

Ivo Pilar and Robert William Seton-Watson: two Political Viewpoints on the Southern Slav Question

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In this article, the author compares the viewpoints of Ivo Pilar and R. W. Seton-Watson, two brilliant publicists, on the South Slav Question as the key problem in southeast Europe in the period up to 1918. He shows how before the First World War both sought a solution to this complex problem, particularly the aspect of Croat-Serb relations, exclusively within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. The difference between them lay in the fact that Pilar sought to affirm Croatian statehood, while Seton-Watson to create a new Yugoslav statehood. During the war, Seton-Watson held the view that it was necessary to establish an independent Yugoslav state outside the Monarchy in order to solve the Yugoslav question, but Pilar cemented his standpoint that the Monarchy was the only possible solution for Croatian interests.

I

On the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, despite the quickened pace of social modernization and the gradual improvement of the economy, the national question in the Habsburg Monarchy was sharpened. Crisis in the dualistic system quickened the tempo of change among the various nationalities of the Monarchy who felt stunted in their development. The Austro-Hungarian administration had difficulty in meeting the demands for national equality and democratization. Its paranoia stemmed from the fact that any disturbance in the constitutional balance between Germans and Hungarians, the two most numerous peoples of the Monarchy. According to the Monarchy's elite, if that were to occur, the cohesion of the whole Empire would be imperiled. Since the wielders of power were then not ready to accept any changes that would reflect the diversity of the community, political instability was endemic.

One of the greatest hotbeds of dispute was the South Slav Question. This issue was geographically tied to two larger areas. The first included the so called southern regions of Austria-Hungary: Banat Croatia, Dalmatia, Istria, Gorica, Carniola, the

greater part of Carinthia and Styria as well as Bosnia and Hercegovina, and due to ethnographic reasons, southern Hungary (Vojvodina) can be included in this fluid space; in propaganda materials, Trieste was often included as a South Slavic city. In these regions the majority of inhabitants were, according to linguistic divisions already standard at that time, collectively referred to as South Slavs. These were Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs. Along with them it is necessary to mention the Muslim community of Bosnia and Hercegovina, which at that time had not yet construed a modern national identity of its own. Muslims were distinguished by their religious characteristics, but they were considered to be a part of the South Slav group in ethnographic terms. Besides this, South Slavs lived outside of Austria-Hungary, in the neighbouring states which had received their independence at the Berlin Congress. The Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro grew in importance after the two Balkan wars (1912-1913) with the acquisition of parts of the Ottoman Empire in Kosovo and Macedonia, where there was in turn a large population of non-Slavs. Some also included the Bulgars among the South Slavs. Indeed, the cruel Balkan wars had demonstrated the fragility of the notion of South Slav solidarity at least as far as the Bulgars and Serbs were concerned. Hence, the concept South Slav covered many states, which showed itself to be a delicate problem and the source of various demands for the revision of the constitutional system.

The notion of a shared language was imposed as the main, fundamental tie binding the South Slavs. Namely, language became an indicator of politics and, despite several conflicts, one of the constituent elements of the imagined South Slavic community. Other elements could not contribute as effectively to the integration of the Yugoslav national idea. Historical state right tradition, religion and culture sharply differentiated the individual peoples comprehended under the South Slav Question. All this showed that the nationalistic movement aiming at the creation of a unified Yugoslav nation was built on very weak foundations. The thesis of a common language was supposed to become the basis for a shared national consciousness and the primary lever in raising up a unified state.

The importance of language is clear in the works of the two authors studied in this article. Seton-Watson's influential analysis of the South Slav Question, which he focused on the Croat-Serb relationship, began with the observation that these two peoples already speak the same language: "Linguistic unity has already been achieved; for the Croat language is Serb written with Latin, the Serb language, Croat written with Cyrillic characters."¹ Elsewhere he writes: "In theory this has already been attained, and to-day every savant whose researches and opinions carry the slightest weight are unanimous in regarding 'the Serbo-Croat language', as they prefer to call it, as a literary unit. Indeed, in the field of literature Croat and Serb are but two names for one and the same language, whose divergence of dialect are mainly the result of geography, not of racial or religious distribution".² Going for-

¹ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*, Constable & Co. Ltd, London 1911, p. 2. In the German translation: "Sprachliche Einigung ist bereits erzielt worden; denn die kroatische Sprache ist serbisch in Lateinschrift, die serbische ist kroatisch in cyrillischer Schrift." (*Die süd-slawische Frage im Habsburger Reiche*, Meyer & Jessen, Berlin 1913, p. 3.)

ward with the theory of one language, it is not surprising that the next step would lead to the conclusion that the Croats and Serbs were one people. However, Seton-Watson did not sufficiently take into account the linguistic disputes, which just then were showing that the model of a common language was not coming into being, but he simply accepted the Yugoslav linguistic ideology formulated back during the period of romanticism. We can conclude that he accepted the Herderian concept whereby language is expression of the spirit of a unique people.³

With regard to the question of language, Pilar agreed that Serbs and Croats have one literary language, but he used the method of analyzing the historical development of the literary movements of both peoples — which included research into various ethnic and political influences in forming contemporary linguistic standards — in order to show that this was not one single people under examination. Prophetically, he wrote: “Both languages are, among other things, mutually diverging and it depends solely on political developments in the south, whether they will again become completely differentiated, yet the beginnings of this divergence can already be clearly discerned.”⁴ Pilar’s main tendency was to refute the linguistic argument as the main tenet of national identification.

On the eve of the First World War, the South Slav Question became one of the key obstacles to the stability of not only southeast, but also Central Europe. Within Austria-Hungary, the peoples of the South Slav regions persistently demanded the reform of the internal order, that is to say a revision of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise or the creation of an entirely new model of constitutional organization. However, there was no unified view in the search for a formula, which would satisfy varied interests. Some Croatian politicians felt that first the territory of Banat Croatia should be joined with Dalmatia, and then the new state entity should be joined to the Slovenian lands and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of Croatian and Slovene politicians sought a solution within the Habsburg Monarchy almost to the very end of the war. This was to be expected considering the centuries-long tradition of life under Habsburg rule, based on legitimate succession and not military conquest. On the other hand, the process of joining these territories was viewed through the lens of Croatian state right. The degree to which this right was emphasized as the foundation of Croatian constitutional awareness depended on the status of political relations. On the basis of the findings of Croatian legal experts,

² R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The Southern Slav Question*, p. 129. In German translation: “Tatsächlich sind auch auf dem Gebiete der Literatur kroatisch und serbisch nur zwei Namen für dieselbe Sprache, deren Dialektunterschiede hauptsächlich mit der geographischen Lage, nicht aber mit Rassen- oder Religionsverteilung zusammenhängen.” (R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Die südslawische Frage*, p. 149.)

³ On the linguistic concept in politics see: Robin OKEY, *The Habsburg Monarchy c. 1765-1918*, European Studies Series, Macmillan Press Ltd 2001, London, p. 284. On this concept in Croatian historiography see the works of Ivo BANAC, *Hrvatsko jezično pitanje*, Zagreb 1991., Nikša STANČIĆ, *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću*, Barbat, Zagreb 2002., and Petar KORUNIĆ, “Fenomen nacije: porijeklo, integracija i razvoj”, *Historijski zbornik*, vol. 53, Zagreb 2000., pp. 49-80.

⁴ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje. Prikaz cjelokupnog pitanja*, published by Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb 1943.², p. 324 (originally published as: *Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg. Übersichtliche Darstellung des Gesamt-Problems*, Vienna 1918).

Croatian politicians developed the idea that Croatia never *de jure* ceased to be a state despite its entry into a complex type of statehood with Hungary and the loss of an independent character of statehood. Appealing to Croatian state right meant the development of a consciousness of a distinct political territory and nation which did not wish to be melded into unified state with some other nation. It is important to point out that the concept of so-called national oneness had a place in Croatian political tradition, which started from the assumption that in the condition of pressure being exerted by more numerous neighbouring peoples, the Croats and Serbs of the Monarchy must necessarily coordinate their political directions whether in terms of adopting the principle of two individual peoples or a phrase referring to one people with two separately named branches. At the beginning of the 20th century a new generation of politicians appeared who insisted that it was necessary to cast away the old political programs, so as to overcome the differences and antagonisms between Croats and Serbs. Their view was that Croats and Serbs were ethnically one people and that were this consciousness of their oneness to triumph, this would be a good reply to the South Slav Question. The attitude among Serb politicians in Croatia and the Monarchy was otherwise; a twofold politics conformed to their position. On the one hand they sought a compromise solution to achieve their interests within the existing multi-national community, but on the other side they simultaneously looked to Belgrade and its dynasty and government — especially the Karadorđevićs after their bloody “May Revolution” (1903) — hoping to establish a unified state where all Serbs would live under the rule of a “consanguineous” dynasty. This second option was not too open to support for any solutions within the context of the Habsburg Monarchy, because it saw the Monarchy as one of the greatest barriers to the creation of a unified all-Serb state, or as Pilar would phrase it “new-era nationalistic all-Serbianism.” However, what was even more unacceptable for the Croatian side, all the Serbian options were opposed to the idea of Croatian independence, whether as a fully independent state or as an autonomous unit within the framework of the Monarchy, because this was a thorn in the side of Serbian nationalism.

II

Ivo Pilar's voluminous *Die südslavische Frage und der Weltkrieg* (Vienna 1918) represents the most serious monograph on the South Slav Question from the ranks of the Croatian intelligentsia. A mere look at his biography shows that indeed he was an ideal candidate to take on such a large study of one of the key issues in European diplomacy and politics.⁵ This son of a Croatian academician and university professor of geology had excellent prerequisites for a successful career. He completed a one year course in commerce at the *Hochschule für Welthandel* and studied law in Vienna, but he also was briefly at the *École de Droit* in Paris. Coming home did not mean a return to his native region. Bosnia and Hercegovina (occupied in 1878)

⁵ Mladen ŠVAB, “Spomen na Ivu Pilara”, *Matica. Časopis Hrvatske matice iseljenika*, nor. 5, Zagreb, 1993., pp. 20-21. i Srećko LIPOVČAN, “Životopis Ive Pilara”, *Godišnjak Pilar. Prinosi za proučavanje života i djela dra. Ive Pilara*, vol. 1, Zagreb 2001., pp. 269-272.



Robert William
Seton-Watson

enticed many educated people — teachers, professors, doctors, engineers, officers, clergymen — from the whole Monarchy, especially from those regions inhabited by Slavs. Among them was Pilar, who made his living for a long while the secretary of a bank in Sarajevo and as a lawyer in Tuzla. However, at the same time he became one of the pioneering researchers in the field of sociology, anthropology, geopolitics and social psychology, which enabled him a many-faceted approach to various subjects of intense public interest in the public life of the period. During the first decade of the 20th century he became actively involved in the political life of Bosnia and Hercegovina (B-H). As a co-founder of the *Croat People's Association* (est. 1906) he tried to promote a new political program with a group of Bosnian Croats of the younger generation, which was based on a solution to the national problem directed at respect for the multi-confessional society of B-H. Relative to the standards of the political scene at the time, this group was liberally-oriented and sought a common ground with the Muslim politicians. Pilar was among those Croatian politicians who was convinced that cooperation with the Muslims might be useful to the development of the Croatian state idea within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy, and generally, for the development of Croats in B-H. For this reason he criticized the efforts of the Archbishop of Sarajevo, Josip Stadler, who wanted to

make Catholicism the key ingredient of the Croatian national movement in B-H, which created tension between Bosnian Croats and Muslims.⁶

The other direction in which his thinking went had to do with the assumption that the Croats, as the most open proponents of the annexation of B-H (1908), would succeed in drawing the attention of the highest levels of the state in Vienna in a particular way and thereby reaffirm their standing. Nevertheless, Pilar did not distinguish himself too often in public in the political sphere right up until the First World War. His serious engagement in the search for a new political direction for the Croats begins after its outbreak. During the war he unsuccessfully attempted to create the preconditions for the formation of new Croatian political parties.⁷ The highpoint of his success came with the submission of a memorandum to Emperor and King Charles I (IV) (August 18, 1917). The Memorandum sought the union of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia with Bosnia and Hercegovina into one administrative body, which would be closely tied to Austria and Hungary. His guiding idea during this period was in the promotion of a program wherein he interpreted that a process of dissolution of the community of peoples under the Habsburg dynasty was harm Croatian interests, whereas the creation of a new state community with Serbia on the ruins of the Dual Monarchy would inevitably mean taking a new direction into an entirely uncertain future. Pilar's main arguments in the debate were based on stressing specific historical inheritances as well as international and geopolitical relations. His emphasis of religious and ethnic differences in the past and present within the South Slav Question were not meant to prepare the ground for a conflict with the Serbs, but in the legitimate effort to solve the problem in the interest of the Croats within the framework of the Monarchy.

Pilar's monograph, *Die südslavische Frage und der Weltkrieg*, was completed in March 1917, but was published a year later.⁸ Its main purpose was to inform the European public about what had happened in history of the peoples who were the subjects of the South Slav Question, first and foremost the Croats and Serbs, and what their contemporary aspirations were. The author perceived an unfavourable attitude toward Croatian interests in international opinion. On the one hand he interpreted this climate of opinion as due to the influence of Austria-Hungary's wartime enemies, on the other as the result of the activity of inexplicable internal factors which included to his mind Croatian politicians and members of the intelligentsia who saw a solution in the destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy. He held the majority of the domestic political elite responsible for the disorientation in Croatian politics. He had the proponents of Croat-Serb oneness especially in mind, whose

⁶ Zoran GRIJAK, *Politička djelatnost vrhbosanskog nadbiskupa Josipa Stadlera*, Hrvatski institut za povijest, Vrhbosanska nadbiskupija Sarajevo, Dom i svijet, Zagreb 2001., pp. 174-176. and Jure KRIŠTO, "Uloga Ive Pilara u hrvatskom organiziranju u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Godišnjak Pilar*, vol. 1, 2001., pp. 81-94.

⁷ Zlatko MATIJEVIĆ (ed.), "Tri dokumenta iz godina 1917. i 1918.", *Godišnjak Pilar*, vol. 2, 2002, pp. 188-189.

⁸ See S. LIPOVČAN, "Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg: ponovno o genezi djela i sudbini prvog izdanja", *Godišnjak Pilar*, vol. 2, 2002., p. 196.

politics did not improve the poor position of Croats, but instead had put them to work for the interests of others. At the same time he judged the imprudence of the leading political circles in Vienna and Budapest, who did not wish to recognize the needs of Croats and were not prepared to give them greater rights.

In the work mentioned, Pilar relied a great deal on the opus of the influential Robert William Seton-Watson (1879-1951), who after 1905 under the pseudonym Scotus Viator published many critical texts concerning intra-national relations in Austria-Hungary. Pilar's interest in this work is not at all out of place, since this Scottish publicist was an authentic source of political information about the Danubian Monarchy in British public opinion and he drew much attention by his researches into the South Slav Question. His results were issued in the wide-ranging book, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy* (London 1911). It was quickly translated into German and published with some supplementary material as — *Die südslawische Frage im Habsburger Reich* (Berlin 1913) — by which it became accessible to readers in the Monarchy.⁹ The reception for this ground-breaking study was rather positive in Croatian public opinion because it clearly showed the hegemonic attitude of ruling Hungarian politicians and the disinterestedness of the Viennese court towards the Croats. "A book as elegant as Renaissance thought" commented prince Lujo Vojnović about the work, having in mind particularly its scholarly value as it made known many new documents.¹⁰ The influential university professor of literature and political activist Gjuro Šurmin added "that cultured Irishman [sic] presented such a book about us to the European world, oh that one of our men could write better, more truthfully, or more objectively."¹¹

Finally, from a historiographic point of view, Seton-Watson's published and critically evaluated correspondence containing many facts about the period up to the collapse of the Habsburg Empire is equally important, allowing us to make a comparison between his approach to the South Slav Question and Pilar's conceptions.¹² This correspondence is of inestimable value because Seton-Watson, in the manner of a clever diplomat who wishes to obtain as much trustworthy facts as he can, wrote to the adherents of various political ideas. At the same time, from this collection of letters one can observe that Seton-Watson is not an ordinary propagandist, but is trying readily to base his views on solid arguments.

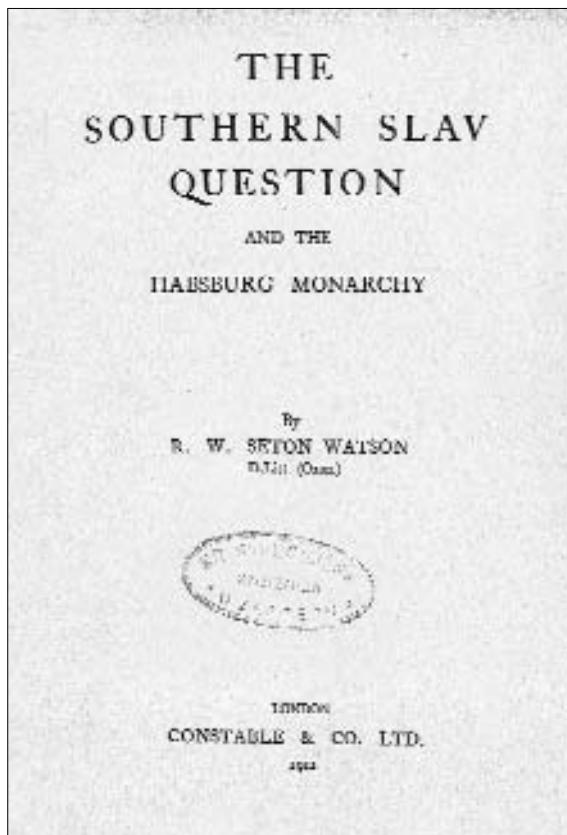
Eventhough he went to Croatia as well as Bosnia and Hercegovina a few times, where he met the leading figures in public life, we have no evidence that Seton-

⁹ With respect to Croatia, Seton-Watson published a shorter work entitled *Absolutismus in Kroatien* (Vienna-Leipzig 1909 and in english published in London, 1912), and in the book *Corruption and Reform in Hungary* (London 1911, and in German translation *Ungarische Wahlen. Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Korruption*, Leipzig 1912), where, arguing that Hungary had "the most illiberal franchise in Europe", he threw additional light on electoral manipulation in Croatia.

¹⁰ Dr. L. [Luj]o Vojnović, "Strossmayer i Gladstone (1876-1892)", *Savremeni*, Zagreb 1912., pp. 20-29.

¹¹ Gj. [Gjuro] Šurmin, "Strani svijet i Hrvatska", *Savremeni*, 1913., p. 445.

¹² R. W. Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni. *Korespondencija 1906-1941* [R. W. Seton-Watson and the Yugoslavs. Correspondence 1906-1941], vol. 1 1906-1918, University of Zagreb — Institute for Croatian History and the British Academy, Zagreb — London 1976.



Watson ever met Pilar. With the outbreak of the First World War, these two authors found themselves divided between two states which were at war with each other. In this atmosphere, Pilar wrote: “anyone who wants to learn something about the South Slav Question has to reach for Seton-Watson or Serbian writers.”¹³ Since these writer stemmed from the ranks of the enemies of the Habsburg Monarchy, it is not surprising that he labelled them «sources of untrustworthiness». On the other hand, he agreed with the stated thesis that the South Slav Question continued to be «a matter of life and death for Austria-Hungary». Thus he admitted that the South Slav Question was the central issue because it affected the internal as well as external relations of the state, and, it could come explicitly into view in the case of the military defeat of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The biography of Seton-Watson likewise demonstrates that he was one of the most competent individuals with regard to understanding the political developments

¹³ L. v. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, 1. In this book Pilar referred most often to three Serbian authors, Jovan Cvijić, Milan Spalajković and Vladan Đorđević, who he considered rather one-sided and tendentious authors when they wrote about Serbian interests in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Pilar tried to disprove the majority of their nationalistic theses, which had been well-received throughout Europe.



in southeast Europe. According to his biography, he came to Vienna “filled with a strong and deep sympathy for the Monarchy.”¹⁴ He believed that the Danubian Monarchy was vital for European peace, which was necessary to overcome the tension between Germany and Russia. In this sense, Austria-Hungary should have been Britain’s natural geopolitical ally.¹⁵ The well-known Croatian historian Ferdo Šišić attempted to explain the wider context of Seton-Watson’s interest in the Dual Monarchy. The spirit of the times prompted his decision to study Austria-Hungary, claimed Šišić, emphasizing that the feeling that Germany was seeking world domination was prominent in England at the time.¹⁶ King Edward VII imagined surrounding Germany with political opponents and encouraging internal factors toward its federalization, but he did not succeed in winning over Emperor and King Franz Josef to his way of thinking. Seton-Watson set out on this path convinced from the

¹⁴ *Correspondence*, p. 13.

¹⁵ Hugh SETON-WATSON, “Robert William Seton-Watson i jugoslavensko pitanje”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 2, Zagreb 1970., p. 75.

¹⁶ Ferdo ŠIŠIĆ, “Mr. Seton Watson”, *Obzor*, Zagreb, no. 122, 1920. This article was published in honour of Seton-Watson’s visit to Zagreb.

beginning that the Monarchy's salvation rest solely in extending equality to its component peoples and the loosening of its ties to Germany.

After observing the internal organization at work, Seton-Watson inclined toward the peoples that felt unequal in the dualistic system. He nourished a sympathy for the non-Magyar peoples — Slovaks and Rumanians — of Transleithania in particular, who were involved in an open struggle for the recognition of their fundamental national rights. As time passed he concentrated more on the southeast of the Monarchy, which he clearly the Monarchy's key problem. First he familiarized himself with Banal Croatia, which under the provisions of the Croato-Hungarian Compromise found itself in the eastern part of the Monarchy, in a specific arrangement with Hungary, but with the recognized right to partially exercise autonomous statehood.

We mentioned that Seton-Watson visited Croatian regions on many occasions. His visits fired salvos of enthusiasm. Even though the Croatian party-political scene was deeply divided with regards to ideological principles, all would noisily approve of Seton-Watson's coming. At the beginning of 1912, he visited Dalmatia. During his stay in Dubrovnik the local population unanimously expressed its respects. Three party newspapers, the liberal-Slavophile *Crvena Hrvatska*, the Christian-Socialist inspired *Prava Crvena Hrvatska*, and the Serbian-Catholic *Dubrovnik* commonly in joyous tones welcomed the foreign guest.¹⁷ For them he was an important figure who had presented "our question" to the European forum. He revealed the nature of Hungarian politics towards Banal Croatia, where on the eve of the introduction of the Commissariat the Croatian Sabor (Diet) was dissolved, but he also pointed out the importance of the South Slav Question to the Monarchy.

III.

The analysis carried out shows that up to the First World War Pilar and Seton-Watson shared some important views.¹⁸ Namely, until the war began Seton-Watson supported the preservation of the Habsburg Monarchy in a reformed configuration, which was also acceptable to Pilar, since he saw the resolution of the South Slav Question as a vital matter for the Monarchy. In other words, both advocated for the reform of the internal organization of the state on the basis of increased rights for the peoples of the Monarchy's southeast.

Pilar, in spite of criticizing individual political views, which must be considered within the context of the First World War, held that Seton-Watson had written an "excellent work", "wide-ranging" and "objective."¹⁹ The Croatian author countenanced the Scot's sympathy for the South Slavs because he himself was convinced

¹⁷ "Scotus Viator u Dubrovniku", *Crvena Hrvatska*, Dubrovnik, no. 16-17/1912.; "Dobro nam došao!", *Prava Crvena Hrvatska*, Dubrovnik, no. 365/1912 and "Scotus Viator u Dubrovniku", *Dubrovnik*, Dubrovnik, no. 8 i 9/1912. The report of the British Vice-Consul in Dubrovnik, who confirmed the eruption of enthusiasm in the local population, can be found in: H. SETON-WATSON, "R. W. Seton-Watson", p. 83.

¹⁸ To date, only Josip NAĐ has made such an analysis in the short article: "Seton Watson i Südland o jugoslovenskom pitanju", *Jugoslovenska obnova-njiva*, no. 15, Zagreb 1920., pp. 333-335.

¹⁹ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 302.

that the Monarchy's leadership was unjust in its persistent defense of the dualistic system. However, he could never agree with Seton-Watson's view concerning the necessity of Croat-Serb national integration within the Monarchy and his later turn toward support for the creation of a Yugoslav state on the ruins of the Habsburg Monarchy, because he thought the pursuit of Croat-Serb oneness was altogether unnatural, undesirable and contrary to historical arguments.

The acute crisis in dualism brought to the fore various groups which either created new or revived older more or less already known ideas to solve the contentious issues. Seton-Watson's view up to the First World War was closest to some form of trialistic-austrophile reorganization of the state by which the South Slav peoples of the Monarchy (excepting the Slovenes for political and strategic reasons) would be politically united and thus be able to more equally carry out their common affairs with Austria and Hungary. In this way they would no longer occupy the political margins, but with the attainment of a higher level of state rights they would be better integrated with the two more progressive peoples. Dualism would be replaced by trialism, but central to the South Slav Question would be the issue of arranging Croat-Serb relations. The concept of trialism had appeared before in certain political circles who wanted to stand clear of dynamic Magyar nationalism, but after the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina it attained a climax and often was brought up in deliberations right to the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy. The majority of contemporary historians believe that trialism was not a realistic political solution, because it exclusively served the interests of the Austrian political elite seeking to manipulate the Croats in order to frighten the Magyars, but they all pay a lot of attention to it, showing how topical and vital it was at the time.²⁰

Seton-Watson professed his support for trialism clearly in his book on the South Slav Question, as he did in his correspondence with Friedrich Funder, the editor of the Christian-Socialist daily *Reichspost* as well as with two Croats, Ivo Lupis-Vukić and Isidor Kršnjavi. In his conclusion to *The Southern Slav Question* he pointed out that the formation of a South Slav state as a third entity under Habsburg auspices would strengthen their influence in the Balkans and foment positive feelings for Austria in Serbia. The three-way interplay among Vienna, Budapest, and Zagreb that would result would bring about a new perspective. The annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina had indeed brought the aspiration of Croat-Serb oneness within the grasp of practical politics. Austria could no longer hope to spread its influence in the Balkans without being prepared to secure the benevolence of its eight million South Slav subjects, and Croats and Serbs in close alliance with Austria against Hungary would be able to dismantle dualism and prepare the way for a compromise between federalism and centralism. With a trialistic solution the danger of irre-

²⁰ In Croatian historiography Mirjana GROSS's interpretation is dominant. Only she has seriously researched the influence of the idea of trialism Croatian and Monarchical politics. Compare her articles "Hrvatska uoči aneksije Bosne i Hercegovine", *Istorija XX. veka*, Zbornik radova III., Beograd 1962., pp. 153-275 and "Hrvatska politika velikoaustrijjskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, no. 2, 1970., pp. 9-74 and her contribution in: Jaroslav ŠIDAK, Mirjana GROSS, Igor KARAMAN i Dragovan ŠEPIĆ, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860-1914.*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1968., pp. 227-228.

dentism would fall away because the South Slavs would begin to gravitate around Croats instead of Serbs, to Zagreb, not Belgrade. Hence the Croat metropolis would become the center of South Slav life. A wider Yugoslav patriotism would encompass the "tribal individualities" and would not be incompatible with loyally proud sense of Austrian Imperial citizenship. He wrote to I. Lupis-Vukić about this: "Needless to say, I sympathise strongly with the idea of Croato-Servian unity, but I am convinced that it can only be realised within the bounds of the Habsburg Monarchy, and that its realisation outside those boundaries would be desirable neither in the interests of the Croats and Serbs, nor in those of Austria and of Europe as a whole. [...] In other words, the support of the moderate Germans is absolutely essential for the realisation of Trialism and it would therefore be the greatest possible mistake to indulge in anti-German outbursts or to allow the publication of anti-German attacks in the leading Coalition organs."²¹ This citation shows the complete identity between Seton-Watson's and Pilar's views. Namely, Seton-Watson encourages the Croats to seek out allies in their national struggle and recommends they secure the backing of Vienna and "the German governing classes," even if these do not enjoy the favour of Croatian public opinion. In the letters he exchanged with I. Kršnjavi, regarding a clarification of the relations of the Monarchy and the Croats with Serbia, Seton-Watson writes: "Der Trialismus den ich in der Broschüre bespreche, hat gar nichts mit Serbien und Montenegro zu tun; eine Eroberung dieser zwei Länder wäre meiner Ansicht nach, verhängnisvoll und würde den Trialismus unmöglich machen. Nur glaube ich — mit Recht oder Unrecht — dass ein trialistischer Staat eine so starke Attraktionskraft auf Serbien wenigstens ausüben würde, dass es gezwungen sein würde, freiwillig in die Monarchie hineinzukommen; [...]"²² (The trialism about which I speak in the brochure, has nothing to do with Serbia and Montenegro; the acquisition of these two lands would in my opinion be unfortunate and render trialism impossible. I believe — justifiably or not — that only a trialistic state would have the influence of a powerful enough attraction on Serbia to compel it to voluntarily enter the Monarchy.)

Seton-Watson represented trialism of an austrophile orientation. He wrote to Funder thusly: "Ich vertrete hier meinen Ihnen schon bekannten Standpunkt, dass Oesterreich diese Frage lösen muss und wird, dass Kroatien sein Heil in Wien zu suchen hat, trotz aller Enttäuschungen und Missverständnisse, und appelliere (in einer etwas verhüllten Weise) an die Christsozialen als reichsbildende Partei."²³ (Here I present my point of view, already known to you, that Austria must and will solve this Question, that Croatia must seek its salvation in Vienna, in spite of all of the disappointments and misunderstanding and I appeal /in a somewhat veiled manner/ to the Christian Socialists as the state-forming party.)

Encouragement for trialism came from receptive Austrian political circles, consisting of Christian socialists, liberal bureaucrats, individual aristocrats, and the

²¹ *Correspondence*, pp. 51-52.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 60

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 72.



entourage of the successor to the throne Franz Ferdinand. Among the Austrian adherents to trialism ran a strong current of displeasure toward the Magyars and their political goals. On the one hand, the Magyars were rigidly one-sided in their attitude of the other peoples of Transleithania, and on the other, they irritated the Viennese court with their demand of full sovereignty in all aspects of state life. The anti-Magyar element of the Austrian political leadership wanted to win the Croats to their side, who despite their eight hundred year history of life in a joint political community, had latterly become dissatisfied with the Magyars. Due to his austrophile orientation Seton-Watson also had an unfavourable opinion of Magyar politics which he witnessed personally and about which he wrote quite a lot. As a result he was convinced that "Austria's prestige throughout the Balkans and, indeed, her very future as a Great Power, depend upon a solution of the Southern Slav Question."²⁴ From this we can conclude that for him trialism was a necessary means to naturally fulfill the political rights of the South Slav peoples, but also the most functional model of future development for Austria. He believed in its value until

²⁴ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Absolutism in Croatia*, p. 56.

the outbreak of the First World War. L. Lenard, a moderate proponent of trialism who met Seton-Watson in Krakow at the beginning of July 1914, witnessed this first hand.²⁵ The young writer (future winner of a Nobel prize in literature) and integral Yugoslav nationalist, Ivo Andrić was also party to their conversation. Compared to Lenard, Seton-Watson was remarkably well-informed about the political scene. For the Briton, trialism was the “last attempt to forestall catastrophe.” He continued to exclude the possibility that all Slovenes join in a third, South Slav unit because they had to remain within an Austrian framework; he also thought it was necessary for the Germans to have an outlet on to the Adriatic.²⁶ Indeed, he foresaw the possibility of an evolution whereby the “Austrian South Slav” would separate from Austria and spread further “to the South,” which was practically a prediction of the future independent Yugoslav state. One more source may have contributed to the diminishment of Seton-Watson’s faith in the transformation of the Monarchy. Vatroslav Jagić, the well-know Croatian professor at the University of Vienna, sent him a letter in which he stated: “[...] Thus the hope for a possible reorganization of the Monarchy on a federalist basis is being lost, and one must ask himself, is not the whole state organism too weak to withstand this kind of operation. We are already too dependent on Germany. The small concessions which are granted to the Austrian Slavs under pressure today’s *Neue Freie Presse* stamps as a criminal attempt to create a western Slavic state! This must be brought to and end! This is the manner in which this world-class newspaper welcomes the New Year! This is the way a new era of repression for the Austrian Slavs is opened! One could really go insane confronted by this kind of blindness! But why am I laying all these complaints and lamentations at your doorstep? You know our sad circumstances. The only difference is that the South Slavs consider you too great an optimist, while among us pessimism in an acute form is spreading more and more.”²⁷

The trialistic concept was popular in some Croatian political circles because they believed that in the case of the creation of a third state unit their idea of Croatian statehood would be reaffirmed, and the center of the new unit would be in Zagreb. The realization of these aims was especially upheld by the members of the Party of (Croat State) Right (those who followed Josip Frank), who traditionally were critical of the system created by the Croato-Hungarian Compromise and against any close political ties to the Serbs. On the eve of the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina they openly expressed their hope that the dynasty would meet Croatian demands. Since Bosnia and Hercegovina was not joined to Croatia, they turned to the successor to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, with whom they were in contact through the Military Chancellery (Militärkanzlei). The leaders of the Party of (Croat State) Right

²⁵ Dr. L. LENARD, “Janez Krek i Seton Watson o trializmu”, *Obzor*, no. 146, 1936, p. 2.

²⁶ This was not Seton-Watson’s original opinion. The well-known movement, “new course”, which was the precursor to the creation of the Croat-Serb coalition, did not mention the Slovenes in any of its proposed combinations. This viewpoint had a negative influence on Slovene liberals, who were favourable to a “yugoslav reorientation”. See Janko PLETERSKI, *Nacije Jugoslavija revolucija*, Komunist, Beograd 1985., p. 123.

²⁷ “Iz naše nedavne prošlosti. Jedno pismo Vatroslava Jagića Setonu Watsonu”, *Obzor*, no. 10, 1924, pp. 1-2.

believed that the Habsburg dynasty was the only bond which connected the divided Croatian lands and that sooner or later it must stand behind the political goals of the Croats, which were prepared to serve it loyally.

Serbian politicians in Austria-Hungary and in the Kingdom of Serbia vehemently opposed the idea of trialism because they saw it as one of the main obstacles to the spread of the Serbian imperial program to the west. In trialism they recognized the affirmation of Croatian, not Serbian statehood. Svetozar Pribičević, the leader of the Serb Independent Party, noted the following concerning the Croatian state idea: "On the basis of our deliberations, we can not recognize Croatian state right as the solid foundation for successful political work. It does not live in the people's consciousness, it does not conform to the people's needs for life and development, it does not take into consideration the people's aspirations, and therefore it can not be taken as the basis of the people's politics."²⁸ Besides this, even in the creation of a Yugoslav state unit within the Monarchy, which would neutralize Croat-Serb tensions, Serb politicians saw this as an unfavourable solution because it would impede the Kingdom of Serbia from playing the role of Piedmont, that is, taking the lead in gathering all the South Slav regions to it. This unit would better serve the integration of the Monarchy, rather than strengthening the separatist movements benefiting the Serbian state idea. Finally, a fear existed that trialism might develop centripetal forces which might be able to pull Serbia more strongly into the Monarchy's sphere of interest.²⁹ For all these reasons trialism was judged to be the most serious threat to Serbian state and national aims. This is best shown by the creation of secret terrorist organizations which led to the assassinations of the successor to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife.³⁰ In terms of the ties between political programs and this episode of violence it is useful to remember the testimony of the well-known Italian politician, Sforza, who wrote that the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić told him on Corfu that he was "only once seriously afraid for the fate of his country, and that was when the intentions of Franz Ferdinand had become clear to him."³¹

Pilar was likewise inclined toward trialism, a plan which went along with Croatian interests, but he calculated that the idea could not succeed because of many conflicts within the multi-national Austro-Hungarian community. Above all, it did not satisfy the criterion of being a solution for the whole of the Monarchy's nationality problem. The aspirations of the Czechs, Poles and other national communities had also to be addressed. The Magyars would resist it the most, because they saw in trialism an inappropriate reduction of their advantageous position. Due to their interests and their position in the Adriatic Sea this reconstruction would cer-

²⁸ Svetozar PRIBIČEVIĆ, *Izabrani politički spisi*, ed. Hrvoje Matković, Zagreb 2000., p. 146.

²⁹ Hugh SETON-WATSON, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁰ The leaders of the Yugoslav National Youth in Croatia argued in a similar way and from the same motives in 1912 and 1913. See Srećko LIPOVČAN, *Mladi Ujević, politički angažman i rana proza (1909. — 1919.)*, Književni Krug, Split, 2002., pp. 132-133.

³¹ Karlo SFORCA, *Neimari savremene Evrope*, (translation from the French: *Les batisseurs de l'Europe moderne*), Belgrade 1932., p. 55.

tainly be opposed by the Italians and Germans as well. For this reason Pilar believed that trialism “only strengthens the centrifugal forces” in the Monarchy.³² As a result, he advocated a specific idea, in which the general interests had to lay in creating a powerful and integral state within which Croatian needs too would be satisfied. He suggested the creation of a Croatian Kingdom (including Banal Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and the Istrian islands) which would be joined to the “dualistic structure in the form of sub dualism.” This Kingdom would “exercise partial sovereignty within the framework of the lands of the crown of St. Stephen.”³³ While he maintained that trialism was a “castle in the air”, he considered his solution to the South Slav Question as politically realistic. His main objective was to overcome the historical division of the Croatian lands, which would — united into one administrative territory — more easily be able to resist Italian and Serbian pretensions. Pilar advocated for this idea during the course of the First World War, when he assumed that Austro-Hungarian Slavs would lose political influence after its conclusion, but also that all disabilities could be removed via a reform of dualism. Croatian weakness he ascribed to political disorientation and economic underdevelopment, which itself was the consequence of a divided national market. The only solution he foresaw for Croatia was a strengthening of ties with the entire Monarchy (*Gesamtmonarchie*).³⁴ In spite of the weakness of the Monarchy, for the most part brought on by its disordered relations with its various component nationalities and its international position, Pilar judged that after the war it would be strengthened by its alliance with mighty Germany.³⁵ Some assumed that because of this belief, Pilar suggested a Magyarophile trialism because he proposed that Croatia joins Bosnia and Dalmatia to itself but within the framework of the lands of St. Stephen’s Crown.³⁶ The implication that follows from Pilar’s project is that he did not support any variation of a Croat-Serb political entity, rather, he stressed the individuality of the Croatian state strictly.

In Seton-Watson’s *Die südslawische Frage im Habsburger Reich*, he presumed the existence of three possible solutions to the South Slav Question: Great Serbian, Great Croatian, or trialistic. He did not favour either of the first or second because he believed they offered only the hegemony of one nationalism. The last solution anticipated the union of the Croats and Serbs on an egalitarian basis in one state body within the Habsburg Monarchy. With this the South Slav Question would not be solved in its entirety. Seton-Watson did not find room for the Slovenes in his thorough examination of the South Slav Question. About them he wrote: “They have no distinct history of their own: their voice cannot be decisive in any solution of the

³² L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 305.

³³ See Zlatko MATIJEVIĆ, “Političko djelovanje dr. Ive Pilara i pokušaj rješavanja ‘južnoslavenskog pitanja’ u Austro-Ugarskoj monarhiji (ožujak — listopad 1918.)”, *Godišnjak Pilar*, vol. 1, 2001., p. 159.

³⁴ Under the title to Pilar’s book on the South Slav Question, the following slogan could be found: “indivisibiliter ac inseparabilitet”.

³⁵ Dr. JURIČIĆ [Ivo PILAR], *Svjetski rat i Hrvati. Pokus orientacije hrvatskoga naroda još prije svršetka rata*, Komisionalna naklada knjižare Mirka Breyera, Zagreb 1915., p. 39.

³⁶ IVANOV [Milivoj DEŽMAN], *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, Dionička tiskara, Zagreb 1918., p. 67.

problem; and urgent reasons of strategy and geography make it impossible for them to be included in any unified Southern Slav state of the immediate future.”³⁷ He included the Slovenes among the population of Istria (15% of the total), but he was certain that the western coastline of Istria from Trieste to Pula belonged to the Italians, while the remaining part he did not speak of as belonging to a South Slav state.

Pilar took Seton-Watson’s writing seriously because he was aware of the achievement that the Scottish publicist could attain abroad. Because of this he subjected Seton-Watson’s works to critical analysis, coming to the conclusion that he “understood Croatian politics only half-way, and Serbian not at all, thus his book can be used only with caution.”³⁸ He did not reject all of his views, indeed Seton-Watson’s description of the history to the 1880s and the major part of his condemnation of the autocratic rule of ban Khuen-Héderváry in Banal Croatia (1883-1903) he considered excellently written. For example, Seton-Watson wrote of the former Croatian ban: “a man of ruthless will and great political ability he was able by a judicious combination of corruption and intimidation to get a sufficient number of complaisant persons returned at elections to form a governmental majority from their ranks.”³⁹ Pilar wrote: “Khuen ruled in Croatia with the help of oats and whippings, as his method was dubbed in Hungary. It is uncomfortable for me, but this means nothing more, than that he ruled with bribes and violence. Seton-Watson is absolutely correct, when he says, that Khuen ruined a whole generation in Croatia. In particular, he used violence at elections. Employing gendarmes was an especially well-liked means of preventing voters from reaching polling stations. When the peasants resisted violence with violence, Khuen would let it [the guns] fire and that is why in Croatia there was never an election without bloodshed.”⁴⁰ A similar evaluation was made of Seton-Watson’s description of the administration in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Pilar especially praised parts of an interview the Hungarian politician Benjamin Kállay gave, who Seton-Watson presented as a relevant source for information on political developments in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Specifically, Pilar was referring to a discussion of Kállay’s for *The Times* of London in which Kállay stated: “My countrymen have treated Croatia badly, prevented its development, and exploited it financially; they will pay for this one day”.⁴¹ Nevertheless, as Seton-Watson drew closer to the European military dimension he became more offensive to Pilar. In order to identify some details which contributed to the defense of his theses Pilar mentioned Seton-Watson’s original comments which had shown a peculiar objection to a strong binding of all Croats and Serbs from an apparent fear that in this way the culturally more progressive Croatian side would be subsumed in the

³⁷ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The Southern Slav Question*, p. 2.

³⁸ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 303.

³⁹ H. and Ch. SETON-WATSON, *The Making of a New Europe. R. W. Seton-Watson and the last years of Austria-Hungary*, University of Washington Press, Seattle 1981, p. 59.

⁴⁰ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 247.

⁴¹ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The Southern Slav Question*, p. 85.

“eastern” culture of the Orthodox world which would weaken the opportunity for better development of the Balkans. According to this vision Croatia was to be the driving force in the development of the large southeastern territory of the Monarchy, even wider, but in union with the Central European region which was held together by the Habsburg dynasty. During the First World War he altered his model for resolving the South Slav Question. Instead of the Habsburg Monarchy, Serbia appeared as the focal point for the gathering of these lands.

What did Pilar consider unacceptable in Seton-Watson’s reflections? Most frequently, he criticized Seton-Watson for not understanding the origins and development of the *all-Serbian movement* or it aims at all.⁴² By the term all-Serbian movement, Pilar meant the imperial idea Serbian nationalism at the time, which put roots down in Croatia in 1861. That year, argued Pilar, the first demands for the recognition of Serbian statehood on Croatian territory were made in the Croatian Sabor (Diet).⁴³ The later course of development strengthened Serbian nationalism which seriously intended to unite all Serbs into one state. At the beginning of the war, Pilar noted: “It is without doubt that since 1907, Serb politics in Croatia have been led with a view to propaganda, which the Kingdom of Serbia leads for the purpose of the expansion of its state.”⁴⁴ In this period the Croat-Serb Coalition (HSK) came to the fore in Croatian politics. It was led by the idea of a Croat-Serb political alliance, which at the start indicated a struggle for better constitutional representation of Croats and Serbs in the Monarchy; but later its leadership, over which the Serbian politicians Svetozar Pribičević and Dušan Popović had a rather powerful influence, pursued an opportunistic politics.⁴⁵ On the one hand, the HSK reached an agreement with the government in Budapest, which enabled it to have a majority in the Croatian Sabor, and on the other, during the First World War, its leadership openly carried out a policy of non-confrontation with the dualistic factors of government. At the end of the war, the HSK began to play a “large role in the question of unification” of all the South Slavs. In the period mentioned by Pilar, from 1907 on, based on the contemporary literature, one can indeed notice the influence of Serbia on politics in Croatia. The following fact comes from one recent article: “Nikola Pašić at this point in time was displeased with the attitude of Croatian politicians in the Coalition, who in some of their comments had continued to deny the existence of Serbs in Croatia. That is why he sent Jovan Tomić, on the eve of the 1908 election, to convey his opinions and to remind them that Serbia contributed important resources for the Coalition’s electoral campaign and therefore it was called to have the leading voice in the South Slavic community.”⁴⁶

⁴² L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, pp. 204, 302-303.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁴⁴ Dr. JURIČIĆ, *Svjetski rat i Hrvati*, p. 64.

⁴⁵ See M. GROSS, *Vladavina Hrvatsko-srpske koalicije 1906-1907*, Institut društvenih nauka, Belgrade, s. a., 226-227; Srđan BUDISAVLJEVIĆ, *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, JAZU, Zagreb 1958., p. 59

⁴⁶ See Ranka GAŠIĆ, “*Novi kurs*” *Srba u Hrvatskoj*; Srpsko kulturno društvo “Prosvjeta”, Zagreb 2001., p. 196.

The following citation reveals that Pilar was skeptical regarding the Croatian ability to resist the all-Serbian movement: "Not only has the majority of the Orthodox population been won over to Belgrade's plans, but it has achieved successes among the Croats as well, on which it had not even counted. [...] Following the Balkan wars, the Croats, which through the last 50 years were not capable of scoring even the most modest victory, were left bewildered by the success of the Balkanites and the Serbs, and that strengthens even more the Serbian example, which had existed even before the annexation. By deft politics of agitation, tendentious support for craft industries through army contracting, then opportunistic praise and support for Croatian artists, writers, actors and other public and prominent people, and probably other small means, which create big friendships, Serbia attained an ever greater influence in Croatia, hence, in Serbia the belief took root: Croatia is ripe and ready to fall into Serbia's lap, Croats will support the Serbs, when it comes time to settle accounts with the Monarchy."⁴⁷

Pilar personally witnessed the expansion of the all-Serbian movement in Bosnia and Hercegovina, where he attempted to bring to life a Croatian-Muslim bloc to break the threat of Serbian domination. In his political outline he proposed the extension of full freedom to Islam and support for the maintenance of its position in Bosnia and Hercegovina, while for the Serbs he felt that their rights as a national minority should be guaranteed, in so far as contemporary administrative practice prescribed for the protection of national minorities.⁴⁸ Any other solution he felt would benefit solely the increase of Serbian influence. However, the Croats of Bosnia were more divided among themselves, reflecting in this manner the differences in opinion which were already deeply-rooted in Banal Croatia. Pilar's ideas therefore could not gain a stable foothold.⁴⁹

Pilar attempted to show that Seton-Watson totally failed to understand the Serbian propaganda against the Habsburg Monarchy which aimed at the destruction of the multi-national state and the creation of a formation which would satisfy pan-Serbian goals. In this regard he warned against the use of the term "Serbocroatian people," which was a term coined for political reasons to benefit the Serbian position. Pilar was prophetic on this matter: "This people never existed and it never will exist, it is an artificial product of the imagination, which has more value than Croatian Illyrianism or Yugoslavism, and which is fated to, following a longer or shorter period of time, be recognized as Serbianism or in turn Croatianism." But in terms of the national status of the Muslims, Pilar did not see the future clearly. He believed that the Muslims, who had a poorly developed national consciousness, in fact Pilar wrote that they did not have one at all, could not create their own nation and therefore they were closer to the option of accepting Croatian nationality.

One of Pilar's main theses was that the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) stood firmly behind Serbian nationalism. This often cited thesis must be examined in the

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Z. MATIJEVIĆ (ed.), "Tri dokumenta iz godina 1917. i 1918.", p. 189.

⁴⁹ Noel MALCOLM, *Povijest Bosne. Kratki pregled*, Erasmus, Zagreb-Sarajevo 1995., p. 216.

light of Pilar's judgment that the developments in the Balkans can only be understood if religious history of the region is known. From a historical perspective, the SPC was according to Pilar the militant carrier of a retrograde Byzantine heritage, which in the modern era spilled over into a model tying the nation-state idea together with religion. Pilar especially emphasized the modern Serbian nationalism, due to its militancy and its desire to conquer the territory of others posed the greatest threat to Croats, but was dangerous to the other peoples in Central Europe as well. He saw the arrival of Petar Karadorđević to the throne as the turning point, from which time Serbia began to carry out more openly its aggressive plans of foreign expansion toward Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Montenegro, with the support of Tsarist Russia. As this expansionist politics experienced successes in the Balkan Wars so it strengthened to consciousness of Serbian predominance in the South Slav Question, which "sooner or later" had to lead to war.⁵⁰

On the other hand, Seton-Watson changed his views about Serbs and the Kingdom of Serbia. In the earlier period he commented rather unfavourably on the behaviour of the Serbs, especially their intolerant attitude to Catholicism and the idea of the Croatian bishop J. J. Strossmayer concerning the unity of the Christian Churches. Thus, for instance, he wrote: "Such is the intolerance of the Servians towards Catholicism, that a Barnabite Father sent by Strossmayer to minister to the thousands of Italian workmen engaged in railway work in Servia, was assaulted, injured and obliged to leave the country. In Servia the clergy are sunk in formalism, and their influence is national, not religious."⁵¹ Indeed, from the point of view of economic development, a high level of culture and the well-developed political consciousness he held that the best solution might be for Austria-Hungary to draw Serbia into its domain. Only later did Seton-Watson discover a specifically Serbian value which merited special attention in political estimation, something which could not be fostered if Serbia was to become merely another Austrian province. This change in Seton-Watson's attitude came about in 1912, during the First Balkan War, when the Serbian army triumphed in battles against the Turks. Not long after that came his journey to the newly conquered Serbian regions of Macedonia. His biographers write: "He was likewise impressed by the majority of Serbian officers that he met. It was revealed that they were not only good soldiers but also civilized and intelligent Europeans. From then on Seton-Watson's fears about the 'oriental' barbarian nature of Serbia disappeared."⁵² This impression was strengthened after the First World War broke out. Thereafter he became more concerned for the interests of Britain's ally so much so that he even asked that Serbia's possible territorial losses be compensated by the "unification of all Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of the

⁵⁰ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 370

⁵¹ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 125. In German translation: "In Serbien ist die Geistlichkeit in Formalismus erstickt, ihr Einfluß ist nationaler, nicht religiöser Art.", (R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Die südslawische Frage im Habsburger Monarchie*, p. 145.) Not to appear one-sided, Seton-Watson immediately after that directed readers to the behaviour of Archbishop Stadler in Bosnia, who was accused of proselytizing.

⁵² *Correspondence*, p. 20.

Habsburg Monarchy.”⁵³ Subsequent events indicated Pilar’s and Seton-Watson’s different amplitudes in approach to Serb-Croat relations within the Yugoslav state. Pilar subjectively considered that Seton-Watson was more affected by the influence of his Serbian friends, than England’s alliance during the war.⁵⁴ Again, it is interesting to point out that Seton-Watson later, in spite of his devotion to Yugoslavia and his criticism of both Croatian and Serbian nationalism, did not cast away his old views about differences in civilization. Speaking about the situation in Yugoslavia after the introduction of King Aleksandar Karađorđević’s dictatorship, he stressed again the traditional differences as important facts in understanding the internal conflict: “The differences between Serb and Croat are above all psychological. They go back for many centuries, and are due to their very different history, the Serb having been under the influence of Byzantium, of the Eastern Church and Empire; the Croat under that of the West, of Rome, of Vienna, of Budapest. The difference is not one of race — Serb and Croat are as near to each other as Wessex to Mercia — of a language, which is of course identical, though two scripts are used; or, again, of religion, since the three religions live amicably side by side. [...] Foolish phrases have sometimes been uttered as to the unbridgeable gulf between Eastern and Western culture, as an explanation of Serbo-Croat divergence; but this is a preposterous exaggeration of a real factor. The existence of two currents loosely called Rome and Byzantium must always be borne in mind, but while it retards the process of fusion, it ought in the end to enrich and strengthen the common stock.”⁵⁵ Or when he dealt with religion, Seton-Watson wrote: “There was no country where the educated class was so indifferent to the Church. The role of the Serbian Church had been more national than religious.”⁵⁶

The difference in opinions regarding the South Slav Question between Pilar and Seton-Watson begins after the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1908. At that point in time, criminal proceedings against a large number of Serbian politicians in Croatia are launched in Zagreb — the so-called High Treason Trial — and after that the Vienna trial wherein the Austrian historian Heinrich Friedjung confronted the Croatian politician Frano Supilo, who was at that time the head of the Croat-Serb Coalition and within which a promoter of “national oneness”. The latter trial destroyed the friendship between Friedjung and Seton-Watson, because Seton-Watson did not share the opinion of the Viennese professor that the Serbian government in Belgrade organized anti-Austrian actions, rather he agreed with the stand taken that documents used in the trial had been forged by the Ballhausplatz. Seton-Watson felt that the trials had resulted in a “moral victory for Croat and Serb leaders”.⁵⁷ This was consistent with Pilar’s thinking that public opinion in the Monarchy

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵⁴ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 355.

⁵⁵ *Jugoslavia and Croatia*. By Professor R. W. Seton Watson. Reprinted from *Journal of Royal Institute of International Affairs*, March 1929, p. 119.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132. At the same meeting Edith Durham said: “The difficulty was that the Croat had the European point of view and not the Byzantine. It was not simply a difficulty of religious dogma; it was the whole cultural outlook, the difference between the West and the East.”

and outside of it had become completely convinced that Austria-Hungary “base state creation, which covered its ugly imperial intentions with infamous official forgeries and that systematically destroys and crushes small nations.”⁵⁸ From then on the balance swung in the direction of the prejudice that held that every loyal supporter of the state’s organization deserves to be denounced on the basis of democratic principles. Pilar felt that both trials were taken as defensive measures by the state, which in the end benefited Serbian propaganda and generated the psychoses of great hatreds towards Austria. In Croatia, propaganda materials about Serbocroatian nationalism were becoming more common, and at the same time terrorism in the form of the establishment of secret societies appeared as did the organization of assassination attempts on ruling politicians.

As regards the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina one more point divided Pilar and Seton-Watson. Pilar had a rather high opinion of Alois von Aehrenthal, the Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs at the time. On the occasion of Aehrenthal’s report to the Hungarian committee on foreign affairs after the annexation (10. October 1908) in which the minister promoted the idea of a stronger Monarchy was consistent with Pilar’s view that without the status of a great power the Habsburg Monarchy would not be able to solve its internal problems let alone would it be able to meet the challenges of foreign politics.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Seton-Watson approved of the annexation and the strengthening of Austria’s reputation, but he judged the direction of Aehrenthal’s foreign policy as “dangerously undermining international peace by striking at established treaties.”⁶⁰ In this matter the conflict between two imperial conceptions could already be discerned. To begin with, British state respected Aehrenthal, assuming that he could cool ties between Vienna and Berlin thereby weaken the Triple Alliance. As it did not come to this, the opinion took hold that Austria-Hungary was merely “an appendage of the German Empire.”⁶¹ From then on Anglo-Austrian relations worsened, excepting a small period time during the Balkan Wars. In this atmosphere, Seton-Watson attempted to stay neutral. During the annexation crisis he condemned the inflammatory tone of some British newspapers, but he was not apologetic of the Austrian side, either to state officials or the press, which had raised questions about British morality in international politics.⁶² Prompted by attacks in the Viennese papers, which often relied on propagandistic stereotypes of “perfidious Albion” and put out questions about the statues of the Irish or about British colonies, Seton-Watson replied in a small brochure entitled *Britische Politik und Balkankrise* (Vienna-Leipzig 1909). On this occasion he advised that the unification of South Africa might be a

⁵⁷ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Absolutism in Croatia*, p. 8.

⁵⁸ L. V. SÜDLAND, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, p. 304.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁶⁰ H. and Ch. SETON-WATSON, *The Making of a New Europe*, p. 64.

⁶¹ Samuel R. WILLIAMSON jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, Macmillan 1991, pp. 111-112.

⁶² “Scotus Viator protiv Kršnjavoga”, *Pokret*, no. 24, Zagreb 1910., p. 3.

“good omen” (ein glückliches Omen) for the unification of South Slavs under the Habsburg scepter! The Viennese political elite indeed interpreted the British attitude as sympathetic to Serbia and Montenegro, which at that time were openly threatening war because they did not obtain Bosnia. In a letter, Friedjung wrote to Seton-Watson: “England ist nicht der einzige Anreger dieser Kriegsunruhe gewesen, aber gewiss einer der wichtigsten.”⁶³ The seeds of distrust were sown, which would not be uprooted until the end of the First World War.

Pilar and Seton-Watson also agreed in part in their respective evaluations of *starčevićism*. This refers to the influential ideology which was tied to the activities of Ante Starčević (1823-1896), one of the founders of the Party of (Croat State) Right and a very popular politician. This party was a symbol of Croatian nationalism, the most consistent champion of the idea of creating an independent Croatian state and contemporary Croatian national identity. Its activities, oftentimes radical, inspired various reactions. Pilar wrote: “[...] as Seton-Watson correctly remarks, Starčević absolutely disdains all practical possibilities in politics.” Further, he criticized the influence of the leaders of the Party of (Croat State) Right in creating antagonism among a large part of the Croatian public toward Austria, Hungary, and Serbs as the main obstacles to national freedom and the independence of the state. In distinction from Starčević, Pilar’s political program rested on a reduction of the integral nationalist program. National aims were to be carried with the aid of a plan which was based on a realistic evaluation of the situation. These terms made possible notions of satisfying Croatian interests exclusively in the scope of an autonomous body within the Habsburg Monarchy, the ceding of Rijeka/Fiume to the administration of the Hungarian state in return for the forfeit of Hungarian rights over Croatia, and the guarantee legal protection for the Serbian ethnic community. These calculations showed Pilar’s political pragmatism in which Starčević did not have a corresponding place because he did not seek the help of allies to bring about his national aims. In other words, Starčević and the Party of (Croat State) Right did not achieve results because they led a “negative” program, in contrast to other Croatian politicians which were more inclined to seeking out various political opportunities. Nonetheless, the fact that Starčević heavily influenced the development of consciousness of Croatian statehood when this was most important could not be overlooked, which for Pilar was an indisputably positive feature of Starčević’s political activity. Seton-Watson was of a similar opinion concerning Starčević, of whom he wrote: “No one save Bishop Strossmayer has exercised so deep an influence upon Croatia during the last half century: no one combined such noble idealism and such simplicity and firmness of character with such lack of public life. His exaggerated praise of past centuries was redeemed by the earnest ambition to create a new moral basis for a society which he regarded as corrupt and decaying; but it cannot be said that his choice of tactics was calculated to arrest the decay which he lamented.”⁶⁴

⁶³ *Correspondence*, p. 45.

⁶⁴ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The South Slav Question*, p. 109. In German translation: “Mit Ausnahme von Strossmayer hat niemand einen so großen Einfluß auf Kroatien während des letzten halben Jahrhunderts ausgeübt; niemand vereinigte in sich einen so edlen Idealismus, eine solche Einfachheit und Festigkeit

On the issue of Starčević's successors Pilar and Seton-Watson are again in agreement to a certain extent. The main issue in this respect is an assessment of the role of Josip Frank in Croatian politics.⁶⁵ For both it was important to stress that Frank was a capable lawyer of Jewish background and that he is to be thanked for opportunistically steering the Party of (Croat State) Right toward Vienna, by which he defended the Austro-Croatian tie at a time when public opinion was against Austria. On one occasion Frank declared in the Croatian Sabor: "I think that every serious politician has to count on the chessboard of Croatian politics likewise with these important factors, that is with Austria and with Hungary. One who does not take these factors into account in Croatia, can not be serious. We have to take Austria into account and work it into the combinations on our chessboard all the more that because Dalmatia is over there, Istria is there, and likewise the common administration of Bosnia and Hercegovina is there."⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Seton-Watson was far more stricter in his view of Frank's political ideology, claiming, immediately after the suspension of parliamentary life in Banal Croatia, that Frank was the main proponent of Great Croatian nationalism who incites a fruitless struggle against the Serbs and foments the mentality of anti-Serb hatred. He especially reacted to the role of Frank's followers in the High Treason Trial against the Serbs of Croatia, which to his mind was a break with the moral traditions of Ante Starčević. For this reason he suggested to the Viennese Christian-socialists to change their allies in Croatia, to abandon Frank and turn to the Croat-Serb Coalition of the newly-established Starčević Party of (Croat State) Right, which formed for the ranks of dissidents from Frank's party in 1908.⁶⁷ In the conclusion to *The Southern Slav Question* written somewhat later on he highlights again the thesis about the pan-Croatianism of the Frankists, which aims at the establishment on purely Croatian and Catholic foundations, of a Croatian kingdom under the Habsburg scepter. This state would include Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria and Bosnia with Zagreb as its capital of course. He identified the theory of the Party of (Croat State) Right with the theory of the Hungarian Independent Party — the same throwing around of high sounding phrases, the same narrow-minded tribalistic intolerance. The sole firm foundation was the recognition of the absolute equality of Croats and Serbs and their "essential unity as two inseparable element is the life of one united people."⁶⁸ Seton-Watson's optimism lay in the fact that this type of opinion was becoming more prevalent in the life of the South Slav intelligentsia. In particular, he thought that linguistic unity, achieved by philologists and writers, was a happy indication of a wider-spread unity.

des Charakters mit solchem Mangel an politischer Ausgeglichenheit und einer solchen Verachtung der praktischen Möglichkeiten des öffentlichen Lebens.", (R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Die südslawische Frage im Habsburger Monarchie*, p. 124.)

⁶⁵ On J. Franku see Stjepan MATKOVIĆ, *Čista stranka prava 1895.-1903.*, Hrvatski institut za povijest, Zagreb 2001.

⁶⁶ *Govori dra. Josipa Franka*, Prva hrvatska radnička tiskara, Zagreb 1908., p. 191.

⁶⁷ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *Absolutismus in Kroatien*, p. 26.

⁶⁸ R. W. SETON-WATSON, *The South Slav Question*, pp. 434-435.

Frank's followers reacted to these kinds of views. It is interesting to note that their reaction to Seton-Watson's views were far more conciliatory in relation to the polemics they utilized against their opponents in the Croatian political area, against individual Hungarian or Austrian politicians, or those parties which were concerned with an analysis of Croatian politics, such as T. G. Masaryk or C. Loiseau. They recognized that Seton-Watson rather successfully represented Croatian problems to international public opinion, but they did not agree with his depiction of internal political conditions. Firstly, they rejected the accusation that they were closely tied to the regime of ban Paul Rauch, but they did not deny that they supported Rauch's decision with regards to using the treason trial to persecute Serb nationalists. Their main complaint against Seton-Watson had to do with his attempt to portray the Croat-Serb Coalition as one political party which works for the promotion of trialism or federalism. Listing all the activities of the leadership of that Coalition, the question could credibly be posed whether they were in fact fervent supporters of basic reforms to the Croato-Hungarian Compromise. Thus Frank's daily concluded that Seton-Watson was "badly informed" and that his works might have been written with the best intentions, but that it will be of little benefit to the idea that its author wanted to help.⁶⁹ That opinion concurred with Pilar's views.

With the outbreak of the First World War, Seton-Watson's perceptions completely changed. In the new circumstances, he gave up on the model of reforming the Habsburg Monarchy in favour of creating a new, independent Yugoslav state, which as a member of the Allied Entente, would become "the most certain guarantee of peace in Southeastern Europe." But while Pilar believed that it was in the vital interest of Croats to remain under the Habsburg crown, partly because of their geopolitical and cultural ties to the powerful German sphere in Central Europe, Seton-Watson held a diametrically opposed view. The alliance with Yugoslavia was to be one of the bulwarks of the "new Europe" standing in the way of the German "Drang nach Osten" and the transformation of economic-political relations. The war crystallized the conflicting standpoints of two indisputably lucid publicists, who once shared the belief that the Monarchy had to be saved as a whole. In these circumstances, Pilar "as a subject of the time-honoured Monarchy and dedicated to it by upbringing and conviction," remained consistent in his views, while Scotus Viator subordinated his position to the interests of his homeland which found itself on the side of the enemies of Austria-Hungary during the war. Pilar's conception disintegrated, but at least in the long run it revealed all the unjustifiability of the so-called Balkan orientation of Croatian politics in which the predominance and preponderance went to Serbian politicians. Seton-Watson's views took perfect notice of the worn out condition of Austria-Hungary and all the preconditions which led to the creation of a new South Slav community, but his confidence in the viability of this new community was to be misplaced because the inequality among nations and the continual abatement of democracy was renewed. In terms of Austria-Hungary, Seton-Watson's thesis about the South Slav Question was objectively presented

⁶⁹ "Englez o hrvatskim prilikama", *Hrvatsko Pravo*, no. 4158, Zagreb 1909.

because it correctly predicted that if internal politics were not changed, the Habsburg dynasty would fall. Pilar correctly predicted the subordinate position of the Croats within a Yugoslavia ruled by the Serbian dynasty. To his regret he had to personally witness his predictions coming to pass, the repression of the new regime, and his own death under unclear circumstances. It remained to Seton-Watson to soon begin a critical analysis of why undesirable developments had come to pass in the Yugoslavian state. He quickly ascertained the nature of Serbia's imperialist politics and its determination to dominate the South Slav community.

Summary

The author of this paper compares the views of Ivo Pilar and Robert William Seton-Watson, two brilliant publicists, on the Southern-Slavic question as the key problem of the organisation of Southeast Europe in the period between the end of the 19th century and 1918. Pilar represents the views of a distinguished Croatian intellectual, who seeks answers that would meet the interests of his own people, while Seton-Watson mirrors a reputable liberal from a great nation dealing with the fates of smaller nations. The author shows that up to World War I both men sought a solution to the problem — particularly to the issues of the Croatian-Serbian relations — exclusively within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. Both men advocated a change in the internal organisation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the basis of greater national rights. Both men also held that the Monarchy was indispensable for the preservation of stability and international peace in Europe, particularly within the context of the relations between Germany and Russia. In Pilar's view it was important to satisfy the principle of uniting the Croatian states into a single administrative unit and then preserve the unit within the Monarchy, which would serve as principal protection from all external pretensions, i.e. from the Italian and Serbian expansions. Seton-Watson maintained that the trialism formula would help overcome the conflicts between the Croatian and Serbian nationalisms. Moreover, owing to its civilisational advantage, the trialism in question would exert attractive power over the Kingdom of Serbia and the other parts of the Balkans. Besides, this trialism would strengthen the Monarchy and make it become more independent from its alliance with Germany. In Seton-Watson it is obvious that he started changing his views after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, when he gradually realised that a conflict between German and British interests in Southeast Europe was inevitable, i.e. that the Austro-Hungarian Empire could no longer be a British ally since it was, in actual fact, an appendage of the German Empire. During World War I Seton-Watson took the opinion that, in order to solve the Southern-Slavic problem and establish wider international relations, it was essential to constitute an independent Yugoslavian state outside the Monarchy within "New Europe", while Pilar cemented his view that the Monarchy was the only right solution for the interests of Croats, emphasising that attempting to integrate Croats and Serbs on the ruins of Austro-Hungary was unnatural and contrary to historical arguments.