

IVO PILAR AND THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE: CROATIA BETWEEN CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

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“When a man is in hell, he has to find the coolest
place”.

Ivan MAŽURANIĆ

Introduction

After the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian Agreement (1867), the until-then unified Habsburg Monarchy was divided into the Austrian (Cisleithan) and Hungarian (Transleithan) sections.¹¹ Based on the new state and legal order, Dalmatia and Istria, together with the Slovenian lands, became a part of the Austrian half of the Monarchy, while banian Croatia, together with Vojvodina, became a part of the Hungarian half. A year later (1868), a Croato-Hungarian Agreement was reached, which was a sub-dualist correction to the already established dualist system. With its 70 articles, the Agreement was the fundamental law governing Croato-Hungarian relations until 1918. First and foremost, it stipulated the inseparability of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen. Furthermore, joint representation, joint action and joint governance were established for all spheres except domestic affairs, the judiciary, religion and public instruction, which were under the authority of the Territorial

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¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *Habsburška Monarhija 1809 – 1918* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1990), pp. 161-173.

Governments of Croatia and Slavonia (banian Croatia). According to the provisions of the Agreement, Civil Croatia was subordinate to Hungary with reference to two vital issues: 1) the *ban* (viceroy) was appointed by the king at the proposal of the Hungarian minister president, while the minister for Croatia and Slavonia was not accountable to the Croatia *Sabor*, but rather to the joint parliament in Budapest; and 2) in financial terms, banian Croatia was entirely dependent on Hungary, for its budget was approved by the Hungarian finance minister. The question of control over the city of Rijeka was resolved to Hungary's benefit by an annex, the so-called "Rijeka scrap", which Croatian Sabor never ratified.² Despite the numerous limitations which ensued from this Agreement, it nonetheless allowed for the modernization of Croatia's then already obsolete governing institutions by means of autonomous legislation.³

Based on a decision made at the Congress of Berlin (1878), the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was granted the right to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was under the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan.⁴ The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was implemented by imperial proclamation on 5 October 1908. This newly-annexed territory, which had the status of a condominium, was administered by the joint Austro-Hungarian finance minister.⁵

I. Ivo Pilar's Political Activity prior to the Outbreak of World War I (1906-1912)

Ivo Pilar (1874-1933) was a Doctor of Laws (LL D), and he had a long career as an attorney. The depth of his knowledge and the breadth of his interests and accomplishments in the arts, political geography, political science, social psychology, anthropology, economics, religious studies and other fields place him among the ranks of the most distinguished Croatian intellectuals of the twentieth century.

² Jaroslav Šidak, Mirjana Gross, Igor Karaman and Dragovan Šepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860 - 1914*. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), 38-43; Vasilije Krestić, *Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti – Naučno delo, 1969); Josip Šarinić, *Nagod-bena Hrvatska: Postanak i osnove ustavne organizacije* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1972).

³ Dalibor Čepulo, "Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba i reforme institucija vlasti u Hrvatskom saboru 1868.-1871.," *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci*, 2001, Suppl., no. 1: 117-148.

⁴ See: V. P. Potemkin, ed., *Historija diplomacije*, 3 vols. (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1951), 2: 37-45.

⁵ See: Ferdo Čulinović, *Državnopravna historija jugoslavenskih zemalja XIX. i XX. vijeka. (Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija, Istra, Srpska Vojvodina, Slovenija, Bosna i Hercegovina te Država SHS)*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1953), 1: 309-326; Robert J. Donia, *Islam pod Dvoglavim orlom: Muslimani Bosne i Hercegovine 1878-1914*. (Zagreb – Sarajevo: Naklada ZORO – Institut za historiju BiH, 2000).

After the completion of his university studies, Pilar left his native Zagreb and moved to Bosnia-Herzegovina (1900). After several years spent in Sarajevo, he then moved to Tuzla, where he opened a law office (1905).⁶ At the time of his arrival in Bosnia, an undisputed authority in both religious and even political matters among the local Catholic Croats was the Vrhbosna (Sarajevo) archbishop, Josip Stadler. During his long service as bishop, he acquired numerous adversaries on all sides due to conflicts between irreconcilable religious and political interests. Among the fierce critics of his work, besides the local Franciscan community,⁷ were the members of the small Catholic lay intelligentsia, whose ranks included Ivo Pilar.

The benediction of the flag of the Vlašić Choral Society in Dolac, near Travnik, proved an opportune moment to begin developing political activity in Bosnia-Herzegovina that will eventually evolve as independent of Archbishop Stadler.⁸ At that time, the decision was made to establish a religious-cultural organisation under the name Croatian People's Union (*Hrvatska narodna zajednica* – HNZ). The Committee of Six was formed for this purpose, and Pilar joined it as the representative of Tuzla County.⁹ The Committee was charged with drafting a charter and setting up the new organisation. In November 1907, the Land Government in Sarajevo and the Joint Finance Ministry in Vienna approved the by-laws of the HNZ.¹⁰ It would appear that the key to their approval was the fact that the leaders of this new organisation called for the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austro-Hungary, a matter on which the top leadership of the Monarchy had already made a general decision.¹¹ The constitutive session of the HNZ Central Committee was held at the end of February 1909. Pilar also joined this Committee, and he was also elected chairman of the HNZ County Committee in Donja Tuzla.¹²

In contrast to Stadler's desire for the Union to be a confessional organisation of the Croatian Catholics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the non-clergy members of the Central Committee, advocating inter-confessional principles, insisted that it should also be open to the local Muslims. These were two opposing and incompatible concepts for the organisation of the Croats

⁶ Srećko Lipovčan, "Životopis Ive Pilara," *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 269.

⁷ See: Velimir Blažević, *Bosanski franjevci i nadbiskup dr. Josip Stadler* (Sarajevo: Svjetlo riječi, 2000).

⁸ Jure Krišto, "Uloga Ive Pilara u hrvatskom organiziranju u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 86; see also his article "Heeding a Good or an Evil Angel: The May Declaration of 1917 and the Collapse of the Middle-European Monarchy," *Review of Croatian History*, 4 (2008), no. 1: 39-50 (42-43).

⁹ Luka Đaković, *Političke organizacije bosanskohercegovačkih Hrvata. (I. dio: Do otvaranja Sabora 1910.)* (Zagreb: Globus, 1985), p. 229.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

of Bosnia-Herzegovina. An open conflict between Archbishop Stadler and the HNZ was not long in coming. In February 1908, the Sarajevo archbishop informed the Union's leadership that he could not approve its by-laws.¹³ An attempt – in which Pilar participated – to reach a resolution to this dispute, i.e. a pledge by the Central Committee to adjust the HNZ's rules to comply with the archbishop's wishes regarding a confessional organisation of Catholic Croats, did not yield the desired result, and each side fell back to its initial positions.¹⁴ In attempting to explain the causes of the conflict, Pilar claimed that the archbishop himself bore the brunt of the blame, for under his political leadership Croatian interests were allegedly left unprotected, and he also did not want to relinquish political leadership of the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina to laypersons.¹⁵ The conflict reached its peak when the Croatian Catholic Association was established at Stadler's behest.¹⁶ The establishment of a new political organisation made the rift among the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina even deeper and more unbridgeable.

Until 1912, Pilar was one of most outspoken political opponents of Archbishop Stadler, only to transform, almost unexpectedly, into one of his close associates. This turnabout in Pilar's political life ensued after he became convinced of the unwillingness of the leadership of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina to accept the HNZ's stance on the necessity of creating a Croatian/Catholic-Muslim political bloc, which could then successfully oppose the efforts of the Serbs to draw Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Monarchy and annex it to the Kingdom of Serbia. As Pilar understood it, the survival of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a part of the Monarchy guaranteed the territorial integrity of this Austro-Hungarian territory, and simultaneously improved its chances of forming formal state (constitutional) ties with Croatia. In opposition to Pilar's expectations, the Muslim club in the Land Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, together with the Serbs, supported the autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, i.e. opposing its unification with Croatia (1912).¹⁷

The looming World War imposed new circumstances upon Pilar, under which he, together with like thinkers, struggled to create the optimum conditions for the survival and further overall development of the Croatian people in the Central European geopolitical space.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-273.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-275.

¹⁵ Zajedničar [I. Pilar], *Nadbiskup Stadler i Hrv. Nar. Zajednica* (Sarajevo: 1910), pp. 5-9. Cf. J. Krišto, "Uloga Ive Pilara u hrvatskom organiziranju u Bosni i Hercegovini," 88-91.

¹⁶ On the emergence of the Croatian Catholic Association and its relations with the HNZ; see: L. Đaković, *Političke organizacije*, pp. 325-353.

¹⁷ Zoran Grijak, *Politička djelatnost vrhbosanskog nadbiskupa Josipa Stadlera* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Vrhbosanska nadbiskupija – Dom i svijet, 2001), p. 536.

II. Political Activities of Ivo Pilar during the First World War (1914-1918)

The ominous gunshots in Sarajevo fired on the Feast of St. Vitus (28 June) in 1914 from the gun of the youthful Serbian assassin Gavrilo Princip was the spark that ignited the First World War, which ushered in the collapse of four empires: the German, Russian, Austrian and Ottoman.

a) *Ivo Pilar and Stadler's "Memorandum" to Pope Benedict XV (January 1915)*

After the outbreak of war, the Kingdom of Italy, a rather capricious member of the Central Powers, remained temporarily neutral. Sarajevo Archbishop Stadler, known as a man who favoured the Frankist-Rightist stance on a political solution to the status of the Croatian lands in the Monarchy, i.e. "trialism",¹⁸ had received reliable information on the attempts of the Entente powers (Great Britain, France and Russia) to get Italy to enter the war on their side. Fearing that the success of this plan could alter the balance of power among the warring sides and lead to the military and political defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, he sent a "Memorandum" to Pope Benedict XV on 28 January 1915, beseeching him to call for the maintenance of Italian neutrality in the world conflict. Even though Archbishop Stadler drafted and signed the "Memorandum", its actual author was Pilar.¹⁹

It is well known that Pope Benedict XV exercised his great diplomatic skill to prevent Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Entente. Indeed, he encouraged the Monarchy's top officials to make territorial concessions to their insatiable neighbour across the sea. Negotiations between the two states ceased at that moment when, under the secret Treaty of London (26 April 1915), the members of the Entente guaranteed much greater territorial gains to Italy than the Monarchy was prepared to make.²⁰ An once fickle ally became a bitter enemy on the battlefield.

b) *Pilar's "Memorial" to Archbishop Stadler (July 1917)*

During the final two years of the First World War, Pilar attempted to find the best solution for the burning "South Slav", in fact Croatian, question within the framework of the dualistically organised Monarchy and thereby ensure its continued existence as a European great power in the Danubian basin and on the Balkan peninsula.

¹⁸ On "trialism" and its protagonists, see: M. Gross, "Hrvatska politika velikoaustrijskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2 (1970), no. 2: 9-74.

¹⁹ Z. Grijak, "Ivo Pilar i Stadlerova promemorija papi Benediktu XV., g. 1915.," *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 108.

²⁰ Milan Marjanović, *Londonski ugovor iz godine 1915. Prilog povijesti borbe za Jadran 1914.-1917.* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1960).

After the emperor and king, Francis Joseph I, who ascended to the throne long before in 1848, died in November 1916, Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian and Muslim politicians began to reorient their policies toward demands for greater, or even complete independence of their then divided (in the formal state sense) territories within the two halves of the Monarchy. They based their demands on the “national principle”, i.e. the “right of nations to self-determination” and – the “Croatian state right”. These two principles were explicitly emphasised by the members of the Yugoslav Club in the Imperial Council in Vienna, i.e. the parliament of the Austrian half of the Monarchy, in the “May Declaration” (1917).²¹ The Pythically worded text of the Declaration left it open to various interpretations, depending which political option exploited it to achieve its ends.²²

Being among the first to perceive that the ultimate aim of the advocates of the “May Declaration” was the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of an independent Yugoslav state, Pilar sent the “Memorial on the Solution to the South Slav Question” (“*Denkschrift über die südslavische Frage*”) to Archbishop Stadler at the end of May 1917.²³ Analysing the current global political situation and its impact on the “South Slav question”, he proposed, as an “optimum solution”, that the “South Slav provinces become unified into a single administrative territory which would consist of: Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, Carniola, Southern Steiermark to the Drava River, Gorica (Gorizia) and Gradiška (Gradisca). He foresaw a special status for Trieste, whereby this port would be directly subordinated to central state authority.²⁴ In the “Memorial” he expressed particular concern over the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to Pilar, Serbian politics had managed to abuse the idea of “national unity” between Serbs and Croats in the interest of their own expansionist policies: “If the Serbs and Croats are one nation, then it logically follows that the Serbs, based on the national principle, are entitled to aspire to the unification of all South Slav provinces into one Greater Serbian state”.²⁵ Furthermore, he maintained that the United States of America under President Woodrow Wilson had accepted the idea that Bosnia-Herzegovina “must be torn” from the Monarchy based on the national

²¹ Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1914.-1919.* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1920), p. 94.

²² J. Krišto, “Heeding a Good or an Evil Angel;” Zlatko Matijević, “Reakcije frankovačkih pravaša na “Svibanjsku deklaraciju” i njezine promicatelje (1917.-1918.)” Franjo Emanuel Hoško, ed., *Prošlost obvezuje: Povijesni korijeni Gospičko-senjska biskupije*, Zbornik biskupa Mile Bogovića (Rijeka: Teologija u Rijeci – Riječki teološki časopis, 2004), pp.439-474.

²³ National and University Library, Zagreb, Collection of Old and Rare Books and Manuscript Collection; Ivo Pilar Bequest (hereinafter: NSK OIP), R-5708.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

principle, and relinquished to Serbia.²⁶ Assuming that the unification of all “South Slav lands” of the Monarchy could encounter insurmountable barriers, Pilar proposed a “minimal solution”, i.e. the “unification of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina”.²⁷ This state unit, in his view, would have the “national, geopolitical and economic conditions for successful development”.²⁸ Without this “minimal solution” at the very least, Pilar asserted that it would be impossible to find any solution to the “South Slav question”, and that this would ultimately have negative consequences for the Monarchy and its further existence as a state.²⁹

c) *The “Memorandum” of the Stadler-Pilar Political Circle to Emperor Charles (August 1917)*

Concern over the survival of the Monarchy and the future of the Croatian people prompted Archbishop Stadler and Pilar to take concrete political action. The “Memorandum on a Solution to the South Slav Question” (*Promemoria über die Lösung der südslavischen Frage*) was prepared for Charles I (IV), the emperor and king.³⁰

The “Memorandum”, which bears Stadler’s or Pilar’s name in historiography, begins with the assertion that in the period since the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian Agreement (1867) to the outbreak of the First World War (1914), the “South Slav question” was the “most pressing component of the Eastern Question” for the Monarchy, which has “perniciously” influenced internal politics in the state.³¹ In the expectation that the members of the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary) would secure victory over the countries of the Entente and their allies, Stadler and Pilar and their adherents did not believe this would lead to significant changes that would enable the easing of tensions and the establishment of lasting solutions in international relations in Europe. This is precisely why they stressed that the time had come when the Monarchy, out of “an obligation to itself”, must regulate the “South Slav question” so that it would “cease to be the Achilles’ heel of the entire state”.³² The writers of the “Memorandum” were aware that the solution to the “South Slav question” could not be tied to the “general reconstruction of the Monarchy” and the outright revivification of “trialism”.³³ Calling for Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina “to combine into a single administrative

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ NSK OIP, R-5704b.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 2.

³³ *Ibid.*

territory”,³⁴ the Stadler-Pilar political circle formally did not encroach upon the essence of the Monarchy’s dualist structure. However, the creation of a new “unified administrative territory” and its constitutional organisation as a joint possession of Austria and Hungary abrogated vital elements of the dualist system.³⁵ In other words, the Stadler-Pilar “Memorandum” sought the reorganisation of the Monarchy on the basis of “concealed trialism” in the form of a condominium.

The “Memorandum” was delivered to the emperor in mid-August 1917 by Pilar and Josip Vančaš in a private audience requested by Archbishop Stadler.³⁶

d) The Stadler-Pilar “Declaration” (November, 1917)

The president of the Yugoslav Club and one of the writers and co-signatories of the “May Declaration”, Anton Korošec, a Catholic priest, travelled to Sarajevo on 31 August 1917.³⁷ His intention was to become familiar with the positions of the leading politicians and religious representatives of the time in Bosnia-Herzegovina. What interested him the most was the opinion of Archbishop Stadler and his political group on the political programme encapsulated in the “May Declaration”. The Slovenian politician received an explanation of their views from Pilar, who actually reiterated what had already been stated in the “Memorandum on the Solution to the South Slav Question”.³⁸ In other words, no support for the “May Declaration” could be expected from this group.

Korošec compensated the failure in talks with Stadler’s group with success among the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Franciscans, who, in the following months, threw their unconditional support behind the “May Declaration”.³⁹

In November 1917, Stadler’s so-called “Declaration” was released. Its content was diametrically opposed to the “May Declaration” of the Yugoslav Club. In its second point, the Declaration read: “We demand the unification of those lands over which the Croatian state right extends, meaning Croatia,

³⁴ Cited according to: L. V. Südland [I. Pilar], *Južnoslavensko pitanje: Prikaz cjelokupnog pitanja* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1943), p. 398.

³⁵ For Pilar’s views on dualism, see: Stjepan Matković, “Političke prilike ‘nagodbene’ Hrvatske u očima Ive Pilara,” *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 51-66.

³⁶ Z. Matijević, “Državno-pravne koncepcije dr. Ive Pilara i vrhbosanskoga nadbiskupa dr. Josipa Stadlera. Od Promemorije do Izjave klerikalne grupe bosansko-hercegovačkih katolika (kolovoz-prosinac 1917),” *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 121.

³⁷ Momčilo Zečević, *Slovenska ljudska stranka i jugoslovensko ujedinjenje 1917 - 1921. Od Majске deklaracije do vidovdanskog ustava* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju - NIP Export-Press, 1973), pp. 92-94.

³⁸ L. Đaković, *Položaj Bosne i Hercegovine u austro-ugarskim koncepcijama rješenja južnoslavenskog pitanja 1914 - 1918*. (Tuzla: Univerzal, 1980), pp. 176-177.

³⁹ B.[onifac] Badrov, “Odjek svibanjske deklaracije u Bosni,” *Franjevački Vijesnik*, 35 (1928), no. 12: 363-365.

Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatian Istria, into a single political and financial, inviolable state body merged with the Habsburg Monarchy as a whole.”⁴⁰

The “Declaration” was signed by Archbishop Stadler, but not only in his own name but also “on behalf of 51 exemplary citizens from Sarajevo and the provinces”, whose signatures were not made public. The “Declaration” had appended to it a relatively extensive, unsigned article entitled “To the Defence of Croatianhood”, containing a discursive rejection of the “May Declaration” programme as politically unrealistic, and advocating a solution that would be based on the demands set forth in the “Declaration”, i.e. one exclusively based on the Croatian state right.⁴¹

Stadler’s “Declaration” immediately provoked divided reactions: the adherents of the “May Declaration” – notable among them members of the Croatian Catholic Seniority⁴² and the Croatian Catholic Movement, an elite clerical-lay organisation⁴³ – attacked it fiercely, while some of the Catholic clergy, the Party of the State Right (Frankists) and Radić’s Croatian Popular Peasant Party endorsed it.⁴⁴

Few on the political scene of the time believed that the Sarajevo archbishop was the actual initiator and author of the “Declaration”. Suspicion was first aimed at the territorial chief official in Bosnia-Herzegovina, General Stjepan Sarkotić,⁴⁵ who was thought to have exerted influence on Archbishop Stadler through Pilar and Ivica Pavičić to release the “Declaration” with his signature.⁴⁶ However, the style of the “Declaration” itself and the accompanying article indicated that the actual author was Pilar, which he in fact confirmed roughly ten years afterward.⁴⁷

e) *Pilar’s “Memorial” to Count Tisza (September 1918)*

In early 1918, the situation on Europe’s battlefields seemed more than

⁴⁰ F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 103-104.

⁴¹ Z. Matijević, “Izjava’ vrhbosanskog nadbiskupa dr. Josipa Stadlera iz studenoga 1917. godine,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 31 (1999), no. 1: 65.

⁴² Z. Matijević, “Hrvatski katolički seniorat i politika (1912.-1919.)” *Croatica christiana periodica*, 24 (2000), no. 46: 121-162.

⁴³ See: J. Krišto, *Hrvatski katolički pokret (1903. - 1941.)* (Zagreb: Glas koncila - Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2004).

⁴⁴ Z. Matijević “Izjava’ vrhbosanskog nadbiskupa dr. Josipa Stadlera iz studenoga 1917. godine,” 51-72.

⁴⁵ See: Ernest Bauer, *Der letzte Paladin des Reiches. Generaloberst Stefan Freiherr Sarkotić von Lovćen* (Graz – Wien – Köln: Verlag Styria, 1988).

⁴⁶ Marijo Matulić, “Postanak Jugoslavije,” *Seljački Kalendar za god. 1928.*, (1927): 44-45.

⁴⁷ Božidar Jančiković, “Ivo Pilar u svjetlu nepoznatih dokumenata,” *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2002): 242.

auspicious for the Central Powers: Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). Namely, on 9 February 1918, the Central Powers concluded a peace with the then re-established independent Ukrainian state. Three weeks later, on 3 March 1918, they signed a favourable peace treaty in Brest-Litovsk with the new Soviet (Bolshevik) government in Russia. Two months later, on 7 May 1918, Romania fell before German/Austro-Hungarian military onslaught and was compelled to sue for a separate peace. Several weeks earlier, on 21 March 1918, the German Supreme Military Command, buoyed by its previous military successes, launched its great spring offensive on the western front. They were not without success. The British-French frontline began to falter under the brunt of the German attack. The German armed forces came to within 70 kilometres of Paris. The Central Powers had almost no doubt in their ultimate victory.⁴⁸ However, the unexpectedly successful counterattacks mounted by the allied armies under the command of Marshal Ferdinand Foch halted the German advances. The fortunes of war once more turned to the Entente powers. Even though the defeat of the Central Powers was becoming increasingly apparent, the members of the Entente still were uncertain as to who was “enemy number one”. For the Kingdom of Italy, this was certainly the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For the remaining allied countries – France, Great Britain and the United States – it was Germany. None of these states foresaw the complete dismantlement of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in their wartime objectives. Even Italy only wanted a partial reduction of its territory. In other words, the leading political circles in the Entente countries were reserved over the possible division of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of a Yugoslav state composed of some of the latter’s provinces together with the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. Even the Serbian government, which was still in exile on the island of Corfu, had two solutions concerning the possible fate of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: one “maximum” and one “minimum”. The “maximum” solution projected the partition of the Monarchy, based on the “ethnographic principle”, into those territories in which the “South Slav peoples” (Slovenes, Croats and Serbs) lived and their unification with the Kingdom of Serbia, after the latter’s re-establishment in its pre-war boundaries. The “minimum” solution would be limited to the creation of a “Greater Serbia”, i.e. a Serbia that would encompass within its borders those parts of the Monarchy in which the Serbs, allegedly, had an “clear-cut” or “predominant majority”.⁴⁹

Despite its relatively favourable foreign policy and military status, the Dual Monarchy was experiencing a growing internal crisis with each passing day, mostly due to the dissatisfaction of its Slavic peoples (Poles, Czechs, Slovenes,

⁴⁸ Bogdan Krizman, “Stvaranje jugoslavenske države. (Referat na Drugom kongresu historičara Jugoslavije),” *Historijski pregled*, 4 (1958), no. 3-4: 167-168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

Croats, Serbs and others), as well as the discord between the Austrian Germans and the Hungarians, the two dominant peoples of the Monarchy. The deepest crisis was occurring in the southern arm of the Monarchy.

Charles I had already perceived the full importance of the “South Slav question” to the further destiny of the Monarchy. In his efforts to find a solution to save his state, the ruler decided to entrust a vital “fact-finding mission” to the former Hungarian minister president, Count István Tisza, who was still considered the most powerful political figure in Hungary. Summoning Tisza from the south-west front, Emperor Charles received him in an audience on 7 September 1918 and entrusted him as a *homo regius* to travel to the “South Slav lands” of the Monarchy and attempt to find a salutary formula which would save the Habsburg state from impending doom.⁵⁰

The first stop on Tisza’s major political tour of the Monarchy’s south was Zagreb, where he arrived on 13 September 1918.⁵¹ A week later Tisza travelled to Sarajevo, where he met with many, primarily pro-Yugoslav Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians from all three “ethno-religious” communities (Croatian Catholic, Serbian Orthodox and Bosniak Muslim).⁵² At the recommendation of General Sarkotić, Tisza received anti-Yugoslav politicians Pilar and Vančaš, who were at the time members of the Frankist Party of the State Right branch in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵³

During their second audience with Tisza on 22 September 1918, Pilar presented the Hungarian count with a “Memorial” (“*Denkschrift*”),⁵⁴ whereby he intended to justify the “pro-Austrian orientation” of his political circle in the attempt to secure the state and legal unification of all Croatian lands, into which he included Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Istria.⁵⁵

In his “Memorial”, Pilar expounded his view of the relationship of the Hungarians to the Croats during their eight centuries of life in a common

⁵⁰ B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu: Hrvatsko-srpski politički odnosi* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), p. 251.

⁵¹ B. Krizman, “O putu grofa Stj. Tisze po jugoslavenskim zemljama u septembru 1918,” *Historijski zbornik*, 11-12 (1958-59): 233-249.

⁵² B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 254-261; F. Šišić, *Dokumenti*, pp. 161-165.

⁵³ B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, p. 252, note 34. On Pilar’s party involvement see: Z. Matijević, “Dr. Ivo Pilar na stranicama pravaškog časopisa “Kroatische Rundschau,”” *Godišnjak njemačke narodnosne zajednice*, (2005): 35-51.

⁵⁴ NSK OIP, R-5710.

⁵⁵ NSK OIP, R-5710, 1. In explaining the extent of the Croatian lands to Tisza, Pilar instructed him to read his book *Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Manzschke k.u.k. Hof-, Verlags- u. Universitäts- Buchhandlung, 1918). On the fate of Pilar’s book, see: S. Lipovčan, “Pilarovo djelo *Južnoslavensko pitanje*,” *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 193-232.

state.⁵⁶ According to this view, this state union succeeded for so long because the Hungarians did not question the existence of Croatian statehood.⁵⁷ The problems between the two peoples, Pilar asserted, only emerged in the nineteenth century when the “idea of unitary Hungarian state” appeared.⁵⁸

In his further analysis of Croato-Hungarian relations, Pilar expressed his great bewilderment over Hungarian sympathies for the Serbs. To him, such sympathies served as proof that the Hungarians understood “neither the objectives nor nature of Serbian nationalism”, for the “goals of the Serbs were to enfeeble and ultimately assimilate the Bulgars and Croats and to unify the entire Slavic Balkans into a Greater Serbia”.⁵⁹ For Pilar there was no doubt that the Serbian Orthodox Church was slated to play the principal role in the achievement of the Greater Serbian state idea: “the Serbian Orthodox national church is an instrument of implementation; it is more a battle-ready and conquering socio-political organisation than a religious community (...)”.⁶⁰

The unresolved constitutional status of the Croatian lands had compelled the Croats, in Pilar’s opinion, “to become largely prepared to accept as a substitute [for a Croatian state within the Monarchy] a Serbo-Croatian state outside of the Monarchy, and this is the fundamental idea underlying Yugoslavism”.⁶¹

Finally, in his “Memorial” Pilar proposed the following solution to the burning constitutional question in the Monarchy’s south: “1. Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and the Istrian islands shall be unified into a Croatian kingdom; 2. politically, the Croatian kingdom shall be in the hands of the Croats and the Croatian programme shall be implemented appropriately; 3. the Croatian kingdom shall be incorporated into the dualist system in the form of sub-dualism, and it shall exercise partial sovereignty within the framework of the crown lands of St. Stephen, and the conditions for this are a) the guarantee of Croatia’s unconditional national and state individuality and the possibility of developing the economy and trade in its new territory unimpeded; b) Austria’s consent for such a solution”.⁶²

Pilar’s “Memorial” was yet another attempt to reorganise the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy along the lines of the “concealed trialism” principle, i.e. to formally retain the dualist structure of the state, while nonetheless carrying forward the formal state unification of all Croatian lands, including Bosnia-Herzegovina. This proposal stood in stark contrast to the Hungarian intentions

⁵⁶ NSK OIP, R-5710, [3-4].

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, [4].

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, [4-5].

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, [5].

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, [4].

⁶² B. Krizman, *Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 259-260.

of reinforcing the dualist system, which included plans to directly link Bosnia-Herzegovina to Hungary as a “*corpus separatum*”.⁶³

Pilar’s attempts to reorganise the Monarchy did not, as one could only expect, meet with Tisza’s approval.

f) Pilar’s Lecture at the “Austrian Political Society” in Vienna (October 1918)

The day after Tisza’s departure, 24 September 1918, the new joint finance minister, Alexander Spitzmüller von Harmersbach, arrived in Sarajevo.⁶⁴ Three days later, Pilar boarded the train from Sarajevo and travelled to Vienna, as he had been invited by Minister Spitzmüller to deliver a lecture on the solution to constitutional and national problems in the Monarchy’s southern territories.

Pilar arrived in Vienna in the sombre atmosphere of the final weeks of existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. He held two lectures at the “Austrian Political Society”.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the content of the first lecture is not known. In the second lecture, held on 12 October and aimed at the Austro-German political public, Pilar asserted that the “pressing nature of the South Slav question” lies in the fact that the war, which was “set off” by this question” threatened “the Monarchy with an extremely unpleasant end”.⁶⁶ In Pilar’s opinion, the “most fatal” aspect in the entire constitutional and political knot in the Monarchy’s south was that the “South Slav question with the existing legal grounds and power relations can no longer be resolved legally”.⁶⁷ Despite this devastating conclusion, Pilar offered a possible solution: “I believe [...] that the new construction [of the Monarchy] can only be conducted on a federalist foundation. The existing Monarchy can now only be a federal state composed of several smaller nation states. A South Slav federal state may also be included within the framework of this federal state”.⁶⁸

Pilar closed his lecture with words which seemed to forecast the numerous tragic historical upheavals in Central Europe over the course of the last century of the second millennium of the Christian era: “All nations need the Monarchy in their present-day territories, and if they momentarily forget it, then they shall soon learn to value it in the harsh school of life”.⁶⁹

Pilar radicalised his views on a possible solution not only to the “South Slav question”, which for him was essentially identical to the solution to the

⁶³ Z. Grijak, *Politička djelatnost*, p. 554.

⁶⁴ Alexander Spitzmüller, “... und hat auch Ursach, es zu lieben” (Wien – München – Stuttgart – Zürich: Wilhelm Frick-Verlag, 1955), pp. 252-256.

⁶⁵ NSK OIP, R-5712, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

status of the Croatian lands, but also to the survival of the entire Monarchy, for he discarded “concealed trialism” and openly advocated the federalisation of the Habsburg state. The transformation of the Dual Monarchy into a federal state would have, in his opinion, solved all of Croatia’s constitutional problems with the Austrian and Hungarian components of the state.

However, all of the efforts exerted by Pilar and his political adherents to reorganise the internal political structure of the Monarchy and thereby save this venerable state from inevitable collapse, and also ensure a favourable formal state position for Croatia within the Central European civilizational sphere, did not achieve the expected results. Even prior to the formal end of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy disappeared, relinquishing its place to the new states which emerged from its ruins. The “South Slav question” was “resolved” outside of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and all of the Croatian lands, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, together with the Slovenian lands, became a part of the newly-created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the rule of the Karađorđević dynasty of Serbia.

III. The Fate of Ivo Pilar in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/ Yugoslavia (1918-1933)

After the end of the First World War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Pilar, under pressure from political opponents, decided to leave Tuzla and return to his native Zagreb, where he was allowed to open a law office in mid-1920.⁷⁰ His move to Zagreb did not, however, usher in a peaceful time in his life. Indeed, as a politically suspect individual, whose judgements seriously brought into question the historical, geopolitical, religious and economic justification for the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, he was subjected to a show trial in 1921 together with Milan Šufflay, another distinguished Croatian intellectual.⁷¹ By taking Pilar before the courts, the Karađorđević regime intended to discredit him in the eyes of the Croatian intellectual and political public as a person with questionable moral values, apt to engage in clandestine activities (espionage). Ultimately, the trial closed with Pilar receiving a conditional one-year prison sentence.⁷²

⁷⁰ [Z. Matijević, ed.], “Ivo Pilar: Historijat moje veleizdajničke parnice u g. 1920.-22.,” *Godišnjak Pilar*, 2 (2002): 212.

⁷¹ Bosiljka Janjatović, *Politički teror u Hrvatskoj 1918.-1935.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, Dom i svijet, 2002), pp. 191-221.

⁷² [Z. Matijević, ed.], “Ivo Pilar: Historijat moje veleizdajničke parnice,” 214.

The political disfavour garnered by his struggle for the state independence of the Croatian people forced Pilar to keep his activities far from the eyes of the public and the repressive state apparatus.

Under the dictatorship of King Alexander, which was instituted through the deft exploitation of the assassination of Stjepan Radić on the floor of the National Parliament in Belgrade (1928/1929), by 1932 Pilar found himself compelled to offer Vladko Maček, the chairman of the then banned Croatian Peasant Party, his co-operation in the party's "reorganisation".⁷³

In the solitude of his study, Pilar intensively contemplated the status of the Croatian people in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Taking into consideration the domestic and foreign factors which could influence the solution to the incendiary Croatian question, in his final book, *Immer wieder Serbien* (Berlin, 1933) – which he published under the unusual pseudonym Florian Lichtträger (the surname meaning "Lightbearer") – offered a solution which was intended to stabilise the ill-fated Yugoslav state, but also eliminate the threat of a possible broader international conflict provoked by its permanent internal crisis. At that historical junction, Pilar claimed, the only medicine for the sickened Yugoslav state was – "thorough federalisation", which must be implemented without delay.⁷⁴ Even though he temporarily made pace with the Yugoslav state framework, Pilar never forsook the idea of establishing an independent Croatian state.

On 3 September 1933, Ivo Pilar was found dead "in front of a mirror with a bloodied temple" in his home in the Zagreb forest park Tuškanac.⁷⁵ According to the official version, the Croatian intellectual committed suicide with a firearm (revolver). However, given that he was not an unbalanced individual given to uncontrolled outbursts, the rumour soon spread throughout Zagreb that he was the victim of an assassination for which the government in Belgrade was responsible.⁷⁶ Pilar's tragic death remains enshrouded in mystery to this day.

⁷³ B. Jančiković, "Ivo Pilar i vodstvo privremeno zabranjene Hrvatske seljačke stranke," *Godišnjak Pilar*, 1 (2001): 178.

⁷⁴ Ivo Pilar, *Uvijek iznova Srbija* (Zagreb: Consilium, 1997), p. 122.

⁷⁵ Željko Holjevac, "Problem Pilarove smrti," *Godišnjak Pilara*, 1 (2001), 233-238.

⁷⁶ R. Horvat, *Hrvatska na mučilištu*, p. 529.

Dr. Ivo Pilar und die Kunst des Möglichen. Kroatien zwischen Mitteleuropa und dem Balkan

Zusammenfassung

Dr. Ivo Pilar (1874-1933), Jurist, Geopolitiker und Politiker, gehört zur Reihe hervorragendster kroatischer Intellektuellen der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Als politisch engagierter Publizist veröffentlicht er seine Werke in deutscher und kroatischer Sprache, oft unter Pseudonymen (Zajedničar, L. von Südland, Florian Lichtträger). Während seines zwanzigjährigen Aufenthaltes in Bosnien und Herzegowina (in Sarajevo und Tuzla) nahm er aktiv an Politik teil. Er war einer von Gründern der Kroatischen Nationalgemeinschaft (Hrvatska narodna zajednica). Zu Beginn seiner politischen Tätigkeit konfrontierte er sich politisch mit dem Erzbischof von Sarajevo, Dr. Josip Stadler, mit dem er aber später, während des Ersten Weltkrieges, in politischer Hinsicht eng mitwirkte. Im letzten Kriegsjahr wurde Pilar zum Mitglied der von Josip Frank geführten Rechtspartei, beziehungsweise ihres Klubs in Bosnien und Herzegowina. In seiner politischen Tätigkeit suchte er, seiner Meinung nach, die am meisten entsprechenden Lösungen für die existentiellen Bedürfnisse des kroatischen Volkes innerhalb der Grenzen des mitteleuropäischen geopolitischen Raums. Die führenden politischen Kreise der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie hatten aber kein Verständnis für wichtige Resultate seiner Erkenntnisse hinsichtlich der möglichen Lösungen der kroatischen Frage in einem breiteren Kontext der damals außerordentlich wichtigen "Südslawischen Frage". Im Königreich der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen war er wegen seiner politischen Überzeugungen *Persona non grata* und wurde gerichtlich verfolgt. Während der Diktatur des Königs Aleksandar war er politisch vertraut mit der Leitung der damals verbotenen Kroatischen Bauernpartei (Hrvatska seljačka stranka). Sein gewaltsamer Tod bleibt bis heute ungeklärt.