

Nineteen Years of the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences

THE IVO PILAR INSTITUTE — THE INTELLECTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF CROATIA

Interview with Vlado Šakić

by Ana Kapraljević

The Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences has been working for nineteen years in the Republic of Croatia, and it is proper to introduce its work as it plays an immensely important role in the consciousness of the Croatian public, particularly in a time when conscious and responsible practices are increasingly scarce.

Ivo Pilar, the man this institute is named after, was a man of humanistic inclinations, and the institute in his name began a comprehensive research of social, religious, national and sexual changes in Croatian society, but also within the European context, and their reverberations in the present life circumstances.

From 1993 to 2005, many projects were completed for which researches had to be carried out and data had to be collected in Croatia, which was struck by the scarcely ended war, poverty, but, first and foremost, by prejudice which would otherwise take decades to be overcome. However, the institute's team comprising the doctors of science, writers, sociologists, psychologists and historians, undertook a difficult task of researching, and, in only a decade, it became a prominent institution of international relevance. The projects on religious, national and anti-war topics were the following: "Konfesije i rat" / "Confessions and the War", 1993; "Crkva i država u postkomunističkim društvima" / "The Church and the State in Post-Communist Societies", 1995; "Vukovar '91 — Jedanaest godina poslije: Logori i ljudska prava u Europi na pragu 21. stoljeća" / "Vukovar 1991 — Eleven Years After: Concentration Camps and Human Rights in Europe on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century", 2002); they researched social and socio-economic factors in Croatian society: "Nasilje, spol, rat: društveni i kulturni aspekti" / "Violence, Sex, War: Social and Cultural Aspects",

1995; "Odnosi Hrvata i Bugara od X. do XI. stoljeća s posebnim osvrtom na vrijeme Dubrovačke Republike" / "Relationships Between the Croats and the Bulgarians from the 10th to the 11th Centuries with a Particular Reference to the Time of the Dubrovnik Republic", 1999; "COST Reforma sustava socijalne skrbi u Europi i politika zapošljavanja" / "The COST Reform of the System of Social Welfare in Europe and the Politics of Employment", 2001; "COST Ekonomska i socijalna dobrobit djece u Europi" / "The COST Economic and Social Welfare of Children in Europe", 2004.

With their entire work, they raised the questions of coexistence in the Greater Europe without borders, while at the same time, affiliation to one nation ("Hrvatska kao čimbenik stabilnosti i mira u Europi" / "Croatia as a Factor of Stability and Peace in Europe", 1996; "Europske integracije za 21. stoljeće" / "European Integrations for the Twenty-First Century", 1999; "Dijaspora i domovina: Projekt Metropolis" / "The Diaspora and the Homeland: The Metropolis Project", 2002; "Knowledge-Based Society: A Challenge for New European and Accession Countries", 2003; "The COST Growing Up in Europe Between Diversity and Equality — a Common Path Towards Scientific Cooperation in the Enlarged Europe", 2005).

In 2009, the conference SIGURNOST I OBRANA REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE U EUROATLANTSKOM KONTEKSTU (THE SAFETY AND DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA WITHIN THE EURO-ATLANTIC CONTEXT) which provided guidelines on the true significance of a small country within the context of the Greater Europe and greater trans-Atlantic multi-national companies and military associations. Certain of the projects in the three year's work (2007-2010) of the institute, in association with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, are the

following: "Društvena evaluacija hrvatskog inovacijskog sustava u funkciji društva znanja" ("Social Evaluation of the Croatian Innovative System Serving the Purpose of the Society of Knowledge"); "Društveni stavovi i međugrupni odnosi u hrvatskom društvu" ("Social Attitudes and Group Interrelations in Croatian Society"); "Hrvatski identitet i multikulturalnost Mediterana u doba globalizacije" ("Croatian Identity and the Multiculturality of the Mediterranean in the Age of Globalisation"); "Istraživanje javnoga mnijenja i masovnih medija" ("Research of the Public Opinion and the Mass Media"); "Kulture konzumerizma i održivosti: globalni izazovi socio-kulturnom razvoju Republike Hrvatske" ("The Cultures of Consumerism and Viability: Global Challenges to the Socio-Cultural Development of the Republic of Croatia"); "Manjine u Hrvatskoj i Hrvati u okolnim zemljama: povijesni identiteti" ("Minorities in Croatia and the Croats in the Surrounding Countries: Historical Identities"); "Nove ekonomske elite, institucije i prostorna ovisnost strategija razvitka" ("New Economic Elites, Institutions and the Spatial Dependence of the Strategies of Development"); "Određnice rizičnih i devijantnih ponašanja u nacionalnom i globalnom kontekstu" ("The Determinants of Risky and Deviant Behaviour Within the National and Global Contexts"); "Održivi razvoj Hrvatske" ("The Viable Development of Croatia"); "Povijesni atlas gradova: povijesni identitet i suvremeni razvoj hrvatskih gradova" ("The Historical Atlas of Cities: The Historical Identity and the Contemporary Development of Croatian Cities"); "Religijski pluralizam, postmoderni religijski pokreti i hrvatski identitet" ("Religious Pluralism, Postmodernist Religious Movements and Croatian Identity"); "Socijalna održivost i procesi urbane transformacije u Hrvatskoj" ("Social Viability and the Processes of Urban Transformation in Croatia"); "Svjetsko istraživanje vrijednosti: Hrvatska u globaliziranom svijetu" ("The World Research in Value: Croatia in the Globalised World"); "Utjecaj socijalnih mreža u društvu znanja" ("The Influence of Social Networks in the Society of Knowledge"); "Demografska transformacija Hrvatske: urbano-ruralni i regionalni aspekti" ("The Demographic Transformation of Croatia: Urban-Rural and Regional Aspects"); "Europsko istraživanje vrednota: Hrvatska u Europi" ("European Research of Values: Croatia in Europe"); "Supsidijarnost u hrvatskom društvu" ("Subsidiarity in Croatian Society"); "Hrvatski identitet, religijske

zajednice i izazovi europskih integracija" ("Croatian Identity, Religious Communities and Challenges of European Integrations"); "Religijski, nacionalni i politički identitet Hrvata u Bosni i Hercegovini" ("Religious, National and Political Identity of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina"). The institute has been headed by the same person, Vlado Šakić, for the third term of office. He is well-known for being self-sacrificing in his work. Here follows the interview with him, and his thoughts and ideas about today's challenges within the European context.

¶: Could you please inform us, in several key sentences, of the humanistic aspects of the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences?

Vlado Šakić: The Ivo Pilar Institute was founded in 1991 on the initiative of a group of Croatian scholars from the social and humanistic fields. To this day, it has developed into an international,



reputable institution. The basic starting point of the founders was that the "Croatian society was an unresearched society", while the fundamental motto on which it has developed is "through research to the facts". Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and the applicability of researches are the basic scientific and humanistic orientations of the Ivo Pilar Institute. Such have been, since its establishment, the approaches with which we have participated in the world exchange of scientific information.

¶: What aspects of Croatian culture is the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences engaged in?

V.Š.: Croatian culture is an indispensable segment in the research of Croatian society, and that is the basic research topic of the Ivo Pilar Institute. Through numerous socio-cultural projects, we have researched cultural identity in the broadest sense, socio-religious topics, topics of socio-cultural anthropology, historical-cultural topics, while

most recently also the cultural habits of Croatian citizens. Based on the empirical insight in all the aforementioned topics, numerous scientific publications have been published and a large number of scientific conferences have been held. The topic of one of the scientific programmes of the institute (which includes four internationally recognised projects) is "Hrvatski identitet, socio-kulturni razvoj i globalizacija" ("Croatian Identity, Socio-Cultural Development and Globalisation"), while recently we have signed a contract with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport for the new scientific project entitled "Odnos kultura: društvo u hrvatskoj modernizaciji" ("The Relationship — Culture: Society in Croatian Modernisation"), which is going to be managed by Dr Ivan Rogić, and which will deal with the research of Croatian culture.

]]: *Are there any international projects, and to what extent are they and the international co-operation between the Ivo Pilar Institute and other international institutions wide-spread?*

V.Š.: It is difficult to answer the question of international scientific work and the co-operation with the Ivo Pilar Institute briefly. Namely, we have been co-operating and are involved in all forms of scientific activities with international, scientific and educational institutions. As leaders or contributors, we were or have been involved in dozens of international projects; we have published or have been participating in the publishing of numerous international scientific publications; we have been the scientific representatives of Croatia in the managements of scientific organisations in the European Union, while annually we participate in some hundred international conferences, scientific or professional, where we present our scientific achievements. Among significant international partners, I will mention the European Scientific Foundation (ESF) within which there is also the organisation COST, i.e. the European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research of the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, the USA; the European Academy for Life Research, Integration and Civil Society (EALIZ), from Vienna; the Konrad Adenauer Foundation; the Erste Stiftung Foundation and numerous other scientific institutions which we collaborate with in scientific projects.

]]: *What, do you maintain, is the greatest achievement of the Ivo Pilar Institute?*

V.Š.: During nineteen years of its existence, the institute has published some two thousand scientific publications, while annually approximately one thousand and five hundred scientific and professional papers are published, based on the empirical insight in Croatian society. Some hundred scholars have obtained their doctorates and master's degrees in thirteen scientific fields within the scientific and humanistic domains. Two scientific journals were started, one of which, *Društvena istraživanja* (*Social Research*), is an internationally recognised journal. Some hundred Croatian and international scientific conferences have been held. In terms of organisation, we have established six regional (Split, Osijek, Gospić, Pula, Vukovar, Dubrovnik) and seventeen functional centres. Apart from that, the scholars of the institute have participated in the establishing of the larger number of university studies, one faculty and one university. Choose the greatest achievement yourself.

]]: *What do you see as your greatest achievement while being the head of the Ivo Pilar Institute?*

V.Š.: I was the chairman of the Promotion Committee of the Ivo Pilar Institute and its head for four terms of office, but, I have been performing this duty for the third consecutive term of office. As my greatest success, I do not see the accomplishments which have earned me the status of the scientific adviser and a tenured professor, nor the listed achievements of the Ivo Pilar Institute — which are the work of all the scholars of the institute — but the continuity of confidence that the scholars of the institute have had in me virtually without exception since the founding of the institute.

]]: *Are you possibly embarking on some projects on the literary level?*

V.Š.: As I have already said, we took and have taken part in numerous projects on topics of Croatian culture, and we have published a considerable number of publications about it. Literature is not directly the subject of our researches, but, among our scholars, we also have had writers such as, for instance, the late Srećko Lipovčan, who performed the duty of the vice-president of the Croatian Writers' Association and was one of the editors-in-chief of the journal *Most / The Bridge*. The aforementioned project by Ivan Rogić, who is also a writer, is going to — more intensively than others — deal with the topics of Croatian culture and literature.]]