of Yugoslav socialism as well. The promise of the LCY Program, and the Yugoslav Constitution, the principles proclaimed by the Party—democracy, self-government, human rights, and liberties— will be interpreted by the intellectuals as being more and more a ‘Potemkin village.’ Moreover, with the decentralization and the subsequent ‘crisis of reform,’ brought about unemployment, strikes, immigration to the Western countries, and as has been already discussed, the rise of national grievances and demands for more autonomy of the republics.

While the economic crisis was in the background, the intellectuals discussed at the Yugoslav sociological gatherings the existing ‘crisis of youth’, although prior to 1968, not directly pointing at Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, in their analyses, they unavoidably reflected on their own context as well. As the student movements and protests unfolded mainly in Western Europe, the *Praxis* intellectuals saw it as a way of ‘correcting’ the course of history—the leftist and Marxist ideas inspired the new generations for actions to transform their existing societies, which as we described before were characterized as technocratic, alienated, consumerist, and where ‘*homo consumicus*’ created an illusion of human emancipation and freedom. These societies were highly modernized, capitalist societies in which revolution should have occurred, but it ended up “wrongly” in, as the *Praxis* intellectuals often emphasized, “backward

Russia,” with no civic and democratic intellectual traditions. As discussed in Chapter Two, the intellectuals used the analyses of the Western advanced societies in their criticism of the Yugoslav reforms, which have started to move away from the promise of the revolution and of Yugoslav socialism which they viewed as representing human emancipation and realization of new humanism.

While the previous chapter (Chapter Three) looked at the intellectual debates on the issue of culture and humanism, as well as the approaches to the ‘national question’ in Yugoslavia, this chapter, in keeping these debates in the background looks more directly at the expressions of ‘crises’ in the Yugoslav society. Namely, these included the transnational purviews—Yugoslav intellectuals, not only *Praxis*, continuously looked at the student movements abroad, mainly in Western countries, and through the discussions on the ‘crisis of youth’ in the world, they also brought to the debates the question of generations, and for their own context, the question of the meaning of the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ left. The chapter also analyzes the more open criticisms of the practice of self-government in Yugoslavia, as well as the debates that stressed the importance of rethinking the role of the LCY in the self-governing society. At the same time, while conceptualizing intellectuals as ‘engaged’, the scope of engagement became more connected to politics as the crisis of society was becoming more expressed. By 1967, the intellectuals interpreted the LCY as an organization in ‘crisis’ as they saw its role becoming increasingly redundant and even hindering the democratic processes. The LCY still had the monolithic function in Yugoslav society (and while not yet explicitly calling it as such, the intellectuals regarded the Party to be an old remnant of the Bolshevik type of political organization). The chapter then delves into the 1968 discussions concerning the rights to assembly, which the Party sanctioned and thus overstepped its Constitution. Such steps by the Party were interpreted precisely as an authoritarian move by the critical intellectuals around *Praxis*. Moreover, the 1968 student demonstrations demanded the respect

of human rights not only based on the main principles of the Yugoslav Constitution but also tying it to the International Year of Human Rights, which marked the twentieth anniversary of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁵⁵¹ The student demonstrations in which some of the *Praxis* members actively participated, demanded the respect of the constitutionally granted rights (freedom of debate), the reduction of the large social and economic differences in the society, and the solution of the problems of unemployment.

In terms of chronology, the first part of the chapter analyses the period just before the 1968 crisis in Yugoslavia, during which intellectuals eagerly observed the student movements abroad, through their interactions with the intellectuals of the New Left coming to the Korčula Summer School, while the last part of the chapter looks at the 1968 student demonstrations in the country, and the ways in which they expressed some of the demands for human rights which combined social rights as well as the right to human dignity. The argument was that while the Constitution granted these rights to self-governing society, the Yugoslav leadership did not succeed in implementing them for the very reason that the main political origination in Yugoslavia, the LCY, was inherently archaic (preserving its Bolshevik character), and thus out of tune with the progress of self-government in Yugoslavia. The philosophers combined therefore their philosophical insights concerning dogmatic Marxist theory with the practical political criticism of the basic structures of Yugoslav socialism.

A New Phase in *Praxis*: Critique of Bureaucracy, Technocratism, and ‘Traditional’ Political Organizing

The economic reforms in Yugoslavia very quickly brought about disappointments, as historian Hrvoje Klasić describes it, even among the reform-oriented politicians.⁵⁵² Those who opposed the reforms and decentralization in the country were called ‘conservatives.’ Generationally

⁵⁵¹ *Jun-Lipanj 1968, Dokumenti* [June 1968, Documents] *Praxis* (Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, Zagreb, 1968), 87.

⁵⁵² Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 26.

speaking, as Hrvoje Klasić argues, it was about the ‘old’ partisan cadres and dedicated communists who in economic and political decentralization saw mainly “disintegration of the country which they created in the war.”⁵⁵³ At the same time, while the reforms were introduced (withering away of the state, decentralization, self-government), the monopoly of the party and the importance of Tito were the biggest “halts to all serious changes, which would bring into Yugoslavia genuine democracy.”⁵⁵⁴

From the economic reform of 1965 until the end of 1968, there were 631 strikes.⁵⁵⁵ The economic crisis was on the table, with the 1968 student demonstrations shaking socialist Yugoslavia for the first time to such an extent. As we will see, the growing criticisms of the intellectuals regarding the ‘contradictions’ of the system were becoming more pressing and challenging to the political leadership and the Yugoslav governing organizations.

The editorial of the journal *Praxis*, in its first issue of 1967, stated that “Marxist dogmatism can sometimes be more damaging than the open anti-Marxism,” implying that Marxist thought, in order to be a thought for ‘life’ as it was proclaimed by the leadership, should not serve as a “substitute for independent thinking.”⁵⁵⁶ More importantly, in this context, *Praxis* reiterated its role in the Yugoslav socialist society, as well as its position concerning the contemporary developments in the world as well. To be able to have a fruitful dialogue “about the basic problems of the contemporary world and human beings,” it was crucial to also include non-Marxists, and “even anti-Marxists, all of whom are ready to openly and honestly speak about the important questions of our time.”⁵⁵⁷ In their view, *Praxis* therefore stood for the creation of a democratic platform, an arena in which different ideas and ideologies

⁵⁵³ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 26.

⁵⁵⁴ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 28.

⁵⁵⁵ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 28.

⁵⁵⁶ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 4.

⁵⁵⁷ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 4.

could co-exist in order to find the best solution of a problem of a human being in the given moment. In their view, they were helping develop participatory democracy in the realm of ideas, where different, sometimes controversial opinions would not be sanctioned, but would be given their right to ‘defend’ themselves through philosophical arguments.

To their mind, this was the only way to fight against the dogmatism in Marxist thought, dogmatism which had brought about the stagnation or crisis in the development of Marxist ideas in contemporary socialist societies. In 1967, the *Praxis* editorial emphasized their dedication to fighting against socialist conservatism, bureaucratism, and etatism, with the aim of developing “social self-governing, humanist socialism, and creative Marxism.” At the same time, they acknowledged the existence of criticism against the journal—namely that the journal, without attention, also gave a platform to ‘dangerous’ ideas and positions in socialist Yugoslavia—bourgeois liberalism, revisionism, anarchism—supported also the ideological disorientation, and thus helped the others by also falling itself into “abstract humanism, anarcho-liberalism, Austro-Marxism, and even anti-communism.”⁵⁵⁸ The *Praxis* editorial rejected these criticisms as lacking any basis, arguing that the main dangers that started emerging in Yugoslavia were in fact linked to bureaucratism, etatism, and dogmatism. These three aspects were thus the main point of criticism of the social critique for *Praxis*, and the journal called for the need to further and more deeply advance the critique of these phenomena.

Thus, during this period the intellectuals gathered around the journal *Praxis* started a new stage of their engagement, triggered by the problems emerging in the Yugoslav society (and thus more politically oriented)—‘the language crisis’ and the problem of nationalism, but also the direction of the development of Yugoslav society following the market reform which they saw as damaging not just the economy but also the very ‘character’ of the socialist self-management. The intellectuals around the journal *Praxis* claimed that in their philosophical

⁵⁵⁸ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 5.

and intellectual engagement, they would inquire to see “to what extent was the henceforth social critique useful and impactful, in what measure were the criticized phenomena resolved, and to what extent they stayed or received new forms which deserve to be analyzed and criticized in a novel way.”⁵⁵⁹ Their philosophical engagement, therefore, led them to continuously inquire into the phenomena found in Yugoslav society and to think about them through different perspectives.

The international dimension stayed at the core of their intellectual perspectives—to be able to discuss the problems in Yugoslavia, as they claimed, “we need to see the experiences of international socialism.”⁵⁶⁰ That is, they saw that the main characteristic of contemporary socialism was the tendency of growing bureaucratism and technocratism. They argued that technocratism should not be seen as unavoidable, and the only way of developing societies. Instead, they argued for the need to explore other alternatives of social development. The problem of bureaucratism and technocratism, in their mind, was an acute one, and not sufficiently dealt with, especially its consequences. However, the political leadership saw this as already solved. Moreover, instead of seeing the existence of dogmatic Marxism as solved, they claimed that these problems became even more complex, giving themselves and the journal “an even more difficult and responsible task.”⁵⁶¹

Rudi Supek, in his “Technocratic scientism and socialist humanism,” posed the following questions which captured some of the main lines of their intellectual engagement and the problems that they discussed:

Would the progressive rationalization of social life bring about the new infrastructure in which the liberated human talent will dance in “free time” [*slobodno vreme*], or would they strengthen the domination of one technobureaucratic “managerial” militaristic image? Will it not be the case that the bigger centralization of the production functions, planning, and information gathering will

⁵⁵⁹ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 5.

⁵⁶⁰ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 5.

⁵⁶¹ Editorial, “Na početku novoga godišta [At the beginning of the new year],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 5.

give birth to a new Leviathan, which will exclude the democratic participation of citizens from the questions important in their lives?⁵⁶²

These were just some of the questions that either captured the optimism of the technobureaucrats or the pessimism of the humanists, represented by *Praxis*. Some of the characteristics of the period were the expansion and acceleration of knowledge and its application in the form of technique, in the progressive “rationalization of the entire social life and social values, in the scientific organization of production and management of social works.”⁵⁶³ Universalism which Supek described as being in the very nature of scientific and technical rationalism, at the same time “annihilates the old ideologies inherited from the nineteenth century, as they have in themselves irrational or eschatological moments (from the bourgeois liberalism and nationalism to proletarian Marxism).”⁵⁶⁴ The ideology as Supek explained was becoming exhausted, and here he referred to Daniel Bell and his book *End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, which was often referenced by the Yugoslav intellectuals. In brief, Bell, a sociologist teaching at the University of Columbia, discussed the “exhaustion of the political ideology” of communism—which he saw both as a result of Stalinist ‘excess’ but also of essential changes in ‘classical’ capitalism.

Namely, the ‘demystification’ was one of the modes of thinking among the *Praxis* intellectuals, as can be seen in the criticism of the etatistic type of socialism in Svetozar Stojanović’s text “The etatistic myth of socialism.” Stojanović argued that after many decades of “difficult crisis,” in 1967, it was clear that there was “a renaissance of Marxism. As a phoenix, Marxism is again born from the ashes, although he had firsthand many times

⁵⁶² Rudi Supek, “Tehnokratski scijentizam i socijalistički humanizam. Nekoliko ideja o jednoj neiscrpoj I aktuelnoj temi, [Technocratic scientism and socialist humanism. A few ideas on an inexhaustible and current topic],“ *Praxis* No.1-2 (1967): 7–8.

⁵⁶³ Rudi Supek, “Tehnokratski scijentizam i socijalistički humanizam. Nekoliko ideja o jednoj neiscrpoj I aktuelnoj temi, [Technocratic scientism and socialist humanism. A few ideas on an inexhaustible and current topic],“ *Praxis* No.1-2 (1967): 7–8.

⁵⁶⁴ Rudi Supek, “Tehnokratski scijentizam i socijalistički humanizam. Nekoliko ideja o jednoj neiscrpoj I aktuelnoj temi, [Technocratic scientism and socialist humanism. A few ideas on an inexhaustible and current topic],“ *Praxis* No.1-2 (1967): 8–9.

autopsy.”⁵⁶⁵ Stojanović, like his colleagues from *Praxis* (and echoing Bell), argued that Marxism as a critique of capitalism faced deadlock, insofar as it was impossible to continue its intellectual innovation as a critique of capitalism. Thus, he argued that Marxism can only be developed further as a critique of socialist or “quasi-socialist movement” and society. Stojanović was hesitant to call the existing contemporary socialist movement ‘socialist’ for the very reason that to his mind they did not reach the point in which they could ‘deserve’ the name, except perhaps Yugoslav socialism, which, however, he also started to regard as ‘deviating’ from the right path (especially after the economic reforms). We can see this in the language he was using when speaking about the renewal of Marxism in the societies “that are called socialist.” These societies, including his own, relegated this renewal of Marxist thought to the academic and philosophical problems, yet they did not yet allow for the “critical application of the theoretical results on their own societies.” What he implied was the limited freedom of debate and critical rethinking of Marxism (which was tolerated in Yugoslavia on the level of the academic discussions)—that is, while the philosophers could critically approach some issues of the Yugoslav society, the application of their ‘findings’ in practice, was ignored and pushed aside.⁵⁶⁶ Stojanović and his colleagues argued for the lack of space for the open and critical discussion of the socialist self-management, and through their contributions in *Praxis* demanded for the space where they could also engage in actual and practical matters of the development of Yugoslav self-government.

As philosophers and sociologists working and living in socialism, they believed that they had an important position in the society to discover and disclose problems that are hindering socialist development. More specifically, as Stojanović claimed in his article, they were supposed to reveal what he called the “biggest ideological myth of the twentieth

⁵⁶⁵ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 30.

⁵⁶⁶ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 30.

century—the etatistic myth of socialism.”⁵⁶⁷ This myth was at the core problem of contemporary socialist societies, because, according to Stojanović, “the degradation of the entire communist movement and the revolution established etatism as a new class.”⁵⁶⁸ This etatism was the oligarch type that was legitimizing itself through socialism.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, instead of criticizing the capitalist regimes, genuine Marxists and communists were first supposed to disclose this ‘myth’ and then show the ‘reality.’ This was their theoretical and practical duty, according to Stojanović.

Stojanović’s theoretical inspiration were the analyses of Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse, who argued that the so-called socialist societies (here etatistic socialisms) were societies that were exploiting their own citizens; hence, as Stojanovic noted, “they [Fromm and Marcuse] rightly do not wish to call them socialist.”⁵⁷⁰ Yet, he disagreed with both Fromm and Marcuse who, due to their “theoretical inertia” did not manage to disentangle their theoretical insights from Marx’s theoretical division of socialism and capitalism, and that because of that, they tended to call them “state capitalist.” Stojanović disagreed as he argued that the existing ‘socialist’ societies were not capitalist. For Stojanović, it was more likely that the “contemporary capitalism will transform into etatism,” than—as Marcuse and Fromm argued—that the etatistic system will be mixed with capitalism.⁵⁷¹

Grgo Gamulin (1910–1997), an art historian and literary critic who would in 1971 become a prominent member of the Croatian national movement (Croatian Spring), approached the apparent crisis of socialism in Yugoslavia in a more open manner in his contribution “Osnovno proturječje naše situacije” [The basic contradiction of our situation]. He articulated the problem shared by *Praxis*—the problem of the contradiction between the system of self-

⁵⁶⁷ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 30.

⁵⁶⁸ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 30.

⁵⁶⁹ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 30–31.

⁵⁷⁰ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 33.

⁵⁷¹ Svetozar Stojanović, “Etatisticki mit socijalizma [The etatist myth of socialism],” *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 33.

government and the LCY, which he saw not as not a problem of the program of the LCY, or ideas propagated in it, but of structure.⁵⁷² Gamulin's assessment was that the self-government in Yugoslavia was only barely achieved in the 'base,' it was still in its inception in a way, and the fact that it did not arrive, or even started to move towards the 'top' (the Party), showed the unfinished project of the self-governing system.

Gamulin connected this insufficient implementation of self-government to the social conflicts in Yugoslavia (he mainly meant the conflicts that started to appear in the 1960s and were linked to national identities, but also other social problems). He did not want to call for, as he noted, "the return of the multiparty system" but wished to define the issue of "monolithicity" in Yugoslav society.⁵⁷³ His main interest was to find the modality that could help resolve the existing social conflicts in Yugoslavia, and thus asked whether socialist thought and structure (as expressed in the Yugoslav constitution, its laws, and also through the self-governing system) were strong enough, historically grounded (both in the material base but also in the consciousness of the people), so that they could "withstand the criticism and dialogue in order to resolve the struggle."⁵⁷⁴

During 1968, Gamulin's question showed the weakness of the structures to deal with the challenges. *Praxis's* intellectuals examined the relationship between the 'state' and the 'party' in socialism. From their perspectives, the problem of state and party was fundamental, as it could also be implicitly seen in Stojanović's earlier text on etatism. Discussing this issue, Predrag Vranicki, claimed that the main thesis put forth by the most important Marxists (next to Marx and Engels, Lenin, Gramsci, Lukács, and, as Vranicki added, Tito as well), was that the state must wither away in socialism (as was already announced by the Party in its *Program*),

⁵⁷² Grgo Gamulin, "Osnovno proturječje naše situacije [The basic contradiction of our situation]," *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 113.

⁵⁷³ Grgo Gamulin, "Osnovno proturječje naše situacije [The basic contradiction of our situation]," *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 114.

⁵⁷⁴ Grgo Gamulin, "Osnovno proturječje naše situacije [The basic contradiction of our situation]," *Praxis* no.1-2 (1967): 115.

and that party, which is not the tutor of the working class, and not a ‘carrier’ of socialist transformations, but the avantgarde and the leading political force in socialism.⁵⁷⁵ While the Yugoslav leadership in its Constitution, program, and laws acknowledged this goal, Vranicki returned to the basic issue—namely, that the development of socialism started first in ‘underdeveloped’ Russia with “weak democratic and bourgeois traditions.”⁵⁷⁶ And while according to Vranicki, Lenin propagated the idea of the withering away of the state despite this fact, and while he was also in favor of the achievement of the self-governance of the working human beings and the democratism in the party, thus tolerating of the individual or group opposition—the “‘era of Stalinism’ brought some of the already existing processes and conceptions—etatic bureaucratic and non-democratic ones—to their final expression.”⁵⁷⁷ Vranicki, while acknowledging Lenin’s ‘progressive views,’ nevertheless still argued that they carried in themselves the ‘seeds’ of Stalinism precisely due to the fact that they existed in a political environment with weak and undeveloped democratic traditions.

While it was almost impossible to envision a socialist democracy in the East, for Vranicki it was important that the “Western democratic countries gained the presence of the socialist ‘forces’ and that their parties started to entertain the idea of the self-governing socialism.”⁵⁷⁸ At the same time, socialist systems were becoming increasingly volatile such that, in some countries “contradictions and antagonisms” were already in full swing, while “in others they had just started to emerge.”⁵⁷⁹ From *Praxis* intellectuals’ perspectives, the socialist countries and the socialist parties in the West, ought to realize that self-government was not just some “far-away stage of the development of socialism... but the essence and meaning of

⁵⁷⁵ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 643

⁵⁷⁶ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 644.

⁵⁷⁷ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 644.

⁵⁷⁸ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 646.

⁵⁷⁹ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 647.

revolutionary transformation, the beginning of the new historical epoch and the permanent socialist revolutionary task.”⁵⁸⁰

Regarding the Yugoslav problems and dilemmas at the time, Vranicki acknowledged the partial success of the conception of self-government in Yugoslavia and praised its codification in the important state and political acts, namely the Yugoslav Constitution and Program of the LCY. However, the important aspect mentioned before—that is the role of the Party within the framework of the development of self-governed socialism—was still to be seriously addressed. He argued that without the strengthening of democracy, democratic decision-making, the struggle of opinion and interests, and the forming of the majority and minority around any important question, the self-governing processes are impossible.⁵⁸¹

Vranicki, as well as his *Praxis* colleagues, saw the Party as an old remnant of the Bolshevik type of political organization. To them, it was crucial to solve this issue, insofar as they saw the Party as an archaic organization, lagging behind the development of the society, both in theory and practice, being thus even a hindrance to the developing of a self-governing socialist society. The democratization of the Party could not just mean, as Vranicki pointed out, the possibility and the right of having one’s own opinion in the processes of decision-making. While this was an important, constitutional right—that is, right to one’s own opinion—the actual respect of this right would be allowing the minority to publicly engage, defend, and argue for its own opinion, which is in contrast to that of the majority.

Vranicki’s point thus was to suggest that to affirm the ideas of individuals and groups, who hold the opinions of the minority, without demanding from them to give up these ideas and opinions, just because the “majority, in the given moment does not agree with them.”⁵⁸² In this way, Vranicki returned to the already mentioned problem of the ‘struggle of opinions’ and

⁵⁸⁰ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 647.

⁵⁸¹ Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 648–649.

⁵⁸² Predrag Vranicki, “Država i partija u socijalizmu [State and party in socialism],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 650.

the way in which this ‘struggle’ was supposed to be organized. Vranicki argued for the right to defend one’s own views in the debates, notwithstanding whether these ideas and opinions are found controversial or problematic for the majority. In a way, he argued for the rights of the minority, in terms of ideas and ideologies held by this minority.

For Stojanović, the Yugoslav system did not truly respect minority rights, insofar as it was a mixture of self-government in the base and a strong etatistic structure above it. He argued that the LCY needed to go through a deep transformation and adjustment to social self-government. The LCY could only exit its own crisis through essential democratization. The system of social self-government was impossible to develop on the basis of the political monopoly represented by the LCY, in which people of socialist beliefs that are not communists, according to Stojanović, did not have a possibility of gaining any real influence in the political process. Similarly, Mladen Čaldarović put forth that the most important task of Yugoslav socialism in their current moment was to pose the question of the reorganization of the LCY. It was about whether the working class would via its “most progressive institution—self-governing—in fact, become a subject in the decision making and what is the role of LCY in the system of self-governing.”⁵⁸³

Just like Gamulin, Čaldarović did not argue for the establishment of more parties—since “the Yugoslav revolution would be damaged by that,” as he noted, and especially because these parties would be based on nationality (creating thus a six-party system), which would bring about the demise of Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, he argued that while the critique of the multiparty system in Yugoslavia was important for the above reason, it was crucial to use “some of the important benefits of the multiparty system.” Most importantly, as he noted, the multiparty system was more democratic than the one-party system. Indeed, as he argued, there

⁵⁸³ “Diskusija o predavanju Predraga Vranickog. Učesnici: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić i P. Vranicki [Discussion about the presentation of Predrag Vranicki. Participants: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić and P. Vranicki],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 654.

had been many criticisms of the one-party system in the name of no-party pluralism in Yugoslavia. *Praxis* intellectuals wished to create space for the no-party pluralism in Yugoslavia, which as Stojanović agreed, was still vague and not theoretically developed.⁵⁸⁴ Čaldarević, however, claimed that the question was posed wrongly since it was not “about whether the organization of the LCY will be tied to different territories, or whether the LCY will be relocated to the labor organization.” The main issue was whether the working class would in fact be a decision-making subject in Yugoslavia.⁵⁸⁵

Youth and the Student Movements in the World: Humanism and New Values as a Response to Social Stagnations

The concepts of ‘youth’ and ‘generations’ became important aspects of the reflection on Yugoslav society among the intellectuals in the mid-1960s. Following the protests unfolding in Western Europe, the intellectuals in Yugoslavia saw it as the corrective path of the history of Marxism—instead of the backward countries, the Marxist and leftist ideas have been found among the youth of the most advanced and well-developed countries. At the same time, they argued that the majority of these protests did not have a well-developed agenda and a program to bring about the real transformation of society. The movements, however, confirmed the crisis in the Western technologically advanced societies, proving the claim of *Praxis* intellectuals that material aspects were not sufficient for the liberation of human beings. Despite the material abundance which even allowed the workers to participate (workers could buy a car, go on holidays) the “spiritual” poverty existed, and the younger generations expressed their rebellion against the contemporary societies through worldwide protests.

⁵⁸⁴ “Diskusija o predavanju Predraga Vranickog. Učesnici: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić i P. Vranicki [Discussion about the presentation of Predrag Vranicki. Participants: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić and P. Vranicki],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 654.

⁵⁸⁵ “Diskusija o predavanju Predraga Vranickog. Učesnici: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić i P. Vranicki [Discussion about the presentation of Predrag Vranicki. Participants: S. Stojanović, D. Grlić, M. Čaldarović, Đ. Šušnjić and P. Vranicki],” *Praxis* No. 5-6 (1967): 654.

Some theoretical perspectives regarding the youth in Yugoslavia and beyond were captured in the Yugoslav Sociological Association's journal, *Sociologija*, which published the contributions of the planned meeting of the sociologists of Yugoslavia in Split, on February 15–17, 1968. This was the first Yugoslav sociological conference with the topic; the idea was to “realistically and critically approach youth.” The editorial board of the journal included some *Praxis* members, and the main editors at the time were Zagorka Golubović from *Praxis* and Miroslav Pečuljić.⁵⁸⁶

A jurist and sociologist at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, and one of the founders of modern sociology in Serbia, Radomir Lukić (1914–1999) framed the crisis of youth in 1967 as a worldwide phenomenon.⁵⁸⁷ He claimed while it was common knowledge that there was a crisis of youth worldwide, it was nevertheless difficult to precisely define what is meant by this crisis. In his contribution he wished to address this issue, by moving beyond the commonsense arguments that the crisis of youth meant

being asocial or antisocial, that the youth was removed from the society, and that it does not feel itself as being a part of it, that it is acting against the social norms, rebelling against society, that it does not accept its task in a society nor that it is trying to promote the progress of the society, that the youth is developing criminality, violence, other delinquent forms of behavior, that it is destroying family, marriage, love....⁵⁸⁸

While some of these might have been the case, as Lukić agreed, it was nevertheless more important to argue that the crisis of youth was a recurring and cyclical phenomenon. That is, every period in history had its own crisis of youth, which was expressed either as a weak or a strong crisis. The main point was that the crisis of youth was not a unique phenomenon of the 1960s and characteristic of the postwar period. Instead, the crisis of youth according to Lukić

⁵⁸⁶ Editorial board: Miroslav Pečuljić, Zagorka Golubović, Aleksandar Todorović, Vlada Milanović, Josip Županov, Zdravko Mlinar, Ivan Kuvačić, Firdus Džinić, Ruža Petrović, Zoran Vidaković.

⁵⁸⁷ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 28.

⁵⁸⁸ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 27.

was a constant and unavoidable social phenomenon, because “this is at the very heart, at the very nature of society and youth itself.”⁵⁸⁹

Moreover, this crisis was also a worldwide phenomenon; there was no other country and society in which it did not appear and in which it was not discussed. Lukić however pointed out that it was clear that the “strongest crisis” was “hitting the most developed countries,” which were according to Lukić, “the carriers of today’s culture, which can be marked as ‘technological,’ and which was marked by industrialization, urbanization, robotization and similar.”⁵⁹⁰ The less developed countries also experienced a crisis of the youth, including the Yugoslav society. While there were many similarities, he also pointed out that every crisis has its own characteristics.

Lukić’s theory of crisis followed the Marxist account of history, where he referenced the changes of the values. A crisis thus arises then when a society, or a part of it, rejects the old values, and aims to replace them with completely opposing values. If the rejection of these values is intense, the crisis will be stronger, and one would feel as if it is the ‘end of the world’ [*smak sveta*].⁵⁹¹ In 1967, it was clear, as Lukić argued, that the crisis was much stronger than it was before, and that it existed in every society since every society was changing and transforming. In non-developed societies there was, as Lukić argued, a “normal crisis of youth,” that is, the crisis that had always existed in history, that meant the replacement of ‘old’ with ‘new,’ while in the developed societies, existed a type of ‘nihilist crisis—the old is being destroyed, but it was not changed with anything new, there is no creation of new value

⁵⁸⁹ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 27.

⁵⁹⁰ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 28.

⁵⁹¹ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 29.

systems.”⁵⁹² This sort of crisis was not just against the old society, it was also against society as such. It was a society that was destroying itself.⁵⁹³

In order for a society to function, and to develop without crisis, it was not enough to accept the culture—the knowledge of culture and will to act according to demands, nor it was the participation in the social processes, or differently, socialization. It was necessary that human beings spontaneously act culturally and perform their roles as society demands. The development of such inclination of a human, on the basis of which he or she will spontaneously, naturally, and always and reliably, act the way in which society wishes, according to Lukić, was the development of his or her social character and social personality.⁵⁹⁴

Yet the nihilist crisis existing in the developed countries brought down the human being to the status of an animal. The human being had ceased to think about anything or wish for anything. The position of this type of human being “is a complete passivity, because life itself does not mean anything valuable.”⁵⁹⁵ This type of youth did not accept any responsibility and role, neither in labor, nor family, nor wider or narrower social community. For Lukić this represented the apolitical character of the youth since every way of doing politics was rejected. “Fatherland, society, nation, ideology are ridiculed,” he claimed, and the activities of the young generations represented the real expression of the “end of ideology.”⁵⁹⁶

Moreover, the nihilist type of crisis also disregarded any importance of the community: “the ‘other’ is hell,” as Lukić paraphrased Sartre’s famous claim, “Hell is other people,” in his 1944 play *No Exit*. Instead of personality, which was connected to the community, there was

⁵⁹² Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 29.

⁵⁹³ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 29.

⁵⁹⁴ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 30.

⁵⁹⁵ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 30-31.

⁵⁹⁶ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 31.

“just one huge and absolute ‘Me.’”⁵⁹⁷ This also included the lack of any responsibility in terms of morality and moral consciousness. As Lukić put it, “‘I’ has swallowed the world, it is lonely, there are no other people for this ‘I,’ so it cannot feel any responsibility.”⁵⁹⁸

Lukić tied this discussion of youth to the problem of culture. The modern technical culture reduced humans to things in the processes of labor and thus in other social processes. While the modern human being was not deprived of human rights and was “officially viewed as a human being,” still, as Lukić argued, at the very core “it was a thing.” Such analyses, Lukić found mainly in Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, David Riesman, and C. Wright Mills, as well as Marx. The reification of humans in the contemporary community, a theme often discussed among *Praxis* intellectuals, was based, according to Lukić, on the destruction of “the organic human community,” which was to him “either family or the wider community based on labor which was communal and social, and at the same time personal for every member.”⁵⁹⁹

Ivan Kuvačić (1923–2014), a sociologist from Zagreb and member of the advisory board of *Praxis*, spoke about the importance of the change of generations but also expanded this theoretical approach by adding the socially-psychological research done primarily by the Chicago School of Sociology.⁶⁰⁰ This approach emphasized the wish for reciprocation in personal relations, as well as the wish to be accepted within a group.⁶⁰¹ Kuvačić argued that starting from the said wishes and tendencies, the representatives of this school gave a theoretical basis for the understanding of the social disorganization of youth from their

⁵⁹⁷ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 31.

⁵⁹⁸ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 31.

⁵⁹⁹ Radomir Lukić, “Osnovni problem omladine: podruštvljenje, usvajanje kulture, vaspitanje [The basic problem of youth: socialization, adoption of culture, upbringing],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 36.

⁶⁰⁰ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 45.

⁶⁰¹ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 45.

transition from the patriarchal to the industrial system of life.⁶⁰² They showed that in these conditions, the new values and new personal needs came into conflict with the old. This also brings about changes of ethical ideals: “Moderate asceticism of the personality, which was perfectly fitting the family and parochial solidarity, was now taken by the strong hedonist tendencies.”⁶⁰³

Kuvačić asserted that the youth had always been the ‘head’ of the revolutionary movements in history. As he claimed, the youth’s “uncrushed defiance in the literary canon is best expressed in the image of Prometheus.” This was a position, as Kuvačić explained, of the self-conscious resistance, and sacrifices in the name of the better future of a human being.⁶⁰⁴ For Kuvačić, the Promethean model could be used to understand the youth movement in the nonenveloped countries. As he claimed “the youth of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the black youth of the USA, had entered the phase of the creation of the avant-gardist fighting units, which are the carriers of critique (of the weapons) of everything existing.”⁶⁰⁵

Kuvačić pointed out at the “historical role of the dialectics of violence” that was expressed in these movements and argued that in contrast to the existing analyses warning that the ‘revolutionary fancy’ is not always “an appropriate leader in the historical movement,” it was the case that the symbol of Che Guevara was showing itself “more and more as a guidepost.”⁶⁰⁶ In contrast to the capitalist, Western countries, Kuvačić argued that the youth in socialist countries faced a very different problem as they had moved beyond the phase of

⁶⁰² Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 45–46.

⁶⁰³ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 45–46.

⁶⁰⁴ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 46.

⁶⁰⁵ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

⁶⁰⁶ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

“revolutionary creativity and transformation, and thus had entered the stage of stabilization.”⁶⁰⁷

The youths in these countries were now preoccupied with the creation of the new system, and thus they did not need “free, uninhibited personality” as much as they needed the people who would be the carriers of specific roles in the society.”⁶⁰⁸ For that reason, the youth confronted the old generations who had believed that the important aspects were already achieved, and thus that one needed to strengthen the existing positions. Kuvačić, just like his colleagues from *Praxis*, did not adhere to the idea of ‘stability’ or the idea that the revolution was ‘finished.’ While the ‘old’ generation believed that the important elements of the Yugoslav revolution had already been achieved, the opposite was the case. Kuvačić criticized the existing idea of leadership that from his perspective rejected the idea that Marxism is indeed the critique of all existing. He argued that the leadership’s starting point of their analyses was “not a human being or human’s destiny, but the social role as a unity of the social system.” He emphasized that the leadership was thinking mainly in terms of pragmatism, and needed the youth primarily as included in the system of production and life, and not as a carrier of novel ideas and values necessary for the development of socialist life. At the same time, the urban modernization of production sought a bigger differentiation in pay and positions, and the “carriers” of this trend were predominantly the young generations of highly qualified workers, engineers, and technicians, who were aiming towards a higher standard and were not burdened with the remnants of the revolutionary eschatology.⁶⁰⁹ The youth in socialist countries was becoming the most important grounding of the technical orientation of social development, as they accepted their roles in the framework of the system as long as that gave them the possibility to buy cars and other objects of a high standard.

⁶⁰⁷ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

⁶⁰⁸ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 48.

⁶⁰⁹ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

Kuvačić viewed the youth as completely devoid of any humanist interests, such that the “hunger” for material objects among them was so huge that it brought about the crisis of theater and other forms of “high culture” in Yugoslavia. These views were essentially critiques of the insufficient implementation of the ideals and principles proclaimed by Yugoslav socialism. Instead of nurturing youth for ‘freedom,’ the Yugoslav society was creating ‘consumers’ not too different than was the case in the West. However, while the youth in the West was able to realize the ‘spiritual poverty’ brought about by consumerism and other aspects of modern, technological societies, the socialist youth saw its role as participating in the ‘building of the society,’ where the main accent was placed on the development of the economy. Thus, this created the situation, as Kuvačić argued, where the youth was becoming a new group of society that was technocratically oriented, not humanistically.

This type of youth in a socialist society was an accompanying phenomenon of mechanized industrial production, “which created alienated, partial human beings.” This created a society of that held no social responsibilities, nor duties, as “nobody wants anything from him to decide on anything, and if one does want, it comes to the fact that this decision-making process is illusory.”⁶¹⁰ This type of youth was becoming increasingly anti-participatory, similarly to what Lukić said, the youth was turning out to be apolitical and thus not ‘nurtured’ for self-governing society. When the value system was such that the importance of cars and televisions was seen as above the importance of humanistic ideals, as Kuvačić argued, this contradiction was at the core of the Yugoslav self-governed society. This was also the main factor of the stagnation and dissolution of the revolutionary youth organizations, their inability to identify with and show solidarity to the liberation movements in the “backward countries.”⁶¹¹

⁶¹⁰ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

⁶¹¹ Ivan Kuvačić, “Teorijski pristup za shvacanje suvremene omladine [Theoretical approach to understanding contemporary youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1968): 47.

While the situation looked grim among the youth in socialist societies, the intellectuals eagerly followed the events in the Western countries. Bogdan Denitch (1929–2016, born as Denić), an American sociologist who was affiliated with *Praxis* and who was an important ‘mediator’ for some of the intellectuals in their visits to the universities at the United States, wrote about the New Left and the American youth. He referenced American sociologist and political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset, who argued that the students were in a fundamental disagreement with the commercial civilization, oriented towards material success. The youth also disagreed with their parents because they viewed them as conformists. However, as Denitch agreed, the new left, while seeing itself as revolutionary, did not have any envisioned political plans to come to power. What the new left was protesting was precisely this part of bureaucratization and depersonalization of the modern industrial society. It rejected the Marxist and workers’ movement to the degree that it saw it as becoming bureaucratized, although the new left had many shared goals with Marxism and the workers’ movement, as Denitch noted.

Because the new left was protesting the tendencies that were communal for any industrial society, Denitch predicted that a similar thing would occur among the youth in other industrial societies; that is, in socialist ones as well. Between generations, there was a “real barrier making their understanding more and more difficult.”⁶¹² The generation which had fought for their material needs, could “hardly now understand how it is that their kids saw this struggle as empty and senseless.”

Denitch also commented on the utopian nature of the new left. The new left was utopian because the students were projecting a vision of a good society—“a society in which the Vietnam war was impossible and in which... love between people was becoming more possible.”⁶¹³ In their visions, the new left moved away from the previous left-wing movements,

⁶¹² Bogdan Denitch, “Nova levica i američka omladina [New left and the American youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1(1968): 241.

⁶¹³ Bogdan Denitch, “Nova levica i američka omladina [New left and the American youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1(1968): 242.

which was occupied more with the questions of power and strategy, to one that movement that was even earlier in terms of history and which was able to project the dream about one society that was morally good.⁶¹⁴ At the same time, these student movements were also utopian because they did not manage to build a bridge between their dream and contemporary American society. As Denitch emphasized what was already claimed above, the youth in the the USA did not have a program that could be used in the transition from the current society into the new society. There was a hope that the new left could revive the Marxist left and bring “back its vision and humanity,” which the intellectuals saw as lacking. At the same time, the Marxist left would also be beneficial insofar as it would be capable of “directing the non-used idealism of this generation towards more fundamental work and serious political organizations and theory that are necessary for the wide social transformation.”⁶¹⁵ Only through such synthesis, as Denitch claimed, could the “helplessness of the old and the new left” be solved in the United States.

Milan Komnenić (1940–2015), who was a student at the time, echoed some of the main aspects of the student movement in the world, however writing just very briefly after the June 1968 protests at the University in Belgrade. His comments, while referring mainly to the ‘western’ student protests, should thus be read in the light of his reflection on the Yugoslav 1968 crisis as well. Komnenić argued that the Western youth organizations were increasingly cooperating with the youth of the socialist world, yet there were still some misunderstandings among them. The youth leaders could not manage to surpass the “ideological dilemmas” of the members who had different ideological orientations. The distrust towards the “new rebels,” had as a consequence a hesitant and very unclear position of the communist parties, especially the French Communist Party, which affirmed to Komnenić that the communist parties were no

⁶¹⁴ Bogdan Denitch, “Nova levica i američka omladina [New left and the American youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1(1968): 252.

⁶¹⁵ Bogdan Denitch, “Nova levica i američka omladina [New left and the American youth],” *Sociologija* Vol. 10, No. 1(1968): 252.

longer sites of progressive forces. Komnenić, also reflected on the recent student demonstrations in Yugoslavia, arguing about its specificity, its “ideological purity towards Marxist ideals, self-government, and democracy.”⁶¹⁶

In Yugoslavia thus as well, the student movement was gaining strength, and this also had to do with the fact that the number of students was growing, but also the fact that the educated people and intelligentsia were gaining influence in the society.⁶¹⁷ His approach was very different to that of Kuvačić one year earlier, as Komnenić argued that in the majority of the industrial countries, only a handful of students were politically active and that the majority did not believe in the necessity of force and violence. Nevertheless, the “reformists and revolutionaries” in these countries managed to join their forces in order to transform the politics and also society in the majority of the European countries, the USA, as well as Japan.

Jean-Paul Sartre called these students “detonators”—they went completely against the consumer society and shook them to its core. Yet they were not like the previous “Luddite movements,” the nineteenth-century English textile workers who rioted against the automated machinery that was replacing them. Instead of rejecting entirely the benefits of their consumer societies, these students “wished to overcome spiritual emptiness and political apathy.”⁶¹⁸ Moreover, some analyses argued, as Komnenić pointed out, that the physical struggle with the police was a sign of the intellectual renaissance within a society. In Paris, West Berlin, Rome, Mexico, and Warsaw, there was a combination of new ideas and old methods: the philosophy and ideas of Marcuse and Bloch, and ideas from the period of 1948.⁶¹⁹ Marcuse, who was a philosophical inspiration of the angry students, Komnenić explained, argued that the students

⁶¹⁶ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 108.

⁶¹⁷ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 108.

⁶¹⁸ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 108.

⁶¹⁹ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 109.

did not attack only the old-fashioned structures at the universities, but also the entire social arrangement in which future and stability were based on “broad exploitation, brutal competition, and hypocritical morality.”⁶²⁰ The result of such a situation was not a revolution in the common sense of the word, but a combination of one people’s “general humanity and the encompassing movement of renewal.” It was a new meaning of revolution, which was a demand for more humane relations in all aspects of the state, its organs or political parties, and a demand to “find a cure that would stop the ‘removal’ of the public [*javnost*] from the political system and engagement.”⁶²¹

An issue connected with the crisis of youth, and the student movements which were its expression, was the crisis of classical academism. What were the causes of the crisis of classical academism? The issues at the European universities had their roots in the general dissatisfaction relating to the existing system of education. It was old-fashioned, and the youth wished that the university would help and assist them in their participation in the building of their societies. However, the problems of education and political problems were often entangled. The students argued that the system of education was a part of the political system and thus, they demanded changes in their societies. While the state recognized that the universities had started to be anarchic, it implemented reforms in education that were “adjusting the university to the short-sided needs of either state or private monopoly.” Komnenić pointed out that these reforms were in most cases reactionary and antidemocratic.⁶²²

Therefore, in the West, the universities faced social stagnation and limited political freedom, as they depended financially on the state and private monopoly. Komnenić pointed out that the crisis of classical academism was expressed in the fact that while the students

⁶²⁰ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 109.

⁶²¹ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 110.

⁶²² Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 111.

wished to participate in the self-government of the university, they barely had the chance as “the university government was protecting its Middle Ages hierarchical order.”⁶²³

Similarly to the above insights, Komnenić referenced David Riesman, who interpreted the student protests from the perspective of the generational struggle: the protests came out from the “spontaneity of the young generation, characterized by new human values, humanism, and authenticity.”⁶²⁴ As argued by sociologists, the youth wished to compensate for the stagnation—when they criticize their parents they do not do so because of the ideas in which their parents believe, but because of the fact that the parents stopped ‘realizing these ideals in practice.’”⁶²⁵ This is why, as Komnenić highlighted, the large number of student activists in the countries like the United States wished to show the existing contrast between the principles and reality.⁶²⁶ We can say that Komnenić also reflected on the Yugoslav student movements, insofar as they demanded among other things, the realization of the constitutional rights to equal conditions in education, but also the need to better the material position of the worker, and realize the human right to labor, implement genuine freedom of public debate, and so on.⁶²⁷ Moreover, as Komnenić implied by referring to the student protests abroad, the students sought the opening of the problems of democratization; they rebelled against ‘totalitarianism,’ authoritarianism, and the military, in favor of the inauguration of the “new humanism.” They wished, as Komnenić argued, not just to transform the universities but also to bring about new structures in society, a new hierarchy of values.⁶²⁸

⁶²³ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 112.

⁶²⁴ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 112.

⁶²⁵ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 115.

⁶²⁶ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 115.

⁶²⁷ *Jun-Lipanj 1968, Dokumenti* [June 1968, Documents] *Praxis* (Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, Zagreb, 1968), 88.

⁶²⁸ Milan Komnenić, “Studentski pokret u svetu 1968 [Student movement in the world 1968],” *Gledišta* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1969): 115.

1968 in Yugoslavia: The Demand for Constitutionally Granted (Human) Rights

The revolt of students in 1968 was triggered by the crisis of higher education and unsolved questions regarding the social and material position of the students. However, the students also raised many questions that “bothered the Yugoslav socialist community,”⁶²⁹ as articulated in the open letter of the collective at the Institute for International Politics and Economy which supported students’ demands.⁶³⁰ The most important demands included “a more consistent fight for the development of genuine socialist democracy in Yugoslavia, on the basis of self-governed relations and democracy of all social-political organizations, especially the LCY.”⁶³¹ According to the collective at the institute, the issue had to do also with the fact that the ‘forum’ type of work dominated, which was contrary to the decisions at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. There was a sense in which the LCY was not properly adjusted to the new conditions of work, and thus many leading party cadres were not at the level demanded by the contemporary processes.

The public discussion and dialogue within the LCY lacked on all levels. As the Committee expressed, “for us it would be natural that one revolutionary party constantly questions its own conception, using the practice as a corrective, and it is precisely this, as a method, which is not sufficiently used in Yugoslavia.”⁶³² They also agreed with the student demands concerning the deepening of social differences in Yugoslavia—therefore, the student movement put the social question as one of the key issues.

⁶²⁹ Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za medjunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

⁶³⁰ „Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za medjunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

⁶³¹ Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za medjunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

⁶³² Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za medjunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

In the context of large changes in the structures of the economy and the modernization of the Yugoslav economy, large changes in employment became necessary, yet the students and the open letter stated that the “socialist community must in time predict the effects of that and in time stop the negative social and political consequences which carry with them a high degree of unemployment.”⁶³³ Reflecting on the demonstrations, the Collective harshly condemned the application of violence and force on all sides, demanded the cancelation of the ban on assembly and demonstrations, condemned the unobjective information of the public via press and other media of information, while also condemning any expressions of anti-socialist tendencies, which they claimed “could be also an accompanying phenomenon of such events.”⁶³⁴

In 1968, the Korčula Summer School was also attended by League of Communists of Yugoslavia representatives, as was recorded by the report published for personal and internal use. The following was a reconstruction of the debates that occurred at the sessions, authored by a few authors, including Prvoslav Ralić, the author of *League of Communists and Socialist Humanism* (1967), who would go on to be director of the Marxist Centre of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia in the 1980s.

The Korčula Summer School in 1968 overlapped with the 150th anniversary of Karl Marx’s birth. Ernst Bloch repeated the *Praxis* intellectuals’ claim that Marxism could not be reduced to economy or to the interpretation of Marx—but “one ought to put real problems ahead in order to explicate the real diagnosis.”⁶³⁵ The point was thus to recognize first and

⁶³³ Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

⁶³⁴ Otvoreno pismo kolektiva Instituta za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 4. Jun, 1968 [Open letter from the staff of the Institute for International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, June 4, 1968],” *Republika* 1-31. 07. 1998., 45.

⁶³⁵ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],” 2. The report was for internal use, and it was handed to the Department for Information of Central Committee LCY. The report is almost 50 pages long. HR-HDA-1780.

define the real problems of the modern world and to formulate them in order to be able to use Marxist thought efficiently. Rudi Supek, reflecting on the 1968 events in Europe, argued that these events showed that in both socialist and capitalist countries, the socialist revolution is more and more “returning to the framework of the genuine Marxist predictions.”⁶³⁶ His colleague, Ljubomir Tadić, gave a lecture “Socialist Revolution and Political Power,” which was a lecture published with minor changes in the ‘banned issue’ of the Slovenian daily *Delo*.⁶³⁷ In his reflections, he emphasized that “when political leaders stop being tribunes, when they become mystified, when they are no longer educated by the people, they become guardians of the people. Then the political power is institutionalized, ossified. This leads to a halt in the continuity of socialist revolution.”⁶³⁸ To make a point, Ljubomir Tadić cited lines from Bertolt Brecht’s poem “The Solution,” written about the uprising in East Germany in 1953:

After the uprising of the 17th of June
The Secretary of the Writer’s Union
Had leaflets distributed in the *Stalinallee*
Stating that the people
Had forfeited the confidence of the government
And could win it back only
By redoubled efforts. Would it not be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people
And elect another?

The discussion at the Korčula Summer School therefore highlighted that there was an existing conflict in Yugoslavia—the conflict between the revolutionary powers and classical elements

⁶³⁶ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”2. The report was for internal use, and it was handed to the Department for Information of Central Committee LCY. The report is almost 50 pages long. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶³⁷ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”5. The report was for internal use, and it was handed to the Department for Information of Central Committee LCY. The report is almost 50 pages long. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶³⁸ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”5. The report was for internal use, and it was handed to the Department for Information of Central Committee LCY. The report is almost 50 pages long. HR-HDA-1780.

of the political government. The LCY was therefore seen more and more as a classical authoritarian political party which followed the logic of the party in terms of it wanting to keep power. The existing social conflicts that were emerging in Yugoslavia were not possible to solve through political power, but only through the self-governing power, as Mladen Čaldarović noted.⁶³⁹ Democracy was seen to be a basic issue of socialism. As Dragoljub Mićunović (1930) argued “Freedom and democracy ought to be the measures of socialism in all countries. Democracy in a society cannot exist without democracy within the party.”⁶⁴⁰

The intellectuals saw that within the international workers’ movement, in the last fifty years, with the exception of the short time immediately after the October Revolution, there was a lack of the ‘struggle of opinion,’ and there was mainly a struggle between people who had different degrees of political power. In Yugoslavia, as Mićunović argued, the ideological struggle or struggle of opinion did not exist: “Ideas are not confronted on the basis of their correctness or truthfulness, but rather through a confrontation between those in power and those without it.”⁶⁴¹ Mićunović highlighted the weakness of such expression of power, since he added that those in power forgot that sheer power and violence was not enough “since ideas as such cannot be canceled—only the organizational form, and the individuals who carry those ideas, can ultimately be eliminated.”⁶⁴²

Svetozar Stojanović also noted that the most basic problem discussed at the school was the problem of how to ensure that the results of the political revolution do not hinder social revolution. Power, he agreed with Mihailo Marković, does not only change the essence of the people in power but also the general social being. Once this is reached, one cannot speak about

⁶³⁹ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”6. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁰ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”7. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴¹ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”7. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴² “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”7. HR-HDA-1780.

the “socialist society.”⁶⁴³ Finally, the argument was that force cannot be applied in the name of humanist goals, as Danko Grlić stated. Ljuba Tadić agreed also that slaves have the right to violence in order to liberate themselves.⁶⁴⁴

Gajo Petrović and Branko Bošnjak accused the students at Korčula Summer School of irresponsible and anarchistic behavior, which they argued could endanger the work of the school which could be banned. Among the students there were three groups— anarchists who were extreme, then those acting from the positions of League of Communists, and a more moderate and objective group according to the report which was also critical towards anarchists. Šime Vranić was a member of an anarchist stream, from Zagreb, and he most vocally argued for the need to have a program and an agenda for further activity. As report listed, some of the ideas shared by the attendees of the summer school could be summed up as follows: “in Yugoslavia nothing ‘revolutionary’ happened over the last decade, thus one ought to politically destroy the existing structure as they have totally alienated themselves and bureaucratized.”⁶⁴⁵ Vranić also argued that it would be “useful” to ban the Korčula Summer School and the journal *Praxis*, and to have more philosophers rejected from the League of Communists, which he argued would probably happen. This way, a lot of real communists would be forced to create a new party outside of the League of Communists. These students argued that the professors became opportunists as they were between the government and the revolutionary students, making compromises and betraying the student revolutionary movement.⁶⁴⁶ Vranić argued that “the government, police, bureaucracy ought to be

⁶⁴³ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”8. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁴ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”9. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁵ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”41. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁶ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”42. HR-HDA-1780.

systemically and constantly provoked. One ought to create the worst situation in society in order to ensure better conditions for the revolutionary action.”⁶⁴⁷

The Program of the LCY and the Constitution were seen as great in their principles, but that these principles were not achieved because of the existing and persisting bureaucracy. Self-government was also not seen as achieved as this did not go to the advantage of the managerial class, which usurped economic and political power. ⁶⁴⁸ Yet, according to the report, with these themes and problems the school was becoming less a place for discussion about key philosophical and sociological theoretical problems, and more a platform for the discussion about actual political and social events.⁶⁴⁹

The school was attended by the same participants from Yugoslavia, and the editorial board of the school gave “more importance to the participation of the foreign philosophers and sociologists with diverse ideological political orientations, and especially the participation of Yugoslav and foreign students.”⁶⁵⁰ But the report concluded that the meeting of the philosophers and other intellectuals from Yugoslavia and other countries could be useful to the further betterment of social thought, and to bringing together intellectuals from different countries. It was also positive that many could express their different ideas and conceptions. Yet the report argued that it would be beneficial for the school to bring other theoreticians—political scientists, economics, historians, lawyers, and others together.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁷ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”43. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁸ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”43. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁴⁹ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”45. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵⁰ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”46. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵¹ “Informacija sa pete sesije korčulanske letnje škole održane 14 to 24 avgusta, 1968. godine [Information from the fifth session of the Korčula summer school held from August 14 to 24, 1968.],”46. HR-HDA-1780.

“It came down to the question: Where next?”: Post-1968 reflections among the philosophers and their decision for organized engagement

At the beginning of 1969, the Yugoslav Association for Philosophers organized a meeting in Opatija discussing, among other things, the position of philosophy in Yugoslav society.⁶⁵² The crisis of philosophy that was more pronounced, and was shared by the participants, including *Praxis* member Ivan Kuvačić who argued that philosophy was not able to fully develop in Yugoslavia because of the centers of power. As a result of the hindrance imposed by the political power structures, philosophical thought was becoming increasingly “calculative” and instead of “seeing the human being, one sees only numbers in almost all activities.”⁶⁵³ Vojan Rus, a philosopher from Ljubljana (1924–2015), however, was more optimistic, and did not see the existing crisis as a hindrance to the development of philosophy in socialism. There were still conditions existing to enable this, and moreover, the engagement of philosophers in the student protests he saw as a huge success, theory in practice, in which “they were moving from the ‘universal’ towards the ‘particular,’” in their demands for the realization of genuine self-government and direct democracy. The task of philosophers was to contribute to the “awareness among the masses,” as Stalinist elements still resided in the Yugoslav society. Rus argued that Stalinism was found in “the theories of functionalism, structuralism, and Heidegger in the second phase of his development,” for example. Moreover, Stalinism was analogous to “conformism.”⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 1968. HR-HDA-1780. This report was titled: Sastanak jugoslovenskog udruženja filozofa u Opatiji 31. January 1. and 2 February 1968 [Meeting of the Yugoslav Association of Philosophers in Opatija, January 31, 1 and 2 February 1968]. The description reads: Opatija meeting of the Yugoslav Association of Philosophers (JUF). The meeting was attended by 43 delegates of the republican associations, and two guests from Czechoslovakia, as well as the other guests. The author Rajko Danilović, member of the analytical group of the Central Committee of LC of Serbia, wrote that the section is mainly interested in the discussion concerning the position of philosophy in the Yugoslav society.

⁶⁵³ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 48. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵⁴ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 49. HR-HDA-1780.

We can argue that the constant impulse of being critical towards the present and the *status quo*, made philosophers' positions theoretically unstable as well. Moreover, in the post-1968 context, where the differences between philosophers and politicians became more affirmed, and interpreted as impossible to bridge, they thematized their positions as being in a constant opposition to politicians. As Branko Bošnjak argued, "the ideas of the rulers and ideas of philosophers have always been in contradiction." At the same time, while philosophy was an individualist discipline—meaning that one was thinking independently—Bošnjak argued that "the time has come for the more organized engagement of philosophers" via the Yugoslav Association and through different ways.⁶⁵⁵

Ljubomir Tadić pushed for a more radical position, agreeing with Herbert Marcuse that one should be able to see the possibilities of overcoming existing in the contemporary world—thus there were two positions that were possible to take. First, accepting reality as fatal, and as something that cannot be changed. Such positions would lead to a complete passive resignation. Yet, the other position would be a utopian one, from which comes the "impossible demand for the radical change of the existing world."⁶⁵⁶ Tadić saw the student movements as having elements of utopia because the world is seen "as hermetically closed and without exit. It came down to the point when one must ask: where next?"⁶⁵⁷

The students' input was that philosophy was in crisis as well—and especially after the events in Czechoslovakia the mood had drastically changed. "It seems that there is nothing else to say," were some of the comments that could be heard. Yet the roots of the crisis were difficult to detect immediately, although later the intellectuals would often refer to the 1960s economic reforms. Nevertheless, the intellectuals argued that "humanism as expressed in Yugoslavia,

⁶⁵⁵ "Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY]," *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 50. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵⁶ "Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY]," *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 50. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵⁷ "Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY]," *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 50. HR-HDA-1780.

was linked to politics, and not to philosophy.” They complained that the political philosophy became the dominating philosophy, and outside of it there was no other philosophy, except for the classical and traditional ones that could still be found.⁶⁵⁸ Thus the events of 1968 thus were seen in the light of the crisis of philosophy, but it was described as if the USSR invasion in a way created a crisis even deeper than before.

Stojanović saw the exit from the crisis in widening the problematics of philosophical engagement. Moreover, he pointed to the insufficient direct dialogues between philosophers, which had differences, but overcoming these differences could not be done without direct dialogue between them. Stojanović also reflected on the problem of humanism which had become more and more popular, but which also hid power and violence—what Stojanović called a “hypocrisy of humanism,” or the supposed protection of the rights of the weaker.⁶⁵⁹ The hypocrisy of humanism he located both in the “liberal-capitalistic” (USA) and “humanist-socialist” (USSR) states.

The intellectuals argued against violence, but the violence exercised by the Yugoslav leadership they saw as being without the application of force. Namely, it was not expressed in terms of force without the application of force. That existence is belittling, that is the act of psychological genocide.” The task of Yugoslav philosophy was thus to engage and occupy itself with that “type of force and to constantly remove its ideological mask.”⁶⁶⁰ Thus, while Stojanović was not directly speaking about the Yugoslav political system, we can argue that through the example of the Soviet Union and the Prague invasion, he references the Yugoslav 1968.

⁶⁵⁸ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 51. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁵⁹ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 51–52. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶⁰ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 52. HR-HDA-1780.

Dragoljub Mićunović spoke about the manipulation of politics—philosophy and politics were closely cooperating when the politicians were using philosophy, yet the moment “philosophy became critical towards the experience of politics, then it became criticized, and also brutally attacked.”⁶⁶¹ But reflecting on the problem of engagement of philosophers, he argued that all philosophers are in different ways engaged but the engagement was “within the system of manipulation”—starting with that he asked, “Where could we further go?”⁶⁶² The situation among the philosophers was grim—as some were serving the “daily politics” openly and vocally, while others believed that nothing could be changed, thinking that there is no space for any resistance. This group of philosophers engages with methodological and ontological problems, while the third group is critically relating towards the existing. The dilemma in front of the Association therefore was according to Mićunović a present one—they were “saying goodbye” to the illusion that we would be “free and that we would manage to avoid our own inclusion in the existing system of manipulation.”⁶⁶³ The sense of crisis therefore presented a very devising understanding of either-or, as the middle way was not possible. It was either to be inside the system of manipulation or to do anything to change it.

Thus, the duality of politics and philosophy was once again emphasized—“through the relations between politics and philosophy one can see the agony of our society.” Dragan Glintić argued that after the war, everything was deduced from philosophy, and thus it was deduced and explicated in the political arena. But he argued that “today one needs to ask a question of the ‘legal safeness’ of philosophers who are philosophizing.”⁶⁶⁴ The humane and legal right is for philosophers who think about everything and about politics. Božidar Debenjak (1935), a

⁶⁶¹ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 52. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶² “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 52. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶³ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 52. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶⁴ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 52. HR-HDA-1780.

Slovenian philosopher, argued that philosophy “was getting a new chance because it was more and more evident that the realization of communism is not possible.”⁶⁶⁵ He argued that Marx’s idea about the cancelation of philosophy and creation of communist community were not realized. The philosophers saw the events in the West as eye-opening for the Yugoslav students; Debenjak argued that when students see what is happening in the West, they realize that the world cannot be left as it is. “How is it possible that the conservatism, conformism is being destroyed in the West? What is that which is being destroyed on the revolutionary European ground?” These were the questions that the philosophers needed to give an answer, and he called Yugoslav philosophers to seek to answer these.⁶⁶⁶

Nationalism became a theme once again, although after 1968 in a different manner. The issue of Yugoslavs was also discussed. According to the internal information of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia from 1969, kept at Rudi Supek’s archive, the debates started in the magazines *Kolo* (the journal of the *Matica Hrvatska* for culture and art), *Kritika* (journal for critical art and cultural political questions) and *Naše teme*, whose main editor at the time was Stipe Šuvar. Šime Đodan and Stipe Šuvar debated about nationalism, where Đodan argued that Yugoslavia was only a formally a federation, in which republics did not have any role, but which were governed by bureaucracy and dominance from Belgrade. He blamed the centralist system of economy, which was applied to regional development, and which thus by giving means to less developed areas, was hindering the more successful development of the entire Yugoslavia.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁵ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 53. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶⁶ “Stručna služba CK SKJ [Expert Service of the Central Committee of the LCY],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 6 (1968): 54. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶⁷ Iz lične arhive CK SKH [From the personal archive of the Central Committee of the League of Croatian Communists] (1969), “Rasprave o međunacionalnim odnosima i nacionalizmu [Debates on interethnic relations and nationalism],” 1. HR-HDA-1780.

Šušar, while being also against bureaucratic centralism, still argued that the centralism has an issue for other reasons and not according to Đodan who argued that the hegemonic politics of federation, in which Serbian national interests ruled to the detriment of other peoples, brought the developed republics, parts, and industrial centers to the '*prosjački štap*' (begging stick).⁶⁶⁸ Šušar, however, claimed that Đodan went into "nationalist accusations and exaggerations... which exist only on the rumors and the prejudices of the past." Ethnic social relations, he argued, were the main source of national intolerance, but they were not the carrier of one Yugoslav nation, while the others were victims. Notwithstanding the financial power of Belgrade, the working class there does not have an easy life, milk and honey do not flow, and people do not live better than the working class in Zagreb and Ljubljana.⁶⁶⁹

Conclusion

In the context of the debates concerning the 'crisis of youth' and 'crisis of academicism,' *Praxis* had entered a new phase of their intellectual engagement, one that was becoming more politically motivated. These intellectuals argued for a plurality of views, and as we can see here this plurality was also translated as a national plurality in ideas, views, and opinions that was to benefit the Yugoslav society and which was the way to move away from dogmatism, and monolithism. Introducing different views and ideas would mean a more open society, yet as we see here, national identities were still essentialized and conflated with political and social views. The discussions concerning the 'organic human community' that was being compromised in the technocratic societies, could also carry both the universal ideals of humanity and be ethno-specific.

⁶⁶⁸ Iz lične arhive CK SKH [From the personal archive of the Central Committee of the League of Croatian Communists] (1969), "Rasprave o međunacionalnim odnosima i nacionalizmu [Debates on interethnic relations and nationalism],"5. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁶⁹ Iz lične arhive CK SKH [From the personal archive of the Central Committee of the League of Croatian Communists] (1969), "Rasprave o međunacionalnim odnosima i nacionalizmu [Debates on interethnic relations and nationalism],"7. HR-HDA-1780.

While the philosophers worried that the Yugoslav society was creating consumers that were no different than those in the Western countries, and that the Yugoslav society was heading towards “spiritual poverty” and lack of any vision of a better future, the student protests in which they also participated supported their vision that the LCY was the main hinderance in the development of socialist society. The student protests demanded precisely a more principled application of the rights and freedoms granted by the Yugoslav constitution, including freedom of assembly, a right that was compromised by the police suppression in Belgrade.

Chapter V: Historicization of the Crisis of Yugoslav Socialism, Reexaminations and ‘Demise of Humanism’

This chapter examines how the configurations of the late 1960s and early 1970s were emerging, in a context that was becoming more and more unstable. From the early 1970s, it was becoming more difficult for the *Praxis* intellectuals to stay firmly on their theoretical grounds as they were losing their main referential point. They found themselves between a binary, challenged both by market socialism and by nationalism.

In the 1970s, intellectuals retrospectively tried to make sense of the crisis. For them, the thesis of the withering away of the Party, put forth by the Party itself in 1952, was a “revolutionary step” in the history of Yugoslav socialism. The Party was supposed to cease being a party in the traditional Leninist sense and instead would turn into an ideological guide. However, as the intellectuals would reinterpret it later, this “carried a seed of future issues” since, they argued, in Marx there was no foundational political theory. The experience of the Paris commune was a very short-lasting one and thus a “weak basis for the building of the new

socialist model.”⁶⁷⁰ For that reason, we could add *Praxis* colleagues saw the role of philosophers and theory in Yugoslav socialism as crucial—they were supposed to develop the political theory that was lacking in Marxism. Moreover, by the beginning of the 1970s, conflict existed and not only between the members of the Praxis circle and the LCY; the conflicts were more diffused as they also included intellectuals who were either more or less oriented towards the party. The struggles thus were not just theoretical and academic, but they had important social and political repercussions.⁶⁷¹

Moreover, from their perspective, the 1957 Seventh Congress and the Program of the LCY pronounced the peak of Yugoslav reform socialism. The program announced the struggle of opinion and the withering away of the state, and thus the “start of the genuine democratization of Yugoslav society, respect for human rights, and the development of genuine self-government in all aspects of human life.”⁶⁷² However, in the 1970s their historicization of the crisis-ridden context in which Yugoslavia found itself, narrated that “opposing tendencies” to the democratization process started from the mid-1960s, becoming more visible in the 1970s. Thus, the spirit of the reformation that started in the early 1950s was halted in the 1960s and then reversed in the 1970s. Therefore, in the 1970s, the 1960s were seen as a period of ‘oscillations’ alongside the revival of the role of the political party, which started to “be joined more and more with the state apparatus.”⁶⁷³ This reverse course taken by the LCY was seen as detrimental by *Praxis* and as a cause of the deepening crisis of the Yugoslav society.

From the theoretical perspective, the economic reform, the constitutional amendments, and the reorganization of the LCY were a “step forward towards the development of Yugoslav

⁶⁷⁰ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 3.

⁶⁷¹ e.g. See the introduction to the translated book Ernst Fischer, Franc Marek, *Šta je Lenjin stvarno rekao* [What did Lenin really say], (Minerva Subotica: Beograd, 1970).

⁶⁷² Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 3.

⁶⁷³ Zagorka Golubović, *Kriza identiteta savremenog jugoslovenskog društva* [Crisis of the identity of the contemporary Yugoslav society] (Filip Višnjić: 1988), 43.

socialist society.”⁶⁷⁴ However, *Praxis* already approached these transformations with suspicion, as showed in the previous chapters, and especially the economic reform of 1965. At the same time, and theoretically speaking, all of these aspects were joined by their character of being directed towards decentralization. From the side of the Party, it was important to “prove that the market logic [*zakonitost*] was not in collision with the development of socialism and that the decentralization of federation does not lead to its disintegration.”⁶⁷⁵ *Praxis* intellectuals, however, started arguing that the decentralization undertaken by the leadership was indeed leading to a disintegration of the society, where the ideals of socialist revolution in which they were participating, and which they had fully believed in, were replaced by the ideals of market socialism as well as the ideals of nationalist glorification.

From the beginning of the 1970s, there is a new phase of intellectual engagement among the *Praxis* circle—one that has been shaped and formed by the experience of the crisis of 1968, hence one that is more politically oriented. This new phase was characterized by their ‘reexaminations,’ captured well by the title of Mihailo Marković’s book *Reexaminations* which was a collection of essays written following 1968 and published in 1972. The intellectuals had started to question more radically their social realities, and the language of ‘reexamination’ framed to a large extent their intellectual activity. Similarly, their approach to Marxist thought shifted as well. That is, as shared by the majority of intellectuals of the same generation, Marxism could no longer be seen and interpreted as a “scientific, empirical theory,” especially in the period after 1968. Marx’s projections, which seemingly had an empirical character, were not achieved—the absolute pauperization of the proletariat did not occur, neither did the middle class disappear, and finally, revolutions did not occur in the most developed countries. However, the 1968 political revolt, and the global cultural movements of young people who

⁶⁷⁴ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 449.

⁶⁷⁵ Hrvoje Klasić, *Jugoslavia i svijet 1968* [Yugoslavia and the World, 1968], (Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2012), 449.

challenged the postwar world in general, provided “a broad context of discontent and creativity in which more political avant-garde protest could flourish.”⁶⁷⁶ In such a context, as Mihailo Marković argued, the theory of revolution and the theory of postrevolutionary society demanded critical reexaminations as well.⁶⁷⁷ All this should be understood in the context of the changing circumstances in Yugoslavia (in terms of the events of 1968, as well as the appearance of demands for the respect of national identities and cultures).

Praxis intellectuals were attentive to the theoretical developments in the West and also shared some affinities with the New Left in Western countries. The New Left at the time renewed the idea of revolution in the industrialized countries. Prior to the New Left, there was a belief that “industrialized societies were harmonious social systems, which, internally at least, contained no major oppositional forces.”⁶⁷⁸ However, since the New Left, a key question for social research has been the “legitimation crisis of the system.”⁶⁷⁹ To the statement that Marx’s concept of revolution no longer is applicable to industrial societies, since it has become an “anachronism; it no longer has any constituency,” Herbert Marcuse, for instance, argued that this fact does not “remove its [revolution’s] necessity.”⁶⁸⁰ Moreover, as discussed in his *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse saw that the communist bloc was converging with the West, arguing that “the gradual reduction of direct political controls testifies to the increasing reliance on the effectiveness of technological controls as instruments of domination.”⁶⁸¹

The beginning of the 1970s, for the *Praxis* intellectuals, announced the definite crisis of the old left represented by Tito and the communist leadership. Thus, we can argue that

⁶⁷⁶ Robert Gildea, James Mark, Anette Warring (eds.), *Europe’s 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 24.

⁶⁷⁷ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972)

⁶⁷⁸ George N. Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, (South End Press, 1987), 5.

⁶⁷⁹ George N. Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, (South End Press, 1987), 5.

⁶⁸⁰ Herbert Marcuse, “The Question of Revolution,” 1/45 (1967). Accessed 29. Dec. 2024. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i45/articles/herbert-marcuse-the-question-of-revolution>

⁶⁸¹ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Routledge, London, New York, 1991), 23.

in this phase, their conceptions of a ‘human’ and human rights claims grew out from the sense of a widespread crisis, but more importantly the crisis of the old left and the LCY, which they saw as being still grounded on Party logic inherited from the Bolsheviks. Due to this crisis, they emphasized the need to redefine the meaning of the left, especially of those aspects of theoretical thought represented by the old left. In addition, *Praxis* intellectuals were also presented with the ‘problem of humanism,’ and had to defend their theoretical positions against the anti-humanist ones which were becoming stronger in theoretical analyses. The ideas of humanism were losing their relevance not just on the level of practical politics but also on the level of theoretical discussions, in the Western philosophies, which were their main point of reference.

Finally, the Croatian crisis of 1971 was referred to as “Titoism’s moment of truth,” as it involved “the two great unsolved problems of contemporary Yugoslavia: ‘the national question’ and ‘socialist democracy,’ the latter particularly including the role of the League of Communists and both including the fundamental nature and purpose of the Yugoslav state.”⁶⁸² The Croatian Spring (where ‘spring’ was an allusion to the Prague Spring and was compared to it) had socialist-reforming ideas, and was “quite different from the previous (Yugoslavia) student movement from 1968,” which, while it was “contemporary to the Prague Spring, it aimed to return to the main, although abandoned, principles of socialism, while the movements in Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1968, but also in 1971 in Croatia, demanded more democratic right, political and economic freedoms and social reforms in the liberal directions.”⁶⁸³ From the perspective of *Praxis* intellectuals, this crisis was similar to the linguistic crisis that appeared around the *Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language* from 1967, where Croatian intellectuals affirmed that while Serbian and Croatian were the

⁶⁸²Cited in Oskar Gruenwald, “The Croatian Spring, 1971: Socialism in one Republic?” *Nationalities Papers*, 10 No.2 (1982): 221-231, here 223.

⁶⁸³ Tvrtko Jakovina (ed.), *Hrvatsko proleće, 40 godina poslije* [Croatian Spring, 40 years after], (Zagreb, 2012), 20.

same languages, they ought to have separate standards and should be seen as different national languages. While those who signed the Declaration saw its demands as aligning with the human rights to one's own language as stipulated by the Constitution, the *Praxis* intellectuals saw the Declaration from 1967, as well as the Croatian Spring of 1971, as the re-emergence of nationalism which was "an appearance of the crisis of the vision of socialist future."⁶⁸⁴ From their perspectives, this crisis thus mobilized the masses into a traditional conformism to their national identities. As Rudi Supek argued, by adopting such conformism, they believed that they could find their "real existence," real "peoples' soil [*narodno tlo*]," and a "true homeland" [*istinski zavičaj*]." ⁶⁸⁵

Serbian intellectuals around *Praxis* started using the language of human rights and equality by applying it to the Serbian republic, thus being against the confederation. Without this, to them it was impossible to start a discussion of democratic reforms that would be based on free citizens, and not on the nation and national states.

Curtailing freedoms, mismanagement of self-government: crisis of the system and human rights in danger

After 1968, the intellectuals' position was more openly challenged by the party leadership, who labeled them as "anarcho-liberals." From the perspective of the party leadership, the intellectuals were fashioning themselves as leaders of the "freedom thinking [*slobodoumna inteligencija*] intelligentsia."⁶⁸⁶ These debates occurred in the period in which the intellectuals

⁶⁸⁴ HR-HDA-1780. Supek's text on *Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language* from 1967.

⁶⁸⁵ HR-HDA-1780. Supek's text on *Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language* from 1967.

⁶⁸⁶ "O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi 'Socijalizam i kultura' [About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic of "Socialism and Culture"], *Aktuelni politički pregled* No. 14 (1969): 27. HR-HDA-1780.

demanded more liberties and freedoms while the existence of different ideas was a challenge to the Party. While the party leadership insisted on respecting the principles of democracy in Yugoslavia, acknowledging the existence of various ideas, including anti-Marxist and anti-socialist ones, they also repeatedly affirmed the need for dialogue, discussion, and polemics.⁶⁸⁷

As a part of the reflections on the 1968 events, in 1969 the main theme discussed at the Korčula Summer was not by chance Power and Humanity [*Moć i humanitet*]. The use of power and violence by the Yugoslav police was seen by the students and intellectuals as an attack on the autonomy of the University of Belgrade, but the theme of violence went beyond that. According to the external report, written by sociologist Zoran Vidojević, and Prvoslav Ralić,⁶⁸⁸ the school was attended by 120 professors and students from the country and abroad, including Lucien Goldmann, Serge Mallet, Franz Marek, Ernst Mandel, Enzo Paci, Nicolae Bellu, Julius Strinka, and others. There was a large group of students from Yugoslavia as well as from abroad, mainly from West Germany, France, and the USA.⁶⁸⁹

The introductory words were given by Gajo Petrović, who described the post-1968 experience as “a crisis in the understanding of human freedom and personal dignity.”⁶⁹⁰ The crisis existed because of the false claims of the politicians that the society was “in constant progress... towards prosperity,” and claims about “social security,” which had dulled in the individual feeling about individual and collective freedom. He emphasized that a “genuine

⁶⁸⁷ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’ [About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic of “Socialism and Culture”],” *Aktuelni politički pregled* No. 14 (1969): 44. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁸⁸ Zoran Vidojević (1940) was mentored by Ivan Kuvačić, and graduated with the dissertation “Class roots of the inequality in the contemporary Yugoslav society.” He worked at the Centre for Social Research, of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

⁶⁸⁹ “Korčulanska letnja škola, VI međunarodno zasjedanje, 20 – 30 avgust, 1969 [Korčula Summer School, VI International Session, August 20-30, 1969],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 5 (1969):23. HR-HDA-1780. In the report it was written on the first page that the “Information created on the basis of the personal notes, since the published texts, except the presentation by Supek, were not available. Thus, there could be some insufficient or insufficiently adequate interpretations of the thesis and ideas put forth by the school.” The authors of the report were Zoran Vidojević, and Prvoslav Ralić.

⁶⁹⁰ Rudi Supek, “Uvodna riječ [Introductory words],” *Praxis*, No. 1-2 (1970): 7.

human community, of people or international, cannot be built on the inequality [neravnopravnost i nejednakost] of its members. The use of force and violence under the claim of ‘brotherly help’ turned such a community into a prison of the people.”⁶⁹¹ To his mind, the legal equality of the people and the respect for their path to socialism was the cornerstone of the human right to one’s self-determination.

One of the general conclusions at the meeting in Korčula was that the humanization of social relations and a human being was not possible without the humanization of social systems.⁶⁹² While the foreign participants constantly insisted upon hearing more about Yugoslav socialism, self-management, and its experiences and problems, the response of the hosts was that these questions were constantly addressed at the Party congresses and other similar meetings, and that the school’s main intention was to “discuss essential philosophical and sociological problems.”⁶⁹³ Such claims might have appeared strange to the contemporary observers and participants, since the philosophers around the *Praxis* journal insisted on the engagement of philosophy and Marxism in the contemporary world. But this observation, however, points to emerging disagreement between the main organizers of the school and the journal as well. Gradually, the Serbian intellectuals would grow more politically engaged and would blame their Croatian and Slovenian colleagues for not supporting the equality of Serbian people in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo in the 1980s.

At the meeting, the philosophers argued that the standard of the Yugoslav philosophical thought was in decline, highlighting its crisis, and that philosophy was “retreating into academism,” such that it had lost “its responsibility towards the existing, as it did not say

⁶⁹¹ Rudi Supek, “Uvodna riječ [Introductory words],” *Praxis*, No. 1-2 (1970): 7.

⁶⁹² “Korčulanska letnja škola, VI međunarodno zasjedanje, 20 – 30 avgust, 1969 [Korčula Summer School, VI International Session, August 20-30, 1969],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no 5 (1969): 23. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁹³ “Korčulanska letnja škola, VI međunarodno zasjedanje, 20 – 30 avgust, 1969 [Korčula Summer School, VI International Session, August 20-30, 1969],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 5 (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

anything about the ‘conflict between humane and inhumane political power,’”⁶⁹⁴ according to the Belgrade-based philosopher Milovan Životić. Gajo Petrović also argued that the philosophers’ task was to fight for the humanization in Yugoslavia continuously and not only “for eight days, while on the ninth they dance *Kozaračko kolo*.”⁶⁹⁵ This was an allusion to the ‘failure’ of the 1968 student movements, in which students in Belgrade demanded the genuine application of the socialist principles as well as the principles stipulated in the Yugoslav Constitution, to which Tito responded that “the students have the right,” after which students started celebrating and dancing.⁶⁹⁶ Here, however, students participating at the Summer School argued that it was the fault of the professors that on the ninth day “*Kozaračko kolo* occurred,” for the very reason that they did not do more to shatter the “existing myths” in Yugoslavia—alluding to the ‘myth’ of self-government, economic and social equality, and so on. In the eyes of the students, the professors were too afraid to openly challenge the Yugoslav League of Communists and Tito.

As a way of reflecting upon the recent student movements, the Serbian Philosophical Society organized the same year in December, a few meetings on the topic “Socialism and Culture.” The participants included the members of League of Communists, Oskar Davičo, Vuko Pavićević, and Gavro Altman (the main editor of *Komunist*)—who polemicized with Dobrica Ćosić, Zoran Radmilović (an actor at the theater *Atelje 212*), and Vitomir Teofilović (a student at the Faculty for Philosophy).⁶⁹⁷ According to the notes taken at the meeting, the conclusions and arguments of the “opposition” included: a demand for democracy for all, and

⁶⁹⁴ “Korčulanska letnja škola, VI međunarodno zasjedanje, 20 – 30 avgust, 1969 [Korčula Summer School, VI International Session, August 20-30, 1969],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, No. 5 (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁹⁵ *Kozaračko kolo* as a metaphor invokes the appeasement of the student protests and activism.

⁶⁹⁶ Tito’s speech to the students, Belgrade 9 June 1968. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nne2feNUEu8> , Accessed 10 February:

⁶⁹⁷ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 27. HR-HDA-1780.

the destruction of the ideological and political organization, the League of Communists, which should no longer act as the main political organization. The authors of the notes included again Radoslav Ratković, argued that in these intellectuals' call for the "struggle for free creativity" also included enough space for "conformism and for nationalism."⁶⁹⁸ Namely, Dobrica Ćosić argued that "he was persuaded there is a tragic lack of care for the Serbian national culture over its place, role, and meaning, in the Balkan, Yugoslav, and world community of people."⁶⁹⁹ Ćosić, a close friend of the Belgrade *Praxis* circle, would later be called a 'father of the Serbian nation.'

The group gathered at the Serbian Philosophical Society assessed the situation in culture as a microcosm of the general negative conditions in Yugoslavia, which came as a result of the Brioni plenum, which removed the Serbian Aleksandar Ranković in 1966. The discussions were focused on the degrading "climate in culture" which they characterized as constant attacks on the cultural workers, but here mainly themselves, by the prominent politicians. This included also, according to them, a large number of examples of censorship in press, radio, and television, as well as in cinema. One key event was the removal of the theater play based on the novel *Kad su cvetale tikve* (When the pumpkins were blooming), by Dragoslav Mihailović, from the repertoire. Furthermore, the journal *Književne novine* was also banned, while there was a preventive ban on the work by Aleksandar Popović, *Druga vrata levo* (Second doors to the left), as well as attacks on the *Student* magazine. All of this, as the critical intellectuals argued, disclosed the "darkest dogmatism" in Yugoslavia. Essentially it

⁶⁹⁸ "O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi 'Socijalizam i kultura'[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture']," *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 30. HR-HDA-1780.

⁶⁹⁹ "O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi 'Socijalizam i kultura'[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture']," *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 30. HR-HDA-1780.

meant a disrespect of the freedoms and rights granted by the Constitution, including the freedom of free speech.

From their perspective, the main danger in such a climate of censorship was the lack of space for polemics, which meant that Yugoslavia was not a socialist country in which the freedom of creation was granted.⁷⁰⁰ According to the report, some argued that the banning of the plays and artworks were the consequences of “Serbian primitivism,” as in Slovenia there were no bans, according to Nikola Milošević (1929–2007). Milošević was a political philosopher and writer, who was later to become a correspondent member of the SANU in 1983 and a full member in 1994. He was also a president of the Miloš Crnjanski endowment, and was against the rule of Slobodan Milošević, from the perspective of his anti-communist positions and as a conservative liberal. The intellectuals emphasized that their claims were grounded in the program of the LCY and the Yugoslav Constitution, pointing out that “everyone who stands on the principles of the constitution, law and the program of the LCY, comes into a struggle and a confrontation with the government.”⁷⁰¹ Therefore they used the human rights language stipulated by the Constitution to criticize the practice of the LCY.

When it came to self-government, the intellectuals disregarded it as something which was not achieved in practice, as the report argued. Moreover, they did not explicate in what way the cultural workers should contribute to the development of self-governing relations in culture, “and to create and achieve programs which would be based on the self-governed basis.”⁷⁰² Arguably, the intellectuals discussed the creation of an association of cultural

⁷⁰⁰ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 32. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷⁰¹ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 32. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷⁰² “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the

workers according to the framework of the SSRN (*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda*), yet the community which was tasked to deal with these questions already existed within the SSRN, and this cultural and educational community was ignored by these intellectuals.⁷⁰³

The main issue was, according to the report, that the intellectuals did not reflect and challenge the utopian and petit-bourgeois thesis according to which socialism was first and foremost a moral phenomenon. This thesis claimed that the moral phenomenon, not social and economic relations, is what distinguishes socialism from capitalism.⁷⁰⁴ Such claims, from the Party leadership's perspective, expressed a non-Marxist understanding of socialism as it was divorced from material and economic conditions, as well as from class. However, such a perspective was at the core of the *Praxis* intellectuals' endeavor to create a synthesis of Marxist thought with the ideas of other philosophies, emphasizing moral as well as personal aspects. According to their conception of socialism, the report claimed, socialism meant exclusively political freedom for "everyone on having their own position and a freedom of struggle for the equality of all political positions and ideas."⁷⁰⁵ These claims indeed capture the main priorities put forth by these critical intellectuals—for them the question of human dignity, of morality, the question of how power is used in socialism, and how the principles of equality were applied came before any economic and material considerations.

Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture'],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 33. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷⁰³ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture'],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 33. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷⁰⁴ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture'],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 34. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷⁰⁵ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic 'Socialism and Culture'],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 36. HR-HDA-1780.

As early as 1969, Svetozar Stojanović argued that the Yugoslav revolution after 1948 was using Stalinist principles and that the criticism of Stalinism in Yugoslavia, by the Yugoslav Party, was done using Stalinist methods. Such a claim disclosed his persuasion that the Yugoslav Party was formed and shaped by Stalinism, and that intellectuals, at least in the post-1968 context, saw it as inevitably an oppressive institution which had become a main social and political actor in Yugoslavia. The “revolution” that occurred later, with the implementation of the 1950 Law on Self-management, was therefore limited, as it was being “directed” from above, by the Party. As Stojanović argued, the revolution did not manage to involve the initiations stemming “from below.” Given the fact that the intellectuals, as discussed in Chapter Two, saw the dangers of mass society, and emphasized the need for philosophers to shape values and moral sentiments, it is unclear whether Stojanović truly believed that the implementation of self-management was supposed to be done, spontaneously “from below.” Moreover, the *Praxis* intellectuals also saw socialism firstly as a cultural transformation, which ought to return “to a human being his or her alienated values,” thus implicitly emphasizing their role as philosophers and intelligentsia. Socialism, as Miladin Životić pointed out, meant a “struggle against the inherited repressive culture, and this culture encompasses bans, censorship, impositions of norms on an individual which are limiting his or her freedom.”⁷⁰⁶

Intellectuals also blamed the LCY for orchestrating the self-governing bodies, and for hindering the proper democratic decision making in the workers’ collectives. According to Ljubomir Tadić:

If the general secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Tito says that one satirical magazine like *Jez* is not good, that it is antisocialist—then the following

⁷⁰⁶ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 36. HR-HDA-1780.

day, more than half of the Yugoslav public, the entire party, army, and police apparatus repeat the same, and this is something that should worry us all.⁷⁰⁷

Therefore, according to the intellectuals, following their fears in the 1960s, the Yugoslav society has not yet achieved the requisite level of critical reflection; instead, it had learned to follow what the Party and its leaders would say. The lack of critical consciousness and critical awareness in Yugoslav society according to them was creating conformism, stifling critical debate, and damaging Yugoslav self-governing society. As previously mentioned, their dissatisfaction with this was already voiced in the 1960s, when they were warning about the creation of a ‘mass’ that thinks uncritically and that is easily manipulated. Instead of educating critical human beings, capable of independent thought, the Yugoslav leadership was hindering the development of self-governing personalities. While legally the Yugoslav Constitution claimed that it was protecting human rights, the intellectuals saw this to be a “mystification” of reality.

The report viewed the intellectuals’ demand for the screening of a movie by Mića Popović, *Delije*, to be an exhibition of Serbian nationalism. In fact, the authors of the report saw it as the basis for the “vampirization of *četniks*” [*povampirenje četništva*]⁷⁰⁷—that is, the reemergence of an extreme form of nationalist ideology in Serbia. Furthermore, the report also emphasized that it was precisely these intellectuals who were also authors of the *Predlog za razmišljanje* [Proposal for Consideration] which was a response to the *Declaration* in 1967. The Serbian Writers’ Association’s *Proposal* was signed by forty-two authors (twenty-one of them members of the LCY), responding to a text issued by nineteen Croatian institutions and signed by 130 people (eighty party members, including Miroslav Krleža). The Declaration made two important demands for the federal government: instead of three official literary

⁷⁰⁷ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 38. HR-HDA-1780.

languages (Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian, Slovenian, and Macedonian), the Constitution ought to recognize four languages, thus splitting Serbian and Croatian. The Declaration also demanded “the consistent use of the Croatian literary language in the schools, the press, the public and political forums, on radio and the television networks whenever the broadcasts are directed to a Croatian audience.”⁷⁰⁸

The Belgrade City Committee of the League of Communists concluded that the organizers of the gathering ‘Socialism and Culture’ were unified in their criticism and demonstration against the politics of the League of Communists and the self-governed community. Their conclusion was that such a position inevitably leads towards the “rehabilitation of Cominform, [and an] attack on the revolutionary role of the League of Communists,” claiming that Serbian nationalism was present in the discourse as well, the politics of self-governing society and the LCY in culture was attacked, while the genuine and existing problems of culture were ignored.⁷⁰⁹ Moreover, the City Committee and the members of the League of Communists in Belgrade, according to the report, ought to be acquainted with the positions expressed during these gatherings.

The periodical *Bilten*, journal of the Presidency of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia, published “Conclusions of the city committee of the SK Belgrade on the occasion of the political theses and positions expressed at the gatherings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic of ‘Socialism and Culture’” in which it presented a critique of the organizers. It claimed that they were ‘conspirators,’ who were ready to “welcome anyone who would be ready to oppose the politics of the LCY, to cry over the ‘unfortunateness of the Serbian culture over which hangs the specter of ideology,’ over the cultural and societal

⁷⁰⁸ Nick Miller, “Ćosić: Engagement and Disillusionment, 1956–1966,” in *The Nonconformists*. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 57.

⁷⁰⁹ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’[About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic ‘Socialism and Culture’],” *Aktuelni politički pregled*, no. 14 (1969): 43. HR-HDA-1780.

situation in which liberties are being taken, and the wave of sentences and administrative bans, pressures and censures is spreading like an epidemic.”⁷¹⁰ The author Bora Simić blamed the intellectuals for being hypocritical and pretentious in their claims that it was them who were the main actors in the criticism and fight against Stalinism in Yugoslavia, “all while they are adhering to those ideas and praxis, which is known for being degrading for a human being, degrading to the human and the arts!”⁷¹¹ It was not by chance that Serbian nationalism and chauvinism found its place in such discussions. These nationalisms went back to role models from the Middle Ages, being nostalgic for the ‘freedoms’ of the Obrenović and Pašić periods. Equally problematic was that the intellectuals challenged the importance of 1948, arguing that it was initiated and prescribed from above, and that the masses did not manage to join the paths that started from above, creating an issue of how to join and change these revolutions from above with those from below.⁷¹²

The question raised was what to do with philosophy today, what is the object of philosophy, and does it have any sense next to the strongly developed social and other sciences?⁷¹³ *Bilten* argued that the abstractly humanist orientation in Yugoslavia “faced the reality of the contemporary world, and exhausted its... argumentation, which is today repeated,

⁷¹⁰ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹¹ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹² “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹³ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 24. HR-HDA-1780.

being spread between revolutionary social events, strong development of sciences, and its own radical, abstractly humanist mainly nihilistically directed thesis.”⁷¹⁴

In this context plenty of discussion emerged about how the school should position itself towards politics and political events. Some argued that it should be only philosophically engaged—that is, without political engagement—while others believed it was necessary to have it politically engaged but from a philosophical position.⁷¹⁵ In opposition to the thesis that the existing political system ought to be rejected as the “existence that has been separated from the essence,” that is, humanism, others believed that the humanists should not distance themselves from the system but that ought to struggle within it for humanism.⁷¹⁶

From 1968, it became clear that the Yugoslav system needed a “solid ideological unity and the indisputable authority of Tito to settle the conflicts that arise more and more often between the republics and the federal government.”⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, the 1968 movement in Kosovo was much “more violent than those in other republics of the SFRY.”⁷¹⁸ Thanks to them, however, in 1969, the University of Prishtina was founded, and in 1971 the Yugoslav Constitution allowed more local control in autonomous provinces. Amendments 7 to 19 of the Constitution granted Vojvodina and Kosovo more autonomy, redefining the Socialist Federal

⁷¹⁴ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 25. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹⁵ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 26. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹⁶ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 26. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷¹⁷ Agustín Cosovschi, *Les sciences sociales face à la crise. Une histoire intellectuelle de la dissolution yougoslave (1980-1995)* (Éditions Karthala: Paris, 2022), 45.

⁷¹⁸ Atdhe Hetemi, *Student Movements for the Republic of Kosovo: 1968, 1981 and 1997* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 65.

Yugoslavia as having eight and not six constituent parts. Students demanded equality and the right to labor, which was one of the most important human rights in the constitution in Yugoslavia. Finally, the 1971 Croatian spring created a wave of nationalism which was seen by the *Praxis* circle as an expression of mentalities that were ‘backward’ and that were created as a result of what they saw as the incorrect politics of Yugoslavia, in which human beings were not allowed to develop their potential through free and open debate, struggle of opinion, as well as a critical position towards their socialist realities.

In this context, Mihailo Marković spoke about “International relations and culture” arguing that the most important sources of the national relations problems in Yugoslavia were the creation of the “republican bureaucratic structures, then one-sided insistence on the material interest and materialist goals.”⁷¹⁹ Moreover, the problem was that the city of the biggest nation, Serbia, became the capital, with all important federal institutions also created an issue. Yet he argued that one ought not to exaggerate arguing that the capital, Belgrade, has all the important aspects. He argued: “it is a fact that Belgrade does not have an opera, does not have a library, does not even have enough museums, nor hospitals and clinics, and definitely does not have all that is needed for a university. It is definitely the case that in Belgrade the situation is no better in the field of science and culture, than it is in other republican centers.”⁷²⁰ Here Marković also argued that one of the biggest mystifications has to do with the fact that people believed that whoever spoke of Yugoslavism spoke either “in the name of greater Serbian or in the name

⁷¹⁹ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 61. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷²⁰ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 62. HR-HDA-1780.

of greater Croatian hegemony.”⁷²¹ According to him, it was paradoxical and senseless that it was “fine” speaking about European culture, while Yugoslav culture was looked down upon.⁷²²

In terms of *Praxis* engagement, the intellectuals continued with the international collaboration that defined their engagement during the decade of their organized activity. During this period, they were still creating alliances and participating in international collaborations. One institution that would be conceived during this time was the Inter-University Center in Dubrovnik. In the report by the Yugoslav Association of Man and Society, we can see that 1971 the Association organized an international gathering in 1971 with the topic “Science, Man, and his Environment” [*Nauka, čovek, i njegova okolina*]. Due to the “importance of this gathering—one of the first gatherings in the world on this topic—Maurice Strong, general secretary of the world conference on environment (Stockholm, 1972)... joined the gathering.”⁷²³ According to the report, Strong argued that this was crucial for addressing the environmental crisis emerging within the technocratically society, and that the gathering played an important role in supporting the UN Conference on the Human Environment..⁷²⁴

Yugoslavs from the Association, including *Praxis* members, participated at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. The recognized and accepted members included universities from the US, Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and the UK—next to these universities from Ljubljana, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, Zagreb, as well as the Yugoslav

⁷²¹ “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 63. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷²² “Zaključci gradskog komiteta SK Beograda povodom političkih teza I stavova izraženih na skupovima filozofskog društva Srbije o temi Socijalizam i Kultura [Conclusions of the City Committee of the City of Belgrade regarding the political theses and views expressed at the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the subject of Socialism and Culture],” *Bilten Predsedništva Saveza komunista Jugoslavije* (1969): 63. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷²³ “Aktivnosti Jugoslovenskog udruženja ‘Nauka i društvo’ za period 1963–1975 [Activities of the Yugoslav Association 'Science and Society' for the period 1963–1975],” 4. HR-HDA-1780.

⁷²⁴ “Aktivnosti Jugoslovenskog udruženja ‘Nauka i društvo’ za period 1963–1975 [Activities of the Yugoslav Association 'Science and Society' for the period 1963–1975],” 4. HR-HDA-1780.

Academy of Sciences and Arts from Zagreb, were also members. After this gathering, the Swedish group of intellectuals planned to visit Yugoslavia, and Rudi Supek was one of the contacts, as Stjepan Udović reached out to Supek in 1973. Namely, Supek participated at the symposium on “Work and Democracy in an Industrialized Society” which was held in Stockholm in May 1973. The discussion at the symposium provided opportunities for exchanging views and reporting experiences on problems of work and democracy, among the scholars of the Scandinavian union, Yugoslavia, and others. The resolution which was written at the symposium supported the “establishment of the *International Centre for Studies in Participation, Workers’ Control and Self-management* in Dubrovnik, which has been set with the very purpose of fostering international coordination and cooperation in this field of research.”⁷²⁵ The resolution of the symposium in Sweden also urged the institutions, authorities, and funds in Sweden to financially support the activities of the center as well as the corresponding activities in Sweden.⁷²⁶ As Udović explained, the group of experts was formed with the idea of also visiting Yugoslavia in order to better understand the Yugoslav experience of self-government. The “left social democrat” Ulf Svensson was supposed to become the new secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade and, according to Udović, and he was to get in touch with Supek regarding the visit of “the Swedish team.” Udović was also a friend of Mihailo Marković, and the connections of the *Praxis* intellectuals with the Swedish intellectuals can also be seen in the fact that Marković and Supek at the time, during the early 1970s, were conceptualizing an anthology on self-government in which they planned to include the writings of Ernst Wigforss (1881–1977), a Swedish social democrat who contributed to the theory of self-government.

⁷²⁵ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

⁷²⁶ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

While creating alliances around the theory and practice of self-management, the *Praxis* intellectuals remained critical towards it in practice. In their view, Yugoslav self-management was already in deep crisis by 1972.⁷²⁷ Supek wrote an article “Contradictions and vagueness of the Yugoslav self-governed socialism” in 1971, reflecting on the twenty-one years of experience. He connected the appearance of *Praxis* with the strengthening of the idea of self-management in Yugoslavia. The idea of self-management also became an important demand in the trade union movements in the Western European countries, and was accepted “by students, a large part of the New Left, but also other intellectuals.”⁷²⁸ The reason for this importance, even in the progressive part of the liberal bourgeoisie, had to do with the fact that modern sociology and social psychology, after discovering the ‘human factor’ in the production, dedicated their attention to studying the motivation and participation of workers in production. Independently from Marxism, as Supek explained, they came to the conclusion that it was necessary to have workers participate in decision-making processes in the workplace. Moreover, some of the workers’ syndicates had already won their right to participate in the processes of decision-making. These tendencies were expressed during the stormy 1968 in France and afterward.⁷²⁹

The events of 1968 confirmed even more to these intellectuals that the idea of self-government was crucial, yet they started asking more openly whether self-government in Yugoslavia was the model to follow. Supek stated: “we have the possibility to say the truth about the Yugoslav worker’s self-government, that is, we have enough wide historical perspective that we can objectivity see its good and bad sides, that which we should reject...” It is not by chance that Supek wrote a section titled “self-government in crisis?” in one of the drafts of his paper on self-management in Yugoslavia. In his text, he placed the *Praxis*

⁷²⁷ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

⁷²⁸ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

⁷²⁹ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

intellectuals in line with the revisionists: Lefebvre, Bloch, Fromm, Lukács, Goldmann, Marcuse, Fischer, and Kosik, without mentioning the contributions of the LCY to the revisionism of Stalinist interpretations of Marxism. One could say that by 1971, the intellectuals saw the LCY as a “Stalinist anti-Stalinism” as expressed by Stojanović. At this point, however, it seemed that the intellectuals placed themselves as the main ones responsible for developing the “authentic Marxist thought from the pressure of Stalinism,” putting thus into question the etatist type of socialism, and with that the need to find an alternative that corresponded to the Marxist conception of socialism. As Supek presented, there were two kind of demands distinguishable by these revisionists: a minimalist and a maximalist one.

The minimalist one emphasized the right to one’s own path to socialism, which implied by necessity various models of socialism, and thus a specific pluralism in the Marxist interpretation of political and social reality. The maximalist demand was characterized by the demands to theoretically and critically overcome the etatistic type of socialism. This overcoming was based on the theory of alienation (insofar as the state-political institutions were understood as alienated forms of human sociability, etc.), as well as within the frame of the idea of workers’ self-government, which represented the genuine idea of socialist democracy. From the minimalist position, the Yugoslav workers’ self-government meant one possibility or one model of socialist organization among many, while the maximalist position demanded the correction of a higher degree of development about etatistic socialism. This counterpoint, which was seen by Supek as a logical theoretical consequence of the Marxist understanding of socialism, was the danger for etatistic socialism.⁷³⁰ Critique was no longer indifferent, but it was engaged and directed against etatistic socialism.

From the early 1970s, *Praxis* philosophers at the Korčula Summer School argued that the only appropriate way to describe the contemporaneous Yugoslav system was to call it “a

⁷³⁰ HR-HDA-1780. Letter from Stjepan Udović to Rudi Supek, 24 July 1973, 3.

system in crisis.”⁷³¹ Stojanović and *Praxis* philosophers aimed to offer a different way of conceptualizing the situation in Yugoslavia, one that would contrast with the official narrative, which was often described as a “transition” or “transitional period.” The perception that “transition” and “transitional period” could not say much about the social, political, and economic situation in Yugoslavia also implied delegitimization of the meaning of socialism, at least the meaning of socialism propagated by the LCY, which was generally understood as a transitional period from capitalism into communism. The widespread crisis in Yugoslavia, as Stojanović explained, was a result of the “worsened relationship between the Yugoslav nationalities, which caused a kind of social neurosis.”⁷³² The blame for such a situation was openly directed towards the officials, who discussed the ongoing crisis as “if it were a natural catastrophe, in which they play no part nor share any responsibility.”⁷³³ Yet, as *Praxis* argued, the politics that the Party had been leading, especially from the early 1960s, and the decisions that it had made, were the main element responsible. Stojanović and his *Praxis* colleagues—critical Marxists who started to expose the sources of the crisis in the mid-1960s—were being attacked by officials who accused them of damaging the socialist order. As a solution, Stojanović proposed a radical change of the political culture:

It is time to change the theoretical perspective. We often argue in Yugoslavia about cultural politics, yet hardly ever speak of political culture. The political underdevelopment of Yugoslavia is usually explained by its economic and cultural backwardness. Yet, in Yugoslavia today there is a higher level of economic and cultural development than political development.

Implicitly, this claim was also supported to point out the lack of “liberal political culture” in Yugoslavia.

⁷³¹Svetozar Stojanović, “Od postrevolucionarne diktature, ka socijalističkoj demokratiji: jugoslovenski socijalizam na raskršću” [From post-revolutionary dictatorship, toward socialist democracy: Yugoslav socialism at the cross-roads], *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1972): 375.

⁷³² Svetozar Stojanović, “Od postrevolucionarne diktature, ka socijalističkoj demokratiji: jugoslovenski socijalizam na raskršću” [From post-revolutionary dictatorship, toward socialist democracy: Yugoslav socialism at the cross-roads], *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1972): 375.

⁷³³ Svetozar Stojanović, “Od postrevolucionarne diktature, ka socijalističkoj demokratiji: jugoslovenski socijalizam na raskršću” [From post-revolutionary dictatorship, toward socialist democracy: Yugoslav socialism at the cross-roads], *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1972): 375.

This issue was also connected to the question of democracy within the LCY as well. As Predrag Vranicki expressed, “we always speak about democratic centralism, but we did not develop the concept of ‘democracy’ in order to know its meaning in the current phase of our development.”⁷³⁴ Vranicki criticized the fact that there were many discussions and demands that the LCY must develop democratic relations within itself, but at the same time “we are scaring each other with the threat of fractions.”⁷³⁵ Vranicki repeated what the *Praxis* intellectuals had argued throughout the 1960s, namely that the political organizations ought to be developed internally on the principles of democracy, in order not to hinder the development of democratic relations in other spheres of life. To achieve democracy, Vranicki noted, it was needed to have “the possibility of critical thinking, confrontation, different ideas with respect to some specific conceptions, etc.”⁷³⁶

Vranicki further claimed that the problem of democracy also resided in science and culture, and that it must urgently be developed. In fact, he described it as lagging behind democratic relations in culture and science. “We still have not sufficiently solved the issue that the bourgeois democracy is just a formal democracy,” he stated, but the democracy in the Western countries “has evolved and progressed.”⁷³⁷ Some freedoms have been achieved, and thus “we have to bring many such things into our development, in order to become a modern civilized and self-governed society.”⁷³⁸ He invoked the previously illustrated claim that the

⁷³⁴ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 384.

⁷³⁵ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 384.

⁷³⁶ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 384.

⁷³⁷ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 384.

⁷³⁸ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 385.

human freedoms and rights achieved in the West were not the consequences of the bourgeoisie, but of the “progressive struggle and victories of workers.” The freedom of press, organizing, striking, were the result of the fight of the socialist and communist forces in the West, and “without the development of these democratic forces, other fundamental processes could come into question.”⁷³⁹ While echoing the same arguments that were found in the 1960s, the context of 1970 was as very different one, and thus these demands meant something else. That is, the intellectuals did not “read” well the present conditions of the society in Yugoslavia, which was fragile not only in an economic sense but also in the sense of the existing societal issues (unemployment, social stratification, etc.), they opted to apply their philosophical concepts on a context that looked different than the one in the 1960s. Nevertheless, they continued with their demands regarding the importance of free discussion, in a situation in which there were already emerging national grievances—as seen most openly at the discussion organized by the Serbian Philosophical Society.

Zooming out from Yugoslavia, it is important to note that around the same time, several figures already mentioned in connection with the Yugoslav *Praxis* intellectuals—such as Bertrand Russell, Lelio Basso, and Vladimir Dedijer—were also involved in a transnational movement against human rights violations in Brazil and Latin America. This is relevant because it highlights the connections between the *Praxis* group and activists engaged in global human rights efforts, like Lelio Basso, prominent Italian Marxist theoretician, politician and lawyer who attended Korčula Summer School in 1971. The same year, Basso, was approached by Brazilian émigrés who proposed that a new tribunal be established to denounce the human rights abuses occurring in Brazil. Soon after, Yugoslav historian and politician Vladimir Dedijer was also contacted by these émigrés. Together, Basso and Dedijer invited prominent

⁷³⁹ Predrag Vranicki, “Savez komunista i demokratija [League of Communists and democracy],” in *Savez komunista i samopuravljanje* [League of communists and self-management](Marksistički centar CK SK Srbije i Institut za Međunarodni radnički pokret, Beograd, 1979), 385.

intellectuals and activists, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Noam Chomsky, and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.⁷⁴⁰ They were later joined by Palestinian intellectual Abu Omar and others.⁷⁴¹ The primary inspiration behind the Second Russell Tribunal was the principles of self-determination and opposition to American imperialism.⁷⁴²

Reexaminations: the end of ideals or of ideology? Discussions on liberalism and communism

In 1971, in the context of the heightened debates on national identity and nationalism, Edvard Kardelj expressed that the leading role in the Yugoslav nation can only be held by the working class. He distinguished between the nationalism of the ‘bourgeois’ Yugoslavia that “turned the peoples of Yugoslavia into instruments of fascism and imperialism,” and imposing a hegemony of one “nation over others,”⁷⁴³ with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia’s approach to the national question. The communists, as he explained, approached this issue from a “class-revolutionary and humanist positions.”⁷⁴⁴ Humanist positions were understood in a Marxists sense, and by that meaning that they included the importance of material conditions. At the same time, as Kardelj argued:

there is no such an internationalist, democratic, humanist and progressive international unification of people... without a complete recognition of national individuality, and with that rights and objective conditions which are connected with life and development of such individuality. That was the reason why we Yugoslav communists decided not only in the field of foreign affairs, but also in our internal international relations, we echoed Lenin’s interpretation.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁰ Umberto Tulli, “Wielding the human rights weapon against the American empire: the second Russell Tribunal and human rights in transatlantic relations,” *J Transatl Stud* 19, (2021): 225.

⁷⁴¹ Umberto Tulli, “Wielding the human rights weapon against the American empire: the second Russell Tribunal and human rights in transatlantic relations,” *J Transatl Stud* 19, (2021): 227.

⁷⁴² Umberto Tulli, “Wielding the human rights weapon against the American empire: the second Russell Tribunal and human rights in transatlantic relations,” *J Transatl Stud* 19, (2021): 215–237. See also Sean Raming, “The 1967 Russell Tribunal and transatlantic anti-war activism,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* Vol.22 (2024): 341–364.

⁷⁴³ Edvard Kardelj, “Vodeću ulogu u naciji u našem društvu može imati samo radnička klasa [Only the working class can have a leading role in the nation in our society],” *Marksističke sveske* No. 3 (1972): 17.

⁷⁴⁴ Edvard Kardelj, “Vodeću ulogu u naciji u našem društvu može imati samo radnička klasa [Only the working class can have a leading role in the nation in our society],” *Marksističke sveske* No. 3 (1972): 18.

⁷⁴⁵ Edvard Kardelj, “Vodeću ulogu u naciji u našem društvu može imati samo radnička klasa [Only the working class can have a leading role in the nation in our society],” *Marksističke sveske* No. 3 (1972): 18.

National individuality and respect for it was demanded in the 1971 “Croatian Spring,” but also in the 1968 student movements in Kosovo. While *Praxis* intellectuals defined themselves as vocal speakers against nationalism, for the Serbian group, already from the late 1960s, the issue of nationalism was used in order to describe the Serbian position in Yugoslavia as the most disadvantaged one. They were antinationalist insofar as antinationalism meant anti-Croatian nationalism, for example, and insofar as that position was “protecting” the Serbian position. These nationalist expressions would not be so clearly visible in this initial period, but nevertheless they were part and parcel of their ‘reexaminations.’

As stated above, the 1970s can be described metaphorically as a decade of the intellectuals’ reexaminations and rethinking of their socialist present through historicization. That is, for *Praxis* intellectuals, the historicization of their present had a goal of examining ‘what went wrong’ and at the same time grappling with the meaning of 1968, both in Yugoslavia and globally. Their reexaminations were necessarily connecting the Yugoslav experiences with the experiences of the ‘New Left,’ the student movements mainly in the Western countries. These reexaminations ultimately aimed to find the cause of the crisis of Yugoslav society, which to their mind had encompassed the Yugoslav system at the beginning of the 1970s. The question of human rights was in the background—that is, the intellectuals would reference the right to self-determination, or would argue that their liberties to speak up against the Titoist regime were denied.

By the end of the 1960s, the shared assumption found among the intellectuals was that Marxism was indeed a ‘product’ of the nineteenth century and that as such, it could “serve as a theoretical pointer to social changes” only in social conditions that were more or less similar to those in Germany in the nineteenth century.⁷⁴⁶ Put differently, what Andrija Krešić (1921–

⁷⁴⁶ Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3–4 (1969): 371.

2018), a member of the *Praxis* circle argued, was that Marxism of the nineteenth century could not help much in analyzing the circumstances of their own present.

Andrija Krešić repeated the often expressed argument among the *Praxis* intellectuals: as a political practice, socialism was established only in the “backward areas of the world,” while in the highly industrialized countries of Europe and America, capitalism transformed to the point that it had “apparently” managed to neutralize social conflicts, instead of creating further class polarization and crisis as Marx anticipated.⁷⁴⁷ This type of argument was an essential element of the *Praxis* critical position towards both the liberal democracies in the Western countries, and the socialist countries in the East. The fact that Marxist theory ‘made a mistake’ in its predictions, and the fact that socialism as a political practice was established firstly in the countries that were not capitalist, were to *Praxis* the main coordinates of their engagement with Marxist thought. They still believed in Marxist thought to be the most crucial philosophy of the liberation of human beings and justified that by claiming that due to the historical circumstances which could have not been predicted, the Revolution occurred firstly in Russia. In the context of 1968 and the growing student revolts across the globe, they attempted to theorize about these events and thus understand possible further developments.

As seen in the previous chapters, *Praxis* intellectuals’ analyses often followed the logic of the political leadership’s analyses and claims, but they further radicalized them. That is, in their arguments, they described the bipolar world—socialist and capitalist—whereby the socialist was often approached as being similar to the capitalist, in terms of its lack of freedoms for human beings. Andrija Krešić explained, while the socialist states announced that they had “liberated a human being from being exploited by another and thus they had managed to solve the class conflict, the Party and the state were playing an even greater role in the regulation of

⁷⁴⁷ Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 371.

the country's economic, political and cultural life.”⁷⁴⁸ Thus, economic freedom was not the guarantee of achieving human rights from the perspectives of these intellectuals. Instead, the respect for personality, which was more connected to liberal, classical rights of the human being, was seen as being not properly protected and advocated for. Thus, human rights or the rights of human beings were limited insofar as they stayed on the level of declarations and discourses, and were not implemented in practice.

Even more problematic was that the worldwide experiences that occurred during the ‘long 1960s’ (including student movements and protests, the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact, but also the processes of decolonialization) undermined the ideology of socialism. Krešić’s interpretation was that the theory of socialism which was mainly relating to the liberation of the working class, was called into question by the events unfolding in the ‘Third World.’ One could not speak of the existence of a “modern industrial proletariat” in this part of the world, as Krešić argued, and yet “many of these countries, once liberated from colonial bondage, undertake political and economic projects which are considered socialist.”⁷⁴⁹ This was an implied criticism of the Yugoslav involvement in the Non-Aligned Movement, which was more “firmly institutionalized on the world stage in the 1970s.”⁷⁵⁰ That is, the intellectuals did not consider these countries to be called ‘socialist’ for the very reason that the “authors of such projects are national-liberation movements of non-working class origin,” but more importantly in some cases, as Krešić argued, these authors even operated “against the communist party in their country.”⁷⁵¹ It is possible to note the different approaches to self-determination among the *Praxis* intellectuals here, as analyzed in the previous chapter—that

⁷⁴⁸ Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 371

⁷⁴⁹ Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 372

⁷⁵⁰ Paul Stubbs, “Introduction: Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Contradictions and Contestations,” in Paul Stubbs (ed) *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries* (McGill, 2023), 11.

⁷⁵¹ Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 372.

is, for *Praxis*, nationalism and self-determination were often rejected as dangerous, ‘backward,’ and unmodern. Yugoslavia’s engagement and cooperation with the countries of the ‘Global South’ from their perspectives also contributed to the circumstances in which it was difficult to define what socialism actually is. While they shared the importance of internationalism with the Party, at the same time, building internationalism with the countries that were not socialist (that is, without the working class) but called themselves socialist created a theoretical impasse as well as skepticism among the *Praxis* intellectuals. As Krešić argued, “the foregoing circumstances confront us with a very significant dilemma: either socialism does not necessarily depend on the working class, or—if it has literally to be the affair of the working class—then a great deal of what today goes by the name of socialism is not socialism at all.”⁷⁵²

Such arguments inevitably alluded to Yugoslav socialism as well—namely, in the background, the intellectuals in fact raised concerns about the type of socialism that existed in Yugoslavia, and whether this socialism, formulated and advanced in the discourse of the Party leadership, was a type of socialism that would lead to the emancipation of humanity. It was through these questions that the intellectuals probed the issues concerning the relationship between “ideals, the ideology, and the reality” in which they lived.⁷⁵³

One of the important areas of their theoretical ‘reexaminations’ concerned socialist ideals and the achievements of these ideals in Yugoslavia. This was simultaneously a part of their intellectual reexaminations and the historicizations of their own present. Miladin Životić asked, “What are the fundamental ideologies today and how do they express the reality of our age?”⁷⁵⁴ Ideals, as Životić explained, were adopted by people in order to transcend their existing realities and to achieve “new and more humane conditions of social life.”⁷⁵⁵ These

⁷⁵² Andrija Krešić, “The Proletariat and socialism in the works of Marx and in the world today,” *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 372.

⁷⁵³ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

⁷⁵⁴ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

⁷⁵⁵ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

included the ideals of the socialist revolution in Yugoslavia, propagated by the leadership during the National Liberation War and after 1948, encompassing the development of a self-governing society which was to bring about the emancipation of human life and the expression of human creative potential. Ideals were thus also values, used as a “basis for acquiring critical knowledge of the existing reality, as the basis for the transvaluation of all existing systems of social values and social relationships.”⁷⁵⁶ ‘Ideals’ as seen by these intellectuals were not to be simply safeguarded—their use in a socialist society was more critical than that. By their nature, they were to be used critically in order to analyze and assess reality and the present day. The critical mode of *Praxis* intellectuals was, therefore, a constant questioning of the distance or closeness between social and political realities in Yugoslavia and the ideals propagated by the socialist revolution. Životić pointed to the unreachable goal of their own engagement: “Ideals impose the truth about man and society which does not reflect the existing reality, but reveal a new historically created possibility for the humanization of the world and man.”⁷⁵⁷ Furthermore, ideals, as Životić argued, “ensure that the present is not accepted as the only form of reality: they actualize the past and with their help history is studied in order to discover the possibilities for changing the existing reality.”⁷⁵⁸ Through ideals, it was possible to conceive a better version of the future, a more humane future. These ideals and values introduce, as Životić argued, a “futuristic dimension into man’s consciousness and activity.”⁷⁵⁹

While ideals are necessary future-oriented in order to envision and propagate a better and more humane society, they have been, as Životić pointed out, “transformed into ideologies.” He suggested that this had negative consequences, given that the function of ideologies was “no longer to direct human thought and activity towards new horizons of

⁷⁵⁶ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

⁷⁵⁷ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

⁷⁵⁸ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

⁷⁵⁹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 409.

freedom.”⁷⁶⁰ Therefore, instead of being future-oriented and critical towards the present, ideologies became “instruments of the mystification of the existing reality and of the normative regulation of behavior in the framework of the given social structures.”⁷⁶¹ Ideologies, therefore, were preserving the status quo, while claiming that they represented the ‘ideals’ and visions of a better future. However, the ideology or the myths of socialism ossified the positions of power and political privilege.

In defining the concept of ideology, Životić argued that it had several opposing meanings in theoretical discourses. Notably, UNESCO in 1947 called for an analysis of the ideological conflicts at the time. The idea was to understand the theoretical presuppositions that were necessary for their solution, although one of the participants in the project was Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who wrote in his book *Ideology, Objectivity and Democracy* (1956) that the crucial concept of ideology was the most difficult to define. Životić referenced Adorno, according to whom an ideology is a “highly developed system of official beliefs and attitudes of a social organization”.⁷⁶² Furthermore, he also cited Abraham Kaplan and Harold Lesswell’s *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry* (1950), where they claimed that ideology is a “political myth whose function is to maintain a particular social order.”⁷⁶³ For Marx, as Životić explained, ideological consciousness distorts, falsifies, and turns upside down the relationship between man and reality.⁷⁶⁴ In one word, as he summed up all the mentioned perspectives, “Ideology is a consciousness deprived of the ideal.”⁷⁶⁵ For *Praxis* intellectuals, an ideology was similar to what their colleagues in Hungary would claim. Namely, an ideology was in complete contradiction with the Enlightenment and its legacy:

If, according to Kant, Enlightenment is humankind’s release from its self-incurred tutelage, de-enlightenment means the relapse into that same tutelage... de-

⁷⁶⁰ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 410.

⁷⁶¹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 410.

⁷⁶² Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 410.

⁷⁶³ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 410.

⁷⁶⁴ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 411.

⁷⁶⁵ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 412.

enlightenment requires that one should never use it [the intellect] but should rely upon the collective intellect of the Party which does the thinking, instead of the person's own intellect.⁷⁶⁶

Liberalism and communism were two great visions of the world; they were the two fundamental “ideals of our age,” as Životić put it. They were forms of social consciousness and theories of man and society. The ideals of liberalism, as he underlined, had their origins in the bourgeois revolutions, in the French Revolution and The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. They were based on the idea “of the individual citizen whose freedom serves as the foundation for the freedom of society.”⁷⁶⁷ Životić explained that these ideals were contained in the ideals of the French Revolution: the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.⁷⁶⁸ The main forms of liberty in this case were “freedom of thought, speech, press, association, behavior in accordance with one's own beliefs as well as the freedom of private economic initiative.”⁷⁶⁹ For Životić, liberalism offered the necessary rights and freedoms for the development of the social character of the individual: freedom of judgment, critical thought, and freedom of personal choice.⁷⁷⁰

While liberalism was the ‘source’ of human rights, the course of history, as Životić explained, did not conform to the predictions of the ‘fathers’ of liberal ideals (Locke, Mill, etc.). That is, *laissez-faire* capitalism and the unrestricted initiative of private individuals, which was at the base of these ideas, has been “transformed into an authoritarian bureaucratic power.”⁷⁷¹ For Životić, one of the major problems of liberal democracy was that it could have not been a “democracy for all members” of the society.

⁷⁶⁶Ferenc Fehér, Agnes Heller, György Márkus, *Dictatorship over Needs: An Analysis of Soviet Societies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), 195.

⁷⁶⁷ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 412.

⁷⁶⁸ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 412.

⁷⁶⁹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 413.

⁷⁷⁰ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 413.

⁷⁷¹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 414.

For him and other *Praxis* members, socialist ideals carried in themselves these liberal ideas and tendencies, and for that reason communism was supposed to incorporate these and apply them in practice. As Životić explained, liberal and communist ideas were “capable of adopting the rational core of liberalism and its demand for the freedom of the individual as a necessary condition for the freedom of society.”⁷⁷² At the very base, socialism is nothing else but the liberation of an individual and human being. The problem, however, was that instead of adopting and transcending liberalism, communist and socialist parties, according to Životić, rejected liberalism and did not even transcend it in the development of socialism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the intellectuals closely associated with the Party did not reject the fact that the role of socialism was to ‘perfect’ the already existing liberties and freedoms gained in liberal democracies. Nevertheless, at this point in the 1970s, the *Praxis* intellectuals argued that “the fate of liberal ideals was decided by the appearance of bureaucracy and technocracy... a form of society in which bureaucracy uses technological rationality... to establish new patterns for the authoritarian manipulation of the individual.”⁷⁷³ For them, Yugoslav society was also becoming bureaucratized, and technological rationality permeated different aspects of social life.

While promising human liberation, socialism did not transcend the bourgeois-legal horizon in its conception of human freedom. Moreover, as these critical intellectuals believed, it even suppressed these freedoms which had already been achieved in civil society.⁷⁷⁴ For Životić, liberalism was a perennial problem. This was because the fundamental human values emphasized by liberalism—the freedom of thought, speech, opinion, association—were not only “underdeveloped both in some Eastern and some Western social systems, but also restrained and suppressed.”⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷² Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 415.

⁷⁷³ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 416.

⁷⁷⁴ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 416.

⁷⁷⁵ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* no. 3-4, (1969): 416.

The development of these intellectuals' understanding of human rights and their development of the concept of liberties was very influenced by the New Left and their arguments concerning the present-day situation with respect to human rights. Životić argued that "our age" witnessed the appearance of a new form of society that was governed not by the elite of culture, but by the elite of power, as he referenced the argument put forward by C. Wright Mills. Moreover, this was a similar argument as presented in the previous chapter, in which Životić discussed Jose Ortega y Gasset and his *The Revolt of the Masses*. That is, society was no longer "governed by the men of knowledge and culture; they are merely paid, specialists."⁷⁷⁶

We can argue that Životić's text could be read as a defense of liberal ideals and as a call to revisit these ideals and save them from the dangers of being misused and employed for authoritarian purposes. Životić and his *Praxis* colleagues saw themselves as members of a small intellectual elite that led "a struggle against total reification, against complete institutionalization of the bureaucratic system."⁷⁷⁷ This intellectual elite, as Životić argued, was becoming increasingly exiled—as the *Praxis* intellectuals were seeing themselves as more and more at odds with the Yugoslav system (problems with funding of the journal, criticisms in the main outlets of the LCY, like the journal *Komunist*, and similar)—yet without influence on the course of social life and the actual solution of practical social problems. However, the problem that these intellectuals were facing was that liberal ideals were becoming bureaucratically transformed, being then used as empty phrases only to embellish the political vocabulary that was "used in the process of bureaucratization of society."⁷⁷⁸ As Životić observed, similarly to Herbert Marcuse, "the conflict between the liberal and the conservative political parties has almost completely disappeared from practical social life."⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁶ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 416.

⁷⁷⁷ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 416.

⁷⁷⁸ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 416-417.

⁷⁷⁹ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 417.

Životić's text indirectly reflected on the situation in Yugoslavia. He argued that liberal ideals were used for the moralistic embellishment of the existing reality, living "only in rhetorical phrases of contemporary political pragmatists, in phrases which contribute to the maintenance of the existing order and not to its change."⁷⁸⁰ Invoking freedom and the right to autonomous personal choice, human rights were thus only rhetorical devices. Translated to the Yugoslav context, the Law on Self-government was reinterpreted by these intellectuals as an empty phrase, while being the most revolutionary and emancipatory law adopted by a country. These ideals that were inevitably part of the self-governing law have thus become a part of the ideological vocabulary of socialist regimes, precisely when these ideals are "absent from the actual practice of social life."⁷⁸¹

The ideals of liberalism, as Životić argued, also stopped being guides for the critical knowledge of human possibilities and the limits of existing reality, "but instruments of manipulation whose purpose is to ensure the conformity of the individual to the given society."⁷⁸² We can add that Životić here criticized Yugoslav political leadership, arguing that while it was using the language of human rights, the leadership was in fact only obscuring the reality. This was the case both in the Western societies (especially in the US) and the socialist systems, since both were characterized "by the rising power of bureaucracy."⁷⁸³ Životić argued about the similarities, as in both the technological development "has been transformed into an end and is no longer a means for the liberation of man."⁷⁸⁴

The fate of Marx's ideals of communist freedom in socialist societies was similar to the fate of liberal ideals in the Western democracies "without people."⁷⁸⁵ The societies, including his own, that "call themselves socialist" had their ideals transformed into ideologies that were,

⁷⁸⁰ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 417.

⁷⁸¹ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 417.

⁷⁸² Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 417.

⁷⁸³ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 418.

⁷⁸⁴ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 418.

⁷⁸⁵ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* no. 3-4 (1969): 419.

as he claimed, “mystifications on a grand scale.”⁷⁸⁶ Thus, the clash between politicians and humanist intelligentsia was at precisely the crux of these ideals. *Praxis* intellectuals believed that their intellectual vocation was to hold responsible the politicians upholding these promised ideals. Rudi Supek also argued that the clash between politicians and humanist intelligentsia was to be found in the “nature of the very political pragmatism.”⁷⁸⁷ This pragmatism was the source of resistance and confrontation of that part of the intelligentsia which “anticipates socialist society as a certain ideal, and which has a developed utopian element.”⁷⁸⁸ *Praxis* as humanist intelligentsia aimed to keep alive that ideal that gave impetus to revolutionary activity, and which after the “winning of power, slowly gives way to political pragmatism.”⁷⁸⁹ According to Supek, and similarly to Životić, “bringing this utopian or anticipatory conditions to the real, already existing condition, brings about not just mystification of the contemporaneity in the name of the future, but also the very opposite.”⁷⁹⁰ These ideals therefore get lost once they are adapted to the reality and transformed into political pragmatism. “What politicians in this given moment understand as their main tasks, is taken as the final goal of the socialist transformation”—so that the “etatist type of socialism is taken to be the ‘path into

⁷⁸⁶ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 421.

⁷⁸⁷ Rudi Supek, “Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba? [Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?],” in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 65.

⁷⁸⁸ Rudi Supek, “Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba? [Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?],” in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 65.

⁷⁸⁹ Rudi Supek, “Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba? [Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?],” in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 65.

⁷⁹⁰ Rudi Supek, “Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba? [Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?],” in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 65.

communism', and 'economic reform' as the struggle for the 'final goal'—the increase of the standard of living!"⁷⁹¹

In his text, Supek aimed to show the gap between words and deeds, and thus to point out the fundamental differences between politicians and humanist intelligentsia. On the question of whether the "high standard of living must be the most important and the final social goal," Supek referenced a poll that showed that politicians agreed the most (more than 72% of those asked), while the intelligentsia agreed the least (38.4%), which was also less than journalists.⁷⁹² This was to show that the humanist-minded intelligentsia was in a way keeping the politicians accountable for their promises concerning socialist ideals; to them the first and most important was human emancipation, which was not simply material but also spiritual. It was almost in the nature of humanist intellectuals, as Supek explained, to position themselves as skeptical towards the achieved results and the existing reality and conditions, while "politicians tend to view the existing reality through rose-tinted glasses."⁷⁹³ As Supek explained, the politicians displayed "a constant optimism" which is a character of political pragmatism. The duty of humanist intelligentsia was to be turned towards the future, always seeking a more ideal condition.

Continuing along the lines of the mythologization of reality, Mihailo Marković argued that the philosophical tradition established and canonized by the institutionalized culture

⁷⁹¹ Rudi Supek, "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict Supek, Rudi. "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?]," in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 66.

⁷⁹² Rudi Supek, "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict Supek, Rudi. "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?]," in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 72.

⁷⁹³ Rudi Supek, "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict Supek, Rudi. "Politički pragmatizam—izvor sukoba?[Political pragmatism—a source of conflict?]," in *Humanistička inteligencija i politika* [Humanist intelligentsia and politics], by Rudi Supek, (Zagreb: Studentski centar Sveučilišta, 1971), 73.

presented itself in the form of an ideological myth.⁷⁹⁴ Marković reflected as well on the liberal and Marxist myths:

The first time, it is a positivist-liberal myth of free society and positive knowledge which ensures progress, power over nature, abundance, and security. The second time, it is the eschatological, quasi-Marxist myth of social equality, brotherhood, desalination, the nonexistence of conflict as an unavoidable final goal of history.⁷⁹⁵

That is, at the beginning of the 1970s, *Praxis* intellectuals saw liberalism and Marxism as having ‘tricked’ human beings. In the first case, liberalism was presented as the natural way of thinking, the only way to which one must adjust. The second myth aimed at attracting the “revolted human being,” and persuading the human being to submit to those social forces which, “as he was being told, work in the interest of history.”⁷⁹⁶ In both ways, Marković concluded that both liberalism and Marxism and their myths endeavored to make human beings adjust to their logic.⁷⁹⁷ The resistance to these myths, he argued, was most commonly expressed in the shape of nihilism or utopia. The third possibility of this resistance was critical thought, which saw nihilism as powerless and utopia as an abstract and irrational form of resistance to “spiritual enslavement.”⁷⁹⁸ The third possibility of the resistance to myth and mystified reality forms the “position of optimal historical possibilities of its time, from the position of concrete historical praxis.”⁷⁹⁹ Siding with the third alternative, as Marković explained, this position did not accept the given, contemporary reality, but nor did it approach it as a fake, bad reality that ought to be only an object of hate and destruction. This position distinguished between actual and potential. More importantly, as he highlighted, it did not take any givenness as a total

⁷⁹⁴ The editorial board included Jovan Arandelović, Mihailo Đurić, Miladin Životić, Mihailo Marković, and Dragoljub Mićunović. In his book published in 1972 (which was a collection of his essays published in the aftermath of 1968 and up until 1971), by *Srpska književna zadruga*.

⁷⁹⁵ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations], (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 5.

⁷⁹⁶ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 5.

⁷⁹⁷ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 5.

⁷⁹⁸ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 6.

⁷⁹⁹ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 6.

expression of human nature as a natural condition of human beings. From that, it came out that the “present time, present givenness” was not something “one should celebrate, praise, without any reserve ...”⁸⁰⁰ At the same time, being an active part of the present did not mean a total acceptance of that life, reconciliation with it, and staying within its borders.⁸⁰¹ Instead, it implied going to the limits: “feeling them as limits means having a critical position, means seeing the possibility of being outside those limits.”⁸⁰²

As one can see, the issue of relating to reality and breaking through the ‘false consciousness’ of ideologies, or through the reality as presented by the official discourses, was one of the main areas of the intellectuals’ engagement. Andrija Krešić also wrote a book with a similar theme, *Political Society and Political Mythology*, where the overall argument pushed for the autonomy of philosophy which was not supposed to be an *ancilla* of politics nor a mere apology for politics. It was in the ideology that philosophy lost itself and ceased to be nonconformist and “the critique of the existing order as well as an anticipation of the future.” It was published in 1968, and the book examined the relationship between philosophy, ideology, politics, and mystification—following the experience of 1968 and the aftermath in Yugoslavia, these became even more relevant and affirmed among the *Praxis* intellectuals.

The ever-growing closeness between philosophers, social scientists, and politicians in socialist society was an issue for *Praxis* philosophers. They saw their colleagues being “hired” by the politicians to create the most “effective methodologies for the existing political practices”—which *Praxis* intellectuals saw as the result of the positivist orientations in Western philosophy. The ever-growing positivism in philosophy was also entering the socialist societies, such that the previously denounced disciplines—like “functionalist sociology, symbolic logic, theory of meaning, and cybernetics, were translated on a mass scale.”⁸⁰³

⁸⁰⁰ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 6.

⁸⁰¹ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 7.

⁸⁰² Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 7.

⁸⁰³ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 425.

While they were warning about this tendency, after 1968, the intellectuals argued that the suppression of a critical attitude remained even stronger. From their perspectives, 1968 confirmed that not much has changed in that field.⁸⁰⁴ Communism, socialist equality, socialist democracy, freedom of the individual, self-government, and other values of socialist humanism were seen as being “increasingly absent from the technological vocabulary of the theoreticians.”⁸⁰⁵ The problems of humanism, as they saw it, were therefore reduced to the questions of how to achieve a moral human being perfectly adapted to the given society, and a methodology of successful interiorization of the authoritarian whole in individual consciousness and behavior.⁸⁰⁶ When discussing Western communist parties, Životić argued that they were no longer “guided in their practice by the values of Marx’s humanism.”⁸⁰⁷ According to Životić, their practice and theoretical ideals look more like the *Realpolitik* of social democracy.⁸⁰⁸

That is, in the 1970s, the issue of ideology became an important way of describing their realities. Ideology as a concept was also borrowed from Daniel Bell, but also from Raymond Aron and Theodor Geiger, who all discussed the overarching theme concerning the ‘end of ideology.’⁸⁰⁹ Životić cited Theodor Geiger, a German sociologist who discussed the ideology in relation to the ‘formation’ and ‘representation’ of reality in his *Ideology and Truth* (1953). Namely, as Životić explained for Geiger, “ideology is a set of evaluative statements which are not scientific,” nor can they be empirically verified. Moreover, in his book Geiger discussed ideology and its role in the creation of mass society, a theme close to *Praxis* intellectuals. These evaluative statements were philosophical, ethical, aesthetical, and political statements, that were based on the so-called immediate judgment of taste. Thus, it was “senseless to treat these

⁸⁰⁴ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 426.

⁸⁰⁵ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 426.

⁸⁰⁶ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 426–427.

⁸⁰⁷ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 423.

⁸⁰⁸ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 423.

⁸⁰⁹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 427.

statements as if they were true or false.”⁸¹⁰ Ideological statements therefore arise “when a bias or prejudice is expressed” as if they were objective and scientific truths. However, while Geiger believed that these statements based on biased judgment would disappear in the coming age of science, Životić was not so hopeful.

The future was thus not bright: it seemed, as Životić argued, “to belong to specialists and engineers, to the technical intelligentsia and political bureaucracy without ideals.”⁸¹¹ This new age transformed philosophers into social engineers and theory into practical knowledge that was concerned mainly with the question of “how to solve concrete” problems in the framework of the reality at hand, “disregarding the question of what this reality is.”⁸¹² A pragmatic and more hands-on approach to theory thus replaced the ideals of the humanistically minded critical position towards reality that these intellectuals propagated: “The forthcoming age belongs to technology and mass culture.”⁸¹³

Životić painted a bleak image of present-day societies, which he saw as characterized by “intellectual emptiness and disintegration,” yet adding that new forms of resistance could be found. He presented the alternatives, one put forth by A.D. Sakharov, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, a founding member of the Committee on Human Rights in the USSR in 1970, and the author of the manifesto *Thoughts on Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom* (1968). As Životić referenced him, Sakharov argued that the mutual contradictions will bring about cooperation and assistance. In this manifesto, Sakharov advanced the thesis of convergence—“the historical rapprochement of the socialist and capitalist systems, accompanied by democratization, demilitarization, social and scientific, and technical progress—as the only alternative to the destruction of humanity.”⁸¹⁴ Životić, however, added

⁸¹⁰ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 427.

⁸¹¹ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 428.

⁸¹² Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 428.

⁸¹³ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 428.

⁸¹⁴ Miladin Životić, “The end of the ideal or of ideology?”, *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

that while an affluent society might appear, it will be still within the limits of bureaucratic structures and thus a society without personal freedoms.⁸¹⁵

Another option, more aligned with *Praxis* members' positions, was linked to the resistance of the young generation to "affluent society with its authoritarian manipulation of human beings."⁸¹⁶ Životić cited Ernst Bloch who commented on the student demonstrations: "[Bertolt] Brecht's words: 'I clearly see the goal, but I do not know how to approach it' are no longer applicable. On the contrary, it seems that one knows how to approach the goal but is not able to see it clearly. If the existing reality does not comprise of the distant goal there are no corresponding nearer goals either."⁸¹⁷ Životić connected the recent experience in Yugoslavia, and particularly in Belgrade, with Marx's ideal of a self-governing social community. He argued that the young Yugoslav generation's goal was precisely that. However, the demands of the new generation could not be "satisfied by the ritual gesture of their joining the Party."⁸¹⁸ Therefore, he argued that the new society must live in the form of practical freedom, in order "to find its own more humane future in the context of radical de-bureaucratization."⁸¹⁹ Therefore, he implicitly referenced his disappointment in the co-option of the student movements in Yugoslavia, and their appeasements by the Party.

Finally, the re-examinations also included more indirect discussions concerning the importance of tradition for the revolution. In his book, Ljubomir Tadić examined the conservative reactions to the French Revolution, in order to show the example of the "first attempt to translate Enlightenment thought into a social and political reality."⁸²⁰ Tadić understood ideology as analyzed by Karl Mannheim, as a reflection of the ideas of the dominant

⁸¹⁵ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

⁸¹⁶ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

⁸¹⁷ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

⁸¹⁸ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

⁸¹⁹ Miladin Životić, "The end of the ideal or of ideology?", *Praxis* No. 3-4, (1969): 429.

⁸²⁰ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd, Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 89.

groups that aim to keep their status quo, while he and his *Praxis* colleagues were the representatives of the groups belonging to the realm of utopia, aiming to transform society and bring about human emancipation. In this book, he inquired into tradition, and the turn towards the past started to dominate the thought of some of the intellectuals, especially those from Serbia. The importance of tradition was in order to ground their work in the context in which universalist humanism was losing ground. As Tadić claimed, referencing Edmund Burke, in “political science the experience that has been amassed cannot be exchanged with just a few basic formulas which are according to the need uttered or declaimed: ‘philosophy,’ ‘enlightenment,’ ‘liberalism,’ ‘rights of a human being.’”⁸²¹ Tadić implicitly referenced to the intellectuals’ interpretation of the ways in which the party leadership was using these terms in an empty way. In this book he discusses various aspects connected to human rights, including freedom of thinking. He cited Wilhelm von Humbolt, for whom “freedom... did not only develop the force of an individual, but through this strengthening of an individual it contributes to the development of one noble spiritual structure.”⁸²² Following Humboldt, Tadić argued that the task of the state would be only to serve the security of the citizen, so that the citizen could have free fulfillment of his rights.

Finally, by going through the development of European political thought, focusing on the French Revolution, Tadić was reading into it the experience of the Yugoslav revolution. This is clear when he argues talking about the French Revolution that:

One can claim that the terrorist elements in all revolutions, and not only French, are inherit to the petit-bourgeois layers that are climbing to power, and who are not, due to their undefined and uncertain position in the social and social-psychological sense, capable of governing with the assistance of normal democratic tools, without application of the repression.⁸²³

⁸²¹ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 89.

⁸²² Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 108.

⁸²³ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 192.

Clearly Tadić meant also the socialist revolution, as he cited in a footnote Rosa Luxembourg and her Critique of the Russian Revolution. In defending the importance of the freedom of human beings, including the freedom of the press, Tadić also referred to François-Noël Babeuf, who argued that without this freedom the French citizens were being turned into “executive bodies, into automats in order to deprive us of all our rights so that you can shut our mouths.”⁸²⁴

New Left/Old Left in the 1970s: Different Visions of Humanism

This section focuses more on the different perceptions of humanism existing among the Yugoslav philosophers and intellectuals. *Praxis* were challenged not only by the Party, but also by their colleagues, as can be seen in the afterword written for the book *What did Lenin really say*, by Franz Marek and Ernst Fischer, members of the Communist Party of Austria and representatives of the Eurocommunist current in the 1970s.⁸²⁵ The author of the afterword, philosopher Andrija B. Stojković (1924–) a student of Dušan Nedeljković who was mainly interested in the genealogies of the philosophy in Serbia (namely, writing about Dositej Obradović, Jovan Žujović, Vladimir Jovanović, publishing a manuscript in 1970, entitled *The Beginnings of philosophy among the Serbs: From Saint Sava to Dositej on the Grounds of Folk Wisdom*), reflected on the conflict within the Yugoslav philosophical and Marxist community, splitting it into two currents. The first were the Marxist determinists, scientific socialists, a traditional strain of Marxist thinkers who were aiming to develop Marxism on the basics of the laws of social development, following closely the “ideals of the working movement”; the second, anthropological-humanist current, saw the task of Marxist theory and praxis mainly in the “rejection of everything achieved as a facticity and in the ‘rootless critique of everything

⁸²⁴ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 199.

⁸²⁵ See, Silvio Pons, “The Rise and Fall of Eurocommunism,” in Leffler MP, Westad OA, eds. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, (Cambridge University Press; 2010), 45–65.

existing' (capitalist and socialist), from the positions of freedom and humanism."⁸²⁶ Stojković highlighted that these currents approach Lenin's contribution to Marxism differently: Marxist anthropologists, that is *Praxis*, similarly to Western Marxism treat Lenin as a "practician, a revolutionary and statesman, and as a theoretician they see him as a footnote of Marx."⁸²⁷ Stojković belonged himself to the other strain of Marxist thinkers in Yugoslavia, who saw Lenin not just as a statesman but primarily as a philosopher, but who was also regarded as Stalinist by *Praxis* intellectuals. From the perspective of this strain of Marxist thought in Yugoslavia, often referenced as 'dogmatic' by *Praxis*, Lenin was also a Marxist humanist who "did not aim towards utopian but towards scientific creation and practice of socialism."⁸²⁸ He nevertheless recognized the importance of the anthropological-humanist strain in their critique of the dogmatization and canonization of Lenin's positions by Stalin and other contemporary Marxists, but he claims that it is clear that they did not fully understand his thought. Frank Marek and Ernst Fischer, however, were moderate in their approach to Lenin, and did not juxtapose him to Marx and to Marxism, which the *Praxis* intellectuals generally did.⁸²⁹

The reexaminations of their socialist practice and theory, as well as the reexaminations of the party's approaches to the new realities following 1968, also continued through the lens of 1968 and the New Left. The New Left was described by Marković as a political movement that encompassed the most diverse oppositional groups:

those who fought against the war in Vietnam, those who rebelled against the authoritarian structures at the universities and other social institutions, the organizers who hailed from the poorest and most oppressed minorities that lived in ghettos, fighters for equal civic rights [*građanska prava*], workers who went on strikes, or as they did in 1968 in France, occupy factories without being allowed by the syndicates, communities who want to fight notwithstanding the

⁸²⁶ Andrija B. Stojković, "Pogovor [Introduction]," in Ernst Fischer, Franc Marek, *Šta je Lenjin stvarno rekao* [What did Lenin really say], (Beograd: Minerva Subotica, 1970), 181.

⁸²⁷ Andrija B. Stojković, "Pogovor [Introduction]," in Ernst Fischer, Franc Marek, *Šta je Lenjin stvarno rekao* [What did Lenin really say], (Beograd: Minerva Subotica, 1970), 182.

⁸²⁸ Andrija B. Stojković, "Pogovor [Introduction]," in Ernst Fischer, Franc Marek, *Šta je Lenjin stvarno rekao* [What did Lenin really say], (Beograd: Minerva Subotica, 1970), 182.

⁸²⁹ Andrija B. Stojković, "Pogovor [Introduction]," in Ernst Fischer, Franc Marek, *Šta je Lenjin stvarno rekao* [What did Lenin really say], (Beograd: Minerva Subotica, 1970), 183.

opportunistic positions of their parties, artists and intellectuals who do not wish to be part of the consumer societies and to sell themselves to the establishment, but wish to preserve their freedom... Finally, the youth revolved to against the hypocrisy and alienation of their well-situated parents, in the search for genuine humane values, for a different style of life.⁸³⁰

One could argue that the *Praxis* philosophers saw themselves as part of the New Left movement—precisely as those communists or socialists who did not wish to be opportunistic and instead were arguing against the commodification of Yugoslav socialism in the context of the economic reforms and transformations of Yugoslav society. The New Left discussions helped *Praxis* also position itself in contrast to the official Yugoslav discourse, which they implicitly saw as the ‘old left,’ due to the fact that from 1968 the Party took a more conservative turn, becoming also more dominant in Yugoslav politics, as a response to the 1968 crisis. The ‘new left’ in this case was the one part of the intelligentsia that was upholding the previously discussed ideals. Or, to connect it with the overall criticism of the emphasis of the Party on pragmatism, the New Left was utopian and was confronting the pragmatism of the political leadership in quenching the previously promised ideals.

The ‘old left’, which included the Party and its leadership, therefore failed in their eyes to put their ideals into practice or to at least align reality closer to them. At the same time, *Praxis* intellectuals faced theoretical deadlock: on the one hand, they demanded the ideals be put into practice, and at the same time their theoretical framework was defined by humanism and humanist ideals which they saw as operating through the continuous development of the human being’s potential, thus conserving these ideals was dangerous. That is, arguing that these ideals have been achieved already, from their perspective was a rhetorical device that claimed the achievement of the liberation of human beings. Contrary to this, they argued for the need to constantly rethink one’s present, by always being turned towards the future with a critical

⁸³⁰ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 224.

mind, never accepting the present as a condition worth preserving. This was a theoretical paradox where *Praxis* intellectuals wished to achieve the ideals of human freedom and potential, but they were at the same time wary of claims that these ideals had already been fulfilled or, indeed, that they could ever be. Accepting such claims would hinder critical engagement with their socialist reality and human development. To put it simply, for them, human liberation and the development of human potential was an ongoing process, rather than something that could be achieved. Thus, the utopian element, which they shared with the New Left movements abroad, was a defining one.

In the post-1968 context, Praxis intellectuals started their criticism of the Party leadership more openly and strongly, and to a great extent this was based on the Party's disrespect of human rights in Yugoslavia (right to assembly, freedom of speech, etc.). While not necessarily calling Tito and the Party 'old left,' one could see that this was how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the Party. Moreover, in tracing the 'genealogy' of the old left, they saw the LCY leadership as closely related to the Bolshevik Party organization, arguing that the leadership was profoundly influenced by Bolshevik strategy, even though it was a 'reformist' stream at least in the immediate post-1948 context. In historicizing the old left, Mihailo Marković noted, it has been ideologically and organizationally formed around the Third International, and its strategy was based on the unavoidable fall of capitalism, for which the most important type of political organization was 1) a party of the Leninist type, and 2) a model of the new society—Soviet state socialism, which has already gone through deep crisis in the 1930s (the crisis standing for Stalin's purges, the pact with Hitler and the partition of Poland, and the war with Finland) which had alienated many revolutionaries and "almost destroyed the leftist movement in many countries."⁸³¹ During the Second World War, the resistance to fascism and, subsequently, the final victory rekindled some hopes and new

⁸³¹ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 225.

enthusiasm concerning the development of socialism. However, as Marković and his colleagues reinterpreted the aftermath, the revolution also brought about the “quick material progress, privileges, and unexpected concentration of power, as well as authoritarian relations. The crisis of the old left in the socialist world was expressing itself on the one hand in the many authoritarians’ practical actions, and on the other, in the form of theoretical ‘revisionism.’”⁸³² The crisis following WWII started first with the Yugoslav split with Cominform, followed by the workers’ uprising in East Germany in 1953, and the Polish and Hungarian anti-Stalinist movements in 1956.⁸³³

‘Revisionism’ was, therefore, one of the responses to the crisis of the old left, which started to develop in the framework of the *Petőfi Circle*,⁸³⁴ the Polish magazine *Po prostu*, as well as through many reforms in Yugoslavia. This revisionism was different as Marković argued from the classical one, that is, the revisionism that occurred in the framework of the Second International. According to Marković, this revisionism, in contrast to the previous one, led by German social democrat Eduard Bernstein, did not believe in the reforms. It was also “skeptical towards bourgeois-parliamentary and syndicalist methods of struggle, and it was loudly against the emphasized economism of social democracy.”⁸³⁵ At the same time, Marković noted that this new revisionism was “spiritually very akin” with the New Left, though it did not affect it directly.⁸³⁶ The revisionism of the New Left was directed against all authoritarian structures in the socialist world (including the domination of one nation over another), or internal bureaucratic repression. Especially in the realm of culture, this “neo-revisionism brought into question the monopoly of the state and the Party” and rejected socialist realism as the only method permitted for cultural and artistic expression. To Marković,

⁸³² Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 225.

⁸³³ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 225.

⁸³⁴ See, A. B. Hegedüs, “The Petofi Circle: The forum of reform in 1956,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 13(2) (1997): 108–133.

⁸³⁵ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 226.

⁸³⁶ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 226.

this was an expression of the fight for full freedom of artistic and scientific creation, and thus, the fight for the rights of human beings.⁸³⁷ While Titoism was a type of revisionism (which, for them it denoted anti-dogmatism and separation from the Marxist-Leninist interpretations of the USSR), in their eyes at least in the 1950s and early 1960s, by the 1970s it was clear that while it had its revisionist moment in the context of 1948, the leadership of the Yugoslav LCY was nevertheless traditionally and historically embedded in the ‘old left’ formed by the Bolshevik party organization, placing primary importance on authority and hierarchy. Thus, the Yugoslav Party was also regressing in its policies, slowly disavowing its own proclamations of human rights. As Marković would later indicate, the Russian Revolution did not preserve the rights that the workers had before in the capitalist society, and before they were ‘liberated’—the right to organize in the independent syndicates, to collectively bargain, and the right to strike.⁸³⁸

Marković and *Praxis* saw themselves as revisionists in the 1950s, or neo-revisionists, similar to the New Left. While they were revisionists within the Party, they continued along the path while the Party ceased to be reformist in that sense. Philosophically, as Marković argued, this neo-revisionism was important as it brought the “real renaissance of the forgotten Marx’s humanism,” complemented and refreshed with the elements of other important contemporary philosophies. The Party, however, stuck firmly to its Marxist-Leninist positions and kept its classical Marxist interpretations of history, human beings, class, and so on.

The character of the New Left in general, according to Marković, was against capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. It negated all authoritarian relations and was always demanding radical economic and political democratization, real equality, and self-government.⁸³⁹ While demand for the destruction of everything existing was justified, according to Marković, the

⁸³⁷ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 226.

⁸³⁸ Mihailo Marković, “Odnos između političkih i socijalno-ekonomskih ljudskih prava [The relationship between political and socio-economic human rights],” *Theoria* (1987): 6.

⁸³⁹ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 230.

New Left lacked a vision of the future and a program, as was already mentioned by his colleagues in 1968. The New Left was seen as being “anti” in its character—anti-organization, anti-culture, and anti-university. At the same time, Marković and *Praxis* did not reject this negation, insofar as it was the strongest response to the contemporary bourgeois and bureaucratic society. This response was seen by them as being much more efficient in challenging the present realities, than what the traditional left in that moment had. Praxis intellectuals attributed the ‘positive sides’ of the New Left to their own activities, and clearly saw their role in Yugoslavia as analogous to the New Left in the West. The traditional left, therefore, has lost its “steam” and was starting to repeat itself in its critique of the capitalist societies, which did not look the same as they did in Marx’s, Engel’s, and Lenin’s analyses. The traditional communist left, as Markovic highlighted, was not aware of the problem of the consumer society and the fact that coercion was found in different layers of social and political life. The old left could also not grasp the problem in the fact that the political power “believed that the withering away of the state and power will be delayed for some far future.”⁸⁴⁰ Marković further noted what

[Jean-Jacques] Rousseau, a pure theoretician suspected: that the representatives of the people could always betray the interest of people—Lenin, the practitioner did not take seriously into consideration [this aspect]... he was desperate over the quick bureaucratization, but the phenomenon of bureaucratization he saw in the rise of the number of clerks, and not in the unlimited power of the leadership of the party.⁸⁴¹

Thus, not understanding the roots of bureaucratization blinded the traditional left to the problem of power and bureaucratization, which was understood well, disclosed, and revealed by the New Left.

Fuad Muhić, a philosopher and political scientist from Sarajevo, who was not a member of the inner circle of *Praxis* but was an interlocutor of the circle, reflected on the division

⁸⁴⁰ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 230.

⁸⁴¹ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 232.

between the new and the old left, placing the *Praxis* circle in the New Left.⁸⁴² Writing from a somewhat more historical distance than Marković, Muhić nevertheless more openly saw the overlaps between the New Left in the West, which culminated in the student movement in Yugoslav society. To Muhić, the term New Left had an objectivizing importance, in the sense of theory and praxis of those groups in Yugoslavia that acted according to the program of the New Left, although they often refused to be identified as such. This refusal might not have been due to the theoretical disagreements, but mainly due to the fact that it could invite negative comments as the ‘New Left’ had a more controversial connotations. Fuad Muhić argued that the program of the New Left in Yugoslavia was already explicated in the 1960s when some intellectual groups aimed to provide new interpretations and approaches to Marxism and Leninism. “In that, there was nothing malicious,” Muhić claimed, and from then until the mid-1970s, the path of this New Left could be followed through its “confrontation with some dogmatic structures in our society—it was a path through which one was supposed to implement a different historical and theoretical experience from that inherited in the administrative period in our society.”⁸⁴³ Right after that, the main dialogue that was established with dogmatism was transformed to the revalorization of humanist categories of Marxist teaching (the concept of the human being, human essence, the concept of praxis, alienation, and reification, humanistic and technological socialism).⁸⁴⁴ However, for the theoreticians of the New Left, the idea of a ‘hard ideology’ was foreign, and they argued that it could not be a guide for the future. In this way the program of this stream of the New Left could be understood

⁸⁴² Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 89.

⁸⁴³ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 90.

⁸⁴⁴ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 89.

as “an idea of spontaneity and as that which is from the Marxist point of view very important: the idea of non-intervention, the idea of free deliberations in all segments of society.”⁸⁴⁵

The issues between the old left and the New Left in Yugoslavia according to him, arose when the New Left “overemphasized” the rehabilitated dimension of Marxism—or, as he argued, stretched it too far. Muhić analyzed this ‘clash’ as an analogy, just as Marxism understood from the perspective of positivism was hostile (in the name of science) to humanist “speculations,” a “stream” of Marxist humanism was becoming more and more “allergic towards scientific categories of Marxism.”⁸⁴⁶ Yet from his position, which we could describe as being neither a vocal humanist—thus emphasizing the humanist aspect of Marxism above all else—nor a dogmatist (prioritizing science), Muhić argued that Marxist humanism was not “brought into the corresponding relationship with realistic historical movements, nor situated in the correct social framework.” Muhić’s criticism of *Praxis* aimed to show their transhistorical approach to their present-day reality, and thus their inability to engage with their own context properly. For example, the category of praxis as a creative and self-creative activity of human beings could be a case and could be valid for every historical epoch, without regard to its internal contents.⁸⁴⁷ “The critique of everything existing,” the main motto of *Praxis*, if not defined on strictly Marxist positions, could be anarchistic, liberal, conservative, and so on. The notion of freedom as self-determination could also mean, as Muhić argued, one type of anarchy, that is if every human being, disregarding the historical tendencies of social movements, could self-determine itself [*samoodredi*]. Human rights, we could add, were radically understood by these intellectuals: that is, humanity was seen as the highest reference point, but what that meant was that the social aspects would be ignored as well as the political

⁸⁴⁵ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 90.

⁸⁴⁶ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 90.

⁸⁴⁷ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 91.

ones. We could say that for this reason, the nationalist turn was easier among some intellectuals—their human rights and dedication to humanity were genuine in so far as they spoke about the liberation of human beings—yet they were also always limited, limited to the European space, and also limited to what and whom they saw as belonging to humanity. It was a theoretical blindness and limit of the faculty of human beings that disregarded class as a category and placed instead the abstract figure of a human being, untied to any position and transhistorical.

Thus, the Marxist humanism of their stream, or the radical one, could fall into real danger and end up in uncritical abstraction, which Muhić suggested would not be far from a different type of dogmatism. Muhić, like the majority of Yugoslav intellectuals, was influenced by the LCY criticism of Stalinism, and was greatly influenced by Marxist humanism, yet he remained critical of it as well, and especially of the stream of Marxist humanism represented by *Praxis*. He saw the main benefit of humanism in the fact that it demystified socialism as a nonconflictual society.⁸⁴⁸ Yet, for him, it was problematic that one element of Marxist intellectuals—those gathered around *Praxis*—did not develop appropriately their intentions within the proletarian revolutionary program.

As he criticized *Praxis* intellectuals, he argued that they did not grasp that the very creative engagement of humanist Marxism represented an ethical and intellectual obligation and duty. Muhić claimed that their ideas of a critical relationship towards reality were sometimes going beyond historical projection and that they often forgot from such positions of negatively dialectical thinking (that is, from the position of “critique of all existing conditions”), that the critique should not turn into an “a priori nihilism which was something entirely foreign to authentic Marxist thinking.”⁸⁴⁹ Following this critique, we could also argue

⁸⁴⁸ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 92.

⁸⁴⁹ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 92.

that *Praxis* in fact adopted the New Left critique which (from their own perspectives) indeed did not provide any alternatives, but only demanded the importance of critical positions and a suspicious perspective towards reality. In such a state of hermeneutics of suspicion which they practiced through the “critique of all existing conditions,” they dissolved any possibility to build a system of thought that would provide a guide for the situations in which the country was becoming increasingly disintegrated. Thus, it became easy to hark back on the ethnicity of one group—it even was a necessity—and to argue for the human rights of one group while entirely ignoring the rights of the other groups. We could add that, the exclusion of the experiences of the anti-colonial liberation movements from their theoretical positions, as well as the failure to establish connections with intellectuals from these countries, shows a tendency among *Praxis* intellectuals to see ‘humanity’ mainly from a European perspective. This approach introduced later in their theoretical perspective a dichotomy between ‘barbaric’ and ‘civilized’ nations, a distinction they would apply when describing Serbian experiences under the ‘yoke of the Ottoman Empire,’ seeing Kosovo Albanians as the “remnants” of this uncivilized oppression.

As Zhivka Valiavicharska notes, Marxist humanists’ contemporaries and anti-colonial intellectuals such as Aimé Césaire or Frantz Fanon created different humanist ideas which they formed through their critiques of the Eurocentric and racist notions of the “human.”⁸⁵⁰ *Praxis* intellectuals, as we saw before, did not interact with intellectuals from the ‘Global South’; instead, their main engagement was with Western intellectuals and Western aspects of humanist thought. Their concept of the human was a foundation for a radical vision of liberation of the whole of humanity, yet we can also add that it was limited and as such, allowed for the appearance of the development of ethnonationalist aspects and the development of human

⁸⁵⁰ Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 5.

rights language which was exclusionary, and which operated on the positions of ‘civilizational hierarchies.’

Mihailo Đurić, a member of the inner *Praxis* circle, was removed from his teaching position at the University in Belgrade and imprisoned for two years (his sentence was later reduced to nine months), due to his critical remarks during the debate concerning the constitutional amendments. In 1971, Đurić warned that Yugoslavia was practically destroyed with these amendments and that nationalism would take over the country, resulting in a situation in which Serbian people would face existential dangers. For Muhić, abstract humanism could explain why a member “of the New Left,” Đurić, propagated nationalism and right-wing politics.⁸⁵¹ In Muhić’s opinion, this was inevitably a consequence of the abstract nature of the positions held by the New Left.

Endorsing the opposition, also found in Marx’s early works, “between ‘human being’ and ‘animal,’ ‘human being’ and ‘beast,’ and ‘human being’ and ‘nature,’” *Praxis* intellectuals embraced the “evolutionary developmentalism and anthropocentrism of bourgeois and European Enlightenment thought.” This can be seen from the perspective of *Praxis*’ emphasis on the anthropological aspects of Marx’s thought, which inevitably led to the glorification of a ‘man’ or a ‘human being,’ their emphasis on the heritage of Enlightenment thought, as well as their insistence on the importance of the French Revolution and the bourgeois revolutions for the history of human emancipation. Yet in their Eurocentric frameworks, “they reproduced the colonial premises, anthropocentric binaries, and patriarchal logics of European humanist thought.”⁸⁵² Zhivka Valiavicharska calls such ideas *hegemonic humanism*—describing post-Stalinist humanism in Bulgaria, as using “universalizing notions of the human, which remained

⁸⁵¹ Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 94.

⁸⁵² Fuad Muhić, *SKJ i Kulturno stvaralaštvo* [LCY and cultural creativity] (Beograd: Mladost Beograd, 1975), 94.

blind to gender, sexual, racial, and ethnic difference, and adhered to universal notions of ‘human need’ and ‘human oppression.’”⁸⁵³

The demise of a human being?: Antihumanism on the rise and the weakening of intellectual references

By 1971, the *Praxis* intellectuals linked the national question with human being, at least implicitly. In discussing the national question at the beginning of 1971, Marković argued that in order to pose the national question one ought to place it at the universal level and thus link it with basic human rights.⁸⁵⁴ Moreover, the national question was a question of general human liberation. The national question presupposed “a collective made of human individuals, with individual needs and nonalienated basic rights.”⁸⁵⁵ At the same time, the excessive nationalist expressions were viewed by these intellectuals as antihumanism. In this period, however, *Praxis* intellectuals were facing challenges insofar as theoretical antihumanism was gaining strength in philosophy, making their positions more difficult to defend. The *Praxis* intellectuals were losing their reference point and as a result, were attempting to create a new referential framework that would align with their claims and demands.

Therefore, the issue of national rights and the national question could also be approached from the perspective of the rising challenges put forth by “theoretical antihumanism.” Especially among the French philosophers in the 1960s and the early 1970s, antihumanism became an important point of controversy. This ‘humanist controversy’ dates back to 1965, and Erich Fromm’s edited anthology on socialist humanism, which included many scholars from Eastern and Central Europe, including some *Praxis* members. Louis Althusser, who also submitted a contribution titled “Marxism and Humanism,” was kindly

⁸⁵³ Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 10–11.

⁸⁵⁴ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 90.

⁸⁵⁵ Mihailo Marković, *Preispitivanja* [Reexaminations] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 90.

rejected by Fromm.⁸⁵⁶ Moreover, it should be added that the young Marx's text on humanism, defined the nature of radicalism in theory. Yet, for intellectuals in East Central Europe, radicalism meant "grasping things by the root, and that root is 'man,'" as famously stated by Marx, while for the increasing number of Western counterparts at least from the mid-1960s onwards, radical theorizing progressively assumed "an explicitly anti-humanist position, or 'leaving man behind.'"⁸⁵⁷

The French 'May 1968' was seen as "a resurgence of humanism."⁸⁵⁸ At the same time, in philosophy, the opposite seems to have been the case, as antihumanist ideas were put forth by some of the important intellectuals. For example, Michel Foucault declared the 'death of man' in his *The Order of Things* (1966), and Althusser defined humanism as an ideology, thus proposing to speak openly about the "theoretical anti-humanism" or "Marx's philosophical anti-humanism," which "reduces to ashes the philosophical (theoretical) myth of the man."⁸⁵⁹ *Praxis* philosophers, as shown previously, participated in intellectual exchanges with Sartre, Lucien Goldmann, Serge Mallet, and Kostas Axelos, and so, when antihumanism became a dominant philosophical stream in French thought, they closely followed its development. Symbolically, 1971 was marked by the deaths of two important critical Marxist thinkers and role models of *Praxis* intellectuals—György Lukács and Lucien Goldmann, two important contributors to the humanist version of Marxism and references for *Praxis* intellectuals.

Louis Althusser was one of the most unapologetic critics of the abstract notion of a 'human.' Althusser was also seen by *Praxis* as a Stalinist, and allegedly he submitted an article to the *Praxis* journal in 1965, yet the editors rejected it on the grounds of being too dogmatic

⁸⁵⁶ Nikolay Karkov, "Decolonising Praxis in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue," *Comparative & Continental Philosophy*, Vol 7, No. 2 (2015): 183.

⁸⁵⁷ Nikolay Karkov, "Decolonising Praxis in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue," *Comparative & Continental Philosophy*, Vol 7, No. 2 (2015): 184.

⁸⁵⁸ Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 11.

⁸⁵⁹ Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 12.

and antihumanist. Rudi Supek reviewed the text arguing that it was a Stalinist positivism, while Milan Kangrga wrote that the “article is below the level, it is Stalinist.”⁸⁶⁰ Not willing to allow the intellectuals they deemed as dogmatic and antihumanist to engage in a dialogue speaks as well about the limited nature of the ‘open platform’ created by the journal. Althusser argued that addressing the political and philosophical limitations of Stalinist Marxism was an urgent political task of the Left. However, embracing the “human” as a subject of liberation was politically dangerous. “The return to the abstract and general concept of the human or “man” (in the singular), ironically and sadly, could only lead to another dead end.”⁸⁶¹ In it, he saw the return of bourgeois liberalism and argued that there is a “structural juncture between bourgeois liberalism and Marxist humanism.” The concept of “man” was not only liberalism in disguise, but it also produced its own exclusions and marginalizations.⁸⁶²

Next to Althusser, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan in France also held antihumanist positions. Veljko Korać reflected on this theoretical antihumanism in his article for *Praxis*. He explained that Foucault’s radical historicization of the “discourse of human being” claimed that it was a product of early modernity.⁸⁶³ As Korać interpreted Foucault, he claimed that the notion of ‘human’ was an invention of European culture, and that “man could, in the near future, be erased like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.”⁸⁶⁴ Thus, the more frequent criticism of the intellectuals by the Party leadership as being ‘abstract humanists’ coincided also with the growing anti-humanism in the theoretical framework in which they were operating. At the time, Michel Foucault’s theoretical insights into the critical aspects of

⁸⁶⁰ Milan Kangrga, Božidar Jakšić, and Nebojša Popov, eds., *Sloboda i nasilje: razgovor o časopisu Praxis i Korčulanskoj letnjoj školi* [Freedom and Violence: A Conversation about the Praxis Journal and the Korčula Summer School] (Beograd: Res publica, 2003), 29.

⁸⁶¹ Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 10.

⁸⁶² Zhivka Valiavicharska, *Restless History: Political Imaginaries and Their Discontents in Post-Stalinist Bulgaria* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 11.

⁸⁶³ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 431.

⁸⁶⁴ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 431. See also, Vicky Iakovou, “Castoriadis, Anti-Humanism and the Problem of Alienation,” *Ethics & Politics* 24, No. 3 (2022): 217–231.

humanism were gaining strength, and the *Praxis* intellectuals followed closely these theoretical developments. As Veljko Korać explained: “Against all that was, he [Foucault] stands for the new, the scientific and the progressive... Foucault tells us that humanism is rejected, precisely because it appears as a postulate of the dialectic of history, as well as that of human experience and alienation.”⁸⁶⁵

Critical of this turn, Korać connected these ideas as the expressions of pragmatism, as well as of scientism, arguing that “that is why in the current language of everyday pragmatism, one hears increasing talk about the so-called ‘abstract, non-specific humanism, as opposed to the concreteness of effectiveness of science and technology.”⁸⁶⁶ Contrasting ‘analytical reason’ (although we may add here ‘pragmatic reason’ as well) with ‘humanist reason,’ Korać argued that “one forgets that it is impossible to pose any fundamental philosophical problem today” without directly or indirectly taking into account the existential problems of the human being.⁸⁶⁷ In other words, one cannot have philosophy without a fundamental question of the human. The problem with philosophy which is based on analytical reason, and which negates dialects and humanism, is that it cannot take the “middle road position,” but instead needs to go all the way into rejecting all humanist ideas and traditions.

Korać therefore rejected the antihumanist trends in Western philosophy by aligning them with Stalinism. He argued that Althusser’s antihumanism was very close to a dogmatic way of thinking, “for it liberates itself from the uneasiness brought about by the dialectics of critical humanism.”⁸⁶⁸

While it was beyond doubt for *Praxis* intellectuals in the 1960s that humanism was worth defending, in the 1970s, it became a challenge for them to continue to defend these ideas of humanism—with the writings of philosophers like Foucault and Althusser, the question they

⁸⁶⁵ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 431.

⁸⁶⁶ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 431.

⁸⁶⁷ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 431.

⁸⁶⁸ Veljko Korać, “The Phenomenon of Theoretical Antihumanism,” *Praxis* No. 3-4 (1969): 433–434.

inevitably had to face was if it was even possible to argue for the idea. In 1970, Herbert Marcuse wrote that the concept of alienated and nonalienated labor became ‘a question mark.’ The progressive industrial society thus “put into question the idea of humanism, and radical Marx’s humanism.”⁸⁶⁹ In political practice, this also had an impact on the freedom of the press and critique—as Marcuse wrote, there were “many different newspapers and magazines, but the freedom which in a ‘magical’ way censors itself so that the official censure is in many cases not even necessary.”⁸⁷⁰ Thus, there was a general presence of anti-humanism or a general suspicion towards humanism. In such an environment, Marcuse argued that the humanities were also in danger. Marcuse, as well as *Praxis* philosophers, saw for instance psychology and sociology as becoming more suspectable to being governed. That is, the newly established field of Science of Human Relations became a necessary part of every large cooperation. As Marcuse argued, this science was nothing else but a “branch of scientific management for production increases.”⁸⁷¹ The industry had “discovered” that workers are humans [*ljudi*], as Marcuse claimed, and that one needs to treat them in a different way than “things.” The development of industrial psychology thus had one goal, and that was to “get to know their [workers’] souls,” in order to govern over them, so that they become more efficient.⁸⁷² Such an interpretation echoed, for example, the 1960 study by Loren Baritz, *The Servants of Power: A History of the Use of Social Science in American Industry*. Instead of seeing technological society as an ideology-free realm, according to both Marcuse and the *Praxis* intellectuals, it was precisely the place where false consciousness ruled.⁸⁷³ As Marcuse argued, “Humanism

⁸⁶⁹ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331–340, here 334.

⁸⁷⁰ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331–340, here, 335.

⁸⁷¹ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331–340, here, 335.

⁸⁷² Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331–340, here, 336.

⁸⁷³ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331–340, here, 338.

today represents the break with the existing... This cannot be covered with humane illusions. Resistance and power of the existing order are bigger than ever before.”⁸⁷⁴ Speaking about the anti-war protests, Marcuse argued that those who demonstrated against the war, “might not be socialist and might not have constructive ideas, but they broke through the false consciousness, they hate ‘society in abundance.’ And they did not wish to support it anymore. Their fight was a fight of humanism.”⁸⁷⁵

In Yugoslavia, at least in the context of *Praxis*, students questioned the practical aspect of the humanism propagated at the Korčula Summer School. At the summer school of 1971, students in attendance reflected on the overarching theme of the school, Reality and Utopia, putting forward the dilemma: “Is the humanist, anthropological-philosophical orientation of Korčula Summer School below the level of the demands of the modern time, in which practical engagement becomes the unavoidable imperative? Is it not the case that this orientation is moving in a too abstract realm which is at worse trans-historical?” The students asked whether one should finally transform this orientation into a concretely defined action program.⁸⁷⁶ In answering this criticism, Danko Grlić defended the circle of philosophers by arguing that the task of philosophy was not “a direct political activity.” According to Marx, as Grlić reminded the students, politics was a sphere of alienation.⁸⁷⁷ Philosophy, as Grlić argued, needs to develop “critical consciousness about all spheres of alienation.”⁸⁷⁸ In other words, for *Praxis* philosophers, philosophy was beyond politics, it was not supposed to provide any direct

⁸⁷⁴ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331-340, here, 340.

⁸⁷⁵ Herbert Marcuse, “Humanizam-ima li ga još? [Humanism - does it still exist?],” *Praxis* No. 3 (1970): 331-340, here, 340.

⁸⁷⁶ Fuad Muhić, “VIII sesija Korčulanske letnje škole [VIII session of the Korčula Summer School],” *Pregled:časopis za društvena pitanja* No. 10 (1971): 407.

⁸⁷⁷ Fuad Muhić, “VIII sesija Korčulanske letnje škole [VIII session of the Korčula Summer School],” *Pregled:časopis za društvena pitanja* No. 10 (1971): 407.

⁸⁷⁸ Fuad Muhić, “VIII sesija Korčulanske letnje škole [VIII session of the Korčula Summer School],” *Pregled:časopis za društvena pitanja* No. 10 (1971): 407.

answers on how to organize society, but to be a critical consciousness, constantly rethinking the reality.

In such circumstances, the question of what is a human and where is the essence of a human being to be found, brought in different answers. Ljubomir Tadić asked “is nationalism our destiny?” while his colleague from Zagreb, Kangrga, asked “is nationalism a human being’s destiny?” The essence of a human being to Kangrga was not found in the national identity.⁸⁷⁹ Tadić at the time, who spoke from the positions of human dignity and freedom, argued that “instead of socialist democracy, liberation of the individual, we have a retrograde return to the old arsenal of values and pseudo-values in order to find in nationalism its shelter.”⁸⁸⁰ To Tadić, nationalism appears when the “working class is disintegrated,” which to his mind was the case in Yugoslavia following the decentralization of the federation. Moreover, nationalism, according to him, arises when “socialist thought is disoriented.”⁸⁸¹ At the same time, however, Tadić saw Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* [*Reden an die deutsche Nation*] (1808) in which he called Germans *Urvolk*, to be simply a “metaphysical call to understand the essence of the love towards the fatherland.”⁸⁸² More importantly for Tadić, Fichte connected this love for the fatherland with the “cosmopolitan-universalist tradition,” as well as with the “world and humanity.”⁸⁸³ As Tadić concluded, nationalism (as patriotism) in Fichte does not exclude, but it presupposes cosmopolitanism and universalism.

The *Praxis* intellectuals were caught in the ambiguous relationship between theory and practice, which they aimed to keep separate at times, while at the same time, arguing for the

⁸⁷⁹ Milan Kangrga, “Zbilja i utopija [Reality and utopia],” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1972): 24.

⁸⁸⁰ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd,: Srpska književna zadruga (1972), 33.

⁸⁸¹ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd,: Srpska književna zadruga (1972), 4.

⁸⁸² Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd,: Srpska književna zadruga (1972), 110.

⁸⁸³ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd,: Srpska književna zadruga (1972), 110–111.

need to bridge the two, seemingly as a consequence of their insistence on a critical attitude which they saw as being part and parcel of the humanist perspective.

Conclusion

The leadership was creating a stricter border within which it was possible to discuss ideas like Serbian nationalism, which they saw rising among the intellectuals. At the same time, while acknowledging the importance of critique and freedom of opinion, from the perspective of the leadership which was dealing with the practical issues and problems in the Yugoslav society, it was important not to ‘misuse’ the freedoms. From their perspective, the freedoms demanded by these intellectuals carried in themselves ideas which were aligning with Cominform as well as with nationalism. To accept this type of ‘freedom’ meant, then, “to accept unfreedom.”⁸⁸⁴

The *Praxis* intellectuals, however, had a different understanding of freedom—that is freedom as a basic right of the individual, which was turned more towards the liberal conceptions of the right of a human being. This can be seen in their adherence to Bertrand Russell and his ideas of human rights, echoed also in the essay published in 1971 by Gajo Petrović. As already mentioned in the dissertation, Russell was seen as an important inspiration for the intellectuals around *Praxis*. For Petrović, he was an intellectual who was not only the first to recognize the aspects of what would later become known as Stalinism, but also an intellectual who did not, like many disappointed with Stalinism, “completely abandon socialist and other progressive positions.” Instead, as Petrović noted, “Russell in the very moment of disappointment managed to make a difference between the way in which Russia is building communism and communism itself.”⁸⁸⁵ As a philosopher and critical thinker, he was skeptical of those who “held some belief so strongly, that they are willing to bring poverty to the

⁸⁸⁴ “O Političkim tezama i stavovima izraženim na skupovima koje je organizovalo filozofsko društvo Srbije o temi ‘Socijalizam i kultura’ [About the political theses and views expressed at the gatherings organized by the Philosophical Society of Serbia on the topic of “Socialism and Culture”],” *Aktuelni politički pregled* No. 14 (1969): 46. HR-HDA-1780.

⁸⁸⁵ Gajo Petrović, “Bertrand Russel,” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1970): 222.

masses.”⁸⁸⁶ The skepticism was not directly towards communism, just like in the case of *Praxis*, but towards those in power defending their ideas dogmatically. Moreover, for Petrović, he was a thinker who also believed that the West was more capable of adopting “less painful” methods of socialism than those practiced in Russia. He also believed that socialism could continue in different directions.⁸⁸⁷ Finally, seeing him as a principled fighter for freedom and justice, and human rights, Petrovic almost self-referentially claimed that “Russell does not belong to the governing layers of societies and classes, but to those who, just like him, are ready to fight for a better human life.”⁸⁸⁸

The revisiting of their recent socialist experiences, but also of their own positionality in the development of Yugoslav socialism in the context of the crisis of 1968, sat alongside the increasing loss of their theoretical point of reference: European humanism, which traced its roots back to the Enlightenment. Tadić’s book *Tradition and Revolution*, while not discussing the crisis in Yugoslavia, can be read as an attempt to read the experiences of his own present into the historical development of liberalism and conservatism in Europe. More importantly, discussing liberalism and the competition that it includes in the economic field, he emphasized that competition occurs in culture as well—making culture become a place of bitter clashes. From the idea of the “inherent sociability, according to the immanent logic of the natural rights, would come the possibility of peace and understanding between people.”⁸⁸⁹ Culture thus, for him, represents the “best bridge for the establishment of the ideal of rationalism and natural rights.”⁸⁹⁰

The intellectuals around the journal *Praxis* used the language of human rights as stipulated by the Constitution to criticize the practices of the LCY. While freedom of

⁸⁸⁶ Gajo Petrović, “Bertrand Russel,” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1970): 222.

⁸⁸⁷ Gajo Petrović, “Bertrand Russel,” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1970): 223.

⁸⁸⁸ Gajo Petrović, “Bertrand Russel,” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1970): 225.

⁸⁸⁹ Gajo Petrović, “Bertrand Russel,” *Praxis* No. 1-2 (1970): 225.

⁸⁹⁰ Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija i revolucija* [Tradition and revolution] (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1972), 226.

expression also meant the potential growth of nationalist narratives, for them it meant an ability to express their dissatisfaction and critique the political leadership.

Conclusion: Human Being in Crisis—Marxist Humanism with a ‘Nationalist Face’

On September 15, 1985, a group of Slovenian intellectuals secretly met with some of their Serbian interlocutors in *kafana Mrak* [The Dark Tavern] in Ljubljana to discuss the possibility of a “third,” reformed Yugoslavia. The Slovenian intellectuals present at the discussion—Ivo Urbančič, Tine and Spomenka Hribar, France Bučar, Taras Kermauner, Milan Apih, Niko Grafenauer, Marjan Rožanc, and Jože Snoj—were associated with the journal *Nova Revija*, founded in 1982, which became important in generating a program for Slovenian independence. The Serbian intellectuals—Dobrica Ćosić, Mihailo Marković, and Ljubomir Tadić—had been associated with *Praxis*. The discussion in *kafana Mrak*, according to the Serbian novelist Dobrica Ćosić, lasted from 10:00 in the morning until 18:00 in the evening.⁸⁹¹ Thanks to the Yugoslav secret police, a stenographic transcript of the discussion was taken down, and the text gives an insight into the arguments and dilemmas these intellectuals faced in their dialogue. The Federal Secretariat for Internal Affairs [*Savezni sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove*] classified the document as a state secret, and the main actors of this meeting were called “the bourgeois right-wing” [*građanska desnica*], from Belgrade and Ljubljana.”⁸⁹² The overlapping positions among these intellectuals were based on the need to create the “conditions for democratic freedoms, press, speech, assembly, political organizing, cultural creation...”⁸⁹³ Thus, the demand for human rights was one of the most crucial aspects

⁸⁹¹ Dobrica Ćosić, *Piščevi zapisi (1981-1991)* [Writer's notes (1981-1991)] (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 2002), 162.

⁸⁹² M. Radović, “Neka saznanja i ocene u vezi sastanka pripadnika građanske deslice iz Beograda i Ljubljane, Beograd, 26.11.1985. [Some information and evaluations regarding the meeting of members of the civil society from Belgrade and Ljubljana, Belgrade, November 26, 1985.],” 1. ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II.

⁸⁹³ M. Radović, “Neka saznanja i ocene u vezi sastanka pripadnika građanske deslice iz Beograda i Ljubljane, Beograd, 26.11.1985. [Some information and evaluations regarding the meeting of members of the civil society from Belgrade and Ljubljana, Belgrade, November 26, 1985.],” 1. ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II.

they sought to achieve in Yugoslavia. Moreover, the intellectuals agreed that the “tragedy of the present-day situation” in Yugoslavia was a direct outcome of the ‘Bolshevization’ of Yugoslav socialist politics, “which characterized the entire development and establishment of Yugoslavia after 1941.”⁸⁹⁴

The intellectuals presented themselves as democrats and humanists.⁸⁹⁵ Mihailo Marković’s argument aligned with his earlier positions that the problem of democracy is indeed a problem of human freedom. Marković framed humanism as universal, and he, along with his colleagues, placed the human being and personality at the center of his philosophy. The human being, as he claimed, was firstly “a personality, individual, and only then can he be identified as a member of people, class, race, religion and so on.”⁸⁹⁶

While employing the universalist language and invoking human rights, the participants in this discussion consistently referred to historical and cultural differences between the Slovenian and Serbian nations, revealing their view that personality and the human being are closely intertwined with national and cultural identities. While they had initially intended to arrive at an idea of what a new, reformed Yugoslavia should look like, the references to these national-historical differences seemed to have hindered any common agreement. The Slovenian philosopher Taras Kermauner made a point about the lack of proper historical analyses concerning the ‘Yugoslav’ Revolution of 1941 which was partly to blame for their differences in approaching the meaning of Yugoslavia, as well as the meaning of socialism.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁴ M. Radović, “Neka saznanja i ocene u vezi sastanka pripadnika građanske deslice iz Beograda i Ljubljane, Beograd, 26.11.1985.[Some information and evaluations regarding the meeting of members of the civil society from Belgrade and Ljubljana, Belgrade, November 26, 1985.],” 2.

⁸⁹⁵ M. Radović, “Neka saznanja i ocene u vezi sastanka pripadnika građanske deslice iz Beograda i Ljubljane, Beograd, 26.11.1985.[Some information and evaluations regarding the meeting of members of the civil society from Belgrade and Ljubljana, Belgrade, November 26, 1985.],” 3.

⁸⁹⁶ M. Radović, “Neka saznanja i ocene u vezi sastanka pripadnika građanske deslice iz Beograda i Ljubljane, Beograd, 26.11.1985.[Some information and evaluations regarding the meeting of members of the civil society from Belgrade and Ljubljana, Belgrade, November 26, 1985.],” 3.

⁸⁹⁷ Branko Petranović and S. Dautović, *Jugoslovenska Revolucija i SSSR (1941–1945)* [The Yugoslav Revolution and the USSR (1941–1945)] (Beograd: Naučna Knjiga, 1988); Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country. Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919–1953* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

The revolution in Slovenia, he argued, combined the local (i.e., the national) with the universal (i.e., Yugoslavism and human liberation). As such, it was very different from what happened in Serbia at the time. Kermauner continued that, in 1941, "...you [Serbians] have a national revolution, and the whole time you referred to "Karadžorđe,"⁸⁹⁸ while he argued that in Croatia in 1941, the Independent State of Croatia "was still, to a degree, Croatian, it was still a Croatian state."⁸⁹⁹ Thus, from his perspective, the very historical experience of the Yugoslav revolution and the very motivations for entering it were diverse. His interlocutor, Ljubomir Tadić, did not deny the deeply-rooted historical and cultural differences among the Yugoslav nations and the subsequent differences in their approach to both the Yugoslav state and socialism, yet he explained it in a different way, placing Serbia, as a state, much closer to Europe in historical terms: "The life-long orientation of Serbia, as Serbia from 1804 until today, as a nation and as a state, was and is Europeanization."⁹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Tadić argued that Serbia, unlike Slovenia and Croatia—the territories of which had belonged to Austria-Hungary until 1914—had as broad a spectrum of political parties as in France.⁹⁰¹ Serbia, they therefore argued, was a liberal society with all the civic parties that Europe had. Dobrica Ćosić continued Tadić's line of argument:

We had an emancipated mentality, a high-level intelligentsia already by the end of the nineteenth century. At the time, we [Serbia] were the most progressive country in the Balkans in every possible way: politically, spiritually, institutionally, and economically. Then we entered Yugoslavia, our grave, which we dug ourselves. The second time, too, we created Yugoslavia, which is now killing us.⁹⁰²

⁸⁹⁸ Đorđe Petrović, better known as "Karadžorđe," the leader of the First Serbian Uprising (and namesake of the Karadžorđević dynasty) against the Ottoman Empire in 1804.

⁸⁹⁹ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 25.

⁹⁰⁰ Vasa Čubriloović, *Историја политичке мисли у Србији XIX века* [The History of Political Thought in Serbia during the Nineteenth Century] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1958), 151. Čubriloović argued that, with the 1804 Revolution, Serbia aligned its economic and social development with the development of capitalism and bourgeois society in nineteenth-century Europe. Following Serbia's open borders after 1815, he highlighted the beginning of the circulation of material and cultural goods between Serbia and the countries of Western and Central Europe. In this way, Čubriloović, claimed, Serbia became a part of the family of the European states.

⁹⁰¹ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 25.

⁹⁰² ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 25.

Ćosić's argument was not an off-handed remark in the heat of a polemic. Rather, the narrative of (socialist) Yugoslavia as “a spiritual grave” of the Serbian nation had widespread acceptance in popular and academic circles alike from the 1980s onward. Moreover, Tadić and Ćosić's argument that the “Europeanness” of Serbia had been based on its monarchic traditions had far-reaching acceptance in Serbian intellectual life in the period.

Both sides saw Europe as a measuring stick of progress, both claiming the need to belong to it intellectually and culturally. Yet the Slovenian intellectuals emphasized their wish for Slovenia to “become Europe,” thus demanding that the Serbs “Europeanize themselves more... in a sense... that they serve as some guarantee that there is no some kind of Asiatic totalitarianism...”⁹⁰³ From their perspective, the conflicts with the Kosovo Albanians were “balkanizing Serbs and at the same time Yugoslavia.”⁹⁰⁴ Contrary to that, Ćosić and the Serbian intellectuals defended the Serbian ‘Europeanness,’ claiming that Serbian society was historically a European society *par excellence* and a democratic state. It was after the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia that, according to the Serbian intellectuals, the communist leadership “decided about dismantling Yugoslavia and Serbia.”⁹⁰⁵ For the Serbian intellectuals, the ‘dismantling’ of Serbia represented the loss of a significant part of Serbian history, particularly the period of the Serbian Middle Ages. As Ćosić explained, this period was “stolen by Macedonia, stolen by Kosovo.”⁹⁰⁶ Their interpretation of this was grounded in historical narratives they believed expressed the core of Serbian identity. However, their concept of identity—and the ‘human being’—was viewed in an ahistorical manner, as if ‘Serbian identity’ has always existed, and had been continuously present since the Middle

⁹⁰³ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 15.

⁹⁰⁴ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 10. Moreover, the same year in which the *Kafana Mrak* meeting took place, the notion of ideological genocide, was explicated in *The Book on Kosovo* [Knjiga o Kosovu], by Dimitrije Bogdanovic published in 1985 by SANU.

⁹⁰⁵ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 25.

⁹⁰⁶ ARS, CK ZKS, collection 1589/IV, technical unit 2637/37-II, 25.

Ages. Thus, they perceived the moral crisis that followed the economic and political crises as drawing its roots in the previously mentioned Fourth Congress.

By the time of the meeting, Mihailo Marković, together with Richard J. Bernstein, an American philosopher and a regular guest at the school and a contributor to *Praxis*, established a new journal with a hinting title: *Praxis International* in 1981. The editorial board included many names of the previous *Praxis*, including Rudi Supek and Veljko Rus, from Croatia and Slovenia, respectively. The rationale of this new journal nominally continued the project of the previous one—*Praxis International* was to play an integrative role and help with “mutual communication and dialogue” among Marxist Humanist intellectuals, and most importantly “encourage the development of a systematic critical consciousness about the essential limitations of present-day societies, and about the optimal historical possibilities for human emancipation.”⁹⁰⁷ While the editors of the journal emphasized that the concept of the journal was seemingly the same as the one of 1960s, the editors also pointed out that the historical conditions had changed since the 1970s. As such, the problems of socialist Yugoslavia—as well as the socialist world at large—“demand a different type of response.”⁹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the crisis that had started in the 1960s was far from being over. Moreover, as they explained, the crisis’ “forms and causes are more complex than those of earlier crises, and we are confronting a new type of crisis situation.”⁹⁰⁹

A year after the meeting at the *kafana Mrak*, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences drafted a Memorandum, argued that the politics of “nationalist egoism” and “limitations of science, culture, and education to territorial borders”⁹¹⁰ had led to the general crisis in the country. The Memorandum blamed the primacy of national identities in Yugoslavia, which

⁹⁰⁷ Editorial, “Why *Praxis International*?” *Praxis International* no.1 (1981): 1.

⁹⁰⁸ Editorial, “Why *Praxis International*?” *Praxis International* no.1 (1981): 2.

⁹⁰⁹ Editorial, “Why *Praxis International*?” *Praxis International* no.1 (1981): 2.

⁹¹⁰ SANU Memorandum, 1986, 8. Accessed from Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf>. Accessed 15 February 2025.

embodied the ideas of Edvard Kardelj's *Development of the Slovene National Question*, that had "mainly served as the ideological formulation of the development of Yugoslavia towards confederation of the autonomous republics and provinces, which had finally been achieved with the Constitution of 1974."⁹¹¹ The Memorandum linked the position of Serbia and Serbian people, with the crisis of economy, and the issue of nationalism in Yugoslavia (which the Memorandum also tied to the ideology of the Comintern and the national politics of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, prior to the WWII).⁹¹² As stated in the Memorandum: "The fundamental cause of the multidimensional crisis lies in the ideological defeat that nationalism inflicted on socialism."⁹¹³

The 'timeline' of crisis as expressed by the SANU Memorandum followed a well-accepted stance of the *Praxis* intellectuals as well. Namely, the crisis of Marxism in the 1950s, and the subsequent transformations in the Yugoslav socialist society had triggered hopes for the democratic development of the country. The process of de-bureaucratization of the economy and society, coupled with the program of the LCY which had announced its dedication to the development of socialist democracy, had been halted by the mid-1960s. The ideals of socialist democracy had been betrayed, and democratization was taken over by decentralization, which they saw as harboring bureaucratism, and anti-Serbian sentiments.

Similar arguments were found in the proposal "For Political Democracy" published in 1987 by the unofficial Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Expression, initiated in 1983 by novelist Dobrica Ćosić which had gathered the mentioned intellectuals from the *Praxis* circle: Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, and Zagorka Golubović, but also Dobrica Ćosić, painter Mića Popović, poet and writer Matija Bećković, lawyer Vojislav

⁹¹¹ SANU Memorandum, 1986, 8. Accessed from Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf>. Accessed 15 February 2025.

⁹¹² SANU Memorandum, 1986, 8. Accessed from Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf>. Accessed 15 February 2025.

⁹¹³ SANU Memorandum, 1986, 8. Accessed from Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/memorandum%20sanu.pdf>. Accessed 15 February 2025.

Koštica, and prominent members of the SANU. In their proposal they expressed the crises including the lack of respect for human and civil rights, as well as the “threats to elementary personal security and integrity (in particular in the province of Kosovo).”⁹¹⁴ The issues of human rights violations were thus applied only to Serbians, whom these intellectuals saw as the victims of the politics of the LCY. We can see both these documents, the Memorandum and the proposal as expressions of ideas and positions promoted by the intellectuals around the *Praxis* circle. However, the context in which these ideas were expressed, was radically different than in the 1960s. The crisis which they have conceptualized starting in the 1960s, which predominantly had to do with Marxist theory and was thus concerning only the intellectual realm of their activity, multiplied into diverse crises that culminated in a systemic crisis of Yugoslav socialism which the political leadership was incapable of solving. By this point, the intellectuals, indeed more than ever, saw their role as a “moral force existing outside the realm of power.”⁹¹⁵

A case in point is an article by Mihailo Marković, “Tragedy of National Conflicts in ‘Real Socialism’: The Case of the Yugoslav Autonomous Province of Kosovo,” published an article in *Praxis International*. To analyze the state of Yugoslav socialism, Marković relied on the civilizational trope, going back to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, and the “defeat of Christianity by Islam.” His position can hardly be understood as a Marxist one, when he argued: “The region which was invaded and eventually conquered by Islamized Albanians, also happened to be the cradle of Serbian culture the center of the Serbian Orthodox church, the locus of the crucial event in the entire Serbian medieval history, the symbol of Serbian national and cultural identity. That is why Serbs cannot give it up.”⁹¹⁶ Framing the primordial right of

⁹¹⁴“Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Expression: For political democracy.” *Index on Censorship*, 17, No. 5 (1988): 35–36, here 35.

⁹¹⁵ Nick Miller, *The (Non)Conformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944-1991* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 206.

⁹¹⁶ Mihailo Marković, “Tragedy of National Conflicts in ‘Real Socialism’: The Case of the Yugoslav Autonomous Province of Kosovo,” *Praxis International* Vol. 9 No.4 (1989): 409.

the Serbian people to Kosovo, or discussing national identity as an essential, fixed aspect of one's being is not consistent with a Marxist position. More importantly, is not consistent with the fact that *Praxis* intellectuals saw national sentiments as 'backward' and a thing of a past. Yet, Marković and some of his friends, like Tadić and Stojanović, who used the language of humanism in an abstract way, speaking about the general emancipation of human being, could radically exchange their universalist positions with particularist arguments.

The dissertation aimed to understand this 'switch' not as an exception, and as some kind of an accident that occurred in these intellectuals' theoretical positions. Instead, it aimed to explore and to show that through their discourse of humanism and human rights they could end up with such positions. That is, one of the dissertation's arguments is the importance of recognizing multiple strands of humanism in Yugoslavia. This challenges the preexisting binary view of Marxist humanism versus dogmatic Marxism-Leninism, showing instead that such positions were often intertwined with the competing interpretations of humanism, that shifted as well in the different contexts of Yugoslav socialism. It is important to recognize that humanism was a central concept in the official interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, closely tied to economic and political dimensions expressed through the system of self-management. The *Praxis* philosophers, while starting from the positions of the LCY diverged from this framework by downplaying the economic and political foundations and instead adopting anti-institutional stances. Their articulation of human rights thus emerged in opposition to the official, materialist interpretation of Marxism. By drawing on personalist philosophies, they opened up a broader range of interpretations of human rights—ones that could also accommodate ethnonationalist perspectives, unlike the more 'rigid' framework of 'orthodox' Marxism.

As discussed in the dissertation, the crisis of Marxist philosophy announced in the 1950s, offered different solutions—from the perspective of the intellectuals around *Praxis*,

these solutions meant the return to European philosophy. Only by claiming the European philosophical heritage, could Marxism attain the genuine humanist character which respects the dignity of a human being and its rights. The underlying assumption was that the development of the institutions protecting and safeguarding human rights was tightly linked to the European philosophical traditions rooted in humanism. As Erich Fromm, a regular *Praxis* intellectuals' interlocutor and friend, announced at the international symposium "Socialist Humanism" in 1965:

Humanism—in simplest terms, the belief in the unity of the human race and man's potential to perfect himself by his own efforts—has had a long and varied history stretching back to the Hebrew prophets and the Greek philosophers.⁹¹⁷

Praxis intellectuals, thus adopted such view, as Marxists who argued that Marx could not anticipate the development of capitalism and changes in which the working class prospered materially and shared "in the capitalist spirit while all of society would become alienated to an extreme degree."⁹¹⁸ Their criticism of the Yugoslav political leadership's, in their eyes, abandonment of humanist principles, led them to positions in which they saw their roles as defenders of those very socialist principles.

While the LCY also stressed humanism as the guideline in the Yugoslav approach to socialist practice, the insistence on the engagement with other philosophical traditions led the *Praxis* intellectuals to increasingly critical perspectives towards the party's role and position in Yugoslav society. From the perspective of their personalist and existentialist accounts, these intellectuals saw Yugoslav socialism disbanding its values and moving towards market oriented and consumerist societies of the West. With the lack of interested in their Marxist humanist predecessors, these intellectuals regarded their own role as crucial in bringing

⁹¹⁷Erich Fromm, "Introduction," In *Socialist Humanism and International Symposium*, edited by Erich Fromm (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), vii.

Erich Fromm, "Introduction," In *Socialist Humanism and International Symposium*, edited by Erich Fromm (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), vii.

genuine humanism, and viewed LCY as the Bolshevik party, which led the policy of national identities instead of insisting on integrated Yugoslavism—an option they saw as progressive in contrast to the ‘primitive’ national identities. Therefore, coupled with the crisis of 1968, and the emergence of the ‘Serbian question’, their theoretical positions gained new meanings in a changed context. The period of 1970s thus presented entirely different arena of engagement than the early 1960s for a group which vocally criticized nationalism as ‘barbaric’ and ‘backward’.

The concept of self-determination was still seen by them as crucial for genuine democracy. Self-determination was a cornerstone of the rights of human beings and respect for human dignity. Keeping the position of being critical towards both the capitalist and socialist countries alike, Marković claimed that a society based on the principle of equal self-determination differed from traditional liberalism or bureaucratic collectivism.⁹¹⁹ Self-determination, however, which was previously linked to the idea of self-governing, autonomous subjects, and a human being in a universal sense, in the context of the crisis of the Yugoslav federation, and the perceived “ethnic threat” in Kosovo, became linked to a Serbian national self-determination.

While this dissertation did not wish to propose that all humanist interpretations inevitably lead to ethno-nationalist positions, it points out at the contestations around the concept of ‘humanism’—one announced by the Party which defended the classical Marxist interpretations, and one which had been deeply influenced by personalist and existentialist accounts, and saw the centrality of ‘human being’ in contrast to economic and material conditions, and interpretations of history. By developing a synthetic interpretation of Marxism based predominantly on the personalist and existentialist accounts, these intellectuals

⁹¹⁹ Mihailo Marković, “New Forms of Democracy in Socialism,” *Praxis International* Vol.1 No. 1 (1981): 34.

developed a notion of a human being that, while framed as universal and ahistorical, was proven inadequate in times of crisis. This notion was unable to encompass all people in Yugoslavia, and the ‘human dignity’ was applied only to some, in this case to Serbians. Thus, it was readily and easily appropriated for ethnonationalist agendas, diverging from the principle that all individuals deserve human rights and dignity.

Humanism as the dissertation aimed to show with parts reflecting the narrow reach of Praxis’ internationalism, which followed predominantly European philosophical approaches and discussions, was immune to positions that based arguments on the racial and cultural differences, following the civilizational hierarchies. As such the dissertation expands on the existing scholarship on *Praxis*—a body of work that does exist but has often been written from a more philosophical perspective, focusing primarily on ideas and arguments. At the same time, literature on *Praxis* has often presented it as a success story in Yugoslavia’s intellectual history, especially during the period when the country enjoyed international visibility. From the perspective of such narrative then, the ethnonationalist turn of some intellectuals is often understood as an aberration, or a very unimagined event. By contrast my dissertation situates these intellectuals within a broader system of ideas that already had the potential of such ethnonationalist positions. Rather than treating this turn as an exception, the dissertation aimed to explain their shifts as linked to their system of thought as well as the shifting ideological terrain they inhabited

Moreover, the dissertation demonstrated, in line with Zhivka Valiavicharska’s findings, the dual nature of humanism: while it positioned itself as a radical rethinking of socialist principles, its Eurocentric underpinnings also reproduced colonial assumptions, anthropocentric oppositions, and patriarchal elements characteristic of European humanist thought. Yet, the definitions of Europe as a civilizational space were not adopted uncritically by these intellectuals—for them, European philosophical heritage was a goal worthwhile

returning to, while at the same time criticizing the existing capitalist and materialist values that have subdued the true potential of European democracies.

The development of human rights language among the *Praxis* intellectuals evolved in an opposition to the official discourse of human rights, characterized by classical Marxist interpretations and the Yugoslav orientation to the principle of self-determination. While the decolonization and self-determination was a part of the Yugoslav public discourse, it was strikingly absent in the debates among the *Praxis* intellectuals. Self-determination which was the corner stone of the Yugoslav foreign policy and which eventually lead to the Constitution of 1974 was perceived by them as the beginning of the end of the Yugoslav project. Self-determination, while also closely connected with the principle of self-government and self-management, did not translate to the freedom and dignity to all citizens of Yugoslavia, from the perspective of these intellectuals.

To partly answer the question of how it was possible for some humanists and universalist intellectuals who used the language of human rights were able to also base their political arguments on ethnonationalist positions, the emerging literature on the history of human rights helps to place the case of Yugoslavia in a transnational and global perspective. The discussions presented in this dissertation show the ambiguous relationship between universalist and particularist claims, but also between the ways in which universalist and humanist intellectuals thought about national identities, self-determination, and human rights. For example, scholar of genocide, A. Dirk Moses argues that literature on human rights often presumes that term human rights has a stable meaning and that as such it “served uniform purposes from the interwar years to the present day.”⁹²⁰ Instead he argues that the human rights rhetorics “was not a mere puff or only an enabling context for expulsion in the 1940s; it

⁹²⁰ A. Dirk Moses, “Cutting Out the Ulcer and Washing Away the Incubus of the Past: Genocide Prevention through Population Transfer,” in *Decolonization, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights Politics*, edited by A. Dirk Moses, Marco Duranti, Roland Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 153.

performed important work in inspiring and justifying the foundational violence of the postwar order.”⁹²¹ This dissertation, by focusing on a circle of Marxist humanist thinkers in Yugoslavia, who engaged with their own, changing contexts in the post-war socialist Yugoslavia, illustrates the elusiveness of human rights language. Similarly to A. Dirk Moses, it challenges the presentist approaches that would assume human rights language as universal and incompatible with ethnonationalist politics. Similarly, as suggested by Michal Kopeček, the motivation of this dissertation was to challenge the “indiscriminate idolization of human rights” in the discourses of socialist transformations.⁹²² Overall, the contribution of the dissertation is precisely to avoid turning human rights into, as Michal Kopeček writes, “untouchable fetish...losing all credibility in the process.”⁹²³

⁹²¹ A. Dirk Moses, “Cutting Out the Ulcer and Washing Away the Incubus of the Past: Genocide Prevention through Population Transfer,” in *Decolonization, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights Politics*, edited by A. Dirk Moses, Marco Duranti, Roland Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 155.

⁹²² Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights between Political Identity and Historical Category: Czechoslovakia and East Central Europe in a Global Context,” *Czech Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. IV No. 4 (2016): 7.

⁹²³ Michal Kopeček, “Human Rights between Political Identity and Historical Category: Czechoslovakia and East Central Europe in a Global Context,” *Czech Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. IV No. 4 (2016): 7.

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