

Was Croatian Marxist Philosophy Important? An Outline of an Empirical Approach

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ABSTRACT: This article evaluates the significance of Marxist philosophy in Croatia by examining the carefully selected facts (research was carried out in 2023). These facts, while not exhaustive, primarily pertain to the most influential figures within Croatian Marxist philosophy. The assessment interpretation focuses on readily verifiable data, such as the role of these philosophers as mentors or committee members for Ph.D. theses in Marxist philosophy, their published works, citation counts, and their notable ideas. Croatian Marxist philosophy is characterized as lacking a substantial body of high-quality philosophical output, as evidenced by relatively small number of publications, citations, and notable ideas, particularly on the international level. Consequently, its overall impact is relatively minor, and their importance overstated.

KEY WORDS: Croatian Marxist philosophy, Gajo Petrović, Milan Kangrga, Nenad Mišćević, Neven Sesardić, Predrag Vranicki.

A Philosophical School Cannot Be Both Important and Unimportant

Terminological Clarifications

The following key terms will be employed throughout this article with the meanings specified below. While scholarly debates exist regarding each term's precise definition, the interpretations provided here are generally accepted within the field.

Marxist Philosophy is understood as an integral component of Marxism, defined as “the body of doctrine developed by Karl Marx and, to a lesser extent, by Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century. It originally encompassed three interconnected ideas: a philosophical anthropology, a theory of history, and an economic and political program” (Chambre & McLellan, 2024). Within this framework, the term *Marxist philosophers* will refer to those engaged in the development or defense of Marxist philosophy.

A *Croatian Marxist philosopher* is defined as any Croatian philosopher who has produced and published works (e.g., articles, books) in defense of Marxist philosophy. It is noteworthy that Croatian Marxist philosophers, particularly those associated with the journal *Praxis*, expressed ambivalence regarding their own identity, questioning whether they were *Croatian* or *Yugoslav* philosophers, and whether they were *Marxist philosophers*, *Praxis Group* members (Croatian: *Praksisovci*), or *philosophers of praxis* (see Veljak, 2002; see also *Praxis & Korčulanska ljetna škola — digitalna arhiva*).

Historical Period (1945–1991): The primary focus of this article is the period from 1945 (more specifically, from 1947) to 1991 in Croatian Marxist philosophy. These dates were chosen for their historical significance. In 1945, one totalitarian regime in Croatia was overthrown and replaced by another. By 1947, all non-Marxist philosophers, with one exception, had been dismissed from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb. In 1991, Croatia gained independence, marking the transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic political system.

Definition of importance and notable ideas: The term *important* refers to something that is strong, significant, or prominent in influencing events or developments. A notable idea in the context of science refers to a fundamental principle or concept that significantly advances understanding in a particular field.

Measuring Importance: The influence or importance of a philosopher can be assessed through both quantitative and qualitative measurements. Quantitative analysis, which will be the predominant method employed in this article, involves metrics such as the number of published works, citation counts, and the number of notable ideas. Qualitative analysis, which will be used in a more limited capacity, evaluates the significance of a philosopher’s concepts, arguments, and objections within a broader intellectual context.

Opposing Opinions About the Importance of Croatian Marxist Philosophy: Mišćević and Sesardić

While Croatian Marxist philosophers considered themselves to be of significant importance both within Croatia, Yugoslavia, and internationally, this perspective can be regarded as self-praise, and will therefore not be addressed in this analysis. Similarly, criticism from Croatian Christian philosophers—predominantly Catholic, but also Protestant—arguing that Croatian Marxist philosophers are unimportant will also not be discussed, due to fundamental and irreconcilable differences regarding the philosophy of religion and religious matters.

However, there are Croatian philosophers outside the Marxist tradition who hold divergent views regarding the significance of Croatian Marxist philosophers. On the one hand, some ascribe great importance to their contributions, while on the other hand, others minimize their impact. Particularly, two Croatian analytic philosophers represent these opposing views. Nenad Mišćević advocates for the substantial importance of Croatian Marxist philosophers, while Neven Sesardić argues for their limited significance. These two positions are mutually exclusive, and thus both cannot be correct.

Additionally, Mišćević and Sesardić, likely formed by their background in analytic philosophy, have pointed out that Croatian Marxist philosophy was frequently characterized by contradictions and inconsistencies. Furthermore, they argue that some of these Marxist philosophers exhibited inconsistencies between their personal and professional lives. In his entry from 2005 “Croatian philosophy” Croatian philosopher N. Mišćević writes:

In the period after the Second World War the most important group was the Praxis group, or Zagreb school of Marxism (the late Gajo Petrović, then Milan Kangrga, Branko Bošnjak, and others), defending a humanistic Marxism with idealistic and Heideggerian overtones. (Mišćević 2005: 184)

As a young philosopher, Nenad Mišćević (1950–2024) engaged with continental philosophy and, to some extent, with its critique of Marxist philosophy. Notably, in his early work *Marxism and Post-Structuralist Movements* (1975), he addressed these themes. However, from the early 1980s onward, Mišćević’s focus shifted toward analytic philosophy. Despite this shift, his assertion that Croatian Marxist philosophers represent “the most important group” (Mišćević 2005: 184) is an intriguing point of departure for further examination.

Miščević's claim aligns with perspectives expressed by certain non-Croatian philosophers regarding Croatian Marxist philosophers. For example, Joseph Bien, in his dictionary entry on the *Praxis School*, offers a similar assessment of their significance (Bien served as the Course Director of the International Society of Philosophy in Dubrovnik, Croatia).

Quite possibly the most important and original philosopher of the group, and certainly Croatia's leading twentieth-century philosopher, was Gajo Petrovic (1927–93). He called for (1) understanding philosophy as a radical critique of all existing things, and (2) understanding human beings as beings of praxis and creativity. This later led to a view of human beings as revolutionary by nature. At present he is probably best remembered for his *Marx in the Mid-Twentieth Century* and *Philosophie und Revolution*. (Bien 1999: 731–2)

In contrast, Croatian philosopher Neven Sesardić (1949–) stands as a prominent intellectual figure offering a critical assessment of Marxist philosophy in Croatia. A key element of his critique is derived from George Orwell's observation, which Sesardić cites in his book *Iz desne perspektive (From the Right-Wing Point of View)* (2012): "The sin of nearly all leftists from 1933 onwards is that they have wanted to be anti-fascist without being anti-totalitarian." This perspective forms the core of Sesardić's critique of Marxist philosophy, positioning it within a broader discourse of totalitarianism. His major objections to Croatian Marxist philosophy can be summarized as follows.

(1) *Reevaluating the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: Sesardić (2012) challenges the portrayal of the dictatorship of the proletariat as relatively humane under Yugoslavian communism. He contends that such leniency does not inherently justify celebration or approval. To illustrate this, he compares it to an abused child who should not celebrate parents simply because they are less abusive than they could be. This argument questions the moral foundation of the regime.

(2) *Philosophers in Practice – Praxis Opportunism*: Sesardić emphasizes the need for rigorous intellectual scrutiny when philosophers or intellectuals enter public life. He argues that an individual's academic or scholarly background does not inherently qualify them for governance, cautioning against the populist enthusiasm often accorded to intellectuals in politics. Specifically, Sesardić scrutinizes the career of Gvozden Flego, a Croatian Marxist philosopher, questioning the transparency of his professional biography. Sesardić's critique suggests that a scholarly reputation does not guarantee ethical governance or effective leadership. He further argues that the public

has the right to critically assess the credibility of intellectuals who transition into political roles, particularly when these individuals have distanced themselves from ideologies they once supported. Sesardić stresses that the issue is not about seeking apologies for past beliefs, but about maintaining an honest and unembellished record of historical actions of these intellectuals.

(3) *Democracy and Totalitarianism: Are They Mutually Exclusive?* In his critique, Sesardić raises a provocative question about the ideological transitions from fascism to communism, particularly in post-WW2 Yugoslavia. In there he questions whether the defeat of one form of totalitarianism, such as fascism, justifies the establishment of another, namely communism. This critique implicitly challenges the democratic credentials of those who overthrew fascist regimes only to replace them with authoritarian structures, casting doubt on the commitment to democratic values claimed by the leaders of such transitions.

In the chapter *Philosophers of Practice Ride Again*, Sesardić (2012) shifts his analytical lens toward key figures in Croatian Marxist philosophy, focusing in particular on Milan Kangrga. This chapter serves as a critical examination of philosophers who, according to Sesardić, demonstrated the ability to adapt and thrive under shifting political regimes and ideologies. Kangrga, one of the central figures in Croatian Marxist philosophy, is singled out for what Sesardić characterizes as intellectual flexibility that verges on ideological opportunism. Sesardić's critique questions the consistency and integrity of such philosophers, implying that their survival across different political contexts may have been driven more by expediency than by steadfast philosophical commitment.

Milan Kangrga's work in Marxist philosophy has exerted a notable, if partial, influence on the intellectual landscape. However, Sesardić raises serious concerns about the consistency of this influence, particularly in the post-communist era. Sesardić contends that Kangrga, like many of his contemporaries, made subtle adjustments to his philosophical stance in response to the evolving political environment. This adaptability, according to Sesardić, calls into question the foundational principles underlying Kangrga's philosophical contributions. Was Kangrga genuinely committed to the Marxist cause, or were his shifting philosophical positions motivated more by political expediency? This dissonance is a central focus of Sesardić's critique, as he seeks to determine whether Kangrga's contributions were rooted in ideological conviction or con-

venience. Based on the evidence presented, Sesardić leans toward the latter interpretation (Sesardić 2012).

In his later work, *Konsenzus bez pokrića* (*The Unjustified Consensus*) (2022), Sesardić presents a well-documented critique of key *Praxis* philosophers, specifically Milan Kangrga and Gajo Petrović. In Chapter 8, titled *Scratch the Surface of a Praxis Philosopher and You Will Find a Serbian Nationalist*, Sesardić argues that the most prominent *Praxis* philosophers were not as committed to Marxist ideology as might be expected. He attributes this to their Serbian ancestry, which he claims influenced their political actions and allegiances, particularly if one bears in mind disproportionate reactions to Croatian nationalist movements while remaining silent or passive regarding Serbian nationalist excesses. To support his argument, Sesardić cites Kangrga's controversial assertion that "the Croatian people are genetically determined by Serbophobia," without offering a similar critique of Serbian nationalism or providing an explanation for this view (Sesardić 2022).

Further reinforcing his critique, Sesardić (2022) highlights the case of two students, Ivan Zvonimir Čičak and Dražen Budiša, who were imprisoned in the 1970s for their dissident views—Čičak for three years and Budiša for four years. Petrović and Kangrga did not intervene on their behalf and, according to Sesardić, appeared indifferent or even approving of the political repression these students faced. This, in Sesardić's view, further undermines the philosophical and ethical integrity of Kangrga and Petrović's Marxist commitments.

Although Gajo Petrović and other members of the *Praxis* group were actively involved in defending individuals accused of dissident thinking in various contexts, they remained notably passive when their own students required similar defense. In the influential double issue of the *Praxis* journal (3–4, 1971), published shortly before the imprisonment of Čičak and Budiša, Milan Kangrga wrote: "The League of Communists can implement the socialist revolution only insofar as it is firm enough to eliminate and purge its internal enemy forces and dissenters," thereby endorsing repressive action (Sesardić 2022). This stance is particularly ironic given Kangrga's earlier reputation. In his youth, he was accused of ideological nonconformity for failing to mention "Comrade Stalin" in his article on ethics—a case for which he was praised for his intellectual courage and defense of freedom of thought (Jakšić 2004). Even 30 years after the imprisonment of his students, Kangrga continued to justify

his non-intervention by claiming that those same students had wished the same fate upon him and other *Praxis* philosophers (Sesardić 2022).

Sesardić's critique of Kangrga extends beyond the individual and serves as an allegory for an entire generation of intellectuals who, in his view, may have compromised philosophical rigor for political survival. Understanding figures like Kangrga, Sesardić argues, is essential for a comprehensive evaluation of Marxist philosophy in Croatia. By dissecting the shifts and contradictions within Kangrga's work, Sesardić seeks to expose the complexities of the broader intellectual landscape.

It is noteworthy that both Mišćević and Sesardić, despite their differing perspectives, do not provide explicit definitions for the terms *importance* and *notable idea* when discussing Croatian Marxist philosophers. This lack of clarification introduces ambiguity, suggesting that their positions may not be in direct contradiction. It is possible that Croatian Marxist philosophers hold importance and notable ideas within the specific contexts of Croatia or Yugoslavia, while simultaneously lacking substantial influence and notable ideas in the broader landscape of global philosophical movements.

Selected Facts About Croatian Marxist philosophers

Carefully Selected Facts

In this section, we will focus exclusively on the facts pertaining to Marxist philosophy in Croatia. Marxist philosophers have primarily been affiliated with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb (FFZG), the Institute for Philosophy in Zagreb (IFZ), and later the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Split (FFST). It is noteworthy that many of these philosophers began their careers as a high school or gymnasium teachers before transitioning to positions within academia. Consequently, our aim is not to provide an exhaustive list of all relevant facts, but rather to present carefully selected, we believe, important facts that will support our analyses, arguments, and conclusions.

We will first outline facts that suggest the existence and legacy of Croatian Marxist philosophy. Subsequently, we will provide an overview of these facts, and finally, we will interpret them based on the available evidence (as illustrated in Table 1).

Some influential non-Marxist philosophers in the period 1945–1947 who played important role in the emergence of Marxist philosophy (for the period 1941–1945 see Macut 2017 and 2020)	
Stjepan Zimmermann	Falsely convicted and forced into retirement in 1946
Albert Bazala	Dies in 1947
Pavao Vuk-Pavlović	Driven out of college in 1947 (dies in 1976)
Hijacint Bošković	Dies in 1947
Vladimir Filipović	He remained the only philosophy professor at FFZG in 1947 (dies in 1984)

Some PhD dissertations in Marxist philosophy defended in period 1951–1991 at University of Zagreb (FFZG) (see Bracanović 2003; titles are translated to English by authors; Marxism, and Marxist philosophers and concepts are given in bold print)			
Year	Name	PhD Thesis	Examination committee
1951	Predrag Vranicki	<i>On the problem of general, particular and individual in classic Marxism</i> (see Vranicki 1952)	Dušan Nedeljko (supervisor) (Belgrade)
1953	Rudolf Supek	<i>L'Affectivite et L'Imagination</i>	(Paris, Sorbonne)
1956	Gajo Petrović	<i>Philosophy of Plehanov (Place of G. V. Plehanov in the history of philosophy)</i>	Josip Badalić, Vladimir Filipović , Marijan Tkalčić, Predrag Vranicki , Rudolf Supek
1956	Branko Bošnjak	<i>History of philosophy as a science. The problem of methodology and subject matter</i> (see Bošnjak 1958)	Vladimir Filipović , Marijan Tkalčić, Jaroslav Šidak, Predrag Vranicki , Rudolf Supek
1958	Vanja Sutlić	<i>The essence and alienation of man in Marx and in the philosophies of existence / existentialists</i>	Miloš Đurić, Rudolf Supek , Vladimir Filipović
1961	Milan Kangrga	<i>Ethical problem in Karl Marx. Criticism of moral consciousness</i> (see Kangrga 1963)	Vladimir Filipović , Predrag Vranicki , Gajo Petrović
1975	Davor Rodin	<i>Dialectic in Hegel and Marx</i>	Predrag Vranicki , Vladimir Filipović , Gajo Petrović
1975	Hotimir Burger	<i>The problem of science in Marx's works</i> (see Burger 1978)	Predrag Vranicki , Gajo Petrović , Milan Kangrga
1979	Vjekoslav Mikecin	<i>Fundamental antinomies in contemporary Marxist thought</i>	Gajo Petrović , Milan Kangrga , Predrag Vranicki
1982	Lino Veljak	<i>Antonio Gramsci's philosophy of practice</i> (see Veljak 1983)	Gajo Petrović , Vjekoslav Mikecin , Predrag Vranicki
1983	Gvozden Flego	<i>Fromm's and Marcuse's understanding of alienation</i>	Gajo Petrović , Predrag Vranicki , Hotimir Burger
1985	Žarko Puhovski	<i>The political philosophy of the Frankfurt School from 1932 to 1945</i> (see Puhovski 1989)	Gajo Petrović , Predrag Vranicki , Milan Kangrga
1988	Zvonko Šundov	<i>Historical thinking of Lukacs's "History and Class Consciousness"</i>	Lino Veljak , Milan Kangrga , Gajo Petrović , Božidar Sekulić
1988	Ante Čović	<i>The problem of the world in Marx's initial and early works and its relevance</i> (see Čović 1988)	Milan Kangrga , Hotimir Burger , Branka Bruijć

Some facts about the most important Marxist philosophers of the first generation after 1945/1947				
Philosopher	Predrag Vranicki 1922–2002	Branko Bošnjak 1923–1996	Milan Kangrga 1923–2008	Gajo Petrović 1927–1993
Influenced by	Karl Marx , Marxism	Karl Marx , Karl Jaspers	I. Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Karl Marx	Karl Marx
Most important Marxist publica- tions	<i>Dialectical and Historical Materi- alism, The Intellec- tual Development of Karl Marx, Marxism and Socialism</i>	<i>Logos and Dialect- tics, Marxist Ap- proach to Religion</i>	<i>Ethical Issues in the Works of Karl Marx, Ethics or Revolution, Hegel – Marx</i>	<i>Philosophy and Marxism, The Thought of Revolu- tion, Philosophy and Revolution</i>
Google Scholar total	448	258	281	240

Carefully selected facts about the most important Marxist philosophers of the second generation and after 1991						
Philosopher	Žarko Puhovski 1946–	Gvozden Flego 1946–	Ante Čović 1949–	Lino Veljak 1950–	Mislav Kukoč 1952–	Raul Raunić 1959–
Influenced by	Karl Marx, J. Habermas, G. Petrović, M. Kangrga, P. Vranicki	Karl Marx, J. Habermas, G. Petrović, M. Kangrga, P. Vranicki	Karl Marx, M. Kangrga	G. Petrović, P. Vranicki, V. Mikecin, A. Gram- schi	Philosophy of practice	Karl Marx
Marxist works	<i>Mao Zedong's Marxism, History and Revolution, The Socialist Construction of Reality (1990)</i>	<i>The Philo- sophical Forum on Lukács</i>	<i>Marxism as a Philosophy of the World, Ethical Criticism in the Work of Milan Kangrga</i>	<i>Marx- ism and the Theory of Reflec- tion, Gajo Petrović – Philosopher from Kar- lovac, Gajo Petrović – Man and Philosopher</i>	<i>Critique of Eschatologi- cal Thought – The Problem of Alien- ation and Croatian Philosophy of Practice, Foundations of Croatian Philosophy of Practice</i>	<i>Marx After One Hundred Years (re- view), Roy Medvedev's Leninism and Western Socialism (review), An Ana- lytical Key to Marx's Aporias? (review)</i>
Google Scholar total	413	126	260	189	179	51

Carefully selected facts about younger at least partially Marxist philosophers after 1991					
Philosopher	Hrvoje Jurić	Marija Selak Raspudić	Luka Bogdanić	Ankica Čakardić	Mislav Žitko
Influenced by	H. Jonas, A. Čović	A. Čović, M. Kangrga	Praxis, Marxism	Marx	Marx
Marxist works	<i>Anarchism and Marxism in the Perspective of “Praxis Philosophy,” Self-Management – Before and After Socialism</i>	<i>Human Nature and the New Epoch (including Exposition of the Concept of the World in the Philosophy of M. Kangrga)</i>	<i>Praxis: History of a Heretical Journal in Tito’s Yugoslavia, Why Praxis? Or the Historical Origin and Place of Praxis, Elements of the Relevance of the Manifesto</i>	<i>History, Revolutionary Dialectics, and Philosophical Systems, The Social Philosophy of Friedrich Engels, Dialectical Empiricism and Historical Materialism, Capital and Marx’s Epistemological Revolution: From Neue Marx-Lektüre to Political Marxism, Marx and Social Reproduction Theory: Three Different Historical Strands</i>	<i>The Antagonism of Productive Relations – A Post-Socialist Perspective, Global Environmental Crisis and Limits to Growth: A Marxist Perspective, Thought and Revolution: A Contribution to the Critique of Gajo Petrović’s Philosophy, Aspects of Praxis: Reflections on the 50th Anniversary</i>
Google Sch.	123	14	48	74	64
Supervisor	Ante Čović	Lino Veljak	Nicolao Merker	Žarko Puhovski	Borislav Mikulić

Table 1: Some facts about Croatian Marxist philosophers (citations are given from the Google Scholar, 17/02/2023, for other facts see Bracanović 2003, Wikipedia entries of listed philosophers, and their official CVs on Faculty’s websites given in references).

Selected Formal Connections in the Period 1947–2023

The purpose of this section is to clarify the continuity and legacy of Croatian Marxist philosophers from 1945/1947 to 1991, but also to early 2000s. This analysis employs both quantitative (e.g., the number of connections) and qualitative methods. The relationships among Marxist philosophers in Croatia can be reconstructed established through various approaches, with factual connections (see Bracanović 2003) serving as the most reliable starting point. Among these *factual* connections, it is

advisable to initiate the analysis with doctoral dissertation supervisors and committee members (as illustrated in Figure 1).

As shown in Table 1, several observations come to mind. First, there was a decisive rupture following World War II concerning the philosophers who had been active prior to this period. The sole non-Marxist philosopher to retain his position after the advent of the communist regime was Vladimir Filipović. Alongside two Marxist philosophers who obtained their doctorates outside of Croatia—Vranicki in Belgrade and R. Supek at the Sorbonne—Filipović participated in overseeing doctoral dissertations on Marxist philosophical topics for Bošnjak, Kangrga, and Sutlić, serving as a committee member during their thesis defenses.

Furthermore, Vranicki, Petrović (see Veljak 2008), and Kangrga (see Mikulić 2014) either supervised a significant number of doctoral dissertations or were members of committees together with other Marxist philosophers (as indicated by the names highlighted in Table 1), thus establishing themselves as the most influential figures in this regard. Notably, Bošnjak and Sutlić did not exert influence in a similar capacity; they were neither supervisors nor committee members for doctoral dissertations focusing on Marxist philosophy. All these activities occurred at the University of Zagreb.

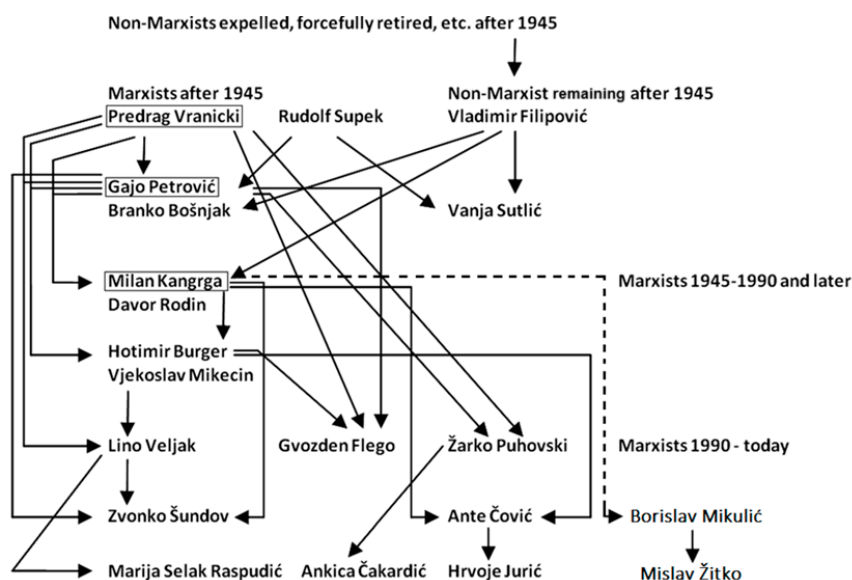


Figure 1: Relationships between Croatian Marxist philosophers by the criterion of being either a PhD supervisor or a member of PhD examination committee (by the authors; based on data given in Bracanović 2003, and information from private correspondence).

Figure 1 illustrates the differences between the transitions in the political system that occurred in 1945 and 1991, the latter marking the formal independence of Croatia. The change in government in 1945, characterized by the transition from one totalitarian regime to another (specifically, from a right-wing to a left-wing totalitarian system; see Macut 2017), resulted in the replacement of politically unsuitable members of the faculty with the politically suitable ones. In contrast, the governmental transition in 1991 (from a left-wing totalitarian regime to a formally democratic system) did not precipitate the removal of preceding Marxist philosophers (see Vranicki 2003; Mišćević 2005; Mikulić 2014; Jurković 2015).

The majority of philosophers in 1991 retained their professional positions, despite the evident internal inconsistencies and contradictions within Marxist philosophy, which raises questions about its scholarly soundness. Moreover, external issues persisted due to Marxism's status as the ideological framework of the former communist regime (as detailed in Macut 2020). Notably, some philosophers continued to engage with Marxist philosophy, and even to this day doctoral theses exist. For example, a recent PhD thesis by A. Lunić, supervised by M. Kukoč, addresses ethics within M. Kangrga's philosophical framework (see Lunić 2022).

It is also important to highlight that some of these figures were involved in various professionally and politically questionable activities both before and after 1991 (see Sesardić 2012, 2022). Such activities included dubious testimonies before various courts, plagiarism, and involvement in attacks on other philosophers, among other unethical practices (as detailed in the first section). Following the establishment of democracy in 1991, Marxist philosophers retained their positions within faculties and institutes, continuing to receive state pensions in the newly formed democratic state. They played a significant role in mentoring younger generations of philosophers, many of whom primarily engaged with Marxist philosophy.

Some of these philosophers ascended to positions of influence, including ministers of science and education in democratically elected governments in Croatia (notably A. Čović and G. Flego), as well as serving as university vice-rectors, with A. Čović being a prominent example (see their respective Wikipedia entries). This phenomenon can be partially attributed to the presence of former communists within the government, including the first President of Croatia, F. Tuđman, as well as various ministers and members of the ruling parties, i.e. the HDZ and

the SDP. Intriguingly, none of the Marxist philosophers faced explicit scholarly criticism within democratic Croatia, although some individuals encountered criticism for reasons unrelated to their Marxist philosophy (e.g., A. Čović). The lack of philosophical and professional repercussions for their philosophical positions and political actions is perplexing, especially when contrasted with the treatment of non-Marxist philosophers in Croatia and the Croatian diaspora (see Krkač 2012, Sesardić 2022).

Interpretation

To assess whether there exists a legacy that could lend importance to Croatian Marxist philosophy today, the following key points should be emphasized:

- (1) Definition and application of “legacy”: Legacy refers to traditions and ideas handed down from predecessors, constituting a living tradition. Aside of obvious continuity in period 1947–1991, prior to 1947, there existed a degree of defense and critique of communism, Marxism, and socialism (see Macut 2017). In contrast, post-1991, there has been a notable absence of such discourse. Nevertheless, Marxist philosophy has continued to be defended by younger generations. The available data suggest that there is an ongoing tradition and continuity within Croatian Marxist philosophy.
- (2) Current Philosophical Landscape: While Croatian philosophy today exhibits considerable diversity—with the majority of philosophers engaged in the history of philosophy and Analytic philosophy, and a smaller number focusing on Christian and Continental philosophy—Marxist philosophy constitutes a minority. Its practitioners are primarily concentrated at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb (FFZG). This distribution indicates that, despite its ongoing practice, Marxist philosophy does not dominate the philosophical landscape in Croatia today as it did in the period 1947–1991.

Many former Marxist philosophers, perhaps unscrupulously, have transitioned to contemporary democratic political philosophy and postmodern topics. This shift is particularly evident in the bibliographies of some younger Marxist philosophers, showcasing a transition from Marxist topics prior to 1991 to a broader array of non-Marxist topics afterward. In the youngest generation of philosophers publishing on Marxist philosophy, only a subset predominantly engages with Marxist topics while

others demonstrate continuity in various other fields, such as democratic political philosophy, ethics and feminism (see Table 1, bottom section).

Regarding the youngest cohort of Marxist philosophers, as indicated in Table 1, only a few possess a substantial number of published works focused on Marxist philosophy. However, these works are among the most cited within this context (see Table 2, which highlights two philosophers from Table 1, as the others have minimal output in Marxist philosophy). This observation suggests that the number of some third-generation Croatian Marxist philosophers actively engaging with Marxist philosophy amounts to no more than two individuals. While some older philosophers remain active, their contributions to Marxist philosophy in terms of citations and notable ideas have diminished significantly after 1991.

A comparative analysis of citations of works of Marxist philosophers from 1947 to 1991 versus 1991 to 2023 reveals a notable decrease in citations in the latter period. However, younger Marxist philosophers are publishing a portion of their works in international journals outside Croatia which wasn't a regular in the period from 1947 to 1991. Consequently, it can be inferred that, as of 2023 (when the present research was carried out), Marxist philosophy in Croatia represents an extremely marginal segment of the broader philosophical landscape. Although the philosophers of the third generations are not the most cited within Croatian philosophy, they approach the average citation rates of their colleagues doing philosophy in other philosophical schools (here it should be taken into account that the estimated number of citations per philosopher in Croatia is somewhere around 40, while the number of active philosophers varies from 150 to 205, see Jolić, Grgić 2022).

Some younger at least partially Marxist philosophers active after 2000		
Philosopher	Luka Bogdanić	Ankica Čakardić
Dominant approach	Marxism	Marxism/Feminism
Share of works in Marxist philosophy in the relation to their overall works	13/44 (29%)	8/40 (18%)
Google Sch. total	48	74
Google Sch. Marxist works	43 (89%)	25 (33%)

Table 2: Some facts about two representatives of the youngest generation of Marxist philosophers in Croatia (citations are given from the Google Scholar, 22/02/2023)

(3) Lastly, despite the fact that Croatian Marxist philosophy (1947–1991) had some degree of international recognition—most notably through the *Praxis School* and *Korčula Summer School* (see Wikipedia; Marković and Petrović 1979)—the authors of this text contend that it did not generate what could be classified as notable ideas, such as “humanistic Marxism” or “Marxist humanism” (see Feenberg 2014, Berman 2001) (the originality of the concept of “humanistic Marxism” is attributed to other Marxist philosophers, not to Croatian, e.g. Lukács). This notable idea emerged during the decade when the Praxis School was at its peak (1964–1974) and has not maintained relevance, with its international recognition remaining low even within global Marxist philosophy.

The concept of “humanistic Marxism” (sometimes referred to as “creative” or “critical Marxism”, see Veljak 2002) appears to have historical significance in Croatia primarily in the period between 1965–1975 within Yugoslavia and Croatia. However, it currently plays a minimal role in contemporary philosophical discourse, as evidenced by its frequency of citation which is three times lower than that of the term “Marxism” and similar terms. It is important to note that this assessment is speculative, grounded in limited nevertheless carefully selected data, as there is an inherent challenge in quantitatively evaluating notable ideas such as this.

With regard to citation metrics, in the period from 1947 to 1991 exhibited relatively low citation rates, as indicated by the total number of citations of philosophers presented in Table 1 is relatively small (especially if one takes into account the fact that not all of their publications can be treated as Marxist).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that none of the Marxist philosophers are among the most cited Croatian philosophers today (2023), or at least not in the top 20, and the overall number of citations of their works has decreased across generations (as illustrated in Table 1). For instance, the book *Praxis* by Marković and Petrović (1979) has accumulated only 47 citations (Google Scholar, 18/02/2023). While the youngest generation of philosophers shows an improvement in individual citations compared to other Croatian philosophers, this does not extend to the growth number of works or of notable ideas.

In summary, points (1) to (3) indicate that, although there has been a clear continuity of Marxist philosophy in Croatia before 1945, particularly during the period of dominance from 1947 to 1991, and to a lesser

extent from 1991 to 2023, this continuity did not yield notable ideas within 20th-century Croatian philosophy, nor did it produce internationally recognized and highly cited works. This observation is especially pertinent when considering that during the 1947–1991 period, Marxism served as the official philosophy of the totalitarian Communist regime in Croatia. Moreover, various other philosophical schools and non-Marxist Croatian philosophers active during the same period, particularly in years closer to 1991, attained significantly higher citation rates and achieved international recognition. This includes scholars engaged in Continental, Christian, and Analytic philosophy, who made substantial contributions that resonated beyond the local context.

Therefore, based on the data presented and the subsequent analysis, it can be concluded that while Marxist philosophy maintained a degree of continuity, it has not established a significant impact within the broader philosophical discourse in Croatia or internationally.

(4) To repeat (see previously (1) and (2)), there has been a continuity and (relative) dominance of Marxist philosophy in Croatia at the academic level from at least 1947 to 1991, and some even prior to 1947 when considering the academic critiques of Marxism by non-Marxist Croatian philosophers, as well as the so-called *Conflict on the Left* beginning in 1936 (see Jurković 2015). This continuity extends to the present day. However, it is important to note that continuity and dominance does not necessarily equate to significance or importance.

(5) In contemporary independent Croatia, Marxist philosophy is marginal in terms of the number of philosophers actively publishing a significant portion of their works on Marxist topics. This is evident among both the youngest generation of philosophers and the older cohorts, as indicated in Tables 1 and 2.

(6) The existence and influence of any internationally recognized notable ideas from Croatian Marxist philosophers remain to be thoroughly investigated. A review of foreign sources authored by non-Croatian and potentially non-Marxist philosophers suggests that Croatian Marxist philosophy has been unimportant. For instance, global rankings of prominent Marxist philosophers rarely include Croatian figures (see Wikipedia entries: “List of contributors to Marxist theory” and “Croatian Marxists,” which mention individuals such as Josip Broz Tito, Rudi Supek, Stipe Šušar, and Franjo Tuđman). Additionally, analyses of the number of interna-

tionally relevant publications, citation counts per philosopher, total and average citations of Marxist philosophers taken as a group, and the presence of authorship of notable ideas indicate that, while Croatian Marxist philosophers were dominant during the period from 1947 to 1991, they were also largely unimportant according to these criteria standardly used for assessing the significance of a philosophical school.

Conclusion

Based on the preceding points (1–6), we can draw several conclusions from this preliminary and partial analysis. If the sample and criteria used here are indeed representative, it may be worthwhile to conduct further research on a larger sample with additional criteria (such as qualification of books by published reviews). Such research could support our research hypotheses that Croatian Marxist philosophy has persisted before, during, and after the communist regime in Croatia (specifically, from 1945/47 to 1991). However, it can be argued that Croatian Marxist philosophy from 1947 to 1991 lacks both internal quality and external ideological impact. This assertion is evident in the work of Marković and Petrović (1979), which have faced substantial criticism, particularly from Sesardić (1985, 2022). Moreover, as noted by Feenberg (2014), “this philosophy failed to yield practical ideological results within the context of a defunct communist political framework”.

Furthermore, Croatian Marxist philosophers have not been highly cited in international contexts and have not produced notable ideas recognized outside their own circles. In contrast, several of their Croatian critics have gained considerably more international recognition, primarily by working abroad and publishing in international journals and with esteemed publishers.

Consequently, it may be concluded that Croatian Marxist philosophers were largely unimportant on the global stage and perceived as significant only within their own spheres and in the eyes of the Yugoslav Communist regime, at least for some time. The research hypotheses warrant rigorous investigation, potentially in line with the concept of “merciless criticism of everything existing” (G. Petrović quoted recently in Sunajko, Jurić, Selak Raspudić 2022:13). Although such more extensive examination is beyond the scope of this paper, we believe that our preliminary findings demonstrate that the research hypotheses merit further exploration.

If the significance of a philosopher's core business encompasses, among other things, philosophical research and the publication of works preferably in internationally high-quality journals and with reputable publishers which contribute notable ideas and make an impact on a scholarly community by being considerably cited, then it can be argued that Croatian Marxist philosophers have not excelled in performing their core business. Overall, they have not achieved substantial importance, particularly on an international scale. Despite their continuity, legacy, and dominance within Croatian philosophy, the actual significance of their contributions is questionable to say the least.

The mere presence of Croatian Marxist philosophy in the 20th century, especially during the period from 1947 to 1991, does not automatically confer importance upon it. While it is true that the history of Croatian philosophy during this time cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the existence of Marxist thought, this alone does not elevate its status above that of other philosophical traditions of the era, such as Continental, Christian, or Analytic philosophy. Moreover, similar logic applies to these other schools. The dominance of Continental and Christian philosophical movements from 1918 to 1945 does not, by itself, render them important; rather, importance must be assessed through the impact and quality of the ideas generated within those traditions.

The fact that Croatian Marxist philosophy existed as the dominant philosophical framework during the 1947–1991 period—and served as the official philosophy of the totalitarian communist regime—with access to substantial material, financial, political, and academic resources, does not in itself establish its importance. The relatively small total number of published works, coupled with low citation rates and the absence of notable ideas recognized as such by the International philosophical community, indicates that this philosophical tradition is not important despite its dominance and continuity. Thus, the story is more one of failure than of success.

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