

# A Portrait of Ivo Pilar

---

Srećko LIPOVČAN

The Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar,  
Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

UDK 32-05 Pilar, I.  
929 Pilar, I.

(accepted on 15th March 2006)

*When I published a brief Biography and two bibliographies on Ivo Pilar on the basis of literature which had appeared before mid-2000,<sup>1</sup> I never imagined that they would have to be updated so soon. Yet during the intervening five year period, more works on the "Pilar theme" have been published than in the whole duration preceding the year 2000: over 30 scholarly and expert studies of Pilar's life and his opus, but also a good number of his previously unpublished/unknown writings have come to light. As a result, this Portrait, even though it maintains the formal structure of the above-mentioned Biography, is in fact a new text, integrating the most important new discoveries and information with bibliographic references.<sup>2</sup>*

Ivo Pilar was born on 19 June 1874 in Zagreb, where he also died on 3 September 1933 in unclear circumstances (Suicide? Politically motivated murder?).<sup>3</sup> • **FAMILY.** Czech by ancestry, his father's family originated from Brod on the Sava: Ivo was the son of *Gjuro Pilar*, a professor at the University of Zagreb, who was a geologist and palaeontologist with a European-wide reputation, and the nephew of the architect *Martin Pilar*. His mother *Klementina* was the daughter of an entrepreneur, prominent cultural figure, and deputy mayor of Zagreb, *Gjuro Crnadak*. • **EDUCATION.** He attended primary school and classical gymnasium in Zagreb, following which he completed a one year course at the *College for World Commerce* (Hochschule für Welthandel), but went on to study law, specializing in national economy (Volkswirtschaft) and sociology in Vienna. He rounded out his legal education in Paris at the *École de droit*. He then obtained a doctorate in law in Vienna in 1899. • **WORK IN HIS FIELD.** After completing his studies, he worked briefly as the secretary to the director of a Viennese joint-stock iron industry corporation, but in 1900 he left for Sarajevo, where he worked first in banking (as secretary to the director of the provincial economic land bank), and then from 1901 in the judicature: he was an official of the judiciary and a legal clerk. He led a private legal practice from 1905 to 1920 in Tuzla, and then, until his death, in Zagreb. In his Tuzla period, he rep-

---

<sup>1</sup> Lipovčan: *PRILOZI<sup>1</sup> 2001; PRILOZF 2001; PRILOZF 2001*.

<sup>2</sup> For the same reason, two bibliographies appear at the end of this collection: *Bibliography of the Publications of Ivo Pilar* (selection) and *Literature on Ivo Pilar* (selection).

<sup>3</sup> See in this issue: LITERATURE ON IVO PILAR: *HOLJEVAC, 2001*.

resented the *First Croatian Savings Bank* and its affiliates in Bosnia and Hercegovina (*Croatian Central Bank for Bosnia and Hercegovina* and the Croatian Associated Bank, Inc., in Sarajevo).<sup>4</sup> • **YOUTHFUL INTEREST IN LITERATURE AND ART.** Like many of his generation, his first appearance in print was in the form of published verse (which did not stand the test of time).<sup>5</sup> He expressed an interest in the problems of artistic creation not only in an aesthetic sense, but also as a cultural and social issue, especially in his studies "Secession" (1898) and "The Zagreb literary movement" (1903).<sup>6</sup> With the publication of "Secession", he quickly earned "legitimacy as a theoretician of modernization".<sup>7</sup> His youthful works already displayed his skilful and excellent style. • **POLITICAL PUBLICIST.** Motivated politically and in terms of political science, and as an engaged journalist, he often published under pseudonyms (D. Juričić, L. von Südland, Florian Lichtträger). These works constitute the majority of his journalistic opus, which is easily seen from an overview of his works.<sup>8</sup> For a time during 1917, he was also the editor of the most important organ of the Bosnian and Hercegovinian Croats, the *Croatian daily* (Sarajevo). • **POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT.** He was actively involved in political life by his cooperation in and preparation of the establishment of the religious-cultural organization, the *Hrvatska narodna zajednica* (Croat People's Association - HNZ), the most influential political organization of the Bosnian and Hercegovinian Croats prior to 1918. In August 1906, he became a member of the preparatory "Committee of Six", in February 1908, of the "Central Committee", as well as the president of the "District Committee" of the HNZ for Donja Tuzla. The most active period of his political career ends with the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy, in 1918, and it is tied to the activity of the Archbishop of Sarajevo, *Josip Stadler*. In the early years, the two split on the programmatic orientation of Croatian political organization in Bosnia and Hercegovina: the HNZ and Pilar stood behind an inter-confessional model, Stadler insisted that membership be restricted to Catholics.<sup>9</sup> In the echo of this conflict, Pilar, using a pseudonym, penned his first important political text, a polemical brochure called "Archbishop Stadler and the Croatian National Association" (Sarajevo, 1910). After the representatives of the Muslims and Serbs jointly opposed the tying of Bosnia and Hercegovina with Croatia in the Bosnian Parliament at the beginning of 1912, Pilar and Stadler moved closer together and cooperated until 1918, creating "a strong influence on the process of the political formation of the Bosnian and Hercegovinian Croats at the beginning of the 20th century".<sup>10</sup> New research has shown that Pilar was the author or co-author of important political documents which were, until recently, ascribed to J. Stadler,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> KOLAR, 2001, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> PAVEŠKOVIĆ, 2001<sup>1</sup>, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Of this aspect of Pilar's creativity, nothing was published until 2000, when a few foundational studies appeared. I direct the reader to - besides those just mentioned - especially the following: PAVEŠKOVIĆ, 2001<sup>2</sup>, MATKOVIĆ, 2002, KOLAR, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> ROGIĆ, 2001., p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> See: *Bibliography of the Publications of Ivo Pilar* (selection), in this issue.

<sup>9</sup> KRIŠTO, 2001, pp. 86-93.

<sup>10</sup> GRIJAK, 2001, pp. 96, 97-98.

**Krištni list**  
Tuchmanium Hercegovina

*Ivo Pilar*  
Baptized on *18. 10. 1902* at *10. 10. 1902*

Ime:	<i>Ivo</i>
Prezime:	<i>Pilar</i>
Rođeno:	<i>18. 10. 1902</i>
Rođeno u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>
Rođena majka:	<i>Blanka Pilar</i>
Rođena majka u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>
Rođena majka rođena:	<i>Blanka Pilar</i>
Rođena majka rođena u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena:	<i>Blanka Pilar</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena rođena:	<i>Blanka Pilar</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena rođena u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena rođena rođena:	<i>Blanka Pilar</i>
Rođena majka rođena rođena rođena rođena u:	<i>Hercegovina</i>

*Ivo Pilar*  
*Blanka Pilar*  
*Blanka Pilar*

*18. 10. 1902* at *10. 10. 1902*

*Ivo Pilar*  
*Blanka Pilar*

Ivo Pilar's certificate of baptism

and Pilar was in contact with the highest officials in the Monarchy. In conjunction with Croatian political tradition (and the program of the united Croatian opposition from 1894), Pilar considered Bosnia and Hercegovina Croatian lands by state right. Mindfully and convincingly pointing out all of the negative aspects of the constitutional system created by the Croato-Hungarian compromise, he sought out the forms and solutions which he considered most applicable for the existential needs of the Croat people within the Habsburg Monarchy. His best and most well-known work on this issue was the book "Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg" (Vienna, 1918). The political elites of the Monarchy were deaf to these and did not have the understanding to recognize either the insights which stemmed from the results of Pilar's research or, on the basis of these, to solve the Croatian problems in the wider context of the very relevant South Slav Question, on which the Monarchy would founder. In the newly created, first Yugoslav state community, from its earliest days weighted down by unsettled national and social issues (a harsh Great Serbian cen-

<sup>11</sup> See: GRIJAK, *ibid.*, 101ff; MATIJEVIĆ, 2001<sup>1</sup>; MATIJEVIĆ, 2001<sup>2</sup>; GRIJAK, 2002; see also: *Apel nadbiskupa Stadlera papi Benediktu XV*, in: *GP 2/2002.*, pp. 172-175; Ivo Pilar: *Promemoria über die Lösung der südslawischen Frage*, in this issue.



Ivo Pilar

tralization and subjugation of non-Serbian entities which left especially the Croatian question unsolved), Pilar became a *persona non grata* due to his political convictions: in 1920, he was forced to leave the life he had built in Tuzla and, to avoid arrest, remove himself to Zagreb. Here, he was also persecuted politically and by the police, and put before the courts.<sup>12</sup> He remained politically inactive until his death, but research into his papers thus far (only possible after 1990), has revealed that in the last decade of his life, and particularly after the shooting of Radić in the Belgrade Assembly in June of 1928, he was in contact with the most prominent Croatian politicians, and close to the Croatian Peasant Party.<sup>13</sup> So too then, violent death ended his, albeit hidden from the public eye, political activity; however, of great interest for Croatian science and scholarship, it brought to an end his research and theoretical work. • **WIDER EXPERT AND SCHOLARLY INTEREST. 1. Theoretician of Modernization.** It was mentioned above that Pilar obtained “legitimacy as a theoretician of modernization” with “Secession”; in it, he had seemingly limited himself

<sup>12</sup> JANJATOVIĆ, 2002; see: “I. Pilar, *Tri dokumenta u vezi sa suđenjem g. 1921*”, in: *GP* 2/2002, pp. 203-209; “I. Pilar: *Historijat moje veleizdajničke partije u g. 1921.-22.*”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 211-215.

<sup>13</sup> JANČIKOVIĆ, 2001<sup>1</sup>, JANČIKOVIĆ, 2001<sup>2</sup>

to *cultural* modernization, but really it was a “call for the modernization of Croatian society as a whole”. He had two principal ideas within this framework: democratization and European Croatia.<sup>14</sup> **2. Legal expert.** He was quite respected as a legal practitioner: his sense of and dedication to the promotion of the *modernization process* he proved early on with his extensive work on the application of the *General Austrian Civil Code* to the conditions of Bosnia and Hercegovina, where until that time *shariah*, common throughout the Ottoman Empire, had been in use. Pilar’s notion of the *process of modernization* (from a theoretical, methodological, and pragmatic point of view) was clearly shown by the breadth of his scholarly interests: he was interested in the problems common to a variety of related disciplines in the *social sciences*, so much so that in terms of some of them he published, for Croatian circumstances, *pioneering works*. **3. Sociology, psychology.** Works of *sociology* and his activity as the founder and president of the *Sociological Society* of Zagreb still needs to be researched, and the very first study of Pilar’s psychological writing concluded that it was the effort of a rather important and competent author.<sup>15</sup> **4.** About two decades after *political geography/geopolitics* was established as a scientific discipline in the leading European countries (Ratzel, 1897; Kjellén, 1899, Mackinder, 1904), and in the period when it received practical application (Mackinder 1919, Bowmann, 1921), but when a conceptual and effective difference between political geography and geopolitics had not yet been established, Pilar was the first Croatian author to write about this: *The Political Geography of the Croatian Lands. Geopolitical Studies* (Sarajevo, 1918) was «the first treatise which deals with Croatian subject matter within the scope of a political geography». As a result, Pilar occupies a pioneering position in the development of Croatian political geography: “he opened new themes and introduced previously unknown concepts into Croatian geography”.<sup>16</sup> **5.** Pilar came into contact with *banking* immediately after the conclusion of his University studies. It was mentioned above that he was the lawyer for a banking concern, but his most important contribution in this field came at the end of his life. It is widely believed that there “is no better analysis or comprehensive review of the crisis in banking which broke out in 1931 and 1932 than Pilar’s texts” published in Zagreb in *Obzor*; he published an excellent summary of the problem in his 1932 book, *Immer wieder Serbien*, printed in German in Berlin.<sup>17</sup>

As is evident from the discussion above, not even the accessible (published) multi-disciplinary works of research by Pilar (political geography, geopolitics, sociology, anthropology, psychology) have yet been sufficiently examined or subjected to scholarly-critical analysis and tested for their validity (which is even more true of his unpublished writings). A thorough, necessarily interdisciplinary effort of critical evaluation of *all* aspects of his work has only now begun, which implies the need to prepare a *critical edition of at least the most relevant segments of his opus*.

<sup>14</sup> ROGIĆ, *ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>15</sup> ŠAKIĆ, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> KLEMENČIĆ-POKOS, 2001, pp. 41-43, 47.

<sup>17</sup> KOLAR, 2001, p. 74.

### Summary

Dr. Ivo Pilar (Zagreb, 1874 - 1933), educated as a lawyer and an economist (studied in Vienna and Paris). From the 20th century to 1920 he lived and worked in Bosnia and Hercegovina (Sarajevo; Tuzla), and afterward in Zagreb until his death. He actively participated in political life also: until the autumn of 1918, he supported the preservation of the multinational and multicultural Habsburg Monarchy, but on the condition that it be *reformed* in a constitutional and national political sense, a matter about which he wrote a number of important documents. In the newly created Yugoslav state (The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes — The Kingdom of Yugoslavia), he was politically persecuted. A scholar and publicist of broad interests (art, history, sociology, psychology, demography, political geography etc.). His most important works: the study *Secesija* (*The Secession*, Zagreb 1898., by which he attains “legitimacy” as a “theoretician of modernization”), a professional work concerning the reception of the Austrian General Civil Law Code in Bosnia and Hercegovina (*Entwicklungsgang der Rezeption des Österreichischen ABG in Bosnien und Herzegowina...*, Wien, 1911), the broad study *Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg* (*The South Slav Question and the World War*, Vienna, 1918., under the pseudonym L. v. Südland), a pioneering work in Croatian psychology (*Borba za vrijednost svoga »ja«*. *Pokus filozofije slavenskog individualizma / The Struggle for the Value of the Ego — an experiment in the philosophy of Slavic individualism*, Zagreb 1922), a political-economic study, *Immer wieder Serbien. Jugoslawiens Schicksalsstunde* (*Serbia Yet Again. Yugoslavia's Fateful Hour*, Berlin, 1933, under the pseudonym Florian Lichtträger).