PRAXIS, STUDENT PROTEST, AND PURPOSIVE SOCIAL ACTION:  
THE HUMANIST MARXIST CRITIQUE OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF 
YUGOSLAVIA, 1964-1975

A dissertation submitted 
to Kent State University in partial 
fulfillment of the requirements for the 
degree of Masters of Arts

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August 2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many fine people have directly contributed to my research, development, and morale as I prepared this thesis. I would like to extend my warmest gratitude to Dr. Richard Steigmann-Gall, who enthusiastically shared his insight into historical theory and assisted me in focusing and completing this thesis. Our early discussions about cultural history set me off on the right foot for this project. I would also like to thank the members of my committee for their superb guidance: Dr. Rebecca Pulju, whose scholarship, work ethic, and kindness is an inspiration to me and all those around her; Dr. Susan Roxburgh, under whose excellent mentorship I achieved a deeper understanding of humanist Marxism and sociological theory; and Dr. Janet Klein, whose incisive comments dramatically improved my thesis. I am also truly grateful to the following faculty members: Dr. Clarence Wunderlin, who expertly and patiently assisted me in making my first connections between theory and primary source analysis on this topic; Dr. Pat Coy, who unflinchingly took me under his kind, interdisciplinary wing and expanded my knowledge of discourse analysis and social conflict; and Dr. Ken Bindas, who improved my understanding of Marxism and the methodologies of intellectual and oral history.

Graduate school would have remained an unfulfilled hope for me without the support and encouragement of Ms. Sean Howard, Dr. Elizabeth Smith-Pryor, Dr. Ralph Menning, and Ms. Kay Dennis. Dr. Ann Heiss, in particular, also offered me excellent
direction on opportunities for research funding and has always been very generous with her time and advice.

I would also like to acknowledge gratefully the fiscal support given to me by the Kent State University Graduate Student Senate. The Senate’s grant allowed me to travel to Croatia and Serbia to collect material essential to this thesis. I wholeheartedly thank Obitelj Terek, Goran Zgrablić, Marko Artuković, Nenad Galunić, and Dario Katava and their families for their hospitality, vibrant companionship, and assistance during my stays in Zagreb and Belgrade.

I would like to thank those who have fostered and shared my love of southeastern Europe over the years. My mentors and friends, Drs. Bogdan and Svetlana Rakić, who not only taught me the Serbocroatian language, but also to cherish the history, culture, and literature of the South Slavs, have my eternal respect and gratitude. I will always proudly consider myself a student of Dr. Bogdan Rakić, who has exuded every effort to see my interests bloom. Never shy with red ink, but always generous with encouragement! Nikola and Dolores Biliškov, Vladimir Terzić, Vladimir Lukić, Branislav Savić, Dragana Okolić, and Dr. L. Steve Bujenović have all showed me true friendship and professional support many times over.

Dr. Monika Flaschka and Matt Philips, both of whom are incredibly talented teachers, offered me my first chances to lecture on Yugoslavia. I thank them and humbly bow to Matt’s formidable prowess in Risk and research and Monika’s impeccable research acumen and sharp eye. I owe much of my success and sanity to the rapier-like wit, talent, and kindness of valued comrades-in-historical-arms: Leon Perkowski, Jeff
O’Leary, Bailey Trenchard, Erika Briesacher, Austin McCoy, Denise Jenison, Bryan Kvet, Mathew Brundage, Rachel Boaz, So Mizoguchi, and Nathan Fry. My love and gratitude go to Adrianne Janke, Laura and the Petković family, Ryan Anderson, J.D. Childs, and Evelyn Keifer-Roulet, my friends who stood alongside me with open ears, warm words, patience, and fun-filled diversions.

No one could ask for a more loving or nurturing family. My parents, John and Ruby O’Keeffe, have believed in me even when my own confidence faltered, always given me their complete support, and encouraged my wanderlust and curiosity. Stanislav, Snežana, Mira, and Ivica Žabić have inspired and astounded me with their shared zest for life, their collective brilliance, and their kindness and openness from the moment of our first acquaintance. They gladly gifted me and my research with countless hours of discussion on all things Yugoslav, surrounded me with light even in the darkest of times, and graciously loved me from seemingly the first moment. We were all meant to find each other and I am so very glad we did.

My deepest thanks and greatest affection are reserved for my love and husband, Stanislav Žabić, who always knows instinctively how to help me. He speaks my language without words. Last of the Yugoslavs, Stanislav supported me and my research with a rare grace, integrity, and charm. His vast knowledge of Yugoslav culture, his unbounded generosity of spirit, and the depth and beauty of his conflicted love for his country, now a historical phenomenon, are my inspirational center.
This thesis is dedicated *in memoriam* to David “Krvović” Schulthise and Stoja Žabić, two of the most adventurous and lovely people I have ever known. David shared my love of Bloomington and the Balkans with verve. Full of irrepressible panache, Stoja brought me joy and helped me speak when I needed to most. Our paths were too shortly aligned, but I loved them well while they were here and I still do. *Život je lep—idemo dalje.*
INTRODUCTION

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was in transition during the decade 1965-75, and, toward the end of the decade, it had reached a crisis point. The student protest of June 1968 and the Praxis School’s humanist Marxist critique subjected President Josip Broz Tito’s socialist vision, or Titoism, to its first internal challenge; the structure, ideology, and sociopolitical fabric of the nation became *de facto* an open question. This decade was defined not only by the humanist Marxist ideological critique of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and civil unrest, by also the regime’s efforts to control this transition politically, culturally, and socially. The title of Praxis School author Svetozar Stojanović’s article, “From Post-Revolutionary Dictatorship to Socialist Democracy: Yugoslav Socialism at the Crossroads,” captured the essence of the transitional decade during which the Praxis School was active.

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1 Sabrina Ramet defines crisis as a “collective consensus that the status quo is untenable.” In her view, the second incarnation of Yugoslavia, which is considered in this thesis, was conceived in an inherently illegitimate system that will never be able “to obtain the full benefits of political legitimacy.” She offers a corollary to her definition of crisis that is pertinent to this study: “illegitimate systems cannot allow the introduction of legitimate or semi-legitimate institutions or practices, without exposing themselves to decay or ruination.” *The Three Yugoslavias.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006, 31.

2 Titoism, for the purposes of this thesis, describes the ideological stance of the LCY, of which Tito was the central figure and most powerful leader. While the nuances of Titoism fluctuated over time during the second Yugoslavia (1945-1990), Ramet identifies three pillars that remained constant: brotherhood and unity, or Yugoslavism, self-management, and nonalignment. *The Three Yugoslavias* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 185.

A group of professors affiliated with the philosophy departments of Belgrade and Zagreb Universities founded the Praxis School. The Praxis movement began publishing the journal *Praxis: A Philosophical Journal* in 1964 as a forum for their reform agenda.\(^4\) In addition to the journal, the Praxis professors sponsored an annual seminar on Korčula, an island in the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Croatia, which they dedicated to developing further their humanist Marxist philosophy. The ultimate goal of the Praxis School was to “realize human nature by producing a more human world.”\(^5\) This simple goal speaks volumes about how the Praxis School viewed their contemporary Yugoslav society: in their view, alienation remained rampant and a new, unsavory “red bourgeois” had formed.

The student protesters of June 1968 identified as communist and, with the advent of the 1960s, became increasingly critical of the practical implications of LCY

\(^4\) The *Praxis* ideological critique was only one of four major reform movements active in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Within both the Croatian and Serbian League of Communists, liberal communists, who were also nationalists in some cases, pressed separately for a liberalization of the LCY and the decentralization of federalist state model. This nationalist movement in Croatia was called the Croatian Spring. During this period, there was also larger a cycle of student protests, some with a nationalist orientation. This study considers the two reform movements, Praxis and the 1968 student protest in Belgrade, Serbia, that were communist and did not have a nationalist agenda. On the Serbian liberal movement, consult Jasna Dragović-Soso, *Saviors of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst and Co., 2002) and Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944-1991.* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2007). Regarding the Croatian Spring, see Jill Irvine, “The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia,” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration*, eds. Leonard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008), 149-178; and Ante Čuvalo, *The Croatian National Movement, 1966-1972* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

sociopolitical policy. Although they shared the Praxis School’s humanist Marxist perspective of their society, the students organized their protest independently. When an impromptu protest began on June 2, 1968, in a suburb of Belgrade, existing student organizations that had been promulgating reform discourse since 1966 became centers of active sociopolitical protest. They occupied university buildings and went on strike from classes. The movement spread to other campuses across Yugoslavia. The documents from the 1968 protest demonstrate clearly that, in this instance, the students wanted to expand social justice, reform the economy (particularly in academia), and bring about an ideological reorientation from within the framework of a communist political system.

Significantly, the 1968 protest and the Praxis School’s critique of the Party line came from dedicated communists—students and professors alike—who sought to redirect Yugoslavia ideologically, culturally, and politically. This thesis will demonstrate that these two critical movements and the state’s response to them were reflexive and fundamentally impacted the trajectory of the Yugoslav state. The Praxis School and the student protest of 1968 amounted to ideological dissidence in the civil sphere, which threatened the LCY’s power. This informed the LCY’s response and prompted the state to reassert control over public discourse. The reflexivity in the context of this thesis

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6 This thesis occasionally employs general references to the “student protest” or “student protest of June 1968.” These references are specifically to the events in Belgrade (the capital of socialist Yugoslavia). Students protested in other cities in June 1968 and at other times during this decade, but this study only examined documents for the student protest and strike on the University of Belgrade campus that took place June 2-9, 1968.

7 In The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction, James A. Herrick defines discourse as “symbols internally organized into a message” and discourse becomes rhetoric when it “is goal-oriented and seeks,
refers to the occurrence of an active exchange of ideas, even the exchange was unequal. The discourse among the Praxis School, the student protesters, and the LCY was reflexive and the reflexivity of communication and debate in the civil sphere is an indicator of the degree of political and social totalitarianism in a state. During the period examined in this thesis, the degree of sociopolitical communicative and participatory reflexivity waxed and then waned. One of the ambitions of this study is to contribute to the historical understanding of this fact.

This thesis investigates the dynamics of the intellectual debate over the ideology of Yugoslav Marxism by examining the state’s response to the Praxis School’s critique and the June 1968 student protest in Belgrade, Serbia. Resting at the crossroads of intellectual, cultural, and political history and discourse analysis, this thesis will present three synchronous perspectives—from the Praxis School, the student protesters, and the LCY—of the sociopolitical discourse surrounding the debate over the meaning of Marxism in Yugoslavia. Michael Freeden opines the political language of ideology is “a tool through which human agency was considerable enhanced—both the agency of the participant and the agency of the imaginative interpreter.” This study examines the political language, or discourse, of the students, the Praxis School, and the regime, represented by Edvard Kardelj and Josip Broz Tito, in order to explore the character,

by means of planned use of symbols, to adapt ideas to an audience (Scottsdale: Gorsuch, Scarisbrick, 1997), 8-9. Michael Foucault suggests that a “discursive formation” forms when a “number of statements” display a common “regularity” in “objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices.” (38) This paper contemplates on discourse, the discourse of socialism, and two separate ideological interpretations of it: humanist Marxism and Titoism.

roots, and legacy of these challenges and why the government found them so threatening. The outcome of this ideological conflict would have a profound impact on the ideological trajectory, and thus the organization, of the Yugoslav state.

The Praxis Group and the student protest are significant in twentieth-century Yugoslav history because they were the first concerted large-scale ideological challenge to the Party’s socialist vision; the Party’s disingenuous response to the 1968 student protest and its harsh censure of the Praxis School in 1975 collectively signaled that ideological diversity within the Party would not be tolerated. The return to Party unity after the protest was an absolute prerequisite in order for the communist regime to navigate the myriad constitutional changes that took place during this period, all of which culminated in the radical decentralization of the state with the introduction of the 1974 Constitution.9

While a detailed discussion of the radical changes inherent in the 1974 Constitution is beyond the scope of this work, the constitution’s import to this thesis cannot be overstated. During the transitional period examined in this thesis, the state was in the midst of crafting a new constitution that would revolutionize the political, economic, and to a lesser degree social relationship among the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This seminal shift in the balance of domestic power was the League of Communists of Yugoslavia’s response to a growing nationalist movement centered in Croatia and other points of discord largely between Serbia and Croatia over the structure of the federal state. It was imperative that the Party reclaim ideological unity and legitimacy in order to preserve the stability of the state. On the 1974 Constitution, see Vojislav Koštunica, “The Constitution and the Federal States,” in Yugoslavia: A Fractured Federalism, ed. by Dennison Rusinow (Washington D.C.: The Wilson Center Press, 1988), 78-92; and Eric Gordy, “Destruction of the Yugoslav Federation: Policy or Confluence of Tactics?” in State Collapse in South-east Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration, ed. by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008), 281-300.
Party-controlled media outlets immediately blamed the Praxis School for sponsoring the student protests of 1968 ideologically and organizationally.\(^\text{10}\) It was politically expedient to do so. The LCY had to form a unified ideological front in order to quell the nationalist movement in Croatia, the Croatian Spring.\(^\text{11}\) This meant censuring the Praxis School to sever the momentum of their dissident movement and any ideological connections that existed between the professors and the communist youth protesters of June 1968. The student action was purposive in that the protesters had a defined, concrete set of demands that were borne of a specific ideology, in this case, humanist Marxism.\(^\text{12}\) Police treated the protesters harshly at first and there was no immediate, public response from the regime. Seven days into the protest, Tito sagaciously addressed the student protesters directly in a speech, mollifying them with praise for their communist enthusiasm, their sense of duty, and their service to their country. The deliberate timing and tone of this speech served to separate Tito from the repressive measures the police employed against the students.


\(^{11}\) Cf. n91, chapter 1. Tito purged several of the Croatian Party leaders who were active in the Croatian Spring movement in December 1971. They have written memoirs about their experience: Miko Tripalo, *Hrvatsko proljeće* [Croatian Spring] (Zagreb: Globus, 1990) and Dabčević-Kučar, *'71 Hrvatski snovi i svtarnost* ['71 Croatian Dreams and Reality] (Zagreb: Interepublik, 1997).

\(^{12}\) The student protest as “purposive social action” is rooted in Clifford Geertz’s view of ideologies as “maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience” in “Ideology as a Cultural System,” *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc.,1973). Geertz underscores cultural input and reflexivity in the formation and modification of ideology. A configuration of cultural symbols align into an ideology to inform purposive social action, in this case, the student protest and the *Praxis* critique.
The Praxis School’s humanist Marxist critique undeniably influenced the students. It is, perhaps, impossible to quantify this influence exactly, but this thesis will demonstrate how the students translated the Praxis School’s ideology into purposive social action, and, more importantly, how the regime determinedly blamed the Praxis School intellectuals for instigating the student protest of June 1968 as a convenient method to resolve an ideological challenge from within their own Party. The scope and subject of this thesis offers several important contributions to the historiography of socialist Yugoslavia, Marxism, and purposive social action.

The scholarship on the social movements of the 1960s across the globe and the transnational New Left has enjoyed a surge in recent years due to the forty-year anniversary of 1968. The events in Yugoslavia during the 1967-68 global wave of student protest are, however, poorly represented in the secondary literature. When the student movement in 1968 Yugoslavia is mentioned in a larger European or global context, its role is undervalued or altogether glossed over as a tangential point to another focus. Two excellent investigations of 1968 as a transnational historical phenomenon include 1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977, 13 a collection of essays organized thematically and geographically around 1968 in Europe, and 1968: The World Transformed. 14 Klimke and Joachim’s volume only dedicates ten pages to Yugoslavia,


which may seem paltry, but it is the most recent and comprehensive effort to discuss the events of 1968 within Yugoslavia and connect it to the larger Yugoslav and European political, social, and cultural history. While a fine study of 1968 globally—Fink’s work discusses 1968 in Poland, Vietnam, China, Czechoslovakia, and Ostpolitik—it ignores Yugoslavia altogether. Many of the authors who cover this period in Yugoslavia as part of a thematic work or in a more general survey focus more intently on the rise of the nationalist movement in 1960s Yugoslavia or the constitutional or economic crises of the period.15

Recent historical scholarship on Yugoslavia that touches on the period 1964-75 has largely concentrated on the roots and rise of nationalism and the politics of ethnic, religious, and gender identity, historical memory in light of the slow disintegration of communism after Tito’s death in 1980 and the tragic Yugoslav Civil Wars of the 1990s. Many studies turn to this decade in socialist Yugoslavia in search of the roots of the ethnic conflict that led to country’s violent disintegration and continued social and political crises. Greenberg’s Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and its Disintegration is a rewarding study of cultural nationalism in Yugoslavia. Greenberg

15 Excellent general studies of post-World War II Yugoslav history are as follows: Sabrina P. Ramet The Three Yugoslavias (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Pedro Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1963-1983 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); and John R. Lampe, Yugoslavia: Twice There was a Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). These monographs all approach Yugoslav history from an area studies perspective, primarily focusing on political analysis. They offer insight into the social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and institutional history of Yugoslavia, and place Yugoslavia in perspective internationally, but offer precious few details about the Praxis School or the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s. These sources generally utilize the evolution of League of Communists as their prism for analysis of Yugoslav history. Three Yugoslavias has the most variegated methodological approach.
posits that understanding the evolution of Serbo-Croatian as a unified language, and its later disintegration, is a powerful prism into the political devolution of the nation. In his view, the language of Yugoslavia is both a result of historical memory and an instrument in its manipulation.\textsuperscript{16}

Two studies on Serbian intellectuals and nationalism examine the LCY’s treatment of internal ideological dissention, but in these studies the ideological divergence concerns the national question and not the ideology of socialism itself. In ‘\textit{Saviours’ of the Nation: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism},’ Jasna Dragović-Soso traces the rise of nationalism in modern-day Serbia.\textsuperscript{17} Nick Miller conducts an intimate investigation into the nationalism of two prominent members of the Serbian intelligentsia, Dobrica Cosić and Mica Popović, in \textit{The Nonconformists}.\textsuperscript{18} Miller and Dragović-Soso both assert that the rise of Serbian nationalism in 1980s Yugoslavia can best be determined by historical analysis of the evolution of the federalist system under Tito during the same period considered in this thesis. These two authors hold that LCY’s management of the constitutional crisis, its concerted effort to marginalize communist liberals, and its return to the exclusion of dissident discourse in the early


\textsuperscript{17} Jasna Dragović-Soso, ‘\textit{Saviours’ of the Nation: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism}’ (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

1970s, which this thesis also examines, led to the mismanagement of the national question and the rise of radical ethnic nationalism in post-Tito Yugoslavia.

Two other important and recent works also seek to understand the break-up of Yugoslavia by examining, to varying degrees, the social, economic, and political atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. Four of the essays in the ambitious compilation *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslav’s Disintegration* specifically consider same formative years of the “socialist legacy” that this present study examines. These authors, Budding, Rusinow, Irvine, and Miller, all agree that this was a crucial period for Yugoslavia that had dire consequences in the 1980s and they each key in on various aspects of the national question in Yugoslavia to weave their arguments. Notably, none of these essays examine the *internal* ideological evolution of socialism or perform discursive analysis of the internal challenges to the LCY, such as the humanist Marxist critique of Titoism that is the subject of this thesis. These authors trace in the development of socialist ideology only vis-à-vis nationalism and none of them employ cultural methodology.19

Dejan Jović’s *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* also probes the 1960s and 1970s for clues about the disintegration of Yugoslavia.20 His well-crafted study begins with interwar Yugoslavia and extends to the eve of the Yugoslav Civil War in April 1990. Jović identifies the impetus behind the reforms in late socialist Yugoslavia,


including the watershed reorganization of the state with the constitution of 1974 and others, as Edvard Kardelj’s deep-seated confidence that Yugoslavia was ready to move on in its political evolution. “The notion of transition,” according to Jović, “remained a stable part of Kardelj’s concept” of socialism. Kardelj considered the political unrest of 1965-75 a sign that Yugoslavia was ready for further decentralization and he took action to insure the withering away of the state that Marx so emphatically advocated. The decentralizing trend that characterized Yugoslavia between 1965 and 1975 was, in Kardelj’s view, another step towards the fulfillment of the socialist revolution and a protective measure against the encroachment of other forms of socialism into the Yugoslav model.

Jović claims logically that Yugoslavia’s communist leaders feared other communist and socialist models that were more “statist” and centralist (such as the USSR) more than liberal democracy. For the elites in the LCY, the most threatening ideological “Other” was in fact other brands of communism and socialism. After the 1948 split with Stalin, Tito’s Party jealously guarded those characteristics that differentiated it from other forms of neo-Marxism. Jović holds that one of the central ways the LCY defined its political system was in a negative sense: by what it was not, rather than in positive terms of what it indeed was. Kardelj’s attempt to redress this weakness and maintain transitional momentum toward a state of true communism was to make policy

21 Jović, Yugoslavia, A State that Withered Away, 72,

22 Dejan Jović, Yugoslavia, A State that Withered Away, 67.
decisions that would lead to the withering away of the state. While he succeeded in
crafting a positive identity for the Party, his efforts went astray once radicals exploited
the resulting power vacuum in the 1980s. While Jović’s study provides excellent
historical context for this thesis, he does not extend his analysis to the Praxis School,
humanist Marxism, or the student protests of 1968, and as a political scientist, he asks
different questions of his source material and employs different methodologies than the
author of this thesis.

Vjekoslav Perica’s first book, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, is a cogent exploration of the relationship among faith, religious leaders,
and politicians in Yugoslavia from the 1930s to the early 2000s. Perica argues that
religion was often wielded as a weapon of ideology and nationalism, especially in ethnic
conflicts.23 Jovan Byford’s *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* is a very well-executed and
conceived study that offers an important contribution to the historiography of collective
memory, religion, and nationalism in post-World War II Yugoslavia. Byford deftly
“deconstructs” the historical memory that “Bishop Nikolaj [of the Serbian Orthodox
Church] could not have been an anti-Semite ‘because he was in Dachau’.”24 In these two
studies, the LCY is presented as the powerful center of sociocultural policy-making and

University Press, 2002).

24 Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-Communist Remembrance of the Serbian
state-building; Party functionaries often clashed with religious leaders or acted as instruments that manipulated the civil sphere and collective historical memory. Perica and Byford’s analyses are illuminating and tangentially relevant to the historiography of this thesis because in these studies Party ideology is a structural agent that shapes the contours of the civil sphere. This aspect of *Denial and Repression* and *Balkan Idols* is exactly parallel to the function the Party played in the events examined in this thesis.

The secondary literature in English that offers specific treatment of the Praxis School, the student protests in June 1968, the humanist Marxist critique of Titoism, or the state’s response to them are few. The authoritative scholar (in English) on the Praxis School and humanist Marxism in Yugoslavia is Gerson Sher, whose book *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* offers some detail on the student movement as well, but only relative to his main topic. Unfortunately, his 1977 study is somewhat dated: the preface acknowledges that Sher had to revise his manuscript just before publication because the LCY had unexpectedly succeeded in censoring the journal *Praxis* out of existence and expelling eight of its most prominent authors from their university posts in 1975. Sher’s work highlights the fact that the Praxis School “never did become….the core of an outright oppositional political movement.” This thesis certainly does not dispute that claim, but asserts that it is also important to look at what ideological connections the *Praxis* authors did make within Yugoslav society, examine


26 Sher, 243.
why there was resonance or rebuttal, and consider the implications of the movement’s failure to thrive as a dissident body. This thesis seeks to accomplish this.

Other existing studies that thematically and chronologically intersect with this thesis include Nebojša Popov’s *Contra Fatum* [Against Fate] and *Drustveni sukobi* [Social Conflicts], Fredy Pearlman’s *Revolt in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Laslo Sekelj’s *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration*, Ralph Pervan’s *Tito and the Students*, and April Carter’s *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia*. Dr. Popov, himself a Praxis School member who was active in the 1968 protests and expelled him from his teaching job in 1975 for ideological insubordination, offers a rich, comprehensive examination of Praxis, protest, and the League during this period. In addition to his incisive analysis—which is more sociological than historical—his two books also hold a very useful collection of primary documents related to 1968 Yugoslavia. The Popov monographs are authoritative and exquisitely detailed, but are not available in English translation. Ralph Pervan focuses more on the political history of self-management in the context of the university as an institution, and like Sher, his 1978 book is somewhat dated. Sekelj is concerned with strict political analysis of this era and he examines the Party, focusing on its upper echelons and the evolution and the implications of its policies. While full of vibrant
description and carefully selected quotes from primary sources (largely newspapers), Perlman’s work does not offer in-depth analysis and it is devoted to the student protest. April Carter’s study is chronologically even narrower than this thesis—she only examines the years 1964-1972—but her prism of analysis is exclusively political history and her essential interest in the League of Communists. She does offer a detailed discussion of the freedom of the press under the LCY and her analysis extends to the dissident student press and its relationship with the regime. Her main concern, however, is undoubtedly the machinations among the elites and functionaries of the LCY and not their interaction with elements and institutions in the civil sphere.

The historiographic strength and significance of this study is three-fold. First, it provides a necessary contribution in English to the secondary literature on Yugoslavia as a participant in the global wave of student protests in the years 1967-68. Secondly, methodologically, it draws upon primary sources that have become newly available in the last fifteen years to deepen the focus on and freshen the analytical juxtaposition of the discourse of the League of Communists, the Praxis School, and the communist student protest of 1968. Third, this study employs cultural methodology, considering songs, poems, and chants from the protest, to establish the students’ use of socialist discourse.

The LCY enacted reforms that resulted in an ideological thaw in the mid-1960s. This led to unprecedented civil freedoms in Yugoslavia, the flowering of which resulted in ideological diversity and independence within the ranks of the League of Communists

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and the rise of humanist Marxism and social and ideological conflict. Sabrina Ramet, an accomplished area-studies historian of the western Balkans, describes this process in her description of Crane Brinton’s *The Anatomy of a Revolution*. She asserts that “cognitive dissonance sets in not during a period of sustained repression or exploitation,” which describes Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, “rather as a formerly oppressive or exploitive regime begins to reform itself,” which captures the Yugoslavia of the late 1960s. This study utilizes three important theoretical constructions, all of which pivot on the import of language, to investigate the development of socialism during the years 1965-75: the discursive analysis of ideology, Freeden’s understanding of ideology as a “thought-practice,” and Foucault’s notion of “excluded discourse.”

This study posits that after 1968 the LCY engaged in what Michael Foucault termed the “exclusion, limitation, and appropriation” of discourse in order to try and effect a return to Party ideological hegemony. Discourse is expression, which results in knowledge: if discourse is limited, then it follows that knowledge is as well. For Foucault, “discourse—and thus meaning, knowledge, and power—are governed by rules.” Power configurations determine structures and can limit the terms of engagement (i.e., the rules) or otherwise manipulate the rituals, tropes, symbols, and language that comprise public discourse and public knowledge. The institution or entity,

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therefore, that holds power can diffusely control discourse by exclusion. The LCY accomplished this in two ways: the Party answered the student protest with immediate rhetoric aimed at diffusing the active phase of the strike, whereas the fractious ideological debate with the Praxis School was more elongated both in terms of time and application of strategy. Both tactics had the same result despite the students’ and the Praxis School’s determined expression of independent agency within the LCY structure: the reassertion of the Party’s hegemonic exclusion of humanist Marxist discourse by 1975.

Michael Freeden’s conceptualization of ideology as a “thought-practice” is central to this thesis. Humanist Marxism, to which the Praxis School and the student protesters ascribed, and Titoism are both examples of ideologies of “thought-practice.” Freeden defines this as “the performance of, and participation in, an identifiable regularity of action or thought, one replicated as well as shaped by other such practitioners. It is hence a communal activity taking place in a social space and recurring over time.”32 A thought-practice is inherently, but not equally, reflexive; thus, when there is a pronounced power differential—as in the case examined in this study—exclusion of ideological discourse can occur.

Discourse analysis is the primary methodology of this study and it assumes that words have an unstable, unfixed meaning generally and yet a very precise meaning within a defined historical context. Michael Freeden posits that the “study of political

thinking” is actually “an act of decoding meaning.” Foucault, in his construction of postmodern theory, broke the bond between the signifier and the signified and declared that while discourse is “composed of signs,” it is not “irreducible to the language and speech.” So what is the relationship between discourse, socialist discourse in this instance, and language? How can the analysis of political rhetoric of the LCY and humanist Marxism, meant to deliver an ideological perspective, and the language (slogans, songs) of the student movement in 1968 help us decode the true symbolic meaning of the events and ideas in question? The beauty of Foucault’s redaction of structuralism is that it bestows upon historians the power of interpretation; by considering the relativity, context, and interdetermination of language, we arrive at its symbolic meaning specific to its particular usage at a determined time and place. This constitutes discourse analysis and it is a very powerful analytical tool: by interrogating selected primary sources, this study proposes to distill the meaning of concrete historical events from the abstract concept of language.

One of the essential subjects of this thesis is a social movement that engages in direct purposive social action: the June 1968 student protests in Belgrade, Serbia. Analysis of this event utilizes a cultural approach, which is in line methodologically with discourse analysis. McAdam et al describe cultural analysis as seeking to “attribute causal power to norms, values, beliefs, and symbols that individuals experience and

absorb from outside themselves.35 Furthermore, this thesis considers the student protest in terms of structure (macro-level) and agency (micro-level).36 The historical examination of the students’ protest departs from the premise that the “framing” of a protest is indeed socially and culturally constructed at the individual level, but must align with the collective’s goals before purposive action at the macro-level can occur.37

This thesis indicates that the students demonstrated voluntarism and agency, as well as ideological purpose, which was to bring the humanist Marxist ideology into practice (or praxis). Their effort, however, took place within a defined set of institutions, the university being the central one; therefore, structural considerations tempered their agency. Even though the protest included an occupation of university buildings spatially,


36 This bridge approach is advocated in the Karl-Deiter Opp’s reconstruction of Snow’s classic “Framing Processes, Ideologies and Discursive Fields” referenced in Theories of Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Analysis (New York: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2009), 1-31 and 273-74.

37 Framing is the individual’s set of convictions or attitudes that motivate participation in a collective action, in this case a protest. An individual’s “frame” is forged from various incentives that are interdependent, such as economic or social desires, like employment opportunity or respect, or transitive normative moral convictions. See Karl-Dieter Opp’s discussion on how an individual’s frame aligns with the collective in a protest group in Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Synthesis (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), 234-74 and 301. The study of social movements using framing theory arose out of several important intellectual traditions: E.P. Thompson’s “moral economy,” Clifford Geertz’s emphasis on cultural relativity and “thick description,” social psychology’s notion of “consensus mobilization,” and Foucault’s ideas on discourse as mentioned above (17) in Sidney Tarrow’ Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Tarrow also discusses framing generally (106-122) and in connection with identity (118-22). McAdams et al in Dynamics of Contention argues for a synthesis of framing theory and social construction, which this study accepts (48).
the university as a structure, including policies, officials, and reliance on the government and the LCY for direction, persisted.\textsuperscript{38}

This study examines a wide selection of primary and secondary sources to trace the ideological exchange among and establish the agendas of the Praxis School, the student protesters, and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Primary sources originating from within the LCY include the speeches and political writings of President Josip Broz Tito and two other highly influential Party officials, Edvard Kardelj and Stane Dolanc. This thesis considers the diary of one protest participant, \textit{Ispljuvak pun krvi} [Spit Full of Blood], articles from the journal \textit{Praxis}, and memoirs and interviews from the Praxis professors and protesters themselves, and two collections of primary documents related to the student movement.

The student protesters documented their social action very well: the Praxis School released a special collection of documents in order to distill what they valued as an important advancement of the humanist Marxist agenda.\textsuperscript{39} Nebojša Popov, a participant in the protest, a member of the Praxis School, and later expelled from the Party and his position at the University of Belgrade for his activities, authored \textit{Contra Fatum} [Against Fate], which combines secondary analysis with a rich index of primary sources. Both sources include students’ communiqués with Party officials, self-management councils, self-management councils,

\textsuperscript{38} Opp makes an excellent case for the pursuit of micro-macro analysis in the examination of social movements (Ibid., 1-31, especially pp. 31.)

unions, and students in other countries; internal communiqüés; poems and slogans; press releases; resolutions and political action programs; newspaper clippings; and articles. The thesis also analyzes other public newspaper articles and journals to provide reflection on the events and discourse in question.

The first chapter, “The Yugoslav Articulation of Humanist Marxism: The Praxis School,” illustrates that the humanist Marxist critique was, in practice, an ideological challenge to Titoism. To establish historical context for the thesis, this chapter also discusses the Tito-Kardeljian vision of socialism, defines Yugoslavism as the sociopolitical basis of national identity, and explicates the Party’s development up to the mid-1960s. Why did the LCY allow the Praxis challenge to materialize in the first place? What are the origins and concerns of the Praxis movement? Why was their criticism of self-management and the LCY policy so emphatic? Once this chapter has established the evolution and terms of the Praxis School’s critique of Yugoslav socialism, it will be easier to determine why it was so attractive and timely to the students in chapter two.

The second chapter, “‘The Red Choir’ in Action: The Belgrade Student Protest, June 1968,” argues that the protest of June 1968 was a direct participatory extension of the humanist Marxist ideology, and therefore, was an example of purposive social action. This characterization of the protest allows us to define its motivation—the students clearly demonstrated independent voluntarism and agency in their actions—and analyze responses to it. What were the student demands and how did they present them? Why were they so careful to highlight their loyalty to communism while criticizing its implementation so dramatically and publically? What were the connections between the
students’ protest agenda and the professors of the Praxis School? The students deliberately engaged symbolism and rhetoric of communism during their protest to highlight their continued loyalty to communism while venting their frustration with the status quo.

The last chapter, “The Curious Incident of the State’s Response to the Red Challenge: A Return to the Exclusion of Discourse,” considers sources written after 1968 in order analyze the state’s response to the student protest and the Praxis School’s ideological dissidence. How did the state finally end the protest? Why did the state refrain from quashing the June 1968 student protest with military force? How did the regime view the Praxis School’s role in the student movement and what measures did the Party take against the professors? How did the professors approach the issue of nationalism? Most importantly, why did the Party ultimately choose to silence the Praxis School?

This chapter contends that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia made a concerted effort to exclude the humanist Marxist discourse and reestablish its monopoly over the communism in order to reconstitute its control in society especially after the 1968 student protest. This strategy was precipitated by the fact that the LCY needed to reclaim its ideological unity if it hoped to navigate the constitutional crisis of the early 1970s and the decentralization of the state with the 1974 constitution. The communist

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40 This period was also characterized by tension between ethnic nationalism and the civil nationalism of Yugoslavism, which was one of the pillars of Titoism. Chapter three will consider the distinction between these two models of nationalism and the Praxis School’s position on the national question.
regime could not hope to weather a constitutional crisis and the consequent restructuring of the state—a challenge that had upset the social and political order several times before—amid such pronounced civil unrest without absolute internal ideological unity. Dejan Jović argues that the LCY feared the communist “Other,”—other neo-Marxist interpretations of communism—more than western-style liberal democracy. This thesis posits that the rise of humanist Marxist ideological “Other” domestically was a crucial factor in the Party’s renewed offensive for internal unity and its relapse back into the exclusion of dissident socialist discourse after 1968.\footnote{Dejan Jović, “Communist Yugoslavia and Its ‘Others,’” in Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe, edited by John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, 277-302 (New York: Central European University Press, 2004).}
CHAPTER I
The Yugoslav Articulation of Humanist Marxism: The Praxis School

“A revolutionary is with the desperate people for whom everything is on the line, not with those who have time. The invocation of a scheme of social stages which demonstrate post fastum the importance of a past era was at the time an inversion of theory and politically bankrupt...Critical theory rejects the kind of knowledge that one can bank on...Mankind is not betrayed by the untimely attempts of the revolutionaries but by timely attempts by the realists.”

Marx Horkheimer, Frankfurt Critical School
“The Authoritarian State,” 1940

“Authority is an historical category whose necessity is conditioned by the very nature of social organization and social life. But in so far as social organizations are not eternal, neither are forms of authority relations....As soon as the authority relation has become void of this human content, subordination becomes senseless, since mere heteronomy as a basis for authoritarian power has no human support and therefore deserves to be wiped from the face of the earth. The sooner the better.”

Ljubomir Tadić, Praxis School
“Authority and Authoritarian Thinking,” 1968

The Praxis School, an intellectual movement within the humanist Marxist tradition, sought to re-conceptualize socialism within the Yugoslav context and bring about sociopolitical reform. The Praxis movement was significant in its impact on


3 The terminology for the neo-Marxist movement spawned by the Frankfurt School of Sociology, to which the Praxis School belongs, is varied and can be confusing. It is important to note that “critical theory,” “humanist Marxism,” “creative Marxism” and “critical Marxism” all essentially describe the same neo-Marxist critique of classic Marxism. The terms are used almost interchangeably throughout the intellectual
twentieth-century Yugoslav history because it was the first concerted, grand-scale ideological challenge to Josip Broz Tito’s post-World War II vision of socialism in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (hereafter “Yugoslavia”). Recognizing persistent and increased alienation in Yugoslav society, the Praxis School’s critique of Titoism and Stalinism drew upon two important European philosophical traditions: the writings of the young Karl Marx and neo-Marxist critical theory, founded by the Frankfurt School of Sociology. Vojin Milić, a Praxis contributor, stated that the “fundamental principle of critical theory is to establish a rational unity between theory and practice.” The Praxis authors did not pen simply philosophical, metaphysical essays— with their primarily ideological challenge to Titoism, the movement fully intended purposive social action that would effect corrective change.

historiography of Marxism. Unless quoting or referring to Alvin Gouldner, a neo-Marxist scholar who prefers “critical Marxism,” this paper uses “humanist Marxism” because it is the term that the Praxis School uses most regularly to describe itself.

4 Students operated a whole array of dissident journals 1965-75 (Student, Polet, Mladina, Naši Dani, Mladost, Vidici), but Praxis, a journal whose authors and administrators were mature academics, is the focus of this study due to its historical significance, the scale and prominence of its operations, its international profile, and constraints of the study. In chapter two, we will explore the forums in which the Praxis School influenced student dissident thought.

5 The founders of the critical theory from the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School of Sociology are Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodore Adorno. These sociologists were immensely influential internationally. They all fled Germany in the 1930s and moved to academic and advisory positions in the USA. They were instrumental in the philosophical and sociological offensive to understand the Holocaust and the rise of fascism at the conclusion of World War II. Jurgen Habermas is also obliquely considered a product of the Critical School. The philosophic parallels between the Praxis School and the Frankfurt School are considerable—the major difference is the Praxis School is operating within a socialist system and must couch their discourse more carefully. See Vojin Milić, “Method of Critical Theory,” PIE no. 3-4 (1971) for the Praxis explication of the Frankfurt’s School of critical theory. Articles from the international edition of Praxis will be cited hereafter as PIE.

This chapter argues that the Praxis School’s entire agenda revolved around constructing an ideology that would successfully translate into purposive social action as a corrective to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia’s sociopolitical program. First, this chapter briefly examines the sociopolitical situation in Yugoslavia in the early 1960s in order to provide context for the development of the humanist Marxist critique. Then it will turn to its primary purpose, which is to conduct a conceptual analysis of the humanist-Marxist Praxis School agenda utilizing reminiscences from the authors themselves and a selection of articles from the journal Praxis (1964-1975). This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the Korčula Summer School, an annual symposium for Praxis authors, their students, and their international guests.

The Praxis School was also part of a larger contemporary European neo-Marxist philosophical tradition. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist whose lengthy stay in prison under Mussolini led to one of the most important critiques of classical Marxism, Prison Notebooks, was the founding father of humanist Marxism. A Leninist, Gramsci accepted that a Party vanguard would be instrumental in bringing about the communist revolution, but only with the assistance of Gramsci a group of “organic intellectuals” that was generated from the ranks of the proletariat. The latter was a modification of great import: the Party vanguard, assisted by these intellectuals, must function in tandem with the proletariat in order to enlighten them to the false consciousness preying upon their peers. In turn, Gramsci held that this close relationship between the Party vanguard and

\[\text{Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13.}\]
the proletariat—the intellectuals acting as a bridge between them—would result in a consensus in favor of the Party. Participatory communism, predicated by direct, open dialogue with the workers and the bourgeois, and a “strong belief in the [transformative] power of culture” and consensus, Gramsci laid the foundations for humanist Marxism.\textsuperscript{8}

The articles of \textit{Praxis} demonstrate Gramsci’s intellectual legacy indeed found fertile ground in Yugoslavia: the members of the Praxis School and the protesters functioned in the role of Gramsci’s “organic intellectuals” for a short while.

The transnational humanist Marxist movement extended to Yugoslavia. Some of the founders and devotees of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, such as Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas, internationally renowned philosophers in their own right, advised the \textit{Praxis} journal and even penned articles for the multi-lingual international edition. In the opening salutatory article in the Yugoslav (domestic) edition of \textit{Praxis}, the editorial board unwaveringly staked their claim, stating “we want a philosophical journal in which philosophy is the thought of revolution, ruthless criticism of all that exists, a humanist vision of the truly human world and an inspirational force for revolutionary activity.”\textsuperscript{9} This bold statement would resonate with the student protesters in 1968, and although the Praxis professors did not instigate the protest organizationally, the students found direction in their words and ideas.

\textsuperscript{8} Tarrow, 13.

The Praxis School was a group of like-minded academics, largely from philosophy departments, affiliated with the University of Belgrade, the University of Zagreb, and others within Yugoslavia. Their journal, *Praxis: A Philosophical Journal*, came to life in 1964 as a collective inter-republic effort. The Croatian Philosophical Society published the journal simultaneously in two formats: a Yugoslav edition that used Serbo-Croatian exclusively and an international edition that offered articles in English, French, German, and Serbo-Croatian. In addition to the journal, the Praxis professors sponsored a seminar on the island of Korčula that they dedicated to developing further their humanist Marxist philosophy and coordinating parallel social action.

The Praxis School’s critique was ideological in nature, so a definition of ideology is in order. Michael Freeden suggests that one of the hallmarks of ideology is that, “those engaged in ideological discourse make…stipulative assertions about the truth or correctness of their views. In doing so, they seek to legitimate interpretations and courses of political action in competition with other ideologies.”¹⁰ As analysis of the *Praxis* articles will demonstrate, the Praxis School had two goals: to deconstruct the sociopolitical status quo in Yugoslavia and to proffer an alternative ideology that, in their estimation, was more correct, more moral, and more adept at achieving emancipation.

Freeden summarizes Clifford Geertz’s influential notion of ideology as “an ordered system of cultural symbols organizing social and psychological processes into

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meaningful patterns, *enabling purposive action.*”¹¹ This definition of ideology is central to this thesis. This first chapter seeks to establish the Praxis School’s agenda as ideological and, according to Freeden, *enabling purposive action* is an essential quality of ideology. In the second chapter, we will examine exactly *how* the Praxis School enabled purposive action. This definition also exposes the philosophical roots of the movement. The Praxis School was intent on influencing the course of Yugoslav society and politics with their critique and “enabling purposive action” was the centerpiece of the larger intellectual tradition of critical theory.¹² Author Mihailo Marković contended that Marx understood the School’s namesake *praxis* as the process in which “man affirms his personality and experiences himself a subject who can change those features of his surroundings that do not satisfy him.”¹³ Both Geertz and Marković acknowledge how an ideology fuses the macro level (“social processes” and “surroundings”) with the micro level (“psychological processes” and “personality”) in its march toward purposive action. It is clear that the *Praxis* authors did not limit their work to the realm of political philosophy; the Praxis School was substantively an ideological movement.

The Praxis School envisioned equality, individuality, creative will, and humanity as crucial constituents of socialism.¹⁴ The opening editorial in the 1964 international

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edition was a position statement for the journal as well as the School: “The development of an authentic, humanist socialism is not possible without the renewal and development of Marx’s philosophical thought, without a deepened study of the works of all significant Marxists and without a Marxist, non-dogmatic and revolutionary approach to the open issues of our time.”15 Thus the Praxis members maintained that society and the political system in Yugoslavia were open-ended problems to be actively scrutinized and critiqued. The Praxis School, therefore, rejected bureaucracy, censorship, and static sociopolitical mobility, all of which they found rampant in the Yugoslavia of its day, a post-war Yugoslavia which the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), under Tito’s leadership, had fastidiously crafted.16

The life of the Praxis journal, 1964-1975, coincided with a turbulent time in the nation’s history and a vulnerable time for the LCY. The national question had reawakened, economy policy and the state’s political structure were once again open questions, and Tito was dedicated to carving out a new international niche for Yugoslavia with the Non-Alignment Movement in the midst of the Cold War. The license the Praxis authors enjoyed to conduct an ideological exploration of what would best serve the country’s future would not have been possible a few years earlier.


Highly centralized, authoritarian Party policy, pressing domestic economic concerns, Cold War tension, and fear of a Soviet attempt at take-over characterized the 1950s in Yugoslavia. In order to appreciate fully how the Praxis School’s critique fed into the larger reflexive discourse spawned by the student protest of June 1968 and the state’s response to both challenges, it is necessary to discuss the fact that Party policy in Yugoslavia underwent a “thaw” in the early 1960s. The three pillars of Tito’s Yugoslavia were Yugoslavism, self-management, and the Non-Alignment Movement. This section will discuss how the collective development of these phenomena, primarily self-management and Yugoslavism, collectively created a domestic atmosphere in Yugoslavia that was more conducive to multiple socialist ideologies.

State security improved dramatically in the early 1960s. On the international front, more than a decade had passed since Stalin had expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform without incident or interference from the Soviet Union and a second, more successful rapprochement between Tito and the USSR took place in 1962. Tito had secured a place in Cold War geopolitics for Yugoslavia as a co-founder of the Non-Alignment Pact (1960). Domestically, the country had made significant economic


progress in the 1950s and Yugoslavia was in a position to “compete for international credit” after 1961. As further evidence of state stability, Tito’s postwar policy of “brotherhood and unity,” or Yugoslavism, succeeded in soothing residual ethnic bitterness left over from World War II, at least temporarily, and diffusing the immediacy of the conflict. The Party had also successfully implemented its own distinct socialist system, self-management.

Yugoslavia went into World War II as a royal dictatorship and emerged a communist state rife with deep wounds inflicted by the three-way civil war, fought along ethnic as well as political lines, which raged alongside the struggle against Nazi occupation. The challenges inherent in the process of consolidating power and restructuring Yugoslavia during the transitional years immediately after World War II made a search for legitimacy a high priority. This would prove to be an on-going process in the period between the Constitutions of 1963 and 1974. In order to rebuild the state


20 During the publishing period of the *Praxis* journal, there were a series of constitutional amendments 1967-68 and June 1971. In December 1971, the central Party leadership expelled liberal communists in the Croatian League of Communists who pressed for the amendments in a purge. A similar purge took place in the Serbian League of Communists and other republics. The constitutional flux of this period culminated in the Constitution of 1974 with a new confederal model for Yugoslavia. Many Croats were disenchanted with the reforms due to the Party purges, and the new constitution left many Serbs, nationalists and communists, dissatisfied with the new state structure. The question of state structure was an open one during this period and the *Praxis* critique came at a vulnerable time for Kardelj and the LCY. Interestingly, the state censure of the Praxis School in 1975 coincided roughly with political purges of the LCY in 1971. On the Serbian question during the constitutional debates of 1967-1974, see Dejan Jović, *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), 95-140. For insight into the Croatian question in the constitutional debates, see Jill Irvine, “The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia,” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration*, eds. Leonard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008), 149-178; and Dennison Rusinow’s “The Reopening of the National Question” in
after the war, the Party exercised a heavy hand in rooting out ideological dissidents. These groups included people who remained sympathetic to Stalinism and non-communists, including Serbian royalists and members of and collaborators with the ultranationalist *Ustaša* terrorist organization that had come to power under the Nazi occupation in Croatia. The lines of battle during the civil war in Yugoslavia during World War II had left the state with a difficult national question that Tito addressed with Yugoslavism, a civic identity that emphasized citizenship and duty to the nation and Party loyalty over ethnic identity.  

References to the National Liberation Struggle, or the Partisan struggle against Nazi occupying forces during World War II, permeated Tito’s rhetoric during the entire length of his life-long term as President of Yugoslavia. This was a tactic to ensure the legitimacy of the League of Communists and the unity of the ethnic groups in the country. He emphasized the collective effort of the Partisans, despite their ethnic diversity, as the strength of the country’s future. During World War II, Tito was already laying the foundations for a postwar civic identity that would triumph over ethnic divisions:

> The present National Liberation Struggle could not terminate in victory over the invaders [the Nazis] and their henchmen if it were not for the unity of the people

the same volume (131-148) offers general analysis of the national question vis-à-vis the structure of the state.

in that struggle...[including] Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians, and Moslems. The full-fledged liberation of each separate nationality could not be achieved if each one did not already now take up arms and fight for a common victory by all the nationalities of Yugoslavia over all the enemies of the people.  

Yugoslavism was meant to foster unity and citizenship in Yugoslavia as a whole country, led by the League of Communists. The sovereignty implicit in Yugoslavism privileged political affiliation with the Party and loyalty to its ideological unity over ethnic identity. It was one of several mechanisms the Party employed after the war to restore social order and insure their political dominance in the wake of such catastrophic upheaval. The successful implantation of Yugoslavism contributed to the security of the state and the relaxation of Party authority in the early 1960s.

Tito’s designated ideologue for the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Edvard Kardelj, introduced self-managing socialism at the VI Party Congress in 1952 in order to form a Yugoslav communism ideologically independent from Stalinism.  


24 This was symbolized in a name-change for the Party. Previously, the Party name had been the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, in line with Soviet nomenclature. In 1952, the Party changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in honor of Marx’s Communist League of 1848. This paper is concerned with the period after this change and will use the abbreviation LCY exclusively. “Stalinism” describes Stalin’s revision of Marxism and it was premised on a strong Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which dominated an authoritarian, centrist state. Stalinism rejected many of the basic premises of classical Marxism, such as equality in socialism, and he reversed the order of economic development in Marx’s historical materialism: first comes the Party-led revolution, then the Party will build the economy. Communism in Stalin’s USSR was not participatory, and the Party was largely a facade for totalitarian policies. See Wolfgang Leonhard’s chapter “The Second Transformation: Stalinism” (pp. 95-132) in his Three Faces of Marxism for a full description of Stalin’s interpretation of classical Marxism (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970).
fought alongside Tito in the Partisan war effort during World War II. As a Slovene, Kardelj embodied Tito’s “popular front” mentality during the Second World War that embraced all volunteers to the Partisan cause, regardless of ethnicity, as long as they were dedicated anti-fascists.\textsuperscript{25} The Praxis School succeeded in opening an unsolicited ideological dialogue with Edvard Kardelj, the patriarchal ideologue of the LCY, which only escalated after the June 1968 student demonstrations. By the time the Praxis School entered the political scene in the early 1960s, Kardelj had matured into concurrent political positions that most suited his talent as an ideologist: he was the “chief architect of the social system” as Vice Chair of the Federal Executive Council and President of the Committee for Legislation and the Building of People’s Power.\textsuperscript{26}

The significance and power of Kardelj’s position was evident; it was his official responsibility to conceive political ideology and render it into policy and legislation. Kardelj’s intellect and command of political philosophy made him a natural choice for a parade of high-profile positions within the post-war Yugoslav Communist Party.\textsuperscript{27} Operating in his official capacity, it was predictable that he would eventually cross swords with the Praxis School. This is particularly true since one of the main themes of

\textsuperscript{25} The reigning assumption behind the “popular front” was the importance of bolstering the war effort with people from all political persuasions and, as long as they were not in sympathy with fascism, eventually they would come to recognize the merits of communism and “join” the movement ideologically as well. Tito’s “popular front” approach encountered two serious challenges: the Serbian Četnik movement that was dedicated to reinstating the Serbian monarchy after World War II and the Croatian ultra-nationalist Ustaša.

\textsuperscript{26} Sabrina P. Ramet, \textit{The Three Yugoslavias}, 207.

\textsuperscript{27} Kardelj’s positions span the name-change of the communist party so the non-specific phrasing is intentional.
the Praxis sociopolitical critique and the student strike of 1968 was the implementation of self-managing socialism, Kardelj’s magnum opus as a communist ideologist.

Self-management defined Tito’s vision of communism—this became essential after Stalin expelled the Yugoslav Communist Party from the Soviet-led Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform, in 1948. The impetus for Kardelj’s innovation in political ideology was to distinguish the LCY from two “others”: the interwar monarchy that brutally imposed an authoritarian Yugoslavism to control ethnic tensions in the state, and Stalinism. Relative to Stalinism, self-management was “a process of decentralization, and de-etatization, and democratization...” Kardelj’s ideological innovation was a return to “original Marxism in order to replace and/or counter Soviet

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28 The Cominform, or the Communist Information Bureau, was the post-World War II international forum for communist parties. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union dominated the Cominform and Stalin and his successors used it as a tool to dictate sociopolitical policy in the countries of the Warsaw Pact. On June 28, 1948, after a four-month hostile exchange of letters, the Cominform expelled the then-named Yugoslav Communist Party. For a full historical analysis of the Cominform, see Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Robert Bass and Elizabeth Marbury Bass, eds., *The Soviet-Yugoslav Controversy, 1948-1958: A Documentary Record* (New York: Prospect Books, 1959) is the most comprehensive collection of primary sources related to the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform and the tensions thereafter. For secondary analysis of the Yugoslav-Soviet split, see Wayne Vucinich, *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982).

29 Dejan Jović, “Communist Yugoslavia and Its ‘Others,’” in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. eds. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower. (New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 281. The interwar monarchical Yugoslavism has a completely different premise than Tito’s Yugoslavism, which was “legitimized” by a concrete historical event: the Partisan national liberation struggle against the Nazis in World War II. The monarchy based its Yugoslavism simply on the de facto existence of a multi-ethnic state and the need to construct a policy that would foster a collective identity.

‘revisionism.’”31 The central idea behind self-managing socialism was to empower the people in workers’ councils to mold their own environments subject to the will of the group. Edvard Kardelj termed this “pluralism of self-management interests.”32

Postwar Yugoslavia included six republics and two autonomous territories, located within Serbia. The Party structure at the federal level included an Executive Committee within the Central Committee, and at this level the Party also had ministries for various government functions. Each republic had its own Central Committee, as well, with a supporting hierarchy that extended down to the city level and myriad self-management councils.33 Kardelj envisioned self-managing socialism as a system in which “the worker through his basic organization of associated labor, be it material production or in the social services, gains direct political control over the condition and movement of all the results of his labor.”34 Chapter two will demonstrate that one of the central axioms of the student protest in Belgrade, June 1968, was that self-management be reformed so that its implementation would match the spirit of Kardelj’s words.

Improved postwar state security led to watershed reforms in Party ideology and policy, and the subsequent decentralization of state controls in the civil sphere, but only after an internal Party struggle. The LCY introduced the first of these decentralizing

32 Remington, 59.
34 Edvard Kardelj, Towards a New Type of Socialist Democracy (Beograd: Socialist Thought and Practice, 1976), 21. This booklet is a publication of Kardelj’s statement at the Third Session of the LCY Central Committee in April 1976.
changes at the Eighth Congress in December 1964.\textsuperscript{35} The strongly centrist, statist character of the LCY no longer really fit the needs of the state. This was not a foregone conclusion to some of the most powerful members of the LCY’s Executive Committee and there was a struggle over the degree of authority that the Party would exert in the economy and the civil sphere. Aleksandar Ranković, Vice-President of Yugoslavia after 1963 and the chief of the secret security force, favored a more authoritarian, centralized role for the Party. “Hard-liners” centered in Belgrade supported Rankovic’s position as they faced off against a reform coalition that included prominent authors of the newly minted humanist Marxist journal \textit{Praxis}.\textsuperscript{36}

The turning point came when Tito expelled Aleksandar Ranković from the LCY in 1966 supposedly for spying on Tito himself. To supporters of Kardelj’s self-managing socialism and liberal members of the LCY, “Ranković was the embodiment of central state power…. [he was] a symbol of the bureaucracy and state apparatus.”\textsuperscript{37} His downfall signaled Tito’s vote of confidence that a new level of state devolution, in the name of fulfilling the socialist revolution, was in order.\textsuperscript{38} The Praxis School’s alliance with reform-minded LCY members quickly deteriorated when the Praxis authors pressed for \textit{too much} decentralization of Party authority. Not long after Ranković’s disgrace, the

\textsuperscript{35} Ramet, 212-14.
\textsuperscript{36} Carter offers a more nuanced discussion of how this struggle over the future role of the LCY played out along national lines among the republics (19-20).
\textsuperscript{37} Jović, \textit{State that Withered Away}, 64.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 82.
reform coalition collapsed into factions that pitted the Praxis School members against the newly decentralized LCY. This established a configuration of power and contention that would persist through the next decade, but the Praxis School was now a firmly established fixture on the nation’s newly diverse ideological landscape.\textsuperscript{39} The future development of socialism was now a plural pursuit.

The decision to reopen the question of Yugoslavia’s structure was risky, despite the stability described above. Dejan Jović astutely characterizes the period from the fall of security Chief Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 to the new constitution of 1974 as a period of “elite perceptions of reality” and the search for a “desirable future” in Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{40} Sabrina Ramet broadens this conceptualization of the state, contending, in fact, that a lack of legitimacy plagued Yugoslavia from its very inception in December 1918 due to the lack of consensus between the Serbs and Croats on a model for their new state.\textsuperscript{41} The upper echelons of LCY were still searching for a solid path for the nation that would at once distinguish Yugoslavia from other communist countries and its dictatorial interwar period, and secure it from Soviet and western interference. The Praxis School had no compunctions about chiming in with their own point of view on the matter.

Notably, the Praxis School carefully waged its ideological critique of self-managing socialism largely from \textit{within} the LCY up until the Party revoked their

\textsuperscript{39} Sher, 37-48.

\textsuperscript{40} Jović, \textit{The State that Withered Away}, 1.

\textsuperscript{41} Ramet, \textit{Three Yugoslavias}, 13. The structure of the state, confederal vs. federal, and the degree of authority was at issue then too, but the dispute at the end of WWI played out along ethnic lines, not along the lines of political ideology as was predominantly the case in post-World War II Yugoslavia.
memberships after 1968 or the journal’s final suppression in 1975. One Praxis contributor openly criticized self-management as “an ideological myth” that had potential, but had not been properly implemented. In many ways, the Praxis School’s internal critique of self-managing socialism, one of the fundamentals of Titoism, was more threatening than external criticism, whose source might come from another political system, perhaps one hostile to Marxism altogether and easily explained away by the state. It is much easier to denounce and buffer against political criticism when it utilizes foreign terminology and epistemology, which would be the case with domestic nationalism, for example. When the critique emanated from within, as with the Praxis School’s commentary on Titoism, the state’s response had to be necessarily nuanced and carefully conceived to preserve the legitimacy of the socialist system. Now we will turn to the roots, ideas, and accomplished intellectuals that created the Praxis School through articles, conferences, and connections with the academic world beyond Yugoslavia.

The Praxis School Platform

The publication of Marx’s early lost works in the 1930s, the failure of world communist revolution, and the alarming totalitarian character of Stalinism combined to stimulate a global reassessment of Marxist social theory in the post-World War II era and the Yugoslavs were no exception. The Praxis School belongs to the larger European philosophical tradition of neo-Marxist critical theory, otherwise known as the humanist

Marxists. Critical theory informed the Praxis School’s critique of Yugoslav socialism, which was primarily at the level of ideology, but mandated that its practitioners seek to apply sociopolitical critique in practice to bring about real social change.

The beginnings of the Praxis School can be traced back to a symposium at Lake Bled in 1960 where the participants debated the merits of dogmatic (or scientific) versus humanist Marxism. The nature of this event, a public discussion of Marxism, was evidence of an ideological thaw. The future Praxis School members firmly argued for the latter and their interpretation prevailed. This debate marked a crucial shift in the Yugoslav conception of communism and Marxism. 43 Praxis contributor and prolific author on humanist Marxism, Mihailo Marković remarked that thereafter, “orthodox Marxists subsequently completely withdrew from the philosophical journals, and they played quite and insignificant role during philosophical life in the ‘sixties.” 44 The doctrinaire Marxists yielded the playing field to the Praxis School, at least on this occasion, but it was a sign that it was open season on socialist discourse.

43 Mihailo Marković and R.S. Cohen, A History of the Praxis Group, 23. The full title of the symposium was Problems of Object and Subject, Practice and the Theory of Reflection (22). See also Sher (pp. 32-7) for a more detailed discussion of the theory of reflection in classical Marxism, dogmatic scientific Marxism, and the Praxis humanist Marxist critique of both.

44 Ibid. The first part of this booklet is a memoir reflecting on the Praxis School’s evolution, position, and treatment. Marković, a regular contributor to the journal penned this work unabashedly to raise awareness of the plight of the Praxis School. Robert S. Cohen, a Boston-based member of the Praxis journal’s (IE) advisory board from the beginning, wrote the second half of the book on the international response to state harassment of the Praxis School members, concluding with an addendum that the journal had in fact been closed (late February 1975) just before the booklet went to print. The third part is a fascinating essay entitled “An Appeal from the Belgrade Philosophers: To the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Serbia” in which the “Belgrade Eight,” argue that the charges that led to their suspension were unjust.
The Praxis School possessed an extensive web of international contacts from the outset and purposefully maintained a dual profile: one domestic and one international. The journal’s international image and audience were so important to the Praxis journal that the editors-in-chief, Gajo Petrović and Rudi Supek, cultivated academics for the advisory board from England (Alfred J. Ayer), Paris (Sergi Mallet), Mexico City (Erich Fromm), and San Diego (Herbert Marcuse) among other places. For the most part, the Praxis School members who lived in Yugoslavia and also belonged to the LCY had fought with the Partisan war effort during World War II, and were generally of the same generation (born in the early 1920s).

Two important Praxis members did not fit this profile. Rudi Supek, one of the editors-in-chief, had actually fought in the French resistance during WWII before being deported to Buchenwald, where he continued his resistance activities at great peril. Supek never joined the LCY and proved to be somewhat hostile to the shift in editorial focus after 1968. Nebojša Popov was the other Praxis author who did not fit the mold: he did not fight in with Partisan resistance in World War II because he was about a decade younger than most of his peers. Gajo Petrović, one of two editors-in-chief of Praxis, led the defense against the government’s legal harassment from 1971 to the

45 Sher, 52-53.


47 Ibid., 24-25. Supek, of all the Praxis School members, had the most contentious relationship with the student movement. He resigned his post as editor-in-chief in late 1973 over myriad issues.
journal’s dissolution in 1975. He was also one of the leading organizers of the Korčula Summer School. Individual *Praxis* authors displayed critical flair on certain topics. Svetozar Stojanović, for example, demonstrated a penchant for criticizing Stalinism and played the part of provocateur by writing the only article directly addressing the student protests of 1968, which the government claimed Praxis School members had incited.

The Praxis School applied critical theory, first advocated by the sociological theorists of the Frankfurt School, not only to the Marxist tradition generally, but also to the contemporary Yugoslav political system by posing a new answer to the gap between Marxist political philosophy and Yugoslav socialism in practice. The problem of how to implement Marxism is a problem that has absorbed countless communist revolutionaries and intellectuals over the ages and their answers have spawned numerous waves of neo-Marxism. Alvin Gouldner recognizes two groups of neo-Marxists: critical Marxists and scientific Marxists. The point of philosophical divergence for these two neo-Marxist traditions is their interpretation of Marx’s notion of *praxis*. This difference is concretely traceable to an inherent “tension between Marx’s dismissal of idealism and his call to

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48 Sher, 235-36.
change the world.” In Marx’s XI Feuerbach Thesis, he called future revolutionaries to action and soundly rebukes the liberal bourgeois philosophical tradition for its lack of action: “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” The critical Marxists understood this exhortation as a mandate to preserve and infuse individual agency into the political system. As part of a multi-generational intellectual tradition, the Praxis School and other humanist Marxists interpreted this as voluntarism in the name of political struggle that translates into social action: conceptualize, target, resist, and change. The Praxis School’s mantra was that “man is a being who freely and consciously transforms his own life.”

As humanist Marxists, the Praxis School rejected the Stalinist interpretation of Marxism as stifling “statism.” Stojanović penned the most scathing condemnation of Stalinism in “The Statist Myth of Socialism,” in which he defined statism as “a system based on state ownership of the means of production and state control over production


55 Marxist-Leninist ideology contends that non-revolutionary forms of socialism cannot achieve a true dictatorship of the proletariat as in Karl Marx’s vision; the Communist Party should not wait for historical materialism to progress toward the socialist revolution; the Party has the obligation to seize power and induce the socialist revolution. In his essay “The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution: Draft of a Platform for the Proletarian Party,” Lenin wrote that “there is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolution in one’s own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such a struggle…[Robert V. Daniels, ed., A Documentary History of Communism and the World, From Revolution to Collapse, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994). 11].See Wolfgang Leonhard’s chapter “The First Transformation: Leninism” (pp. 47-95) in his Three Faces of Marxism for a full description of Lenin’s interpretation of classical Marxism (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970).
and other social activities. The state apparatus represents a new ruling class. He did not spare the LCY: “Yugoslav Marxism, in its otherwise quite radical philosophy, is not an exception” to the trend among socialist states, such as P.R. China and the USSR, to return to statism. Stojanović used the term “oligarchic statism” to describe Stalinism and Maoism. In his estimation, “oligarchic statism …is carrying out forcible industrialization” and in doing so, it has “created its own ‘grave digger’: the industrial proletariat.” This was a highly critical perspective on the state of affairs in Yugoslavia—despite all of Tito’s bluster and Kardelj’s innovations, Stojanović charged that the Yugoslav system suffered from the same persistence of alienation and misguided statism as its arch-enemies the Soviets and the Maoists.

The Praxis School was uncomfortable with the strong notion of the vanguard Communist Party in Leninism and Stalinism because both focused dogmatically on the

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58 In this article, Stojanović assumed a collective position for Leninism and Stalinism, and chose to juxtapose it with Maoism.

determinism in Marx’s historical dialectic. Their mistrust of an insular vanguard Party was directly in line with Gramsci’s humanist Marxist advocacy of “organic intellectuals” connecting the proletariat with the Party leaders. The LCY was also, in their view, currently abusing the idea of a Party vanguard. Stojanović cautioned, “because of the conditions in which the party operates...monolithism, discipline, hierarchy duty, responsibility and appointment [from the upper Party echelons] develop at the cost of diversity, initiative, democracy, rights, and choice.”

Stalinism, in particular, led to a convoluted bureaucratic communist system void of individual agency, opportunity to dissent, and dynamic exchange between the people and the government. The Praxis concern was that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, with Tito at the helm, was marching down the same path. In the Yugoslav context, the Praxis School actively critiqued the self-managing socialism of Edvard Kardelj as “red bourgeois.” Milovan Djilas acknowledged the possibility of a “red bourgeois” in every socialist democracy: “The development of dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist democracy, can go in two directions: in the direction of its own disappearance to the extent that socialism...”


62 The phrase “red bourgeois” refers to the criticism of the Praxis School and others is that the ruling communist party either: (1) conceives of the socialist revolution as a pretext for the construction of a new ruling class (Stalinism); or (2) is in danger of losing its Marxist bearings and promoting policies that value the retention of political power over the progression toward communism and the withering away of the state (cf. n57)
strengthens itself, or in the direction of strengthening and transformation of bureaucracy into a privileged caste which lives at the expense of society as a whole…” The latter is the “red bourgeois” in the *Praxis* ideal-type of malformed self-management.

The Praxis School sought to revive the more philosophical concerns of the young Marx and infuse the Yugoslav path to socialism with a heightened role for the individual, emancipation, and creative production in the battle to redress alienation. The humanist Marxists also rejected the sacrosanct position of the dialectic, a fundamental tenet of classical Marxism. The *Praxis* intellectuals, instead, had “a tendency to construct some key concepts such as human essence, alienation, revolution, human community, etc., as transcendental rather than historical categories.” The *Praxis* articulation of humanist Marxism called for increased personal, cultural, social and political freedoms, especially free speech and the right to an open exchange of political ideas and social theory. The Praxis School was functioning *de facto* as the “organic intellectuals” of Gramscian theory.

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66 Mihailo Djurić, a *Praxis* editor, was put on trial after making comments about the recent constitutional amendments “that were publicly interpreted as being inflammatory of Serbian nationalist sentiments” (Sher, 224). Notably, other Praxis editors defended Djurić’s right to free speech in an editorial in the domestic edition, although they did not defend the substance of his comments. The editorial was promptly banned.
It was important for the Praxis School to justify their positions as Marxists and yet distinguish themselves from other dogmatic neo-Marxist movements. Praxis authors often turned to the early writings of Marx to legitimate a position on contemporary issues. According to Freedén’s characterization of ideology, the authors’ constant attention to the justification of their position supports the conclusion that the Praxis School was indeed functioning primarily at the level of ideology, and a reflexive one that considered its position domestically and globally. A review of Praxis articles demonstrates that the Yugoslav authors often criticized Stalinism—a safe target in Tito’s Yugoslavia—in order to make a point about an issue in their own country. Gouldner contends that critical Marxism and scientific Marxism (i.e. Stalinism) “could not emerge as structurally distinct tendencies but for the fact that both are truly present in Marxism.” While “capitalist society was governed by blind and necessary laws to which persons were inescapably subject,” he continues, “it is also true that Marxism treats persons as free agents…who can respond to appeals and be won over even against their own class

67 An excellent example of Praxis author turning to Marx’s early writings to justify his opinion on a modern issue facing Yugoslavia is in Mihailo Marković’s “Man and Technology,” PIE 3 (1966): 395-400. Marković meticulously reviews Marx’s position on technology, citing from Marx’s Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, 1848, to support his own oblique criticism of the LCY’s intense industrialization program. See also: Gajo Petrović, “Dialectical Materialism and the Philosophy of Karl Marx,” PIE no. 3 (1966): 325-337.

68 Cf. page 28 (n10) of this chapter.

69 For example, Vojin Milić, “A Contribution to the Theory of Social Conflict,” PIE 4 (1965), 542-550. Milić examined the Stalinist response to social conflict and concluded that it did not resolve social conflict “in a rational and human way” (543). Milic’s article amounted to a tacit caveat to the LCY, his assertion being that only a careful, critical analysis of Yugoslav practice may prevent the same pathology.
Gouldner’s astute line of reasoning did not escape the authors in *Praxis*: it was their express hope to win over the proletariat and the students in order to form the “organic intellectuals” in Gramsci’s conception of humanist Marxism.

Gajo Petrović defined the “essence” of Marxism in his *Praxis* article “Dialectical Materialism and the Philosophy of Karl Marx” as the “fundamental thought possibility of our times, the critical humanistic thought of modern man about himself...” A survey of this article reveals that this sentiment was the thin unifying thread among all variants of neo-Marxism. Petrović distilled the humanist Marxist refinement of classical Marxism by highlighting the reflexive, interactive relationship that “creative thinking in the spirit of Marx, by co-thinking with Marx and by thinking through Marx's guiding ideas.” As testament to how small the common ground was among neo-Marxist movements, Stalinism, for example, wholeheartedly rejected “creativity” in the interpretation of Marx’s words and eschewed critical thought in practice. The fact that there were so few common points among neo-Marxist movements was exactly Petrović’s point. The Praxis School was indeed Marxist, and yet very distinct from other neo-Marxist groups such as Stalinism. Petrović posited that what differentiates neo-Marxist movements is the primacy of determinism in scientific Marxist versus voluntarism in the Praxis School’s reading of Marx’s classical texts. To make this point, Petrović succinctly panned scientific Marxism as “simply a report on what has been or is still going on,” and

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characterizes the Praxis School’s humanist Marxism as “participation in the creation of something that can and should be,” thus enabling purposive action.\textsuperscript{71}

The very name that the Praxis School chose to identify their journal and the group is laden with ideological connotation. In many ways, \textit{Praxis} was a manifesto clearly meant to delineate the Praxis Schools relationship to classical Marxism and other neo-Marxist movements, such as Leninism and Stalinism. The term \textit{praxis} translates from the Greek to “practice” in English. Michael Freeden defines the term “practice” as “the performance of and participation in, and identifiable regularity of action or thought, one replicated as well as shaped by other such practitioners.”\textsuperscript{72} Freeden’s mention of “action” in his definition is significant. The idea of practice, or acting on one’s philosophy was central to the Praxis School. Humanist Marxism must “embrace the whole of this creative man by the concept of practice” because “man creates his own history, his historical life, according to the possibilities of his own practice.”\textsuperscript{73} The most important component of this definition for the Praxis School was the idea of open, reflexive exchange. The people should be allowed and encouraged to participate creatively—to express their agency—in their government and its formative ideas. This quality, according to the Praxis critique, was desperately lacking in Kardelj’s vision of self-managing socialism.

\textsuperscript{71} Gajo Petrović, “Dialectical Materialism and the Philosophy of Karl Marx,” 328. This article is the most concise distillation of Praxis School thinking on Marx’s original texts in the international edition of the journal.

\textsuperscript{72} Michael Freeden, \textit{Liberal Languages} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 239.

\textsuperscript{73} Predrag Vranicki, “On the Problem of Praxis,” PIE, no.1 (1965), 43.
The range of topics covered by the Praxis School’s articles in the International Edition was relatively narrow; ideological critiques of the political and social status quo in Yugoslavia were the most common. Specifically, the essential “theoretical contributions of the Praxis School to Marxism” were “philosophical anthropology, political sociology, epistemology, and ethics.”74 The overarching themes of the articles in Praxis include explications on the finer points of socialist ideology and theory and how it related to other political systems, which were also subjected to critique.75 Their application of critical theory to other political systems, as well as the Yugoslav status quo, supports the conclusion that Praxis authors were building their own socialist ideology, namely humanist Marxism, while trying to erode support for other competing ideological systems. Their goal may have been socialist pluralism domestically, but the Praxis authors did not limit their criticism to their own country. Theirs was truly a transnational (European) movement.

There was never direct critique of the Party functionaries by name, but the Praxis authors eloquently critiqued the LCY at the level of ideology, rhetoric, and social action. One article dared to accomplish its criticism by tacitly putting the namesake of Titoism himself on trial. Dr. Svetozar Stojanović, Praxis author, quipped in a recent interview that in his articles for Praxis he “would write ‘the Party’ but everybody would know that


75 For one example of many, see Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, “Socialism and Humanism,” PIE no. 4 (1965): 520-535.
is Tito's name.”\textsuperscript{76} In one particularly direct article about the phenomenon of charismatic leadership in socialist systems, Stojanović managed to write a blistering critique of Tito’s heroic and unquestioned status as the great patriarch of the League of Communists.

In this article, after pronouncing that post-1968 Yugoslavia was in the grip of a serious crisis, Stojanović proceeded to discuss in detail the detrimental effect of “charismatic” leadership and the development of “cults of personality” around leaders such as Stalin and Lenin. He intimated that Tito was in fact one of those “great leaders [who] spontaneously acquire charismatic status in times of great social crisis and revolution,” clearly referring to the fact that Tito came to power based on his iconic status as a Partisan war hero. He continued with the warning that such leaders are “as long as they live, a potential source of evil as well as good.”\textsuperscript{77} Their threat to social progress was particularly pronounced in times of state crisis because the “charismatic leader is aware that democratization [with in a socialist system, i.e. a social democracy] would gradually deprive him of power unless he secures for himself a savior’s role. He may, therefore, occasionally even instigate disagreements, tensions…in the party and state hierarchy, and thus, in society as a whole.”\textsuperscript{78} Stojanović continued his metaphoric indictment of Tito by

\textsuperscript{76} Interview with the author, August 3, 2009, Novi Belgrade, Serbia.


\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 315.
suggesting that charismatic leaders inevitably resist liberalization because it “subverts the power of the charisma.”

The sheer gravity of Stojanović’s critique warrants an excursus on this particular article: the article implicitly attacked the very nature of Tito’s leadership, questioned the integrity of his persona and Party, and compared Tito to his arch nemesis, Stalin. It is unusually direct, even by *Praxis* standards, even thought the author avoided using Tito’s name. Stojanović raised some very salient issues that reflect the larger agenda of the Praxis School. His article took direct swing at one of the most sacred of all Yugoslav icons: Marshall Tito, who led the country to victory during WWII and whose heroic exploits comprised the very heart of Yugoslavism. This article offered potent criticisms of not only Tito’s as a charismatic leader, but also those who had subscribed blindly to his “cult of personality.” Stojanović utilized critical theory in his analysis of the Party members’ interface with their leader and posited that one of the main obstacles to meaningful social change and the progress of civil rights in the country was Tito himself. This is a radical departure from the established contours of socialist discourse in Yugoslavia at the time. The article first came out in the domestic edition of *Praxis* in 1971 and it indirectly referred to the 1968 student protest as an attempt at liberalization that was thwarted by Tito’s display of “charismatic” instead of substantive leadership.


80 It is important to note that all of Stojanović’s articles in both editions of *Praxis* have the same insightful, yet insolent, tone. In a recent interview with the author (August 3, 2009; New Belgrade, Serbia) Stojanović discussed this article and its impact. He stated that he was “arguing for democracy rather than charisma.”
The most common theme among the articles in *Praxis* written by Yugoslavs was a sociopolitical critique of Kardelj’s self-managing socialism. The Praxis School’s fixation on this subject was an obvious irritation to the LCY. Branko Horvat even proposed a detailed and sweeping economic “program of action” in 1971 based on a meticulous statistical analysis and critique of the LCY’s economic policies. He assessed the performance of the 1965 economic reforms, which the government launched to compliment self-managing socialism, and concluded that they were not successful. He proposed a new set of tax instruments to improve the economy. The *Praxis* polemics were consistently directed at self-management itself; the authors were trying to build an alternative to Titoism and in their view the first step was criticism of heart of the existing system itself.

The *Praxis* authors essentially conceived of self-managing socialism and other objects of critique as examples of Weber’s “ideal-type.” Weber’s notion of an ideal-

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type is a “constructed model of fully rationally purposive action” that facilitates the understanding “of the real action, influenced as it is by all sorts of irrational facts.”

The Praxis authors indeed constructed a rational ideal-type of Kardelj’s self-management system in order to more effectively challenge its irrational elements and its failures. This is further evidence that the Praxis School’s critiques in general were predominately on the level of ideology. Their corrective proposals were based upon an agenda for purposive social action. Golubović-Pešić, for example, formulated an ideal-type of Marx’s position on humanism vis-à-vis socialism and then proceeded to offer a specific, corrective action program so that socialist theory could be “a more adequate expression of its time and ensure the creation of a truly humanistic community of people.”

Gajo Petrović exhibited the same pattern in his article “Marxism vs. Stalinism.” He took on the challenge of defining the “authentic Marx” with a positive argument based on Marx’s own writings and a negative argument against Stalinism’s “extremely dogmatic and extremely nihilistic attitude toward the philosophical inheritance of Marx.”

Despite the trend among Praxis authors to avoid direct engagement with the architect of self-managing socialism, Edvard Kardelj, Tito himself, or other Party


85 Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, “Socialism and Humanism,” PIE no. 5 (1965), 528. She herself did not propose legislation or social policy, but she outlined specific ideological goals for the LCY. This pattern of creating an ideal-type in order to critique it with an alternative ideology is repeated consistently throughout the Praxis articles.

functionaries, Mihailo Marković and other active members of the Praxis School leveled potent criticism at the implementation of the system:

Self-management cannot be reduced to its initial historical forms which at present exist in our country…It cannot be limited only to production relations at the level of the enterprise and to the local organs of social power. The complete and definitive surpassing of bureaucracy is possible only when self-management reaches the top: when the central organs of the state are converted into organs of self-management.87

A review of the articles in the journal reveals that Praxis School members were dedicated communists and the Yugoslavs among them strove to resurrect the failing, bureaucratic-laden Yugoslav articulation of socialism from its own shortsightedness. Their critique possessed a distinct moral aspect based on a normative, universal, modernist notion of social justice. Marković’s critique pivoted on the fact that a society has not truly achieved equality, an essential component of emancipation, if the power distribution is concentrated in the upper echelons of the LCY. This quotation also exemplified the Praxis School’s distaste for bureaucracy as antithetical to individual agency and, therefore, to the praxis of Marxism as the humanist Marxists understood it.88

Stojanović deftly captured the Praxis critique in the metaphor of self-managing socialism as a double-edged sword: it has excellent potential if the LCY would simply


88 This conception of self-management is common in current historiography seeking to forge a macro-theory for the violent collapse of the Yugoslav state in 1991. (cf. Sekelj) The persistent and uneven distribution of power, even in a Marxist society, is a classic and powerful argument against the logical integrity of Marx’s theory in general. The classic and unsatisfying Marxist response to this criticism is that neither power nor its distribution in society will be problematic once the state has successfully “withered away” and a true state of communism is fait accompli.
reform its implementation. If the League, however, insisted on the status quo, rejecting the humanist Marxist critique, it was a danger to the proper evolution of socialism and individual will. Stojanović contended that the positive side of self-management is that it “provides a potentially revolutionary element in the existing system,” and yet its implementation has gone wrong because it “has become transformed into an ideology.”

The LCY and the state did not fail to recognize Praxis’ ideological challenge, especially when it found its voice in the student protests of 1968.

Another recurring subject of criticism in the journal *Praxis* was Stalinism. The journal portrayed it as a dogmatic, static, interpretation of classical Marxism that led to a reconstitution of oppression, this time under the guise of communism. The Praxis philosophers held that the value of humanity and the individual is depleted in this “statist” system and instead of fostering emancipation; the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes a dictatorship by the proletariat.

The Praxis School related its conception of the role of the individual in history to the rejection of Stalinist “statism.” Stojanović charged that the “ideologies” of the Soviet Union and China “are trying to camouflage reality, equalizing society with the state and insisting that the system is based on ownership….It is not easy to admit that the socialist

89 Svetozar Stojanović “From Post-Revolutionary Dictatorship to Socialist Democracy: Yugoslav Socialism at the Crossroads,” PIE no. 4 (1973): 319. The Praxis School’s critique also qualifies as an ideology theoretically in this paper—Stojanović referred to the understanding of ideology in classical Marxism as a hallmark of the bourgeois.

revolution has gradually degenerated into a new exploitative class society."\textsuperscript{91} This was the new false consciousness—the “red bourgeois” that the Praxis School so vehemently rejected. The Praxis position was that man is a creative, free being that can change the world around him by accomplishing actions, political or otherwise, \textit{in practice}. Petrović stated that “as a being of praxis, man is a being of freedom,” meaning that man can shape his world at will.\textsuperscript{92} With a “red bourgeois” political system in place, it inherently impeded humankind’s ability to express agency and effect change. An analysis of the \textit{Praxis} articles illustrates that the false consciousness of the “red bourgeois” results in dual alienation: humankind is alienated from (1) its creativity within and the ability to restructure their surroundings at will and (2) the knowledge that the revolution is false because it is oppressive as well. Citizens cannot dramatically change their circumstances, or express their voluntarism, and they are ignorant of the need for to do so. They are unaware that a new class has arisen.

Humanist Marxism indeed accepts Marx’s epistemological assessment of the world as \textit{a priori} oppressive and exploitive, their distinguishing revision, however, is in how humankind achieves emancipation. Individuals are, by nature, imbued with the ability to effect change in their lives and assert their creative will—in short, individuals have agency. The conditions into which the individual is born are predetermined, but the

\textsuperscript{91} Svetozar Stojanović, “The Statist Myth of Socialism,” 180,181.

ability to reposition oneself and reorganize one’s environment is innate. The political system must allow and encourage free will and free exchange of ideas.

The Praxis School soundly rejected the traditional interpretation of Marx’s base-superstructure formula of society. Veljko Korać offered a reinterpretation of the base-superstructure not as a formula for alienation and oppression, but as a mechanism of achieving emancipation from alienation. Korać asserted that Marx has been altogether misunderstood in terms of praxis, and his real intention was to establish “technology and economics as possibilities for creating real conditions for a humane society.”

It was exceptional, at this turbulent time, that the question of ethnic relations in the Yugoslavia was not a common theme in Praxis articles. The relative silence in Praxis on the national question was loquacious indeed: the regime relentlessly censored any overt discussion of the Croatian Question or ethnic nationalism generally. The Praxis School was active during a time of low-grade political volatility centered on the question of ethnic relations in the state. The Croatian Spring movement was gaining traction in the late 1960s in its efforts to reintroduce Croatian national identity into the political system and society at large. Simultaneously, the Croatian Spring movement was pressing a

94 Sher, 218-19.
95 The Croatian Spring was a political movement within the League of Croatian Communists (LCC, a republic branch of the LCY) that called for federal economic reform and increased autonomy for the Republic of Croatia within the federalist Yugoslav state. A social movement promoting Croatian culture, literature, and ethnic identity paralleled the political movement. The Praxis School vehemently rejected the nationalist elements of the Croatian Spring’s agenda. The Croatian Spring is complicated because it allied liberal communists with non-communist and nationalists, each advocating their own specific rationale to a common end. In December 1971, Tito ousted the three political leaders of the movement, Pero Pirker,
cultural and political nationalist agenda and this was absolutely at odds with Tito’s notion of Yugoslavism. The notion of “brotherhood and unity,” Tito’s mantra that symbolized Yugoslavism, had unified the country after the World War II in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945.96 Chapter three concludes with a discussion of the larger collective implications of the humanist Marxist critique of Titoism for the Yugoslav state. A cursory discussion of how the national question impacted the ideological exchange between the Party and the Praxis School is more appropriately placed there.

The Korčula Summer School (KSS)

The Praxis School existed beyond the world of ink and articles. An important part of their mandate was to mobilize human agency and improve society by resetting the course for self-management. Since the authors were professors, they had excellent access to young, energetic minds who were hungry for new ideas, not to mention a trip to the seaside. Every summer in August, Praxis authors would convene a conference on the serene and gorgeous island of Korčula, just off the rocky Croatian coastline of the

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Adriatic Sea. Intellectuals of international repute such as Herbert Marcuse, Ernst Bloch, and others attended the Symposia on Korčula.\textsuperscript{97} Significantly, students participated equally, elbow-to-elbow, with the mature humanist Marxist scholars who organized and participated in the symposia.\textsuperscript{98} The Korčula Summer School was, thus, a direct vertical transfer point for the humanist Marxist ideology and an excellent forum in which the professors and students could compare their “frames” of reference.\textsuperscript{99}

In a recent interview with the author of this study, Svetozar Stojanović reflected on the Korčula Summer School as an important forum in the development and diffusion of the Praxis School’s critique. He recalled the goals the Praxis School had for the journal aligned with their hopes for the Korčula Summer School (KSS). The organizers were hoping to attract “not simply Marxists but people with open minds, of different orientations…[such as] phenomenologists, Christians, atheists, social democrats, liberals.” The diversity of the KSS participants extended also to nationality: the symposia attracted Marxist dissidents from all over Europe. The symposium functioned as a round-table discussion for the upcoming journal issues, as well as an opportunity to connect with other like-minded Marxists and students. The presence of international scholars at

\textsuperscript{97} Sher, 55.

\textsuperscript{98} Djordje Malavrazić, ed. Šezdeset Osma: Lične Istorije, 80 Svedočenja [Sixty Eight: Personal Histories, Eighty Testimonies] (Belgrade: Službeni Glasnik, 2008), 547. (Milan Nikolić)

\textsuperscript{99} Recall that Karl-Deiter Opp defines “frame” in plain English as an argument or conviction. He tells us that framing is not necessarily conscious, but it is a powerful factor in mobilization of a social movement even if it is not quantifiable empirically. In his treatment of frames, he determines that they are not a prerequisite for a social movement or protest, but for historical purposes, it is a useful conceptual tool that allows discussion of cognitive alliance. See Theories of Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Analysis (New York: Routledge, Taylor, and Francis Group, 2009), 234-74.
the symposium, in fact, spawned the idea for the publication of a parallel international edition of *Praxis*. The KSS undoubtedly enhanced the Praxis School’s international profile; this would become a crucial benefit in the years after 1968 when the Party escalated its harassment of the School and its operations.¹⁰⁰

This table below displays the topic of each KSS symposium by year. The session themes clearly demonstrate that the KSS was in tune with the larger agenda of the Praxis School. In fact, the titles read like a laundry list of *Praxis* concerns. “Creative” Marxism is another common descriptor for the humanist Marxism critique and the connection between the two terms is apparent in the session titles below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Progress and Culture¹⁰¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Meaning and the Perspective of Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>What is History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td><em>Not held</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Creativity and Reification</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Marx and Revolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Power and Humanity</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Hegel and Our Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Utopia and Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Freedom and Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The Being and the Borders of the Civil Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Art in a Technical World</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that the LCY forbade the KSS symposium in 1966 is telling. This was just after Ranković lost his position in the Party (1966) and the coalition between the Praxis members and the LCY reformers who had worked against the security chief fell apart. At

¹⁰⁰ Svetozar Stojanović, interview with the author, August 3, 2009, New Belgrade, Serbia.

this point, the regime was making a point that the decentralization of the VI Party Congress did not mean a loss (or shift) of power from the central Party core to the Praxis School. The KSS continued as long as the journal was in print, even after 1968, and it is reasonable to assume that this was due to the high international profile the Praxis movement had obtained by that time. The LCY also had a vested interest in preserving its international standing as a \textit{nonaligned} state—which distinctly translated to non-Stalinist after Soviet forces invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

The Korčula Summer School was a vital program in the Praxis School’s ideological agenda. It is an excellent example of their humanist Marxist ideology as a “thought-practice.” Freeden reminds us that each ideology “displays different interpretations of the relationship between theory and practice.”\textsuperscript{102} In this case, the Praxis professors viewed the KSS as way to reach out internationally and domestically to enlarge their own civil sphere. The presence of students made the whole event an exercise in dissemination of humanist Marxism. The Praxis School understood the relationship between thought and practice as one of necessity. One means nothing without the other: the idea of \textit{Praxis} was to practice a thought, to exert free will and agency in the search for social justice.

The impact of the KSS was clear and its reputation as a place of corruption or enlightenment, depending on the individual’s ideological persuasion, was evident. In a 1967 article describing the KSS, the author deemed it the “most meaningful

manifestation of philosophical life in the country over the last two years.”\textsuperscript{103} After the 1969 symposium, an article in \textit{Vjesnik} accused the organizers of the KSS of trying “to exploit for their own purposes a group of revolutionary students, domestic and international, but their intent was decidedly foiled by a group of local residents.”\textsuperscript{104} The intervening year, 1968, brought a dramatic reassessment among the intellectuals of the Praxis School, the LCY elite, and the students of Belgrade understood their own political system.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The Praxis School critique is historically significant because it emanated from within the Party itself and was definitively the first large-scale ideological challenge to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. A relaxation of Party authority in the early 1960s led to the possibility of plurality in communist ideology. The rise of humanist Marxism was a transnational phenomenon and Yugoslavia’s participation came in the form of the Praxis School. An analysis of the articles of the international \textit{Praxis} has demonstrated that the Praxis School was rooted in the neo-Marxist intellectual tradition of humanist Marxism, which drew on the early writings of Marx to emphasize human agency in social and political relations and rejected doctrinaire determinism. The Praxis School was an ideological challenge to Kardelj’s self-managing socialism that was based


\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 200.
in different conceptions of socialism for the modern world. The LCY and the Praxis
School traded justifications for their respective positions, both claiming the “correctness
of their views,” their ideological debate often waged in reference to classical Marxian
texts.  

The Praxis journal is one of many examples of an intellectual community rising
up around a publication and extending the written word into the real world. The
translation from ink to act was the ultimate goal of the humanist Marxist intellectuals in
Yugoslavia. They had carefully selected the very appellation of their journal with this in
mind: their critique pivoted on the idea of praxis-practice. The Praxis School’s ideology
was a fine example of a thought-practice: the bond between idea and action was non-
egotiable, rather it was essential to their movement and their effort to better society. To
this end, the professors directed the Korčula Summer School and humanist Marxism did
reach the streets by serving as an inspiration for the student protest of June 1968.
Although the professors could not be held responsible for planning the protest, it was
their ideas that threatened the government in a very concrete way in 1968. This is the
focus of the second chapter.

It is categorically easier to criticize a political system and a civil sphere than to
build and maintain one in the first place, but both roles inevitably inform social progress,
social change, and state-building. Although the Praxis professors were agitating for
reform, they remained loyal communists. Even though some were expelled from the

105 Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, 28.
Party at varying stages during the life of the journal, primarily after 1968, they continued to utilize socialist discourse and believe in Marxism as the basis for a political system. Reflexive discourse and the natural right to expression were cornerstones of the Praxis agenda. The Praxis Editorial Board set the movement’s tone in 1965:

…we shall welcome every public critical discussion of the journal. We maintain that even the wholly unfavorable does not have to be a bad sign [quoting Marx]: “This cry of its enemies have the same significance as the first cry of the new-bom babe has for the anxiously listening ear of her mother: it is the cry testifying to the life of its ideas, which have burst the orderly hieroglyphic husk of the system and become citizens of the world.”

The regime would have to actively exclude the Praxis voice—they would not silence themselves—and this is precisely what the LCY did. The state dissolved the Praxis School in January 1975 when the regime arrested eight university professors, all leaders of the Praxis School, in Belgrade. The government banned funding for the Praxis journal (both editions) later that same year and both editions of the journal ceased publication. These developments will be explored further in chapter three.

CHAPTER II

The “Red Choir” in Action: The Yugoslav Student Protest, June 1968

In the midst of the 1968 student protest in Yugoslavia, Miodrag Stanisavljević penned a poem, the first stanza of which is, “It is unbelievable how unnecessary you are / and how little that bothers anyone / and how little things change / even when someone leaves.”¹ Miljenko Zuborski cast the students’ sentiment in metaphor: “walls, walls, but where is the door?”² Nebojša Popov, a junior faculty member of the Sociology Department at Belgrade University and a Praxis contributor, penned a featured article in the periodical “Student” from June 1968 entitled satirically “Mysteries and Hysterias!”³ The title of one student’s speech during the protest was “Violence, Social Justice, and Freedom.”⁴ Journalist Milan Vlajčić referred to the 1968 student protest in a recent article as a “spontaneous strategy.”⁵ These characterizations share a similar thread: all of them speak to social marginalization and frustration. The students had been exposed regularly

¹ Nebojša Popov, Contra Fatum: Slučaj grupe profesora filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu [Against Fate: The Case of a Group of Professors of the Philosophy Department in Belgrade] (Mladost: Belgrade, 1989), Primary Documents Appendix I, 13. The author has assigned page numbers to the collection of primary sources at the end of this source beginning with the first photograph; there is no pagination in the original. This index will hereafter cited as PDA I and the pagination will be consecutive as described above.

² Popov, Contra Fatum, 13

³ Popov, Contra Fatum, PDA I, 12.

⁴ Ibid., 10.

to the humanist Marxist critique, and had witnessed and expressed support for many of the student protest that had erupted across Europe.⁶

Stanislavjević’s poem expressed the alienation, social stagnation, and disenfranchisement the student youth felt despite their status as the cultural and political heirs to a communist state in which they had faith. Popov satirized the fact that disinformation shrouded the protesters’ agenda and many wrote off their actions as the protest as the “hysteria” of youth. The title of the student speech indicates that at least some members of the student protest movement claimed a specific political agenda for their actions. These glimpses into the language of the protest assist us in understanding how the students, participants, and spectators envisioned the protest. The analysis of the rhetoric used in a social action is an incredibly powerful way to determine its agenda and development, but it also allows insight into the larger discourse in which it transpired.

Was the student movement an impromptu venting of generational angst, possible drunkenness? An opportunistic grab for power, or a concerted, politicized agitation meant to achieve purposive social action? What are the connections between the student protest and their social and political reality in 1968?

The week-long student protest of June 1968 offers excellent perspective into the transitional decade 1964-75 in the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The Praxis School’s humanist Marxist critique and the larger cycle of student protests during this

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decade, of which the June 1968 protest was the most intense, were evidence of a growing reflexive discourse in the civil sphere over the trajectory of socialism in Yugoslavia.  

This chapter will demonstrate the thematic link between the Praxis School’s critique of socialism and the language of the protest. The students utilized the reigning discourse of socialism, and taped into the ideological tenets of humanist Marxism, to address myriad social, structural, economic, and political concerns.

This chapter examines the students’ agenda and the development of the protest using a selection of primary sources, including a participant’s diary, newspaper articles, commentary from Praxis School professors, and speeches and political writings by Edvard Kardelj and President Tito. Analysis of these sources will demonstrate that the student protest of 1968 was an example of purposive social action that sought to make the Praxis School’s critique of Titoism a social reality and that the students deliberately and sincerely employed communist rhetoric in order to emphasize the legitimacy of their ideological challenge, their loyalty to communist political system, and, above all else, their adoration for Marshall Tito. It was their express intent to utilize the common discourse of socialism, and to promulgate the humanist Marxist ideology and extend it

7 See Boris Kanzleiter, “Yugoslavia” in 1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977, eds. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 219-28. Kanzleiter divides the student protests into three distinct phases (1966-1975), and identifies them as the “first open large-scale revolt after the consolidation of power by the Communist Party” (225, my emphasis). While Kanzleiter’s characterization of the student protests in Yugoslavia as a “revolt” is problematic, his overview of the roots, transnational character, and course of the Yugoslav student protests in 1968 is enlightening. He designates the dissolution of the Praxis School in 1975 as the capstone event to the third phase of the student protests, although he does not explore the relationship between the Praxis School and the students in his short chapter. This study argues that the Praxis School was the earliest ideological challenge to the regime. The Praxis movement, furthermore, predated the student protests and provided critical ideological and philosophical impetus for the students.
into action. This was because the students’ “frame,” or their goals and incentives, underpinned their ideological orientation and both matched the Praxis School’s ideas. Theirs was a reflexive, symbiotic ideological congruence.

The students were, in fact, perfectly suited to perform the role Gramsci envisioned for the “organic intellectuals,” or the bridge-builders who would reach out to the larger proletariat and awaken them to the need to recalibrate the communist movement in Yugoslavia. There was indeed a generational aspect to the conflict—the protesters were student youth—but their social action brought support from university faculty and other community leaders, the citizens of Belgrade, and the author-professors of Praxis itself.

The members of the Praxis School, as with the student demonstrators, were communist themselves and simply wanted to reform, not overthrow, socialism in Yugoslavia. Police brutality had sparked the protest on the evening of June 2, 1968, but it quickly turned into a student-driven political action, which quickly spread to other university campuses across Yugoslavia, and lasted about a week. The students intended to effect social change by redefining important premises of the state’s educational, economic, political policies within the confines of socialism. Specifically, the students

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9 Djordje Malavrazić, ed. *Šezdeset Osma: Lične Istorije, 80 Svedočenja* [Sixty Eight: Personal Histories, 80 Testimonies] (Belgrade: Službeni Glasnik, 2008), 777-816. This anthology of testimonies about the events of 1968 in Yugoslavia from those who participated as protesters includes an appendix with biographical sketches of those whose memories appear in the book. The variety of occupations is startling, although many were either students, somehow working the university at that time, or members of the artistic community in Belgrade. The “workers” with whom the students tried so hard to connect do not appear in this volume and none of the memoirs on ’68 in Yugoslavia that the author has reviewed have recorded the “workers’ perspective” first-hand. The existing testimonies are all from members of the intelligentsia.
wanted to expand social justice and civil rights, improve living conditions on campuses, and increase job opportunities for their generation, particularly in academia. The protest was, in fact, deep and angry, but it was a short-lived flare. The government’s response to the student protest revealed its intention to exclude the humanist Marxist discourse from the civil sphere as well as its unwillingness to employ brute military force to accomplish this.

From a Caravan of Friendship to a Caravan of Protest

The student protest of June 1968, after all, began with violence. The essential question was whether or not it would end with violent military suppression. On the evening of June 2, 1968, in a suburb of Belgrade, state organizers moved the staging of the play *Caravan of Friendship* from a large outdoor amphitheatre into a smaller indoor arena because rain was forecast. Security denied entrance to the performance to many students and Belgradians due to the smaller venue. Party officials, who were allowed in, joined forces with the security team to repress the students’ demonstration as they demanded entrance to the play.10

An official report from the Executive Committee of the LCY documented violent acts of student aggression, primarily against property, including extensive damage to the new venue for the play, the storming and destruction of a fire truck, and window-smashing at a near-by “work brigade settlement.” Around 10 p.m., officials called in the

police to deal with the students’ destruction of property and the police brutalized the students and workers in their attempts to disperse the crowd. The police returned violence against property with violence against persons. Pervan notes that primary sources largely concur on the basic events, but not the order of them, during this first night of the protest, although the students claimed it was in fact “the arrival of the militia and the fire trucks on the scene which gave fuel to their anger and led to extensive destruction.”

In one of the first their communiqués of the protest, students charged that on June 2, the police “waited for students at the underpass in New Belgrade and both times dispersed us with the violence, the use of fire arms, and because of that a great number of our colleagues were injured.” In their view, their civil rights had been violated with police violence and this established one of the major themes of the protest: a call for increased social justice and more institutional protection for civil rights. The communiqué continued, the “behaviors of the police was savage—they mercilessly beat students and professors who were with them,” and in return the students demanded “the removal of all those [in the government] who were responsible in any way for the indescribably brutal conduct of the police.” The students also insisted that any of their peers who had been arrested during the first clash be released from jail and the record of arrest expunged. For them, the violent overreaction of the police justified continued

11 Ralph Pervan, Tito and the Students, (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia: 1978), 19.

demonstration. Party officials evacuated the scene of the first clash and by midnight over 3,000 students had gathered in Student Square in New Belgrade in angry protest over the police’s use of violent force.\textsuperscript{13}

During this first night of the protest, Professors Ljubomir Tadić and Svetozar Stojanović, both well-respected and prolific contributors to \textit{Praxis} and professors at the university, were with the students.\textsuperscript{14} A university official summoned them, among others, in an attempt to control the student population. The media heavily cited this fact after the protest ended as proof that the Praxis School had a direct hand in starting the student protest.\textsuperscript{15} In a recent interview with Dr. Stojanović, he clearly recalled the tension he and his colleagues felt between his status as a representative of the faculty and university and his support of the students’ agenda and his sympathy with their resentment of the police brutality.\textsuperscript{16} He spent a lot of time trying to negotiate with student leaders throughout the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Popov, \textit{Društveni Sukobi}, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Svetozar Stojanović, interview by Sarah Žabić, Belgrade, Serbia, August 3, 2009. Corroborated, Popov, \textit{Društveni sukobi}, 39.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Gerson S. Sher, \textit{Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia}. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 211.
\item \textsuperscript{16} This tension between the Praxis School’s “thought-practice” and their position of responsibility for the students’ safety was also an issue at the Korčula Summer School. Dr. Stojanović recalled that students often wanted to “radicalize” and “ politicize” the School’s operations, and the Praxis members, being more seasoned political dissidents, had to curb their enthusiasm for action in favor of maintaining a forum for dissident discussion. This is an example of how the Praxis professors actually \textit{restrained} their young protégés and the students indeed had the students’ own independent agency motivated the protest. Interview with the author, August 3, 2009, New Belgrade, Serbia.
\end{itemize}
protest, encouraging them not to become too radicalized because he feared that the regime might order a decisive military repression of the demonstration.  

The next day, June 3, the Yugoslav Student Federation declared itself the institutional voice of the demonstration and proceeded to try to bring some order and unification to the student action. The students refused to attend classes and declared a general strike. They occupied campus buildings, held mass rallies, and met amongst themselves and with sympathetic faculty to craft a “Political Action Program” to outline their grievances to the state. The student leaders would only work with the Student Action Committee, an ad hoc organization of university and Party officials set up specifically to work with the demonstrators, to negotiate the development of the protest. This indicated their mistrust of the established Party channels and institutions as well as their desire to directly shape their agenda, the way it was publicized, and the public’s perception of their activities.

A review of the collection of primary documents related to the protest, which the Praxis School released in its journal in 1969, is in itself proof that the students generated


18 Fredy Perlman, Revolt in Socialist Yugoslavia, (Black and Red: Detroit, 1973), 11.

19 Popov, 31-45.

20 Ralph Pervan, Tito and the Students, (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia: 1978), 28.
a vast amount of documentation during their social action. A flurry of letters, press releases, and telegrams and regular planning meetings, from which we have minutes, accompanied the demonstrations. The fact that the Praxis School gathered and edited these documents into a compendium for release in its own journal less than a year after the events took place indicates a high degree of cooperation and the mutual support between the Praxis professors and the students.

It is important to recall that after the violent end to the initial incident on June 2 in Belgrade, students at other universities across the country immediately took to the streets in solidarity with the Belgrade students and to make statements of their own. There was regular communication between the students in Belgrade and their peers in other republics and Serbian cities. The reading of new mail was one of the regular tasks that took place at the planning meetings during the protest in Belgrade. The networking among the students and simultaneity of the protests undoubtedly alarmed the regime and placed them in a quandary about how to handle the situation. On one hand, if the Party officials in Belgrade and in the Executive Committee of the LCY chose to retaliate with

21 The collection includes a wide range of documents from all parties concerned with the protest, including documentation from parallel actions on other campuses, letters to and from the Belgrade protesters, and government documents. The government forbade the circulation of the volume, but its exact publication history remains unclear. At the Croatian National Library (July 2009), the author discovered that this volume was technically under restricted circulation: a notice accompanied the volume denying foreign citizens permission to make photocopies. The librarian in the special reading room, however, determined that the decree predated the new Republic of Croatia and granted access. See “Zbornik: Jun-Lipanj, 1968, Dokumenti [A Collection: June 1968, Documents], Praxis 1-2, Yugoslav Edition (1969).

22 Kanzleiter, 223.

the military, there would be an immediate, definitive restoration of social order. On the other hand, this course of action would cost the LCY credibility both domestically and abroad as the paragon of non-totalitarian communism, and the leader of the Non-Alignment Pact and the “Third Way” socialist democracy.

A close reading of the communiqués the students released during the protest will illuminate their ideological agenda, which was clearly humanist Marxism. On the first day of full protest, June 3, 1968, the Student Action Committee, editors of the newspaper Student, and the University Union of Students jointly released a Resolution with demands related to the violence from the night before. Its tone was raw and forceful, more so than the “Political Action Program” released two days later. Most strikingly, the students called for the “democratization of all sociopolitical organizations, specifically the Central Committee” of the Party. 24 This attack on the Party was not qualified or nuanced in this early resolution as it was in the later ”Political Action Program.”

It is likely that the most radical among the students in the early phase of the protest were responsible for the June 3rd Resolution. Once the Student Action Committee had a chance to establish itself as the cooperative steering body for the protest, the rhetoric was not as contentious and openly critical of the Party. There were concerns that “the police [would] have the last word” and the students hoped to continue their protest without further bloodshed and gain a crucial step forward for civil rights at the same

24 Pavlović, 38. This was not a call for democracy, per se, rather a demand for the democratization of the Party hierarchy itself. This did not amount to a rejection of socialism or the communist political system.
The most central and timely demands they made were related to civil rights: increased “freedom and impartiality of information” exchange (specifically in the media), and the right to demonstrate and strike.

In the June 3rd Resolution, educational demands included equal access to education and university services for all, the right to work and freedom of work for everyone, and increased university support for science. Notably, they criticized the very integrity of the university by requiring the “creation of a proviso that would outline how the university could become truly free, critical, and veritable self-managing institution.” The italicized phrase in the quote above was capitalized in the original text. This was a direct reference to critical theory, the philosophical tradition that underpinned humanist Marxism. This demand echoed the humanist Marxist critique, the most prominent theme among Praxis authors, that self-management had potential, but had been poorly implemented by the LCY. The June 3rd Resolution also included a proviso for the “formation of free and critical scientific agency.” The repetition of critical implies that the students did not fully believe in the integrity and independence of their institution and, again, they called upon the perspective of critical theory to remedy the situation. Concretely, this Resolution was symbolic of the students’ attempt to break free from Party control of university curricula, resource allocation, and research agendas.

\[25\] Pavlović, 69.

\[26\] Pavlović, 38.

\[27\] Ibid.
In terms of social and class-related demands, the students insisted upon an increase in the minimum wage, “an improvement in the material status of the students and workers,” and an “end to all social privileges and obstacles to financial security for the working class.”28 From the first moments in the protest, students sincerely included the hallmarks of socialist discourse, such as references to and the glorification of the working class. They were trying to deflect speculation that the protest was a cover-up for an ill-conceived moment of lawlessness the night before or that this protest was simply to improve their own material comfort as students in an overcrowded and under-funded university system.29

Student Action Committee leaders released a “Political Action Program” on the evening of June 5 that clarified their desires and motivations. This document is altogether more composed and formal in its tone. Essentially, the “Political Action Program” sought to rewrite not only key elements of the social contract with their socialist government, but also the implementation or praxis of self-management itself. The students repeated their earlier overt criticism of the regime’s implementation of self-management, carefully layering their specific comments about the university into demands on behalf of society as a whole:

The system of self-governing relations needs to be developed not only in organizing labor, but in all layers of our society, from the commune to the federation… It is necessary to improve the material situations of the students, but to further develop the institutions of student standards. According to the principle

28 Pavlović, 38.

29 Ibid.
of self-governing relations in our society the administration of these institutions has to be laid in the hands of the students.\textsuperscript{30}

The Program emphasized that the university must be “a self-governed institution, in which progressive and critical thinking can freely develop.”\textsuperscript{31} This is another reference to critical theory; this particular paradigm of analysis—critical theory—was likely so attractive to the students and the \textit{Praxis} authors because it pivoted upon the necessity to consider a concept or policy \textit{critically} in order to establish its faults. While the LCY tolerated some plurality of socialist discourse at this point in time, there was no mechanism with which to make actual purposive social change as a dissident student or professor. The students’ cry “We have been Blockaded – What Happened to the Promises?” during the protest indeed had dual meaning. Literally, the police had prevented them from marching with cordons and batons. Also, as student youth who ascribed to humanist Marxism, they were “blockaded” ideologically and generationally.\textsuperscript{32} The protesters felt as if they had approached a generational glass ceiling, with the postwar generation having taken all of the promising jobs that required education and provided social mobility.

The Program and the resolutions clearly show the students were demonstrating agency and ideological purpose in the political, moral, and social milieux. Their


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{32} Pavlović, 40.
insistence on solidarity with the working class—making many of their demands on behalf of students and workers alike—was likely at once disturbing and calming to the regime.  

On one hand, it meant that the students’ strike could spread to the general population. Yet it also indicated that the students were still utilizing socialist discourse and espousing socialist goals and there was no direct demand for western-style democracy or ethnicity as a category of citizenship.

The Language of the Protest in Song, Symbol, and Slogan

An analysis of the language and symbolic action of the student protest will establish that the students’ use of socialist discourse with which to frame their protest was unequivocally sincere and purposeful. One of their most pressing concerns, in fact, was the right to language, to voice themselves in the media and explain the premise of their protest to the public. Even though the media coverage of the event was structurally beyond their control, their message was very clear in the forums where they were free to “speak:” songs, speeches, rituals, and written communiqués. The protest songs, banners, and slogans equally emphasized the students’ dedication to Tito and communism generally and their anger over police brutality, the alienation and frustration they felt with their social and economic reality, and their political opinions on the development of socialism in Yugoslavia. During the protest students simultaneously and emphatically

33 While a very interesting historical question that would add considerably to the historiography of these events and this period, as well as complement and test the conclusions of this study, the response of the workers and the public to the student protest in Belgrade (and throughout Yugoslavia) is beyond the scope of this study due to time and space restrictions. This question would also require access and review of an entirely separate set of primary documents.
reaffirmed their allegiance to Tito and socialism, but also their dedication to redirecting Party policy and ideology. They were protesting corruption in and implementation of communism, not its validity as a political system.

Živojin Pavlović was a thirty-five-year-old film director and resident of Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1968. Alongside many of the rising and established stars of stage, screen, and pen in Yugoslavia, Pavlović witnessed and participated in the student demonstrations that shook his city, and country at large, that summer. One of his most important legacies is the diary he left us recounting the days of the student protest. He wrote,

On the fourth day of the revolution, seventy-year-old poetess Desanka Maksimović visited the ancient building Kapetan-Mišino. Before she tackled the recitation of her own verses, the poetess posed the following fateful question to the youth before her:
“Children, will you in five, in ten, in fifteen years believe in everything that you believe at this moment?”

Maksimović, a famous poetess who established her reputation penning commemorative stanzas about the hardships and massacres of World War II, sought to invoke a proper sense of gravitas into the students’ social action. She hoped to bring the possible ramifications of their actions into sharp relief and to question the wisdom of its spontaneity if not its agenda. Building on the Praxis School’s ideological challenge, the student protest was the first significant expression of purposive social action among the university students—the future leaders of the country—to threaten the LCY of Yugoslavia in postwar Yugoslavia. At the outset of the protest, there was no indication

34 Pavlović, 140.
that the students’ agenda would be taken seriously, and, more ominously, there was no guarantee that Tito’s regime would tolerate the demonstrations at all.

The students’ use of socialist discourse in their slogans and songs, in their view, emphasized their natural right to hold an open exchange with “Comrade Tito” and the working class about socialism. Direct addresses to the President pervaded the discourse of the protest. Students sang “Comrade Tito, We Swear Ourselves to You…” chanted “Tito-Party,” and “Tito Would Lead Us!” There were banners at the protest that read “Enough murders!” and the students shouted “Down with the Chief Murderer – Bugarčić,” “I have been beaten,” “They shot at us,” “Students-Workers,” and “We are the sons of the working people!” “We want work,” “Workers, we are with you!” “Enough with corruption,” and ”Down with the Kings of Socialism!”35 These slogans show the students’ desire to circumvent and criticize the “red bourgeois” that was the bureaucracy of the LCY, in order to speak directly with the First Citizen, as well as all citizens, of Yugoslavia directly.

The students implicitly understood self-management, the workers, and Tito as symbols of possibility, positivity, and progress—they represented what socialism should be in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the “Kings of Socialism” had corrupted the implementation of socialism and hijacked the very ideals that were attractive about socialism. In their discourse, the students very carefully distinguished between the ideals

of socialism, which they supported, and the LCY’s *practice* of socialism, which they rejected. Pervan notes, the “Political Action Program” did not include “even toke obeisance to the League of Communists” as the leading and guiding force in society.”

Demonstrating solidarity with the working class was a very important goal in the protest. If the students failed to couch the themes and motivations of their protest within the socialist discourse, they would appear to be demonstrating for selfish material gain—the improvement of their physical and financial circumstances or their living conditions—the very antithesis of their moral and ideological agenda. One stanza of the protest song “The Red Choir” reiterated the student solidarity with the workers and their continued affection for communism:

> And the workers are standing beside us now  
> Everyone supports the truth  
> To end all injustice  
> To give themselves over to communism

Despite the fact that the students chanted ‘Down with the Socialist Bureaucracy,’” they still believed in the socialist legacy bequeathed to them by the generation before. Another song, “Left, Left, Left,” speaks to the sense of socialist legacy the students felt, as well as their frustration at their inability to contribute as they would wish to the development and progress of the socialist revolution:

> We know of the bravery of our fathers from books  
> And it is their dream that warms us

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36 Pervan, 29.

37 Pavlović, 111.
Today and from now on our concern is
Left, Left, Left!

Now, before our eyes, like it once was with [our fathers]
The star of the Commune shines
Youth is our privilege,
Left, Left, Left!38

The students utilized performance and ritual to express the motivations behind the protest: indignity at the violence they had suffered and their desire to return to what they saw as the true values of socialism. McAdams et al suggest that “performances innovate around inherited repertoires and often incorporate ritual forms of collective action.”39 On June 4, 1968, the protesters renamed the University of Belgrade as “Red University ‘Karl Marx’” as testament to their ideological orientation.40 One of the protest leaders, Dragoljub Mićunović, regularly pulled up his shirt while addressing a crowd to show the bruises he received from the police to underscore his outrage at the violation of his civil rights.41 As the student protesters tried to make their way to downtown Belgrade from the suburb on the first night of the protest (June 2), they were “carrying pictures of the President of [the Serbian] Republic, the state and Party plaque, and singing the national

38 Popov, Društveni Sukobi, 45.
39 Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, Cambridge. (Cambridge University Press, 2001),
40 Živojin Pavlović, Ispljuvak pun krvi: Dnevnik ’68. [Spit Full of Blood: A Diary from ‘68]. (Službeni Glasnik: Beograd, 2008), 44.
41 Pavlović, 32. Dragoljub Mićunović later became one of the eight professors active in the Praxis School who were expelled from the University of Belgrade in 1975 on the basis of his dissident activity.
anthem” while they marched. Symbolic actions, such as the songs, banners, and performances of the student protest in Belgrade, were strategically ritualized and illustrated the students’ loyalty to socialism and their hope for change within it.

The most powerful performance ritual of the protest came on June 5 when a planning meeting opened with an appearance by members of the Music Academy and Stevo Žigon gave an interpretative reenactment of Robespierre’s speech delivered on the occasion of Danton’s death in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Jeffrey Alexander defines rituals as “episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication in which the direct partners to a social interaction and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of one another's intentions.” Žigon’s delivery of “Danton’s Death” invoked all of the imagery and symbolism of the struggle between the Dantonists and the Robespierre faction of the Committee of Public Safety over the proper pacing and development of the French Revolution and transported it into 1968 Yugoslavia. In some ways, it was a one-sided battle: Robespierre simply exploited the ideals of the Revolution to justify his own quest for power. By ordering Danton’s execution for selfish reasons rather than for the good of the Republic, Robespierre completed his slide away from the ideals of the Revolution and into tyranny. The parallel symbolism is unmistakable:

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42 Popov, Društveni sukobi, 39.

Žigon’s message was that the “red bourgeois” had betrayed the principles of the communist revolution, and the LCY was persecuting the students for its own aggrandizement. Alexander continues that “it is because of shared understanding of intention and content, and in the intrinsic validity of the interaction, that rituals have their effect and affect.”

These performances were meant to engage the regime in a common discourse so that they could gain an ear within the Party as an institution for their grievances. The students did not come to the LCY empty-handed: the communiqués from the protest offered a very explicit set of ideals and, most importantly, the students sought the right to have a voice in the political and social future of their country. They did not, perhaps, offer a well-developed economic plan to overhaul self-management, but they recognize corruption when they saw it and they wanted a hand in combating it. Above all else, they wanted the freedom to react to their environment without censure: they wanted the freedom to organize and to demonstrate. The students wanted the right to express themselves in the future and during the protest without manipulation or interference from the privileged Party bureaucracy that they considered to be the “red bourgeois.”

Many of the communiqués that the students released during the protest were attempts to correct disinformation in the larger public media outlets. The students in

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45 Alexander, 29.
Belgrade felt as if they were working under a media blackout and that the larger public did not understand the purposes of their protest. This increased their already heightened sense of social alienation. They urgently tried to clarify their ideological position to the public, knowing that the strength of their protest was in its claim of solidarity with the workers and their enthusiasm to participate in socialism more fully. In a press release on June 4, the students wrote,

> telegrams are arriving from various groups and it lifts out spirits that some many understand and know the meaning and goals of our action and support our demands. However, due to the insufficient publicity of the truth about our action, it has not reached everyone. We are against the greater wealth of the individual at the expense of the working class…We are against the idea that only the working class carried the burden of economic reform. It hurts us that 100,000 of our people must leave to serve and work…We desire, with our own knowledge, enthusiasm, and love to build our socialist society.46

On June 5, the students occupying the Law School released a communiqué in which they complained that *Politika*, the major newspaper in Belgrade, had portrayed their serious, purposeful protest as a bunch of “hooligans” who were “chauvinistic and self-serving” and “against self-management” as a system.47 The communiqués sent directly to and from the student protesters were, thus, even more important to the protesters: it was one of the only ways they had to communicate with the world at large over which they had compete control. The students were aware that the LCY was trying to exclude their discourse and they took action.

46 Pavlović, 55.

As a remedy to the media bias, the students turned to the demands within their “Political Action Program:” open discourse and freedom of expression. The students at the Philosophy College simply invited the directors of Politika, Borba, another powerful daily publication, and Radio Belgrade to “come to them and discuss all of the problems connected with the role of the press in our society.” “We guarantee you, “the students continued, “that you will find in our presence a true democratic atmosphere and the requisite tolerance…so that you may express and defend your positions.”

Perhaps this was a naïve invitation, if only because the media was not completely independent of the Party, but it was nonetheless absolutely sincere. This is another fine example of the students acting out their ideological convictions outlined in the “Political action Program.” The symbolic rituals and language of the protest were congruent with the ideological expression of their demands in the communiqués and the “Political Action Program” and this amounted to purposive social action. Most important of all, all of these things were in line with humanist Marxism.


49 John R. Lampe, Yugoslavia: Twice There was a Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 293.

50 Recall that Clifford Geertz explicates ideology as “an ordered system of cultural symbols organizing social and psychological processes into meaningful patterns, enabling purposive action.” Freeden, Ideologies and Political Theory, 20. My emphasis.
The Students and Professors of *Praxis*: Humanist Marxism in Action

A comparative examination between *Praxis* articles and the communiqués from the student protest reveals that both groups ascribed to the values and social agenda implicit in humanist Marxism. The two movements shared many common concerns such as the flawed application of self-management, and an unwavering devotion to the more philosophical concerns of the young Marx such as social justice, and the importance of creative and individual free will. Their agendas were also linked in a more concrete manner: many Praxis School faculty members actively supported the students during the protest. During a meeting of protesters from the College of Philosophy on June 5, a student leader read letters from the community. One of them was a formal letter of greeting and support from the *Praxis* editorial board in which the board asked the students to keep them appraised as the protest developed.\(^\text{51}\) Individual professors were often in the thick of the protest and some were even brutalized alongside the students. Nebojša Popov, a *Praxis* member and professor at the University of Belgrade, described a scene on June 3 in which police beat him across the shoulders twice, leaving him prostrate on the sidewalk while two other policemen “coldheartedly” beat a young woman near him.\(^\text{52}\)

In a letter protesting the censure of six professors in Poland—two of them *Praxis* contributors—for dissident activities, the editorial board of *Praxis* revealed how they

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\(^{52}\) Ibid., 66.
perceived their role in the civil sphere: “a democratic, humanist socialism is the one progressive perspective for contemporary humanity and such socialism cannot successfully unfurl without the freedom, exchange, and battle of opinion on equal footing.”\textsuperscript{53} This letter lays out the basis of the \textit{Praxis} agenda and the students clearly incorporated the same ideals into their “Political Action Program” and other communiqués as discussed above. It also illustrates the fact that the students felt connected to events beyond the borders of Yugoslavia—they considered themselves to be part of a larger transnational movement.

The songs and slogans of the protest are testament to the alignment between the \textit{Praxis} agenda outlined in the letter above and the students’ agenda. The slogans “Down with the Kings of Socialism,” and “Enough Corruption,” have the very same symbolic meaning as Svetozar Stojanović’s article condemning the “Statist Myth of Socialism.”\textsuperscript{54} Both perspectives rejected the LCY’s implementation of socialist ideology as a twisted, thin shadow of what it should be. At the expense of civil rights, social justice, and human agency, the Party had built up a monolithic system that was borderline “statist,” or Stalinist, that did not support reflexive political participation from the proletariat, the established dissident intelligentsia, or the “organic intellectuals” who were currently in the midst of a protest. The songs expressed solidarity with the working class and

\textsuperscript{53} Gajo Petrović and Rudi Supek for the Editorial Board of \textit{Praxis}, PYE no. 3 (1968): 233.

alienation from society and their own political system, yet clearly claim the ideals and legacy of socialism.

Opp’s description of “framing” is useful in understanding how the students made the transition from humanist Marxist ideology to social action. Opp defines framing in plain English as argument or conviction of individual. Common convictions or “frames” is one of many possible conceptualizations of how and why people act collectively. In identifying the incentives that build the “frame” of the individual, we are also able to capture the motives of the agents in the social action and gain insight into its goals. This approach assumes that individuals with similar motives (or frames) will form the core of a collective action. An individual’s “frame” is forged from various incentives that are interdependent, such as social desires, like civil rights, and political desires, like increased participation in government. Transitive and communal normative moral convictions are more abstract, but equally powerful, incentives.\textsuperscript{55} The political statements, symbolic actions, poems, and songs of the protest demonstrate that the students had all three types of incentive above during the Belgrade protest.

Framing occurs at the individual level, but is socially constructed and collectively expressed. The integration of framing theory with the concept of socially constructed identity is based on the fact that “shared prior knowledge, connections among key

\textsuperscript{55} See Karl-Dieter Opp’s discussion on how an individual’s frame aligns with the collective in a protest group in \textit{Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Synthesis} (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), 234-74
individuals, and on-the-spot direction guide the flow of collective action.\textsuperscript{56} Frame resonance or alignment, the transitional phase from individual conviction to collective action, is the process by which individuals interface with others and find a like-minded cohort. When frame alignment occurs among a group then social action is much more likely. Implicitly, framing theory assumes a micro-macro fusion approach to sociological phenomena because the very subject of analysis is how individuals align into larger collectives, usually within the limits of an institution.\textsuperscript{57} The social construction of the individual’s “frame” and self-identity is the bridge the joins the analysis of actor-based agency with structural elements, like the regime’s legal censorship of publications.

This study posits that frame resonance took place both between the Praxis School and the student protesters and within each group separately. The Korčula Summer School, the university forum, and the protest itself, where faculty were present, were all points of frame resonance. It was in these milieux that contact between mature scholars who promulgated the humanist Marxist critique, and the students who were frustrated with their social, economic, and political reality translated into concrete social action.

The communiqués we have examined thus far to establish the agenda of the protest demonstrate that the students had economic, social, and moral incentives. In the earlier resolutions (June 3) there was an emphatic demand for the democratization of the Party organizations. Their economic concerns included high unemployment and limited


\textsuperscript{57} Opp, 234-274.
job opportunities for their generation. As an example of social incentive, the students
demanded a voice in the management of their society, which amounted to a call for social
respect and standing. Specifically, they desired “equal participation of the students in all
forums where essential problems of society are addressed.”

Students also felt morally compelled to address the corrupt, misguided
implementation of self-management and the economic disparity it caused. Živorad
Stojković gave a speech to his fellow protesters on June 4, 1968, in the courtyard of the
Philosophy College:

You are not and should not be the political opposition: you are the negation of
everything corrupt that is poisoning our contemporary society. Political
revolution was carried out during war, but it still has not been realized. However,
you are not the protectors of political or socialist revolution; the revolution that
you want is, above all else, moral.

Their moral incentive was undoubtedly the satisfaction that would come from seeing a
system in which they believed—self-managing socialism, implemented in an ethical way.
The protest communiqués and symbology reveal a deeply idealistic movement with every
intention of reaching for the impossible in hopes of gaining an inch of progress. Quoting
graffiti on the wall of the Sorbonne during the Paris student uprising in an article for
Praxis journal in 1969, Herbert Marcuse wrote “‘Let us be realistic, let us ask for the
impossible.’ I believe that this inscription marks a turning point in the development of

58 All of these example appear in the June 3 “Resolution” with appears in Praxis, “Zbornik: Jun-Lipanj,

59 Pavlović, 123. From Živorad Stojković’s speech to the students on June 4, 1968, in the courtyard of the
Philosophy College.
established societies…"60 The students’ belief in communism informed their identity as protest participants and they believed they had indeed come to the turning point Marcuse described above; for them, the time for purposeful social action, with a solid ideological foundation in humanist Marxism, had come. The discourse of the protest, as documented in the symbolic performances and communiqués, demonstrated that the students were engaged in an idealistic and ideologically motivated initiative to restore the moral and institutional integrity of communism in Yugoslavia.

The students’ frame of reference was borne of their dissatisfaction with their social and economic opportunities and their ideological opinions on how socialism in Yugoslavia should unfold. They had considered their society through the prism of critical theory and came away dissatisfied. In their 2003 memoir on the Korčula Summer School, a few members of the Praxis School reflected on the summer symposia and the role they played in the larger events of the decade in question. Nebojša Popov ruminated that “the student movement sought not only to reproduce theories and ideas, but also to research reality critically, that which their existence felt was a problem, above all else, violence.”61 Along with other structural developments, the Praxis School’s critique of Titoism had rendered the ideological basis of the state an open question in the early 60s and the


students felt they had an answer. The protest extended the ideas of the humanist Marxist dialogue into action.

Importantly, the fact that the students’ social action criticized the implementation of communism that formulated their reality, and not the political system itself, significantly informed the government’s response to the student protest. Review of the “Political Action Program” demonstrates that students did not engage in nationalist discourse or demands, nor did they seek Tito’s resignation or a change in political system. Dr. Stojanović’s recollections of the protest concur with this interpretation.62

Mihailo Marković, a Praxis contributor and one of the Belgrade Eight who would later lose his position at the university over his dissident activities, pronounced with the wisdom of hindsight that in the early 1960s, the LCY functionaries “were not yet able to see how relatively harmless this abstract humanism was and how much more trouble they would have with humanism when it became concrete.”63 A large group of students, with the support of some faculty and workers, were trying desperately to translate the newly minted consciousness of humanist Marxism into concrete action in June 1968.

The security forces’ brutalization of the students and the ban on free demonstration and publications were examples of ways in which the regime excluded

62 He confirmed in an interview with the author (August 3, 2009, New Belgrade, Serbia) that there was no prominent expression of nationalist sentiment during the 1968 student protest in Belgrade. He characterized the protest as a “left emancipatory movement.”

dissident discourse during the protest. The students’ social action was effectively illegal because public demonstrations were not a natural right of Yugoslav citizenship.\(^{64}\) This law gave the Party a very powerful tool, built structurally into the legal code, to use in the exclusion of discourse when the situation warranted it; the LCY chose to exercise this power regularly during the week-long student protest. The memoirs about the protest are filled with passing references to the fact that the student organizers were constantly negotiating with Party officials to conduct a march or a demonstration with permission so that there would be less likelihood of police brutality. The negotiations often included possible routes and the number of students who would be allowed to march or assemble.\(^{65}\) The state also controlled discourse in another fundamental way: it sought to control the written word. The LCY censors banned the newspaper \textit{Student} for two days during the protest.\(^{66}\) Some of the worst violence of the protest occurred on that first evening when the students spontaneously gathered in protest at their exclusion from the play. Although the police continued to use excessive force to manage the demonstrations, after the first day the students at least had the chance to apprise the government of their intentions.

\(^{64}\) Carter, 202.

\(^{65}\) One example is in Jaksić’s \textit{Sloboda i nasilje: Razgovor, Ko su praksovi, Šta su hteli i postigli} [Freedom and Force: Who are the Praxis School, What Did They Want and Accomplish] (Belgrade: Res Republica, 2003), 65.

The June 1968 student protest in Belgrade was indeed temporally spontaneous, but it was not ideologically spontaneous. An article in *Student* in May 1968 predicted the eruption of a student protest. The article noted, “various forms of tension are visible in the university…the lack of solutions to numerous problems is at the root of various problems. Feeling this, many are asking if the tension might not be transformed into a conflict…” The students’ frustration with their reality had been building, and they turned to humanist Marxism, a very powerful critique of both capitalism and socialism that was resonating throughout Europe at this time, as the ideological basis for their protest.

The rhetoric, agenda, and symbolic action of the protest indicate the protest was a purposive social action with a defined ideological perspective on socialist discourse. There is a direct thematic link between the Praxis School’s critique of Titoism and the discourse the students employed during the protest. As Sher points out in his analysis of the connections between the Praxis School and the students, the exact relationship between the Praxis professors’ ideas and the students’ social action is “difficult to determine” and socialist discourse, even the humanist Marxist critique, was “not the property of any single group of intellectuals.” It is, however, unmistakable that “the echoes of many Praxis ideas were audible in the students’ demands.”

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68 Sher, 211.
thing is that the LCY made a ruling on the subject even as the protest was unfolding: the journal *Praxis* and its authors were *de facto* guilty of inspiring the protest.⁶⁹

The state’s official response to the demonstration ultimately came from President Tito himself in a televised speech on June 9, one week after the demonstration started. We will examine the state’s response to both the Praxis School and the student protest in more detail in chapter three. Notably, Tito did not chastise the students, nor did he berate them or criticize them in any way. The First Citizen of Yugoslavia even admitted that some of their criticisms were well founded and their demands reasonable. He acquiesced that the Party had some responsibility for their discontent. The students responded positively en masse to Tito’s reassurances that their complaints had not fallen on deaf ears: steps would be taken to address their demands.⁷⁰ The Marshall assured them personally that he identified with them, that he was asking many of the same questions they were, and he intended to take action on their behalf. There were recorded incidents of loud cheers, applause, and dancing in the streets throughout Belgrade and other cities at the end of Tito’s speech.⁷¹ Many felt that they would finally have a permanent voice in their society, a more secure economic future, and that the political system around them would come to reflect ideals of humanist Marxism to a greater degree.

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⁶⁹ Speech by President Tito at the Sixth Congress of the League of Trade Unions, released in *Borba*, June 27, 1968.

⁷⁰ Pervan, 32.

⁷¹ Pavlović, 106-07. This is the text of Tito’s speech.
There are also some examples on record of deep disappointment over Tito’s speech and what amounted to a premature end for the protest. In her recollection of June 9, 1968, Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, a Praxis author and sociology professor at the University of Belgrade, described the reception of the speech at the Philosophy College, where she watched the speech with the students:

The kolo [a national dance] was danced at the Law School! We at the Philosophy college did not applaud at all. Moreover, we stayed at the university for two days afterwards and not even our action committees broke apart. [the same happened] in the Architectural Department. They continued their activity in the shape of a tribunal. It died away only later. There was no applause at all. We understood Tito’s speech and we knew that its purpose was to suffocate our movement, not to support it.72

There were those among the students who recognized Tito’s speech as yet another attempt to exclude discourse by taking advantage of the power differential to cash in on his iconic status despite their devotion to reform and exploit the structural advantages of the media and his position in the President. The most intense week of the protest drew to a close. The June protest and the regime’s response echoed in future challenges, ideological or demonstrative, to the state. The student demands opened a new reflexive dynamic in the dialogue over the structure of Yugoslav society and the regime’s response was, at least on the surface, supportive.

Conclusion

The Praxis critique inspired the student protest of June 1968, the largest and most important among a larger wave of protests during this period, and together they launched the first example of purposive social action to challenge the LCY’s vision of socialism on a grand scale. This chapter has examined the events, the ideological agenda, and the symbolic ritual and language of the protest in Belgrade, June 2-9, 1968. The first chapter determined that the Praxis School’s ideological agenda was to foster purposive social action based on the humanist Marxist critique of socialism. Analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that the students demonstrated independent agency in their efforts to translate that ideology into practice. In the final words of his diary, Pavlović declared that the student demonstrations of June 1968 “as a revolutionary action accomplished absolutely nothing” but was successful as a “reform movement.”

Spit Full of Blood is at once a deeply reflective historical rumination on the currents that led to and guided the student protest, and also a truly apt pronouncement of its impact. There was no revolution and the regime’s response to the protest was less than substantive, but the protest would indeed impact the way the LCY’s policy on dissident activity. We will turn to that in chapter three.

Responding to the growing antagonism between the Praxis School and the regime, as well as the growing interest of the student body in Belgrade in purposive social action, Dr. Svetozar Stojanović quipped in April 1968 that “heretics are always more dangerous

73Pavlović, 140.
than enemies.”74 The students’ heretical purposive social action of 1968 was an internal critique of Titoism, and as such, had all the more potential to damage the LCY’s agenda. Tito’s response to the protest of June 1968 set an important precedent for the Yugoslav state in general. Direct military repression of a social action was not an option if the LCY hoped to maintain international credibility. This tolerance was further confirmed after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 brutally ended the reform agenda of the Prague Spring. The Prague Spring phenomenon had another lesson as well: if ideological unity within the Party declines, and a reform movement is allowed to bloom, the Party can lose its power and its position.

It is notable that students were able to launch a protest that was inspired by—and not incited by—the Praxis Group in the civil sphere without evoking a harsh military response from the state. They did this by engaging socialist discourse in every milieux of their social action. Tito’s speech on June 9 seemed the paragon of progressive tolerance compared to the Soviet invasion and, owing to the 1948 expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Comintern, this distinction was very important to President Tito and his experiment with self-managing socialism. The regime tolerated the student protest and the Marshall himself at least paid lip service to the student demands.

Ultimately, the state’s decision to not pursue a violent military response to the students’ challenge in Yugoslavia was a harbinger of the state’s response to future sociopolitical reform agendas in the civil sphere. For better or worse, the state would

74 Svetozar Stojanović, Student, (Belgrade, April 9, 1968), 7.
utilize, and perhaps manipulate, Party policy, structures, and hierarchy, and not the military, to respond to reform movements and social conflict; even purposive social action would garner an ideological response. This would have a direct impact on the fate of the humanist Marxist Praxis School and other groups that continued to question the Party line in the 1970s, but for the students, the protest of June 1968 passed without a significant escalation of violence or military intervention.
CHAPTER III

The Curious Incident of the State’s Response to the Red Challenge:

A Return to the Exclusion of Discourse

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia was in need of an immediate response to the public at large in the wake of the student riot on June 2, 1968, and the subsequent week-long strike of university students across Yugoslavia, most notably, at the University of Belgrade. President Tito’s June 9 address had ended the active phase of the protest, but calculated follow-up was required in order for the Party to maintain internal unity. Was Tito’s June 9 address to the students sincere or simply strategic, pragmatic showmanship? How did the student protest impact the Party’s treatment of the Praxis School? The reflexive discourse among the three communist foci in Yugoslavia society would undergo dramatic change in the aftermath of 1968.

In his 1978 book *Democracy and Socialism*, Edvard Kardelj at once validated the students’ agenda during the 1968 strike while undercutting the humanist Marxist critique that had spawned it. He conceded that students were “virtually barred from participating with their creative forces in the management of society and their own interests” and he concluded that “students are the ones who fall prey in the greatest numbers to the ultra-left ideology.”

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inspiration, the Praxis School, and the increasing exclusion of dissident discourse defines the government reaction from summer 1968 onward.

The LCY concertedly divided and conquered, at least in practical, concrete terms, the two threads of communist dissident activity examined in this thesis. After the events of June 1968, the Party unequivocally reasserted its authority in the civil sphere with the express intent of reestablishing its monolithic command of communist thought and practice, and, most importantly, how these two elements translated into action and policy. The challenges posed by the Praxis School’s ideological critique and the purposive action of the students were particularly dangerous in light of the fact that a very determined nationalist movement, centered in the Republic of Croatia, was active alongside the intra-communist debate over the trajectory of the Yugoslav socialism.

The national question has plagued Yugoslavia from its inception after World War I. The nationalist criticism of Yugoslavism and the federal state structure, dominated by

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2 While the historiography on the Croatian question during the formation of Yugoslavia after WWI is vast, Ivo Banac’s work, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, remains the authoritative work on the subject (London, Cornell University Press, 1984). Banac’s explores the roots of national ideologies, including Yugoslavism, in Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia in the 1800s and moves into a very narrowly focused investigation of the Croat question from the start of WWI up until the adoption of the Vidovdan Constitution on June 28, 1921. He contends that the structure of the nascent Yugoslav state inherently denied “the national individuality of each South Slavic nation, a position inherent in the precepts of unitaristic Yugoslavism, greatly facilitated the introduction of centralism” at great cost to Croatia and Slovenia (407). Jill Irvine’s more recent study, *The Croat Question* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) picks up analysis of the same subject during the next major negotiation of Yugoslav state structure, 1941-45, precipitated of course by World War II. She focuses on the “the effects of nationalism on state-building” among the Communist elites in Croatia who vied for control of the postwar power (9). The issue was, again, the status of Croatia within a Yugoslav federation vs. its possible independent statehood (15). Irvine and Banac consider the Croatian question from the perspective of Yugoslav history in the earlier twentieth century, while other scholars try to mine the latter phases of Tito’s leadership and the constitutional decentralization of the state in the 1970s for insight into the same topic. The latter approach juxtaposes state-devolution (as opposed to state-building) and national ideology in Yugoslavia. [See *Yugoslavia: A Fractured Federalism*, ed. Dennison Rusinow (Washington DC: The Wilson Center Press, 1988)]. Dejan Jović’s study *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 2009) offers a fascinating alternate view of nationalist ideology within Tito’s communist state. He argues that
The LCY, pivoted on the allocation of power and fiscal resources related to civil rights, educational curricula, religious affiliation, and even the very name of the language, vis-à-vis ethnic identity at the republic, regional, local, and individual level. The central question was whether the state would privilege Yugoslavism as a civic form of national identity, which meant a support of a strong central state and tacit acceptance of the Party’s domination of it, or ethnic identity, which implied support of more regional, republic-based political control. Nationalists who eschewed the civic identity inherent in Yugoslavism, and the authoritarian federal state that came with it, often saw the LCY as hostile to their attempts to claim their ethnic identity.

Rising ethnic nationalism had serious implications for the structure of the state. Nationalists who supported an organization of the Yugoslav state along ethnic lines under Edvard Kardelj’s ideological guidance, Yugoslavia’s state structure did successfully wither away and because the LCY had so effectively marginalized moderate (liberal) communists and ethnic nationalist radicals on both sides usurped power after Tito’s death in 1980 and clashed dramatically in the Yugoslav Civil War. In *Elusive Compromise*, Dejan Dokić considers interwar Yugoslavia and challenges the consensus reached by Banac and Irvine that ethnic tension between Serbs and Croats before 1918, especially over the balance of power in the proposed South Slav state, directly led to a unstable state that never recovered (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

favored a loosely confederalist, decentralized state in which the federal government would have limited power over the republics. This decentralization, implemented without the Party’s explicit guidance, could severely limit the Party’s authority in the sociopolitical sphere, or at least force a dramatic change in institutional structures. In 1971, the LCY purged its ranks, especially in Croatia, of any Party members who were sympathetic to the nationalist agenda. While that action was decisive, it only increased nationalist tension among the republics and Croatia became the “sullen republic.” In order to manage the national question, especially after the 1971 purge, the LCY first had to have control over communist discourse.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to establish the implications for the Yugoslav state of the reflexive three-way ideological dialogue among the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), the Praxis School, and the student movement of June 1968. This debate was reflexive despite the fact that all three entities were not allowed to participate on equal footing—the LCY obviously holding the advantage in matters of policy making—at least an exchange of ideas took place. First, this chapter will examine the regime’s response to the students. How did the LCY approach the obvious connection between the youth movement’s demands in the “Political Action Program” of June 5, 1968, and the humanist Marxist critique of the Praxis School? What factors tempered the regime’s response to the students? Second, this chapter will compare synchronically the distinct ideologies of the Praxis School and Edvard Kardelj. This amounts to an

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examination of the Yugoslav government’s response to the Praxis School’s critique, particularly after the student protests of 1968, as Kardelj was the Party official best equipped to parley with the Praxis School’s ideological challenge. The juxtaposition of the Praxis platform and the state’s response, ideologically and practically, will serve to illuminate why the League of Communists of Yugoslavia found the Praxis movement so threatening. In conclusion, it will also give brief consideration to how the Praxis authors viewed the nationalism and how the national question impacted the regime’s management of the Praxis School and the 1968 student movement.

The State Response to the Student Protest, June 1968

Three features distinguish the state’s response to the student movement in 1968. First, the regime insisted on denying the student protesters proper agency in the formulation, execution, and aspirations of the events of June 1968. It was simply easier, and more expedient politically, to chalk up the students’ purposive action to generational angst that was exploited by a dissident group of intellectuals, the Praxis School, seeking a public platform for their agenda.

Second, there was an urgency to resolve the active phase of the protest in order to manage the public perception of the Party and its agenda. The week-long protest was a very public event and the students were careful to underscore their loyalty to communism, and particularly to Tito as leader of the state. This required a nuanced response from the state. To reiterate the import of the 1948 split between Stalinism and Titoism, the LCY was mindful of the international and domestic necessity to differentiate
itself from the Stalinist communist “Other” and this meant protecting its uniqueness.\(^5\) The credibility and legitimacy of the self-management system, the very heart of Yugoslavia’s socialist democracy, was at stake.

Despite the regime’s tightly monitored media coverage of the events, the scale and intensity of the June 1968 protest in Belgrade rendered it a very delicate situation.\(^6\) The protest in Yugoslavia was also part of a larger global movement and Yugoslavia’s response would have an effect on its international standing as a leader of the Non-Alignment Movement, its ability to secure loans from western Europe and the United States, and its ability to fend off unwelcome Soviet diplomatic, financial, and ideological overtures.\(^7\) As direct consequence of this urgency, thirdly, the Party resorted to oversimplification and disingenuous appeasement in order to placate the students.

In the previous two chapters we examined the critical function that language, written and oral, and the symbolic performance of it, had in the discourse of humanist Marxism as manifested in the *Praxis* articles and the 1968 student protest. An examination of the rhetoric of the LCY’s response will be equally demonstrative of its positions and motives. On June 9, 1968, Tito delivered a televised speech addressing the student strikers. He stated that the Party already had committees in place working on the very questions the student strike had raised and agreed that it was unfortunate that the

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\(^6\) Although this thesis focuses exclusively on the events in Belgrade in June 1968, it will be recalled from chapter two that student protests erupted simultaneously on major university campuses across Yugoslavia.

information about the work of the committees “had only been released in short” and therefore the “public could not get a true picture of what was being discussed and what conclusions had been reached.”

He lamented that “too little had been made public, and too little had been explained to the students.” Tito characterized the student protest as a “revolt” but diffused its danger by suggesting that it was “spontaneous” and rejecting the possibility that the students were under the influence of enemy Marxist ideology such as Maoism or the ideas of Milovan Djilas.

Tito’s refusal to acknowledge the student strike and protest as a concerted display of purposive social action was necessary in order to preserve the integrity and public face of the Party’s position in society. It is also indicative of the Party’s intention to deal separately with the concrete actions of dissidence (the strike) and the ideological critique that spawned it (the Praxis School). He acknowledged the students’ loyalty to Marxism, and, although he did not mention the Praxis School explicitly, he intimated that they had ascribed to the wrong strand of Marxism. Tacitly, Tito acknowledged the impact that the Praxis School’s critique had had on the students and aired his disapproval of their deviant ideology.

The President also rejected the logic that student protest was part of a larger pattern in Europe, opining instead that the student protest in Yugoslavia was “a reflection of our own weaknesses” because the Party had not integrate the concerns of the

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8 Pavlović, 106.
9 Ibid., 107.
communist youth into their agenda earlier.\textsuperscript{11} Tito and the LCY were aware of the wave of student protests that swept Europe during 1967 and 1968 in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain, and Poland.\textsuperscript{12} By insisting, however, that the student discontent was specifically domestic, it improved the regime’s chances of resolving it without provoking public concern over state security or outside intervention, like a Soviet invasion, for example.

At the end of the speech, Tito also promised to investigate the police brutalization of the students and, without explicitly stating his agreement with the student demands, he pledged a generic “solution” to their problems and encouraged them to return to their studies. Most strikingly, Tito promised to relinquish his position as President if he was unable to resolve the students’ concerns.\textsuperscript{13}

It is reasonable to suspect that once the regime realized that the violent clashes between demonstrators and police forces would only escalate without at least a plausibly sincere rhetorical response, the Party realized that it had only two options: the regime could either order an escalation in violence to disperse the students, promise them status as active participants in socialist discourse, or actually grant them the very same.

The Party’s course of action became clear a few days later when it released a set of guidelines in the Party-friendly newspaper \textit{Borba} on June 14, 1968, in direct response to the students’ demands. The guidelines zeroed in on only one of the protest demands,

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\textsuperscript{11} Pavlović, 110.
\textsuperscript{13} Pavlović, 110.
\end{flushright}
the “failure on the part of the responsible individuals to work for the implementation of League policies,” thereby bypassing all of the other demands.\textsuperscript{14} The Party’s logic was that if they redressed this foundational issue, the rest of the students’ points of contention would also resolve. Poor implementation of self-management had long been a favorite criticism of the humanist Marxists, and the students had echoed the \textit{Praxis} cry for substantive change on this matter. Ralph Pervan investigates how the LCY guidelines addressed one example of student demand, employment opportunity, and he found that “it is immediately obvious that such guidelines were not qualitatively different from the many previous official statements on the subject.” Tito also “expressed concern that the guidelines might simply remain empty words.”\textsuperscript{15} The end of the protest clearly amounted to a case of exclusion of discourse by manipulation on the behalf of the League of Communists.

On June 26, 1968, Tito delivered a follow-up speech regarding the student protest, confirming that the regime had disingenuously made promises to end the protest. Effectively, the LCY had accomplished a bait-and-switch: promises to end the protest in the name of social order became promises for retaliation against Praxis. This time, he launched into a direct attack on the “individual professors, some philosophers, various \textit{praksisovci} and other various dogmatists” for daring to “create chaos and to fish in troubled waters.” In his most direct public address to the Praxis Group to date, he ranted,

\begin{quote}
We must offer them decisive resistance, say a decisive ‘no’...For them the working class and its role are transcended. For them the League of Communists
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Pervan, 33.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
means nothing. They think that some wise men, some technocrats ought to stand on a pedestal and give orders by waving their wands...There is no place for them...Do such people educate our children in schools and universities? There is no place for them here!...We must, moreover, reduce such people to impotence...it will sometimes be necessary to use administrative measures as well...we must preserve our socialist self-managing society.16

In this speech, Tito was primarily addressing the Praxis School, but he was also sending a direct answer to the students. The Party would not hold the youth responsible for their own protest—those who inspired the protest would answer for what some LCY members termed “a counter-revolution” during their initial discussions over how to respond.17 Tito’s suggestion that it takes more than a “magic wand” to reform a society belied his frustration with what he considered the utopian ideas behind the protest. The tone of Tito’s speech on June 26 was altogether more visceral; he was more defensive of the LCY’s position and made it clear that he intended to launch an offensive to “reduce” the Praxis School “to impotence.”18 The President offered this later speech to a completely different audience than the June 9 speech. On June 26th, Tito shed his persona of the Patriarch of the Partisan resistance and the Revolution that he had projected when speaking to the students, and turned to the essentials of politics: delivering pointed rhetoric in order to guide communist discourse in the civil sphere, support his position, and marginalize his opposition. On June 9, Tito had tapped into the youth’s historical memory and responded to their enthusiasm for communism and use of socialist discourse in kind. He literally “spoke their language,” the language of idealism,

16 Sher, 213.

17 Carter, 215.

18 Sher, 213.
hope and revolution, and it reassured them that he was still worthy of their faith. The students’ protest may have been purposive social action, but it was to some extent also naïve.

Tito’s immediate response to the 1968 student protests was publicly conciliatory and distinctly dissonant with the violence meted out by the police throughout the protest. By October of 1968, the Party had undertaken a campaign of damage control, spinning the protest into a demonstration of student solidarity with the LCY. In some ways, the students did exhibit solidarity with the Party by retaining sincerely socialist rhetoric, but their intent for reform was very pronounced. Tito was able to exploit this loophole and play upon what was only to those unsympathetic to the students’ cause an ambiguity:

This year, too, our youth has raised a powerful voice in a desire to join with all who are building Socialism, with the same rights and the same duties. We have accepted all the justified criticism which has come from the young people and the working class…I must say that never in the past more than twenty years has Yugoslavia demonstrated such unity as has been the case this year. The unity of our peoples and our youth, the unity of our wish to preserve our unhindered development, our Socialist construction, to defend our independence from any attempt to interfere in our internal affairs, has been powerfully displayed.19

This deliberate reconstruction—or misconstruction—of the students’ motives and their social action is another example of concerted exclusion of discourse. The students were, on the contrary, very interested in “hindering” the socialist development of their country because they viewed it as a corrupt landscape conducive to alienation. They sought unity and expressed loyalty to socialism, but on their own terms. They were, after all, protesting. There was, unsurprisingly, a parallel and uneven effort in the years after

1968 among Party-controlled media outlets, both during the protest and after, to disseminate disinformation about the protest. In October 1972, the media feasted daily on the slightest bit of information when Party officials met in Serbia to prepare a list of “culprits” who were responsible for the 1968 protests. Calls for punishment of the “culprits” were common headlines.\(^{20}\) As refusal to acknowledge the youth’s own agency and another example of the regime’s plan to divide and conquer the two dissident movements, it did not even occur to the LCY officials to blame the students themselves for their own protest. The regime finally had found reason to directly link the Praxis School with active political dissidence in the June 1968 student protest.

This October 1968 speech was, if nothing else, deeply circumspect. The President’s emphasis on unity and his repetition of this theme was very deliberate and telling. His goal was not only to return social order, but also to recast the student protest as evidence of a healthy socialist democracy that encouraged voluntarism and open debate. He alluded to unity on a grand scale: the unity of the Party in the face of internal upheaval, the unity of the Party vis-à-vis the communist “Other” of the Soviet Union, the unity of Yugoslavism as the civic mythos that governs ethnic relations in the country, and

\(^{20}\) Nebojša Popov, *Contra Fatum* (Beograd: Mladost, 1989), 411. The delayed reaction was likely due to the Party’s preoccupation with the Croatian Sprig in Croatia. Sher posits that Praxis had a protector in upper-Party echelons (214). In *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia* April Carter posits that his disinformation was interspersed with hostile coverage that was not tendentious. Disinformation was not common among all media outlets. Even some of the most important newspapers traditionally allied with the Party, for example, Belgrade’s *Politika*, offered fairly balanced accounts of the protest (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 216. This is at odds with the students’ own perception that there was deliberate disinformation in the press about their social action. See Pavlović, *Ispljuvak pun krvi: Dnevnik ’68. [Spit Full of Blood: A Diary from ’68]*. (Beograd: Službeni Glasnik, 2008), 29.
the generational unity of a youthful protest that was resolved without domestic or foreign military intervention.

In the same speech (October 20, 1968), President Tito also addressed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to suppress the Prague Spring, a communist reform movement that sought a democratization of the Party.\textsuperscript{21} He complained that the Soviets “attack our reform, at the same time they themselves are trying to discover some kind of reform…And in the case of Czechoslovakia, the central issue was, in my opinion, the democratization of social development in the sense of changes which would have enabled the people to live a better life.”\textsuperscript{22} Ironically, Tito lacked self-reflection on the matter of reform and plural socialist ideology; a few months before, he had dismissed the students’ demands in his own country and denied them free agency in their actions. Furthermore, the LCY had fulfilled some of the threats Tito had made against the Praxis School and harassment of the group had increased.\textsuperscript{23} The invasion of Czechoslovakia (August 1968) had reminded students that the violence during their protest had been comparatively mild in their case. It also reminded the LCY what could happen if a reform movement was allowed to evolve organically without any internal boundaries or Party discipline.

In his reflection back on the events of summer 1968 in \textit{Socialism and Democracy}, Kardelj dismissed the student movement as a “modish imitation of various foreign ultra-

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\textsuperscript{21} Robert Harvey, \textit{A Short History of Communism} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 263-270
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\textsuperscript{23} Sher, 223-230.
\end{flushleft}
left views.” 24 Thus, Kardelj at once admitted the transnational character of the movement—something the regime only wanted to admit in a negative sense, with the West as “infiltrators”—and painted it as subversive and corruptive influence. More pointedly, he again robbed the students of their own agency. It was acceptable for the student movement to be transnational if the LCY required a scapegoat, but it was unpalatable to think of Praxis and the student protest as part of the larger organic reform movement of the New Left.

Kardelj glorified the working class and utilized it as the ideal by which to judge both the students and the professors who participated in the demonstrations or other dissident activity. He acknowledged some of the same structural weaknesses in Yugoslav society as the student protesters. He reflected, for example, that “the outmoded school system, particularly the system of higher education, further exacerbates the [students’ disenchantment]” because they are isolated “with no exposure to the job and public responsibilities that are borne by all the other working people.” 25 There is, however, buried in this statement, a backhanded slight directed at the youth movement. Kardelj implied that the students would have been more content if they had identified as workers and taken proper advantage of the opportunities of an enlightened socialist democracy.

Education of the youth was a pivotal point of discourse between the regime and the Praxis School. The professors also chimed in on the question of education, expressing

24 Kardelj, Democracy and Socialism, 94.
25 Ibid.
their frustration that the regime had rebuffed their attempts to *re-educate* the students in the traditions of humanist Marxism:

>[There has been] an escalation of repressive measures against creative Marxism, ...and this precisely when some people, in the name of political power, speak of unsatisfactory “Marxist education” as one of the causes of the lack of socialist construction of our society!26

The government persistently sought to censor *Praxis* articles and editorials, especially after the 1968 student protests: this limited their ability to teach and this was the express intent of the regime. The Praxis School found itself in a whirlpool of censorship and harassment that demonstrated how very thin the LCY’s commitment to civil rights, open socialist discourse, and education truly was. The censorship of articles in *Praxis* is direct evidence of excluded discourse.

Kardelj was also vocal about what may have motivated the Praxis professors in 1968. Kardelj considered the ideological critique of the Praxis group to be a “modern form of anarchy.”27 The intelligentsia had “become a thing of the past as there are fewer and fewer jobs which do not require any education and more and more which do.” In other words, social progress threatened the insular position of intellectuals in Yugoslavia and as their ranks swelled, they were fighting the very system (LCY) that was behind the progress. He suggested that “the majority of intellectuals [i.e. the professors of the Praxis School] have lost their once privileged positions as an intermediate class between the working and ruling classes and have been put more or less into the traditional position of


27 Kardelj, *Democracy and Socialism*, 97.
the wage laborer.” The faculty members were in “privileged positions” at the time of the protest, and had since been demoted to wage laborers. Their contentment with privilege was the result of false consciousness and malcontent, he implied, and this was due to their own inability to be comfortable as working class people. Despite the fact that the students’ rhetoric during the protest was carefully crafted to identify with the workers as much as possible, the regime still squarely blamed the Praxis School as an intellectual movement.

The stage was set for the Party’s ideological offensive against the Praxis group to regain control of socialist discourse in the country. The dismantling of the Praxis journal and the careers of some of its most prominent contributors occurred over the seven years after 1968. This is primarily because the Party tried to manipulate the self-management councils at the faculty, university, and city levels, and the principles of its own self-management system to achieve its goal.

The State Response to the Praxis School

“No one can be more left than the League of Communists. What is beyond the lines of the League and what is an attempt to look more left than the League is in fact more right than any kind of political line, and the same holds true for right extremism.”

These words from Stane Dolanc, Secretary of the Executive Bureau of the LCY Presidium, set the tone for the Party’s reassertion of ideological control after 1968.

28 Kardelj, Democracy and Socialism, 94.

Although his phrasing is a bit convoluted, his meaning is clear: reform movements to the left (Praxis) and right (ethnic nationalists) must bow to the LCY as the final ideological authority. The Party would have unity and control, nothing less. As 1968 drew to a close, the regime declared the Praxis School “public enemy number one to Yugoslav socialism” in direct response to the student uprising.30

Censorship of articles in Praxis and harassment of the authors, including dismissal from university posts and loss of Party membership of the members of the Praxis School, defined the LCY’s response to the Praxis School, particularly after 1968. The regime’s retaliatory tactics against academics at the University of Belgrade affiliated with the Praxis School were particularly repressive and occurred over a longer period.31 All of these things are concrete examples of the Party’s exclusion of the dissident socialist discourse of the Praxis School. In a 1972 speech, Tito indicated that his goal was “democratic centralism in the LCY and the desire to make the LCY a unified, strong party and organization of the working class.” He lamented the “neglect of these obligations” and vowed to reassert control over the socialist discourse in the country. In the same speech, Tito did refute the fact that this meant a return to the dark days of highly centralized Party authority, but declined to turn the LCY into a “debating club.”32

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The LCY and its numerous regional branches sought to re-absorb the ideological sphere and local councils of self-management doled out carefully controlled Party-line rhetoric. A review of the articles in *Praxis* in chapter one clearly showed that the Praxis School was functioning within socialist discourse, but also operating at the level of ideology. Their articles and themes were premised on creating an alternative ideology to Titoism aimed at purposive social action. The main difference was that the Praxis School operated on the periphery of society and the political scene, whereas the LCY enjoyed monolithic power. The Praxis movement, however, obviously gained enough attention for the state to obstruct the journal’s funding in 1975.

The next logical inquiry is to determine whether or not the government’s contention that *Praxis* was an ideological threat was valid. The domestic circulation data of the Yugoslav edition of the *Praxis* journal offers one method to quantify the movement’s impact. The Croatian Philosophic Society only printed 3,000 copies of the 3-4/1971 domestic edition of *Praxis*. Relative to the population of 20,523,000 in 1970, this indicates a very small readership.

In a court case in 1971 intended to censor *Praxis* legally out of existence, the District Court found in favor of the journal. One of the main factors in their decision was that the readership of *Praxis* was not significant enough to warrant its legal censure. The court’s opinion offered data on the profile of the subscribers and the journal’s circulation: “subscribers [to the domestic edition of *Praxis*] are members of the Croatian

33 Sher, 264.

Philosophical Society…while it is also received by the highest political representatives, as well as by the libraries of the LCY Central Committee, the Central Committee of the republican Leagues of Communists, and the leadership of the Trade Unions, Youth, and Socialist Alliance organizations. Praxis’ readership was largely other LCY members, intellectuals from all over Yugoslavia who subscribed to the Croatian Philosophic Society’s publications, and members of the public or students who sought out the journal in libraries. This hardly qualified as mass circulation, but the government’s assertion that the Praxis School had incited, if not organized, the student protests of 1968 rendered circulation numbers unimportant.

The crucial fact was that academics and students were among the journal’s readership and this was the very faction that turned to purposive action: the 1968 protests alone were all the proof the government required to confirm that the Praxis School was enough of an ideological challenge to the LCY’s status quo to warrant decisive countermeasures. It was a convenient scapegoat for the civil unrest, the momentum of which the LCY then harnessed and turned to its own uses.

As a counterpoint to the low domestic circulation numbers of the journal, the rock and roll group Azra released a song in 1982 entitled “’68” that referenced the Praxis School and captured its legacy of action in defiance of stagnation:

While I was a student, I was a defiant one / I read Praxis
I was a skilful polemist / anarchism was in my blood
I dreamt about barricades / I dreamt I lead the proletarians.
Now I need a doctor / it's tough to be idle all day.
My friends are nocturnal / they don't drink, they aren't loud.

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35 Sher, 264.
They just stare and rot / I'll throw myself into a river. 
I'll throw myself back into '68 / '68 will come back. 36

The *Praxis* legacy was certainly well known enough to spawn a popular rock song. The lyrics are at once nostalgic for the philosophy-saturated purposive action of the 1968 student protests and despondent over their failure to effect and sustain meaningful social change. It was also commentary on the lethargy of the Yugoslav people despite the increasing political and economic turmoil that followed Tito’s death in 1980. The 1982 release date of the song closely coincided with the reinstatement in July 1981 of seven of the eight Praxis School faculty members from University of Belgrade who had been suspended from teaching. Gorman credits this to “vigorous protests by the academic community.”37 Another likely (and more salient) factor was that Tito and Kardelj were both dead by this time. There is reason to wonder if the regime and the LCY would have allowed the release of Azra’s “’68” between 1975 and 1980 while the Party patriarchs were still alive.

After June 1968, the LCY and Yugoslav authorities harassed Praxis School members mercilessly, both personally and professionally.38 This was out of fear that the Korčula Summer School, a pet project of many of the *Praxis* authors, editors, and advisors domestic and international alike, had actually translated into a mass

36 Branimir Johnny Štulić, Azra, Song ””68” on ”Filigranski pločnici” [Filigree Sidewalks], LP record, Zagreb: Jugoton, 1982. Translated by Sarah Žabić.


38 Mihailo Marković and R.S. Cohen, *A History of the Praxis Group*, 27 and 29. Marković is maddeningly vague about the harassment techniques, the time frame, and people involved. Context indicates that University of Belgrade faculty was targeted in particular. Marković is explicit about how the Praxis School managed to weather the harassment.
movement.\textsuperscript{39} The government’s concern was that the \textit{Praxis} journal and summer school had incited direct social action among the most well-educated, articulate, and energetic population in the country, the students, and this popular base could be mobilized at will. Even if the students did not throw up barricades on a regular basis, it was still worrisome to the regime that students nurtured in critical theory would grow into the next generation of Party members, civic leaders, and educators.\textsuperscript{40}

Interestingly, the protests opened a debate within the group about whether or not the journal should be \textit{more} accessible to the younger generation. The Praxis School had not played a deliberate role in the protests so perhaps it was possible that they were becoming \textit{irrelevant}. Veljko Korać lamented that the “journal would…commit suicide if it were to swim in the peaceful waters of scholasticism.”\textsuperscript{41} The journal had to walk a very fine line between staying relevant and staying out of jail, and the unwelcomed spotlight on Praxis School activities after the protests tilted the balance for some members toward taking more risks.\textsuperscript{42}

The domestic press immediately pinpointed the Praxis School as organizers and instigators of the protests.\textsuperscript{43} This, in addition to the undeserved attention, galvanized some Praxis School members to live up to their unearned reputation in print, if not on the

\textsuperscript{39} Sher, 214.

\textsuperscript{40} Sher, 214-15. See also Stojanović, “The June Student Movement and Social Revolution in Yugoslavia,” PIE no. 3-4 (1970): 394-402.

\textsuperscript{41} Sher, 217.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 215-16.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 216.
streets. The most dramatic example of this revitalized “post-protest” *Praxis* attitude was Svetozar Stojanović’s article “The June Student Movement and Social Revolution in Yugoslavia.” Stojanović did not mince words. The second sentence of the article reads: “A revolution awakens the masse from their lethargy—the question is how to stop them from becoming passive again?” He did, however, immediately privilege the social revolution over the political revolution, and then transitioned into a philosophical introduction on the meaning of “entropy in revolution,” almost as if trying to assuage the angry censor in advance. Four pages into the article, Stojanović unleashed a cascade of openly critical remarks highlighting the significance of the fact that “not even the basic documents on the student movement have been published.” None of his points were flattering to the regime. He was careful not to invoke the names of institutions, politicians, or Tito himself, but his critique was bold nonetheless.

Stojanović argued that in addition to failing its population in terms of the economy, social mobility, and the stagnation of information exchange and education policy, the government failed fundamentally in the socialist revolution. He identified the “fundamental significance of the student movement” as the “resistance to the entropy of the social revolution.” In other words, if the revolution were clipping along at an acceptable pace, creativity, agency, and free speech were protected, and self-management

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45 Sher, 395.

46 Ibid., 397.

retooled, all would be well and the students would not have caused a stir. Stojanović traces entropy of the revolution back to the Stalinism and scientific Marxism, which does not have a temporal scale and discourages the prospect of creating one.\(^{48}\)

Stojanović’s true courage is in his call for “a developed and democratic system of political organizations and activities.”\(^{49}\) Implicit here is something that is also evident throughout Kardelj’s work: if the state withers away sufficiently, and self-managing socialism, which is premised on decentralizing the Party both in terms of (geographic) space and power, democratic qualities will surface. For Kardelj, pluralism within the LCY, a spectrum of workers’ councils, a cacophony of individual voices directing the system, is an alternate form of democracy.\(^{50}\)

The problem is that the Praxis School and Kardelj define pluralism within socialism differently. The Praxis School was reaching for an egalitarian society as a necessary environment for self-managing socialism to thrive and prosper as it should. As long as people are unequal, they cannot be expected to compete or engage their agency equally. Stojanović even equated the “the statist [LCY] and the petty-bourgeois [nationalists]” as corrosive forces that “jeopardize[d] the socialist revolution in

\(^{48}\) Karl Marx, “The German Ideology,” in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1972), 157-164. In “The German Ideology,” Marx’s exposition of the theory of history describes the evolution toward communist, but he does not provide a temporal scale. He only states that the “evolution [towards communism] takes place naturally, i.e. is not subordinated to a general plan of freely combined individuals” (159). Marx only states that the revolution will be spontaneous and natural.


\(^{50}\) Edvard Kardelj, Towards a New Type of Socialist Democracy, 25.
Yugoslavia.”51 As dedicated Marxists, the Praxis School never would have supported the idea of pluralism of political parties, but in terms of the relationship among society, government, and people, the pluralism of the workers’ councils was highly valued. The greatest unspoken critique is that, while Stojanović was writing this article, he likely knew it would evoke a response, possibly even legal, from the government: that was the only litmus tests required for a troubled political system.

The journal had been insulated from regime interference before 1969 in large part, because of its high international profile. The 1971 domestic edition, however, was too much for the authorities. It tipped the scales against Praxis and the District Prosecutor of the city where the journal was printed filed to suppress the issue entirely because the articles made “false, distorted, and alarming assertions which evoke the agitation of the citizens and [disturb] the public order and tranquility.”52 Dejan Jović has developed his work around the thesis, which he excellently constructs and supports, that Tito was, in fact, more afraid of challenges from other communist groups, at the level of both ideology and social action from non-communists. This was specifically because if internal dissidence threatened Party unity, it could potentially undermine the LCY’s power and position politically, socially, and economically.53 In the context of this first suppression of Praxis work as well as the final crackdown in 1975, Jović’s rationale


52 Sher, 218-219. Apparently, Milan Kangrga wrote the most problematic article, but this article is in German and is inaccessible to the author at this present time. Stojanović’s article is more relevant to this paper’s examination of Praxis as an ideological movement in any case.

describes the regime’s response well. In the end, the District Court only suppressed Milan Kangrga’s article entitled “Phenomenology of the Ideological-Political Advance of the Yugoslav Middle Class” instead of the whole issue. In its opinion, the Court stated that Kangrga’s conclusions inflamed nationalist sentiment. The Court’s assertion that the article may agitate the citizens suggests that the authorities’ true concern was the prevention of another mass social action as in 1968.54

In Yugoslavia, Kardelj, as the LCY’s designated ideologist and the architect of self-managing socialism, and the Praxis School, as the status quo’s primary critics, were engaged in a search for the next stage of ideological development in Yugoslavia, which would, in turn, dictate the sociopolitical structure of the state. Kardelj and the Praxis School focused on many of the same ideological themes. *Democracy and Socialism*, Kardelj’s book penned in 1978 just one year before his death, was the summation of a political career spent trying to navigate a centrist position in the often polarized political atmosphere of Yugoslavia. In many ways, Kardelj’s self-managing socialism was the ultimate political compromise. It accomplished three important goals simultaneously. Self-managing socialism insured the centrality and power of the LCY as the defining force in Yugoslav society, it set apart the Yugoslav Marxist model from Stalinism, and it

54 The year 1968 had special significance for all Yugoslavs. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to end the Prague Spring reminded them of what could have been had Yugoslavia not been expelled from the Comintern in 1948. The timing of the Soviet invasion coincided roughly with the student protests. These two factors together likely contributed to the LCY’s decision to exclude the discourse of humanist Marxism and return to ideological hegemony.
imbued Yugoslav Marxism with the essence, if not the actuality, of the ability to respond to the will of the people.\textsuperscript{55}

In a very important passage, Kardelj weaves his justification for self-managing socialism as an absolute corrective against the “bourgeois” forms of democracy as well as the “technocratic-bureaucratic, statist” system of Stalinism. Although he does not refer to specific incidents, Kardelj forthrightly admitted and rationalized the LCY’s crackdown on Praxis School activities, the suspension of the “Belgrade Eight,” and the purging of the LCY in 1971 as necessary:

Obviously, under the system of socialist self-management we should not expect to have conventional political parties, which fight to gain a monopoly of power, but rather forms of organizations which reflect progressive changes in social consciousness and the growth of the creative forces of society. In other words, in the society of socialist self-management such organizations will have approximately the same position as that enjoyed by organizations in the fields of science, culture, etc., and not a position of monopoly control of political power, such as they have in the system of bourgeois democracy. Moreover, the further advance of socialist society will dissipate the political strength of the economic, ideological, cultural, and political forces of bourgeois and technocratic-bureaucratic counter-revolution, thereby gradually reducing the need for special repressive measures against these forces. In other words, restrictions on democratic rights necessitated by the violence of political struggle for class will be eased.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} In \textit{Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration}, trans. Vera Vukelić, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Laslo Sekelj offers a scathing criticism of self-managing socialism as a hollow progressive façade. He argues that “participation [in self-management] was far from egalitarian: expert and management structures dominated and did it via informal power structures, or via manipulation, with worker’s councils functioning as the transmission of expert services making formal membership in them irrelevant to the decisions reached” (39). He charges that self-management was in fact rife with cronyism, nepotism, and inequality that effectively added up to an oligarchy. Much of his thesis’ evidentiary analysis is unbalanced, but his specific criticism of the extra-legal power exchange in self-management is nicely constructed. Importantly, the Praxis School, as dedicated neo-Marxists, would disagree with Sekelj’s complete dismissal of the system—Praxis members would simply counter that the \textit{praxis} of self-management needed to be integrated properly into society. For a more favorable review of self-managing socialism and its similarities to political pluralism, see Robin Alison Remington’s “Self-Management and Development Strategies in Socialist Yugoslavia,” 57-89.

\textsuperscript{56} Edvard Kardelj, \textit{Democracy and Socialism}, 117. My emphasis.
Kardelj implicitly categorized the Praxis School as a misguided, bourgeois, and elitist reform movement that attempted to preempt the natural evolution of socialism in Yugoslavia. His ultimate goal is to facilitate the “withering away of the state,” Engel’s classical description of the dialectal progression towards communism.57

The student protests of 1968 fundamentally shifted the state’s response to the members of the Praxis School, the journal, and the Korčula Summer School. After 1971, the regime escalated the harassment of the Praxis School members whom they considered to be the most egregious offenders. The regime even tried bribing the professors to relinquish their positions at the university. A Party member would “usually invite me for some reason,” recalled Dr. Stojanović about the days after June 1968, and he “would offer that if we resign, they would give us positions in diplomacy, send us to the embassies.”58

Through the court system the LCY banned numerous publications by Praxis School members that appeared outside of the journal itself and authors were jailed for their sentiments. *Praxis* articles were more often challenged in the courts. Very few of the Praxis School authors still had their LCY membership rights at this point.59

Two *Praxis* articles printed after the 1968 protests were cloaked responses to the government’s open pressure on the *Praxis* journal as an institution and its authors. Ivan Kuvačić wove an obvious metaphor in “Contemporary Forms of Violence,” in which he

58 Interview with the author, August 3, 2009, Belgrade, Serbia.
59 Sher, 214-242.
quipped that in modern times, “the role of the cudgel is being exchanged for that of the technique of suggestion.” He expounded on fascist, consumer, and Stalinist forms of manipulation. While Titoist manipulation was conspicuously absent from the list, his intent was clear and many of his criticism of Stalinism doubled for the LCY’s handling of the Praxis School.

Djuro Šušnjić simply wrote “The Idea of Manipulation and Manipulation of Ideas” as nineteen theses that explore the relationship between the manipulator and manipulated ideas. Šušnjić wrote that “when an idea has been launched into the world…its originator will soon lose control of it,” a stealthy reminder to the LCY that the Praxis School had simply taken the regime’s professed social democracy at face value and launched an ideological critique. Each of his theses serves as a solid indication that the Praxis School’s ideological challenge to the LCY was well under way and unlikely to abate: the article closed with the observation that “resistance to manipulation means in the first place resistance to institutionalized thinking.”

The very same system that had garnered so much of the Praxis School’s criticism, namely self-managing socialism, ultimately made it difficult for the regime to suspend the most outspoken members easily. The “long standing tradition of the autonomy of the University of Belgrade” and the faculty and student councils who had nominal control of university policy hindered the government authority’s ability to have offending faculty


62 Ibid., 155.
removed. The LCY initiated a formal extensive investigation of eight sociology professors at the University of Belgrade during the first half of 1974, although the regime had harassed the professors increasingly since 1968. The media unsympathetically publicized the professors’ plight and they became known as the “Belgrade Eight.”

In 1989, Nebojša Popov, the youngest of the “Belgrade Eight,” published a book about the 1968 student protests and the Praxis School’s experience. He included a section in which the eight professors wrote a brief personal reminiscence of their expulsion from the university. For Zagorka Pešić-Golubović the state’s response to the Praxis School proved that the “state [Communist] Party has the power to tailor people’s fates, to decide completely the fate of science, literature, and culture even if completely incompetent people make these decisions…The state missed the chance to transform in a deeper sense and free itself from the burden of a Stalinist heritage.” In a much less reflective turn of phrase, Trivo Indjić simply equated the government’s campaign of personal and professional persecution to apartheid.  

63 The LCY was sub-divided along republic lines. Though there was a central LCY authority, prosecutions for breach of morality codes and other Party standards were pursued at the republic level of the Party. The central LCY could simply recommend and facilitate action. Praxis School faculty from the University of Croatia, much closer geographically to the actual printing plant for the Praxis journals, were treated with more deference simply because the politics within the League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) were different and more sensitive than those of the Communist League of Serbia. The 1971 political purges of the LCC due to the agenda of the Croatian Spring resulted in a LCC committee with less tolerance for manipulation from the central authority. See Sher, 220-21.

64 The “Belgrade Eight” were Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, Trivo Indjić, Mihailo Marković, Dragoljub Mićunović, Ljubomir Tadić, Miladin Životić, Nebojša Popov, and Svetozar Stojanović. The government did not persecute many of the most provocative authors from the University of Zagreb in a bid to balance the ethnic relations with the Republic of Croatia.

65 Nebojša Popov, Contra Fatum [Against Fate] (Beograd: Mladost, 1989), 393-4.

66 Ibid., 394.
The League of Communists of Serbia (LCS) insisted on the dismissal of the “Belgrade Eight” because they had breeched “moral-political criteria for university professors, including conforming to the Party line.” The Faculty Self-Management Council resisted the pressure from the LCS, but finally had to issue a report on the conduct of their eight colleagues—in true dissident fashion, the Council issued a favorable report in an effort to stymie the government’s agenda. Their courage was futile, however, and the government neatly and shamelessly circumvented its own self-management protocol and dismissed the “‘Belgrade Eight’ by legislative decree” on January 28, 1975.

In short order, the regime cut funding for the Praxis journal’s printing through a government order to the workers and the journal dissolved. The government tried to ban the 1973 and 1974 Korčula Summer School symposia. The farewell of Praxis’ editorial board was curt and hinted at the pointed censorship and harassment the authors had endured for years—the very same harassment that finally brought the journal to an abrupt end:

At this time, when the Yugoslav Edition of Praxis ends its existence after a ten-year period of publication, one might expect that the editorship would offer an analysis and assessment of its work and activity. But as it does not appear that such an analysis could be published at this time, we have no choice but to defer an assessment of our activity to the future.

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67 Sher, 226.
68 Ibid., 232.
69 Ibid., 240.
After 1975, Kardelj made an attempt justify the government’s forceful oppression of the Praxis School and other political and social reform movements in the early 1970s. In a speech from April 1976, Kardelj restated his ideal vision of “self-management democracy of associated labor” and argued that “only in such a democratic system can the League of Communists…perform their leading ideological role in the system of power of the working class… as a component part of that system, not as a force, over and above it, as was to some extent the case in our recent past.” Kardelj contended that “abolition of democratic freedoms…is a weapon in the battle against those who attack the existing state of affairs….That is why, in our society, we had to come into conflict with the propounders of so-called absolute freedom who…were actually arming the enemies of socialism and socialist self-management.” It is very clear from this passage that the regime understood the Praxis School as an ideological challenge. The Praxis Sociopolitical critique was still a threat to self-managing socialism despite the fact that it originated from within the LCY. Kardelj acknowledged that, in many ways, the ideological challenge from the Praxis School was more damaging than a non-socialist critique precisely because it provided ideological fodder for political pluralists, nationalists, and other groups who sought to undermine the monolithic LCY.

The National Question and the Humanist Marxist Critique of Titoism

The intricate contortion within the LCY, as well as between the Party and outside nationalists, over the nationalist question explains why the contributors to the Praxis journal were treated differently in Serbia and Croatia. There was no incident equivalent to the “Belgrade Eight” in Croatia. A nuanced distinction informed the Praxis School’s position on nationalist ideology. Essentially, the basis of legitimacy for the nationalism and the agenda of its proponents determined the issue. Rudi Supek “distinguish[ed] between progressive and reactionary nationalism” on the basis of two criteria: “the relationship which each posits between man and time (history) and between the individual and the larger community (politics).” Progressive nationalism, such as the Partisan liberation struggle in World War II, “view[ed] man as primarily future oriented and creative, rather than bound by past loyalties.”

71 Anthony Smith’s conceptualization of nationalism is most appropriate for Yugoslavia during this time period. He envisions an “ethnocentric nationalism” in which “power and value inhere in [the] cultural group” (158) and a “polycentric nationalism” in which there is a “condition of dignified equality” (192). These two categories are respectively equivalent to ethnic/reactionary nationalism and civic nationalism or Yugoslavism. Praxis authors preferred the terminology reactionary/progressive nationalism, Smith ethnocentric/polycentric, and the author of the study is partial to Dejan Jović’s description of Yugoslavism as a civic identity based on political affiliation. See Anthony Smith, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1983), 158-198.

72 Croatian nationalists with the LCY were punished during purges—the penalties by republic for ideological dissidence in the Party was largely consistent with republic affiliation.

73 Sher, 183-4.
Tito’s “brotherhood and unity” nationalism, or Yugoslavism, qualified as progressive, civil nationalism and it seemed legitimate to the Praxis authors, while the agenda of the Croatian Spring was suspect as class-based, reactionary nationalism. Dr. Stojanović confirmed that the Praxis School had a civic understanding of nationalism. “Since we were all pro-Yugoslav,” he stated, “we considered ourselves Yugoslavs, so the nationality as a culture-ethnic nationality did not interest us – Serbs, Croats...We were all Yugoslavs.” Mihailo Marković, a prolific Praxis contributor, confirmed in an interview in 1989 that “many Serbs (at least in [his] generation) understood the idea of internationalism literally and were ready to sacrifice their own Serbian identity…and accept Yugoslavism as a national belonging.” Some Praxis authors, like Milan Kangrga, attempted to address the national question directly, but the government considered such articles inflammatory and invoked censorship laws to silence the authors. This is a concrete example of how the LCY engaged in discourse exclusion.

74 Dejan Jović’s chapter “Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism: From Kardelj to Tito,” in Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1991 offers the most pertinent explication of Yugoslavism during the period of the Praxis School (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003). Jović traces the “differences between Josip Broz Tito and Edvard Kardelj’s understanding of Yugoslavia,” arguing that “although both were Marxists, by the late 1960s they understood and interpreted Marxist doctrine of the state—and crucially, of the Yugoslav state—somewhat differently” (157-8). His thesis is the constitutional debates of 1967-74 ended in Kardelj’s rejection of “brotherhood and unity” or civic nationalism that had served to unify the state as an “ethnic project” (158). Thereafter, Kardelj’s completely ideological formulation of Yugoslav unity dominated government policy. This is one indicator of the rationale behind the government’s campaign to censure Praxis out of existence.

75 Interview with the author, August 3, 2009, New Belgrade, Serbia.


The Praxis School rejected reactionary or ethnic nationalism because “the nation is precisely *par excellence* the political creation of the bourgeois class...[it] is the political instrument for safeguarding the ruling interest...of the bourgeois class and the bureaucracy and, simultaneously, for the oppression and exploitation of the working class of the very same nation.” The Praxis School strongly opposed any reactionary nationalist agendas, within or beyond the confines of the LCY and its branches in the republics.

There are two reasons for the Praxis School’s animosity toward reactionary, ethnic nationalism. First, ethnicity and nationality are fundamentally not categories of analysis in classical Marxism. Tito’s “brotherhood and unity” was effectively Marxist-based civic nationalism so it was acceptable. Marx premised historical materialism, his conception of historical change, upon the economy as the base of all societal superstructures. Second, as the quote above demonstrates, the Praxis School deemed ethnic nationalism divisive, reactionary, and a function of the *bourgeois concept of nation*.

Kardelj, as spokesman for the LCY, agreed with the Praxis assessment in a 1969 speech stating that “in our circumstances, the ideology of reactionary bourgeois nationalism is becoming the banner of all those who rise against socialism and self-management.” Nationalism had become a concrete threat to the Party as a whole, and despite the fact that the Praxis authors agreed with the regime on the question of

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78 Sher, 182.

reactionary nationalism, the subject was too sensitive for the Party to allow “outside commentary.” The government’s censorship of number 3/4 of the 1971 issue of *Praxis* demonstrates that the LCY considered the Praxis ideology a very serious challenge to Party unity, especially in the wake of the 1968 student protests and in the midst of a changing state structure.

Mihailo Marković proffered his assessment of the Praxis movement’s role vis-à-vis nationalism in the convoluted political atmosphere in Yugoslavia of 1965 to 1975. In his view, the Praxis School maintained “ideological balance” in Yugoslavia and “its disappearance would inevitably strengthen right-wing nationalists (especially in Croatia) and pro-Stalinist hard-liners (especially in Serbia).”

In this political configuration, the Praxis School and the LCY, although engaged in an ideological debate over the meaning of socialist democracy, the implementation of self-management, and myriad other issues related to the persistence of alienation in Yugoslav society, had a larger common enemy: the burgeoning and increasingly politically active ethnic nationalist movement in Croatia.

Within the LCY itself, particularly in the League of Croatian Communists (LCC), a movement developed in the late 1960s that “attempted to promote Croatian language, history and culture, which they believed had been repressed during the last twenty-five years.” This movement became known as the Croatian Spring, a reference to the thaw in Titoism that allowed it, as well as the other reform movements discussed in this thesis,

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to bloom. Although it first formed around the indicators of cultural nationalism like language, the movement quickly gained traction and its platform grew accordingly.

In contrast to the Praxis School, the Croatian Spring’s reform agenda combined elements of Croatian ethnic nationalism, western liberalism, and a profession of socialist loyalty. Mika Tripalo, Savka Dabčević-Kučar, and Pero Pirker, powerful Party members in the LCC, led the Croatian Spring reform movement. Many politicians associated with the Croatian Spring were liberals with a “soft” nationalist agenda and they were willing to work within the larger communist political system, but sought greater latitude to pursue their own programs at the level of the republic.

Their main goal was the decentralization of the federal state and the Party apparatus itself. They intended to make use of the more liberal political atmosphere to press their nationalist agenda. The Party members of the Croatian Spring, and their more radical proponents who did not actively hold positions in the Party echelon, called upon deeply potent historical memories of the ethnic conflict of World War II, as well as the tumultuous interwar period, to mobilize public sentiment in their favor. Tito eventually cast out Dabčević-Kučar, Pikar, and Tripalo from the CPY in 1971 and purged the LCC of their supporters. 82 Tito’s decisive action delivered a blow to the Croatian Spring movement and made it clear that nationalism, even cultural nationalism, would draw attention to ethnic differences would not be tolerated in a unitarist, socialist Yugoslav society based on “brotherhood and unity.”

82 Lampe, 309-10.
The League of Communists held the Tenth Congress in Belgrade in May 27-30, 1974. Tito’s opening address to the first plenary session betrayed the tumult of the last few years, and set the Party’s course of action: “The League of Communists has once again demonstrated its strength by overcoming, in the struggle for the unity, the monolithic character, and the purity of the Party, all those elements which had denied the leading role of the League of Communists.”

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the LCY launched a strategic and concerted effort to quash the Praxis School with censorship and harassment and to dilute the impact of the student demonstration with disingenuous promises of reform. Both of these actions amount to the LCY’s deliberate exclusion of the humanist Marxist critique from socialist discourse at the structural level. The essential motivation that underpinned the state’s response to both the student unrest of June 1968 and the Praxis School was two-fold. The Party wanted to restore social order and reassert its control over communist ideology to reestablish unity. The LCY was facing a constitutional crisis and the national question was reawakening in this period. In order to maintain control of the coming transitions, it had to re-establish internal Party unity ideologically. It was, therefore, a necessity to exclude dissident socialist discourse in the country whether it originated with the students or with the intellectuals of the Praxis School.

The government’s response to the Praxis School and the protest revealed its unwillingness to abide open criticism, or, in the case of the “Belgrade Eight,” even abide by the protocols of its own self-management system. The humanist Marxist critique manifested from within the Party itself and the regime could not tolerate the internal divisions and comfortably address the increasingly vocal national movement in Croatia simultaneously. The humanist Marxism had ideologically and demonstratively threatened the primacy of Party ideology from within in the form of the Praxis School and the student protest of June 1968. The power of the League of Communists was under siege by the ethnic nationalism externally and the internal, intra-communist front was easier to control and more dangerous to lose. The Party above all else wanted to control the constitutional crisis politically, socially, and economically and this required internal unity. The League of Communists excluded dissident socialist discourse in two ways. It failed to acknowledge the gravitas of the student protest and it harassed and censured the Praxis School forums, including journal operations, the summer school, and the author-professors themselves. These Party policies collectively signaled that if there would be reforms and critiques of Yugoslav society or politics, they would originate within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.
'69, my old man and I,
Hop on our bikes,
Straight to Ilidza, rivers and meadows
Where the folks from Sarajevo like to party,
Throw a blanket, have a beer, barbecue and handball.
All is colorful like a rug.
"Tide" by The Indexes and
News from Vietnam on the radio

“Extra Coffee Pot,” by Forbidden Smoking

“Extra Coffee Pot,” written in 1997, reflects back on the whole of Yugoslav history after it had boiled over into violent civil war in the 1990s and a few stanzas are devoted exclusively to the Sixties. In Yugoslavia as elsewhere, through song, film, and literature, the Sixties are viewed as an idyllic, yet turbulent time of protest, social change, and the reach for utopian ideals. It is only the last line of the song that betrays the civil unrest that was an integral part of the regional and global landscape in the 1960s.

This thesis has examined how the Praxis authors the student protesters of June 1968 engaged with their sociopolitical surroundings critically, in ink and action respectively. They sought to improve their society, and some of their expectations were based on utopian ideals, which is the bane of critical theory. It is easy to criticize, and more difficult to propose viable alternatives to complex, systemic fiscal, social, and political crises. By investigating the contours of socialist discourse among members and

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devotees of socialism in Yugoslavia and how cognitive dissonance begat ideological dissonance, this study has endeavored to shed light upon why the Party made an effort return to ideological hegemony after June 1968.

Once the LCY’s insistent ideological hegemony of the 1950s began to ease, intellectuals of all political persuasions took the opportunity to voice criticism of Party policy or project a political path for the state. This allowed dissidence in the civil sphere to bloom and introduced a new level reflexivity, or exchange of ideas and influence, into Yugoslav politics and civil society. Thereafter, the LCY was often forced into the new position of defending its policies to its own citizens, some of whom were in its own Party or at least professed Marxists. The Praxis School and the student protest of 1968 are concrete examples of this phenomenon. As loyal Marxists, their dissidence was especially threatening to the LCY because it opened the previously insular Party to the influence alternate communist ideologies. In trying to stay true to “Third-Way” socialism and craft at least the precepts of a non-totalitarian society in the 1960s, the LCY entered into a delicate balancing act. It sought to maintain social order on its own terms and deflect the influence of competing transnational neo-Marxist ideologies while at the same time undertaking an initiative to allow its own citizens more freedom in the civil sphere. The LCY’s inconsistent and ultimately repressive management of the humanist Marxist critique clearly demonstrated that these goals were inherently contradictory and a balance between them untenable.

Problematically for the LCY, the communist “Other” organically built a domestic presence manifested by the Praxis School—and later the student protesters in 1968—in the Yugoslav civil sphere, and yet proclaimed absolute loyalty to the integrity and
continuity of the communist political system. The LCY had previously equated the communist “Other” with foreign attempts to undermine the state or the Party’s power in Yugoslavia altogether. Humanist Marxism was a new domestic communist “Other” and the LCY did not foresee the momentum, persistence, or influence the movement would achieve. The humanist Marxists proved to be very adept at challenging the Party elites within their common Marxist framework both ideologically in Praxis and in the streets during June 1968.

Dejan Jović’s warns against engaging in the logical fallacy of the “myth of prolepsis,” or “assuming that there was a causal between the action and its result.”2 With this in mind, it is reasonable to categorize the LCY’s return to the exclusion of humanist Marxist discourse as an unintended consequence of the failure of the Party to maintain a sufficient level of power in the midst of the social and political crises in Yugoslavia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This thesis identifies humanist Marxism, professors and students alike, as one important sociopolitical movement of several that forced the regime to reinstate a higher degree of repression in the civil sphere after 1968 in order to achieve its ideological goals.

The Praxis School was the first to offer a revisionist perspective on socialism in Yugoslavia, but its critique remained ideological and never reached the level of active demonstration until the student-heirs took to the streets in 1968. The students and Praxis authors, as true devotees of Marxism, acted in organic concert to make Marx’s Feuerbach Thesis a reality: “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the

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2 Jović, Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away, 36.
point is to change it." The Praxis articles were not simply philosophical, metaphysical essays—as an ideological challenge to Titoism, the movement fully intended to generate public interest in purposive action that would effect corrective social change, but the professors did not organize revolutionary activity in salons across Belgrade in June 1968. In fact, as Dr. Stojanović reminds us, the professors were concerned for the welfare and safety of the students and harbored real concerns about the police brutalization of the protesters and the possibility of a more dramatic military intervention.

Tito and the LCY tolerated the Praxis School’s ideological dissidence at first, but there was a definitive shift toward persecution of the professors and their journal after the communist-oriented student protest of 1968. After June 1968, the regime declared the two movements to be cause and effect, then effectively silenced each of them in different ways. The League simply dismissed the students and denied their independent agency, and turned its attention to the Praxis School. The LCY became concerned about the ideological crisis spawned by the humanist Marxist critique of Yugoslav Socialism for two reasons. First, the LCY feared that the student protest of 1968 could perhaps make a return appearance and possibly burgeon into a large-scale revolt that included workers and all strata of society. Second, the Praxis School’s critique of the Party and the student protests coincided with another social movement, centered in Croatia, that sough to reawaken the national question. Ethnic nationalism had lain dormant in Yugoslavia since the end of World War Two, thanks, in large part, to the civic nationalism of Tito’s post-war Yugoslavism. Communism is generally ideologically opposed to ethnic nationalism.

as a category of analysis and personal identity, but the national question was nonetheless part of the legacy that Tito’s Yugoslavia inherited from the pre-war state and the Party had to return to ideological hegemony to address it.

The students’ purposive social action was as much in hope of reaching a future ideal as it was about bringing forth concrete remedies to everyday problems. Undeniably, the students wanted to exercise their own agency, hear their own voices express the very quotidian frustration of a generational glass ceiling in civic participation and economic opportunity. They sought an active role in the political discourse of the day, and the regime determinedly excluded them with hallow promises. Their demands for the autonomy of universities, civil rights, and more social justice in the bureaucracy-bogged self-management were signs of purposive social action. These were signs of a future generation of leaders who saw corruption and mismanagement and went to the barricades to argue their point of view when the regime would not otherwise take notice.

In our discursive analysis of the student protest and the articles of Praxis it is clear that a vertical connection of humanist Marxist ideology was in play for these two reform groups. It was rooted in critical theory and the New Left agenda for political reform, both of which were at the apex of influence transnationally at this time. The students engaged in the protest with a very concrete set of demands inspired by the synergy of their frame of reference with the Praxis School’s critique. This is the essence of purposive social action: frames of reference come together to generate social action. Their call for reform was premised on a realistic set of expectations despite the complications of policy implementation.
President Tito and Edvard Kardelj attempted to address the grievances of various reform groups, the Praxis School among them, with constitutional amendments in the 1960s and ‘70s and a new constitution in 1974. Despite these Party responses, the Praxis School continued its sociopolitical critique in its journal and agitated for a reformulation of Yugoslav self-management in favor of humanist-Marxist philosophy. In 1975 with the expulsion of the Belgrade Eight and the banning of the *Praxis* journal the Party definitively declared the language of humanist Marxist dissidence dead in the civil sphere.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine, demand by demand, whether the regime fulfilled the goals of the students’ “Political Action Program” as the 1970s unfolded. What this thesis very clearly demonstrates is that, after 1968, the regime retracted its invitation for a widening of socialist discourse and concertedly turned to excluding the dissident discourse espoused by the Praxis School and the student protesters. In the face of the quickening nationalism movement in Croatia, the League of Communists found it timely to reunify the Party ideologically so that their ideological understanding of socialist discourse, and its implementation in policy, could be protected. It is not an overstatement to suggest that the censorship, retraction of Party membership, and the placating speech President Tito gave to dispel the protesters were examples of the Party’s struggle for preservation and domination.

The thaw in sociopolitical controls in the early 1960s, followed by the LCY’s return to manipulation and discourse exclusion after 1968, and the devolution of power at

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4 Pervan traces one example of a protest demand and the regime’s proposed remedy (employment) and determines that Tito’s promises were indeed hollow (33).
the federal level with the constitution of 1974 were signs of a state in distress. In Tito’s vision, Yugoslavia enjoyed a unique status among the countries of Eastern Europe as a non-Stalinist, non-totalitarian, yet communist country. The humanist Marxist critique intended to make sure this select status was not a sham domestically. The reflexive dialogue between the LCY, the students, and the Praxis professors was evidence of a society that is distinctly not Stalinist, and yet the LCY’s pervasive attempts at discourse exclusion border on totalitarian tactics and belie a leadership deeply uncertain in its course.

This thesis generates several fertile lines of inquiry for future historical research. It would be an interesting extension of this study to investigate the precise degree to which the nationalist movement in Croatia informed the Party’s management of the Praxis School and the June 1968 student demonstrations. The exact nature of the Croatian Spring and its relationship with the communist government would significantly broaden what we know about the larger context in which the social movements considered in this thesis occurred. Perhaps there was disagreement over the Croatian question within the Praxis School as well. Additionally, more research on the student protest movement itself within the Croatian Spring is warranted, particularly in English. Specifically, a detailed comparative study of the 1968 student demonstrations in various cities in Yugoslavia, focusing on Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Belgrade, would likely deepen our understanding of the national question and the legacy of 1968 in modern-day Yugoslavia.

This thesis comes just after the fortieth anniversary of the global wave of protests in 1968. Yugoslavia is presently only a figment of an imagined community, but the countries of former Yugoslavia still retain the legacy of 1968. Zagorka Pešić-Golubović,
a prolific contributor to *Praxis* and one of the Belgrade Eight expelled from the university in 1975, suggests the student movement “Resistance,” a youth/student group instrumental in organizing support against the Slobodan Milosević’s repressive dictatorship of Serbia in the 1990s, was a direct heir to the legacy of 1968 in Yugoslavia. She mused that “that which ‘Resistance’ stood for, the manner in which they engaged in criticism and analysis of society and called citizens into action to be included in the changes, recalls the motives of the ’68-ers.” Her assessment opens up another fascinating research opportunity: the diachronic comparison anti-war social movements that were active during and the after Yugoslav Civil War of the 1990s and the 1968 student protests.

To project forward, the regime’s exclusion of humanist Marxist ideology in the discourse of socialism response stifled the liberal voice within the LCY. The *Praxis* intellectuals were communists who favored a state that was not authoritarian in its political policy or its interaction with institutions or individuals in the civil sphere. While the Praxis members had no patience with ethnic nationalism, their adherence to the principles of social justice would have dictated that they support free speech, minority rights, and accountability in all state policies and functions. When Tito died a few years later in 1980, there was no liberal voice within the Party to counterbalance and restrain the radical ethnic nationalism that grew, within and outside the Party, more and more virulent over the course of the 1980s. The same liberal communist voice could have offered some resistance to the communists leaders (Slobodan Milošević) who implemented an even more totalitarian hegemony in matters of state, culture, and society.

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and sought to reconstitute a highly centralized state based on ethnic privilege. When Tito censured the humanist Marxists, the liberal voice in the Party, perhaps won the battle to regain control of the ideology in the League of Communists, but he lost the war to preserve the unity and integrity of the Yugoslav state. The Party’s scramble to silence the *Praxis* journal and dismiss the student protest hastily was a short-sighted power play that left the League of Communists without a way to navigate the country’s ethnic tension and the fall of communism peacefully. Geostrategic and domestic factors indicate that the Party would have fallen all the same after Tito’s death, but the violent, genocidal civil war might have been avoided if liberal discourse had not been so effectively marginalized in the aftermath of 1968.

On the Manipulation of Ideas:

“An angel once said to the Devil,
I will defeat you by endowing every individual with high ideals,”
to which the Devil replied,
“I will win in the end, for I will institutionalize the ideals.”

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