

Czech Student Albert Bazala at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, 1895–1899: Doctor of Science, Full Professor

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Abstract

Albert Bazala stands as a central figure in Croatian philosophy and public culture in the first half of the 20th century, bridging European currents with a distinctive national-cultural program. Trained in Zagreb and refined through studies in Munich, Jena, Halle, Leipzig, and Prague, he synthesized Wundtian psychology, Eucken's cultural phenomenology, and Masaryk–Drtin's sociocultural perspectives into a Croatian-centered, voluntarist philosophy. Bazala linked philosophical insight to pedagogy by serving as a bridge to culture, science, and everyday life. His contributions extended beyond scholarship: he founded and edited the first Croatian philosophy and psychology journal, contributed to encyclopedic discourse, and, through leadership of Pučko sveučilište (People's University), Matica Hrvatska, and the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU), promoted popular education, civic engagement, and pro-democratic, pro-socialist ideals. He argued that culture must serve humane existence and that education is the principal instrument of social emancipation, proposing reforms such as mandatory regional lectures, public libraries, and a citizenry capable of critical thought and creative production. Bazala sought to harmonize universal philosophical insights with Croatian/South Slavic history, combining gnoseological clarity with ontological depth and a strong commitment to education as a political and cultural project.

Keywords

Croatian philosophy, Popular education, Cultural democracy, Popular education, Croatian national identity.

