dr. IVAN ČIZMIĆ

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HISTORY OF THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION OF AMERICA

GOLDEN MARKETING

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Dr. Ivan Čizmić

HISTORY OF THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION OF AMERICA 1894–1994

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Dr. Ivan Čizmić

HISTORY OF THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION OF AMERICA 1894–1994

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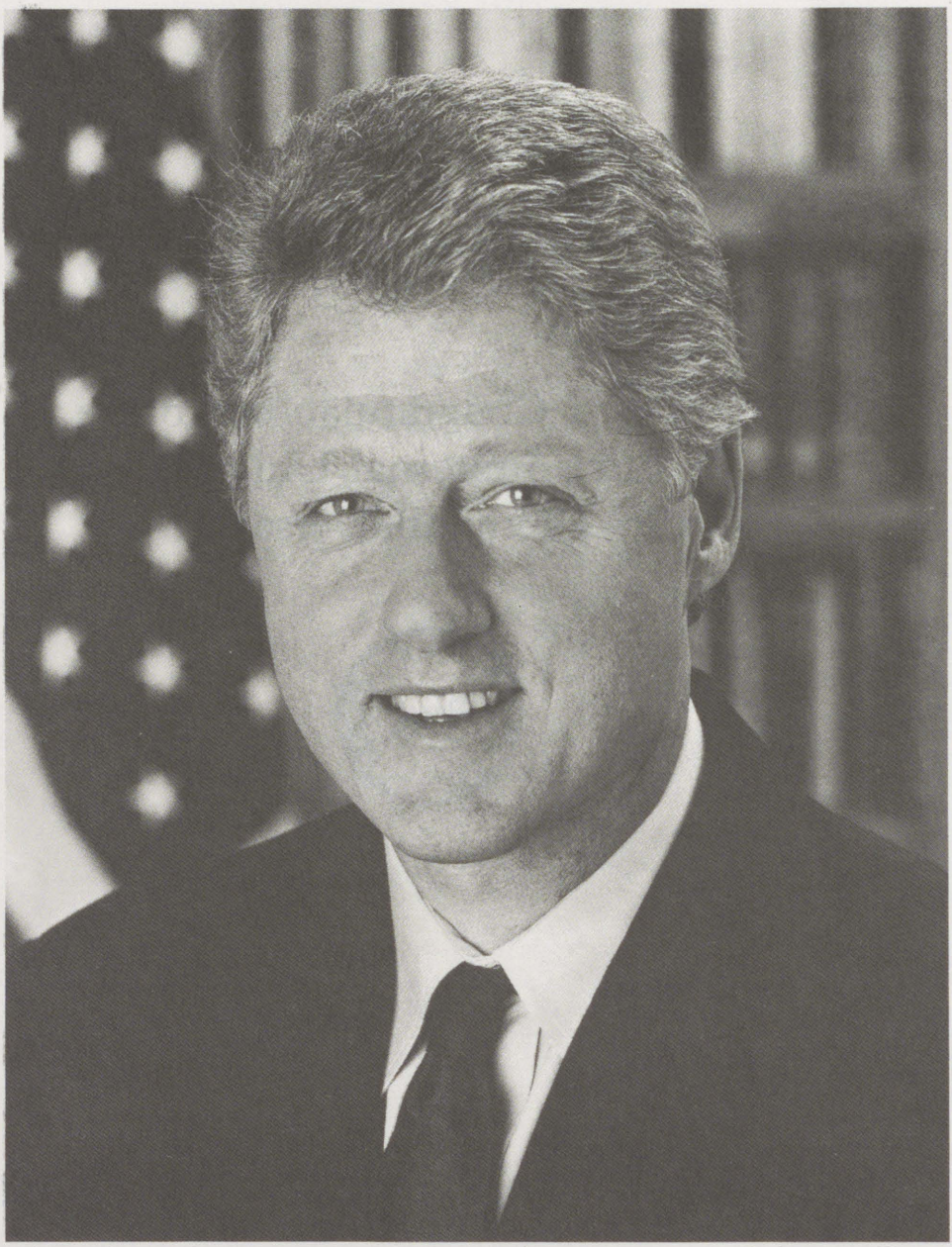
This book was made with the patronage of the CFU

Greetings and Congratulations to the
Croatian Fraternal Union
on its 100th Anniversary



Bill Clinton, President of the United States of America

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

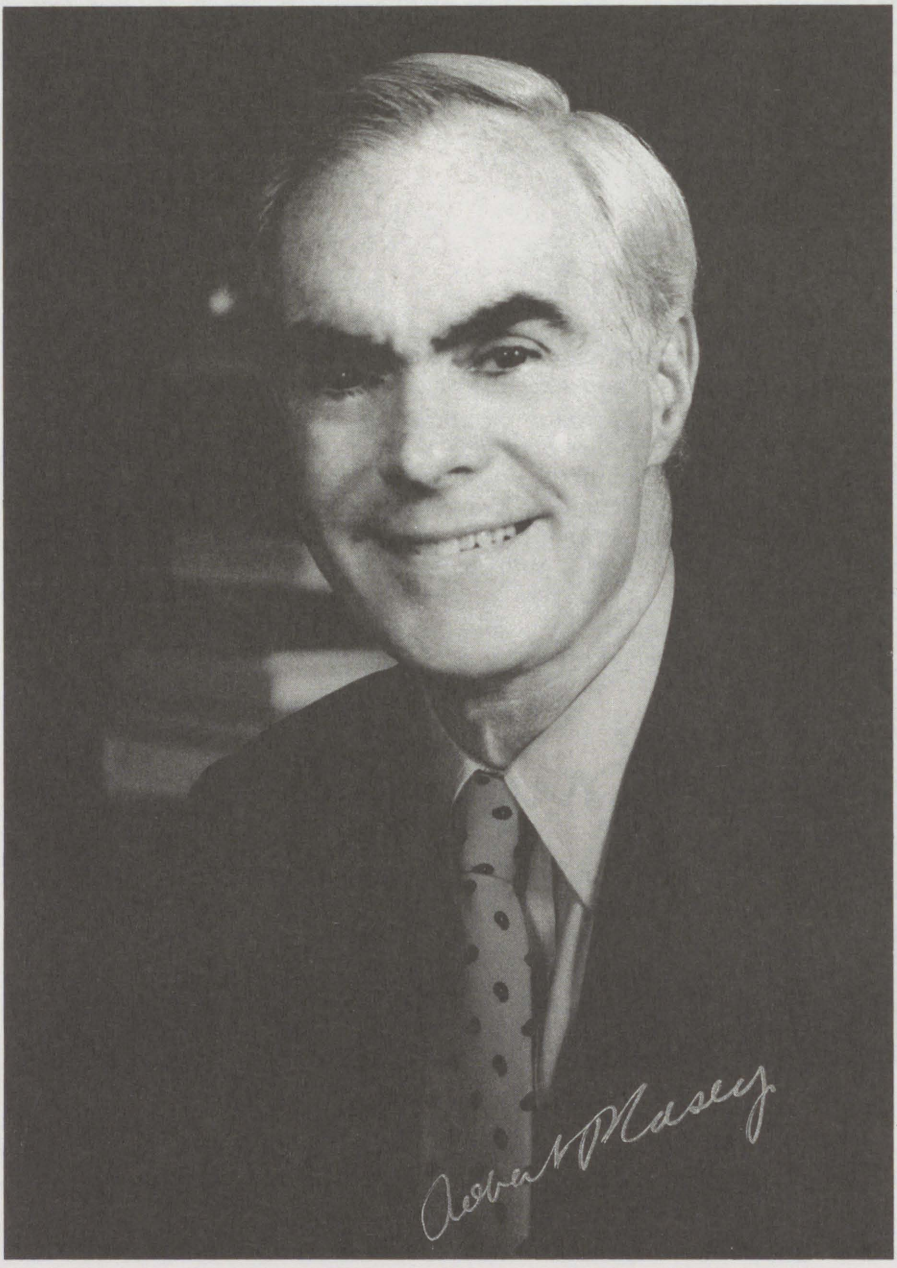
April 7, 1994

I am delighted to honor the Croatian Fraternal Union of America as you celebrate your 100th anniversary.

One of the most rewarding of human experiences is the coming together of people to share common experiences and interests. For 100 years, the Croatian Fraternal Union has maintained and built upon the wonderful legacy of your founders. The strength of your organization today is a testament to the vision of your founders and to your commitment to your shared goals.

I congratulate you on your achievement, and I extend best wishes for many years of continuing success.

Bill Clinton



Robert P. Casey, Governor of Pennsylvania

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Governor's Office

I am pleased to extend warmest congratulations to the Croatian Fraternal Union of America on the occasion of your 100th anniversary. This is indeed a very special and historic milestone.

Pennsylvania was built by the peoples of many lands who came here seeking a better future for themselves and for their children. Many joined forces to create labor, social, and fraternal organizations to improve their working lives and take care of one another in time of need. These organizations, like the Croatian Fraternal Union, have also worked to keep alive the wonderful heritage brought to our shores from the homelands of their members, enriching both our state and nation with the many arts and traditions that have thus been preserved.

Since your organization was founded in Pennsylvania a century ago, you have grown into the largest Croatian organization outside of Croatia itself, and have shown extraordinary commitment to the families and people of your communities. Your outstanding work on behalf of others is a testament to your dedication to community service and the principle of neighbor helping neighbor.

On behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I salute you for a century of service and offer my best wishes for every continuing success.

Robert P. Casey
Governor

Dr. Franjo Tuđman, President of the Republic of Croatia

THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Republic of Croatia, I personaly extend my congratulations on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Croatian Fraternal Union, the largest and most distinguished organization of Croatian emigrants. Its activities among the Croats in the USA and Canada have always been of extreme importance for cherishing and keeping the Croatian national identity alive in their new homeland. In the past hundred years, the Society has played an irreplaceable role among the Croats on the American Continent, thus becoming part of Croatian history.

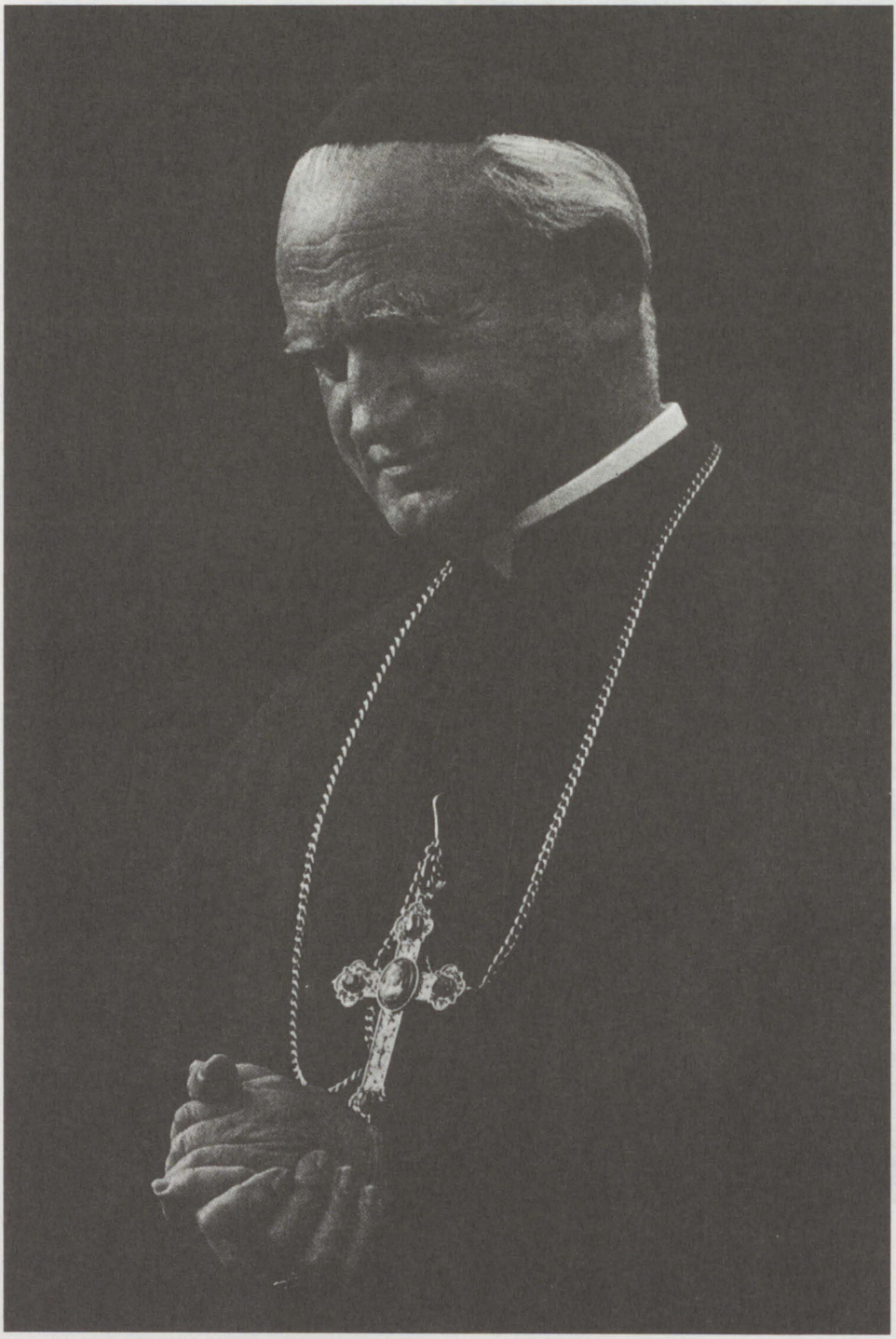
I particularly welcome the publication of the book *History of the Croatian Fraternal Union* which will give the American and the Croatian public an insight into the patriotic and humanitarian work of the Society, from its establishment till today. The Croats, forced to emigrate from their native country for political and economic reasons, have never forgotten their homeland, always offering their political and financial support. This was especially manifested recently in the creation of our independent and democratic state of Croatia.

The Croatian Fraternal Union and all American and Canadian citizens of Croatian descent can be proud of their contribution - through numerous ties with their old country - to the evolution of their new homeland - the USA and Canada.

I am fully convinced that cooperation between the Croatian Fraternal Union and the Mother Country will further be promoted in the interest of good relationships between the Croatian, American and Canadian peoples and their respective democratic states.

President of the Republic of Croatia

Dr. Franjo Tuđman



Franjo Cardinal Kuharić, the Archbishop of Zagreb

ZAGREBAČKI NADBISKUP
ARCHIEPISCOPUS ZAGREBIENSIS
41001 Zagreb, Kaptol 31 • pp 553

To the *Croatian Fraternal Union*

It is a special pleasure for me to extend my heartiest congratulations on the 100th anniversary of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

Upon their arrival in America over a hundred years ago, the Croatian immigrants encountered all the hardships of life in a foreign country. They were employed in the most difficult jobs in mines, steel mills or railway construction; not knowing the language of their new country they felt bitter loneliness. The harder their life, the greater was their need for mutual assistance and protection. So, the slogan "All for one, and one for all" was born.

By building their own church and establishing cultural societies with social goals and aims, their need for togetherness and fraternal union was revealed. The Croatian Fraternal Union of America is the living witness of this hundred-year-long striving. Fraternally united and protected, its members felt closeness - not one of them was abandoned in hard and trying times. It was within this Society that their national conscience was also cherished and protected. Although growing on the new soil, they never forgot either their homeland or its people, for their roots were in the old country from which they brought with them their faith and honesty.

I, therefore, thank all the benefactors and members of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America for all the good deeds, assistance, support and intercession for equity, freedom and peace in Croatia.

I congratulate and express my thanks to the whole Society and invoke Our Lord's blessing on all its members.

+ Franjo Kard. Kuharić

Archbishop of Zagreb

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Bernard M. Luketich

PREFACE

A centennial celebration is an important happening in the life of any organization. It marks a century of growth and presents itself as a time to reflect upon past historical events and accomplishments which gave the organization the impetus to reach 100 years of existence.

For that reason, we are proud to present to all members of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America and all others interested in the workings of our fraternal benefit society this historical recap of the key happenings which were largely responsible for the growth and expansion of the Croatian Fraternal Union.

This CFU Centennial History was written by Dr. Ivan Cizmic of Zagreb, Croatia who has done a great deal of research on our fraternal organization and its development. We are grateful to Dr. Cizmic for the admirable work he has done in compiling the information for this 100th Anniversary History.

We also thank the Golden Marketing Firm of Zagreb, Croatia for publishing and producing this book. It will serve as an important reference source on our fraternal organization which will be used for many years into the future.

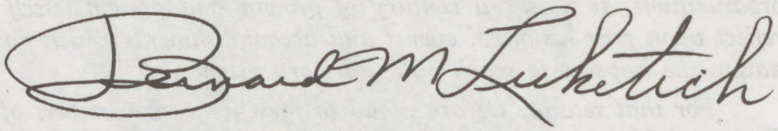
In presenting this book, we proudly dedicate this Centennial History to our founding fathers who had the strength and foresight to call upon various Croatian organizations before the turn of the century to organize the Croatian Society, which became the National Croatian Society, and subsequently became today's Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

We are indebted to our pioneers who forged a future for our generation and for future generations and who created a sense of belonging and security for all Croatian immigrant families to these North American shores. These pioneers endured countless setbacks and difficulties and proved they had the stamina to withstand and conquer even the most turbulent times.

As we commemorate the 100th Anniversary Year of the Croatian Fraternal Union, we celebrate their pioneering spirit and applaud their victories which kept our Society on a course of progress and expansion. Thanks to their perseverance, the Croatian Fraternal Union endured and is now recognized as the largest, most influential Croatian Society outside of Croatia, with a membership of nearly 90,000 and assets of 150 million dollars.

Just as our pioneers did in 1894 in their call for unity and for all to be joined in one strong fraternal organization, the current administration of the Croatian Fraternal Union is the strongest advocate of our Croatian people.

We dedicate our 100th Anniversary Year to the unity of our Croatian Fraternal Union membership and to the continuance of our support of the democratic Republic of Croatia and our Croatian people. In keeping with our motto, "All for One, One for All", we will fervently promote unity among all Croatian people and, in tribute to our pioneer members, will proudly build upon the strong foundation they created as we begin our second century of fraternalism and progress.



Bernard M. Luketich
National President

Foreward

THE CROATS IN THE USA AND CANADA

The migration of Croats to America is part of the European immigration process to the New World. Croats were, among the first Europeans to arrive in America.

According to some historians, a few seamen from Dubrovnik sailed on Columbus's ships. Legend has it that the Croatan Indians were named after some passengers on board the Dubrovnik ships. The colony of Ebenezer, Georgia, was probably the location of the first massive immigration of the Croats and Slovenes into America. There is ample documentation about the spiritual and educational work of the Croatian missionaries Ivan Ratkay, Ferdinand Konšćak, and Josip Kundek.

A larger emigration from Croatia, the so-called modern colonization, started in Dalmatia and Hrvatsko Primorje. In the beginning only individuals emigrated, followed later by smaller groups from the Croatian coast. The people from Primorje settled in California because of its familiar climate. A greater number of immigrants, in the earliest period of colonization, established themselves along the Mississippi delta, in the Pacific Northwest, and in New York City. The first Croatian immigrants were mostly seamen, fishermen, and farmers. As they were few in number, they did not represent an important ethnic group in American society. Because of the vast distances separating them and their small number in the first phase of immigration, the Croats were neither well organized nor were they socially and politically active in their new surroundings. Until the 1880's, there existed only smaller organizations of local interest. A period of mass emigration from Croatia began towards the end of the 19th century, between 1880 and the beginning of World War One. The scale of the emigration wave from Croatia to America up to the present can be best represented by statistics. The data estimates that half a million people left Croatia between 1890 and the beginning of World War One.

World War One interrupted a large scale immigration. After the war, the emigration problem reappeared. The general characteristics of

world migrations, the new directions of migrating, and the new countries of immigration characterize the emigration from Croatia between the two wars. Under the influence of the new economic conditions after World War One, almost all countries passed immigration laws in order to protect themselves from the influx of foreigners. Between the two wars, 150,000 people left Croatia.

After World War Two, new immigrant groups were formed outside Croatia. During the war and afterwards, around 200,000 people left the former Yugoslav territory or just never returned. They were mostly prisoners of war, former soldiers, as well as those who happened to be abroad for various reasons. They spent a few years in Germany, Italy, Austria, and France and were later sent as displaced persons to America, Canada, Australia, and South America.

After 1950, a new generation of immigrants was formed from those who left the country illegally. Some western European countries gave them the status of political refugees. According to the statistics both by the immigration countries and Croatian statistical sources, around 300,000 Croats immigrated within the period between the end of World War Two until recently. Two million Croats of several generations are likely to be living in the USA and Canada today.

Upon arriving in America, Croatian immigrants were mostly attracted by Pennsylvania's well developed industry which promised good salaries in the coal mines, the iron works, and in the railway and road construction industries. The first groups of Croatian immigrants gathered precisely around the mines and the smelters of Pittsburgh and its surrounding area. Another large center was Cleveland, Ohio, where the steel and engine industries were concentrated.

It was quite understandable that Croatian immigrants were attracted to Chicago as well as it was one of the largest centers of commerce and industry. This meant new possibilities of employment in the very well developed iron, leather and food industries, as well as in the electrical and chemical industries.

It is impossible to list all of the places the Croatians inhabited. They settled down in all parts of the country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Driven by necessity, they changed places and states in search of better working and living conditions.

What was the position of Croatian immigrants in their new American environment? The beginning was hard for almost everybody and later many factors influenced the destiny of each individual. Apart from a few businessmen, intellectuals, artists and those having other successful professions, a large number of Croats never managed to free themselves from financial difficulties and lived in an everlasting struggle for existence. For many of them the hopes of returning home gradually faded and their children accepted more and more the values of their new country.

The difficulties which immigrants faced were compensated by a variety of social activities. Since the end of the last century they have organized over 3,000 different societies and built hundreds of Croatian clubs and churches. The clubs played an important role in the immigrants' lives. The clubs became centers of social, cultural, and political gatherings, and sites of celebrations, concerts, and festivals.

It was there that the immigrants gathered and met their friends and relatives. Folk music, songs and dances were handed down to the younger generations, building their pride and interest in the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Dance and theatrical groups, choirs, and sports associations used the Croatian clubs as centers for their activities. The Sokol associations ceased to function after World War Two. The Croatian newcomers founded several soccer clubs often named *Croatia*. The sports associations were at the top of the soccer leagues in the USA.

An important component in the history of Croatian emigration is the role of priests and parishes. The church has always carefully followed the emigration of Croatians and organized religious life in immigration. In each large Croatian community, churches were built, parishes founded and priests were sent from the homeland. Among the Croatian immigrants, the church functioned well at the cultural, educational, organizational and national levels. The churches often were and still are the only gathering places for Croatian immigrants. The schools for learning Croatian language and history have been founded in the churches. The parishes have been the centers of cultural and political events in immigration. Prior to World War One, the Croats founded 25 parishes, four during the war, and six between World War One and World War Two. After World War Two, only three parishes were established, three missions and one pastoral station. In recent years a significant number of young priests, primarily friars, have arrived from the homeland. A few modern churches have been built and some parishes have expanded significantly because of the large number of Roman Catholics arriving from the native country. Included in these large parishes are those in New York, Cleveland, Chicago, and Toronto. The Croatian bishops and other priests pay occasional visits to Croatian parishes and the religious press from home has become very popular with immigrants. The church in Croatia has been paying more attention in recent years to Croatian immigrants and their priests through the Direction of Spiritual Cure for the Croats Abroad, seated in Rome, and the Council of Bishops' Conference for Croatian Emigration, seated in Zagreb.

Since the very beginning of settling in America, the Croats have taken an active part in the political life of their native country and have provided material help to the Croatian people in their fight for freedom. Through political activity they have tried to inform both the American community and the politicians about the real conditions of the Croats in Austria-Hungary, later in Yugoslavia, and especially today concerning the

situation of the independent, democratic and free state - the Republic of Croatia. Hundreds of Croatian societies in America included politics in their activities.

All the societies gradually stopped functioning and only a few among them maintained an important role. The Croatian Alliance was established in Kansas City in 1912, with a motto "For Freedom of Croatia". During World War One, it had 10,000 members and was very active in the struggle against Austro-Hungarian rule, supporting the integration of the Croats into a South Slav Community.

In the 1930's, an important role among the American Croats was played by the Croatian Council whose main task was to acquaint the American public and the world at large with the facts concerning the difficult position of the Croats in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War Two, several important political organizations were quite active among which the Croatian National Council, founded in 1972, is worth mentioning. Its aim was helping Croatia after the suppression of the 1971 Croatian Spring.

American Croatians as well as Croatian people from all over the world have given support during the most recent events in Croatia. The opinion prevails that the moral, political, and economic help of Croatian immigrants is one of the most important factors in the struggle for an independent and modern Croatia.

In order to explain what was going on and to study their social, economic and political position in America, the best and most reliable sources were immigrant newspapers, almanacs, and other publications. Among the great number of immigrants there was, quite understandably, a constant wish to know what was happening in their native country. The letters they received from the relatives usually gave an incomplete picture of life back home.

Upon arriving from Austria-Hungary, and later from Yugoslavia, where a free press had never existed, the Croats in America launched their own newspapers in which they wrote freely about everything going on in the homeland.

The immigrant publications in America first appeared in the 1880's and have intermittently continued to the present. Almost every newspaper has special columns entitled "From the Old Country", "From the Croatian Lands", etc. Literary contributions are being made by writers both from the homeland and in immigration.

It should be emphasized that many Croats acquired their political and civil education in America and became acquainted with the American way of life by means of the Croatian newspapers. In spite of numerous contradictions, the newspapers have become a means of establishing solidarity among the immigrants, as they were binding them in groups of mutual interests, among which the most significant one was winning freedom for the native land. It should be pointed out, unfortu-

nately, that among more than 200 Croatian newspapers in both America and Canada only a few are still being published today. The more significant ones are *Zajedničar* (Fraternalist), the official organ of the Croatian Fraternal Union and *Naša Nada* (Our Hope), the organ of the Croatian Catholic Union.

Apart from the newspapers, the Croats in America developed another publishing activity. As early as 1894, there was a Croatian bookstore in Pittsburgh which published several titles in Croatian. Another bookstore was opened in St. Louis in 1900.

After World War Two, the Croatian Academy of America was established in 1953 with the aim of promoting Croatian culture and history and acquainting the Americans with Croatia and the Croats. The Academy had about 250 members, publishing the *Journal of Croatian Studies* as a yearly issue.

Thanks to the post-war immigration of intellectuals, Croato-American literature has recently flourished.

Generally speaking, the Croats in America, in spite of the high price they paid in their immigrant life, should be pleased with the success they have achieved. The Croats today occupy diverse, frequently significant social positions in America and are an important factor both in the USA and Canada.

The Statue of Liberty

Chapter One

AMERICAN FRATERNALISM

The emergence and development of American fraternalism is foremost the result of the workers' immigration and their organization.* Upon ariving in a foreign country, where the people spoke different languages and practiced different customs, the Croats forged a feeling of cooperation and solidarity within two institutions: ethnic churches and fraternal organizations. These two organizations made it easier for Croatians to enter a new society, gave them a place for prayer and social gathering, and taught them how to adapt to the values of their new community. The fraternal organizations played an important role in the life of individual ethnic groups. The history of the Croatian Fraternal Union is in many ways the history of the Croats in the USA.

Different reasons and motives made the immigrants use mutual care. Many of them died in accidents at work, and after their death, no one took care of their families. Numerous workers were crippled, unable to work, helpless, deserted and lonely. Towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, there was no real social protection in America and that was one of the main problems for the newcomers.[1] Abandoned and frequently exploited in industrial plants, mines, workshops, and in the transportation industry, they realized that the only solution to their difficult life and their working conditions was mutual understanding and help, and the organization of their own associations.

The newcomers from some Eastern European countries more easily accepted the program of American fraternalism. They had brought with them the experience and tradition of gathering in different charitable societies and church communities, a tradition known to them since the Middle Ages. Life in communities was an imitation of a way of life in many of the agricultural parts of Austria-Hungary until the end of the last century.[2] Workers, and especially miners, also had a long tradition of gathering in their societies for mutual help.

The establishment of fraternal organizations in America can be traced as early as 1868 when John J. Upchurch, a railway worker, organized the first society called the Ancient Order of United Workmen. The aim of the society was to offer the workers better conditions and securi-

ty than those offered by the Trade Unions. Upchurch's initiative gained popularity and the organizations founded according to his ideas became successful and influential. The idea of fraternal protection attracted the public. The workers, united in fraternal organizations, had proper protection under rather desirable paying conditions. However, many insurance companies functioning on a commercial basis considered the fraternal organizations as competitors and tried to make their work impossible.[3] This is why the Order of the United Workmen asked the delegates of the various fraternal organizations to attend a meeting held in Washington in 1886. They founded an association of relief organizations named the National Fraternal Congress. Its aim was to successfully lead the fight against the insurance companies. The newspaper *Zajedničar* wrote, "The aim and purpose of this great and powerful American association was to protect the interest of benefit organizations and their members, as well as to try and prevent the passing of unfavorable laws in some states concerning those organizations. Based on the experience and the members' mortality rate, it was attempting to introduce a correct scale of membership fees thus providing a healthy and solid basis for their existence. Only by the merit of the National Fraternal Congress did the American associations grow and strengthen financially, and today, in twenty seven states, a law called the 'Mobile Bill' has been passed dealing with the behavior of benefit organizations."[4] There was, however, some disagreement in the National Fraternal Congress in 1900 when the "Force Bill" was introduced, according to which some newer fraternal organizations should have paid their share by a less favorable rate table. There followed a break-up of the society and a new one was formed - the Associated Fraternities of America. But the split did not last long and at the 1912 joint meeting in New York, both organizations reunited under a common name: The National Fraternal Congress of America. It was a period of fruitful activity in the American fraternal movement. The growth that the movement witnessed is shown by the total number of organizations that were active in the USA just before World War Two: 182 national relief organizations had a state work permit. They counted 6,465,240 adult members and 10,340,194 junior members, and consisted of 99,148 lodges. The assets of all relief organizations totaled $1,331,019,996. The protection or certificate value amounted to $6,609,444,732.

With approximately eight million members organized in almost one hundred thousand lodges, and with assets of more than one thousand two-hundred and fifty million dollars, relief organizations were an extremely influential power in American public life.[5]

The immigrants did not immediately enter fraternal organizations in large numbers. Only when they realized that the fraternals were offering them good social security did they start organizing fraternal societies, clubs, homes, and establishing halls for meetings, talks and conferences.

The development of the fraternal movement, especially at the beginning of this century, is a result of these actions.

The fraternal organizations had to unite in order to become more efficient in helping their members. Social activities could not remain within the boundaries of small or large immigrant communities built around the mines and factories. They had to be broadened and planned on a national scale and still retain their fraternal and co-operative sense of action in order to develop a fraternal spirit.

The establishment of powerful fraternal organizations represented a turning point for the immigrants in the USA. In these organizations they found mutual help, cultural advancement, and joint action for the improvement of living conditions. A separate system of organizations consisting of junior nests, sections for the elderly, and centers for the efficient promotion of social activities caused the fraternal societies to become the main promoters of all social activities. Under the patronage of their lodges, English courses were offered to older immigrants and native language courses for their younger descendants born in America. The lodges were instrumental in founding committees and clubs for the promotion of education, theatrical groups, and the development of the tamburitza and other orchestral music. They organized language and folklore courses, and staged various performances with rich programs; they held regular monthly meetings, banquets, picnics and outings in large parks. The societies also organized specific lectures where numerous speakers offered enlightening details about the social, cultural and political life both in immigration and in the old country.

American fraternalism had its rival - commercial insurance; therefore, the fraternal organizations had to introduce a variety of life insurance products under more favorable conditions than those of the commercial insurance companies. They were also obliged to plan and fulfill their cultural program more seriously so as to attract the youth and make them more active. As a matter of fact, the fraternal organizations formed, within the youth clubs, sports and educational sections, promotional activities, as well as the junior cultural federations. Their task was to unify all the tamburitza groups, dance groups, and choirs, to organize festivals, and to assure their future activity. The fraternal organizations had scholarship funds to help the less fortunate students. The success of all these activities depended on the number of members and the financial power of the fraternal organizations. This required the coordination of all actions and an expansion of the programs in order to make the fraternal organizations as attractive as possible for the generations born and educated in America on whose opinion the future of the fraternal organizations actually depended. More favorable insurance options humanitarian and cultural activities, sports competitions for the young, and competitions for folk music and folk dances from all parts of the world were the elements that distinguished American fraternalism from the numerous other insurance companies.

The fraternal organizations played an important part in the immigrant's life. Their history summarizes the history of ethnic communities. Just as the immigrants transformed themselves from former peasants into modern American workers, so did the poor immigrant relief organizations develop into modern and rich benefit and cultural institutions, organized on an expert level, thereby fulfilling their duties correctly and conscientiously.[6]

In some American cities the fraternal movement followed a very intensive development and those cities became the centers for several fraternal organizations. Some ethnic communities had numerous branch offices and lodges. The Czechs were among the first Slavs to join the fraternal organizations. Their associations are the oldest ones. The *Slovanska lipa* started its activity in May 1862, and the *Perun* association in 1866.[7] Two great transnational Polish organizations, the Polish Roman Catholic Union and the Polish National Union, were active in Cleveland. These two organizations worked to establish new societies and to unify existing organizations.[8] The Slovaks, who arrived sometime later, decided in the 1880's that the seat of their largest fraternal organization, the First Catholic Slovak Union, should be in Cleveland.[9] The Hungarians and the Croatians, who also belong to the so-called new immigration, were not, at the beginning, quite keen on the fraternal program. But some unpleasant experiences, and especially the indecent burials of a few fellow countrymen, made them aware of the benefits they could have by becoming members of the fraternal organizations. The William Penn and the National Croatian Society, with their large fraternal memberships, had their headquarters in Pittsburgh.

There already existed in the old country good connections between the broad-minded Slovenes and Czechs and these continued in America. The first fraternal organizations of the Slovenes were founded with the help of the liberal Czechs.[11] The founders of the first fraternal organizations were middle class, educated people - physicians, attorneys, bankers, businessmen, and priests. These people often came to America because they disagreed with the political situation back home. They accepted the program of the American fraternal movement by which they could found fraternal organizations, widen their own views on life, and express political opinions which they were not allowed to do in the old country. The businessmen tried to assure their own success through fraternal organizations. The intellectuals, as the organization leaders, were gradually, and sometimes even with much argument, replaced by the working class, as this represented the majority of the fraternal organization membership. Even the priests could not be their leaders as their viewpoint was different, but their membership was quite welcome especially on occasions like meetings, conventions, parties and celebrations. Therefore, the leadership was taken over by the "new class" of ethnic leaders from the ranks of the working men, tradesmen or students who had not graduated in their native land.[12] The "new ethnic leaders" became the people

who were successful in business; the ones who owned the boarding houses or saloons, and who were commissioners of ethnic banks and correspondents of ethnic magazines. They were mostly married people intent on staying in America permanently. They became financially independent, having quickly accepted the new country's habits and its way of life. Some of them became the owners of ethnic journals which, among other things, were used to inform the public about the activities of the fraternal organizations. Generally speaking, each organization had its own journal which it had launched and financially supported. The journals usually had a supplement with reports from various meetings held in the head offices of the fraternal organizations. The reports highlighted their insurance work. These journals also published the views of the organization on political matters both in America and in the old country.

The ethnic leaders established communication with American institutions and representatives from the local political community. A few individuals among them became important persons and they often invited the mayor, government officials, and judges to attend their fraternal celebrations thereby contributing to the benefit of the organizations.

The ethnic leaders were by means of the organization helping the membership to adapt itself to its new surroundings. Even the members of the "new immigration" who came to America after World War One stated they would stay in America permanently. In 1924 these organizations sent protests against the administration of the immigrant laws. Numerous petitions demanded the abolishment of the laws dealing with the registration and enumeration of immigrants. Within particular organizations, committees were formed for the promotion of citizenship rights and for equal opportunities in achieving all civil rights. The leaders emphasized to their members that they should care more about solving problems in their new country and participate in the American way of life on an equal basis with other citizens. More and more members of the fraternal organizations became naturalized citizens.

How did the fraternal organizations of more than one hundred thousand members, and in some cases of several hundred thousand members, manage to gather the immigrants and maintain their interest in the fraternal program? They had a strong organizational structure which was affirmed by the activity of conventions and the system of lodges. The highest governing body of the fraternal organization was the convention. Conventions were held periodically, more frequently for less numerous organizations, but usually annually or at two-year intervals. The conventions of larger organizations were, as a rule, held once every four years. The work of the Supreme Board would be evaluated, as well as that of the Board of Trustees and the board members of the respective fraternal organizations. A new management team would be elected at the convention and the by-laws for future activities accepted. At these sessions the most important matters of the organization were discussed and basic principles were established for the future.

Each lodge elected one or more delegates to the convention depending on its number of members. If lodges did not have enough members, a few of them united and sent a joint delegate to the convention. The conventions generally started with the President's report acquainting the convention with the work of the Supreme Board, and with all of the important events of the previous period. The membership statistics were also analyzed as well as the advantages of the fraternal insurance system. Financial matters of the respective organization were also given approval.

The sessions were by no means routine; on the contrary, they regularly had a significant meaning in the life of fraternal communities. Through the delegates' discussions, ideas were confronted and programs and suggestions for the organization's activities opposed. Frequently, in a very tense atmosphere, the delegates argued about the-political situation in the old country as well as in their new homeland. The relation to the American workers' movement, to religion, and the questions of inter-ethnic relations in America were obligatory topics of dicussion.

The Supreme Board managing the organization was most successful during the period between conventions as it was more capable of following and understanding the frame of mind and the relations among the numerous lodges.

Through a network of numerous lodges, the activities and the work operated successfully. It was the lodge that became the basic initiator of the fraternal organization's efficient functioning. The fraternal organization lodges started taking over some social activities within their multiple programs which previously was partly fulfilled by the boarding houses and saloons.

In their work, the owners of the boarding houses, saloons, and ethnic banks were becoming more active. They soon noticed that the lodges had become significant gathering places for the immigrants. This is why they attempted to take over the leading role in the lodges and at the same time bring about advantages in their own business. For this reason lodges sometimes fell apart as competitors attempted to eliminate their rivals in the leadership positions.

The lodge activities in the fraternal organizations will be analyzed in order to determine how much they contributed by means of good work and organization to the development of fraternalism in the USA.[13]

The lodge members had their own regular meetings which were held monthly, most often on Saturdays after 8 p.m., or on Sundays. The meeting halls were frequently rented from members of their own ethnic group. Prior to World War One, the rent was $12, while after the war it went up to $30 a year. The fraternal publications were received by each member of the organization and included all information on lodge activities. The administration of the lodges was carefully taken care of, particularly in making sure that the accountants, treasurers and other office staff behaved responsibly and regularly attended the meetings. The

accountants were paid 25 cents annually per each organization member. If they were absent from a meeting without good reason the sum was deducted from their pay. Conforming to the minutes kept at the lodge meetings, the main financial expenses were reported to the head office as well as sickness benefit payments, and allowances were paid to the accountant and to the Secretary and the President of the health board. Almost the total income of a lodge was paid to the home office, with, on an average, one-fifth of that amount kept for the purposes of a lodge, to pay sickness benefits and office clerks. Due to large expenses, the lodges often found themselves in financial difficulties which they solved by organizing entertainment activities, though in times of serious economic depression, not even that was enough. The lodges were generally tolerant of members who could not cover their membership dues, only if there was enough money in the treasury. Therefore, wealthier lodges had a lower decrease in membership.

Poor financial conditions in the lodge treasuries were resolved in different ways: by paying an extra dollar per member, by lowering the admission fee ($1.50) for new lodge members, by financially encouraging finding new members (50 cents per member in 1914), and by lowering sickness benefits from $6 to $5 per week.

It was very important for the new members to be healthy, which meant lessening the financial pressure, and so, after 1924, new members were accepted only after a medical check up. In 1918 and 1919, during the Spanish influenza, no new members were accepted. A new member ("brother") had to be introduced by a former member who took all the responsibility should there be problems with the newly accepted member in case the new member did not respect the organization's discipline or if it were to be discovered later that he/she had a physical shortcoming which would have otherwise prevented him/her from becoming a member. The lodges used every possibility in order to show their social influence. They employed all sorts of symbols, flags, medals, and uniform caps. The lodge members even wore uniforms when attending social events as a group such as the founding of a church, the opening of a new school, or celebrating the organization's anniversaries.

One of the most important social activities of a lodge was honoring the flag or the lodge banner. This was a significant ethnic activity which showed how important the flag, the banner, and other lodge symbols and medals were for ethnic identification as well as the affiliation of the members to their particular lodge. To take part in honoring other lodge banners was of great importance. It was unthinkable to hold any form of manifestation or social activity without displaying the lodge banner. When a lodge was invited to another lodge or fraternal organization ceremony its members were always requested to attend ceremonial occasions displaying the lodge banner. For the lodges that sparingly managed their finances it was no problem to pay $120 for the banner even in 1907. In addition, each lodge was supposed to have its own emblem

sewn in the center of the banner and each member had a medal with the lodge emblem.

The banner and lodge emblems were carried at funerals as it was obligatory for the lodge members to attend the funeral of each lodge member. At least twelve members were to attend the funeral ceremony while three of them guarded the deceased the day before the funeral, which was obviously a custom brought from the old country.

However, the most important social function for the lodges was organizing entertainment. They, more often than not, were a way of collecting money to pay the lodge expenses. As time passed, entertainment and picnics were organized more and more because of financial needs; some lodges organized them two or three times a year. Importance was given to dances which were often held during religious holidays and for the New Year holiday. On such occasions, a special organizing committee would be elected. Whenever possible, the lodges formed their own tamburitza orchestras so as to avoid expenditures for musicians. In case the sale of beer was forbidden, the picnics were held outside the city so that more money could be made.

Lodge solidarity was shown in several ways among the Slavic organizations. It is obvious that solidarity best developed within each individual ethnic group, which is quite understandable. Even more so, the "chain settling" by the people coming from the same villages or regions to the same communities meant that the lodges were formed on a local basis. They were named after the patron saints of their villages or after some distinguished person from that particular region. Entire families, their relatives, and other people from the same village became members. In these lodges the patriarchal system was better preserved and a firmer solidarity developed.

The lodge members were obliged to attend various celebrations and parties, and if they failed to do so they were fined $1.00. If a particular lodge did not attend another lodge celebration, the other one would behave in the same manner. For this reason, invitations were carefully considered and regularly accepted.

The lodges developed a habit of gathering together and established a sense of unity and collective conscience with these programs. The lodge regulations set out rules of behavior; the offenders were fined.

There was a tendency that lodge members should only be males. Since the men were doing difficult and dangerous jobs, they had to be insured by the relief organizations. In some fraternal organizations women were allowed to be only "associate members" with a significantly lower insurance rate.[14] However, when it was noticed that a many women died young, especially during childbirth, there were no longer any doubts that they should be allowed to become members of the fraternal lodges too. Where there was an opposition to this tendency, the women formed their own fraternal lodges. It appeared that opposition to include women in the fraternal organizations was not that serious

because the so-called new immigrants, the Slovenes, Croats, and Slovaks founded separate women's lodges only a few years after establishing their own fraternal organizations. The arguments that women should take care of their homes, raise the children, and not be involved in women's lodges, were soon dropped. It should be noted that progressive movements supported the idea that women should be included in the fraternal movement and establish the separate women's lodges. This was most evident among the liberally minded Czech and Slovene immigrants.[15]

The fraternal movement as a part of the American social movement had to take care of its future and further development. The fraternal organization leaders began thinking how to attract the immigrants' children born in America. The conventions held at the beginning of the century quite often saw this as a main topic and decisions were made about establishing separate Junior Order departments. These were mostly English speaking lodges and their programs were adapted to meet the needs and wishes of the immigrant children who had accepted the values of their new American surroundings. However, even within these departments, the parents jealously guarded and handed down to the younger generation the cultural heritage of the nation they came from.

By including both women and immigrant children into the fraternal movement, the American fraternal organizations significantly increased their membership. Their basic aim, the insurance of their members, and the activities programs were enriched, especially in culture, sports, arts and science.

Even though the fraternal organizations were established on an ethnic basis which was their characteristic, religious, political, and ideological adherence were sometimes a basis for inter-ethnic gatherings in some of the fraternal organizations. For example, the Polish Roman Catholic Union assembled the Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians and other Slav Catholic members into the "United Roman Catholic Organization". The Slovaks and Slovenes often joined the membership of the Czech fraternal organizations. The Slovene Catholic Union at first accepted only the Slovenes into its ranks but later the Catholics from other ethnic groups were also allowed, especially the Croats. The Hungarian Roman Catholic Association, *Sv. Ladislav*, gathered the members of various nationalities, mostly Hungarians and Slovaks. Eastern-Rite Catholics joined the Catholic organizations and vice versa. The liberal organizations of Czech immigrants accepted the Slovene and Slovak immigrants into their ranks. But some fraternal organizations strictly divided religious and other adherences from their basic activity considering them a private matter. Ethnic background was not a criterion for the acceptance of a new member.

Nevertheless, this ideal practice of inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation within the lodges was met with strong opposition and misunderstanding not only within certain ethnic groups but also at the inter-ethnic level too.

The fraternal movement became the most acceptable, the largest, and a long-lasting form of ethnic and social gathering. It was quite understandable then that lodge activities should be accompanied by different interests and aims. This was evident at a number of levels.[16] As the ethnic church was the second largest means for gathering immigrants, it was there that sometimes the most complicated problems arose.

The "ethnic leaders" regularly occupying the most important positions in the fraternal organizations and their lodges, were the basic initiators of the most important activities in regard to the establishment of parishes. They therefore appeared in the role of "church builders". Frequently, even before the parish was established and before a priest arrived to take up his duty, the "ethnic leaders", as members of the church committee and with the bishop's approval, undertook the most important steps with respect to finances and organization. The church committee sent out an invitation to a priest and, upon his arrival, took care of him and introduced him to the committee's work. The role of the church committee was dominant as the local bishop was often expected only to support it. After a parish was established and began operating, the lodges collected money for the church, organized church meetings, assisted the parish in its work, and took care of the priest's work. It is quite obvious that the fraternal lodges played a significant role in the establishment of ethnic parishes and churches. It stands to reason, therefore, that sometimes friction and struggle for prestige with the priest and his supporters were unavoidable.[17]

The conflicts were sometimes quite harsh. They even led to incidents such as fights in front of the church between the priest's followers and those who supported the "ethnic leaders". The bishop was often required to intervene between the conflicting sides. The battle for prestige, however, always ended with a compromise: the fraternal lodges did their work within the framework of the fraternal program while the priests gave up every ambition of becoming leaders, offering their cooperation to the fraternal lodges. This was not the case, however, when it came to misunderstandings of a religious or political nature. When Catholic fraternal organizations tried to gather not only all of the members of their own ethnic group but even those of other nationalities, they were met with opposition from other churches. Conflicts sometimes arose among the members of one and the same religion which led to factions among the fraternal organizations. So the Lutherans, as a result of their different religious opinions, often became members of various fraternal organizations in an "effort to maintain their original Lutheranism within the surroundings of various theological tendencies and many sects as well as the influences of other doctrines".[18]

There were also disagreements between the secular and religious fraternal organizations. These organizations competed with each other

while the intensified activities of some religious organizations were primarily directed against other organizations within their ethnic community.

Political conflicts were continually present in the immigrant fraternal organizations. The immigrants in America brought with them their national movement programs so that in their new surroundings their demands for freedom of their people in the old country were often much more radical than they had been back home. The issue of national emblems was quite often the instigator of conflicts within lodges. The Slovaks and Ruthenians abandoned the lodges where the Hungarians were in the majority and vice versa; the Hungarians left the lodges where the Slovaks and Ruthenians were in the majority.[19] The Croatians refused to enter the lodges where the Hungarians were members. Due to mistrust, the Slovaks avoided the Czech lodges even during World War One when they were trying to achieve an independent Czechoslovakia. Immigrants from the same country, upon coming to America, did not wish to establish so-called state organizations because of political and national reasons.

National and political issues were an important feature of the lodge activities. Many political manifestations, meetings, conventions, and lectures where immigrants presented their political views, were often inspired and organized by the lodges.

The fraternal organizations and their lodges nurtured patriotic ties, supported cooperation, and offered great assistance to cultural, economic and political organizations back in the old country. The fraternal members showed their solidarity with political, cultural and other events by organizing manifestations, meetings, or even conventions where, by resolutions of support and by collecting money, they attempted to assist their compatriots in the old country. The anniversaries marking revolutions, uprisings or deaths of their leaders were good reasons to organize commemorations or even larger celebrations within the lodges. America witnessed the arrival of political emigrants too. Intellectuals and businessmen who regularly visited other immigrants of the same ethnic background spread their own political views and conceptions. In this way, the majority of immigrants learned for the first time from these political leaders about political events in their homeland.[20]

The events in the old country, especially during the two world wars, and the assistance to the victims were often a good reason for a reconciliation and for joint activities to be organized even by those fraternal organizations that had not cooperated until then or had been involved in conflicts between each other. Solidarity was expressed in the form of wider campaigns or sometimes even with the initiative of individual lodges. The lodges enjoyed making autonomous decisions about the purpose of individual actions, always taking care that their aim was acceptable. Some welfare actions for the old country sometimes seemed abstract to them and even their initiators were not always very convincing. Life in America had taught the immigrants to become cautious, but

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a constant concern for the events in the old country gave the fraternal organizations credibility and a sense of importance in the eyes of their members.

The fraternal organizations and their lodges began gradually to turn to their new American homeland. Deaths of renowned Americans were also occasions for various lodge manifestations. The lodges suggested to their members to become American citizens. Matters concerning life in America, local politics, and elections of local officials became current issues discussed at the lodge meetings.

According to their social structure, the fraternal organizations were the workers' organizations because over 90% of the members were workers. Despite this fact, their relationship to the workers' movement in America was sometimes questioned. The members of the American Socialist Party often criticized the fraternal organizations. They stated that these were some sort of money-boxes for the sick, underlining their insurance work which was the reason why a large percentage of immigrant workers became their members. What the socialists criticized was that they were not "revolutionary organizations" but only "corporations for assistance". In principle, the Socialist workers' party rejected any form of cooperation with the relief organizations calling them the "nurses of capitalism"[21]. The Socialist Party, however, gradually changed its opinion about the fraternal organizations. A thought prevailed that these organizations might in fact develop the spirit of workers' solidarity and convince the immigrant workers of the need to join the unions and the workers' parties. While the unions were militant workers' organizations, according to the socialists, the fraternal organizations were of a welfare and humanitarian nature.[22] Despite the academic debates and the relationship to the fraternal movement, from the beginning of the century, the socialists made great efforts to gain influence within the fraternal organizations.

During World War One and immediately afterwards, socialist associations were established in the USA. Even these associations had a twofold purpose, giving insurance in case of sickness or death as well as educating workers in a spirit of social and political equality and freedom. This was achieved through their numerous social activities, picnics, concerts, gymnastic presentations, and teaching Croatian at schools. Within the fraternal organizations with a socialist orientation, reading socialist literature was encouraged. Some socialist lodges were exceptionally active and even launched their official publications.

After World War One and the division within the socialist movement in the USA, many lodges experienced political stratification. Some Socialist Party members became communists and so did the members of Industrial Workers of the World.[23] Among the leftists orientated fraternal lodges fierce political conflicts became apparent. It should be pointed out that the communists were extremely active at that particular time.

Their aim was to get involved in various cultural and educational programs and to gain control over the fraternal organizations.

The attempts of the socialists and communists to infiltrate the fraternal organizations and take over the leadership caused great concern among many priests and other national leaders. The priests demanded from their believers to remain within their church and to be the members of religiously orientated fraternal organizations. If they were not successful, they established new fraternal organizations exclusively on a religious basis. Such organizations regularly became the leading social force within the ethnic community. Some priests openly proclaimed that the purpose of the newly established fraternal organizations was to fight "against socialism and communism".[24]

Intolerance and ideological conflicts weakened the fraternal movement and a large number of members became indifferent to the idea of fraternalism and all its positive aspects. Besides, the fraternal organizations based on various religious and ideological foundations attracted members from various ethnic backgrounds according to their religious and ideological orientation. This is why many fraternal organizations acted as multi-ethnic communities. In spite of the many confrontations within the fraternal organizations, there existed spontaneous and undivided workers' solidarity. This was most evident during the workers' strikes. Financial assistance to the striking workers came from the lodge treasuries and contributions were collected at the lodge meetings. In this way the money intended for lodge purposes was saved while the members were called upon to assist their fellow workers and show solidarity with the strikers. The lodge members did not always share the same attitude as far as assistance to the striking workers was concerned. There were even harsh arguments at lodge meetings whether strikes should be organized unless there was enough financial support to assist the workers.

* * *

True enough, American fraternalism witnessed a lot of crises and its future was often uncertain. The fraternal organizations could hardly resist the competition of large insurance companies that were stronger financially, offering better conditions to those interested in various kinds of insurance. This was the reason why their future became one of the most important issues. It was clear that the love of their homeland was not enough to ensure a significant increase in membership. A more favorable insurance rate frequently became the most important motive for the enrollment of new members. Without the insurance money, numerous social and other activities could not have been realized. Numerous fraternal organizations, therefore, attempted to improve their insurance system and offer their members more advantages.

Yet the destiny of many organizations depended upon how much interest those born in America and the new immigrants actually showed. The importance of making the younger generation more active was quite

clear to many leaders of the Croatian organization. The junior order departments continually and systematically tried to attract young members. The cultural, sports and other programs were adapted to the interests of the youth, and the newspapers of the organizations gradually introduced more and more pages written in English. The newcomers who hardly understood the real aim of the fraternalist movement were given explanations about the need to enter the organization by means of the lodge activities and their newspapers. Because of this, American fraternalism has maintained a significant role among immigrants until today. It is confirmed by the fact that in 1994, the largest Croatian immigrant organization - the Croatian Fraternal Union-celebrates its one hundredth anniversary.

Notes:

* This chapter has been written on the basis of the author's investigation into the establishment and development of the USA fraternalist movement. A greater part of the chapter has included the results of the project "Conflict and Cooperation: Comparative Research on the East European Experience in Area City of Cleveland, Ohio, 1880-1930". The project studied numerous ethnic groups according to the following subjects: Čizmić, *Cleveland's Croats;* Juliana Puskas, *Cleveland's Magyars;* Adam Walaszek, *Cleveland's Poles;* Matijaž Klemenčič, *Cleveland's Slovenes;* Michael Kopanic, *Cleveland's Slovaks;* Winston Chrislock, *Cleveland's Czechs.* The investigations have not been published and the manuscript is kept in the Library of the Institute of Applied Social Science in Zagreb.

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Pittsburgh today

Chapter Two

THE FOUNDATION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CROATIAN NATIONAL SOCIETY

The Croats in Pennsylvania

The large industrial city of Pittsburgh is situated in the western part of Pennsylvania where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet to form the Ohio River. In the 18th century, the French built Fort Duquesne there, which was later conquered by the English and renamed Fort Pitt.

Pittsburgh is reknown worldwide as the center of American heavy industry. America's largest and most modern coal mines were built in its surrounding area, as well as the biggest iron mills and steelworks. In addition to this industry, Pittsburgh produces electrical equipment, aluminum, coke, petroleum, and chemicals. There are numerous plants both of heavy and light industry. It is also a railroad center and a major river port.

The immigrant workers from Europe, mostly of Slavic origin, played an important role in building this nucleus of heavy industry from which the huge American industrial network was developed. Hundreds of thousands of Poles, Russians, Croats, Slovenes, Czechs, and Slovaks came to Pittsburgh to help construct coal mines, steelworks and other plants.

Here, in Western Pennsylvania, a large number of Croats found their new homeland. Croatians can be found in almost every industrial coal-mining settlement.

A majority of Croats living in the United States today have passed through Pittsburgh and its industrial areas. It was here that they began establishing their relief and cultural communities. Social and cultural activity spread from Pittsburgh to the neighboring industrial and mining towns. In almost every community in Pennsylvania there was same type of Croatian settlement. In most of them like in Aliquippa, Ambridge, Braddock, Brownsville, Clairton, Donora, Farrell, Greensburg, John-

stown, McKeesport, McKees Rocks, Monessen, New Brighton, Rankin, Uniontown, Conway, Cokeburg, Steelton, and many others, immigrant communities built their clubs where meetings, conferences, assemblies, parties and various other activities took place.

The first mention of the presence of Croats in Pittsburgh goes back to 1866, when the Austrian honorary consul, Max Schamberg, opened an office that was partly a travel agency and partly a bank. He called it *Croatian Bank* in order to draw the attention of Croatian clients.[1] However, the first names of the Croats mentioned in Pittsburgh date back to 1882. They were Juraj Grguri, Juraj and Janko Leš, Blaž Sečanj, and Josip Buneta. In 1884, Josip Šubašić established residence in Millvale, Pennsylvania, with about twenty other Croats.

Early in 1888, Franjo Žibrat and Trivun Lazić, Krunoslav Maljevac, Josip Štibuhar, and Josip Novaković arrived. Some of the Croatians who settled in Pittsburgh came from other American cities. In 1893, Zdravko Valentin Mužina came with Josip Marohnić, Franjo Šepić, Petar Pavlinac, and Franjo Božić.

Towards the end of the century, Croats moved to Pennsylvania in larger numbers, particularly to the Pittsburgh area. Although many of them returned home after several years, most of them stayed. They came mostly from Jastrebarsko, Karlovac, Vrbovsko, and Ogulin. At the beginning of the 20th century, about nine thousand Croats lived in the Pittsburgh area. In the whole of Pennsylvania there were about 38,000 Croats making it the largest Croatian community abroad.[2]

As the Pittsburgh area grew, new settlements were founded, first in Rankin and then in Braddock. McKeesport became the center of the Croatians who settled in Duquesne, Versailles, Port Vue, Christy Park, and Clairton.

In East Pittsburgh Croats settled near the Westinghouse plant, next to Braddock Avenue. It was called Brinton and was actually the first Croatian settlement in East Pittsburgh. On the left bank of Turtle Creek, near the Westinghouse plant, there was another Croatian settlement in Port Perry. They had a post-office. Croatians also had their rooming houses and shops next to Braddock Avenue. They settled on Electric Avenue. In the upper part of East Pittsburgh, along Bessemer Terrace, there was a large Croatian settlement. In 1914, a number of Croatian families started moving to Wilkins Township, on the right bank of Turtle Creek, where they began to build their houses.[3] In the small town of Monessen a larger Croatian settlement grew little by little. At the beginning of the century, it numbered about 21,000 inhabitants among which were about 600 Croats. After *Pittsburgh Steel Co.* had been built in 1901, more and more Croats from other places moved to Monessen.

Immediately prior to World War One, around 3,000 Croats lived in Etna. They gathered in some ten societies and built a *Croatian Home* and a *Croatian Club.* The Croats in Etna were owners of a few saloons and hotels. Adam Jovanović founded an industrial firm named *Croatian Concrete Brick and Block Co.*[4] The history of the Croatian settlement at Steelton is almost equal to the history of numerous miners' settlements in

Pennsylvania. The Croats settled in Steelton in large numbers around 1890. They had come from the Karlovac, Bjelovar and the Vivodin areas. In 1910, there were 2,000 Croats living in Steelton. At *Pennsylvania Steel Company* one third of the workers born outside the USA were Croats. Before World War One, Slavic immigrants made up 70% of the total number of foreign workers in coal-mines. Their starting pay was $1.40 per day.

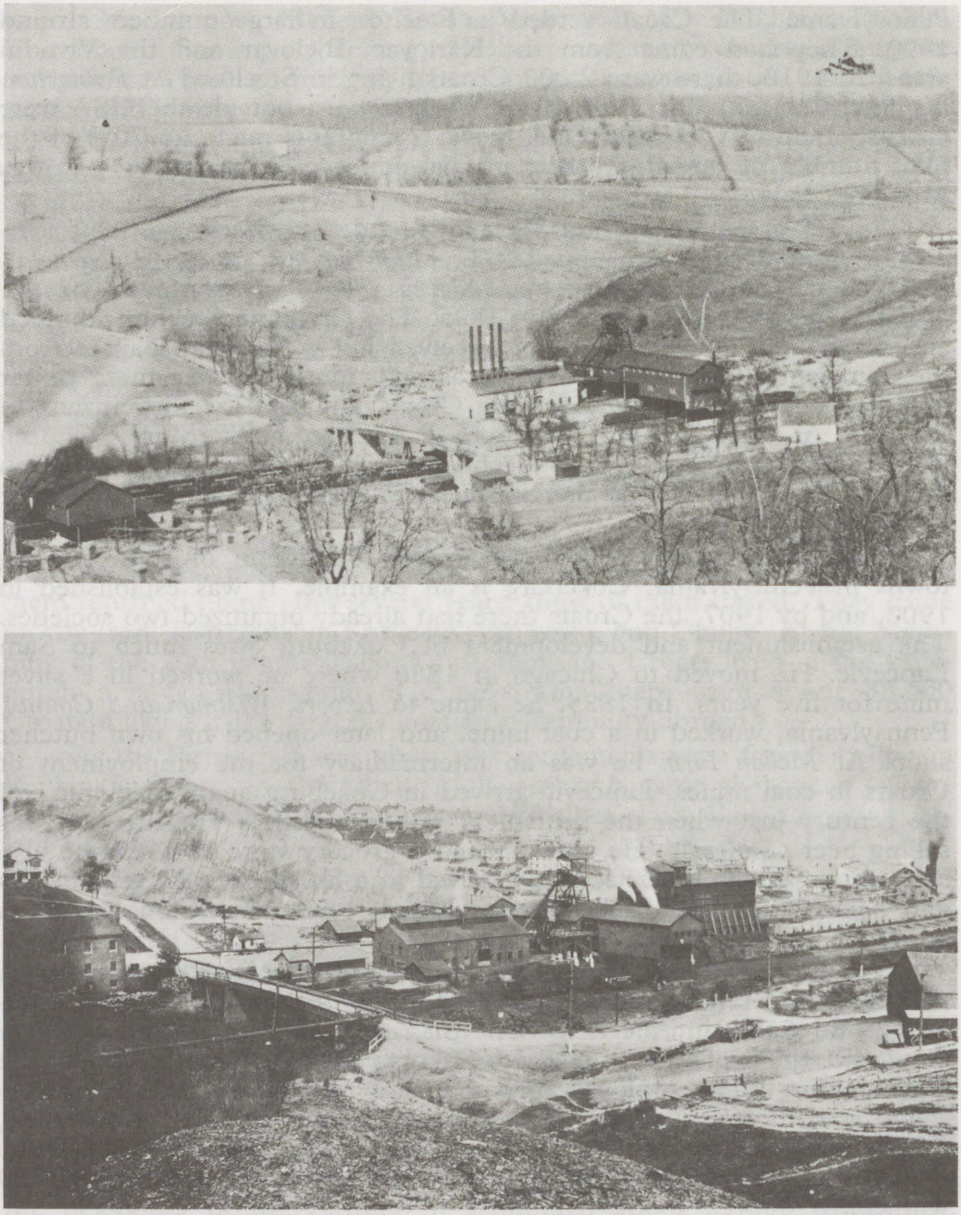
In 1893, the Croats and Slovenes founded in Steelton a joint society for mutual help and named it *Croatian-Slovene Society St. Nicholas.* In 1898, they founded the *Croatian-Slovene Church of St. Mary.* The *St. Nicholas* society ceased to exist in 1895. The Croats in Steelton founded a *Croatian Reading Library* which received books and newspapers from the homeland. The *Croatian Home* was built too and it became a center of social activities not only for the Croats but also for the citizens of Steelton. As early as 1903, they opened a school at St. Mary's Church which had an enrollment of 150 children. In 1909, St. Mary's Church was left to the Croats as the Slovenes separated and established their own.[5]

The Croats also participated in the foundation of some mining towns in Pennsylvania. Cokeburg is an example. It was established in 1902, and by 1907, the Croats there had already organized two societies. The establishment and development of Cokeburg owes much to Sam Lapčević. He moved to Chicago in 1880 where he worked in a silver mine for five years. In 1885, he came to *Export, Westmoreland County,* Pennsylvania, worked in a coal mine, and later opened his own butcher shop. At *Mellon Firm* he was an intermediary for the employment of Croats in coal mines. Lapčević arrived in Cokeburg at the beginning of the century just when the settlement was established. His first job was selling beer wholesale. He later opened a grocery store in which he also sold mining tools. Lapčević was involved in a lot of other merchant jobs and became a distinguished citizen. His descendants no longer have a store in Cokeburg.[6]

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Croatian settlements in Allegheny and Pittsburgh already had 13,000 inhabitants, 7,000 in Pittsburgh and 6,000 in Allegheny. The *Steel Mill* on Twenty-Eighth Street employed 1,500 of them, the *South Side and Steel Co.* employed 600, the *Clinton Iron Works* employed 500, *Carnegie* on Twenty-Eighth Street - 1,000, and the *Small Mill* - 400. *Black Diamond* employed 1,000 men, the *Iron City Steel Co.* - 200, the *Carbon Steel Co.* - 600, the *McConway and Co. Steel Works* - 600, and the *Carnegie Bridge Works* employed 300 workers.

Apart from the Pittsburgh industries Croats also worked for *Ritter and Conley Iron* and for *Steel Co, Thomas Carlin Sons, H. J. Heinz and Co,* as well as for *Kieffer Stiefel and Lape and Co.* In 1915, some 100,000 Croats lived in Pennsylvania.[7]

According to population statistics, the Croatian community in Pittsburgh was the third largest among Eastern European colonies, after the Poles and the Slovaks. The Croatians lived mainly between Twenty-Fifth and Thirtieth Street in the old Allegheny area, and on the eastern part of Ohio Street, popularly known as *Mala Jaska.*[8]



Historic pictures of Cokeburg, Pennsylvania; above, early 1900's; below, mid 1920's

The Croats built two churches: St. Nicholas Church in Allegheny was built in 1894, and a few years later, St. Nicholas Church in Bennett was built. Both are still functioning today. Croats had their own schools and numerous homes and clubs in the Pittsburgh district. There are about 120 Croatian settlements in Pennsylvania today. Many Croats have become distinguished businessmen, politicians, union movement leaders,

teachers and professors, whereas thousands are still working in the steel and mining industries. According to the above data, the Croats are today a very important national community in Pennsylvania.

The life of the Croatian immigrants in Pennsylvania, as in other American states, was extremely difficult in the past. Except for some merchants, bankers and inn owners, the majority of settlers lived in poverty, in a continuous struggle for mere existence. For most, the hopes of returning home gradually faded. Their position in society improved very slowly. In addition to other difficulties, there was homesickness and for many of them also the longing for their families they had left back home. Work had to be done for survival and some money had to be sent to their closest relatives in the homeland.

The work day lasted 10-12 hours, sometimes even longer, and work was hard and controlled by *foremen* and *superintendents*. Physical working conditions were poor and so accidents were an everyday occurrence. George Prpić has written the following, "Working conditions in steel-works, mines and industrial plants were extremely poor. In steel-works they used to work twelve hours a day (...) Working half naked in iron-mills hundreds of them died and were disabled in work accidents."[9] Innumerable immigrants, among them also the Croats, died in American factories and mines, and nobody after their death took care of their families. Many of them were disabled and unfit for work. Due to unsatisfactory protection, the problem of disabled workers was one of the most difficult ones in the life of an immigrant.

Their personal life was no less hard. In the vicinity of the plants and building sites the companies built settlements for the immigrants. The houses they lived in were typical, wooden shacks, places sooty from factory smoke, one next to the other. They were popularly known as *boarding houses*. There was neither water nor electricity or other facilities for civilized life. There was a water pump in the yard and a bench next to it with wash basins. The house usually had six rooms: three on the ground floor and three upstairs. There was the owner's room downstairs, as well as a dining room and a kitchen. About eighteen persons slept in the rooms upstairs with usually three iron beds in each room, two men in every bed.[10]

The taverns popularly called *saloons* were at the time the most profitable money making businesses. The saloon owners became influential among their countrymen and the saloons soon became important places in the private life of the immigrants. Their owners were at the same time agents for American companies looking for workers among the newcomers. The agents for shipping companies were always at hand, and some saloon owners were also active in the banking business as intermediaries between the American government and the immigrants. *Salooners* could obtain American citizenship more easily than others. They were also active on the benefit and church boards of immigrant communities. They were the first among the immigrants to master English as it was necessary for all of their business activities.

Company houses

There has been much controversy about the influence of the boarding houses and saloons on the Croatian immigrants. Hinko Sirovatka has described them like this, "*Saloons,* or as the Croats used to call them *saluni,* are like our inns or taverns. The *saluni* can be found everywhere our people live. There is probably no Croatian club or library, no school or church, but there are saloons all over the place. (...) There are many more of them than there is real need. In some places they stand one near the other and are usually opened by the people whose only aim is making use of their friends as much as possible. Brandy, beer and wine are being served, there is a lot of smoking and bowling (...). A significant share of the hard workers' earnings is left in the saloons (...), the majority of them foolishly waste the money that cost them a lot of physical strength, thus cheaply selling their bodies and their life."[11] At the beginning of the century Sirovatka spent a few years among the immigrants in the States so his opinion must be respected. However, research done by George Prpić seems to be nearer to the truth. Prpić wrote, "The largest number of workers, even in times of depression and strikes, used to discuss the problems in the *saloons* (...), they became important places in the Croatian immigrant's life and activity and kept their importance even after the establishment of numerous Croatian homes, halls and clubs. As a matter of fact, every Croatian home had next to its cultural and social center a *saloon* or a bar (...). The *saloon* was a place where an immigrant could meet his fellow countrymen on Saturday night, on Sundays or on holidays (...), a place where one could listen to the tamburitza and to the songs from the old country (...). The Croats did not spend their time in the *saloons* because they liked drinking; they went there wishing to spend time with the people they knew."[12]

It must be pointed out that saloons also had positive qualities in the life of the immigrants. It is there that they discussed their experi-

ences and gave advice to each other. The news of recent events in the old country, particularly of political events, first arrived at the *saloons*, which were also a place for political campaigns among the settlers. Many *saloon* owners, as has been already pointed out, were the founders and officials in the benefit and political immigrant organizations.

An important part in the immigrants' life was played by the so-called *šifkartaši* or bankers. They sold tickets and were intermediaries in sending the immigrants' money to their homes. Some of them became very rich acquiring a reputation among the settlers. They took an active part in everyday life of the Croats as founders or officials in benefit and political societies of the immigrants. Unfortunately, none of them managed to get over the US depression years before World War One, although some possessed hundreds of thousands of dollars. The role of the *šifkartaši* was described as follows by Milan Jevtić, "The newspapers are the only means holding our immigration together. That is why the *šiftkartaši* immediately began launching their newspapers. In each newspaper there was a name of a *šifkartaš* and the advertisements to prove that the best thing for immigrants to do is to trust him with their money (...). They were the bankers of our people. The immigrants trusted them with their most private objects and confided to them their savings. They had commissioners in all the communities who provided them with customers (...). The communities were flooded with the printed lists of the *šifkartaši*. Their work took such proportions that even great American banks strove to enter their business. All this intensified the influence of the *šifkartaši* who became a sort of *immigrant king.*"[13]

Both the owners of the boarding houses and *saloons* and the *šiftkartaši* operated in the immigrant settlements and communities of the Croatians. The communities developed step by step, parallel to the increase of immigrants. In them, immigrants continued in many ways their old way of life and retained the customs of the native country, so that in addition to the national societies, regional ones were also formed. This is what Prpić has to say on the establishment of the immigrant communities, "When the newcomers arrived from Croatia their friends and relatives usually found jobs for them, gave them food and lodging and sometimes even employed them in their own workshops. This explains why the groups of Croats from one and the same place, district or region settled down in the same place in America and formed large communities of people who knew each other, or were even relatives coming from the same place in Croatia."[14]

The economic crises and depression brought about bad experiences to the Croatian immigrants whose position within the working class of America was less favorable and more difficult since they belonged to the so-called new immigration. In conditions where there was no protection at work, tragedies happened frequently and took hundreds of young lives. Most of the people died in the iron works, from natural disasters, and in traffic accidents. Many of them died of various diseases, mostly tuberculosis. They were sometimes beaten and killed in strikes. The

The Croatian Cemetery in Pittsburgh

American companies tried to hide the facts about the workers' deaths in order to avoid paying indemnity.

In his study entitled *Thousands of Croatian Graves,* George Prpić has disclosed an absolutely unknown page of Croatian history and at the same time, an unknown chapter in the history of the American Croats - their tribute in blood and life. Among the Croatians there was a well known saying "Amerika-čemerika", because for many immigrants it really was full of sorrow ("čemer") and tragedy. The American press showed little interest in the immigrants' untold hardships. Writing about the contribution of particular national groups to the development of America today one usually describes their participation in the arts and sciences. A large contribution is owed to the Croats. The names of Ratkay, Konščak, and Kundek are quite known in America as are Lucas, Meštrović, Vanka and others who often appear in the press. But thousands of Croats died unknown and very little is known about them though they fought against great odds and gave everything they had towards the building of America. Quite often, everything they had was just their own lives.[15]

It is evident that a contribution to a society need not be measured exclusively by the efforts and achievements of a few famous and extraordinary persons. It ought to be judged first of all by the role which the entire national community played. The main contribution to the development of American civilization was made by the ordinary immigrant. In American folklore that contribution is symbolically expressed by a legend about a Croatian smelter of superhuman strength who in the steel indus-

try stood for what Paul Bunyan, a legendary American lumberjack, stood for in forestry.

Joe Magarac was the national hero of the immigrant miners and iron workers in Pennsylvania in the 1880's. He was extremely strong and was able to perform the boldest and even superhuman exploits. He used to appear only at times of great affliction. Joe Magarac would emerge out of the foggy Monongahela river and after the job was done he would disappear into the river again. He won a duel fighting for the hand of Mary Mastrovich, the most beautiful girl in Homestead, but he never married her. The saga of Joe Magarac originated during the time when the workers' unions strengthened and their leaders felt that the newcomers should take an active part in them and not seek protection by inventing legends of national heroes. Legend has it that Joe Magarac was a son of iron ore and once, when the miners ran short of ore, he threw himself into the furnace and melted with the ore. That is how the best steel was produced.

The America of the 1880's had almost no social legislature, no protection or insurance for the workers in case of accident, illness, death or unemployment, especially not for the foreign, most often unqualified workers, who were employed in the most difficult and the worst paid jobs.

The trade unions were still in their infancy, limited to some chosen professions of qualified, mostly American workers, who were prejudiced against mainly unqualified newcomers and especially against those of Slavic origin. The trade unions, reduced to such narrow sectarian associations, could not do anything serious to improve the workers' conditions, in particular the newcomers who, disorganized and disunited by origin, language and tradition, were easy prey to the most unmerciful capitalist exploitation.[16] In firms, mines, factories and building sites terror reigned enforced by special company policemen, *cossacks, pinkertons* and various spies watching attentively over every motion of the workers. Special civil reactionary organizations of *vigilantes* and *knights* were spreading hatred and contempt of the newcomers, not even refraining from violence. Elderly Croatian immigrants still remember the insulting names like *Hunky, Slave* etc. for Croatian, Serbian, Slovene and other Slav workers in different parts of America. Under a great deal of pressure, the Croatian immigrants could hardly get used to the new way of life and were forced to live isolated in the smallest groups of acquaintances and fellow countrymen.

The Foundation of the Croatian Society - Towards a General and Humanitarian Croatian Organization

While the members of other nations, those with a longer immigrant tradition such as the Italians, Greeks, Poles, Czechs, Jews, etc. found in the New World their own national organizations offering them at least some help in distress, the Croats in immigration did not have such organizations. Consequently, their situation, particularly after work accidents, was that much harder and hopeless. True, there existed some Croatian benefit organizations such as the Slavonic-Illyric Mutual and

Zdravko V. Mužina, founder of the Croatian Association

Benevolent Society of San Francisco, established as early as 1857, or the United Slavonian Benevolent Association of New Orleans, founded in 1864. These societies were exclusively of local character and were situated on the western and southern coasts of the USA, too far away from the main flows of Croatian mass immigration which were chiefly in the regions with mines and iron works in Pennsylvania, in neighboring Western Virginia, and Ohio, or a little further away in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and other states of the Mid-West. From the Austrian-Hungarian diplomatic and consular representatives in the USA, the immigrant Croats could neither expect nor hope for any help or understanding of their needs.

In such difficult circumstances, exploited and discriminated, left to themselves, without necessary protection, in an intolerant American industrial system, an idea about self-protection arose among the Croats following the model of other immigrants, first of all of the Czechs and Slovaks. The idea was to establish societies for mutual help in case of death, disease, work accident, unemployment and other distress. This idea was promoted in the columns of the two Croatian immigrant papers. Nikola Polić, the editor and publisher of the journal *Chicago-Sloboda* (Chicago-Freedom) and Juraj Škrivanić, the publisher and editor of the *Napredak* (Progress) of Hoboken, New Jersey during 1893, wrote systematically in favor of establishing a general organization for the Croats of America. But the real supporter of the idea was Zdravko V. Mužina. Mužina was born in Hrvatsko Primorje. Because of his political activity in the Party of the Right, he lost his scholarship in Zagreb and his Party colleagues sent him to Chicago to help Nikola Polić, also a Party member, in editing his journal *Chicago-Sloboda.*

Mužina did not approve of Polić's opinion that it was necessary for the Croatian immigrants to become naturalized, which Polić was arguing for on the pages of his journal. But that was not the real reason why Mužina left Chicago sometime later. They had actually decided together that Mužina should go to Pennsylvania, to the Allegheny area where a large number of the Croats lived, and try to establish a society for Croatian immigrants. Mužina arrived in Pittsburgh at the end of 1893 and immediately made the acquaintances of the immigrant leaders Petar Pavlinac and Franjo Šepić with whom he started a campaign for founding a Croatian fraternal benefit society. He was successful in establishing the newspaper *Danica* (Morning Star) that appeared on New Year's Day, 1894.

DANICA

Organ Hrvatske Zajednice.

Entered at the Post office at Pittsburg, Pa. and admitted for transmission through the Mails at second class Rates.

Godina I. — Broj 35. PITTSBURG, Pa., 6. rujna 1894. Pojedini broj 5 centa.

HRVATSKA ZAJEDNICA.

Hrvatska je „zajednica" ustrojena. Iza tolike muke, iza tolikog napora ovo je djelo izvedeno. Hrvati su pokazali, da znadu promišljati, što im treba; da znaju raditi za svoj moralni i materijalni probitak; da znaju složiti se; da su u stanju još nešto učiniti na čast svome rodu i slavu svoje mile domovine, premda u ovoj neizmjernoj odaljenosti od nje.

Povjest „zajednice" jest doduše kratka, ali ni najmanje osakva, kakva bi morala biti povjest ovako usviešenog ustrojenja. Ideju „zajednice" potaknuo bijaše brat „Napredak" u Hobokenu već prod godina dana: on je pisao per pete o koristi ovog savršenog ustrojstva, ali pošto se društva samo nisu odazvala, a agitacija bijaše slaba dotično sitzakova, k tomu drage su ovdašnje novine nisu na to ni obzirale, to je ovaj krasan predlog ostao, čitao je na papiru i nije bio sloven u život.

predkom te mu navadja samo jekoje slavenske zajednice u Americi, pošto je ustvrdio, da drugi Slaveni ne imadu takovih organizacija.

U 16. broju donaša dopis ... Miljana, prosjednika Am. Slav. Sloge u ... da se ova odobrava ideja zajednice i pr... da se zajednica prozove „jugoslavenska slo... pošto, da znaju usteti obzir i na Srbe.

U istome broju donaše isp... tak iz sjednice društva „Sv. Ciprijan u McKeesportu", koje bijaše ustrojeno dne 15. travnja. Kod te prve sjednice bio zaključeno, da društvo imade pristupiti k ... zajednici.

U 17. broju donosi izvadak iz zapisnika prve sjednice društva „Sv. Ciril... koje bijaše ustrojeno dne 9/21 ... Kod ove prve sjednice pristupiti: k ... osnivajućoj se zajednici. ... broju donaša kratku ... Keesportu, gdje ... sjednice, te poziva ... društva, da se ... U 18. broju ...

društva upravljaju neodvisno svojim imenkom. Svaki član imade kod pristupa pridoniesti ljećničku svjedoždbu i uplatiti 50 cenata pristupnine u „zajednicu". Svaki član imade plaćati svaki mjesec 10 centa u glavnu blagajnu osim eventualnih osmrtnih prisiljba. U slučaju smrti člana dobije njegova obitelj ... 500 dolara podpore a u slučaju smrti supruge koga člana, dobije član udovac 100 dolara podpore. Ovo je određeno za sada, dok „zajednica" ne naraste. Svako društvo imade na konvenciju odaslati po jednog delegata, a u slučaju velike odaljenosti te najbližega skopčanog velikog troška može imenovati od najviših delegata jednog zastupnika. Konvencija će se obdržavati svake godine u drugome mjestu. Mjesto buduće konvencije odredio je glavni odbor u Wheelingu, W. Va.

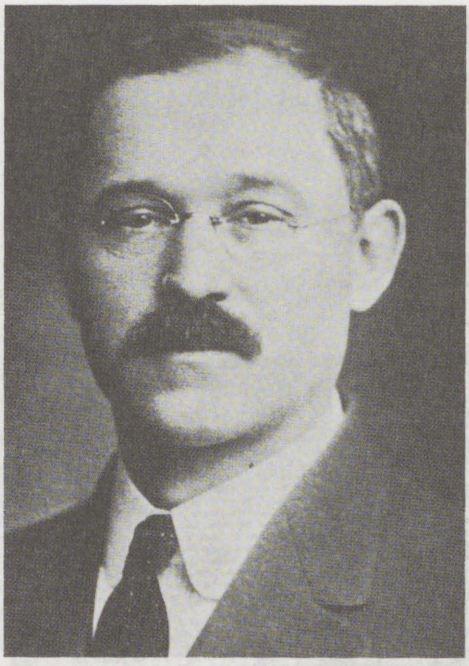
U glavni odbor biljahu izabrana sliedeća gospoda: glavni prvsjednik: Ivan Ljubić, Wheeling, W. Va.
„ podprosjednik: Josip Šubašić, Etna, Pa.
ravnovodja: Franjo Šepić, Allegheny, Pa.
... Ruđer Đurđević, Allegheny, Pa.
blagajnik: Josip Benetа, Etna, Pa.

The "Danica" newspaper, 1894

In the foreword of the first edition of the paper one could read the following, "The aim of the *Danica* will be the following ...taking care that in every place where Croats live societies should be formed which would later be united in a larger union. In that way we would promote moral and material advantages of the Croatian people".[17] Mužina and his collaborators called a meeting on January 14, 1894, in the Czech Catholic School with the intention of establishing a Croatian lodge in Allegheny. According to the minutes, more than 300 people attended the meeting and all of them agreed that the lodge was a necessity. On the motion of Mužina they named it "*Dr. Ante Starčević* Croatian Workers Relief Lodge." The by-laws of the lodge were adopted and it was also decided that the Croats from far away places could be the members as long as they paid fees and attended the sessions regularly.[18] At the foundation meeting of *Dr. Ante Starčević* Lodge it was decided that it would join the Croatian society as soon as it was established.

Croats had founded a lodge a year earlier by the name of "*Franjo Josip" I* in the neighboring mining town of Benwood, West Virginia. The lodge president was a renowned Croatian immigrant, Ivan Ljubić. Mužina was against the use of the Austrian emperor's name that was given to the lodge and the members supported him and renamed the lodge *Hrvatska.*[19]

Other lodges were founded in the meantime. In March, 1894, *Sv. Vid* Lodge was established in Pittsburgh, in April in McKeesport *Sv.*



Petar Pavlinac, founder of the Croatian Society and the Supreme President of the NCS, 1900 - 1904

Franjo Šepić, founder of the Croatian Society

Ciril i Metod Lodge, in May in Johnstown, Pa., *Sv. Rok* Lodge, and *Sv. Nikola* Lodge in Braddock. All of them expressed their readiness of uniting in a joint Croatian Society.

Some Croatian newspapers were afraid of the formation of a large fraternal society of Croats. They censured Mužina for wanting to establish something that even larger Slav societies were unable to create. Persistent and undaunted he answered his critics in the *Danica* explaining that the Slovak and Czech societies were all successful and that there was no reason why the Croats should not achieve the same.

Meanwhile, the Organizing Committee of the representatives of the Croatian lodges was formed. Its members were Petar Pavlinac and Franjo Šepić of Allegheny, Josip Žegudović of McKeesport, Božo Gojsović of Johnstown, and Ivan Ljubić of Wheeling. The Committee made all the necessary preparations and issued a call for the holding of the foundation meeting on September 2, 1894, at *Majak Hall* of the Czech Society in Allegheny. The following document has been preserved about it:

Minutes:

First Convention of the Croatian Society (Hrvatska Zajednica) held on September 2, 1894, at "Majak Hall", South Canal Street, Allegheny City.

The following lodge representatives were present:

Ante "Starčević" Lodge	*Z. V. Mužina*
Allegheny City, Pa.	*Petar Pavlinac*
	Franjo Šepić
Sv. Ćiril i Metod Lodge	*Josip Šubašić*
Etna, Pa.	*Petar Barbić*
	Josip Buneta
Sv. Nikola Lodge	*Anton Nemanić*
Braddock, Pa.	*Nikola Bukovac*
Sv. Juraj Lodge	*Josip Žegudović*
McKeesport, Pa.	*Ignjat Jarnević*
Sv. Rok Lodge	
Johnstown, Pa.	*Božo Gojsović*
Hrvatska Lodge	
Wheeling W. Va.	*Ivan Ljubić*

Altogether six lodges were represented.

The session was opened at two o'clock in the afternoon and on the motion of Franjo Šepić, brother Josip Žegudović was unanimously elected as a recorder.

After many of them had eagerly spoken in favor of the "union" idea it was decided that it ought to be established for the Croats too.

First of all it was named "Hrvatska zajednica" or the "Croatian Association" of America.

The delegates of all the lodges represented made a statement by which they expressed their intention to join the Association. Then the by-laws were read and some amendments made before they were presented by Josip Žegudović and subsequently accepted.

After the deliberation over the by-laws had been closed at six o'clock, there was a ten-hour break and the session continued.

First, a site for the next convention to be held the following year was decided upon. Brother Josip Žegudović motioned that the second convention of the "Croatian Association" be held at Wheeling, W. Va. The following were elected as members of the Supreme Board:

Ivan Ljubić, president
Josip Subašić, vice president
Petar Pavlinac, secretary
Franjo Šepić, accountant
Josip Buneta, treasurer

Brothers elected to the Board of Trustees were:

Božo Gojsović
Josip Žegudović
Franjo Žibrat
Nikola Bukovac
Franjo Tahija
Ignjat Jarnević

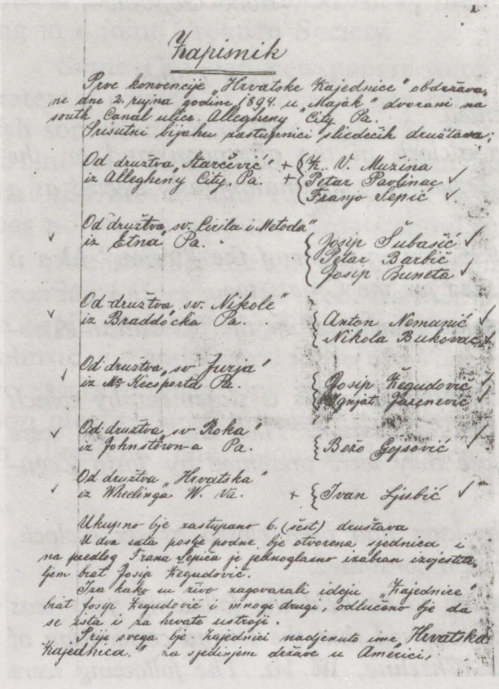
The High Trial Board consisted of the following brothers:

Juro Papa
Anton Nemanić
Miko Moškun

The newspaper "Danica" was selected as the official organ of the Croatian Association.

The newly elected president, brother Ivan Ljubić, thanked the delegates with the kindest words for the honor bestowed upon him and appealed to the Board members and all others to work persistently.

Minutes of the First Convention of the National Croatian Society. September 2, 1894



Zapisnik

Prve konvencije „Hrvatske Zajednice" održane, ne dne 2. rujna godine 1894. u „Majak" dvorani na south Canal ulice Allegheny City, Pa.

Prisutni bijahu zastupnici sljedećih društava;

Od društva „Starčević" + { K. V. Mužina / Petar Pavlinac ✓ / Franjo Šepić ✓
iz Allegheny City, Pa.

Od društva sv. Ćirila i Metoda"
iz Etna Pa. { Josip Subašić ✓ / Petar Barbić ✓ / Josip Buneta ✓

Od društva sv. Nikole"
iz Braddock Pa. { Anton Nemanić ✓ / Nikola Bukovac ✓

Od društva „sv. Jurja"
iz Mt. Pleasant Pa. { Josip Žegudović ✓ / Ignjat Jarnević ✓

Od društva „sv. Roka"
iz Johnstown-a Pa. { Bože Gojsović ✓

Od društva „Hrvatska"
iz Wheeling W. Va. + { Ivan Ljubić ✓

Ukupno bje zastupano 6. (šest) društava
U dva sata poslje podne bje otvorena sjednica i na predlog Franc Šepića je jednoglasno izabran zajednik gosp. brat Josip Žegudović.
Isa kako su živo zagovarali ideju „Zajednice" brat Josip Žegudović i mnoge druge, odlučeno bje da se zvala i za Hrvate ustroje.
Prije svega bje zajednici nadjenuto ime „Hrvatska Zajednica" za spomen države iz Americi.

Sljedeće bijaše društava zastupnika izjavile se da društva koja oni zastupaju pristupaju k ustanovi ratim prestanu se na čitanje pravila, kod čitanja istih pravila bjehu učinjene nekoje preinake, inače ostadoše gornjima u formi podnesenoj po brata Josipa Žegudovića.

Isa kako bje u 6 sati zaključena rasprava o pravilima primljena bijaše 10 časovna pauza, nakon ove nastavio se zasjedanje.

Prvaj prije nje izabrat mjesto buduće konvencije, koja se imade održavat buduće godine, te na pred. bog gosta Josipa Žegudovića, prijačino bje da se dru. ga konvencija „Hrvatske Zajednice" održaje u Whee. ling-u W. Va. iza svog prestanka se na Kranje zlav. nog Odbora, u koj bijahu izabrani većinom glasova sljedeći;

✓ Ivan Ljubić predsjednik
✓ Josip Subašić pod. pred.
✓ Petar Pavlinac tajnik
✓ Franjo Šepić računovođa
✓ Josip Buneta blagajnik

U nadgledni odbor bijahu izabrana sljedeća braća;

✓ Božo Gojsović
✓ Josip Žegudović
✓ Franjo Žibrat
✓ Nikola Bukovac
✓ Franjo Tahija
✓ Ignjat Jarnević

U porotni Odbor izabrani su sljedeća braća;

✓ Juro Papa
✓ Anton Nemanić
✓ Miko Moškun.

Za Organ „Hrvatske Zajednice" je odabran list „Danica".

Novo izabrani predsjednik brat Ivan Ljubić zahvalio se je na povjerenoj mu časti blagim riečima, potaknuo je koli odbornike toli sve članove na ustrajan rad, a on da će od svoje strane

The First Convention adopted the first by-laws whose basic items were:

"Every existing lodge can join the Society, as well as those yet to be established (...) The lodges manage their finances independently. Each member when joining the Society is to produce a medical certificate and pay a 50 cent entrance fee. The members must, in addition, pay 10 cents per month to the treasury apart from possible death charges. In case of death, the member's family shall receive $300 support and in case a member's wife dies the widower shall get $100. This is only valid for now, until the Society has increased. Each lodge is to send one delegate to the convention and only when long distances and consequently great expenses are involved can it name one representative among the announced delegates. The conventions will take place each year at a different site."[20]

The Croatian Association was founded by 13 delegates who represented six lodges with a membership totaling approximately 300 members and with assets totaling $42.52. Although it was a very modest beginning, the *Danica* newspaper noted with pleasure:

"This is how the most significant matter of our American community was solved. By this we proved and showed that we do not fall behind other nations. It is a sacred duty of the *Croatian Society* to gather under its banner all the existing lodges, and to establish new ones wherever our people live, to assemble and unite our Croatian population and to spread knowledge among them, and when necessary, to offer its members both moral and material help.

It is the duty of every Croat to join the lodges and help them join the Society. This should be our *Matica* (focal point) around which we are all to assemble, an axis around which our whole community must turn. Should we behave like this there will be unity of purpose, friendship, contentment and God's blessing among us."[21]

The news about the foundation of the Croatian Society met with very favorable reactions in Croatia. Many famous Croats and Croatian associations sent their congratulations to the founders. Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905) said in his message:

"With great joy in my heart I have heard the news that you intend to bring together all the Croats over there - those who already have or will have their separate societies - into one and the same 'Society', thus helping and protecting each other and encouraging the good deeds in others. In this way the Croatian name will be cherished and your unhappy country will be made famous. God bless you all, I give my heartiest bishop's blessing to your idea!"[22]

Dr. Ante Starčević (1823-1896), the founder and initiator of the Croatian Party of the Right, addressed the society with the following words, "To the famous Croatian Society! Only in unity of purpose and work lies the salvation of the Croats!"[23]

Josip Frank (1844-1911), the leader of the Pure Party of the Right, sent the following congratulations, "The 'Society' is perfect proof of the vital strength of the Croatians, and in the new world let it be not only comfort to the unhappy and oppressed but also a living flame of resur-

Ivan Ljubić, founder and First President of the Croatian Association

rection, freedom and unity of the Croatian homeland."[24]

In its message, the *Hrvatska* newspaper, published in Zagreb, announced, "We were very happy to hear that the Croats in far away America work together. By this, brothers, you who live among foreigners, bestow honors to yourself and to your beloved country. Wishing well to your 'Society' we shout with joy, "Long live!"[25]

Other newspapers and many Croatians sent their best wishes to the Society.

The Croats from Pennsylvania did not choose the most propitious time for the establishment of their Association. In 1894, and during the next few years, the entire USA was struck by the recession. Workers' wages were very low and unemployment was significant. Yet at the Second Convention held at the Croatian Church Hall, Allegheny, in September 1895, the Society was represented by 22 lodges. The membership was 1,143 and the total assets were $848.58. At the time the members paid 10 cents monthly to the treasury and in case of a member's death there was a special tax to pay.[26] The Supreme President and Chairman, Ivan Ljubić, pointed out with pleasure, "Dear brothers! Tomorrow it will have been a year since we have established our beloved Croatian Society which we have to consider as our mother in this country. You have, brothers, no doubt grasped of what benefit the Society is to us. You have witnessed in cases of those few deceased members how useful the support given by the Society can be to their mourning families. Therefore, we warmly recommend to all of you to work unanimously in the future for the welfare of the Croatian Society and for its advancement."[27]

At the Second Convention it was decided that the Pittsburgh authorities should be asked permission for the Croatian Society to act legally. A special board was named that was to visit Judge John M. Kennedy, who on October 14, 1895, issued a charter for the legal activity of the Croatian Society.

Although the Society was developing successfully, there was still some doubt among the delegates about its future which one can see by the following conclusion, "In case of disintegration of the Croatian Society, half of its assets belongs to the orphans of the deceased members and the other half to Croatian churches in America."[28] The Croatian fraternalists did not surrender but went on working for the future of the Society. At the Third Convention held at Travnikar's Hall, Cleveland,

Delegates to the Second Convention of the Croatian Society, 1895, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Josip Šubašić, founder of the Croatian Society

Ohio, on July 12, 1896, there were 33 lodges represented by 25 delegates and 20 voting officers. Membership had grown to 1,885 and total assets were $2,088.59. The convention was accompanied by a great deal of disagreement which was to become very characteristic for the history of the Croatian Union. The convention actually should have been held in McKeesport, Pa., but as that was not realized, Lodge No.3 of McKeesport confiscated the common money amounting to $1,000 and a lot of work had to be done to solve the dispute.

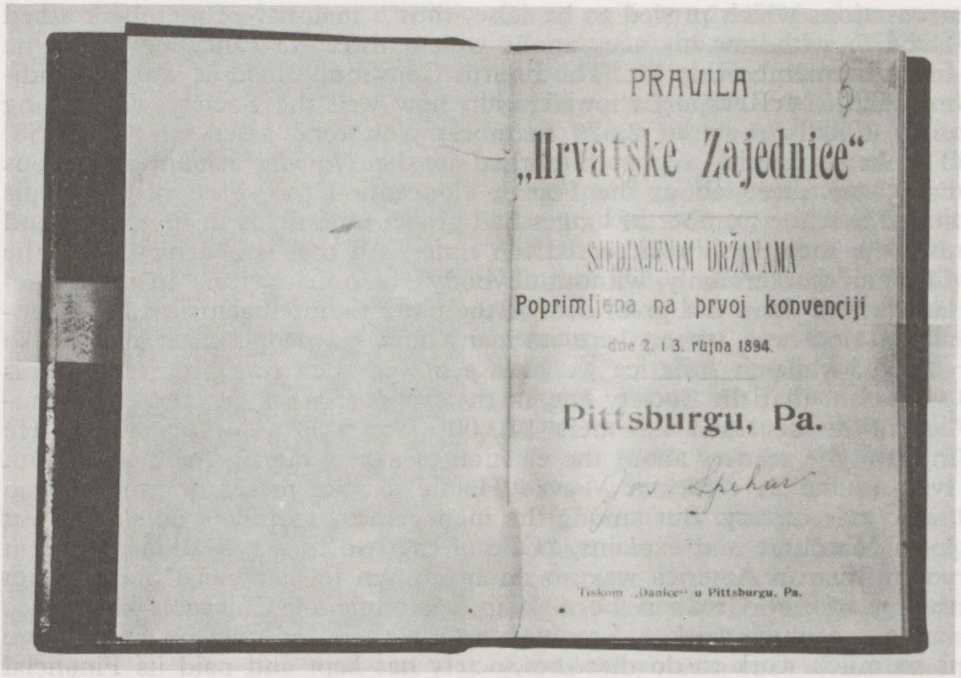
The facts about the Third Convention would have been very incomplete if it were not for Ivan Lupis Vukić who stayed there as an American correspondent to the *Narodni list* newspaper of Zadar. In his article published on September 2, 1896, he reported on the Cleveland convention. Lupis wrote how everything worked smoothly and how the Croatian Society was getting on well. He described the arrival of representatives from many parts of America who were met at the station and brought to a famous Cleveland boarding house owned by Pavao Kekić. The building where the convention was held flew both the Croatian and American flags and on the facade there was a large inscription reading "Convention of the Croatian Society." Lupis wrote that the Society by-laws were improved and that maximum death benefit was raised to $500 and $250 for a member's wife. He pointed out that the society was a true benefit for the Croatian workers in America and that it was a pity that numerous societies had not yet joined the Society. Ivan Ljubić was elected president and again acted as the Convention Chairman, Josip Šubašić was elected vice-president, Frane Šepić was chosen as the secretary, and Josip Buneta as the treasurer. The *Napredak* of Hobocken was chosen as the official organ of the Society.[29]

Unfortunately, things were not as smooth as reported by Lupis in the *Narodni list* newspaper. After the Third Convention, an unpleasant problem arose within the Supreme Board of the Society in connection with the accusations by Trivun Lazić of alleged corruption and irregularities in its work and about constant breaking of the Society by-laws. On February 23, 1897, Lazić printed a circular and distributed it in the immigrant settlements trying to persuade the membership that something must be done against the poor work of the management team. At the Fourth Convention held on June 21, 1897, Lazić's accusations made a painful impact on the delegates. A special board inquired into Lazić's

accusations which proved to be false, thus a majority of members asked Lazić to withdraw his accusations with a threat of canceling his name from the membership list. The Fourth Convention held at Wagner Auditorium in McKeesport showed again how well the Society was getting on: it had grown to 2,679 members with total assets of $3,229.58. Thanks to Lupis's report published in the *Narodne novine,* numerous data were saved about the Fourth Convention too. First of all, Lupis stated that the number of lodges had grown nine times in four years and that the membership increased ten times. All that was achieved by the Croatian workers only, without anybody's help or advice. "In the homeland where there is a great deal of the patriotic intelligentsia and national consciousness, where there are many libraries, people meet and talk so seldom, while in America we have achieved such fine progress." Lupis points out that the Society has, in the few past years, given to the families of its deceased members $12,000 which is a lot of money. He informs the readers about the election of a new management team with Ivan Ljubić as chairman, Pavao Hajdić as vice-president, and Franjo Šepić as secretary. But among the management members he singles out Josip Marohnić and explains, "One of the two most ingenious Croatian young men in America was no doubt chosen for Financial Secretary in the person of Croatian born Josip Marohnić of Chicago. The office implies so much work and requires an educated and diligent man. There is so much work to do that the Society has kept and paid its Financial Secretary for two years and he had to dedicate all his time to the Society. It is beyond question that Mr. Marohnić is fitting for the job. He is also good at writing. His articles and stories are being read with much pleasure and his poems show a real talent. If only he could have stayed at home and got a proper education! But he has to earn his living far away in the world. He was by trade a typographer."[30]

The success of the Fourth Convention lies in the fact that the Society finally started to act legally. The first Society charter was issued by the County Court of Allegheny on October 16, 1895, Judge John M. Kennedy presiding. The management of the Society decided to apply for another charter in which the operation and the rights of the Society should have been more clearly defined and the field of activity widened. Attorney Archibald Blakley suggested that the name of the Croatian Society in the application for the charter be changed into the National Croatian Society, since the former name sounded "somewhat local", while the other one would have a wider national meaning. The management accepted the suggestion. Subsequently, on May 3, 1897, Judge F.H. Hollier issued the charter according to which the Croatian Society received a new name - the National Croatian Society.

Only three years after the National Croatian Society came into operation, it became clear that it was not exclusively an organization of personal and family insurance within the American fraternalist movement. Both the management of the Society and the membership from the very beginning saw it as a national and humanitarian organization. This is how chairman Petar Pavlinac explained it to the delegates at the Seventh Convention, "The National Croatian Society is not only a Croatian benefit organization supporting the sick, the crippled and the


PRAVILA

„Hrvatske Zajednice"

SJEDINJENIM DRŽAVAMA

Poprimljena na prvoj konvenciji

dne 2. i 3. rujna 1894.

Pittsburgu, Pa.

Tiskom „Danice" u Pittsburgu, Pa.

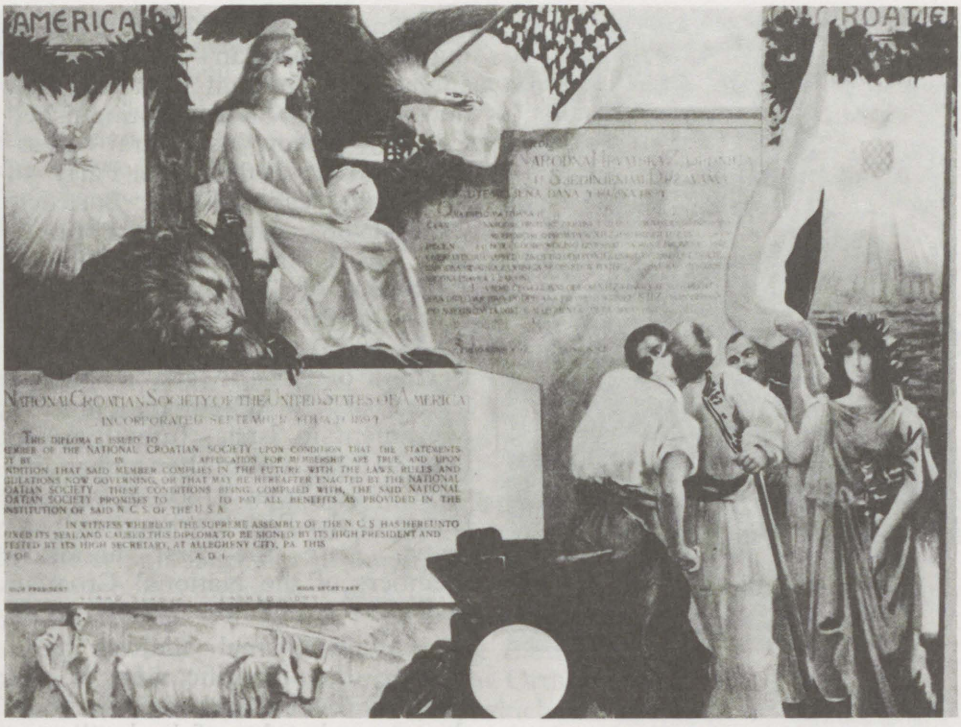
First By-Laws of the Croatian Society, 1894

orphans of the deceased members; it has also another meaning, becoming more and more prominent, active and firm by itself - the Croatian national feeling. In the National Croatian Society 14,000 of our brothers banded together, born in different parts and corners of our country; separated from the Croatian consciousness and national feeling by a barrier like the Chinese wall. They now all embraced their native brothers, the Croats. It means that no sooner had they entered the National Croatian Society that they opened their eyes and adopted their real Croatian name.

Accordingly, if the National Croatian Society is not only a humanitarian, but the people's institution, then its duty is to become active in the national field too, with the motto, if possible, of the great Croatian patriot Strossmayer, "Through education to freedom".[31]

The management tried to express the national and humanitarian nature of the Society by suggestions and by-laws prescribed to its members. The Second Convention agreed to Zdravko Mužina's motion to take a photo of the Supreme Board which should then be hung in each lodge for the membership to know what the Board members they chose looked like. At the same convention it was also suggested to the whole membership that "they should try and become assiduous citizens of this large republic, to respect its laws and consider it as their new homeland."

The Society did take great care of the moral behavior of the membership. It was concluded at the Second Convention that each member of the Society would be expelled at once if it was proved that he had



The CFU Diploma was made up to serve both as a certificate of membership and as a lodge charter. It was created and designed by Vlaho Bukovac, a famous Zagreb artist.

cheated another member. If a member should be divorced from his wife he would also be expelled. An attempt at one's own life was another reason for expulsion.[32] However, when a priest named Božić motioned that each member should go to confession once a year and that it should be included into the Societty by-laws, his motion was rejected with an explanation that the Society was a workers' organization prohibiting no one from fulfilling his religious obligations.[33]

The members of the National Croatian Society who had spent only a few years in the States still cherished vivid memories of their native home and their Croatian homeland. Therefore, at the conventions the necessity of constant connections with the native country and its people was often talked about. At the Third Convention D. Božić gave notice to the delegates that there would be a great exhibition held in Zagreb in 1901, and according to his opinion, the Croatian Society and its members ought to visit Zagreb and the exhibition as a group because they represent the largest Croatian organization. For that purpose, Božić suggested the Society should elect an organizing committee. Unfortunately, this good idea was not realized. Another suggestion by Ivan Ljubić of publishing a book about the history of the Croats in America also remained unfulfilled.

In order to inform the native country as much as possible about the Croatian Society and its work, it was decided at the Fourth Convention that a message be sent to the Croatian reading public through the

Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer

Obzor newspaper of Zagreb explaining how American Croats try to spread the Croatian name in their new country. The distinguished Croatian bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905), the Party of the Right leader David Starčević (1840-1908), a historian and politician Tadija Smičiklas (1843-1914), the bishop of Sarajevo Josip Stadler (1843-1918), Vjekoslav Spinčić (1848-1933) a champion for the freedom of Istria, Matko Laginja a leader of the Croatian National Movement in Istria, Juraj Biankini (1847-1928) a publisher and politician, Gajo Bulat (1836-1900) the leader of the People's Party in Dalmatia, were the first honorary members of the National Croatian Society.[34]

Some formal matters concerning the identification of the Croatian Society and its membership caused a lot of lively discussion at the Second Convention. Some members expressed their dissatisfaction over the emblem of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia that had been used by the Society until then, with the explanation that it was a Hungarian coat of arms. One of the delegates to the convention, Ivan Mavretić, who had previously written a letter to the worthy Croatian writer Eugen Kumičić in Zagreb asking which was the true Croatian coat of arms, showed the convention Kumičić's answer. In his letter Kumičić told the delegates that if they breathed the true Croatian spirit, they would adopt the checkerboard shield design because this was the emblem of the Croatian Party of the Right. That proof was enough for the convention to approve of Kumičić's suggestion.[35]

The National Croatian Society needed special diplomas for its members. It was agreed that Zagreb painter Vlaho Bukovac should design and create the diploma for which he was paid 1,000 florins. Ten thousand diplomas were ordered initially, later followed by an order of 5,000 copies.

The cultural activities of the membership were discussed a great deal at the first conventions. The Third Convention assigned $40 for the publication of poems by Josip Marohnić. Full support was also given to the activities of the Croatian reading library in Steelton, Pa. Petar Pavlinac suggested that $20 or $25 shares be issued so that by means of the earned money a hall for the cultural needs of the Croats in Allegheny could be built.[37]

The early conventions showed and completely confirmed the Croatian spirit of the National Croatian Society. It stands to reason, there-

fore, that all the attempts of changing its name were rejected without having been given any serious thought. In 1894, it was suggested by the Croats of Globeville that the Society should be given a Yugoslav name so that the Slovenes could join also. The answer was that the Slovenes already had their own organization, the *Slovenska jednota.* Another suggestion proposed by the American-Slav Union of Lead requesting that the Society should be renamed into the *Jugoslavenska sloga* so as to enable the Serbs to join was also rejected.[38]

Lodge No. 8 suggested changing the Society's name into the *Hrvatsko-slovenska zajednica* as early as the First Convention because there were many Slovenes in the Lodge. The answer was, "As our brothers, the Slovenes, have their own union they might consider it a sort of competition from our side. On the other hand, there are numerous Croats in the Slovene Union who do not require changing its name."[39] However, the Society was not nationally exclusive: in the lodges with a large number of Slovenes, the by-laws used to be printed in the Slovene language as well. Yet these national disputes could not have been avoided within the CFU even in its initial period. When Trivun Lazić accused the Society management of corruption without any proof, some convention members emphasized that Lazić was trying to weaken the Society because it was a Croatian organization. Then Simo Mamula of Lika, warned the present members that one should not confuse religion with nationality. He pointed out that he was Orthodox, but still a Croat from Croatia. Trivun Lazić did the same, which the members at the Fourth Convention accepted with acclamation.[40] But the Serbian question still remained, becoming even more prominent. The *Narodni list* of New York gave special attention to the matter. The journal pointed out that it was of no advantage for the Croats in America to deal with the Serbian question. It used to bring the Croats even in Croatia a lot of trouble, the paper wrote, and the same might happen in America. It seemed at the beginning that the Serbs would join the National Croatian Society without any prejudice, the more so because the membership considered them Croats of the Orthodox church. However, according to the *Narodni list,* the Serbs opposing such opinions started establishing their national societies. According to the author of the article, the National Croatian Society must decide whether or not a member of the Orthodox church is welcome to join the Society. Those who consider themselves Serbian are free to organize their own unions and nobody must prevent them.[41] The Serbs did so and eventually in 1902, joined first the Russian Association and soon afterwards, in McKeesport, they founded their national organization, the Serbian Orthodox Union *Srbobran.*

Although the National Croatian Society lost part of its membership, it got on successfully. At the Fifth Convention held in Chicago in October 1898, 83 lodges were represented by 66 delegates. The membership totaled 5,173 and the assets had increased to $5,213.66. However, the increase in membership was quite noticeable at the Sixth Convention, held in August 1900, at Wheeling, W. Va.: 132 lodges were represented by 90 delegates and 17 voting officers. The membership had grown to 8,276 and assets totaled $20,209.03. The fast growth of the membership prompted the delegates to take care so as to transform the

Delegates to the Fifth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1898, Chicago, Illinois

Society into an overall Croatian organization of America. They thought a benevolent support of the Croatian press would be useful, and consequently decided to give $100 to each Croatian newspaper. Ivan Ljubić, as President of the Society, was entitled to act as Chairman, but he declined the honor, and Vice-President Juraj M. Mamek of Chicago, Illinois, served as Convention Chairman.

Notes:

1. Stjepan Gaži, *Croatian Immigration to Allegheny County,* 1882-1914, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1956, p. 24.
2. Josip Marohnić, *Popis Hrvata u Americi,* Allegheny, Pa., 1902, p. 99.
3. Compare *Zajedničar,* January 28, 1976.
4. *Hrvatski glas,* Chicago, September 22, 1921.
5. About the Croats in Steelton see a book by John Bodnar, *Immigration and Industrialization, Ethnicity in an American Mill Town,* 1870-1940, Pittsburgh 1977.

   In the book, Bodnar has analyzed the social position of the "new immigrants" (Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, Bulgarians and Italians) and the Afro-Americans. Taking into consideration that for the most part Slav immigrants lived in Steelton, particularly the Croats, Bodnar's research mainly refers to the questions connected with their position. We learn from the book about the discrimination they were exposed to not only by hard work but also in everyday life in Steelton where the Anglo-Saxons and the Irish had an incomparably more favorable social position. That is why the Slav immigrants founded their ethnic societies, trying to assure through them a better social security for themselves in a foreign country. In the beginning , they refused to take part in the Union movement because the unions were in service of the professional workers who used to have a privileged position and the socialist ideas could hardly enter the community of the Slav workers in Steelton. Besides, the political events in their old country deeply influenced the lives of the Slavs and of course the lives of the Croats. They took part in all the actions supporting the struggle of their fellow citizens back at home. Between the two wars, the social position of the "new immigrants" significantly improved. The immigrants and their children became the recognized citizens of Steelton equally participating in all areas of life and work in town.

   Bodnar's work is, as a matter of fact, a model study, dealing with the problems by means of the Steelton example, with some specific qualities concerning the miners'

and industrial settlements in the State of Pennsylvania, where the Slav immigrants, the Croats first of all, represent a majority of the population.

The conclusions of Bodnar's investigation refer chiefly to all the settlements.

6. Compare *Cokeburg Diamond Jubilee 1902-1977,* Cokeburg, 1977, p. 75.
7. S. Gaži, o. c., p. 43.
8. S. Zupčić-Ch.Gaus-Zupčić, *The Evolution of Pittsburgh's Croatian Community,* "Kalendar" Matice iseljenika Hrvatske, 1978, p. 94.
9. George J. Prpić, *The Croatian Immigrants in America,* New York, 1971, p. 156.
10. The life of immigrants in boarding houses and saloons as clearly shown in the articles:

    - Josip Kraja, *Narodna borba prvih hrvatskih iseljenika u USA,* "Hrvatska revija", Buenos Aires, 1963.

    - Ivan Čizmić, *The Role of Boarding Houses and Saloons in the Life of South Slav Immigrants in the USA (1880-1920),* Lock Haven International Review, Issue 1, Lock Haven 1987, pp. 6-13.
11. Hinko Sirovatka, *Kako je u Americi i komu se isplati ovamo putovati?,* Zagreb, 1907, p. 42.
12. G. J. Prpić, o. c. p. 158.
13. Milan Jevtić, *Srpsko useljeništvo u Americi,* New York, 1916, p. 19.
14. G. J. Prpić, o. c. p. 118.
15. Jure Prpić, *Tisuće hrvatskih grobova,* Buenos Aires 1960, an offprint from "Hrvatska revija", year X, vol. 4.
16. About an unfavorable position of the new immigrants within the American working class and the intolerant relation of the American workers' organizations to them, compare: Charles Leinenweber, *The American Socialist Party and "New" Immigrants,* Science and Society, New York 1968, Number 1, Volume XXXII.
17. *Danica,* Pittsburgh, 1. 1. 1894.
18. *Pedeset godišnjica društva Svi sveti, Odsjek br. 1 Hrvatske bratske zajednice,* N. S. Pittsburgh 1944, p. 9.
19. Ibid, p. 10.
20. *Danica,* 6. 9. 1894.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. *Kratka povijest života i djelovanje Narodne Hrvatske Zajednice,* Zajednički kalendar, Pittsburgh 1923.

    The first report on the work of the Croatian Society can be found in the *Danica* where Mužina wrote, "I have been asked so many times by the members and non-members of the Association alike, by the Croats and the Slovenes how we were getting on in the Croatian Association, I have always been able to tell them we were getting on well, as we have existed for nine months so far, in which period two men and a woman died. When one thinks of these hard times with only a few people dead, we can actually be happy that there are not more; thus we have sent $700 for the three orphans back home which is equal there to 1,750 florins. Is that any help to the families in distress, or was it any expense for us? Brothers, it was not, as for the three deceased members we paid $1.34 each. That money or so much money is wasted so often and why would we not rather give it to the families of our brothers, so much more if we know that any moment an accident could happen to any of us as well. There are already 700 of us, and as soon as we are more we shall have to pay less and at the same time the families of the deceased will be given more support. That is why each worker who wishes himself well should first of all think of his own family, for who is going to help them after his death? By our toilsome and hard work we are hardly able to save a few cents for our young ones, and these few cents that we are paying our society are a trifling matter. Peril threatens everybody each moment,

so be careful. So much as an explanation to those who wished to ask me on that matter." (*Danica*, May 16, 1895)

27. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Society, September 1, 1895., Allegheny, p. 10.

    Ivan Ljubić was born in Bosiljevo in 1854. In 1899 he migrated to America to the little town of Wheeling where he owned a shop. He was the first president of the Croatian Association, and at the 1904 Convention held in St. Louis was reelected and remained president until 1906.

28. *Kratka povijest života i djelovanja NHZ...* Pittsburgh, 1923.

29. *Narodni list*, Zadar, September 2, 1896.

30. *Narodni list*, Zadar, June 23, 1897.

31. The minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Association, Allegheny, 1902., p. 7.

    Petar Pavlinac was born in the village of Močila, near Karlovac in 1871. He came to America in 1887. After a short stay in Chicago he came to Allegheny and took an active part in the social life of the Croatians there. He is one of the founders of the Croatian parish of St. Nicholas, of the *Sloga* Croatian society and other educational societies. He was also an active member of the *Eagle* and *Elks* organizations. He held several offices in the National Croatian Society and at the Wheeling Convention, W. Va. was elected Chairman. Pavlinac served the Society as its first Secretary. In 1900, he was elected as Supreme President holding the post for two terms. Pavlinac was the first member of the Society to have an honorary membership conferred upon him. At the Ninth Convention of the NCS held in New York City in 1906, he was conferred the title of Honorary National President. Pavlinac had his own boarding house in Allegheny which he named *Hotel Croatia*. It was a headquarters of many social activities of the Croatian immigrants to Pennsylvania.

32. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Association, September 1, 1895, Allegheny, p. 10.

33. The minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Association, July 12, 1896, Cleveland, p. 51.

34. The minutes of the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Association, June 1897, McKeesport, p. 134.

35. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Association, September 1, 1895, Allegheny, p. 24.

36. The minutes of the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Association, June 1897, McKeesport, p. 160.

37. The minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Association, July 12, 1896, Cleveland, p. 132.

38. *Danica*, Pittsburgh, 1894, p. 16.

39. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Association, September 1, 1895, Allegheny, p. 7.

40. The minutes of the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Association, June 1897, McKeesport, p. 104.

41. *Narodni list*, New York, February 3, 1902.

Chapter Three

THE NATIONAL CROATIAN SOCIETY AND FRANJO ZOTTI - A PERIOD OF GREAT CRISIS

Throughout 1902, the *Narodni list* of New York continued to systematically attack the work of the Supreme Board of the Croatian National Society. Main objections were addressed to the Board's work. The paper claimed that the Supreme Board unlawfully dismissed Supreme Financial Secretary Gojsović, although his embezzlement could not be proved. It also criticized the fact that, against the decisions of the Sixth Convention, an agent was engaged who was obedient only to the Board members without taking proper efforts to increase the Society membership. But the main attack of the paper was directed at Supreme Financial Secretary A. C. Janković, who allegedly ridiculed religion in the Chicago newspaper *Branik* (Defender). The *Narodni list* also attacked Zdravko Mužina, who was supposedly negotiating with the Masons and organizing spiritualistic seances. The journalists defended the Croatian priests who, according to them, were accused by the Society of wanting to take from the immigrants their hard-earned money. The paper published a statement by some priests which, among other things stated, "We have no such ambitions but wish the Society to be in honest hands. The members of the Supreme Board blame us for dallying with the consulate and receiving money from the Hungarian Government."[1]

In 1901 and 1902, several lodges withdrew from the National Croatian Society, which, according to the *Narodni list,* was a consequence of the Supreme Board's poor work. At the same time it reminded the Board members that in 1899, they wanted to shatter the National Croatian Society even before the Sixth Convention in Wheeling, wishing to found a new union if Ivan Ljubić remained the president of the National Croatian Society.[2]

The *Narodni list* reserved some of its pages for the Croatian priests dissatisfied with the Society's work so they could express their views and opinions. Of course, they did not approve of the writing of the paper or the work of Franjo Zotti, but this was the only opportunity for their public activity. Also, their articles were useful to Zotti in his struggle

Franjo Zotti, the Supreme President of the National Croatian Society, 1908

against his rivals in the Society. Namely, at the Seventh Convention, he already tried to gain an important position in the National Croatian Society, so he welcomed an alliance with the priests.

According to the decision of the Sixth Convention, the site for the next gathering was to be New York which was the center of both the Zotti bank and the editorial board of the *Narodni list.* In New York, Zotti hoped to use all his advantages and gain an important position in the Supreme Board. He even planned to sue its members and have them taken into custody according to American law then in force. They would therefore be prevented from taking part in the Convention. In their absence it would be easy for Zotti to realize his plan.[3] However, the Board members were informed about his plans and decided to change the site for the convention. Instead of New York they decided on Allegheny, which the Society by-laws exceptionally allowed.[4] The reaction by the paper and by Zotti and his supporters was very severe. They proclaimed the decision illegal.[5] Zotti refused to submit to the decision of the Supreme Board and through his *Narodni list* extended a public invitation for the convention to be held in New York on September 22, 1902. He even asked support from Attorney McCready of Pittsburgh, who informed him that the convention in Allegheny would be illegal and its decisions of no legal consequence.[6]

As already noted, Zotti was supported by distinguished Croatian priests, M. Kajić, F. Glojnarić, and I. Kranjac. They also demanded that the convention be held in New York making the following statement, "Here are the reasons that made us rise against corruption, primarly because we consider the present Supreme Board incompetent and unworthy of leading our beloved Society. As God is our witness, we do not fight for our own benefit. We repeatedly declare that we neither want a paid job in the Society for ourselves nor for any friend of ours. You alone, dear people, should elect honest and trustworthy persons who will honestly and like good Christians lead your Society respecting your will and your laws. We also want to draw your attention to the latest and most dangerous illegal activity of the Supreme Board, that is, their campaign for our next convention to be transferred from New York to Allegheny which means a repeated breach of the convention by-laws."[7]

Zotti did not receive any considerable support by either the Society members or its delegates. At the New York convention, only 28 dele-

gates arrived, while in Allegheny there were 150. Zotti, however, did not give up easily but through the *Narodni list* summoned the convention in Harrisburg on September 27, 1902, but with no success. Finally, on the third day of the convention, Zotti arrived in Allegheny with his delegates and participated in its work pretending that nothing had happened. The delegates in Allegheny asked neither him nor his delegates any questions.[8]

After the Seventh Convention, the *Narodni list* stated bitterly that all the decisions were arranged beforehand in Petar Pavlinac's saloon. The newspaper pointed out, "Throughout the convention in Allegheny we saw with our own eyes that Pavlinac's saloon was filled with delegates because the satellites knew how to attract and draw everybody there. Pavlinac knew very well that his aim could be achieved only in Allegheny, never in New York. And this is how it was; he was not mistaken."[9] Zotti did not recognize the decisions of the Seventh Convention, maintaining in the *Narodni list* that the decisions of the Sixth Convention in McKeesport were still valid. He also declared himself temporary administrator of the National Croatian Society.

Although the Seventh Convention started with a misunderstanding, its work and decisions were very successful. There were 195 lodges represented by 155 delegates and 17 voting officers. The total membership was 14,117. The assets amounted to $40,656.88. The death benefit was raised to $800, and for the certificate holder's wife, $400. It was also resolved that a monthly assessment in dues should amount to 50 cents per member. It should be pointed out that the membership had been rapidly increasing since the Sixth Convention when there were 8,276 members. As already mentioned, at the Seventh Convention the number rose to 14,117 members. From the day of its foundation until September 15, 1902, the Union paid financial aid in the amount of $283,420.82 which was almost twice the amount paid since its foundation. Two thirds of the money was sent to Croatia where those leaving for America were frequently told, "As soon as you arrive in America, go to the National Croatian Society". At the Seventh Convention the Society's finances were quite sound and there were no debts.

However, in his letter, Supreme President P. Pavlinac analyzed the membership development and ascertained that in the past convention period 215 members died, 64 of them in accidents in mines or railway construction. The injury premium was received by 56 certificate holders. He also mentioned a large number of deaths due to tuberculosis and recommended thorough medical checkups before admittance to the Society as it was losing large amounts of money in this way. The Society lost 845 members who returned home, 42 were excluded, and 484 persons were deleted from the membership list for not paying the membership subscription. Pavlinac commented on the number of cancelled subscriptions, accusing the members of indifference, imprudence, thoughtlessness, and other unjustified reasons which resulted in a loss of $10,000.

As an organization of more than 14,000 members, the Society was very concerned with the improvement of its operation, particularly its by-laws as the basis of its work. At all conventions the by-laws were a

matter of bitter disputes. It was frequently pointed out that, unfortunately, the Society had no "proper and legal by-laws." There were sections that were not in keeping with the Society charter, and some were even against laws in some states. Due to this, the Society was not able to obtain a charter in those states. The problem was that the delegates frequently thought it was their right to adopt the by-laws serving their own purpose, disregarding the fact that the Society's charter and American laws were often contradictory. This is why the Supreme Board repeatedly had to consult American lawyers.[10]

The conventions were attended by delegates elected in their lodges. A problem arose, however, because according to the by-laws, lodges with 15 members had an equal right to send their delegate as those with 200 members. This did not cause much worry at the beginning, but when the membership increased in number, the conventions started to be attended by a large number of delegates. Supreme President Pavlinac suggested at the Seventh Convention that 250 members be represented by one delegate. Therefore, the convention costs were reduced, and the state of Pennsylvania, which at a time had a disproportionately large number of delegates (90), would have only 30 delegates. Several thousand dollars would be saved.[11]

The conventions were concerned with the very important question related to the successful development of the Society - the engagement of a so-called agent. The agents were qualified people who, when visiting the Society members and immigrants alike, acquainted them with the work and importance of fraternal organizations. The agents were of paramount importance for the National Croatian Society because its membership covered only 10% of the total number of immigrants. Pavlinac concludes, "We should not be surprised or blame the people for this. The political circumstances at home killed any fervor and they came here in the darkness in which they will remain unless taken by the hand and lead out into light. Thousands and thousands of our brothers are hidden behind foreign names but there are also thousands of them who know and feel they are Croats and yet have not joined the National Croatian Society. They do not know what its purpose is and many are ignorant of its existence. It is sad and not to our credit and it is hard to express its harm for Croatian national thought. Our slogan should be "all the Croats - one union" and this is what we should strive for with all our might"[12]. Supreme President Pavlinac suggested to the convention of adopting a decision on engaging agents. This was accepted with the remark that, in agreement with the lodges, they would be appointed by the Supreme Board for each state, respecting the right of the lodges to propose an agent for their own state elected among the Society members.

The Supreme President informed the delegates of the Seventh Convention that all large unions organized on sound foundations possessed their supreme medical doctor who granted the ultimate assent for a member to be admitted to the Society. This procedure was accepted because many physicians recommended even sick persons to the lodges so as to avoid the person's or the family's anger. In unions which had their own physicians, all the required documentation was sent to the doctors thereby avoiding any irregularities. Until then, the National

Croatian Society did not have its supreme physician. The criteria for acceptance were not severe so as to encourage as many persons as possible to join the Society. According to Pavlinac, this practice should have been discontinued and a supreme physician appointed by the Convention, which was done.

Due to the favorable development of the National Croatian Society and its successful work, there was a feeling of confidence at the Seventh Convention. This led to some very demanding motions, such as the construction of the Society's hospital, charity home and orphanage. The establishment and erection of a Croatian high school in America was also deliberated. Unfortunately, the National Croatian Society and its membership were not in the position to realize these ideas at that time.

The delegates were much more successful, however, in helping their members in some special cases. V. O., charged with murder, was paid death benefit amounting to $600. Financial aid was given to D. K., also in custody and charged with murder, to cover his lawyer's fees. N. M., who killed a man in self-defense, was also given financial help to cover the ensuing costs.

Special attention was given to helping the families of the Society members killed and injured in a mine explosion in West Virginia. Aid was also given to the families of eight Society members who lost their lives in a coal mine in Johnstown, Pa. Assistance amounting to $500 was given to the miners on strike in Scranton, Pa.

The Seventh Convention considered in detail the adverse political situation in which the Croats lived in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1902, direct political relations were established between some opposition parties in Croatia and the National Croatian Society. Stjepan Radić sent to the Society a message reading, "Work of the Croatian opposition is real work for the people. We are, therefore, turning to you pleading for help now that we need it most because we are defending the ground for the future of our nation."[13] Accepting Radić's invitation, Pavlinac maintained that the Society should help the opposition in Croatia and give it financial support. Some delegates were suspicious, doubting the unity of the opposition parties. So it was agreed that the Society should send the money to Croatia only after the opposition parties had united into an integral block. On principle it was agreed that $500 be sent to Croatia, and the following message was sent to Stjepan Radić, "Yesterday we blessed the banner of the National Croatian Society in Strossmayer's sponsorship. Present were some twenty lodges and a hundred and eighty delegates. Today we opened the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society. On behalf of fourteen thousand Society members, we greet our country. May God bless our beloved Croatia!"[14]

The political situation in Croatia was discussed at length at the Seventh Convention as if the delegates had a presentiment of the turbulent events in 1903. The parliamentary movement in Croatia and the revolt against Ban Khuen-Hedervary were the foremost motive for an immediate and more extensive involvement of American Croats. The first news of the riots in Croatia reached America by the end of March. Historical sources indicate that American Croats really shared the tragedy of their people. The National Croatian Society immediately

issued a manifesto stating among other things that, "On Easter this year blood was shed in our homeland Croatia (...) The blood of the Croatian peasant Ivan Pasarić, who defended the rights and honor of our homeland, cries to us living in the country of freedom and equality - to revenge it by all means. (...) Serious times prevail in our country and our brothers are shedding blood (...) We cannot leap over the wide sea to be among our martyrs, to suffer and shed our blood with theirs, but what we can do is to help them financially."[15]

In all immigrant communities meetings were held, solidarity resolutions passed, and money was collected. The immigrant press was flooded with reports on the events in Croatia but also with the news on American Croats' activities. The Croatian Homeland Committee of America was set up - a counterpart to the National Defense Corporation of Zagreb - managing all immigrant activities. It should be pointed out that other South Slav immigrants also supported the American Croats, participating in their demonstrations, thereby enhancing their effect. Both the Serbian and Slovene immigrants gathered financial aid for the victims in Croatia. The Slovene paper *Glas svobode* (The Voice of Freedom) in its article titled "Hail the Croats in Their Fight for Justice and Freedom" wrote, "We, American Yugoslavs, are united in one thing: if we cannot achieve it peacefully, then we'll do it with swords and rifles in our hands! Long live Croatia! Long live the unity of the Slavs!"[16]

The parliamentary movement in Croatia in 1903 was covered extensively by the American press. Some journalists were not correctly informed about the essence of the conflict. They wrote about the Croats and Hungarians as if they were brothers in disagreement in the articles titled "Brothers in Dispute" or "Two Quarrelsome Brothers". However, the subject was also dealt with objectivity as a revolt by the students and the population against the Hungarian hegemony in Croatia, in particular against the Hungarian language and Croatian economic subordination. *The Herald* of New York wrote, "These disturbances are in the first place caused by the old-time hatred between the Croats and Hungarians. They did so much evil to the peaceful Croatian people with a heroic past. This hatred was first provoked by a widespread dissatisfaction due to poverty so great that some parts of Croatia were in extreme need and hunger. Second, there was indignation caused by the autocracy of the present Croatian Ban, Count Khuen Hedervary, who was anything but a statesman, not caring for his people's prosperity and welfare. For their poverty and misfortune the Croats have to blame the economic policy of the Hungarian government, which in spite of all protests, was forced on the Croats and, wishing to manage their finances, imposed taxes which brought poverty on the people (...). This is why the Croats felt infinite hatred for the Hungarian language and rule."[17]

The events of 1903 had a twofold effect on the life of American Croats. First, although far from Croatia, they were convinced now that they were an integral part of their people, directly tied to its fate. The most widespread Croatian immigrant newspaper of the time, the *Narodni list* of New York , maintained that, "All the nationalities in this country, be they Americanized to whatever respect you will, never cease to have close ties with their homelands (...), never stop being proud of

their home, their native soil." Another thing the American Croats learned in 1903 was that they needed a stable and strong political organization. It was then that the idea of establishing the Croatian League was born and a respective comprehensive action taken. On August 26, the inaugural meeting of the League was held in New York bringing together about a hundred delegates, among them some distinguished Croatian immigrants like N. Grškovič, E. Kajić, P. Pavlinac, H. Sirovatka, Z. Mužina, M. Pavelić and others. Nevertheless, the League was not established that year. The main reason for the failure was a struggle for supremacy between the group of Croatian immigrants around the *Narodni list* newspaper and those gathered around the National Croatian Society. Franjo Zotti, the owner of the *Narodni list*, who gained substantial wealth in America, was of the opinion that he and his paper should have the strongest influence on the Croatian League. Other immigrants gathered around the National Croatian Society thought that it was the Society and not an individual that should have a decisive influence on the immigrants and the League. Already in 1904, American Croats organized a "parliamentary movement" for the financial independence of Croatia which was meant to support the political struggle in Croatia for advantageous renewal of the Croato-Hungarian Compromise. It is a well known fact that at that time the majority of Croatian immigrants wanted to collect as much money as possible so as to save or recover the economy in their native country. According to the newspaper *Hrvatska zastava* (Croatian Flag) of Chicago, some ten million crowns were being sent annually to Croatia by the Croatian immigrants in the USA.

Stjepan Radić

A question arose among the immigrants as to what purpose the money was used and where it was going. This was the reason why American Croats considered it their true and moral right to require a revision of the Croato-Hungarian Compromise, especially as they accounted for almost a half of Croatian labor in those days and also retained their Croatian citizenship.

The "parliamentary movement" for the financial independence of Croatia was initiated by the Croatian Journalists' Association of Chicago which required that Croats in the USA inform the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb that they supported all public meetings in Croatia expressing the determination of Croatia for its absolute financial independence.

Following the initiative of the Croatian Journalists' Association, meetings were organized in Croatian communities so that the whole action really turned into a parliamentary movement for the economic independence of Croatia. The main meeting was held in Chicago on August 7. According to all the participants' opinion, the thirty-six year long financial subordination of Croatia to Hungary was the greatest wrong inflicted on the Croatian people. The best evidence were the hundreds of thousands of Croats who had in the last thirty years tried to save their families and their property at home by migrating to other countries.

The "parliamentary movement" met, however, with opposition from some immigrants. A number of them thought that American Croats should engage in political actions only if the interests of the whole Croatian nation were concerned and not only of the Croats from the Banate. According to this group of immigrants, a revision of the Compromise should not even be discussed because it would mean the recognition of the 1868 Compromise.

Nevertheless, the movement had a strong impact on the overall effort of Croatian immigrants to help their native country. It should be emphasized that the movement was joined by the National Croatian Society which offered its moral and financial support. At the 1904 Convention, the organizers of the "parliamentary movement" were granted financial support. After delegate N. Grškovič had reported on the situation in Croatia, the following petition was submitted to the Croatian Parliament, "The delegates to the Eighth Convention of the National Croatian Society as interpreters of the feelings of the Croats now residing in America, and as representatives of the beliefs of the members of the National Croatian Society who are Croatian citizens, today express their sympathy to those Croatian patriots who are committed to the financial independence of Croatia. The delegates being Croatian citizens also associate themselves with the efforts and aspirations of the Croatian people for its financial independence."[18]

The "parliamentary movement" met with a powerful response and approval in Croatia. The Croatian press paid great attention to it. In the Zagreb newspaper *Obzor* one could read the following, "This action of American Croats reflects a strong awareness of national unity. We see that our national struggle meets not only with the understanding and sympathy of the American Croats but also receives their organized support and assistance. The national movement last year met with a strong response among the Croats on the other side of the ocean. It also initiated fruitful efforts to organize the national potential of the American Croats in assisting their old country (...) The present commitment to the financial independence of Croatia shows that every national action may count on their immediate and effective aid (...) Economic subordination was the cause of our present economic stagnation and its negative effects are expressed in massive emigration. Croatian immigrants are well aware that the only way out of their personal and common national trouble is the economic independence of Croatia."[19]

The Croatian Journalists' Association, after six public meetings, submitted a petition to the Croatian Parliament, while three of their con-

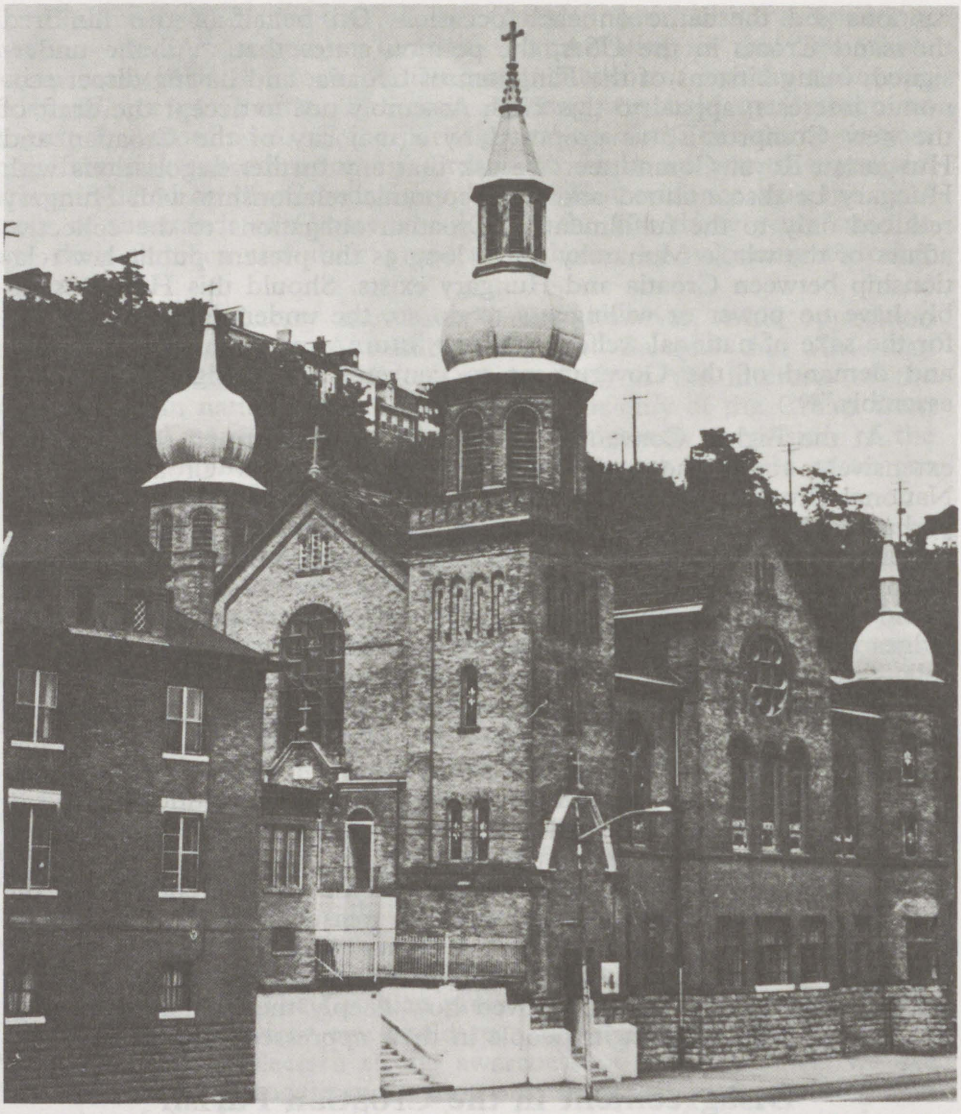
ventions did the same on each occasion. On behalf of two hundred thousand Croats in the USA, the petition states that, "All the undersigned, being citizens of the Kingdom of Croatia, and having direct economic interests, appeal to this High Assembly not to accept the draft of the new Compromise as proposed by a majority of the Croatian and Hungarian Royal Committee. We ask that any further negotiations with Hungary be discontinued and our economic relationship with Hungary reduced only to the fulfillment of Croatian obligations to the collective affairs of the whole Monarchy for as long as the present public-law relationship between Croatia and Hungary exists. Should this High Assembly have no power or willingness to do so, the under-signed ask of it - for the sake of national welfare and our future - to resign their mandate, and demand of the Government to convene a new rightfully elected assembly."[20]

At the Eighth Convention, Petar Pavlinac informed the delegates extensively about the involvement of the American Croats and the National Croatian Society and the aid given to the homeland during the parliament movement. Pavlinac stated the following regarding the proclamation, "This proclamation was like a finger laid on a key which, having struck the chord of patriotic feelings of the Society membership, found an echo wherever there were any Society members. All the lodges responded making contributions either from their treasuries or collecting funds at their meetings or outside them." [21]

The National Croatian Society first decided to send the amount of $900 for the injured in Croatia, and the lodges gathered $15,000. The public, however, was not informed about these amounts so as not to disclose that the Society was directly involved in the revolutionary movement in the homeland. But the members and the lodges alike required that the Society should make the amounts known. Besides, the lodges demanded that the membership should decide by referendum on the amount the Society would assign from its treasury. Finally, the sum of $5,900 was agreed upon. In 1903, the Society had 15,000 members and the assets amounted to $42,000. It offered one seventh of its assets to the homeland, which clearly proved how deeply the National Croatian Society sympathized with its people in their oppressed country.

Disagreement in the Croatian Parish of St. Nicholas in Allegheny

An important component in the history of Croatian immigration is the role of priests and parishes. The church has always carefully observed the emigration of the Croats and tried to organize their church life. In every large immigrant community, churches were erected and parishes established with priests coming from the old country. The church played an important part in the immigrants' cultural, educational, organizational, and national life. Churches were frequently the only places of immigrant gatherings and it was there that the schools for learning Croatian were founded. Churches were also centers of political and cultural events.



St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church, North Side, Pittsburgh, PA., the oldest Croatian church in the US

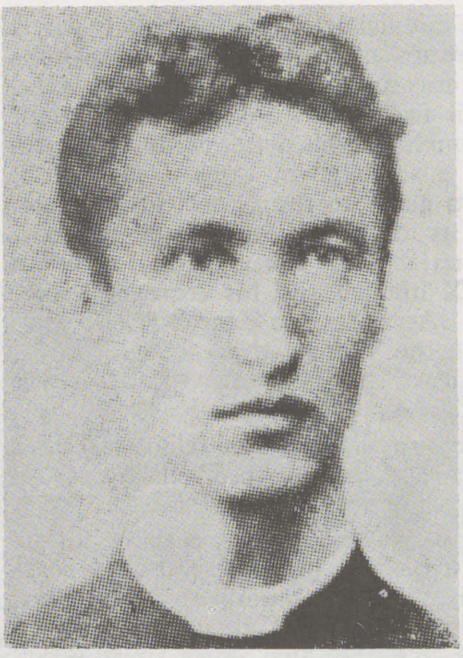
It was not easy to organize the religious life of Croats in America. The Catholic Church could not offer much help because its priests did not know the Croatian language. This is why it was of primary importance that priests from Croatia should come to the States. The American Catholic Church gave the initiative for this and the Croatian immigrants were eager to have their own priests. Of course, the Church in Croatia was ready, within its limits, to meet these requirements. In view of the number of Croats in America, a corresponding number of priests was needed, so the Archbishop of Zagreb sent a circular letter on July 26, 1902, to the priests in Croatia looking for those ready to go to the Croa-

tian parishes. Among other things, the circular letter said, "This is why I am receiving petitions from some groups of Croats and the bishops there to send the priests to the American Croats. Our priests would teach them the divine law, revive their faith and impart solace in their mother tongue."[22] The Archbishop concluded his letter with the statement that, although even in Croatia a shortage of priests was felt, it should not prevent some of them from going to the Croats in America. An insufficient number of priests in Croatia, however, was the real reason why very few of them went to America, thus causing a real problem for the immigrants. Even Pope Pius X himself and his secretary Mary del Val were concerned with the issue. According to Zagreb Archbishop Posilović on the occasion of his visit to the Vatican, they "laid the spiritual needs of American Croats to my heart." Subsequently, Posilović was urged to send the priests to America as soon as possible.[23]

In spite of all these difficulties, the organization of religious life of American Croats seemed to have been successfully resolved. By World War One, there were 33 active Croatian parishes in the USA.[24]

Who were these parish priests? All of the priests coming to the USA had formal permissions from their bishops in Croatia and consents from the authorized American bishops. A certain number of the priests went to the USA to satisfy the religious needs of their parishioners. However, the largest number of those active in the States until World War One and between the two wars had come to America for other reasons. First, they came because of political persecutions in Croatia. So, the first Croatian priest in America, Franciscan Dobroslav Božić, the parish priest in Allegheny, Pa., had, before his departure for the States, severe conflicts with his Franciscan superiors in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of their deference to the Austro-Hungarian rule and their insufficient pleading for a more thorough agrarian reform. Another priest, Davorin Krmpotić, a confirmed adherent of the Croatian opposition Party of the Right, was not able, due to his political radicalism, to get a parish at home. Therefore, left without subsistence, he departed for America where he became the parish priest of the Croatian church of St. John in Kansas City, Kansas. The priests Nikola Gršković, Josip Stipanović, R. Sorić, and M. Kaić were all followers of the Movement for the Union of South Slavs in Austria-Hungary, so as political malcontents they went to America. Once there, they were included in the political life of American Croats, soon becoming their leaders. They never returned to their homeland, living in America until their respective deaths. A large number of priests, however, returned to their previous parishes at home after having spent several years in America.

It was to Dobroslav Božić's merit that the Croats in the USA established their first parish and built the first Croatian church, that of St. Nicholas in Allegheny, Pa. Satisfied with his achievement, he reported about it to the general public in Croatia through the Croatian press. In the *Obzor* daily newspaper, he described the consecration ceremony of the church of St. Nicholas in the following way, "On the eve of the consecration it became bitterly cold. Nobody could expect that in spite of the cold the *Saračević* society would appear in the church hall early at dawn. From there, clad in their national costumes and under the Croat-



Reverend Dobrosav Božić, the first pastor of St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church

ian flag and the flag of free America, accompanied by the Czech band, they went to the Baltimore and Ohio railway station where they were met by the Croatian societies from Braddock and McKeesport. (...) Near the Czech church of St. Venceslav they were joined by the Czech, Slovak and Slovene societies (...) and went to meet the bishop of Pittsburgh, Richard Phelan. Then they went together to the Croatian church. With the music, drums, and banners, the magnificent parade including a mass of people of different nationalities filled everyone with enthusiasm."[25]

The church was consecrated by Bishop Phelan and the mass was celebrated by Capuchin Rev. Herman, the parish priest of the German church of St. Augustine. Božić highlighted that priests of different nationalities participated in the consecration ceremony and he was particularly proud that the Epistle and the Gospel were read in Croatian. Also, he delivered a sermon in Croatian for the first time. Regarding the Bishop's speech delivered to the congregation, Božić wrote, "After the mass the Bishop himself made a speech in English pointing out his special satisfaction that in his diocese the first Croatian church in America should be erected and that God should be praised by all nations in their own mother tongues."[26]

. For the establishment of the Croatian parish of St. Nicholas and its successful development thanks should be expressed to the prominent immigrants gathered around the National Croatian Society. They organized a church council whose task it was to collect funds and be in charge of the construction of the church and the vicarage. The church council together with the parish priest established the necessary contacts with the Pittsburgh Bishop. In short, harmony was established between the Society's Board members and Dobroslav Božić, St. Nicholas's parish priest. An important part was played by Zdravko Mužina who knew English well and, being a lawyer, was very useful to the parish. Having gained great respect and confidence, he started to behave in a strong and sometimes inconsistent manner. In March, 1895, he asked *Ante Starčević* Lodge No. 1 to give a loan to the church amounting to $400. The Lodge management withheld its consent, showing to Mužina the Society by-laws, according to which it was impossible even formally to lend money to the church. But Mužina, trusted by quite a few people, took no heed of what he was told, which created a very tense atmosphere in the Lodge for several weeks. Eventually, the problem was solved

with a compromise: the Lodge made a donation of $150 to the church of St. Nicholas.[27]

In 1898, there was a conflict between two Croatian parishes: the one in Allegheny, and the other in Benett. The members of the Supreme Board of the Croatian National Society had not been very active in the development of the parish in Benett, paying much more attention to the parish of St. Nicholas in Allegheny. The parish members in Benett expressed their indignation and threatened to separate from the Society. They did not accept the explanation that two parishes were not necessary and that one would be less expensive.[28] Soon afterwards, Zdravko Mužina came into conflict with the parish priest D. Božić, so the latter left the parish and went to Steelton, Pa. where he founded a parish for the Croats.

In spite of all misunderstandings, the relations between the parish priest and the church committee which also included the Society Board members, were still good. By the end of 1900, a new parish priest, Bosiljko Bekavac, came to the Croatian parish of St. Nicholas. On that occasion, on behalf of the National Croatian Society, Josip Marohnić organized the construction of the new vicarage and collected money for new furniture and the church organ. Father Bekavac participated in all of the celebrations within the National Croatian Society, such as the blessing of the new NCS banner and the one thousandth anniversary of the coronation of the first Croatian king, Tomislav. These celebrations were of great importance for the reputation of the Croatian ethnic community because participating in them were not only the Croatian cultural and folklore clubs but also those of other Slav nations; the Croatian national community was, therefore, gaining recognition among Americans.

Unfortunately, the period of collaboration was short-lived, and the time of serious conflicts began. The church council headed by Mužina wanted to have the parish priest and the entire work of the parish under his control, which was resisted by both Father Bekavac and his supporters. Mutual accusations followed. Among other things, Bekavac blamed Mužina for the embezzlement of the money intended for the cemetery. In return, Mužina did not allow the inspection of the parish's accounts by the church council.

Bishop R. Phelan was also notified about the misunderstandings in the St. Nicholas parish. Consequently, he appointed a special commission to ascertain the situation in the parish. After its report he gave support to Father Bekavac and issued the following announcement, "The parish of St. Nicholas in Allegheny, Pa. is administered by several so-called church councilmen who, contrary to the conclusions of the Third Plenary Convention of Baltimore and the rules of this diocese, have never been confirmed by us, the Bishop of the diocese of Pittsburgh. These persons tried to disregard the rules of this diocese and play master over the parish and its priest according to their own rules. These same persons have been harassing the parish priest making his position so difficult that he felt unable to continue his work. We, their Bishop, demanded that they should give over all the church registers, money, and other church belongings, which they not only refused but threatened to persist in disobedience and disrespect. We, therefore, declare that as

of today, July 3, 1904, this church should remain closed until the above mentioned scandalous behavior is stopped and until the parish of St. Nicholas is ruled according to the principles of our Christian faith and in obedience to the Church superiors as is customary in other Catholic churches of this diocese."[29]

The members of the Supreme Board of the National Croatian Society did not reconcile themselves to the Bishop's decision. They protested, and in the streets of Allegheny, violent demonstrations broke out accompanied by fights between the priest's followers and his opponents. The Pittsburgh police could hardly calm the demonstrators. The Catholic priests disapproved of such developments within the National Croatian Society, so the parish priest of Benett, Pa., Franjo Glojnarić, complained to Bishop Strossmayer of Djakovo saying, "We organized the Croatian National Society with its lodges all over America. This is an insurance society based on Catholic rules the same as the societies of other Catholic nations in this country. Unfortunately, some semi-educated outsiders imbued our Croatian Catholic workers with Masonic ideas. This is the root of all evil. The Croatian press in America is in their service. This is how these ignorant people are being demoralized and financially exploited. I am, therefore, asking Your Eminence for the following moral support: - should Your Eminence ever receive a request to send a priest wherever he may be needed, will you please stipulate that the Society should not only delete from its by-laws every point directed against our sacred faith, but that also, following an example of other Catholic nations in this country, Catholic rules should be accepted by the Society. (...) May I ask your Eminence (...) to pursue this issue because I cannot expect any help from the Church here." [30]

In view of the conflicts in St. Nicholas parish, the *Narodni list* of New York wanted to remain impartial. It blamed the members of the Supreme Board for having supported Zdravko Mužina even after the bankruptcy of his bank and the suspension of the newspaper *Danica* when Mužina lost respect among Croats. According to the *Narodni list,* the Supreme Board members should not have had a conflict with Doctor Kovačević or the Croatian priests just because of their criticism of the Society's work or because Father Kaić launched the *Hrvatska* newspaper in Allegheny. [31]

The conflict between the Supreme Board members of the National Croatian Society and Doctor Kovačević, and some Croatian priests reached its culmination at the time of preparations for the Seventh Convention and during its sessions. Three Croatian parishes, Kansas City, Chicago, and Steelton, asked for financial aid for the construction and maintenance of their churches. Some delegates even prevented the discussion of the topic because the requests, according to the by-laws, had not been handed in written form. The discussion proved, however, that the majority of delegates disapproved of the financial aid to the churches, arguing that in America there was already a sufficient number of Croatian churches, and that the Society simply could not finance them all. After that, Doctor Kovačević expressly accused some Board members of calling him and some priests and educated persons "highbrow traitors" and "pro-Hungarians". This was followed by sharp disputes

St. Anthony Croatian Catholic Church, Los Angeles, California

and Kovačević was blamed for wrongfully accusing the Supreme Board of corrupt practices and preparations for the foundation of a new union.[32]

On March 20, 1902, the Croatian Catholic Labor Union was founded in Benett by Ivan Ljubić, the former president of the National Croatian Society, Doctor Kovačević, and the priests Glojnarić and Bekavac. It was formally initiated by *Vitez Filipović* Lodge of the NCS

which, being in conflict with the management team, seceded from the NCS and became the first lodge of the new union. As it was joined by some other lodges from the Benett district, it soon had a thousand members, mainly from the National Croatian Society. The founders issued the following announcement, "The basic tenets of the Croatian Catholic Labor Union are the following: a member of the Union may be any Slav, except Serbs, not above 55 years of age, which means that those persons of the Orthodox faith who are members of the Union, are not Serbs, but Croats. The aim of the Union is to raise good Croats and good American citizens in their sacred faith. Each individual state has its main committee which once a year summons its convention which is attended by every member. There is a special supreme council for all the states, which summons a convention every third year with two delegates in attendance from each state."[33]

The foundation of the new union was not met with approval among the Croatian immigration population. The *Narodni list* pointed out that the conflict could not be resolved by creating new unions but by dismissing the "bad" management of the existing one, which is essentially Croatian, with the membership loyal to its faith. "Proletarian intelligentsia" should be expelled from the Administration and, "let them flirt with anarchism and nihilism or even spiritualism in their own union founded with their own money and their own hard-won earnings."[34]

The Croatian Catholic Labor Union was neither successful nor long-lasting. In fact, without any substantial support, a small number of priests was not able to carry out the demanding and serious program of American fraternalism. Eventually, after the Benwood Lodge *Sv. Antun od Paga* had withdrawn from it and joined the National Croatian Society in 1905, the Croatian Catholic Labor Union came to an end.

The conflicts in St. Nicholas parish as well as those in some other Croatian parishes and the frequent transfer of priests from one parish to another were not just incidental episodes of misunderstandings between the priests and their parishioners. Rather, they were part of a very serious and complex problem facing the Croatian ethnic Church in America. It led to sharp conflicts between the church councils supported by some parishioners and the parish priests with their supporters. We shall, therefore, try to explain these conflicts.

In Cleveland, Rev. Sutlić convened, on August 23, 1903, a meeting of the Croatian priests active in different Croatian parishes in the USA. The reason was a serious conflict between the church council and Father Bekavac of St. Nicholas Church in Pittsburgh. The conflict was so serious that the Pittsburgh Bishop ordered the closing of the church on several occasions while in the streets of Allegheny the police were using force to calm the quarreling supporters of the church council and those of the parish priest.

At the meeting in Cleveland eight priests agreed that a resolution should be sent to the Bishop in Pittsburgh cautioning him that unless he soothed the situation in St. Nicholas Church, "disturbances may occur

in other Croatian parishes in America rendering the smooth performance of official priestly duties impossible; would he, therefore, use all his influence and authority to protect the innocent priest and eliminate the rebellious leaders?" The resolution was signed by the eight priests attending the meeting and later by another three who were not in Cleveland. It was also supported by some Croatian journalists in America.[36]

Don Niko Gršković

More light was shed on the Cleveland meeting by the *Hrvatska sloboda* (Croatian Freedom) newspaper published by Rev. Niko Gršković, then a parish priest in the Croatian parish in Chicago. According to him, the priests in Cleveland should have been engaged in the discussion about religious and national issues of the Croats in America. He maintained that the meeting should have been useful not only to individuals but to the entire Croatian population, and the resolution sent from the meeting should have been a message of the Croatian priests emphasizing peace, unity and progress of Croats in America.

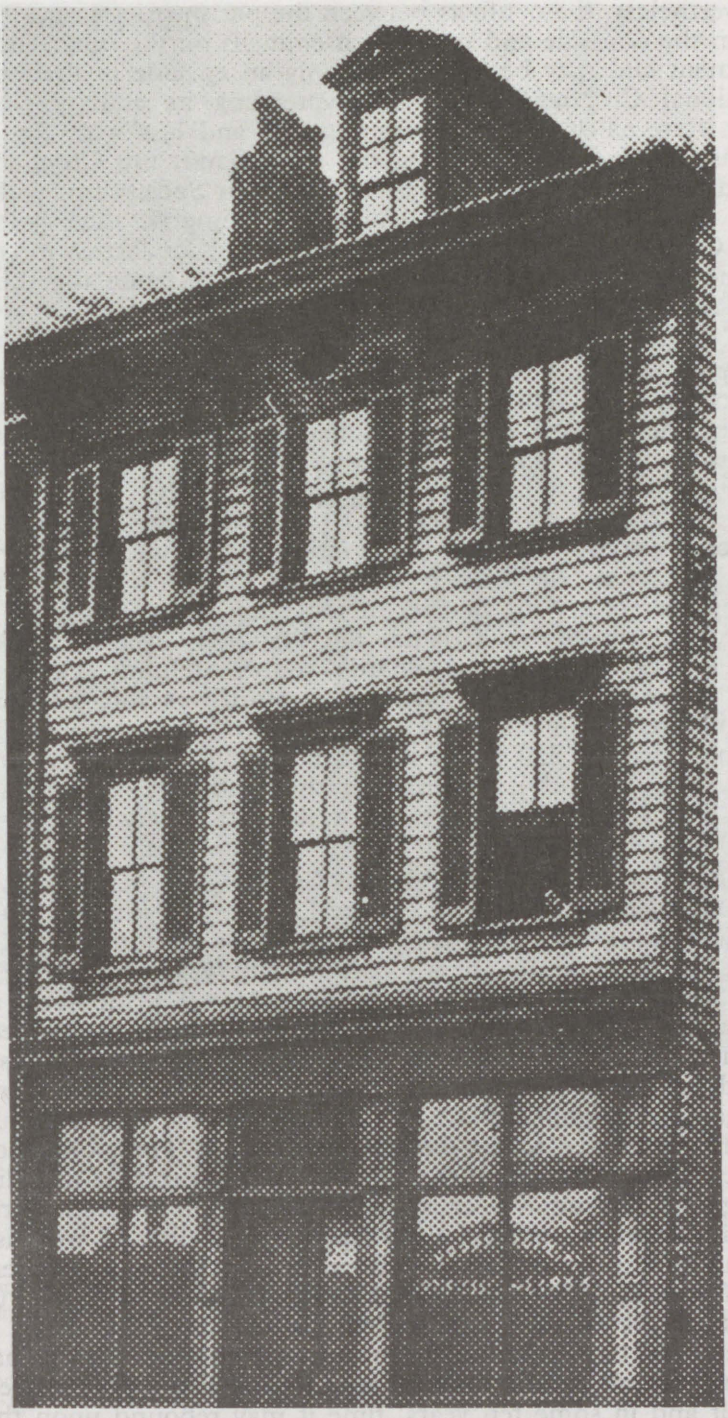
Of course, the attitudes of Gršković were opposed by Hinko Sirovatka, a Christian - Socialist and the editor of the newspaper *Hrvatska zastava* of Chicago. He agreed that the Croatian priests should have been discussing the problems of their status but he denied them the right of solving problems and bringing decisions that would be imposed as an overall program on all American Croats without the participation of the representative of other ranks.[37] Perhaps it was this conflict of principles underlying the guidance of the Croatian ethnic community in America that was the main cause of misunderstandings. But there were also many other reasons for conflicts between the parish priests and the church councils in the Croatian ethnic parishes in the USA. The church councils were both the initiators and directors of all important activities in the establishment and construction of Croatian parishes. Even before the priests' arrival to the parish, the council would, with the Bishop's agreement, attend to all important organizational and financial matters. It was the council that extended an invitation for the priest's arrival and afterwards it was responsible for his subsistence and his introduction to and engagement in the work of the council and the construction of the church. In fact, the role of the council was indispensable and the Bishop was expected to give only moral support. The council members were

usually "ethnic leaders", the distinguished people in the Croatian communities, already financially successful, with their boarding houses or saloons, and also trustees of the Croatian ethnic banks as well as correspondents of the Croatian newspapers in America. They were also the founders of the Croatian fraternal organizations, sports and cultural societies. They were guiding the ethnic communities and were responsible for their successful development. They were usually family men whose decision to stay in America for good was firm.

Decisions of the council members that the communities should have their own Croatian parishes were usually the result of their religious conviction and of the needs of the ethnic community. Another important motive for the creation of Croatian parishes was the consolidation of Croatian ethnic communities. In this respect, among other things, the Croatian parishes led by the Croatian priests played an important part. All this was intended to serve the best interests of the ethnic community and its ethnic leaders.

The Croatian priest who in his parish in Croatia was used to being the "good shepherd" of his parishioners and together with the village physician and teacher was seen as an eminent person of the village, found it hard to reconcile to such a position and role among his American parishioners. Excerpts from a letter written by Mile Golubić, the parish priest of the Croatian Uniate parish in Cleveland, to his Bishop are the best proof of how hard it was on them. He wrote, "I was paid by the parish $50 a month for eight months. Now my salary is $60 a month. All this money ($4,000), with a small exception, had to be collected by myself, and I had to take many steps and suffer many affronts before this amount was finally collected. An apartment for the priest has yet to be bought or built - it has to be rented by the priest himself.(...) Every priest who comes here will find it hard to live here for a long time. People here would like to keep a firm hand on the priest, to have him dance to their music, as the saying goes. As a matter of fact, I have no control of the church property. People elect the president, treasurer, and the secretary, and the priest must collect the alms and hand them in to the treasurer. I think the priest's position is clear to everybody (...) Whoever imagines America in bright colors will be disappointed like myself. From what I have said so far, Your Eminence will understand the position I was in upon my arrival in America and still am. It is difficult and it will not be easier for my successor for a long time. My leave will soon end; I am, therefore, asking you, on behalf of my parishioners, to find a priest to replace me in Cleveland. A married man should by no means be sent there; because of the very low salary he would not be able to live up to his position of a priest. Also, American bishops do not have a very high opinion of our married priests."[38]

Another reason for a conflict between parish priests and their church councils was of a political origin. Younger immigrants who accepted American liberal ideas could not find a common language with the priests coming from the conservative Austro-Hungarian environment.[39]



First Home Office of the National Croatian Society
639 E. Ohio Street, today 1420 E. Ohio Street, Pittsburgh

Nevertheless, the conflicts between the parish priests and their supporters on the one side and the church councils on the other ended with an agreement and may be considered only an episode in their relations. The National Croatian Society was spreading its activity within the American fraternalist system interfering less and less with the work of the priests and their parishes. On the other hand, the Croatian priests continued to be active in the National Croatian Society but without the ambition to be part of the leadership or to impose their will on the National Croatian Society, which at the time had the largest membership among the Croatian organizations in America, bringing together members of different ideas and beliefs.

The Supreme Board members of the National Croatian Society were deeply concerned about the conflicts in the Croatian ethnic community in America. The National Croatian Society was continuously attacked by the *Narodni list*, which propagated Zotti's interests and aspirations. In addition to this, there was a deep misunderstanding between the Society and some Croatian priests. At the Eighth Convention held in St. Louis, Mo., on September 26, 1904, Supreme President Petar Pavlinac complained that some immigration papers, the New York *Narodni list* in particular, did their best to make the Supreme Board odious and unpopular among the Society membership comparing it to Khuen-Hedervary's government in Croatia. The National Croatian Society itself was described as the Supreme Board's source of funds. Pavlinac mentioned that the Society was exposed to numerous intrigues and libel which interfered with its work and hindered its progress. Pavlinac warned the delegates that a way should be found for the National Croatian Society to defend itself and tell the truth: the members of the Supreme Board were not exploiting the Society, but were deeply committed to its interests.[40]

Although the relations within the Society were tense between the Seventh and Eighth Conventions, at the Eighth Convention in St. Louis, Mo., in September 1904, it was ascertained that the interest of Croatian immigrants to become members of the Society was still growing. At the time the Society consisted of 247 lodges and 14,978 members and the assets totaled $48,561.39. Within two years the Society was joined by 74 lodges which naturally caused some new organizational problems. Keeping records and attending to the tens of thousands of members required a well organized administration. The Board members were also supposed to be more committed to the work of the Society. Therefore, the necessary professional structure of the Society's administration was discussed at the Eighth Convention because, according to the Supreme President, "nobody is obliged to run the risk of poverty for himself and his family by working honestly and devotedly for so many thousands of members." It was self-evident that heavy financial losses could be avoided if the professional structure of the Supreme Board were changed because, "stinginess concerning the matter of permanently employed officers has been the severest mistake of all conventions to date, the consequences being already felt and in some ten years' time it may rebound upon the Society itself. Although late, there stilll may be time to employ a sufficient number of skilled officers and provide them with the funds necessary for

The first Home Office building to be owned outright by the National Croatian Society. The original address was 1012 Perry Street in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, and the street was later renamed Peralta Street.

a speedy, comprehensive, and continuous work on the regulation of the NCS."[41]

The suggested changes in the Society's management were not easy to implement because, due to frequent and sharp criticism addressed to

the Supreme Board, it was feared that such changes would make a welcome case for those accusing the Board members of using the Society funds. It was concluded at the convention that until further orders, the Supreme President should be present in the Home Office for at least three days each month during the Supreme Board's session to receive any member of the Society if he wished to consult him, for which he should be given appropriate financial compensation.

About the Official Organ

Since its establishment, the Society had had its newspaper which, as an official organ of the organization, fully expressed its attitudes and aims, trying to inform the Society membership and other readers about the situation within the Society as well as about all the issues important for the organization. Of course, in the early days of the Society's existence, its management unanimously agreed that the official organ should be the *Danica* newspaper whose editor was Zdravko Mužina. The *Danica* was printed in the well known printing-office belonging to a Slovak national worker and businessman, R. V. Rovinianek of Pittsburgh. In his printing-office almost all of the papers of Slav immigrants in Pennsylvania were printed, as well as those covering more general topics and other publications by Slav authors. Of course, it was profitable for Rovinianek because all those papers including *Danica* advertised his business and the sale of tickets for Europe.

Unfortunately, after its initial success, Mužina and his newspaper became more and more ordinary, which had negative effects on the work of the National Croatian Society. This is why at the Second Convention the issue of *Danica* and all its disadvantages was raised. Delegate Dobroslav Božić even suggested that the *Chicago* newspaper, edited by Nikola Polić, become the new official organ of the Society.[42] Polić was willing to publish the address-book of the Croatian Society and some other necessary materials free of charge. But, at the Second Convention, Mužina still enjoyed considerable support of the membership so the delegates refused Božić's proposal, suggesting that the *Danica* should remain the Society's official organ at a fee of $180.[43] Unfortunately, the problem of the official organ was still unsolved. The *Danica* publication continued to be discussed at the semi-annual meeting of the Croatian Society in January, 1896. The delegates objected to the paper's irregular issues and criticized Mužina for not publishing all the necessary information on the work of the Society. It was again suggested that the Chicago newspaper should be the Society's official organ. Nevertheless, the majority was in favor of *Danica* and recommended that it should be given another chance.[44]

Meanwhile, due to Mužina's sickness and the lack of business, *Danica* issues stopped altogether. So the Society's Secretary summoned a meeting of the Board members in Allegheny and Pittsburgh for the appropriate decisions to be taken. It was agreed that the new official organ should be the *Chicago* of Chicago. The delegates to the Third Convention made objections to that decision pointing out that the *Chicago* had not always supported the Society's interests and that it published an allegation on a supposed embezzlement of $800. A suggestion that

the newspaper *Velika Hrvatska* (Great Croatia) of Allegheny should be the new official organ was not accepted by the convention perhaps because it was not considered to be serious enough. The paper the delegates supported most was the *Napredak* of Hobocken, although some delegates expressed their doubts because of its past "Slav orientation". Juraj Škrivanić, editor-in-chief, defended himself by arguing that he was not correctly informed about the events in Croatia, having left the country long before. He also claimed that in the past years his paper's writing had been in keeping with the Croatian spirit. After a lengthy discussion and a secret vote, the *Napredak* became the Society's new official organ. The delegates decided that the newspaper should be subsidized by $180 per year, while each lodge was obliged to pay $5 for the publication of its news. A decision was also reached that all Croatian papers in America should be subsidized by $25 per year if they promoted the work of the Croatian Society. Škrivanić thanked the Croatian Society for the confidence expressed in him and his paper, and emphasized that his work would prove that the Society, "entrusted this honor and duty to honest hands". He also guaranteed that the paper's issues would be regularly published each Thursday, warning the delegates that unfruitful arguments would not be tolerated on its pages.[45]

As the Society's membership was not perfectly satisfied with the way the issue of its official organ was dealt with, the same topic was on the agenda again at the Fourth Convention. Some delegates, finding fault with the *Napredak* newspaper and its editor, Škrivanić, suggested again that the *Chicago* should be the official newspaper. Other delegates advised that the Society should publish its own paper but some others reminded the Convention of the fact that Škrivanić together with his editorial board had already moved from Hobocken to Pittsburgh and that he would suffer a great loss if his *Napredak* not remain the official organ. That argument was accepted and the newspaper was granted funds amounting to $275 a year. The editor guaranteed announcements of the lodge's news free of charge. The Convention also thanked all of the Croatian papers in America that supported the work of the Society.[46]

The issue of the official newspaper and its role in the work of the National Croatian Society had always been topical and the source of much argument. Numerous delegates were of the opinion that the National Croatian Society, like any other public institution, should keep the public informed of its activities. An appropriate amount of money should, therefore, be granted without restraint. The same topic was even more frequently discussed by the Society's membership; one strong line of thought was that the National Croatian Society, being the only Croatian benefit organization of America, should be everybody's concern, including the press. Therefore, the Society should grant the necessary funds to all those Croatian newspapers which provided favorable information on its work.[47]

In spite of the discussions at both Conventions and among the public, the problem of the official organ was not quite resolved. In fact, at the Conference of the Supreme Board on November 10, 1904, it was repeatedly pointed out that the Society had to have its official paper. According to Zotti, J. Subašić and Z. Mužina were ready to take the

responsibility for its printing and distribution. Dobroslav Božić added that Juraj Mamek of Chicago was willing, against payment, to take over its editing. The discussion at the Conference showed, however, that some issues had to be resolved in principle, above all a dilemma whether the editor of the official newspaper could be somebody outside the Society or should be a Society member or even a member of the Supreme Board. Eventually, it was agreed that the editor had to be a member of the Supreme Board. Josip Marohnić was elected editor in chief with a salary of $250 a year. It was also resolved that the newspaper should be issued on the 15th day of each month.[48]

As this resolution of the Supreme Board had not been implemented, the issue of the official organ was again discussed at the Ninth Convention in 1906. The Supreme President pointed out that almost all great fraternal organizations in America considered their own newspaper a necessity and were concerned with its high quality. The National Croatian Society should, therefore, be deeply concerned with this problem, the more so as the Croatian newspapers in America were mostly owned by businessmen who used them for advertisement, or were in the service of political parties promoting their policies. What the National Croatian Society needed was a newspaper explaining the spirit and sense of fraternalism and its principles underlying the Society's existence and work. Therefore, if the aim of its membership was the Society's progress and its efficient information about its actions, then its own newspaper and editor were an absolute necessity. It was also important for the paper to be distributed to its readers on time and free of charge. Therefore, the Supreme President brought forward the following motions:

1. The National Croatian Society will issue its newspaper *Zajedničar* once a month;

2. Apart from the articles and instructions to the membership, the outlines of the Society's needs and the assessment of the work of the lodges and the Home Office, the newspaper will also publish all the reports on the work of the Home Office and the lodge offices.

Although all these motions were accepted in principle by all the members, two opposite views were expressed at the Convention. A delegate from Chicago, Hinko Sirovatka, motioned that the Convention should appoint a board that would edit, publish and distribute the newspaper with full responsibility. This was opposed by F. Zotti's motion that the editing, publishing and distribution of the newspaper should be entrusted to the Supreme Board, which would issue a statement to the convention. Zotti's motion was adopted by the majority of votes.[49]

So, by the decision of the Sixth Convention, the monthly newspaper, *Zajedničar,* appeared in a very modest form. In the course of its publication, however, the paper excelled over all other Croatian immigrant papers.

The Rise and Fall of Franjo Zotti

One of the delegates present at the Eight Convention was Franjo Zotti who was asked questions about the writing of the *Narodni list* newspaper which was under his control. An explanation was required as

Familiar heading for the Official Organ used since 1926 with some variations.

to why the *Narodni list* announced that the Eight Convention should only be held with his permission. But Zotti had his own plans. He demanded that the members of the Supreme Board elected at the Convention should be American citizens and that the Supreme President and Vice-President should receive no pay for their work in the Society. In other words, Zotti wanted to get rid of a number of rivals who had not taken American citizenship and were not yet financially independent.

Even prior to the Eighth Convention, the management of the National Croatian Society considered an agreement with Franjo Zotti. According to this agreement, Zotti was elected President of the Board of Trustees at this Convention. The delegates could only agree, as this was the time of Zotti's greatest business success.

The owner of the *Narodni list*, Franjo Zotti, was one of the most interesting but also one of the most controversial figures in Croatian immigration. First, a poor street sweeper in New York, he became a banker, "Šifkartaš", shipowner, the richest Croatian in America, who eventually died in poverty. For years he was attacked in dozens of immigration papers for swindle and embezzlement. Others praised him, emphasizing his beneficial work for the Croatian immigrants in America. Franjo Zotti began his business carreer in 1889 as a New York travel agent for Croatian immigrants, a very lucrative business in those days. After nine years, he prospered so well that in 1898 he opened a large office in Whitehall on Bridge St. which turned into a meeting place for all Croatian immigrants attending to their financial and other affairs. Business thrived so much that he started opening branch-offices in other towns and bigger immigration communities, especially in Pittsburgh and its surroundings where dozens of thousands of Croatian immigrants already lived. In 1904 he opened his branch-offices in Chicago. Selling travel tickets was his main source of profit. In the first ten years or so of the 20th century, an average of 20,000 immigrants from the Balkan countries passed through his agencies annually. A. Tresić-Pavičić wrote about Zotti, "Zotti impressed me as a man who would either become a millionaire or fail. He possesses real American courage, and if - having arrived in America penniless, having been a street sweeper first - he could open so many banks and own a daily newspaper, I do not see limits to his business success. He assured me that at least half of all the money remitted to our country from America passed through his banks, and this means eight million dollars a year, of course, unless he exaggerates out of sheer vanity."[50]

In 1898, when the Croatian press in the USA consisted of an occasional weekly that usually failed within a year, Zotti launched his *Narodni list*. The newspaper program was intended to serve Croats in the USA. The paper was "foreign in language only" but in fact "American in spirit", which was appreciated by the American authorities.

In 1907 Zotti had about $800,000 of Croatian immigrants' money in his banks and offices. His assets ran over $500,000 and he possessed up to a million dollars in fixed assets and bonds.

Franjo Zotti took his post as President of the Board of Trustees very seriously, developing systematically his influence and authority in the NCS. He censured the Supreme Board for its unorderly administra-

tion and he considered the minutes of the conventions and the meetings of the Supreme Board to be unskillfully and deficiently kept and conducted. He accused the Supreme Secretary of the Society of incompetence. Such behavior was disapproved by both Supreme President Ljubić and Supreme Financial Secretary Janković, a Croatian banker of Chicago, who considered Zotti to be his main competitor in financial transactions with the Croats in Chicago. A strong opposition was offered, however, to the whole new Society management team by a group of Society members from Chicago, who could not accept Zotti's election to the Society's management.[51]

Zotti's election was not the only reason for their dissatisfaction. The Society members from Chicago reproached the Allegheny office for incompetence in management of the organization and excessive costs. So they disapproved the payment of $12,000 to Zagreb painter Vlaho Bukovac who designed and created the NCS Diploma. The costs of the *Zajedničar* were also considered too high. There were many objections to nepotism in the election of the officers to the Society's Home Office.[52]

At the Conference held in Chicago on April 18, 1905, attended by the lodge presidents of Chicago and the representatives of the Supreme Board of Allegheny, unsteady relations within the National Croatian Society were discussed. A complete reorganization of the Society in all states was recommended. It was also suggested that new regulations concerning the assessment of dues and payments to the treasury should be passed with the aim of laying sound foundations for its work as soon as possible.[53]

Zotti, however, did not pay much attention to the Chicago opposition. He remained self-willed even when humanitarian or patriotic activities had to be approved by the Society. At the Supreme Board meeting of October 5, 1905, he insisted that 10,000 crowns should be given in aid for the erection of Bishop Strossmayer's statue in Zagreb. The Supreme Board members warned that only the Convention was empowered to make such a decision. Upon Zotti's solicitation, the decision was made.[54] At the Ninth Convention in New York in 1906, some delegates tried to oppose the decision of the Supreme Board, but Zotti had strong support and the decision was approved by the convention.

Meanwhile, Zotti attacked Supreme Financial Secretary Janković in his newspaper so as to form a negative public opinion of his management of the Society's financial affairs. From one issue to another, the newspaper wrote about Janković's remitting the Society's money to Croatia, to the widows of the dead or killed Society members, against unfavorable conditions for them, thereby making a considerable profit. Using inappropriate words, the paper sometimes made such accusations as, "Who received that money in our homeland? The beneficiaries were orphans, small children and the poverty stricken, sad women whose fathers, husbands, or sons died or were killed here in America. These poor creatures were robbed, really robbed of up to 15,000 crowns by the NCS Supreme Financial Secretary, A. C. Janković. He, robbed them of all that on the grounds of "honest" work and on top of that had the nerve to tell the Convention that he was making sacrifices to the National Croatian Society."[55]

A. C. Janković, owner of a private bank, an influential Croat of Chicago, and the Society's Supreme Treasurer

Zotti did not hesitate long to remove Janković from the Society, explaining at the Supreme Board meeting held on July 6, 1905, that he embezzled the money assigned to the beneficiaries in Croatia of the deceased Society certificate holders. He also accused him of disrespecting the decisions of both the Board of Trustees and the Supreme Board. At that same session Zotti was elected Supreme Financial Secretary, after having resigned from the office of the President of the Board of Trustees. But he changed his mind and withdrew his appointment. Tomo Lacković was appointed Supreme Financial Secretary of the Society.[56]

All of Zotti's moves in the Supreme Board were supported by the *Narodni list* which was informing the public as follows, "A. C. Janković was deposed from the honorable post and this stigma of disgrace and shame will fade neither easily nor for a long time. Just remember Božo Gojsović who received a similar mark of disgrace, although he did not do the same as Janković; he kept the lodge money with him. These removals should be a reminder to the others: no flaying of the Society members will remain unpunished, every sin is unveiled in due course. Janković will fight and probably start legal proceedings to keep his post as the Supreme Financial Secretary, but we know that not even the courts may or have the right to grant him this office - he must abide by the by-laws of the Society according to which he was elected."[57]

To make his accusations against Janković as convincing as possible Zotti began legal action against him in the Pittsburgh law courts through Tomo Lacković. The verdict published by the *Narodni list* was as follows: "Judge Robert S. Frazer in Civil Court No. 2 passed a verdict concerning the matter of A. C. Janković being dismissed from the office of the Supreme Financial Secretary of the National Croatian Society and Tomo Lacković being appointed to the same post. The court sanctioned the Supreme Board decision and ordered Janković to hand over to his successor all the books, official papers and money that were with him and that were the property of the above mentioned Society."[58]

In August 1905, the *Hrvatska zastava* newspaper launched systematic attacks against the Supreme Board whose work, according to the paper, was very poor. The finances were in a complete mess, without appropriate control. The dismissed Financial Secretary Janković had not handed over the treasury and was litigating with the Supreme Board

although he had not been sued for embezzlement. The *Hrvatska zastava* also censured the Supreme Board for its inconsistent decisions. First, it gave instructions to the lodges to send the money to the Supreme Financial Secretary Tomo Lacković, and subsequently it informed the lodges that the money should be kept with them.

Many initiatives and suggestions on how to help the Society were made by its membership. According to the *Hrvatska zastava* daily, the membership in Cleveland accepted the dismissal of the former Financial Secretary but disagreed with the way the new one was elected. A ten member committee was also organized there to keep an eye on what was going on in the NCS Home Office. The paper recommended to the Society members of Chicago that they should do the same in order to prevent Zotti from getting hold of all the power in the Society. The newspaper maintained that the former "shoemaker's" ("Šusterska") and "tailor's" ("Šnajderska") management was more successful than the newly elected one with the so-called professionals. It also objected to the evasion of the Society's by-laws which were being changed at the sessions of the Supreme Board according to current needs. In other words, the journal claimed the Supreme President Ljubić was not up to his office, always following Franjo Zotti's instructions.[59]

The *Narodni list,* protecting its owner's interests, opposed the Chicago campaign, claiming that it was initiated by those NCS members who, in their ambition to attain leadership positions in the Supreme Board, went so far as to require a trustee for the Society treasury although there was no reason for it.[60] The Chicago opposition, however, did not give in, so that during 1905, there was a succession of conferences requiring an extra convention that would clear up the misunderstandings with those using the National Croatian Society for their own interests. There were even suggestions that the Supreme Board should revoke its earlier decisions and rehabilitate the former Supreme Financial Secretary. The members of *Strossmayer* Lodge required Zotti's removal from the office of the President of the Board of Trustees because his behavior was contrary to the Society's interests.[61]

Some Society lodges of Chicago, dissatisfied with the situation in the NCS, decided at their meeting of April 5, 1905, that, unless the situation in the Society improved, they would establish a separate organization - the Croatian League of Illinois.

In the *Hrvatska zastava* newspaper the overall situation in the National Croatian Society was analyzed by Hinko Sirovatka in the following way: "If the circumstances remained the same, disintegration of the Society into territorial societies would be imminent. Of this I am firmly convinced, especially after my travel across the States. Our people still have too much pride and patriotism to be permanently submitted to a self-willed egotist like Zotti surrounded by his creatures. I am glad about that and hope that this patriotism and this conscience will overcome corruption and lead the National Croatian Society down a healthy path. Should it not succeed, all conscientious people will as one body establish a new association not only for a single state or territory but for all the Croats in the USA. In view of all this, I do not regret that a new but already strong Croatian League was established in Illinois. With it

we have additional support should the future convention fail to correct the present shameful situation. If that happens, I think it will not be difficult to turn the "Croatian League of Illinois", which already has a charter, into the "Croatian League of the USA"."[62]

It was the Ninth Convention in New York in 1906 that gave the final judgement on the situation in the Society, especially in the case of Supreme Financial Secretary Janković. First, Zotti was allowed to explain the whole "treasury case", which he did very convincingly. He claimed that the Board of Trustees and the Supreme Board had treated Janković correctly showing appropriate tolerance and insisting on the agreement concerning the by-laws for the operation of the treasury. Zotti mentioned that on December 7, 1904, Janković was warned that his fee for remitting death benefits to the families of the deceased Society members in Croatia was too high. He was reminded that the duty of the Board of Trustees was not only to grant death benefits and send them to the treasury to be disbursed, but also to see to it that the full amounts were remitted to the family members on time. Janković, on the contrary, claimed that he was the Supreme Financial Secretary, that only he was responsible for money remittances, and that the Board of Trustees had no authority to send the money home. According to Zotti, the Board of Trustees did not agree with this but set the by-laws and conditions for money remittances to Croatia which was unanimously accepted by both the Supreme Board and the Board of Trustees. Janković did not carry out the decisions of the two boards, but, what was even worse, refused to hand over the treasury to the Home Office after his dismissal. Legal proceedings were started against him by the district attorney in Pittsburgh in June 1906.

Although Zotti was very convincingly defending his attitudes and the steps taken against Janković by the Board of Trustees, the discussion at the Convention showed that there was a number of delegates who did not accept his arguments. Above all, there were objections to the amounts of money spent on court costs. There were also questions like, "Is Janković still the Financial Secretary; is he at all guilty of embezzlement?" Whereupon Zotti answered, "Of course, for some Society members, especially those from Chicago, my disapproval of such disorder and my defense of the by-laws and conclusions of the Eighth Convention were sufficient to raise dust and make a noise about Zotti wanting to rule over the Society which would lead to its destruction. But, brothers, honest work never leads to destruction! I have asked for nothing else but obedience of the by-laws and conclusions of the Convention; nobody can prove the contrary."[63]

The delegates of the Ninth Convention seemed to have been well informed of the real character of the conflict between Zotti and Janković and realized that it was actually a matter of competition between two Croatian bankers who wanted to be in charge of financial affairs of the National Croatian Society. Janković was rehabilitated because the delegates adopted the Commission's report according to which the accounts were correctly kept. They blamed, however, Janković's willful behavior and his refusal to cooperate with the Board of Trustees and the Supreme Board in the resolution of his case.

The Janković scandal did a lot of harm to the National Croatian Society so the newspaper *Hrvatska zastava* was right in saying, "If his accounting is correct, why did the Supreme Board raise so much noise? Is it because in the Supreme Board there were four "šifkartaši" one of whom had to be destroyed because of competition? If this is the case, why should the NCS be the venue of their business competition and struggle? Who is going to bear the costs of this struggle? The National Croatian Society, for sure. Some say it is not right. It is a nice and decent wish but by law the NCS is obliged to cover the costs. If you are not satisfied with the management team, elect another, a better one! When the fraternalists of Chicago saw, even before the treasury scandal, that the new Supreme Board's policies were leading the Society to chaos, they raised a 'holy protest' and called the fraternalists all over the country to help bring the Supreme Board to its senses. But, with the exception of *Zvonimir* Lodge of San Francisco, nobody joined Chicago. Such apathy encouraged the Supreme Board and its impertinence grew even more. And, as the 'holy protest' was joined by Janković, the Supreme Board fabricated the treasury scandal to take revenge on him. They did incredible harm to the Society and its membership. For the last two years the management of the National Croatian Society has been like a hazardous game at which the membership lost and the shysters won."[64]

In spite of the crisis within the National Croatian Society before the Ninth Convention, and despite a strong opposition, Franjo Zotti was elected Supreme President of the Society. It happened in New York, on his territory, where his bank and enterprises were very strong and where he enjoyed the strongest support. He was convinced that he would keep the post of President for a long time because, upon his motion, the Convention resolved that its sessions would take place every third year instead of every second. After the Convention, the Croatian press took keen interest in the position of the National Croatian Society among American Croats. The fundamental question was. "Why, out of about 400,000 Croatian immigrants, the membership was no larger than 18,707, and whose fault was it?" The Society had its lodges in numerous towns across the States. In these same towns, however, some other Croatian societies were active but there were also hundreds of Croats who were members of none. Why did they not enter the Society lodges? According to the Croatian press somebody was responsible, and Franjo Zotti with his supporters was hinted at. More and more people in the Society considered Zotti's election to the office of the Supreme President to be a wrong decision. The Supreme Board members were becoming increasingly aware of Zotti's unreliability, so the members of the Board of Trustees decided to break all ties with his bank through which the Society used to remit money to the fraternalists' relatives in Croatia. This was the first open disagreement between the Supreme Board and the President which led to another campaign launched by the *Narodni list* against the Society. The paper started again to accuse the management of the Society of careless money transactions. The second half of 1907 witnessed the beginning of one of the most serious economic and financial crises in the USA. It continued throughout 1908, its victims being a number of businessmen, Franjo Zotti among them. On July 15,

Pavao Hajdić, the Supreme President of the National Croatian Society, 1908–1912

1908, the US District Court of New York placed the Zotti Company into receivership. The NCS membership was deeply concerned, fearing the Society itself might be affected or even go bankrupt. The Supreme Board at its meeting on August 21, 1908, took its decision about Zotti's suspension from the office of Supreme President.[65] The immigration press focused its interest on the bankruptcy of the Croatian banker in the States and the reaction of the National Croatian Society. According to press reports, Supreme Vice-president, Pavao Hajdić, was nominated to the position of Supreme President. He made the following announcement in the *Zajedničar*, "As I have taken over the honor of the Supreme President of the National Croatian Society, I assure you that I will abide by the oath I took at the past Convention and again in the NCS Home Office on 26th of last month. I shall make every effort within my abilities to see to it that all members of the Supreme Board fulfill their duties conscientiously and that we all work to our Society's pride, honor and benefit.

"Dear brothers and sisters! I trust your brotherly Croatian love and believe that being good Croats and loyal fraternalists you will do your duty and help me and the Supreme Board in leading our great and honorable organization to its growth and a better future."

"Esteemed brothers and sisters! Some enemies of the NCS have recently started a campaign against some members of the Supreme Board wishing to harm our organization; but I assure you these are all only lies and tales. I assure you that all the Board members' bonds are in perfect order and that they fulfill their duties in accordance with the by-laws. Should I find any irregularities, I shall see to it that they are corrected."[66]

The reaction of the National Croatian Society was correct as it was considered that a man in the state of bankruptcy could not perform the responsible duty of the Supreme President of the NCS, the more so as his improper dealing with the Croatian immigrants' money was well known. This is why the Supreme Board filed impeachment proceedings against Zotti to the High Trial Board which met in a special session in the Home Office on November 16, 1908. It confirmed Zotti's suspension from the office of President and expelled him from membership of the National Croatian Society.

Croatian Home, Farell, Pennsylvania, Lodge 126

In his paper the *Narodni list,* Zotti sharply reacted to the decisions reached, arguing that such action was inconceivable even against an "ordinary" member, let alone the Society's Supreme President. He

referred to his business troubles as temporary, the result of the present financial climate in America and not his incompetence. "My private business life has nothing to do with my public social life. If I have done anything wrong, the civil court will arbitrate and the Croatian people will see whether I am guilty of anything dishonest. My struggle against the capital of a billion dollars was not easy; it was no game. If I am temporarily broken, it does not mean that I am ruined. My struggle for my people and its drudgery is as fierce today as ever."[67] In an interview for the *Narodni list,* Zotti referred to the background of his conflict with the Supreme Board, "Not all of the Supreme Board members, but the "old ones" who have been for years on the Society's pay, frowned at me because I have always fought only for the Society and the fraternalists' benefit. First, I demanded that the Society's money deposited in different banks be withdrawn and invested into state bonds in gold because this is the safest investment in the world. My "colleagues", the Supreme Board members, were against it, looking at me with growing antagonism. Then I insisted that all the Society's books and records be thoroughly examined so as to finally have a clear picture. Indeed, some three or four months ago, when the Society had to submit a Statement of Finances to the Commissioner of Insurance in Harrisburg, Pa., I did not want to sign it because I doubted its accuracy. Eventually I did sign it because Marohnić promised to have all the books thoroughly examined afterwards. Another reason why I signed the Statement was my effort to avoid any wrong to happen to the Society, unless the State were informed of the Society's balance in cash. These are the main causes of the present scandal."[68]

Zotti kept turning to Croatian immigrants through his newspaper, trying to convince them that his business difficulties were only temporary, that he would recover and return all their money. He was optimistic until 1912, when he finally and hopelessly admitted, "The circumstances, or rather difficulties, caused by my own and our people's enemies brought me to the point where the creditors of my enterprise Frank Zotti & Co. are still suffering loss. I did everything possible to recover my firms thereby making disbursement possible within a short time. But my enemies and opponents who were not in the least concerned about my creditors or their savings, were only interested in destroying me and the *Narodni list.* They did their best to obstruct the only way to satisfy the creditors."[69]

All Zotti's endeavors to exonerate himself failed because most immigration papers blamed him, his business, and his behavior towards the Society. The severest statements were made by the *Hrvatski glasnik* of Pittsburgh whose editor Josip Marohnić wrote, "He was rightfully removed from the presidency of the National Croatian Society; he was justly expelled from the organization itself; it would be right if he were banished from the Croatian community entirely. He should be admitted nowhere, neither himself nor anything that might reestablish him. Both

his press and his agents should be expelled from all honest Croatian homes."[70]

Franjo Zotti did not succeed to recover financially but he remained owner of the *Narodni list* through which he, together with his editor-in-chief Stjepko Brozović, continuously and consistently attacked the National Croatian Society and its management. The attacks were retaliated equally and without compromise. They tried to prove that the loss of $750,000 of immigrants' money was Zotti's sole responsibility. However, some immigration newspapers, especially the *Jadran* (The Adriatic) of San Francisco, did not accept Zotti's condemnation unreservedly, claiming rightfully that he caused no financial damage to the Society itself. It is true that at the same time other Croatian bankers also went bankrupt. Croatian banker Božo Gojsović of Johnstown went bankrupt. Sometime later, the former Supreme Financial Secretary of the NCS, banker A. C. Janković of Chicago was also financially ruined. Some respectable businessmen of Slav origin met the same fate. Both the well-known Slovak patriot Rovinianek and a little later the Slovene, Franjo Sakser, were bankrupt in 1912. When well-known Jewish businessman Moritz Rosett of Pittsburgh went bankrupt in 1912, the *Narodni list* mentioned maliciously that a number of Croatian immigrants lost their money in his banks. The National Croatian Society and its official organ made no comments though.

The economic crisis in 1907 and 1908 was the main cause of failure of some bankers who had dealings with Croatian immigrants. Franjo Zotti was the best known and the most successful among them. This is why the bankruptcy of his bank in several American cities drew so much attention by both the immigrant community and the immigrant press. Sharp reactions and heavy accusations were backed by statements according to which Croatian immigrants lost $750,000 in Zotti's banks. However, it was not only the Zotti bank that failed, nor was he the only one to blame. The unfavorable circumstances in the States at the time were, among other things, responsible for the disaster. Zotti would have been easily forgotten like many other businessmen of the time if his case had not been so painful for many members of the NCS. He endeavored for years to gain influence and power in the Society. He eventually succeeded in it. But driven by his personal ambition he wanted to make money and profit. The immigrants preferred buying travel tickets and depositing their money in the offices of the Society's President than elsewhere. Zotti tried to tie the Society's fate to his own success or failure. This was contrary to the ideas and program of the National Croatian Society as an American fraternal organization. The Croatian fraternalists were, therefore, right in their sharp and determined attitudes in the Zotti scandal.

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Troublesome years after the Eighth Convention had an unfavorable impact on the development of the National Croatian Society initiating its disintegration. Early in 1905, the Croatian benefit organization *Hrvatski Primorac* of Chicago was in favor of organizing a new society. They were successful in their endeavors. On March 5, 1905, their representatives along with the representatives of the *Strossmayer* and *Sv. Juraj* societies established the Croatian League of Illinois. The League was chartered in May, 1905, and developed so successfully that in December 1908, it consisted of 25 lodges and 2,036 members. On May 1, 1908, the *Hrvatska zastava* became its official organ.

These three groups established the Croatian League of Illinois and broke away from the National Croatian Society. They were later joined by some other lodges and new lodges were organized. Out of 40 lodges that were active for shorter or longer periods of time in the League of Illinois, 16 operated in Chicago and 27 in Illinois. Some of them spread their activity to neighboring states and only a few lodges were established in farther regions. The membership consisted mostly of immigrants from Istria, Hrvatsko Primorje, and Gorski Kotar.

During 1908, news was received from Croatians in California wanting to organize their own society. The Croatian society *Zvonimir,* operating as NCS Lodge 61 in San Francisco, was opposed. A number of members, disenchanted with the situation in the National Croatian Society, wanted to break away. The *Jadran* newspaper in a series of articles tried to explain that the Society's slogan "All for one, one for all" was unacceptable for Croats in California. As a matter of fact, they lived under far better conditions on their farms; they did not face the risks which the Croats in Pennsylvania were exposed to in the mines and steel mills. At the meeting of the *Zvonimir* society held in January 1908, a decision on breaking away from the NCS was reached for the above mentioned reasons plus the negligent work of the NCS Supreme Board.[71]

The members of the *Zvonimir* society took their task of organizing a new union very seriously. It was not an easy assignment. It was not until March 1910 that the representatives of several societies met in San Francisco deciding to lay the foundation for the Croatian Unity of the Pacific. Some of the delegates present, however, were against the name Croatian Unity. There were some immigrants from Dalmatia bringing to America their anti-Croatian disposition, following the policy of the Dalmatian autonomists. A compromise was reached at the meeting: the future union was to be called the Slav-Croatian Unity. This however, did not seem to be sufficient and the work of the organization was postponed for a time, until finally, in June 1910, the members of the *Zvon-*

imir society decided to accept the original name - the Croatian Unity of the Pacific. It was gradually joined by eight lodges from California.[72]

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The Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society held in Calumet, Mich., began on September 20, 1909, under unfavorable conditions. At the beginning of his address, Supreme President Hajdić pointed out that for the past three years, due to serious unemployment, many Croatians had returned home. He did not even mention, though, the members who had withdrawn from the Society. In spite of all this, the membership had grown to 20,285. Twenty-one lodges were disbanded but seventy-three new ones were established. At the Convention, 332 lodges were represented by 151 delegates; 606 members had died, 106 of tuberculosis, 179 members were killed in work accidents, and 154 remained disabled.

The assets totaled $162,171.49. Assessment in dues for the deceased and disabled members and spouses amounted to $61,265. For the deceased and disabled members and the deceased spouses, the amount of $642,036 was disbursed. Out of this amount $214,233 were remitted for death benefits to the beneficiaries in Croatia. The assets of the fund for the poor totaled $28,929. The national fund for cultural and other needs of Croats in America and at home totaled $13,060.[73]

The delegates were satisfied with the financial situation in the Society but there were other essential issues to be resolved. The discussions at the Convention proved that the question of the Society by-laws had not been solved which led to frequent criticism. According to some members, the by-laws were too extensive, incomplete, vague and even inconsistent. It was maintained that the by-laws did not correspond to the Society Charter, that they were not properly formulated, and that they interfered with the standing orders. According to the Charter, the Society was a relief, benefit and educational organization, while according to the Society by-laws, it was just an insurance organization and a relief organization for mutual help. The delegates to the Convention pointed out that the Society's membership expected the by-laws to be changed, the charges to be decreased, and some advantages to be introduced in the insurance system. The debaters, however, did not seem to be aware that the Society treasury or the treasuries of the lodges could disburse only the money that was paid in, which required the exact fulfillment of all financial obligations of the membership. President Hajdić therefore asked the delegates to do their best to make proper by-laws so as to avoid too frequent changes of the existing ones.[74]

A continued growth in membership was the greatest preoccupation of the delegates at every convention. The Tenth Convention also discussed the need of engaging a larger number of agents (organizers or

field men), at the same time criticizing those immigrant newspapers and individuals who were against it. President Hajdić pointed out that great American benefit organizations owed their success primarily to the work of competent field men. He said, "Many immigrants do not even know the NCS exists. Many would join it if they knew where to go and how to do it, and many are so apathetic that they would enter no society unless you knocked at their door. This is our people's fault and we have to keep this in mind. If the NCS had two competent field men, I am sure that by the next convention it would have at least a hundred lodges more and its membership would perhaps double. If the employment of "organizers" increased the Society's costs, its funds would grow so much that they would by far exceed these expenses."[75]

While the delegates were deliberating how to increase membership, President Hajdić drew their attention to the fact that new unions were being created out of the lodges of the National Croatian Society. This was condemned by the delegates as a division in the national community and Hajdić commented on it, "I do not know on what principles these reorganizers intend to reorganize the NCS, but I can say in advance that no reorganization can be carried out without striking a blow against the foundation on which the NCS was built. Striking and shaking our Society will never be allowed by any conscientious member of the NCS."[76]

Although the Ninth Convention of 1906 seemed to have resolved the question of the Society's official organ the *Zajedničar*, it was still a burning issue. Due to different views as to its political directions, the newspaper was not issued for some time. Its issues did not appear again until February 1907 when Juraj Škrivanić was appointed its editor-in-chief. In the editorial entitled "Organization of American Croats", Škrivanić wrote about its role, censuring its correspondents for not submitting their contributions. He pointed out that the *Zajedničar* was not owned by a single person but belonged to all fraternalists and that a greater cooperation would be appreciated by the editor. He further suggested the editor should not publish articles several pages long, particularly not those in which unfounded criticism was leveled by one fraternalist against another. Škrivanić concluded his editorial with the following words, "Should our brother fraternalists follow my sincere words, not only would our *Zajedničar* be a better, more instructive and entertaining paper than in previous years, but our Society's membership and finances would also thrive."[77]

After the bankruptcy of the Škrivanić bank and his departure from Allegheny, Gabro Rački was appointed editor. He also tried to convince the readers how important it was for the Society to have a respectable and well edited newspaper. According to him, a great deal of unjustified criticism addressed to the Society could have been avoided had the *Zajedničar* been better edited and more widely read. Among the 20,000 Society members it was necessary to find correspondents who would

offer useful suggestions and good solutions to the official organ. Rački criticized the Croatian priests for being only passive observers. He also blamed the Society's management for never having seriously dealt with the problem of its newspaper and for not having precisely determined the role of the *Zajedničar* in the Society by-laws. No wonder that the editor of the *Zajedničar* did not know how he should or should not edit the paper.[78]

At the Tenth Convention, President Hajdić dealt with the *Zajedničar* extensively, passing a negative judgment on it. He pointed out that at the Convention held in St. Louis it had been decided that the *Zajedničar* should publish only the Home Office's monthly reports and only an occasional instructive article about the work of fraternal societies. The newspaper, however, turned into a monthly without any precise orientation or aim. It was seldom or never read by the members. The majority of members complained of never receiving it and its publishing costs amounted to $4,000 a year. At the same time, the Society's membership and finances were growing, so the members required detailed and prompt information. Also, they wanted to be informed about all events in the Society. Therefore, said Hajdić, it would be more to the purpose for one of the existing and successful Croatian newspapers to become again the Society's organ. This should not be difficult for any of them provided the Society granted the assistance of $4,000 dollars equaling the annual amount for the *Zajedničar*.[77]

Hajdić's opinion of the *Zajedničar* was not shared by all the delegates of the Tenth Convention. They realized that it was a more complex problem which had to be resolved successfully and to the best interest of the Society. According to some delegates, the newspaper was not successful because of its modest format; it looked like a street bulletin rather than a serious paper. They thought that it should have the usual newspaper format and that it should be issued as a daily. Different reports of the Society Home Office could be supplemented only in the first issue each month. Every Society member would certainly be ready to give an additional 10 cents for a good newspaper because the fraternalists subscribed anyway to some Croatian newspapers. Concerns were voiced about the concept of the paper. It should include educational articles and issues important for the Society and American Croatians alike; it should not only include news about life in America and Croatia, but also articles on art and literature. The costs of such a paper could easily be covered by 30,000 Society members.

It may be concluded that the problem of the *Zajedničar* divided the delegates because there were suggestions that the debate concerning the newspaper should be postponed, which was not accepted by the delegates. It was decided eventually that a group of five delegates should prepare a proposal for the future publication of the *Zajedničar*. The proposal was unanimously accepted as follows: "The National Croatian Society issues its organ, the *Zajedničar*, once a week. It should be primarily a

propaganda tool of the Society; in other words, it must advocate fraternity, explain the importance of the association, and instruct the membership in all social questions. It must not publish any personal arguments, but must always be a worthy agent and defender of the interests and honor of the Society and its lodges. The newspaper must publish articles on national consciousness and its propagation regardless of the political parties; it must have articles on industry and transportation, on health and the national economy, but also on literature and art. It must have an entertainment page and carry news of the homeland and the world. Religious issues are to be excluded. Further, once a month, it must print the addresses of all the lodge presidents, their secretaries, treasurers, accountants and presidents of the sickness funds as well as the exact number of members of each lodge. Only the advertisements of the Society members may be published in the organ. Advertisements of various sanitariums or banks and suspicious enterprises are not to be accepted. The editor must be a member of the NCS and be elected by the Supreme Board after having competed for the office. He attends conventions and has a voting right."[80]

Early in November 1909, following the decision of the Tenth Convention, the Supreme Board elected Father Niko Gršković, of St. Paul parish in Cleveland, editor of the *Zajedničar*. At that time, Gršković was already one of the most active and influential Croatian immigrants in the USA. Although he had not held office in the NCS until then, his authority had a strong impact on its work. In an extensive statement he made after his election, Gršković promised that the *Zajedničar* would be a paper explaining and advocating the broadest interests of Croats in America. He would primarily follow the aims of the National Croatian Society contributing to it so that both the Society and its newspaper "should prosper, growing stronger" not only in number but also spiritually and morally, this being one of the objectives of the Society. Gršković said, "I have to emphasize that no factions or dissident spirit weakening the already feeble national forces must be present in the organ of the National Croatian Society. Its object is to consolidate the good in their dedication to a good thing; it is a child of national unity, it is a herald and expositor of our slogan, "all for one and one for all!" Our Society's newspaper must be our people's true mirror, its counselor, true and unbiased, its sign-post, its conscientious leader. It will prove to our brothers in Croatia that freedom is an elevating and ennobling force, that struggle for life is making us stronger, that distance does not lead to alienation, and that our homeland's wounds make our hearts bleed."[81]

At the Tenth Convention Josip Marohnić was not re-elected Supreme Financial Secretary, although he had held that office since the beginning of the Society's existence. During this time he was often criticizing negative incidents in the Society, in particular Zotti's harmful influence, thus provoking sharp reactions by a number of opponents. But the delegates

were aware of his credits, so he was elected as a Member of the Board of Trustees and granted $500 for his longtime work in the Society.

The Tenth Convention continued to deal with the Society by-laws determining the behavior of its members. Article 22 was added to the by-laws according to which a Society member should bequeath his death benefit in the following order: to his legal wife and children; to his brothers and sisters; to his parents; to his next-of-kin; to whomever he desired if there were no relatives; to the lodge he was a member of unless he left it to someone else. A proposal was also adopted according to which any Society member living in bigamy or having left his legal wife to live with another woman should be expelled from the Society.[82]

Financial aid to schools and churches was also on the agenda of the Tenth Convention. Petar Pavlinac made a very demanding and unrealistic proposal: "This Convention agrees with the idea of founding a college of the National Croatian Society in the USA. To this end it decides that the future Supreme Board at its first meeting should appoint a committee of five members who are to deal with this question until the next convention. The committee should develop a program specifying the location and funds and hand it in to the Supreme Board before the next convention."[83] The delegates warned Pavlinac that the Society had no funds for the establishment of a Croatian College, but it was resolved that a group of delegates should examine the proposal so that at the next convention a respective decision could be made.

The Slav Immigrant Society, responsible for the immigrants of Slav origin on Ellis Island, asked for financial aid. The Convention granted it an amount of $500 as a symbol of solidarity.[84]

The discussion and the delegates' motions together with the conclusions of the Tenth Convention provided a review of the Society's evolution. Its successful achievements were pointed out but so were some facts that had negative effects on its work. The discussion and the conclusions of the Tenth Convention pointed to the most important objectives and tenets according to which the National Croatian Society was operating. It was concluded that the Society was a universal Croatian organization of the Croats in the USA and Canada following the ideas and the program of American fraternalism and as such it was a part of the Union of the American Benevolent Organizations. It was not only an insurance organization but also a national and patriotic association of American Croats looking after the national interests of the Croats both in America and at home. Its membership was almost exclusively workers, so it was a workers' organization cooperating with other workers' organizations in the American Labor Movement.

The management of the National Croatian Society and its members were well aware that only such a program could contribute to its development and promotion.

Notes:

1. *Narodni list,* New York, July 24, 1902.
2. Ibid., February 20, 1902.
3. *Zajedničar,* Pittsburgh, May 9, 1930.
4. Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1902, p. 22.
5. *Narodni list,* September 1, 1902.
6. Ibid., September 18, 1902.
7. Ibid., April 23, 1902.
8. *Zajedničar,* May 9, 1930.
9. *Narodni list,* October 15, 1902
10. Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1902, p. 4.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid, p. 5
13. *Narodni list,* August 7, 1902
14. Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1902, p. 16
15. *Narodni list,* May 14, 1903
    Khuen-Hedervary, Count Karlo (1849 - 1918), Hungarian politician; Ban of Croatia 1883-1903, President of the Hungarian Government in 1903 and 1910-12. Used oppressive methods in Croatia; suppressed political and civil rights and Croatian autonomy; enforced Magyarization. Caused global national resistance which defeated him. (see Leksikon Leksikografskog zavoda, Zagreb, 1974, p. 465
16. *Glas svobode,* Pueblo, Colorado, July 3, 1903
17. *Narodni list,* May 13, 1903
18. Minutes of the Eighth Convention of the National Croatian Society, St. Louis, MO. 1904, p. 75
19. *Obzor,* Zagreb, August 6, 1904
20. *Hrvatska zastava,* Chicago, September 22, 1904
21. Minutes of the Eighth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1904, p. 14
22. The Diocese Archives of Zagreb, Officium dioceseaneum, No. 3134/1902
23. Ibid., No. 100/1905
24. Ivan Čizmić, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret u USA i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918,* Institut za hrvatsku povijest, Zagreb, 1974, p. 22
25. *Obzor,* February 16, 1895
    Dobroslav Božić was born in Jošava, Bosnia, in 1860. He graduated at the Theological Faculty in Pécs, Hungary. As a young priest, being interested in journalism, he was a correspondent for almost all Croatian papers. In August of 1894, he arrived in Allegheny as the first Croatian parish priest. He should be given credit for the establishment and work of the Croatian parish and the erection of St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Church in Allegheny, the oldest Croatian church in the US. It was also due to his efforts that the Croatian church in Steelton was built. From his travels across America, he regularly sent contributions to the newspapers in Croatia describing the America of his time and the life of American Croats. He contributed considerably to the establishment of a number of Croatian societies, especially of the National Croatian Society in which he was particularly active. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 38.
26. *Posavska Hrvatska,* Brod na Savi, February 23, 1895
27. *Pedeseta godišnjica društva Svi sveti, Odsjek 1,* HBZ, N. S., Pittsburgh, 1944, p. 17
28. *Narodni list,* February 20, 1902
29. *Naša nada, kalendar za američke katoličke Hrvate,* Cleveland, 1930, p. 70
30. Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, The Bishop Strossmayer Collection, XI, A/Gloj., F.1; Ivan Čizmić, Letters of Croatian Priests from the United States to Croatia about the Life of Croatian Immigrants (1894-1940), The European Emigrant Experience in the USA edited by Walter Holbling and Reinhold Wagnleitner, Gunter Narr Verlag, Tubingen, 1992, p. 128

31. *Narodni list,* February 25, 1902
32. Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1902, p. 110.
In the *Narodni list* newspaper Dr. Kovačević wrote an open letter to Petar Pavlinac and A. C, Janković with the following contents, "In your circular letter to the lodges of the NCS as its president and secretary respectively you have stated that here in America there are 'highbrow' betrayers of the Croatian people. This statement supports the writing of the *Napredak* according to which there are Croats here paid by the Hungarians to split and destroy the NCS. I have the honor to be one of these 'highbrow' Croats in America. I am asking of you, Petar Pavlinac, to disclose the names of those considered to be 'highbrow' traitors by you and A. C. Janković, perhaps mine among them. But you had no courage to answer me. Some of us 'highbrow' people, thinking about how to behave towards the two of you, came to the conclusion that turning to the High Trial Board of the NCS was pointless because it was due to you, Petar Pavlinac, that its respectability decreased so that it is illegal today as you have unlawfully dismissed one of its members and appointed another. We did not want to start legal proceedings against you either, because besides the disgrace you caused us, we would waste both time and money. There is nothing for us but to tell you openly in front of all the Croatian people that unless you prove that either myself or any of my 'highbrow' friends received a single cent from the Hungarian Government to split and destroy the NCS, or that we were associated with any person or government against our Croatian brothers, thus being traitors, we consider you, Petar Pavlinac, and you, A. C. Janković to be together and individually mean cowards, scoundrels and rascals." (*Narodni list,* July 22, 1902)
33. *Narodni list,* March 25, 1902
34. Ibid., April 12, 1902
35. Ibid., November 25, 1905
36. *Naša nada, katolički kalendar za američke katoličke Hrvate,,* 1930, p. 75
37. *Hrvatska zastava,* Chicago, March 25, 1904
38. Archives of the diocese in Križevci, Križevci, No. 551/1903
39. I. Čizmić, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret ...,* p. 22
40. Minutes of the Eighth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1904, p. 8
41. Ibid.
42. Minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Association, p. 25
Nikola Polić was born in Kraljevica, Hrvatsko primorje, in 1842. He attended grammar school in Rijeka, where his early interest in politics was kindled so that at the age of 25 he was elected member of the Croatian Parliament. He also edited the newspaper *Primorac.* As a strong opponent of the existing regime, he had to leave Croatia. He emigrated to America and settled in Chicago in 1880. There he launched the *Chicago* newspaper in October 1892. He wrote that Chicago was a town with a great future, indeed of a promising future for Croatian immigrants. The importance of ethnic communities in America was estimated by the number of votes they had in the elections and by the extent of their involvement in the public life of America. Immigrants could help their old country only if they were persons of importance in America. Many Croatian immigrants did not grasp Nikola Polić's views. He persisted in his claims, however, and made every effort for regular issues of his paper. He founded yet another newspaper afterwards known as the *Sloboda* (Freedom). It brought mainly news from Croatia. The publication of two journals was a toilsome business but Polić persevered in it until his death in 1902.
43. Ibid. p. 132
44. Minutes of the half-yearly session of the Croatian Association Supreme Board, January 26, 1896
45. Minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Association, 1896, p. 58
Juraj Škrivanić was born in Dubrovnik in 1861 and completed his education there. He started his military career in the Austrian army. Being a keen Slavophile he was in political conflict with his seniors. That was the reason for his emigration to America in December 1886. In Hobocken he established the newspaper *Napredak* in 1891.

He took part in the organization of a number of Croatian societies. He moved the journal to Allegheny where he also opened the Croatian Bank and a travel agency.

46. Minutes of the Fourth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1897, p. 136 and 167
47. Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1902, p. 8
48. Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, November 10, 1904
49. Minutes of the Ninth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1906, p. 135
50. Ante Tresić-Pavičić, *Preko Atlantika do Pacifika. Život Hrvata u Sjeveroj Americi,*, Zagreb, 1907
51. *Narodni list,* January 20, April 26 and April 28, 1905
52. Already at the Seventh Convention misunderstandings arose between the delegates of Chicago and those of Allegheny. In the minutes of the Seventh Convention the following was stated, "The delegates Maks Malić and Anton Nemanić stood up in the middle of the hall, followed by all the delegates from the western states. The delegate Malić asked permission to speak and said that the delegates from the West had enough of listening for eight days to the disputes of brothers from Allegheny who had come to the Convention to discuss their own petty business, which was outside the sphere of the Convention and harmful to all the Society members. On behalf of the delegates from the West he protested against such work. Unless the brothers from Allegheny obeyed the chairman and behaved properly, the delegates from the West would forthwith leave the hall and go home to their lodges.

    Chairman Juraj Mamek said that he attended the convention of the western delegates which was summoned to discuss the behavior of the Pennsylvanian delegates and put an end to such lack of parliamentary courtesy. He admitted that there was a good number of clever and reasonable delegates from Pennsylvania, but unfortunately there were also people who always jumped into the middle of the hall waving their hands and refusing to calm down, sit in their places and attend to the standing orders of the convention. The delegates from the West decided that unless such behavior stopped, they would leave the Convention and go home, and as for the consequences, those brothers had to blame themselves. Mamek asked the unruly delegates to follow the example of the delegates from the West behaving according to the by-laws and from the delegates from the West he required a little more patience.

    Delegate Anton Nemanić said that they would do as the Chairman had asked them; however, should the Allegheny delegates start protesting again, they would leave the Convention.

    Delegate Josip Vrbos on behalf of Lodge 13 protested against the Chairman's words according to which the whole of Pennsylvania was to blame." (Minutes of the Seventh Convention of NCS, 1902, p. 101)
53. *Narodni list,* April 28, 1905
54. Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, September 5, 1905
55. *Narodni list,* February 16, 1905

    A. C. Janković was born in Sisak in 1866 where he was a printing apprentice. In 1885, he emigrated to America where he worked on the building of the Panama Canal. From 1890 he lived in Chicago, engaged in various kinds of hard work. In 1894, having mastered the English language, he worked as a cashier in Cook County. A year later he opened his own bank and a travel agency, working at the same time as a notary public in Chicago. He participated in the establishment of a number of Croatian societies, and in 1899, he issued his own newspaper, the *Branik.*
56. Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, July 5, 1905 and September 5, 1905
57. *Narodni list,* February 16, 1905
58. Ibid., June 20, 1906
59. *Hrvatska zastava,* August 3, and October 12, 1905
60. *Narodni list,* August 3, 1905
61. *Hrvatska zastava,* August 10, 1905
62. Ibid., April 12, 1906

63. Minutes of the Ninth Convention of the NCS, 1906, p. 72
64. *Hrvatska zastava,* October 4, 1906
65. Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, August 21, 1908, p. 64
66. *Zajedničar,* No. 45, 1908, p. 7
67. *Narodni list,* September 29, 1908
68. Ibid., August 14, 1908
69. Ibid., August 19, 1912
70. *Hrvatski glasnik,* September 18, 1909
71. *Narodni list,* January 24, 1908
72. Minutes of the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific, Sacramento, Ca. September 28, 1916
73. The three year statement of the Supreme Financial Secretary of the National Croatian Society, Josip Marohnić at the Tenth Convention of the NCS, 1909
74. Minutes of the Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Calumet, Mich., 1909, p. 7
75. Ibid., p. 9
76. Ibid.
77. *Zajedničar,* No. 26, February 1907
78. Ibid., 1909, No. 53, p. 14
79. According to the newspaper *Radnička straža* of Chicago, Hajdić protested against further issues of *Zajedničar* because he, allegedly, had already agreed with Josip Marohnić that his Pittsburgh newspaper *Hrvatski glasnik* should take over the role of *Zajedničar* for which Josip Marohnić would receive $4,000 a year. (*Radnička straža,* September 24, 1909)
80. Minutes of the Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1909, p. 38-40
81. *Zajedničar,* No. 59, November 1909
    Niko Gršković was born in the village of Vrbnik, on the island of Krk. He completed grammar school and graduated from the Theology Faculty in Senj. He was a curate in several parishes of the Senj diocese. He was politically active in the Croatian Party of the Right and had connections with its founder, Ante Starčević. At that time he also edited the Party's daily, *Hrvat.* Owing to the political conflict with the authorities and the church seniors, embittered with the global political situation but also with friction and personal conflicts within the Party itself, he emigrated to the USA in 1901 and settled in Chicago as a parish priest in one of the Croatian parishes. Subsequently, he became a member of the benefit organization, the National Croatian Society. In 1901, together with the oldest Croatian journalist in the USA, Nikola Polić, he launched the paper *Sloboda* to be later renamed *Hrvatska sloboda,* and from 1904, it was issued in Cleveland, Gršković's new place of residence. His first significant success was attained in 1909 at the NCS convention in Calumet where he was elected vice-president and editor of the first official organ of the Society, the weekly *Zajedničar.* From then on, he participated in all important events in Croatian immigration in the USA. In 1912, during the convention held in Kansas City, Kansas, he was instrumental in organizing the *Hrvatski savez* (the Croatian League), a political organization giving aid to their brethren in the old country. His greatest merits in the socio-political life of Croatian immigrants were those during his employment in the editing and publication of the *Hrvatski svijet* newspaper where for 25 years he wrote in his editorials about the people and events in the Croatian immigrants' daily life. As the owner and editor of the *Hrvatski svijet* he was fighting for freedom of the Croatian people.
82. Minutes of the Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1909, p. 27
83. Ibid., p. 50
84. Ibid., p. 45
    Ivan Čizmić, The Experience of South Slav Immigrants on Ellis Island and the Establishment of the Slavonic Immigrant Society in New York, In the Shadow of the Statue of Liberty, Immigrants, Workers and Citizens in the American Republic, 1880-1920, Paris, 1982, p. 78

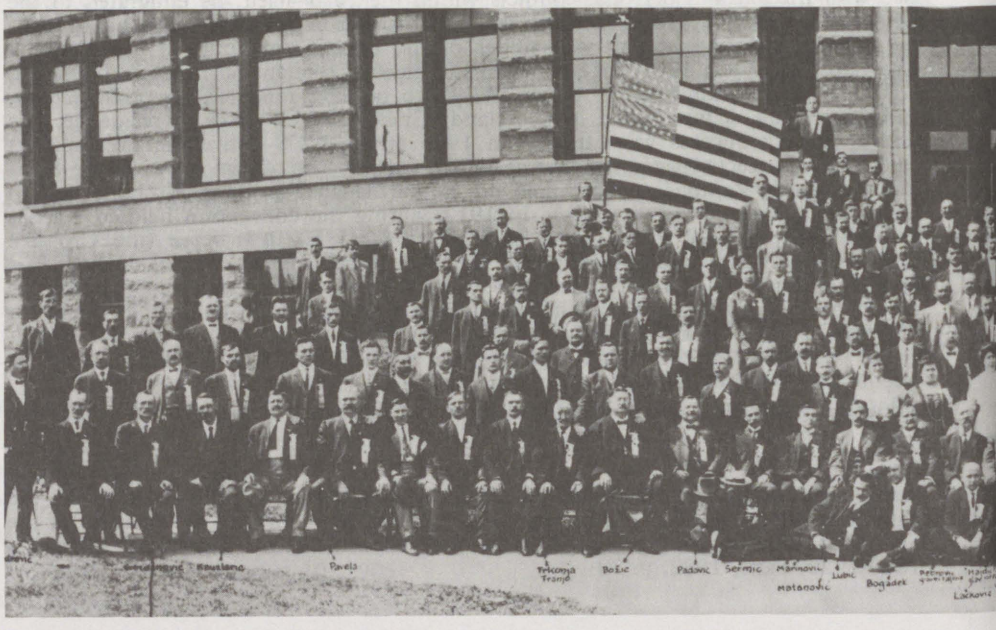
Chapter Four

THE NATIONAL CROATIAN SOCIETY: A LARGE AND POWERFUL ORGANIZATION

The most successful period in the development of the National Croatian Society, considering both the number of newly enrolled members and its financial standing, were the years prior to World War One. However, even more important were its different humanitarian activities and its social and political programs.

On the eve of the Eleventh Convention held in Kansas City in September 1912 the Society had 24,519 members gathered in 387 lodges represented by 186 delegates and 17 voting officers. The total assets had

Delegates to the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, 1912, Kansas City, Kansas



increased to $277,267. Although the delegates at a few past conventions expressed their wish that the property of the NCS should not only be invested in banks but also in bonds, it was actually done only before the Eleventh Convention when $112,000 were invested in various bonds.

The fact that the NCS had a few thousand members and large assets at its disposal convinced the delegates to the Convention that they were governing the destiny of a powerful and large organization which was beginning to play a more important part in the American fraternalist movement. Apart from that, the NCS took over the responsibility for the fate of American Croats and exerted more influence on the events in Croatia itself. This is why Supreme President Hajdić stressed the following in his address, "I can say in all conscience that we are standing on the eve of difficult and serious work that has hardly been such at the conventions so far; we have to solve such questions that the future development and promotion of the NCS will depend upon, and even one wrong decision could be ominous both for the Society and its membership."[1]

The National Croatian Society was already led by experienced Croatian fraternalists who had conducted it successfully through numerous difficult, controversial and very delicate periods and there was no fear that they would not find ways of establishing a more successful future. It was Josip Marohnić who distinguished himself among them. At the Tenth Convention held in Calumet, Michigan, he was not elected to the Supreme Board, but during those three years Marohnić was a prominent and a true leader of the American Croats. He was active in the American Fraternal Congress and participated in many of its meetings. He acquired precious knowledge about the life and work of American fraternalism. He also established and kept good relations with the lead-

Josip Marohnić, the Supreme President of the National Croatian Society, 1912–1921

ers of other Slav ethnic groups. They fought together for the interests and better conditions of the Slavs in American society. By means of his newspaper *Hrvatski glasnik* (Croatian Herald) published in Pittsburgh, he influenced the public opinion of the Croatian community in the USA. As a result, there was no dilemma at the Eleventh Convention whether or not Marohnić was to become President of the NCS which was confirmed by the majority of the delegates. Besides, the Convention decided that the Supreme President (as well as the Supreme Treasurer) ought to be resident officers, and according to the by-laws accepted at the Convention he was granted a great deal more authority, "The Supreme President, who is a resident officer in the Home Office, has control over both the resident Supreme Board members, and all other NCS, employees. He has the right to suspend every employee as well as the resident Supreme Board members unless they fulfill their duties, and to replace any of them temporarily with another officer; moreover, he is allowed to dismiss any officer from service by the approval of a majority vote of the Executive and Board of Trustees members."[2]

After the Eleventh Convention, the interest of Croatian immigrants for the NCS grew, which is proved by the fact that in 1913, 6,625 new members joined the Society. An unexpected increase in such a short time drew the attention of the Croatian immigrant press and therefore the *Hrvatski glasnik* announced, "The Supreme President says that, although the history of NCS does not recall such a growth, we should not fall asleep now but we ought to continue working to strengthen our relief organizations, so that half a million of us Croats in the USA, are not limited to 60,000 NCS members, but we must do our utmost to reach 150,000 members; if anybody needs relief organizations it is us, the Croats. According to the *Pregled* (Review) newspaper, out of 277 deceased Society members in the course of 1913, 78 died at work. The *Narodni glasnik* stated another impressive fact: from its establishment on September 4, 1894, to December 31, 1913, the Society had paid its members $2,880,462, partly as death benefits, partly as help to the 'Associate Members'. The 'Associate Member' coverage was introduced originally to provide benefits for the members' wives, but the privilege was later extended to include any spouse, as well as sickness benefits, while one third of the money was remitted to Croatia.[3]

The Supreme Board frequently deliberated how to better organize the NCS and attract more Croats to the organization. This was also the main issue for the Supreme President Josip Marohnić who in July 1913, in the *Zajedničar* newspaper, started publishing a series of articles entitled *The Croats and America.* Marohnić's first intention was to get the readers acquainted with the situation in the American fraternalist movement. He disclosed how numerous benefit societies that had started to operate in the USA fifty years ago, improved their work so successfully and increased their membership so much that the fraternalist movement increased to almost eight million members. Never in the American history, Marohnić wrote, had solidarity and fraternalism among people been so obvious as in the first decade of the 20th century. The fraternal organizations can, apart from their basic aim, personal and family insurance, be proud of their important influence on the membership that gradually became, through its activities within the benefit organizations, an important factor in American society. The real fraternalist spirit helped the members form and choose moral values and work towards a worthier personal and family life. Marohnić says literally, "One has never heard of a benefit society member who would attend the meetings regularly and listen to good advice of all kinds, and who would at the same time be a bad man or neglect his family, who would not educate his children well or become an unwelcome citizen or a bad member of the human race."[4]

The task and the aim of the fraternal organizations, as Marohnić put it, should be familiar and acceptable to all reasonable and well-meaning people. The benefits they brought the membership certainly meant a certain obligation for them. They were supposed to work for the Society's interests, respect and value each other, support and cherish those human qualities that provided a better life for individuals and the organization as a whole.

The benefit societies did not exist in order to make money for themselves or for individuals. They were non-profit organizations assuring their members the best protection at the smallest price. That was exactly why they met with a considerable response among poor workers who could not pay insurance to various companies working on a large profit base. It was not only a matter of insurance advantages, Marohnić pointed out, but of a humane principle characteristic of American fraternalism which above all attracted millions of members to join the societies. It was important that the interest did not decrease and that the future of fraternal organizations was certain. The benefit societies had adapted their operations to the state legal system and a firm basis was provided for their financial activities. Their experience proved to be very positive and successful. The leading people within them were delighted with the work and the organizations were sure to reach their noble goals for the welfare of the membership and community as a whole.[5]

Having evaluated the work of the American fraternal organizations, Marohnić raised an important question, "What is the position of American Croatians in the fraternalist movement? Do the Croats need their fraternal organizations?"

Marohnić gave an affirmative answer stressing that some ten thousand Croatians were not only a great incentive to the NCS, but also a peculiar phenomenon. "First of all, it is unusual that the largest Croatian organization should not originate, develop and survive in Croatia itself, where millions of Croats live, but instead come into being and persist in America. But that could be unusual only to one who is not acquainted with the situation in Croatia which is economically neglected and politically oppressed, and where the foreign authorities never cared about the Croatian people. The Croatian intelligentsia is partly responsible because they thought that they alone were able to take care of their people and therefore did not worry very much about raising them so as to make them take care of themselves and decide about their own destiny. The National Croatian Society of America, however, is the best proof showing how the Croatian people are capable of achieving something beautiful and great. That was by no means easy to obtain, but that makes the results more obvious. Had it not been for the National Croatian Society, a majority of Croats would have been lost all across the vastness of America. The Society gathered together the best part of Croatian immigrants and saved them for their native country. Without the National Croatian Society, many a Croat would not have been able to speak Croatian any more, and even if they were they would not have wished to. The Society hoisted high the Croatian banner in America and introduced the Croats into social life, showing them that being organized meant a great deal. Everywhere where the lodges were in operation Croatian churches and schools were built and other cultural associations established."[6]

After such a positive reflection on the Society and its membership in his articles *The Croats and America,* Marohnić put forward a critical analysis about the situation in Croatian fraternalism with a clear message that there was still much to be done for the successful development of Croatian fraternalism in America. First of all, Marohnić emphasized that there was hardly a large community in America without a Croat. There was no factory or big firm without Croats. A large number of Croats lived all over America but proportionally only few were NCS members. What was the reason for that? It has to be pointed out that benefit societies were rare in Croatia because Croatian immigrants, prior to their arrival, knew only about military service, paying taxes, and how to be obedient to a foreign regime in their homeland. Upon their arrival in America where life was free and enough could be earned to make a living, numerous Croatians came to the wrong conclusion that they need not unite, frequently basing their conclusion on the consideration, "What do I need a society for? My dollar is my company!" They did not follow the example of Americans who realized that membership in benefit societies was in fact a personal investment they could save for themselves and their families. Therefore, Marohnić comments with uneasiness, "Since there are all sorts of us in America, some rotten soul might misinterpret these words of mine, hoping to fish in troubled waters. But every thoughtful and serious man knows that three Croatian societies in America do not count more than 50,000 members; being

Ime i prezime molitelja

Točna adresa molitelja

SVI ZA JEDNOG, JEDAN ZA SVE!

NAR. HRV. ZAJEDNICA.

MAR 4 1909

MOLBENICA.

Tekući broj 133

U dne 190

Cienjenim članovima družtva odsjeka Narodne Hrvatske Zajednice.

Ja niže podpisani uvidjam napredak i dobrobit Narodne Hrvatske Zajednice, a upoznao sam se sa njezinim zakonima, kao i sa svim njezinim propisima, što ih svaki član mora obdržavati. Imadem želju, da i ja stupim u svezu Narodne Hrvatske Zajednice i obvezujem se sve dužnosti točno vršiti, koje pripadaju jednom članu.

Rodjen sam dne godine u gradu ili

selu občina

kotar zadnja pošta

oženjen ime ženi

Je ste li bio prije članom N. H. Z. Je ste li sve točno platio

Smrtnu podporu ostavljam do daljne odredbe sliedećim:

Adika Trogel

prijavitelj molitelja. predsjednik. molitelj.

Opazka: Prvu i drugu stranu ove molbenice ispuni odsjek, a treću i četvrtu stranu ličnik.

National Croatian Society application form, 1909

aware that there are at least 400,000 of us Croats here, a question arises why these people do not form societies or organizations."[7] It should be clear to everybody that it is absolutely wrong to think nothing could happen to them in America, that they should always be healthy and

leave for home in a few years. Unfortunately, the experience of many of them proves just the opposite. That is why Marohnić invited the Croatian people to unite and gather within the richest Croatian organization in the world, the Croatian National Society.

The Supreme Board knew quite well that everything should be done to attract new membership. But it was necessary to reorganize the Home Office and the Supreme Board. Even before the Eleventh Convention took place, a new Home Office building had been bought on Peralta Street in North Side Pittsburgh where there was also the printing office of the *Zajedničar* newspaper.[8] The Supreme President and a few members of the Supreme Board with several employees were the resident officers. They knew very well they must always be present among the membership. One of the ways of achieving this aim was the work of professional "organizers" who were very much talked about at the past conventions, but with no result. Therefore, the Supreme President Hajdić in his address to the delegates at the Eleventh Convention directly drew their attention to the many inconsistencies, failures and misunderstandings between lodges and the Home Office that had their origins in the Society's lack of professional people, the field men who could contribute to a better operation of the organization.[9] However, not even the Eleventh Convention solved the problem successfully. At the Twelfth Convention, Josip Marohnić addressed the delegates in the following way, "The National Croatian Society needs a field man. Is it enough to have one for the Eastern and one for the Western states? Would it be more convenient if the lodges in each state chose one among themselves as an "organizer"? Should the convention elect them or should the future management be entitled to name the necessary number of field men? All these are secondary matters. The main thing is that each delegate must understand that the need really exists and that the requirements must be met with if we want the National Croatian Society to operate more successfully. So it must be done if we want those numerous, and still unorganized brothers to join us, those who have not yet enrolled, and who are still suffering because of accidents or diseases. Their suffering would not happen were they NCS members."[10]

It was absolutely clear to Marohnić as well as to the Supreme Board members that the successful development of the Society was going to depend on the future activity of numerous lodges in America. That is why Marohnić emphasized that everywhere lodges came into operation there were also other Croatian associations, but hundreds of Croats were not their members. The lodge members knew how to insure their families and had no need to look for more members. Consequently, they were not contributing to the solidarity of the Society and neglected the fact that more members meant less expenses to the lodge itself and to the Society as a whole. There were lodges, Marohnić disclosed, that were very successful considering the number of members and the amount of money they could dispose of. Many of them, however, did not develop, which was the fault of the lodges and their members. Some lodges with a membership of about a hundred behaved as though that number was sufficient. It is interesting to note that in some

boarding houses there were about 30 boarders but the owner did not care a bit to persuade them to join the Society.

The operation of the lodges was not always successful. It stands to reason that the treasury protected each member and that everybody had a right to the same sum of money. But when the treasury was empty the immediate consequences were felt first by those who became ill and were in need of support. One had the feeling that everybody was to blame and most of all the management. Strong objections to the lodge and the Society at large would follow although it was not their fault. And so it happened that the old-time members would leave the lodge while no new members enrolled. That was how Marohnić explained the origins of a debt, observing that each member who was sick was left to his own destiny. In order to avoid this, it was the duty of every lodge board to inform their members about its finances. If those 50 cents that each member paid monthly were not enough to cover the expenses of sickness benefits, then everybody should pay to the lodge treasury an aditional 25 cents permant or the lodge would otherwise have to organize concerts and dances in order to cover the expenses.

Marohnić points out that some lodges disburse sickness benefits using the money paid for a death benefit, and in that way they become the Society's debtors. It should not be done because the money planned for the deceased and crippled members belongs to the NCS. Therefore, the lodge boards must consistently abide by the by-laws and gather the monthly fees regularly, not allowing any member to avoid payments. It is forbidden to meet the requirements of friends or relatives against the by-laws because it causes financial difficulties and harms the lodge activity. The payments of sickness benefits ought to be under strict control as problems turn up in many lodges when the money is disbursed for various purposes, in most cases to a single person or a few of them. Even in humanitarian activities the lodges should have very strict criteria concerning expenditures.

The Supreme Board members became more and more worried about the fact that the members in many lodges were not attending meetings, and even worse, were not paying their dues regularly. It should be noted that each lodge was obliged to pay the Society a monthly assessment in dues, and if the dues were not paid regularly, the Board members had to borrow the money from a bank so as to cover their debts to the Society.[11] The Society showed a great deal of tolerance at the Eleventh Convention when it agreed to enter a section in the by-laws allowing each lodge to suspend a member in case the dues were not paid regularly and not just cancel the name from the membership list as was practiced before. In this way, members were allowed to pay their debts afterwards. Marohnić noticed, with bitterness, that members were not attending the meetings as long as their earnings were high, spending their money in saloons and boarding houses.[12]

In an attempt to prevent some unfavorable trends within the lodges, the *Zajedničar* published the following appeal, "The membership of the National Croatian Society is capable of contributing most to the promotion of our social life. Even if the smallest lodge was in question,

even if it counted only 20 members, it is able, only if it wants to, to bring to the Society at least two new members monthly. Larger lodges could bring a far greater number of members monthly, thereby creating an organized nation out of our scattered people and form the great National Croatian Society. Each of us knows that he who is not a member of a benefit society, who is not a member of the National Croatian Society, is, with rare exceptions, lost for each Croatian movement or institution in America. Let us then use all our power, let us work steadily and resolutely so that our lodges and our organization will multiply and we shall see and feel a great moral and material welfare in all issues of our people's life."[13]

The Supreme Board members were very much aware of the importance the immigrant press had for the life, work and prosperity of the National Croatian Society. Marohnić left no doubt explaining how the Croatian immigrant newspapers should grasp all the important problems in the Croatian immigrant life and offer best solutions in their columns. Unfortunately, the immigrant press had its weaknesses, and it often included irrelevant articles on some world events and general topics, neglecting everyday questions concerning their people in America. The immigrant publications were lacking in articles about the necessity of forming associations and founding national organizations. Many newspapers served individual interests or small groups which had no special relation towards the fraternal organizations of American Croats.

Ending his series *The Croats and America* Marohnić concluded that individuals, lodges, associations, and the press ought to do a great deal more in accordance with the by-laws that the National Croatian Society adopted at the Eleventh Convention held in Kansas City in 1912:

"1. Work on preserving the good name, development and welfare of the NCS and its lodges;

2. Become US citizens;

3. Live honestly and morally;

4. Avoid all misdeeds that could harm the good name of the NCS, its members, and the Croatian people in general."[14]

The Junior Order Department and the Children's Home of the National Croatian Society

Those immigrant societies and organizations that did not pay enough attention to the younger generation frequently ceased to exist in a few years' time. The old ones were left without their descendants because the new environment assimilated them. They acquired its habits, customs, tradition and language. The National Croatian Society, therefore, dedicated much thought on how to organize their members' children. At the Eleventh Convention, Josip Marohnić motioned the foundation of the Junior Order Department but was not quite understood as numerous delegates had different opinions on the matter. Neither the aim nor the task of the Junior Department was clear to them, and many were very much skeptical as to the realization of the idea within the

Society.[15] But the ones who supported the idea did not give in and worked it out in detail for the Twelfth Convention. In several issues of the *Zajedničar* the idea and the Department program were explained, the by-laws adopted and published in the newspaper. The articles also explained how thousands of immigrants' children were insured with other insurance companies, while some of them were not insured at all. If only the Society had done something for the young ones, they would have surely joined it. That is why it was necessary to take preliminary steps so that Croatian children were at least partially insured and prepared for the social life within the Society. If that might be achieved within their own organization then other associations had to be prevented from making money on Croatian children. In order to persuade the membership to organize their juniors, the *Zajedničar* published an article from the newspaper *Fraternal Monitor* which said, "In the first place, the parents' task would be to prepare their children for social life. Particular organizations may differ according to the ways and realization of the idea, but it is important that all of the organizations willing to do so are enabled to fulfill their goals. It was pointed out that the children would belong to the organization up to a certain age when they would learn enough about social life and be able to join their parents' associations. A question of providing death benefits for children was as important as for the adult fraternalists. The objection that the founding of the Junior Order Department would harm the Society was not true at all. It came from the enemies of the movement. By accepting and establishing such an organization the membership was getting an inexhaustible field of action for the organization in the years ahead. In such departments the children would get used to those sublime ideas of fraternalism, common work and mutual help, which are the greatest truths and the most noble goals shared by all humanity."[16]

Marohnić invited all members to establish the Junior Order Department pointing out that the Society would not be able to count on the younger generation of American Croats unless they acquainted and introduced their children to their societies and organizations. Each year the Society membership grew older, many of them died, and one could not depend on the newcomers from Croatia. The members of other nations could not be expected to join the National Croatian Society. "Who can we expect to multiply our ranks if not the children of those fraternalists who are here to stay? It is clear that there is obviously a great need for establishing a Junior Order Department within the National Croatian Society".[17]

At the Twelfth Convention held in 1915 in Cleveland, Ohio, Marohnić motioned a by-laws draft addressing the delegates with the following words, "Brothers and sisters, it does credit to the Twelfth Convention to propose to the membership the by-laws for the founding of a new department that is going to be called the Junior Order Department of the National Croatian Society. We should always keep in mind that by organizing our young generation we will make the Croatian national conscience enter the hearts of all young people and remain there, that we will protect our children, educate them and make them become the

Danica Rački, Director of the National Croatian Society Junior Order

future members of the National Croatian Society. We do not want the blood of our blood to become alienated. We want them to speak the language of their forefathers and to get at least partly acquainted with the history of the nation they belong to. We who are older shall go one after the other, 'where each one finally has to go', and it is our duty to take care of the descendants who will fill our ranks in the future and represent honorably our Croatian cause in this country."[18]

The Convention adopted the by-laws concerning the establishment of the Junior Order Department and according to which every child of Croatian or Slav origin between the age of 6 and 16 could become a member. It was also determined that the seat of the Department should be in Pittsburgh, within the Home Office, and that *nests*, that is, small departments of the Junior Order, should be founded in larger communities. Danica Rački, wife of the *Zajedničar* editor Gabro Rački, was elected head of the Department.

The Junior Order Department was developing fast. Within one year of its foundation, the total membership was 3,494 with 86 nests. Schools were founded in 27 nests for the study of the Croatian language and folklore. It is interesting to note that out of the total membership, 1,156 children were able to read and write Croatian. The majority were children from the settlements in which Croatian schools were in operation.[19] The lodge nests were established in 84 Croatian communities, and the *Zajedničar* invited others to follow the example.[20]

In May 1916, the first numbers of the *Pomladak* newspaper were published which encouraged members to learn Croatian and stimulated the establishment of new nests. The journal carried instructive texts, stories, jokes, and in each issue the names of new members were made public as well as the financial position of the organization. Unfortunately, at the Fourteenth Convention held in Pittsburgh in 1921, a decision was made to stop the publication. Danica Rački explained it as follows, "Based on my experience, I suggest, brothers and sisters, that the *Pomladak* should be canceled since its original purpose was not achieved. To support this statement I want to acquaint you with the fact that out of 7,450 adults only 850 can read Croatian. Other members should first be taught how to read and write Croatian. We ought to first establish something like a course, or some kind of school where teachers would work

to this end. Only when our members are able to read Croatian will it be worth spending money on publishing the newspaper. We simply cannot do it now because of enormous costs."[21]

Though the main aim of the Junior Order was an educational and patriotic one and not just insurance, the management team took some practical reasons into consideration. Being asked by some delegates to the Twelfth Convention what the state laws had to say about such organizations Marohnić replied, "The law does not permit the organization to manage the Junior Order or to have any financial connection with it. The Junior Order will, from the very beginning, be supported by the National Funds. The main purpose of the Junior Order is education, and not insurance. It is therefore stated in the by-laws that $100 is given only as help for funeral costs, and not as a death benefit."[22]

The first by-laws of the Junior Order did not include any death benefits for the deceased members beside the above mentioned $100 for the funeral. The membership fee was, until December 1, 1918, only 10 cents a month. A new table of rates was accepted later according to which it rose to 20, 25 or 30 cents a month, and the death benefits ranged from $34 to $350. Therefore, the Junior Order was to be established in such a way as to meet all its obligations.

The NCS did not only gather together their members' children; from the very beginning, it took care of how to protect the children whose parents met with a misfortune. As early as the Eighth Convention of 1904, a conclusion was made that the parents should pay a certain amount of money into the Orphan Fund. But that was not enough, so

The Croatian Orphanage, Chicago, Illinois

the fraternalists thought about founding a special institution. That is how in 1911 the Croats from Kansas City argued through the *Zajedničar* for the foundation of a Croatian Orphanage in the United States.[23] At the Eleventh Convention held in in Kansas City in 1912, it was decided that of all the fraternalists' children should have priority in getting the National Fund relief. Those were, however, only temporary initiatives which could not provide a constant and universal protection for Croatian orphans. This continued to be so until March 1915 when Croatian newspapers published information about Croatian children living in a Czech orphanage at Lisle, Illinois. The papers insisted it was the duty of the Croats to look after those orphans and to help the Czech institution. The news stimulated some lodges of the NCS and the Croatian League of Illinois to take steps for the establishment of an Association for the education of Croatian orphans in the US. The Association was founded on March 6, 1915, with the purpose of "helping those institutions where Croatian orphans were living." But the members of the Association understood very well it was not advantageous helping foreign institutions and so resolved that their own Croatian institution ought to be established. This is how the Association for the Establishment of the Croatian Orphanage was formed. The initiators of the enterprise were the NCS members and the Croatian League of Illinois. At the NCS Twelfth Convention held in Cleveland in 1915, it was decreed that the NCS become a member of the Association, with a monthly contribution of $10. The Association members paid 10 cents per month. The Society lodges were invited to register with the Association as well. Towards the end of 1916, 30 lodges from both Croatian institutions joined the Association.

To make money, the Association organized parties, excursions and picnics. Monetary contributions and other donations were collected by Croats, particularly by businessmen. But all that was not sufficient to cover the initial expenses for the construction of a building required for this purpose. At the Sixth Convention of the Croatian League of Illinois held in St. Louis in June 1918, the delegates resolved that the League ought to become a member of the Association for the Establishment of the Croatian Orphanage, with a monthly contribution of $25; it was also decreed that the Head Committee of the Association start negotiations with the NCS so as to enable the construction of the Croatian children's institution. The NCS Convention was held in Chicago in the same year. It made a decision that the members had to pay two cents a month for the Croatian Orphanage. The same decision was arrived at by the management of the Croatian League of Illinois. In this way, an income of $960 a month was secured accumulated through 48,000 members from both institutions. The Croatian Orphanage enterprise was thus realized more adequately, and both institutions elected three members each, who, together with the three Association members, were supposed to prepare everything that was necessary for the construction of the Orphanage. The name of the Association was very soon changed to the Croatian Orphanage of America. The charter was soon issued by the State of Illinois, and a construction site bought on Ballard Road, Chicago, where the Children's Home of the NCS and the Croatian League of Illinois was eventually built.

The erection of the Children's Home was an important and a large-scale humanitarian action of the Croatian fraternalists. During the same period, some serious attempts were made to establish an Old People's Home for the elderly Society members. At the Ninth Convention of 1906 held in New York, a decision was reached according to which the members were obliged to make payment of 25 cents a year for the Old People's Home. At the Eleventh Convention of 1912, delegate Tomo Bešenić motioned a construction of a sanitarium for tuberculosis patients and an Old People's Home.[24] The *Zajedničar* was also dealing with the problem by informing its readers about what the Supreme Board was doing on this matter. It was a rather great obligation for the Society because the price foreseen for the construction of such a home was about $50,000, a sum that could be provided only if all of the Society members paid 10 cents a month. In 1914, the Supreme Board consulted the lodges in order to elicit their opinion on the matter. The answer was negative because a majority of the lodges were against a special payment of dues. At the Thirteenth Convention held in Chicago in 1918, the matter was discussed again and the Convention adopted a decision that the membership should pay 50 cents a year for this purpose. But the conclusion was actually never carried out due to expenses incurred by the NCS in other humanitarian activities towards the end of World War One, and due to the levying of an extra assessment for the members struck by the Spanish influenza epidemic.[25]

We mentioned the unsuccessful activity concerning the construction of the Old People's Home in order to illustrate that the NCS members had the best intentions. However, the Society was not yet able to fulfill everything that was necessary or beneficial to its membership.

* * *

One should always bear in mind that the NCS was basically an institution for personal and family insurance. That is why this problem was given special attention within the Society. As membership and activities were increasing, the insurance was improving. In the beginning, when there were only a few thousand members, all of the help offered as insurance was called by one name only, the relief. The Society paid death benefits, sick benefits, and disability benefits; all three types were closely related at first, especially death and invalid claims. If a member was completely crippled, or lost his arm, his leg or his eyes, an amount of $300 relief was paid, after which his membership ceased. The sickness benefit was somewhat different. According to the 1896 by-laws, a lodge could help a sick member up to a period of one year, and in case of a longer illness, the Society would disburse $100 and the membership ceased. It also meant that the sickness benefit had the same destiny as the two former ones. This was so until the 1909 Convention, when the Society assumed the obligation of relief payments. Namely, it was decided that the NCS should pay the sickness benefits only at the end of a six month period for which the lodge was otherwise responsible. To those sick with incurable diseases, the death benefit was paid in the amount of $400. In other cases, the benefit was paid out until a member was

Croatian Home, West Brownsville, Pennsylvania, Lodge 307, 1922

cured, although the relief dues were still only 25 cents a year. But extra assessments were levied rather frequently because, in the course of three years after the Convention had concluded to take over the relief payments, the amount increased to over $70,000.

The Kansas City Convention of 1912 introduced some important changes in the operation of sickness benefits. It was determined that the claims should not be paid from the Invalid Fund. It was also concluded that for sickness benefit claims, members were pay five cents a month and that the sickness benefits should be paid out continuously only during one year. After that, the Supreme Board could, if a member was still ill, pay him the maximum amount of $100, and with that, any further relief claim ceased. The sick person continued to be a member but the only thing he could still receive was a death benefit.

Although the period of relief payments was limited to three years after 1912, the amount rose to $99,383, while the Relief Fund showed a deficit of more than $11,000. Consequently, the death benefit dues were raised to 10 cents a month at the Twelfth Convention of 1915. But the Convention lengthened the relief term from one to two years, and a monthly five cent dues increase soon proved to be insufficient. Within the three year period after 1915, the benefit payments rose to $146,134 so that the Relief Fund showed a deficit of over $28,000 on the eve of the 1918 Convention. Another conclusion was reached at the same convention in the fraternalists' favor: a death benefit could be paid out to a member only after he had been receiving relief from the regular fund in

the course of two years. The 1918 Convention statement shows that for such subsidies within the three years prior to the Convention, an amount of $2,300 dollars was paid out, and in the next three years, up to 1921, after this decision was canceled, the amount paid was $28,228.

The 1918 Convention meant a step forward as the Society completely took over benefit payments. It was resolved that the NCS should pay a sickness benefit claim to a certificate holder after a three month period. It was specified that a member should have a right to relief in the course of two years and three months, but afterwards he could only be paid out for a death benefit. In the event that a sick member had made use of the whole death benefit he ceased to be a member of the Society, but it still went on protecting him by offering certain support.

It was decided at the 1918 Convention that the dues for sickness benefits were to be raised to 20 cents a month and that a sick person should be given a dollar daily. The consequence was the rise of the benefit amount to $303,600 in the three-year period after 1921, which was twice the amount paid in the past period.

During these years, the sickness benefit system improved in the Society. At the 1912 Convention, the first death benefit table of rates was adopted, and the death claims were completely separated from other insurance claims. It was the first time that constant monthly dues were determined for insurance and sickness benefits. The newspaper *Zajedničar* commented it as follows, "The past year was in every sense favorable for our organization; indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that 1913 was one of the most significant years for the National Croatian Society. A new table of rates was introduced, a new system was installed and by means of that, a new order was introduced both within the lodges and the Society at large. By introducing the rate table, although not yet perfect, the Society was given a solid and lawful basis. Without a valid table of rates it is impossible to think of a strong and long-term benefit society. If the membership of the benefit societies understood the meaning of valid and exact table rates in detail, they would themselves require their introduction. On May 1, 1913, the table of rates was introduced in the National Croatian Society. The result was not only that the Society lost no members, but that they even multiplied. The total assets increased as they had never done before, and no one became destitute for those few more cents paid by each member. For each reasonable member of a benefit society, it must not be questionable how much he has to pay monthly, but it must be perfectly clear whether he or his family is going to receive what is owed to them according to the Society by-laws. For this reason, a solid treasury is the best guarantee that the National Croatian Society never lacks resources."[26]

By the time of the Twelfth Convention, an extra assessment was levied for both death and invalid benefit claims; because they were connected with each other, the sums paid were deducted from those meant for the former ones. This was changed by the decision of the Twelfth Convention, so that a member who received $800 in case of having been crippled or operated on, ceased to be insured for such benefits but continued to be a member of the Society and had a right to a death claim.

Thanks to the conclusions of the Twelfth Convention, the National Croatian Society insurance system became much more solid. Though the decisions were changed in many ways later, the main principles were kept for all three kinds of insurance. However, among the delegates and the membership alike, there was a constant feeling of compassion for those in need of relief, and rights were permanently widened to a still larger number of claims without even considering where they would be paid from. Thus the payments in a three-year period prior to the 1915 Convention increased to 70% more, but this was not the reason for not accepting a proposal for ten more operations which made the payments grow to 50%, that is, for five cents a month. Between 1915 and 1918, the payments amounted to $159,000, and by 1921, they had reached $203,700.

Already at the 1912 Convention it was motioned that the Society should assume the relief payments but it was not accepted at the time. Arguments were offered that it would not be possible to control the sick members. There would be too many irregularities and the Society would not be able to disburse the claims without high extra assessments in dues. But the arguments of those who favored the motion were also true. Their opinion was that it was a way of assuring support to all of the members and especially to those in smaller lodges, which would mean an increase in membership. It was the first time that the question of a so-called centralization within the Society was introduced, that is, of making the sick benefits available on a more stable basis, thus enabling all the members to use them. The matter was defined by the *Zajedničar* as follows, "Under the name of centralization it is understood that the Society pays out the sickness benefit to its members as long as they are sick, and not as it used to be, when the lodges paid relief for six months, and later the Society did so for one year."[27]

At the Thirteenth Convention of 1918, a motion concerning centralization was only partly adopted. It was resolved that the Society should pay relief up to three months but the final decision about it was to be made at the Fourteenth Convention in 1921. Yet not even that Convention solved the problem. Only in 1924, at the Fifteenth Convention held in Detroit, did a majority of the delegates agree to a proposal about centralization.

Notes

1. The minutes of the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, Kansas City, Kansas, 1912, p. 19.
2. The Constitution and the By-Laws of the NCS, Pittsburgh, p. 69.
3. The *Hrvatski glasnik,* Pittsburgh, February 28, 1914.
4. The *Zajedničar,* July 23, 1913.
5. Ibid., August 29, 1917.
6. Ibid., April 9, 1913.
7. Ibid., January 21, 1913.
8. The minutes of the Eleventh Convention of the NCS, p. 11.
9. Ibid., p. 21.
10. The address of the Supreme President of the NCS, Josip Marohnić to the Twelfth

Convention, Cleveland, 1915, p. 11.

11. The *Zajedničar*, October 10, 1917.
12. Ibid., April 9, 1913.
13. Ibid., July 23, 1913.
14. The By-Laws of the NCS of America, Pittsburgh, 1912.
15. The *Zajedničar*, February 21, 1917.
16. Ibid., August 25, 1915.
17. Ibid.
18. The minutes of the Twelfth Convention of the NCS, Cleveland, Ohio, 1915.
19. In 1914 six Croatian schools were in operation in the USA: St. Louis, Mo.; Cleveland, Ohio; Joliet, Ill.; Johnstown, Pa.; Steelton, Pa. and Kansas City, Kansas. The *Zajedničar* described their work as follows, " In the USA there are altogether six Croatian schools that are built near the churches and therefore belong to a kind called the Parochial Schools. According to the law, such schools have a right to teach children their mother tongue and educate them in a religious spirit, but the main part of their education is meant to be approximately the same as in all other public schools. Thus they use the identical textbooks for various subjects (mathematics, reading, geography, history etc.). They are under the supervision of the local schoolmasters and must submit to their orders.

    Such schools are not granted any state funds, but are run only by means of the contributions from the parishioners or community members. It must be clear to everybody that such schools are a great burden for the community, and particularly for the parents who wish their children to be educated in such schools. Thus it does greater credit to the representatives and members of our Croatian communities which keep their schools going.

    The National Croatian Society at its latest conventions understood all these difficulties that the people running the Croatian schools were facing, and it helped a great deal by giving sufficient support to all schools, and we are sure it will do the same in the days ahead.

    By this the NCS manifested and confirmed its characteristics of the national and the Croatian organization by supporting the Croatian cause in America through its help to the Croatian schools" (the *Zajedničar*, August 22, 1914).
20. The *Zajedničar*, February 21, 1917.
21. The minutes of the Thirteenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Chicago, 1918, p. 88.
22. The Croatian *Sokol* Almanac for the Year 1919, Chicago, p. 73.
23. The *Zajedničar* September 6, 1911.
24. The *Hrvatski svijet*, New York, July 11, 1913.
25. The minutes of the Fourteenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Pittsburgh, 1921, p. 94.
26. The *Zajedničar*, January 28, 1914.
27. Ibid., February 17, 1915.

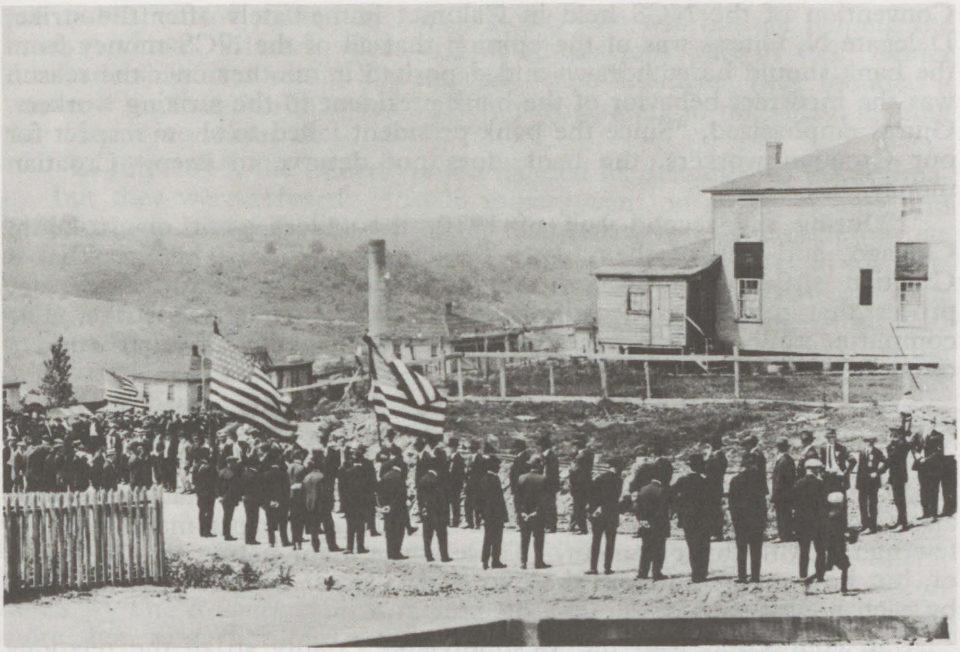
Chapter Five

THE NATIONAL CROATIAN SOCIETY IN THE AMERICAN WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Before their arrival in America, almost all Croatian immigrants had been peasants. Upon arriving, they immediately joined the American working class and shared its fate. It is well known that as a consequence of the difficult living and working conditions, the American workers often went on strike and tried in every way to fight for better wages, shorter working hours, better working conditions, and for the acknowledgment of their associations. The employers usually used force against the strikers. The local authorities often backed them by military force, particularly when the workers seemed to have achieved what they had asked for. Even the Courts of Justice frequently issued strike prohibitions called *injunctions* in which the police also took part.

When the strikes were suppressed, the newcomers, mostly those of Slav origin, suffered the most. Special campaigns were organized against them and slander was spread in order to frighten them, separate them from the American workers, and break the unity of the strikers. However, it was among the Slav immigrants that some individuals were distinguished and the associations for the protection of workers' rights established. In the minutes of the *Dr. Ante Starčević* Society dated April 22, 1894, the following statement was included, "On the occasion of the Connellsville strike all of the local newspapers attacked the Huns and Slavs. Brother Mužina made a statement for a German newspaper, since Croatian papers were quite rare and hardly known then, in which he spoke in favor of the Croatian name and described succinctly Croatian history. Later, brother Mužina suggested to the Society to publish a similar 'statement', which was accepted."[1]

In the Pennsylvania strike of 1902, a few Croats were hurt and killed. A motion by Maks Malić, included into the minutes of the Eighth Convention of the NCS, asked for help to be given to the Croatian workers who had participated in the Pennsylvania coal miners' strike. Malić reminded that numerous fraternal organizations had already



Strike in Pittsburgh, 1910

helped and that the National Croatian Society should do the same, as the workers were its members.[2]

The Convention granted the strikers $500 as a sign of solidarity and informed John Mitchell, the president of the United Mine Workers, who expressed his thankfulness with the following words, "I am grateful to the Convention for its help and supporting words to the striking miners. Herewith I wish your organization much success."[3]

At the time of the great strike at McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, in 1909, many Croatians were either hurt or killed. In *A Short History of the Croatian Fraternal Union,* that strike is referred to as one of the fiercest clashes between the workers and their employers. The companies had at their disposal some armed men, gathered from the underground, and the local authorities also offered police help. The policemen were backed by numerous professional strike breakers and all of them were supposed to suppress the strike. The workers were being provoked and a violent confrontation occured during which about ten strikers were killed, among them also a few Croatians who were NCS members. Finally, the strike leaders announced that two company 'shooters' would be killed for each dead worker. The company was informed about the decision, as were the authorities, and as a result no more workers were killed or abused.[4]

The president of the Pressed Steel Car Corporation was at the same time the president of the German National Bank in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in which the National Croatian Society deposited its money. Further cooperation with that bank was questioned at the Tenth

Convention of the NCS held in Calumet immediately after the strike. Delegate N. Gjuraš was of the opinion that all of the NCS money from the bank should be withdrawn and deposited in another one; the reason was the incorrect behavior of the bank president to the striking workers. Gjuraš emphasized, "Since the bank president failed to show respect for our Croatian workers, the bank does not deserve to keep Croatian money."[5]

During the second half of 1910, the tailors went on strike in Chicago, and one of them, Ivan Senica, was killed. The fact that a Croatian strike committee was established, led by Anton Anderlon, proves that numerous Croatian workers took part in the strike. The committee collected large sums of money to help the Croatian workers on strike.[6]

In Westmoreland County, in the surrounding area of Irwin-Greensburg-Export and Claridge, in September of 1910, a large miners' strike broke out in which more than 20,000 people participated. We learn from the *Radnička straža* (The Workers' Guard) that there were also Croatians among the strike breakers. The newspaper made public a few names with this comment, "These are only the names that we know of, but how many more are there in other places? Let them be despised by each honest worker."[7]

In connection with the Westmoreland County strike the relationship between the National Croatian Society and strike breakers was first put first on the agenda. The *Radnička straža* asked the Supreme Board to delete the names of strike breakers from membership. The paper pointed out that the Society by-laws did not cover the matter but that the Board nevertheless ought to show solidarity with the workers on strike. The newspaper was insisting more and more because during the strike, the other newspaper, *Zajedničar*, whose editor was don Niko Gršković, was unconditionally backing the strikers. The *Radnička straža* demanded from the Supreme Board to free the strikers from paying the assessment dues as long as they were on strike.[8]

Perhaps it was this initiative that caused the delegates at the NCS Eleventh Convention to include in the by-laws the following section, "The members who are taken ill because of drinking, immoral life, venereal diseases or because they work during a strike as strike breakers, lose their rights to sickness benefit."[9] The workers' position in a strike was also dealt with at the Twelfth Convention in 1915, when the following by-law section was adopted, "If a member gets killed as a strike breaker, his beneficiaries have no right to a death benefit."[10]

The strikes were repeated year after year, and the Croatian workers took a still more active part in them. The great Calumet strike remained long in the memory of the Croatian immigrants. It was then that the workers started to join the Western Federation of Miners. Among the organizers was a young Croat by the name of Tony Maleta who spoke English well. He mainly organized the Croats and the Slovenes and was later followed by Mike Gregurić, also a Croat. During the strike, the publication of a newspaper in the Croatian language was started; its editor was Tomo Strižić who was born in the village of Bribir, Croatia. During that time, the newspaper *Hrvatski radnik* (The Croatian Worker)

was published too, edited by Matija Šojat, who was himself helping the miners' union. Miners' wives and daughters took part as well. Under the leadership of a young Slovene girl, Anna Clemenc, they founded a women's organization that was actively participating in the strike, helping the miners in various ways.

In July 1913, the miners' union handed its demands to the company, but they were refused. 15,000 miners went on strike. A long and hard struggle began that lasted longer than half a year. The mine owners mobilized their private mounted police force which terrorized, instigated and frightened the strikers daily with the aim of destroying their unity and breaking the strike. The striking workers held out firmly and submitted to discipline. Their wives helped by stimulating their fighting spirit and endurance. The *Radnička straža* wrote, "Now the companies are trying hard to confuse the strikers by means of force and savage behavior. The arrests and imprisonment of the workers on strike and their wives continue. On Friday, September 12, the capitalist slaves locked up sixteen of our wives who were quietly marching during the parade from Ahmeek to Calumet. On the same day, Janko Terzić, a member of the Head Committee of the Western Federation of Miners, was arrested with a few others, but they had to be released after several hours."[11] The *Radnička straža* mentioned a large demonstration in which more than nine thousand workers took part; among others, T. Strižić who made a speech. He also organized special assemblies held on Sundays for the Croats and Slovenes.

In that strike, a Croatian worker, Josip Marinić, was killed in a fight between the company policemen and the strikers at Hurontown.

Ilija Šušnjar, the secretary of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance, came from Chicago in order to help the Croatians join and organize the Calumet strike. The *Radnička straža* published a manifesto entitled "To the Workers Across America", which said, "A great struggle of the miners in Colorado and at Calumet, Michigan, is still going on. (...) Comrades, workers, brothers! Nobody should leave for these states! Inform your friends and comrades to look for work in other places so as not to become traitors of those martyrs who are our brothers and whose struggle is also ours."[12]

The proclamation was published because in that strike a certain number of Croatian workers entered the ranks of the strike breakers. The *Hrvatska sloboda* (The Croatian Freedom) newspaper informed its reading public that the secretary of the relief organization *Slovensko-hrvatska sveza* (Slovene-Croatian Union), John Puhek, became a strike breaker too. Puhek and the whole organization were strongly criticized.[13]

The Michigan strike was thoroughly covered by the Croatian immigrant press. The *Zajedničar* announced, "As one can find out from the news in all Croatian papers, Croats throughout America are strongly backing the strikers, so that a considerable amount has already been sent for help and the money is still being collected, as it should be. The government seems to be taking severe measures in Michigan."[14] The newspaper invited the readers to help the miners who had been hurt by the following words, "We heartily propose to the lodges that each one should contribute for the sacred workers' cause. (...) Many of our

The Croatian Church in Calumet, Michigan

Croatian brothers have put down their tools, let us keep them in mind all the time and help them!"[15]

It is interesting to mention that a Croatian priest of Calumet by the name of Medin sympathized with the strikers and supported them, although he did not completely accept the propaganda of the workers' agitators. He was actually a supporter of the *Zajedničar* editor, don Niko Grškovič; his opinion was that the Croatian workers should show mutual understanding and responsibility towards others but not be manipulated by any side in the conflict.[16]

After a long and tiring strike in Michigan, some of the NCS lodges still demanded from the Supreme Board not to charge any dues from the lodges and their members as long as they were on strike. They persisted in their claims that the strike breakers be expelled from the Society. At the meeting of April 23, 1914, the Supreme Board proclaimed with pleasure that the Michigan strike was over and, despite it, none of the lodges ceased to operate. It was also confirmed that no payments into the lodge treasury were required from the strikers and that the lodges were expected to pay their debts after the strike and continue enrolling new members. But the demand to expel the strike breakers from the Society disturbed the management. The NCS legal counsel reminded the Society that the employers could sue the National Croatian Society and forbid its activities in the respective states if the demands were adopted.[17]

In 1914, a miners' strike broke out in Ludlow, Colorado accompanied by bloody clashes. The miners worked 14 hours a day for very low

wages. Therefore, the workers demanded from the management of Rockefeller's Colorado Fuel and Iron Co a 10% wage increase, an eight hour working day, and the recognition of their trade union.

Numerous members of NCS Lodge 364 of Ludlow participated in the strike. *A Short History of the National Croatian Society* maintains that the strikers in Ludlow, Society members among them, were severely attacked by the police and by professional strike breakers, that they were thrown out of the company apartments and lived in tents; however, they had fought bravely before they were defeated by a stronger force.[18]

The strikes in Michigan and Colorado worried Croatian immigrant circles. Their press started paying more attention to them. The *Zajedničar* reported, "The great strike in the State of Michigan, which is still going on, has caused considerable harm to the local lodges and the National Croatian Society at large. The fraternalists on strike can hardly live, and it is lucky that the situation did not get even worse. The lodges which have helped their brothers on strike are worthy of praise. In a part of the State of Colorado the two local lodges felt the consequences of the strike. Again, our people are advised not to break the strikes, not to be humiliated in their human dignity, and not to take by any means the daily bread from their brothers by such inhuman activity. Large strikes are organized because of a serious need and not owing to wantonness. The strikers' victory stands for an improvement of their position, for an improvement of humanity; it is a shame that in the twentieth century, a worker breaking a strike should, through his lack of vision, help preserve the present difficult condition of the workers. As far as we know, there is a very small number of strike breakers among the Society members, which does the National Croatian Society credit"[19]

The worries caused by the Croatian strike breakers were expressed at the Twelfth Convention in a statement made by Josip Marohnić. He acquainted the delegates that in the Northern regions of Michigan, 800 Society members had been responsibly accomplishing their duties until the membership dispersed, and the treasury emptied owing to the strike. The lodges seemed to be dying out. The Supreme Board kept up constant connections with the lodges, encouraging them and promising that no harm would be done to them. They were instructed to suspend none of the members and to keep exact records of debts, which were to be paid by the members when the situation would allow. In this way the Supreme Board did its best to save the lodges and enable them to continue their work.[20]

A significant number of Croatians took part in the West Virginia strike of 1915. A policeman was killed in a fight between the miners and the company agents. This was an excuse for the company to attack the immigrant workers. The Croatian immigrants, who were particularly brave, became victims. Twenty-six Croatian miners, mostly NCS members, were arrested and accused of having killed the policeman. Three of them, R. Haler, L. Juraić, and I. Dujmović, all members of the NCS and the Croatian League of Illinois, were sentenced to life-long imprisonment and the others from one to six years of prison. The National Croatian Society organized help for the workers at once. Croatian attorneys Franjo Bogadek and Kosta Unković were hired to investigate and

Croatian miner in Pennsylvania

find out under what circumstances the workers had been sentenced. After a thorough investigation, the workers proved to be innocent.

The records of the Croatian workers' suffering in the West Virginia strike can be read in the minutes of the Twelfth Convention of the National Croatian Society. The applications by lodges No 303, 448 and 531 of Farmington and Barrackville, West Virginia, were read at the session of the Supreme Board on April 15, 1915. The applications asked for help for the fraternalists and other Croats accused of having killed a deputy sheriff during the strike on February 29. The Supreme Board of the Society approved the application and assured the money to pay Attorney Burk who defended the accused members. The Croatian League of Illinois also hired Croatian attorney F. Bogadek thanks to whom the accused were not sentenced to more severe punishments.[21]

In 1917, immediately after the USA entered the war, a great strike broke out in the Arizona copper mining regions. Copper prices grew rapidly but the workers' wages remained the same. This is why the Wobblies, followers of the Industrial Workers of the World, instigated a large strike. They were supported by the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union and by several unions of the American Federation of Labor. The companies refused the miners' demands and began to gather weapons and ammunition, organizing guards, the so-called *vigilantes*, and engaging more *shooters*. The miners' strike was said to be "a German conspiracy" and associations called Loyalty Leagues were organized in all mining settlements. At the request of the companies, the

sheriff of Bisbe attacked the strikers at midnight and arrested 2,000 people; 1,200 were put into railroad cars and brought to a desert across the New Mexico border. In Jeremy and Globe, the sheriff arrested 60 members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and sent them to California in freight cars. The methods used caused a public protest and a Grand Jury was established that brought a charge against the Loyalty League, but nobody was accused or found guilty. A committee appointed by President Wilson was founded to investigate the causes of the strike and the deportation of the miners. It found out that among the deported, 179 were Croatians and 82 Montenegrins.[22]

The participation of the Croats in frequent strikes worried not only the NCS but also the immigrant press and the whole community. The *Hrvatska zastava* of Chicago remarked pungently how America wanted foreign workers and demanded them to work hard though the legal system of some states. Local regulations discriminated against the newcomers by forbidding them to do certain jobs. Consequently, in nine American states, foreigners were not allowed to be hired in some public works and in seven other states, local workers had priority in numerous jobs. "It is no wonder then if such a foreigner to whom the state does not give a right to maintain himself by his own hands, finally becomes a burden to the public welfare."[23] The New York *Evening Post* published an article by S. L. Hoffman entitled "Justice for Foreigners" which said, "I, who am writing this, am the owner of several factories. In some of them, only foreign workers are employed and in others, only Americans. My experience is this: the factories with foreign workers produce, with the same manpower, 40% more than those where only Americans are employed. The people who are the loudest in their protest against the foreigners are the same ones who prefer employing them in their plants. Why are they suddenly so unfriendly to the foreigners who also wish to have a better life? In most cases the workers from abroad are tyrannized by their employers and naturally it is them who are protesting most of all. It is true that we must Americanize these foreigners but we also have to Americanize many of our native Americans.

Let us give a foreigner and a worker in general what he is entitled to and we won't have either strikes or other industrial troubles. I personally come into contact with the workers and I am quite sure that we would enjoy complete industrial peace if the employers treated the workers justly in every matter."[24]

The *Hrvatski glasnik* of Pittsburgh whose owner and editor was J. Marohnić, took particular care of Croatian workers during the strike. Referring to the Westinghouse Co. strike of May 1916, the newspaper reported that the workers had not gone back to work except for those who were paid best, namely those who were making ten dollars a day. They were mostly Germans who had worked in the same factories for years and they all owned houses of their own. "The Germans have always been favored there and considered to be more cultivated workers, while our Slavs have been always neglected. Even the Hungarians have been preferred to us; you can read Hungarian inscriptions and announcements at the East Pittsburgh railway station."

The majority of these workers had instigated the Croatians to strike and then returned to the factories to accuse the Slavs of being unreliable. Yet, in that strike, even the workers whose wage was over ten dollars took part but with categorical demands for an eight-hour working day. "The events at Westinghouse Co. should teach our brothers a lesson not to let themselves be manipulated by the heartless agitators who acted as if they were organizing the workers and afterwards gave the company the names of those who had enrolled. The laborers in all the factories should establish unions, separate from those of gentlemen-workers, and they should try to get a raise in a peaceful way which will be of better use than such political strikes."[25]

The immigrant leaders and their press were trying to persuade the Croatian workers to stick to the rules of good behavior during the strike. Don Niko Gršković wrote in the *Hrvatski svijet* (The Croatian World) on the occasion of the strike against the United States Steel Co in Gary, Indiana, "According to the news we get from our friends in various places, we can conclude that some strikers are behaving in a manly way, worthy of the people who finally understand that they also have rights, not only duties, rights that nobody could take away from them. We do not have to advise such people to stick to the rules valid for the workers' unions, particularly during the strikes. The first condition for the workers on strike is to achieve what they started the struggle for and because of what they had to sacrifice and suffer. (...) Provocation should be answered by peace and calm, and protection from violence is to be demanded from the legal authorities. This would be taken care of by those who manage a strike."[26]

The National Croatian Society's aim was to teach and convince the Croatian workers they had to enroll into the American workers' organizations. This is why the *Zajedničar* announced with pleasure that numerous Croats were members of the American Federation of Labor. Therefore, it was strange that among the strike breakers, a considerable number of Croats should be found. The newspaper instructs the Croats to enter the American workers' organizations whose aim was the improvement of their position. The Croats are told to accept always with kindness the organizers from the American Federation of Labor and the World Federation of Miners as well as other workers' organizers since their activity is useful for all well-meaning workers.[27]

* * *

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, a strong workers' movement began. Many Croats were participating in it actively. They were mostly tradesmen who brought with them socialist ideas from the old country and some experience in workers' organizations. Only the most active ones will be mentioned here. Josip Ječmenjak was elected chairman at the Congress of Shoemakers and Bootmakers held in Zagreb in 1893. Tomo Bešenić was active in the Croatian tailors' trade union. Milan Glumac was a secretary in the Secretariat of the Social-democratic Party for Slavonia and Srijem. Juraj Mamek learned the tailor trade in Zagreb, became a member of several workers' soci-

eties, and was a correspondent of the *Radnički glasnik* (The Workers' Herald). He was the founder of the Tailors' Association and among the first initiators of the workers' movement in Croatia. Upon arriving in the USA, they all joined the workers' movement and were particularly active within the Croatian community.

The first Croatian socialist association of the USA was established in Pittsburgh in 1903 and named the Yugoslav Political Club. The direct motive was an attempt by the socialists to make American Croats familiar with their attitudes towards the struggle fought in Croatia against the Khuen-Hedervary regime. The Club used leaflets and organized assemblies and meetings. The Yugoslav Political Club disintegrated in 1905 and was reestablished a year later when 32 active members were brought together again. Tomo Bešenić was instrumental in the club's revival. It was due to his proposal during the economic depression in the summer of 1907 that the Club decided to launch a workers' newspaper in the Croatian language. In 1907, another socialist association of Croats was established in Southside Pittsburgh, but it ceased functioning a year later because of the depression. Late in 1907, a very lively political battle ensued among the Chicago Croats. Numerous organizations were formed, and the *Radnička straža* newspaper was issued first as a half-monthly and later as a weekly. Following a few unsuccessful attempts in New York, the newspaper *Radnička borba* (The Workers' Struggle) was finally launched in Cleveland and a group of Croatian socialists rallied around it. The socialist press stirred up the birth of a significant number of Croatian socialist associations in Milwaukee, Kenosha, St. Louis, and East Pittsburgh. Until 1909, 14 socialist clubs of American Croats were founded. Social democrats in the Southern-Slav countries had their own national parties, but they were also organized into parties based on the South-Slav or even the Balkan platform. Such organizations were transferred to America and the Yugoslav Socialist Congress of America was held in Chicago on December 3 and 4, 1910. Its main goal was the establishment of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance. According to the regulations adopted at the Congress, the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance was based on the principles of international socialism and acknowledged the program and constitution of the Socialist Party of America. The Alliance was active in the USA, Canada, and Mexico with its seat in Chicago, Illinois. The aim and task of the Alliance was to organize American South-Slavs into socialist groups and associations, as well as their systematic education in keeping with the socialist guidelines.

Any person of at least 18 years of age who accepted the socialist ideas could become a member of the Alliance. Local organizations were established with a minimum membership of five persons. Each local organization was named the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance. All external and internal activities of the Alliance were managed by the Main Committee in Chicago consisting of twelve members. Each national community (the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs and Bulgarians) elected three members into the Committee. Agitation and organizational work was governed by the National Central Committee (formed within the Main Committee, and consisting of three members of the same nationality elected from the Main Committee and two more members, again of the same nationality,

elected by the Chicago socialist organizations) in accordance to the Main Committee. It also managed the press, under the control of the Main Committee.

The foundation of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance was a turning point in the activities of the Croatian and other South-Slav socialists in the USA.

With the help of the Alliance they were able to start the more powerful activity of spreading socialist ideas among the immigrants. Croatian immigrants, however, were already participating in numerous organizations, societies and clubs which had included in their programs a fight for the national and social freedom of their people in the old country. The socialists were to determine the immigrants' attitudes towards this fact.

Croatian immigrants, according to the socialists, had to submit to new conditions upon their arrival to America. As in the old country, they were not in a position to fight the political system successfully. In America, they continued their struggle against the "old homeland" slavery, convinced that the USA was completely different, and that full freedom was possible. They understood their subordinate position in America quite differently, convincing themselves that it was not really a subordinate one and that they ought not to complain, as they did not belong to the country and could not speak the language. Because of such an attitude, the immigrants cared very little about their political position and were much more absorbed in efforts to save their old country. These people who changed from peasant to wage laborers were much more interested in some trifling political matter in Austria than in what the American proletariat did to improve its position. "Thus, living neither here nor there, our people are completely passive. (...) And though freedom of speech and thought is greater here, it is only doing harm to our unthinking workers."[29] In addition, the socialists separated the Croatian workers from the Croatian American middle class, and analyzed the origins of its establishment and development. Up to World War One, according to the socialists, the Croatian middle class in the States was non-existent. There were individuals who lived in Croatian communities and tried to create a better position for themselves, "among our folks". These were rich merchants, innkeepers, salooners, bankers, "the šifkartaši", and later on, interpreters, librarians, priests, and quite rarely, lawyers or doctors.

Those in trade cooperated with the Croatian newspapers or joined journalists' associations, or preferably, they themselves launched newspapers in Croatian.

By World War One, some Croatian bankers and priests became prominent, but on the eve of the war a need was felt to join and work together for the 'benefit' of their own people.

Pinpointing Croatian immigrants in such specific circumstances of American life and distinguishing among them the ruling class and the oppressed one, the socialists acted from the workers' viewpoint, even within the Croatian national program. The failure of any communication with the Croatian middle class of America was explained by the socialists as follows, "However, it is completely natural that we, socialists,

must fight the domestic exploitation as it is the first on our way. We live among our people, speak our language first of all and work for our nation, or rather for the oppressed working classes in our homeland. Here in America, where the conditions are quite different, we are forced to settle accounts with those who are exploiting our working people and support them in the first place. We are trying to make them aware of the facts and do our best to help them. We want them to become socialists and to fight together with other nations against all-powerful capitalism and universal injustice. The one who invites us to cooperate with the 'patriots' does not know the principles of international socialism. Each invitation to cooperate with the patriots is pure nonsense."[30]

The antagonism between the socialists and other political parties among the American Croats was obvious in 1912, after the Croatian League had been founded, which according to the socialists' opinion, was the first attempt to politically organize the immigrant population.[31]

The socialists were of the opinion that a struggle for social and political freedom were inseparably connected. Fighting for the complete freedom of each individual, the socialists were fighting for the freedom for all people and their undisturbed development. A struggle for the economic independence of the working class was not possible unless the workers were educated or cultivated, which could not be achieved if a nation was not independent and free. That is why the socialist idea incorporates the principles of liberty and independence of each nation. Accordingly, the Croatian socialists of America could join the Croatian League or vice versa, the League members could enter the ranks of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance. However, the American socialists considered that to be a problem. Acknowledging the necessity of national freedom, the socialists have made a step forward and have not been content with a "free" country only but craved for a country in which the people would not only be free of foreign rule but of domestic rulers too.[32]

One of the very important and challenging tasks for the Croatian socialists was a decision concerning a standpoint to be taken towards the fraternal organizations, particularly to the National Croatian Society, the largest and most influential Croatian organization in the USA. In the very first year of its publication, the *Radnička straža* dealt seriously with the matter. "We believe that the state ought to take care of workers' insurance in case of sickness, accident, old age or death. Such insurance should be disbursed by the capitalists since all the accidents occur at work. We will therefore fight hand in hand with those workers, the socialists, who demand state workers' insurance. The socialist program requires that the state maintain the sick and grant pensions to the elderly and disabled workers, and all to be paid by the rich, the capitalists who made a fortune at the cost of the workers. Until this is achieved the Croatian workers should be for their own benefit the members of the National Croatian Society or any other workers' relief organization. And relief organizations should remain such. Politics should not enter such associations-if it does there will be trouble! For a relief organization it is immaterial whether one is a member of the socialist party, of the progressive party or adheres to Starčević's political program. The National Croatian Society cannot and must not be a political organization.

Therefore, we need specific educational and political societies and that is why the politically conscious workers have already established the Croatian Workers' Educational and Political Alliance. According to our point of view, a great deal of corruption has become a part of the National Croatian Society which harms it, causing great damage to its membership. All that is rotten will be only cleared up when the workers themselves have started a thorough cleansing, throwing out of the Society everything that harms its reputation. That job cannot be done by those gentlemen who want to make use of the Society and who already have exploited it. That job will be done only by the workers themselves. It shall be fulfilled in the near future when the Croatian workers have become completely conscious after having elected their best representatives into the Society Board."[33]

The *Radnička straža* newspaper sometimes censured the activities of the National Croatian Society pointing out the irregularities and inconsistencies of its activities, but it always emphasized that its objections must not be compared to the malicious criticism of the *Narodni list*. It is unbelievable that so much doubt should be expressed about the good intentions of the socialists. But the socialists would not be prevented from bringing light into darkness and prepare the people for a better future in accordance to their socialist duty.[34] The newspaper intensified its critical views on the eve of the Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society held in Calumet in 1909, "An amount of ink will be used for the 'welfare of workers' on the occasion of the coming NCS Convention. Everybody cares for us. From all sides we are flooded by advice and suggestions and 'patriots', 'advisors' and 'saviors' turn up having in mind only the 'advancement and flourishing' of the Society, the benefit of the people and nothing else. The lodges are in confusion. Speeches are being held and votes solicited. The election of delegates is approaching. The Convention will take place, several thousand dollars will be spent, and everything will remain as it used to be."[35]

Numerous letters were arriving to the *Radnička straža* editorial board in which the immigrants expressed their opinion about the Society's activities. They demanded that the newspaper influence the work of the coming Convention. The newspaper answered that the socialists did not have an indifferent relation on the matter, "It is an unimportant question today whether the Society has done more harm than good to the working people. The Society exists and that is a question of great weight."[36] The socialists did not change their view in this respect, and before the Convention, it had to be decided whether the viewpoint was correct or not. However, the editorial board was of the opinion that it was neither their problem nor of the board of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance. The question was therefore brought to the assembly of the Croatian Workers' Educational Society in Chicago and to the socialist assembly in Allegheny. Both assemblies adopted the same resolution, "In view of the sad truth that the workers, NCS members, were in most cases not aware of their working class interests, there was no prospect for the independent socialist list to win at the election. The reason was that it frequently proved to be harmful for the socialist movement if the socialists sat on the committees together with people of

opposite interests and standpoints, as they were invariably responsible for either bad or good work of such people. Therefore, the socialists and all their sympathizers are asked to refuse any positions on the NCS boards."[37]

The negative relationship of the socialists with the Croatian benefit societies was more a matter of principle than anything else. As a matter of fact, many socialists proved to be quite active in the work of the benefit societies. Prior to the Third Convention of the Croatian League of Illinois that was to be held on March 21, 1910, the *Radnička straža* made known that the workers represented a majority of the delegates and wished them success. There were, though, very few socialists among them and primarily those "whose minds were not pervaded by the bright ideas of socialism."

The non-socialist newspapers of Croatian immigrants argued with the *Radnička straža* and attacked its negative relationship with the Croatian fraternal organization. *Hrvatska zastava* of Chicago observed, "We admit that the National Croatian Society is an insurance company today, but we do not allow the National Croatian Society to be or to ever become a superfluous insurance organization. On the contrary, it is an educational society in the first place and according to its charter it has to establish Croatian schools and to take care of instruction and education of its members and all other Croats in America.

(...) We are not going to let them destroy our Society's best achievements, our relief societies, and to easily obtain of the NCS treasury for which we had worked so hard and shed bloody sweat."[38]

But those controversies fortunately did not multiply and were not necessary at all as the socialists gradually joined both the National Croatian Society's activities and those of other Croatian benefit societies. In numerous lodges the socialists took over leading positions and in the course of the Cleveland Convention of 1915, their delegates were a very influential group. They imposed onto the Convention their anti-war viewpoints and caused a section to be added to article 19, paragraph 7, saying, "Beneficiaries of a certificate holder, killed in a war as a volunteer, lose all rights to a death benefit."

The Croatian socialists worked in the Socialist Party as a separate section but shared the party's destiny entirely. They also approved of the anti-war standpoint adopted by the Socialist Party Congress held in St. Louis on April 7, 1917.[39] However, within the National Croatian Society, or rather in its Supreme Board, they were aware of the difficulties that might have been caused by the fact that the States had entered the war. Because of this, the Board addressed the membership suggesting that article 19, paragraph 7 ought to be deleted, and in the meantime, until the next convention, death benefits should be disbursed to the beneficiaries of the killed volunteers. The motion was not adopted since 6,131 members voted against it, while only 4,728 voted for it.[40] Although only one third of the total membership took part in the voting, the outcome was an obvious reflection of the Society's opinion about the war.

* * *

World War One ended on November 11, 1918. Soon afterwards, all countries, except for the USA, were stricken with poverty. The States became wealthy by means of the war profit accumulation and solvent to pay to Europe their pre-war debts; they even granted loans to the European states in the form of post-war help. As a result, the European countries became their debtors in the amount of seven million dollars. The improved financial situation in America, though, could not solve the inner social unrest that had originated in the pre-war period. On the contrary, the social differences grew deeper and in the post-war period, the workers' position was harder than when the States entered the war. Owing to the war, inflation and the cost of living grew rapidly and wages were actually lowered by 14%. This angered the workers. Numerous strikes broke out in which the workers demanded the fulfillment of their rights. Exasperation spread and four million people in all of the industrial centers of the USA began to fight for higher wages, shorter working hours, better conditions, and for the right to freely organize their trade unions.[41]

A large strike was announced in the American steel industry on September 22, 1919, in which more than 350,000 workers participated. The strike went on for three and a half months. The steel mill owners were quite prepared to suppress the strike; conscious of the workers' anger, they had mobilized thousands of policemen and private agents. This is what Ivan Beck wrote in the *Zajedničar* about the Croatian strikers: "During the strike our people were in the first ranks of the struggle for victory. The minutes from those days tell us that no Croat was a

Croatian Beneficial Society Hrvatski sinovi, Lodge 15, Illinois, October 20, 1912

strike breaker; the treasurer in fact deleted five names acting as 'scabs', but not one was Croatian. The minutes also mention that some members were put on the corporation's black list because of their strike activities. The consequences of the strike were felt for a long time. The Pittsburgh Steel Corporation Co. employed a large number of Croatian workers and because of their partaking in the strike they were all thrown out of the company's houses and the strike breakers, mainly ill-advised Negroes and Mexicans, were let in instead. I don't mean that this was an isolated case here at Monessen, Pennsylvania. It occurred wherever the companies had their housing facilities. Apart from exploiting the workers in the factories, they also made money by renting the apartments to the workers requiring high rental prices while investing at the same time very little for the improvement of housing conditions. It is well known how the strike ended. The consequences were by no means rosy. It is no secret that a number of workers lost their jobs, that some of them had to return to the old country, while others were forced to look elsewhere for employment."[42]

In April 1920, the railroad workers went on strike blocking up the entire rail system. The strike spread to Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and New York. The police imprisoned the strikers following the instructions of the Department of Justice. John Grunau, president of the Railroad Workers' Organization, who was the main strike organizer, was arrested and offered freedom in exchange for a $10,000 bail. Grunau refused pay bail unless all the other arrested railroad workers were offered the same deal. He rejected the accusation of having broken the law for the protection of food transport as well as any connection of the strike with the radical or the communist movement. But in his statement one could easily recognize his negative opinion about the newcomers as he was first of all speaking in the Americans' name. He declared, "More than 90 % of our people are Americans and nobody may join our organization unless they become an American citizen first. About 30 % of our youngsters have served overseas and just because we believe in American institutions and freedom, we reject submitting to the people who hold us their slaves. Should the leaders be imprisoned, others will replace them, until the struggle for a dignified way of life in the railroad industry has been won."[43]

The strike went on for twenty days and the strikers were persistent in requiring higher wages, regardless of the pressure by the police and other authorities. Yet the strike disclosed that the workers' organization and its position in the struggle for workers' rights was by no means unanimous in many aspects. Croatian workers found themselves in enormous trouble. In January 1920, the police made mass arrests all over the US by order of Attorney General Palmer. In some seventy cities, 10,000 American and immigrant workers were simultaneously arrested. But the American workers were soon released while 3,500 immigrant workers were kept in prison with the intention of deportation to the countries of their origin. The majority of Croatians were arrested in Detroit; the police imprisoned 26 people there who were then maltreated. Such conduct was censured even by the Mayor of Detroit, James Couzens. At his request, the prisoners were transferred to Fort Wayne. Eight of the

Croatian workers were deported to Yugoslavia later, while one of them died in prison.[44]

In April 1922, hard and exhausting strikes broke out in the coal mines of several American states. Many Croatians took part as mining was their most frequent occupation. The National Croatian Society was, in keeping with its tradition, actively engaged in helping the miners. The *Zajedničar* in the course of June, July and August became a real source of various news about the strikers and the help offered by the lodges of the Society to their fellow workers on strike. Many letters were made public expressing the gratefulness of the Society lodges and numerous departments of the Miners' Union for the help given.[45]

The American socialist movement and its Croatian socialist members lived through a great crisis and disintegration at the end of World War One. But the American socialist movement was reorganized in the post-war period, a time of frequent social unrest. It was then that the Labor Party of the USA was founded in which the Yugoslav section was rather strong. Its official publication was the *Znanje* (Knowledge) newspaper. A part of the Yugoslav section did not approve of the radicalism of the Labor Party of the USA. Thus the *Znanje* editors, Todor Cvetkov and Đuro Kutuzović, resigned and left the Party, adhering to the reformist ideas of the workers' movement. They launched the *Novi svijet* (The New World) newspaper on August 1, 1923. Sometime later, on November 27, 1924, the two of them with their followers established the Yugoslav Educational Alliance. Its aim was the instruction and education of the workers by means of their associations, papers and books. The work of the Alliance was to be realized in a form of instructive lectures and courses on the current issues of the workers' movement, in a truthful description of the workers' fight; it persuaded them to enter the Unions and to establish singing and theatrical clubs, on the whole, to improve the social life of their communities. The Alliance was to operate among the workers and to promote their participation in solving the problems of political, economic and cultural significance.[46] In January 1925, the *Novi svijet* became the official organ of the Yugoslav Educational Alliance. The Alliance never really became a mass organization, but some renowned personalities within the NCS, like President Tomo Bešenić, Vinko Šolić, and many others, were active members of the Alliance.

The so-called educators exercised a strong influence on the National Croatian Society which drew the attention of the Croatian followers of the Labor Party of the USA so that its members reopened the discussion on the role of benefit societies in the immigrant's life. The *Radnik* (The Worker) newspaper dealt with it a great deal as early as 1924, objecting to those who thought that relief organizations were a secondary problem and should be ignored. The paper backed the opinion that it was a wrong viewpoint because each workers' party was to define its relation to all issues concerning economic or political questions. So it was a mistake to think that relief organizations deserved no

attention, particularly considering their position in a capitalist society or the mere fact that they were or were not basically revolutionary organizations. The *Radnik* did not agree with the opinion that relief organizations were a sort of treasury for the sick. It considered their insurance activity to be absolutely appropriate, which was proven by the fact that over 50,000 immigrants were certificate holders. The newspaper agreed that relief organizations were not actually revolutionary societies, they even excluded the working class from the revolutionary struggle. As the *Radnik* put it, relief organizations were supposed to change their role and bring up the membership more in the spirit of class struggle and explain the necessity of joining the trade unions and the workers' political parties; above all, the organizations were supposed to partake in the political class struggle. Only in this way could they have made the capitalist state pass social laws on workers' insurance proving thus that within the capitalist society no lasting solutions for the working class were possible. All these were the arguments by which the newspaper concluded that the goal of the Labor Party was the struggle for more influence upon relief organizations so as to help them promote the workers' cause.[47]

Stjepan Lojen, a member of the *Radnik* editorial board, tried to compare the role of relief organizations and that of the trade unions. Lojen explained that the former gathered people in need of mutual help in sickness, injury or death. The latter were militant organizations, while the former were welfare and humanitarian ones but they were supposed to support the trade unions through their influence and their operation. The relief organizations did not participate in the class struggle but their members had to. They were to enroll into the economic and political parties of their class. This was to be a link between the two. Consequently, the relations between the relief organizations and the workers' movement were bound to be friendly. They were to help one another and stand for the interests of the working class.[48]

The educators did not immediately believe what the *Radnik* had to say and they called its writings insincere. They were even convinced that the Yugoslav section of the Labor Party only wanted the money from the relief organizations in order to help Russia and the workers arrested in Michigan. These were the alleged reason for the positive relationship with the relief organizations.[49] The educators planned an entire program of cooperation and help to the benefit societies. A proclamation by the Yugoslav Educational Alliance said, "Whenever possible one should cooperate with and help the NCS education boards as well as those of the Croatian League of Illinois, which means, to help the instructive work of our organizations."[50] The educators held a similar viewpoint of the National Croatian Society, "When our Society is in question we have always been and remained only the Society members and by no means the leftists or the rightists. (...) Further on, in the National Croatian Society, we shall as its true members, by activity and otherwise, back all its advancement. In its ranks we shall prevent every divisive spirit and party fanaticism. At the meetings of its lodges and during the coming

conventions we shall all the more emphasize our motto 'The Society to the fraternalists' and we shall shout for joy, 'Down with factious party spirit!"[51]

The educators in the first post-war years gradually became more popular for their 'reformist' ideas and the established program. They were not only popular among the immigration population, but also among the leftist and the progressively oriented and educated Croatians. With their support, they succeeded in taking over the leadership of the National Croatian Society as early as the Fourteenth Convention held in Pittsburgh in 1921. The education activities of the Society and its education boards were identical to those of the Yugoslav Educational Alliance program.

Notes:

1. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* Pittsburgh, 1949. p. 92.
2. Ibid., p. 93.
3. Ibid., p. 94.
   On July 10, 1902, a great disaster occurred at the Cambria Steel Co. where more than a hundred people were killed, among them ten Croats. The company representatives sent their secretary to the Croatian parish priest Kaić, asking him to help in sending the money to the families of the deceased miners in Croatia. (*Narodni list,* February 3, 1920).
4. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* p. 95.
5. Minutes of the NCS Tenth Convention, Calumet, 1909, p. 43.
6. *Radnička straža,* Chicago, December 30, 1910.
7. Ibid., September 30, 1910.
8. Ibid., February 24, 1911.
9. The NCS Statute and By-Laws, Pittsburgh, 1912, p. 60.
10. By-Laws and Regulations of the NCS, Pittsburgh, 1915, p. 62.
11. *Radnička straža,* September 17, 1913.
12. Ibid., September 5, 1913.
13. Ibid., August 20, 1913.
14. *Zajedničar,* September 26, 1913.
15. Ibid., September 10, 1913.
16. *Narodni list,* August 17, 1913.
17. *Zajedničar,* August 30, 1916.
18. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* Pittsburgh, p. 99.
19. *Zajedničar,* January 8, 1914.
20. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* p. 98.
21. Ibid., p. 96.
22. J. Strižić, *Uspomene iz rudarskog štrajka 1917. u Arizoni, Zajedničar,* No. 17, April 25, 1979.
23. *Hrvatska zastava,* Chicago, December 16, 1914.
24. *Hrvatski svijet,* New York, November 16, 1915.
25. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Pittsburgh, May 20, 1916.
26. *Jugoslavenski svijet,* April 17, 1920.

27. *Zajedničar,* January 14, 1914.
28. *Znanje,* Chicago, November 11, 1939.
29. *Radnička straža,* January 5, 1916.
30. Ibid., October 21, 1914.
    The *Narodni list* of New York replied sharply to the Croatian socialists because they had referred to the Croatian immigrant leaders as bourgeoisie. The author of the text made a remark saying that the socialists and their newspaper *Radnička straža* should have known that it was those immigrant leaders that had prompted the construction of the Croatian churches and schools and had established numerous Croatian cultural, educational and political associations. They had helped the old country economically and politically. The *Narodni list* commented that every honest person would have respected them. (*Narodni list,* February 6, 1907).
31. Concerning the Croatian Alliance see the following chapter.
32. *Radnička straža,* April 3, 1913.
33. Ibid., October 30, 1908.
34. Ibid., September 4, 1908.
35. Ibid., July 9, 1909.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. *Hrvatska zastava,* January 3, 1908.
39. About the Croatian socialists in America see also: Ivan Čizmić, *Hrvati u životu SAD,* a chapter on the Croats in the American workers' movement.
40. *Hrvatski svijet,* August 1 and October 30, 1917.
41. Concerning the post-war situation in the USA and the position in the workers' movement see also: Foster R. Dulles, *Labor in America,* A History, Northbrook, Illinois, 1966; G. Hunnius-G. Garson-J. Case, *Workers' Control, A Reader on Labor and Social Change,* New York, 1973; Edvin J. Perkins, *Men and Organization, The American Economy in Twentieth Century,* 1977; Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, *The Age of Enterprise, A Social History of Industrial America,* 1961; Gerald Rosenblum, *Immigrant Workers, Their Impact on American Labor Radicalism,* New York, 1973.
42. *Zajedničar,* June 7, 1972.
43. *Vlasti posreduju u velikom štrajku željezničara, Jugoslavenski svijet,* New York, April 17, 1920.
44. Stjepan Lojen, *Uspomene jednog iseljenika,* Zagreb 1963, p. 101.
45. Concerning the participation of the Croatian workers in the coal-miners' strike see also: Mato Vrkljan, *Naše članstvo prema štrajkovima i unijama, Zajednički kalendar,* Pittsburgh, 1923.
46. *Znanje,* January 7 and November 11, 1939.
47. *Radnik,* Chicago, January 26, 1924.
48. Stjepan Lojen, *Potporne organizacije i radnički pokret, Crveni kalendar,* Chicago, 1925, p. 68.
    The *Zajedničar* opposed the writings of the *Radnik* suggesting its own viewpoint on the role of the benefit societies, "It is right to say that the organizations like our NCS will not be instrumental for the workers' freedom. By its nature they could not be such even if they wanted to; if the NCS was an organization of the Croatian workers at the economic and political levels in this country, both its manpower and material power would only be a small part of what it is today. In our organization all the members have a common interest at present and therefore the people of different political, economic and social views rally around and that is why the Society was able to gather together such a significant number of our immigrants. The same can be applied to all other similar organizations of Yugoslav workers this country. Political organizations, on the contrary, were not able to achieve such a promotion, numerous and material, only because the people who gathered there were of the same political opinion." (*Zajedničar,* December 28, 1923).

49. *Novi svijet,* Chicago, September 1, 1923.
50. Ibid., August 8, 1924.
51. Ibid., November 11, 1938.

Chapter Six

THE NATIONAL CROATIAN SOCIETY IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF CROATIA AND AMERICA

Although a small immigrant community, the Croatian immigrants were permanently present in both the political life of their old country and of their new homeland. Their political leaders were politically active in Austria-Hungary even before their emigration to the USA. Some eminent persons will be mentioned in the following text. Zdravko Mužina and Nikola Polić were active members of the Croatian Party of

The Croatian Sabor, Radić Square, Zagreb

the Right, and Niko Grškovič, embittered by the global political situation in Croatia emigrated in 1901.[1] Another noted immigrant, Davorin Krmpotić, was forced to leave his native country because of his conflicts with the authorities due to his activity in the Party of the Right.[2] After the parliamentary movement of 1903, Hinko Sirovatka came to the USA to be politically active among American Croats. In Croatia, he participated in the Social-Christian Movement.[3] Dr. Matija Pavelić, a lawyer and journalist, was a deputy of the Croatian *Sabor* prior to his arrival in the USA.[4] Persecuted by the Khuen-Hedervary regime at the beginning of the century, the priest Dr. Mato Matina, the secretary of Bishop Mihalović in Zagreb, also emigrated to the USA. Apart from his clerical work, he was also a noted journalist.[5] Due to their disagreement with the Khuen-Hedervary regime Father Oskar Šuster and journalist Franjo Akačić also emigrated to the States.[6] Journalist Ivan Krešić was also active in the Party of the Right before his arrival to the USA in 1906.[7]

Political immigrants from Austria-Hungary were joined by a number of mostly young immigrants (*salooners, šifkartaši* and others) whose interest in politics was aroused after their arrival in the USA. Among the immigrants a special group of people emerged who, by the end of the 19th century, determined the political goals of the Croats in America, offering their political program to Croatian immigration. Although mostly members of the Party of the Right, their activity in immigration was not party-oriented. The same holds true for the immigrants active in other political parties in Croatia prior to their arrival to America. The *Hrvatski glasnik* (The Croatian Herald) wrote, "While in America, we must be only Croats, neither *pravaši* (members of the Party of the Right) nor coalitionists. Party squabbles from the old country must have no echo here. Here, we must all be one party, the Croatian party. Moreover, we must take no notice of what our politicians in Croatia do today. We have to be acquainted with what they do but it must not have any effect on us because our main cause is and must be the idea of a free and independent Croatia. We must teach our people that we are a nation and as such are entitled to our own state governed exclusively by us."[8] The Croatians in America thought at that time that a confused multiparty system in Croatia was the main cause for the weakness and failure of Croatian policy. The immigrants were using the term "old country policy" *(starokrajska politika)* already at the beginning of the century. At the convention of the National Croatian Society in Wheeling in 1900, delegate P. Pavlinac motioned that the opposition in Croatia should be financially assisted. Delagate J. Leskovac replied, "that he was not against it as it was a commendable suggestion but that to his knowledge there were several opposition parties at home and he was not in the position to meet the needs of all of them. The opposition parties at home should first work in unison for the common cause, Croatia's welfare, and only then could they rely on the financial aid from the Croats living here". After a lengthy discussion it was decided that "since the opposition parties at home do not work in unison, this motion cannot be carried for the time being but is postponed until the next convention."[9]

Croatian immigration was consistent in this attitude so at the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society held in Kansas

City in 1912, the opinion was expressed that "All political parties in Croatia are called to work in unison in their fight against the system sapping the national strength! Only if this condition were fulfilled, the American Croats would generously assist the opposition parties."[10] Franjo Akačić in his memoirs published in the *Zajedničar* wrote, "As for the old country policy (...) the Croatian papers were only Croatian, neither the Party of the Right oriented nor the Peasant Party oriented (with the exception of the only socialist paper of the time, the *Radnička straža.*)[11] Not having accepted the political program of any political party in Croatia, the immigrants had their own political idea which was in opposition to all the successive regimes in Croatia until World War One. Ante Radić, who carefully followed all the events and circumstances in Croatian immigration in America, wrote in the *Dom* (The Home) in 1903, "All of us can feel that our people at home are wronged; they are all oppositionists."[12]

American Croats had neither an official nor a completely developed program before World War One. However, they occasionally expressed their political opinions concerning the political situation in Croatia. In the Memorandum of the Pan-Slavist Congress held in St. Louis in 1904, expressing the aspirations of some Slav groups, they demanded, "Freedom and independence for the state of the Croats, union of those territories that belong to Croatia according to historical and national rights, and in the present circumstances, constitutional rights, in particular the institution of the jury for political and press offenses."[13]

American Croats took every occasion to express their dissatisfaction with the political situation in Croatia. At their conventions and other meetings, the Croatian benefit organizations unequivocally expressed their demand for the full freedom of the Croatian people in Austria-Hungary. Josip Marohnić in his address to the Tenth Convention held in Calumet said, "Today, when there is a life-and-death struggle in Croatia, when the Hungarians openly aim at turning Croatia into their province to be populated with their own people who are already arrogantly spreading all over the Croatian territory; today when Hungarian schools are hastily being opened in Croatia and when, assisted by some good-for-nothing individuals at home, the Hungarians try to destroy or completely weaken a handful of steely, unselfish, and faithful sons devoted to their native country; today this assistance is imperative. At this moment of decision the Tenth Convention of the National Croatian Society will know how to perform its duty and in the name of its members, in the name of American Croats, it will cry out to the Hungarians and Germans: Hands off! Croatia to the Croatians!"[14]

Although no systematic contacts were established between the immigration and the opposition parties in Croatia, the immigrants tried to collaborate with some important persons in Croatia. Unfortunately, these contacts have not been examined to date, but according to the available data, they seem to have been frequent.

They date back to the end of the 19th century when, as was already mentioned, Zdravko Mužina required Bishop Strossmayer to send a Croatian priest to the immigrants in America. From Strossmay-

er's reply it was evident that it was not only a religious but also a political collaboration.

Early in 1903, the immigrants collected some funds and sent this financial aid to Stjepan Radić. S. Brozović, the editor of the New York *Narodni list*, wrote a letter to Radić pointed out the following: "With this we achieved two things: first, our people will keep thinking of their homeland and its sons sacrificing themselves for it (...) and secondly, we shall manage to ease your pain and the injustice inflicted on you by these dogs."[15] Radić expressed his thanks through the editorial board of the *Narodni list* adding, "Croatian brothers in America, your gift was a great pleasure. (...) Indeed, your gift is no charity out of compassion, nor is it a reward out of enthusiasm, but a brotherly help out of a strong belief that the struggle for Croatia should be continued even more resolutely, more persistently."[16]

Between the end of the 19th century and World War One considerable attention was paid to the immigration issue in Croatia. It concentrated primarily on the emigration process as an exceptionally harmful phenomenon. The general public was seeking solutions and giving suggestions how to prevent the departure of the Croats from their homeland. The life of Croatian emigrants in their immigration countries was of lesser concern. Only after the parliament movement of 1903 and the response of Croatian immigration to these events did it become clear that the immigrants had become a political factor to be reckoned with in the future. Ante Radić wrote in the *Dom* newspaper, "I have been reading recently in the Croatian press in America that our people there are ardent supporters of their homeland, that they hold meetings and collect money. My question is, however, are these not only words? If these people really feel for their brothers and their home then it might be a great power, it might be the salvation of our Croatian homeland and its people."[17]

In 1906, writer and politician A. Tresić-Pavičić spent six months with American Croats. He visited almost all the immigration communities. On his return home in 1907, he published the book *Preko Atlantika do Pacifika - život Hrvata u Sjevernoj Americi* (Across the Atlantic to the Pacific - The Life of Croats in North America), an excellent account of the social, economic and political circumstances under which American Croats lived at the time. The book played an exceedingly important part in acquainting the Croatian reading public with the life of immigrants. Stjepan Radić was going to visit the Croatian immigrants in the USA in 1910 and have political lectures there. Davorin Krmpotić was ready to help and collaborate with him.[18] Radić did not go to the USA after all, but in spite of this, his influence on Croatian immigration before the war was very strong. Ivan Lupis, a deputy to the Dalmatian Parliament *(Sabor),* deserves high credit for introducing the life of Croatian immigrants as well as global immigration issues to the Croatian public. A correspondent of the immigration papers, Lupis informed the immigrants of the events in Croatia. He himself was an immigrant in the USA between 1891 and 1898, and from 1921 until 1928.

The Austro-Hungarian authorities were interested in the political events in immigration. They tried to influence the immigration leaders so as to stop their anti-Austrian activity. They seemed to have had some

success. The *Narodni list* and the *Hrvatski rodoljub* (The Croatian Patriot), namely, unlike other papers during the Second Balkans War, started to attack Serbia because of its imperialistic policy. Some priests too, headed by Davorin Krmpotić, were in favor of the idea that Austria-Hungary should be organized on the trialist principles, meaning that Croatia along with Austria and Hungary should have the status of an individual political unit.[19]

Although the Croatian immigrants as an individual national community undertook some successful political actions, it has to be emphasized that their chances would have been better within a broader Slav political action. This is best illustrated by the 1910 Census and the Hungarian Count Apponyi scandal.

According to the regulations of the 1910 Census in the USA, immigrants of Slav origin had to be listed either as the Austrians or Hungarians. As a symbol of indignation, a protest meeting of the Slavs was held on March 7 in Pittsburgh at Morehead Hall which was attended by the representatives of 14 Slav organizations and 13 Slav newspapers. The Croats were represented by Josip Marohnić with the newspaper editors of the *Zajedničar*, the *Hrvatski glasnik*, and the *Hrvatski svijet* (The Croatian World) also in attendance. At the Pittsburgh conference, a delegation was elected which was to go to Washington and ask the President of the USA to correct the injustice done to the Slavs. The Croats were represented by Josip Marohnić. The *Hrvatski glasnik* wrote the following concerning the work of the delegation, "After the delegation had talked to President Taft, to the statesmen, senators and congressmen, an urgent proposal for an amendment of the Census Act was made. It was put forward to the Senate by Senator Oliver of Pittsburgh and the same was done in Congress by Congressman Sabbat of Chicago. According to Senator Oliver's information, the urgent proposal was unanimously adopted by the Senate, nobody voted against it except Senator Lodge who did not grasp at first the essence of the appeal. Later, however, when he understood what it was about, he also voted for it."[20] The *Hrvatski glasnik* reminded its readers that the census roll was due in April that year and that to the question concerning nationality, each Croat's obligation was to answer "neither 'Austrian' nor 'Hungarian', but Croatian."[21] Afterwards, all the Croatian papers published once a week a proclamation with the following title, "Don't conceal your nationality; in the census lists only your own national, Croatian names should be entered." The proclamation was concluded with the following words, "Answer all the questions because they are obligatory. But first and foremost do not forget the above instruction when answering the question concerning nationality. Whoever you may get in touch with should be told to enter their national names in the census lists."[22]

In numerous joint appearances of Slav immigrants in the USA, against a difficult political situation of the Slavs in Austria-Hungary, a protest against the arrival of the Hungarian Count Albert Apponyi to America in 1911 was of great significance. He was known to American Slavs as a supporter of the laws and decrees of the Hungarian Parliament according to which the schools of the non-Hungarian population were closed. He was also known for thwarting the work of the Slovak

Central Cultural and Publishing Society *(Slovačka Matica)* and for bearing the chief responsibility for the massacre of Slovak peasants in Černova.[23]

Count Apponyi announced his visit to America as an advocate of peace. The real object of his visit, however, was propaganda. Through his lectures in bigger American towns, he wanted to convince the American politicians and the American public of an allegedly high level of democracy in Hungary. He arrived in America as a friend of former president Theodore Roosevelt and American millionaire Carnegie. It was through their assistance that Apponyi was allowed to deliver a speech to the American Congress and Senate. This was the greatest but also his single achievement of his mission. His attempt to hold lectures in American towns was vigorously opposed by the Slav immigration in the USA. Their general protest was largely suppported by Croatian immigrants. At the Cleveland conference of the Slav immigrants organized by the *Slovak League*, Niko Gršković spoke on behalf of the Croats saying, "When the voice of the oppressed, deceived, exploited and the expelled is heard, it has to be joined by the voice of the Croats."

Another conference was organized in Kansas City by Croatian priest Davorin Krmpotić. For this occasion he wrote a text in English addressed to the American public. He reproached the American authorities for having received Apponyi with benevolence though, even in his own country, he was no representative of either peace or freedom. Informing the American public about Hungarian history and its assimilation policy towards the Slav population, he described Apponyi as a member of the Hungarian government supporting the laws and decrees according to which the schools of non-Hungarian population were closed. In the part of the text regarding Croatia, Krmpotić explained among other things the pragmatical railroad issues as part of the Hungarian policy in Croatia.

Some American politicians tried to convince Apponyi of the necessity to change the Hungarian policy towards the Slav population. Theodore Roosevelt himself reminded Apponyi that the States were against tribal conflits and that in the USA every person was guaranteed their language and religious rights. Emphasizing that in the conflicts between the state and national rights it was the latter that had to be supported, Roosevelt said, "No nation should or could live thinking only of its own rights." Nevertheless, the USA continued to give support to Austria-Hungary which was mainly due to Apponyi's influence on some American politicians. It was as late as 1917 that Roosevelt expressed his support of the creation of independent Slav states.

The Apponyi scandal aroused great public interest in Austria-Hungary. The entire press reported on Apponyi's misadventures, and the opposition newspapers did not hide their contentment. For example, the *Narodni list* of Zadar wrote, "The Hungarian idea has never received a stronger blow in foreign countries than this time and it is the first time that an open conflict between the Slavic and the Hungarian idea gained international significance outside Europe and on neutral territory."[24]

The problems the American Croats had to face on the occasion of the census and Apponyi's visit clearly reminded them of the necessity of

United Croatian tamburitza orchestras Sloga, Bratstvo, Loher, took part in a large tamburitza concert in Chicago, December 11, 1915. The proceeds of the concert were used for the freedom of the Croats in the homeland.

establishing a strong political organization. On such occasions it would have the authority to represent Croatian interests both in America and at home where a deep political crisis reigned again. As was already mentioned, a need for such a political organization was felt in the early days of the 20th century, but it was not feasible then. A. Tresić-Pavičić, during his stay in the USA, reminded the Croats, "The main thing you lack is a political organization. Without it you are not a nation here but a consciousless mass (...) an easy prey to political and economic exploitation. Without such an organization you are of no use to your homeland or to yourself because you will never have anybody to protect you or find you a more lucrative work. (...) Travelling across America I understood that a great deal of your misfortune was caused by the fact that you had no organization of your own, no leaders., (...) You are scattered over many states, mines, forests, factories, towns and villages, without unity among you (...) It will, therefore, be difficult for you to survive as a nationality, to avoid being scattered and lost as a handful of sand thrown into the sea of Americanism."[25] However, the most urgent and immediate reasons for the establishment of the Croatian Society were the abolition of the constitution, the dissmisal of the *Sabor,* and the introduction of the Royal Commissioner's Rule in Croatia. The reaction of the Croats was very sharp. At the Eleventh Convention held in Kansas City, President Pavao Hajdić informed the delegates about the events in Croatia and expressed a deep concern. Afterwards, the Supreme Board decided

Croatian League, political organization of American Croats, Ban Jelačić Branch 3

to send $3,000 dollars to the opposition parties in Croatia thus showing that the spark of patriotism was not extinct and encouraging the opposition politicians to persist in their struggle for Croatian national rights. The Kansas City Convention, on behalf of its 30,000 members, carried a resolution emphasizing that the Society protested against the unconstitutional situation in Croatia for which both the governments in Vienna and Budapest were to blame as well as some native oportunistic politicians. The Convention considered the endeavors of Hungary and Austria to exploit Croatia to be the root of all evil. Later on, an equal, universal and secret right to vote was required by the resolution so that the Croatian people could decide for themselves about their own fate. Also, the Croats and Serbs were advised to be in agreement because harmony was necessary in the work of all patriots "fighting to liberate Croatia from tyranny and violence. They are required to be resolute in their struggle until all the rights the Croatians are entitled to are gained. As a people they can and should develop and decide independently."[26] The Croatian League of Illinois, at its Fourth Convention in Chicago in 1912, also expressed its solidarity with the Croatian struggle for freedom. They sent a resolution to Father Juraj Biankini, a Dalmatian deputy to the Imperial Council in Vienna, and also to the Croatian-Serbian Coalition in Zagreb saying, "Therefore, we, the delegates of the Croatian League of Illinois, require and beg of you to persist in this perilous struggle, never to give in but, with the joint efforts of all the opposition parties, to contribute to the liberation of Croatia from the foreign rule."[27]

The Croatian political parties - the Croatian-Serbian Coalition, the Croatian Party of the Rights, and the Social-Democratic Party - turned to the American Croats for political and financial support in April 1912. They wrote, "We, therefore, appeal to you, overseas brothers, to come to our aid in this fateful moment, as you did in 1903, to prove that national unity cannot be disrupted by either frontiers or oceans. You, who will stay in free America, please help your dejected brothers to become free; you who are coming back home, help now so that you can return to a strong, free and happy homeland!"[28]

The greatest political organization of American Croats, the Croatian League, was founded in Kansas City on September 15, 1912, a day after the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society. That time was chosen because at that moment all the delegates of the Society were present representing a large part of Croatian communities in America. The inaugural meeting was opened by Niko Gršković. In attendance were 500 representatives of American Croats from all parts of the USA.

The by-laws of the Croatian League adopted at the meeting determined its objectives very clearly. According to them, the aim of the Croatian League was to assist all national Croatian undertakings in both Croatia and America. Article 2 stated that the aim of the Croatian League was "spiritual, moral, political and social education of the Croatian people so that it should not resign in its struggle for self-preservation, but would be equal to other developed nations."

The majority of large Croatian organizations in the USA, such as the National Croatian Society, the Croatian League of Illinois, and the Croatian Unity of the Pacific were, for the most part, benefit organizations. Prior to the foundation of the Croatian League, they were attending to a number of national and political affairs. But engaged in their primary mission they could not perform this additional task adequately. A special political organization was, therefore, indispensable to the fulfilment of the afore-mentioned aims. Nevertheless, we can rightfully mantain today that the League would have never been established without the support of the Croatian relief organizations, especially the National Croatian Society. The *Zajedničar* newspaper was, therefore, right in maintaining that the Croatian League was a child of the NCS. All its initiators and founders were members of the Society. The League started its work under the auspices of the convention of the NCS. "Just as in the past the call of the Society struck a responsive chord in every Croatian heart, so the Croatian League meets with response today."[29]

The establishment of the Croatian League found a strong echo among American Croatians. Its branches were founded in almost every Croatian community. American Croats were well aware that the news about its foundation would also be heard at home. It was clear that an organization with such a large scope would become an important factor on the Croatian political scene. The work of the League had, therefore, to be aimed at encouraging hundreds of thousands of Croatian immigrants to become a strong support to the Croatian people in its struggle for freedom. This was the reason why the establishment of the League was enthusiastically welcomed by the press and some political parties at home. Immediately upon its establishment in 1912, it became directly

involved in the political life in Croatia. In the same year, student Luka Jukić made an attempt on the life of the Croatian Ban Slavko Cuvaj. It met with the approval of American Croats who immediately began to protest against Hungarian violence in Croatia. Money was collected and sent to Croatia. Jukić's attempt was used to instigate a fighting spirit among the immigrants. The newspaper *Hrvatski svijet,* the League's official publication, invited the immigrants to collect funds for Jukić's mother; she received $1,200, a substantial amount in those days. Financial aid was also sent to poet Tin Ujević who had been arrested in Split at that time. During the same time, Stjepan Radić and Luka Jukić were arrested in Zagreb. Their articles written in detention were sent to New York through Radić's wife and were to be published in the *Hrvatski svijet.*

A year after Jukić's unsuccessful assassination attempt on Cuvaj, in August 1913, Stjepan Dojčić made an attempt on the life of the Royal Commissioner in Croatia, Ivan Skerlecz. Dojčić arrived from the American town of Kenosha, where he was a member of Lodge 276 of the National Croatian Society. The attempt was prepared in America in agreement with Ivan Krešić, the secretary of the Croatian League, and Franjo Akačić, the editor of the *Jadran* newspaper of San Francisco. These two instructed Dojčić to contact Stjepan Radić, Lupis Vukić, Fran Supilo and some others who were supposed to assist him in Skerlecz's assassination.[30]

Dojčić's assasination attempt found a strong echo among the Croatian immigrants in America. His act was only a reflection of their feelings. At his trial in Zagreb, he declared that the public opinion of American Croats was hostile towards the Monarchy and that the immigrants regretted that Jukić's attempt had not been successful.

The Croatian immigration press gave great publicity to Jukić's and Dojčić's assassination attempts. The *Hrvatski svijet* wrote, "Let them persecute us, let them open their prisons, but their number is not sufficient to receive all those thinking like Luka or Stjepan because our message is that all American Croats are conspirators and criminals like Jukić and Dojčić."[31]

The newspaper *Zajedničar* also informed its readers about Dojčić's attempt asking the Croatian League to start collecting money necessary for Dojčić's defense and his mother's support. The League really provided the funds for his defense. The president of the League, Niko

Delegates to the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific, Sacramento, California, 1916

Gršković, asked journalist Lupis Vukić in Croatia to find a lawyer for Dojčić pointing out that all the costs would be covered by the League. Lupis engaged Dr. Stjepan Špánić as Dojčić's defender.

At the Pittsburgh conference of the Croatian League held on October 20, 1913, a resolution was adopted condemning the Zagreb Court for Dojčić's irregular sentence to a sixteen-year imprisonment.

It has to be emphasized that the political activity of the American Croats, after Dojčić's assassination attempt, were being very strongly felt in the political life of Croatia. Appropriate steps were considered by the authorities. Ban Skerlecz asked the Hungarian government for special funds to bribe the immigration press and undermine the political movement of the American Croats. Besides, the patriotic immigration press was prohibited in Croatia. This was experienced by the newspaper *Zajedničar* in May 1913. The commentary of the paper was, "We have already had reliable information that the Austro-Hungarian consuls here keep a vigilant eye on all the Croatian newspapers, that the articles on Austria are translated and sent home. (...) The Austrian government is afraid lest the truth should penetrate into the darkness in which our oppressed brothers are forced to live."[32]

Assassination attempts as instruments of the political struggle were strongly condemned by Stjepan Radić. Turning to the Croatian public, especially to the immigrants, he wrote, "The main thing for us, the Croats, is to know and decide whether our future struggle is to be open and legal, or is it to be secret, carried out from an ambush, by means of assassination and revolution. This question has been asked primarily by the Croatian press in America, or, to be more precise, by our people in America. This issue has been hastily resolved, especially by our journalists in the States suggesting that we, the Croats, should in the future give up this ostensibly childish legal way and decide to take the only, supposedly, manful course, that of assassination and revolution."[33] Of course, Radić's opinion was different from that of the League only on the point of the methods but not the aims.

It must be mentioned that the Croatian League, with its National Board as its governing organ and its president, Niko Gršković, acted as the largest political organization of Croatian immigration with more than ten thousand active members and substantial assets. During World War One, the League was leading the political action of Croatian immigration in favor of the creation of the Yugoslav state.

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The assassination of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Sarajevo was the immediate cause of World War One. It drew the attention of the American public to the Balkan situation. This facilitated the endeavors of the Croatian immigration to inform the American public of the Croatian issue. It was then that the Croats, together with the Slovene and Serbian immigrants, started a joint action within the Yugoslav Movement for the overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of the state of South Slavs.[34]

The news about the assassination of Francis Ferdinand filled the columns of the immigration press which offered different comments. The *Zajedničar* wrote, "The events in Sarajevo have brought about a new situation at home will arouse a lot of discussion among our compatriots. As our immigrants are of different political orientation, different opinions will certainly be heard. Since our people tend to discuss any important event with drinks in saloons, or elsewhere, we wish to remind our brothers, members of the Society and all of our compatriots of one thing (...) The American Croats and Serbs should not allow the events in Sarajevo to lead to similar animosity between them."[35]

The pro-Austrian oriented immigrants also started issuing their public declarations. F. Dujić, the Croatian parish priest in Allegheny, published the following circular letter, "The only person the Slav and especially the Croatian people set their hopes on, the one the Croatian people expected to resurrect their homeland and bring life and freedom, was killed."[36]

Among the first actions of the Austro-Hungarian diplomats in the USA was their call to the immigrants to return home and report for military service. The Austro-Hungarian ambassador, Konstantin Dumba, instructed all the consulates on July 24, 1914, to remind Austro-Hungarian citizens of their obligation to report to the consulates within twenty-four hours and be ready to join the Austro-Hungarian army.[37]

Delegates to the Fifth Convention of the Croatian League of Illinois, Chicago, 1915

There immediately followed demands to the editors of the Croatian immigration publications to publish orders for immigrants to report for military service. The Chicago consul, Hugo Silvestri, sent to all of the Croatian, Serbian and Slovene newspapers in Chicago a *Proclamation* demanding that "all persons younger than 37 years of age (...) should report to the Consul General and be ready to leave for Austria-Hungary." Those unable to cover the travelling expenses were promised the necessary funds and deserters were offered exemption from the respective punishment if they went "to defend their homeland."[38]

The common features of all the Austro-Hungarian calls or proclamations were promises, rewards, reimbursement of travel expenses, but also threats of confiscation of property and persecution of family at home. The consulates also applied other methods. They spread rumors that, engaged by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, US sheriffs would bring by force the draft registrants to New York from where they would be sent home for the military service.[39]

The Austro-Hungarian action was successful at first. The *Zajedničar* reported, "In Battery Park in New York, a crowd of people was gathered in front of the Austro-Hungarian consulate last Thursday, mostly Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Slovaks. Indeed, there were some Croats, too.They all wanted to go home to fight for the dynasty."[40] Boards were established in some immigration communities for gathering volunteers. Eleanor E. Ledbetter wrote in her book on the Yugoslavs in Cleveland that Austro-Hungarian agents developed a very strong propaganda there asking the immigrants to join the Austro-Hungarian army. They also threatened them with Austrian legislation and different criminal proceedings against their families and property at home.[41]

The above-mentioned activity of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in the USA brought about anxiety and reaction of the Slav political immigration known for its anti-Austrian activity in the USA for many years. They considered it necessary to counteract it with joint efforts but also within national political and humanitarian organizations and the press. As early as July 27, 1914, the representatives of the Slav press met to discuss their joint activity.[42] A resolution was passed expressing among other things, "We invite all our Slav brothers from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to defy the Austro-Hungarian consuls and to refuse to go and help our century-old tyrants."[43]

The South Slav newspapers, such as the *Zajedničar, Hrvatski svijet, Srbobran* and others reminded their immigrant readers repeatedly that they should turn a deaf ear to the calls of the Austrian agents. Historical facts were pointed out concerning the Croatian credits owed to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy which rewarded the Croats by dividing their country and oppressing them. The *Hrvatski svijet* wrote, "Don't respond, dear brothers, even to the most smooth-spoken calls from the Austro-Hungarian consuls, or to the prompting of their agents who, pretending to be Croats, try to frighten you. We have to show that, at least here, in freedom, we are not servants always ready to defend those who have longed for our national death."[44]

The *Zajedničar* editorial written by Josip Marohnić, president of the National Croatian Society, had a very strong effect on the immigration

public. Pointing out that a large number of persons under military obligation emigrated to America because in Austria life was hard to endure, Marohnić reminded his readers that the Austro-Hungarian consuls in both the Roman and Cyrillic script invited the "sweet and dear Croats" to leave free America and fight against their Slav brothers with Austrian weapons. Marohnić stressed that the Croats in America were well aware that a German would work for Germany , a Hungarian for Hungary and united they would act against the Slavs. Therefore, at this fateful moment, the membership of the National Croatian Society, conscious Croats and Slavs in America, firmly supported their Slav brothers, "in their souls and hearts wishing for victory of the Slav weapons."[45]

The Croatian socialists in the USA, in principle against the war, were naturally against immigrants joining the Austro-Hungarian military. The Executive Committee of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance of America issued a proclamation advising them not to go to the old country as soldiers, thus becoming victims of the capitalist interests.[46]

The aforementioned activity of the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic and consular representatives violated the neutrality of the USA. The first to react was the American press. The *Pittsburgh Telegraph* emphasized, "Not only can anybody force the Austro-Hungarian citizens to go to war but each immigrant worker in any state can rest assured that he could never be forced to go back to his homeland to wage war only to please some crazy statesmen. (...) For as long as he is an immigrant here he is a free man obliged only to abide by the laws of this country."[47]

During the same time, American authorities were considering whether the Austrian officials could carry out their activities without violating the principle of American neutrality. It was emphasized that military recruiting was against the law. An unprecedented affair in American history was mentioned when, during the Crimean War, the Secretary of State expelled British ambassador Champton from the USA because he recruited soldiers for the British military. It was decided eventually that the immigrants should decide for themselves whether to leave the USA or not. Congressman Harrison was against this decision. He submitted a bill to Congress in August 1914 according to which any foreigner having accepted a foreign invitation to wage war would be prohibited to enter the USA again. Finally, the Secretary of State, W.S. Brayen, made an official announcement which stated that nobody had any right or power to force the persons whose states were at war to go back home and join their respective armies.

This attitude by the American establishment, the action of the Slav political immigration, as well as the fact, very successfully used by the press, that travel to Europe was under the control of the British and French navies, had the following effect: hundreds of thousands of persons under Austro-Hungarian military obligation remained in the USA during World War One.

Since the very beginning of the century, the life and work of Croatian immigrants had been, thanks to the Austro-Hungarian consulates, under its control. It grew in intensity especially after Jukić's and Dojčić's assassination attempts. When the war broke out the authorities in Zagreb were immediately informed of all the immigration activities. Ban Ivan

Skerlecz wrote a letter to Count Tisza on December 9, 1914, informing him about the situation among the immigrants in the USA. He mentioned that he had had knowledge about it for a long time and, being deeply concerned about the political activity of immigrants, had tried to change it. He corroborated that statement by mentioning that the writing of the *Narodni list* was in favor of the Monarchy. Urged by the Austrian minister of foreign affairs as early as 1913, Skerlecz tried to persuade the immigration leaders in America to stop their anti-Austrian activity.[48]

In 1914, the Austro-Hungarian consuls had leaflets with the following content distributed among the immigrants or glued to their houses, "By the order of high authority, the Imperial and Royal Embassy of Austria-Hungary informs all the subjects of the Monarchy and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the following: should they be employed in the factories manufacturing ammunition or weapons for the enemy of our homeland, they are violating Article 327 of the Austro-Hungarian Military Law thus committing a crime against the defense power of the native country. This crime by the order of the above Law will be punished with ten to twenty-year imprisonment and in aggravating circumstances with capital punishment. All violators of the above Law on the occasion of their return home will suffer all the consequences ensuing from the same Law."[49]

Influenced by the fact that a large number of Austro-Hungarian immigrants were employed in factories producing weapons, early in 1915, the Austrian ambassador Konstantin Dumba, suggested to his government a withdrawal of Austro-Hungarian citizens from all the factories manufacturing ammunition, to be accompanied by the establishment of a special agency in America which would provide them with jobs elsewhere. To this purpose Dumba required permission and special funds from Vienna. In his proposal he wrote, "In large weapon and ammunition factories there are thousands and thousands of workers originating from Bohemia, Moravia, Slovenia, Galicia. Slavonia, Dalmatia and other Austro-Hungarian countries who, poorly educated, cannot see that they are indeed engaged in the war against their own country. In order to warn them accordingly, I gave financial support to a number of newspapers published in their mother tongues trying to make them aware of their essentially criminal work."[50]

Having offended the neutrality status of the USA by interfering with the home affairs of the country, Dumba came into conflict with the American authorities. The American ambassador in Vienna, Penfield, was ordered by his government to deliver a note to the Austrian government quoting Dumba's admission of his plan to instigate strikes in the American weapon factories. Consequently, as Dumba was no longer wanted in the USA, Ambassador Penfield, on behalf of President Wilson, requested his withdrawal.[51]

A quite interesting incident was an attempt to talk the immigrant workers into sabotage in the weapon factories which were exporting their products to the Allies. This action was initiated by Louis Hamerlin, an owner of several newspapers, who also possessed large estates in Austria-Hungary. On April 5, 1915, he, as the president of the American Asso-

ciation of Foreign Language Newspapers, published an *Appeal to the American people* signed by a number of foreign language journalists, pleading for a ban on the export of ammunition to Europe so as to, allegedly, bring an end to the war as soon as possible. The signatories of the *Appeal* appeared to be only supporting the principles against the war, Hamerlin's intent being a ban on the export of ammunition to the Allies. Not seeing through his real intentions, his *Appeal* was signed even by some Croatian journalists.

There was a growing awareness among American Croats of the need to overthrow the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and build a united state of the South Slavs. The *Zajedničar* newspaper wrote the following, "We are striving for all the South Slav countries and nations, especially the Croats, Serbs, Slovenes and perhaps the Bulgarians (when they get rid of their rulers of German origin) to be united. Each of the countries would be independent with its own government and together they would make a whole against a common external enemy. This union would be, in a way, the United States of the South Slavs. In such a Yugoslavia the Slovenes would have their own government, and so would the Croats and Serbs. Not one of these peoples would lose either its freedom, its national characteristics or religion and customs; each would remain independent in its national development. The idea of Yugoslavia implies by no means that any member of this union should submit to the other or that it should renounce any part of its territory. The Croats would not "turn into Serbs", nor would any part of Croatia "become Serbian" as some uninformed persons impute to those supporting the union of the South Slavs. Nobody wishes to sell the Croats to Serbia, nor would the Slovenes be forced to be something they are not. Each nation will be protected; each will be warranted its own free development."[52]

But there were different ideas too. On August 19, the *Zajedničar* published an article entitled *The Croatian Attitude.* It was important for two reasons: first, it had very strong repercussions among the immigrants and secondly, it provided a platform for a movement comprising a part of Croatian immigration that had been striving for an independent Croatian state throughout the war.

The article stated, "Could we expect that after that horrible war we shall be given our freedom? Could we believe some of our would-be journalists, who in their confused articles write that Europe is fighting for the freedom of the Croats and other Slav countries in Austria-Hungary? Should we believe that we would be free and our own masters under any non-Croatian rule? (...) And should we naively think that under some other, non-Croatian, for example, Slav rule, we would be better off, should this suffice? Would this be the fulfillment of the thousand year dream of every true Croat?"

The writer of the article furthermore rejected any possibility of Croatia receiving any privileges or independence under a rule outside Croatia. In that case it would turn into a province of another country, which the Croats should never allow. They did not need it either because they were able to attend to their own affairs. The Croats were mature enough and ready for their independence that rightfully belonged to them. They had every right "to govern themselves being not a

mediocre but a mature and complete people with its own culture. We would never be happy under any but our own rule. We want what rightfully belongs to us! We want justice! We unanimously and resolutely demand the United Kingdom of Croatia be ruled by the Croatian crown and sceptre (...) The Croats should strive for a union with other Slavs but preserving their honest Croatian name and nationality." The writer criticized the misconceived union of the Croats and Serbs and the idea of Yugoslavia, "There is no doubt that the Croats and Serbs are brothers, the sons of Mother Slavia, just like the Slovenes, Bulgarians and others; nevertheless, although twins, they are two brothers. Each has his own house (...) Shall we pull down these thousand-year-old firm buildings (...) to erect jointly a shack on sandy ground, too small for either of them?"[53]

On September 27, 1914, a conference was held in Pittsburgh of the Croatian immigrants living in that city and its vicinity. A resolution was adopted emphasizing their unanimous wish for the unity, freedom and independence of the Croatian countries in Austria-Hungary. They took it upon themselves to make every moral and financial effort to "prevent Croatia's fall from one oppression to another after this war, but become a united, free and independent country." The Croatians from Pittsburgh decided, therefore, to appeal to American Croats as well as to the Croatian press outside the homeland to contribute to the realization of the above aims.

The Croatian League, the largest political immigration organization, was in an extremely delicate situation during the war. Without any contact with or information from Croatia, amidst variable political relations between immigrants and the neutral USA, its leaders dared not undertake any resolute actions in spite of the immigrants' demands. Its first proclamation of August 6, 1914, intended to discourage the immigrants from joining the Austro-Hungarian army, was of a rather imperative character. Among other things it specified that,

1/ The office and the members of the Croatian League will first and foremost be concerned with the spiritual, moral, political and social education of the Croatian people so that they could be equal to other progressive and free peoples. The League will within its power and possibilities endeavor to protect the Croatian people from any attempts that might thwart or jeopardize its aims;

2/ In accordance with national principles, the League will be committed to the idea of unity of the Croats and Serbs and the freedom of their countries. However, the identity of the Croatian people should neither be sacrificed nor should the national Croatian name be denied or exterminated. This has to be emphasized so as to cut the ground from under those who distrust national unity;

3/ From the moment when the Croats became part of the Habsburg Monarchy four hundred years ago, on which occasion both sides took on certain obligations, the Habsburgs have been breaking their word given to the Croatian people. The Croats are, therefore, free from all their obligations to this dynasty. Because of this, the Croats, especially those living in freedom, should renounce their loyalty to Austria-Hungary."[54]

In its second proclamation late in 1914, the League was more specific in its statement that Croatia's freedom was the ultimate aim of the American Croats, implying that the Croatians themselves should determine their own national life, create their own laws and regulations adapting them to the needs of people. Small nations could neither achieve nor preserve their freedom without help of another nation. But the Croats could not expect it from Austria-Hungary. Such help, according to the Croatian League, should be sought elsewhere. Promises by the Russian government about their struggle for the freedom of all Slavs, declarations by the French and English governments that the war was waged against violence and for justice and freedom of oppressed peoples; these were the moral obligations of the Allies the Croats should rely on.

The demands made by the Croats at home had an influence on Croatia's situation after the war. Nevertheless, American Croats had an important task of articulating the real aspirations of the Croatian people who at that moment could not make independent decisions. These aspirations were for union with the neighboring Slavic peoples. "Only by proper education and through a natural development without the loss of national identity can national aspirations be realized, leading to a truly positive and strong national unity."

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims American Croats initiated the most appropriate activity in those days-conferences in all immigration communities. There they defined the attitudes to be adopted by all free Croats during this war; they also discussed the position of Croatian journalism. They expressed support to all those fighting for freedom of their own and other small nations, condemning Germany and Austria as enemies of the Slavs. This movement was organized and monitored from a center formed within the Croatian League.[55]

During the first months of the war, no specific attempts were made by the immigration organizations to acquaint either the Allies or the American politicians with the Croatian issue. Niko Gršković, president of the National Council of the Croatian League, motioned that a memorandum be sent to the American government and diplomatic representatives of the Allies. This was hindered, though, by Davorin Krmpotić, President of the Board of Trustees of the National Croatian Society and a very influential person among the Croats in Kansas City. He informed Gršković that he had already asked Senator W. Stone, a good acquaintance of his, to intercede with the Allies' embassies on behalf of Croatia. Having contacted the English ambassador, Stone addressed to Krmpotić the following letter, "In my discussion about war matters with the British Ambassador, the Balkan problems were touched on. I mentioned your dear people asking if it were possible to set their country free. He answered bluntly what the Croatian position was like at that point. Instead of taking one among thousand chances to budge and affect the resolution of the mid-European situation, their soldiers can be seen fighting against the Allies. If this is their patriotism, let them serve their enemy. Should Austria remain in its present or any other form, we have no rights to interfere with the home affairs of the Monarchy with Croatia as its constituent part. A peace treaty after the war will be concluded on general principles only, leaving the country and territorial borders to

be determined later by special commissions of the neighboring countries without Croatia's participation. Now we see that the Croats are content with their fate."[56]

Another action undertaken by the National Croatian Society met with approval of the British authorities in Canada. When the war broke out, Canada began, for security reasons, to separate the immigrants from Germany and Austria-Hungary, sending them to special camps where they were supposed to remain until the end of the war. The National Croatian Society had four lodges in Canada which informed the Supreme Board in Pittsburgh that 8,000 Croats and other Slav immigrants were interned in the Canadian camps. The Supreme Board at its meeting on January 15, 1915, decided to send the president, J. Marohnić, and an officer, K. Unković, to Canada to see what could be done for the interned Croats. Before their departure for Canada, M. Pupin and K. Unković visited the British ambassador in Washington explaining that the Croats and other Slavs were not enemies of Britain but wished to free themselves from the Austro-Hungarian rule. Pupin was a friend of the ambassador, and his and Unković's endeavors were crowned with success.

Upon their arrival in Ottawa on June 7, Marohnić and Unković visited General Otter, the Commander of all the internment camps in Canada. He allowed them to visit the camps and interrogate the internees so as to ascertain which of them could be released. Since the number of internees was very high, they were given forms to fill. Their answers provided a criterion for their release. Otter would send the forms to the Society Office in Pittsburgh which in turn would send its recommendations. The internees were then released from the camps. A large number of Croatian immigrants was set free in this way.

In the first months of the war emigrees from the South Slavic Austro-Hungarian countries gathered first in Paris and then in London to found the Yugoslav Committee. Its members were mainly Croats, opposition politicians in contact with Croatian immigration even before that. Some of them were people of high standing among the immigrants such as the president of the Yugoslav Committee, Ante Trumbić, Frano Supilo, Franko Potočnjak, and others.

Immediately upon its foundation, the Committee thought of establishing contacts with the immigrants. They considered gathering volunteers among the immigrants and the funds necessary for the work of the Committee. In February 1915, the Committee, having been financed by its friends and members until then, decided to turn to the immigrants with a proclamation inviting them to give financial support to the National Fund of the Committee. The proclamation was also concerned with the atrocities the Croatians had been faced with since the beginning of the war, expressing the Committee's deep belief that the end of the war would bring freedom to all the South Slavic peoples.

The Committee informed the Croatian immigrants that a number of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes left for St. Petersburg, London, Paris, Rome and some Swiss cities. There they were fighting for freedom of all South Slavs, establishing the Yugoslav Committee engaged in the work for the future of their mutual homeland. Concerned with everything

associated with that goal, aiding the detained persons and their families as well as the emigrees without resources, it was in need of assistance.

A connection with the American Croats was soon established through Franko Potočnjak, a defense attorney in Croatia of many American Croats. He arrived in Pittsburgh on January 26, meeting the president of the National Croatian Society, Marohnić, and some officers of the Board of Trustees who gathered there from all parts of the USA. He had separate talks with Marohnić informing him of some confidential issues. On this point Potočnjak said, "The president of the Croatian Society, leader of an army of people, has to be informed of some things his army will be engaged in but it is not called to reason about. I soon noticed that some officers looked rather enigmatic, their conduct being neither sincere nor straightforward and their remarks evasive. Conspicuous among them was a Dalmatian 'pettifogger and notary', and when I told Marohnić about my impression, he confirmed it adding that he was a notorious troublemaker on every occasion. However, I should not worry for should he try to undertake anything, he will be obstructed."[57]

Potočnjak met Gršković in Cleveland on January 27. He discussed all of the points the success of his mission depended on. He pointed out of what immense service Gršković's information and instructions were, adding that he was doubtlessly the strongest personality of our immigration in America with an excellent knowledge of people and circumstances in all regions, noticing every important detail. Potočnjak emphasized that Gršković was the president of the Croatian League, the owner and editor of the newspaper *Hrvatski svijet,* writing important editorials daily which reflected his thorough knowledge of the situation among American Croats.

On January 29, Potočnjak arrived in Chicago where he held several important meetings with participants enthusiastic about his mission. The organization of all necessary affairs in Chicago and its vicinity was taken over by Dr. Ante Biankini and Father Maksim Relić. In Kansas City he met his old friend and political collaborator from Croatia, Davorin Krmpotić, who promised his support. In the Croatian community of St. Louis Potočnjak's ideas also met with approval.

After his successful tour of important immigrant communities, having collected the necessary information and consulted distinguished immigrants, Potočnjak returned to New York where he met M. Pupin and a notable Slovene immigrant and banker, Frank Sakser, whom he also won over to his cause.

Following this, Potočnjak invited through the immigration press all the South Slavic immigrants to attend the Yugoslav Conference in Chicago. The invitation was backed by the National Croatian Society emphasizing its readiness to undertake anything in order to promote Croatian interests and expand the collaboration and fraternity of the Slavs. The Society, therefore, called all its lodges to send their representatives to the Conference in Chicago.

The first National Conference of South Slavic immigrants was held in Chicago on March 10 and 11, 1915. In attendance were 468 authorized delegates from different organizations and a number of communi-

ties in the USA and Canada. Aside from the delegates, the Conference was attended by some hundred prominent immigrants which totalled to 563 participants. The Croatians accounted for a half of all the participants, the others being Serbs and Slovenes. The Conference was opened by the president of the National Croatian Society, Marohnić, and Niko Grškovič was elected its chairman. It was the first united conference of South Slav immigrants proclaiming for the first time the program of national liberation from Austria-Hungary and of Croatia's union with Serbia and Montenegro into one state.

It is interesting to note that the attendants of the Conference thought that the future state would be created and exist on the same principles as the USA. Thus, D. Krmpotić emphasized the following, "It was in America that I learned that all people were equal, with equal rights to freedom and happiness. If the future Yugoslavia is to bring freedom, Croatia will feel free in it, and so will Serbia and Slovenia. Should it bring tsarism, it is undesirable."[58] Potočnjak, explaining the reasons for the break from Austria-Hungary, stated the same reasons as Thomas Jefferson on occasion of the break of the USA from England on July 4, 1776: "In the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them." It was the American federative structure that Krmpotić envisaged as the basis for the future Yugoslavia. This was clearly expressed in his statement made in 1927 for the *Hrvatski list* and *Danica hrvatska*, "My talks with Potočnjak focused on the federal structure of the Balkans, and what we had in mind was the legal and governmental structure of the USA."[59] The delegates at the Conference were themselves well aware of the influence the political structure of the USA exerted on them. Potočnjak himself stated, "Perhaps it is not only by mere chance that we are holding this National Conference, manifesting our national ideals in this country dedicated to freedom. This country has raised its banner of freedom to great heights and has kept it immaculate to this day enjoying all its blessed gifts, imparting of them also to others craving for freedom. God willing, this action of ours may be crowned with success, allowing our posterity to guard the freedom we are today laying the foundation-stone for."[60]

After the Chicago Conference, a great number of Croats accepted the idea of unification of the South Slavs in one state. Some were against this political program though. They enjoyed increasing support of the Austro-Hungarian consuls, who felt that something should be done to replace the pro-Yugoslav management of the National Croatian Society. A campaign was launched. Some members of the Society quoted the by-laws prohibiting any political activity within the organization. Their special attacks were directed against the *Zajedničar* newspaper pointing out that Article 9 of the by-laws specified that the obligation of the newspaper was to keep the national consciousness vigilant among the Croats in the USA, explaining at the same time the significance of the Slavic unification but only if it contributed to the welfare of Croatia.

By the end of 1914, the Supreme Board had already received protests from some lodges requiring that the *Zajedničar* should change its

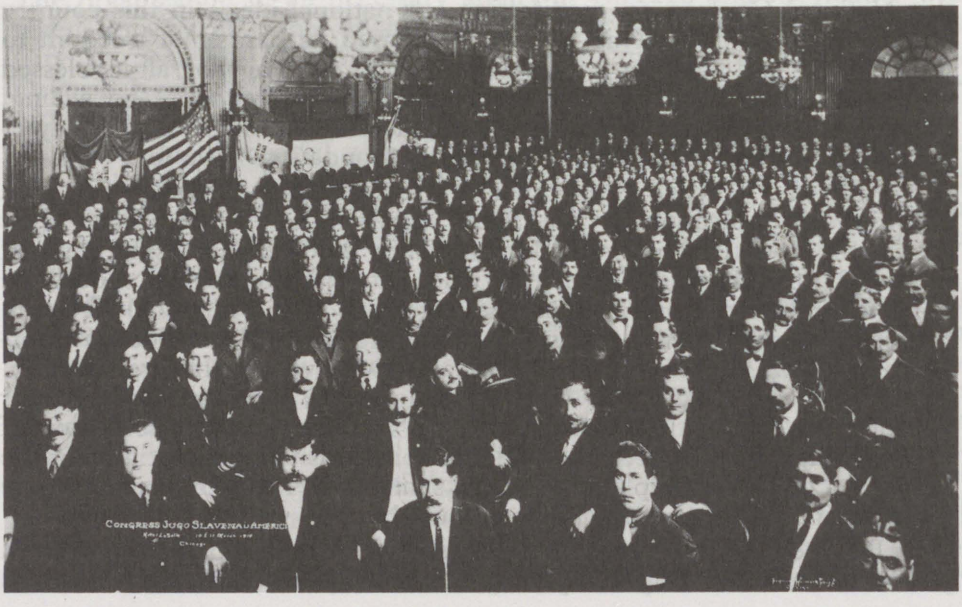
Yugoslav-oriented writing. The response of the pro-Yugoslav oriented lodges was sharp, threatening the unity of the Society. The *Zajedničar* stated that the ongoing crisis could endanger the Society's existence. It called upon the lodges to discontinue political discussions and concentrate on the current organizational issues. Especially severe criticism was leveled at the President of the Society, Marohnić, who was accused of allowing political disputes within the Society, and of letting the official organ be politically misused, as well as of having called the Society membership to attend the Chicago Conference. He was also censured for having, as a citizen of the neutral USA, joined the Yugoslav Committee, whose work not only interfered with American neutrality but was also aimed against the existence of the Kingdom of Croatia.

The attack on the National Croatian Society was led by the Austro-Hungarian consul in Pittsburgh who was directly involved in attempts to replace the Society's leadership. The New York newspaper *Novi Hrvat* in its issue of August 17, 1915, was the first to point out the impending danger. It published the following letter, "The Imperial and Royal Consulate, Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Ambassador in Washington:

In order to put an end once and for all to the propaganda hostile to our Monarchy organized by the National Croatian Society among American Croats, this Imperial and Royal Consulate set itself the task to prevent the reelection of the present management team of the Society. The New York *Narodni list* and a loyal local paper here, have led for some time now a severe struggle against Marohnić and his companions. The National Croatian Society is a respectable association of America

Delegates to the Congress of the South Slavs of America, Chicago, Illinois, March 10 and 11, 1915



and we consider it important to disrupt the present management and that a new, at least partly loyal, one to be elected. Thanks to the action of this consulate a dissatisfaction toward Marohnić can be noticed in many Croatian circles which should be further intensified through newspaper propaganda. This Consulate has already tried to win some delegates for our cause. As the Society has branches all across the States, it would be desirable if all the Imperial and Royal Consulates supported the action and helped spread this propaganda by all means and in every possible way. The reelection of the following delegates, Josip Marohnić, Franjo Božić, Kosta Unković, and Franjo A. Bogadek should be prevented at any rate. Intensified propaganda must be particularly directed against Marohnić and Unković.

Hauser, manu propria"[61]

This organized attempt by the Austro-Hungarian consulate to replace the Society's management team shortly before its convention was strongly opposed by almost all Croatian, Slovene and Serbian newspapers. Hauser's letter was considered by many writers to be an attack on the existence of the Society which was the largest Croatian organization not only in America but in the whole world. The *Hrvatski svijet* wrote, "Our National Croatian Society has arisen from the ranks of the Croatian people and is going to serve them. By its spirit and by-laws it is both Slav and Croatian. Any attempt to turn it into an office of Austro-Hungarian spies will be shattered against the Slav and Croatian consciousness."[62]

The delegates to the Twelfth Convention gathered in Cleveland on September 12, 1915, in dramatic and, for the Society's future, uncertain circumstances. Immediately preceding the Convention, the *Zajedničar* wrote that many hostile voices were heard and an even larger number of them was hushed up. Nevertheless, on the very first day of the Convention, all the fears were gone. In his address to the delegates, President Marohnić said, "Dear sisters and brothers, we should never allow anybody to interfere with our affairs, especially those that are neither our members' nor have anything in common with us Croatians or Slavs. We shall never let foreigners and their mercenaries interfere with our affairs, we shall never receive orders from those who brought unhappiness upon our people." Marohnić's speech met with enthusiastic approval and delegate Gršković made the move for the following resolution, "The delegates to the Twelfth Convention of the NCS held in Cleveland, Ohio, on September 12, 1915 and several days after, having heard the patriotic address of the Supreme President, brother Marohnić, stated and concluded the following, 'At these great and ominous moments when decisions are made concerning the fate and future of the Croatian people and our homeland, we consider it our sacred duty, as members of this Croatian and Slav organization, to declare our sympathy and solidarity with those of our brethren who are fighting for our freedom. We are united with out martyrs suffering in dungeons for the love of their homeland, with those sufferers who in exile work and sacrifice everything to bring our people into the circle of free nations. At the same time we share the indignation of this country, providing us with food

and shelter, that was brought about by the illegal, arrogant and criminal interference of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador Dumba and the press paid by him. Herewith we declare that we support the protests of the American citizens and a large part of their press and public opinion, condemning at the same time the shocking behavior of the Austro-Hungarian agents. We approve wholeheartedly the mature, free-spirited and beneficient attitudes and actions of the American government, especially President Wilson, a worthy representative of this great and free country, a dauntless defender of the progress of the country we are ready to sacrifice everything for.' "[63] The resolution was unanimously adopted and the Convention was brought to its successful conclusion with the reelection of Josip Marohnić as President of the NCS.

After the Chicago Conference of 1915, Davorin Krmpotić changed sides and joined the opposition to the Yugoslav movement. In October 1915, he published a booklet in English entitled, *Are Italy's Claims in Istria, Dalmatia and Islands Justified?* Although intended for the American reading public with the aim of disputing Italian claims on the Adriatic, it was anti-Yugoslav in spirit. After a short historical review of Croatia and Slavonia, Krmpotić referred to the ideas of a greater Serbia and a greater Croatia and to the situation of the Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary. Having given some statistical data on population with a special reference to the Adriatic coast, he turned to the defense of Croatian rights on the Adri-

Members of the Croatian League, Tresić Pavičić Branch, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1914

atic littoral. His conclusion was that the future Yugoslavia would be equal to Great Serbia claiming that the unity of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was impossible. According to him, the Croatians should never fall victims to the all-Serbian illusions, but should secure their position within Austria-Hungary recognized on the trialistic concept.

During 1916, it became clear that Krmpotić's ideas enjoyed support of some Croatian and Slovene priests. Early in February, *Naša izjava* (Our Declaration) was published together with an explanation *K našoj izjavi* (Commentary to our declaration) which was signed by 15 Croatian and Slovene priests.[64]

It was stated in the preamble that since the beginning of the war, Croatian priests had not taken sides with the Yugoslav propaganda. This propaganda was very intensive in America as it tried to prove that the Croats were ready to renounce their name and history to become Yugoslavs, that is Serbs, the subjects of the Karadjordjević dynasty. There were attempts made, especially by Gršković, to describe the Croatian priests as being united with the Yugoslav program. By others, it was described as being friendly with the Germans and Hungarians. These were the reasons that prompted the Croatian and Slovene priests in America to publish *Naša izjava,* pointing out the following, "Primarily as the Croats and the sons of our homeland Croatia and the brotherly Slovene countries, we herewith emphasize and declare our political attitude towards our country in these times of war with its inherent visible and hidden consequences."

According to the 1894 program of the Party of the Rights adopted also by the Slovenes at the Trsat conference, freedom and independence of Croatia should be built on the basis of national, state and historical rights.[65] The Croatians and Slovenes having religious, cultural and historical ties and sharing equal national feelings, make up a complete group of nations in the South of Europe, fulfilling all the conditions for independence. The Croatian state, from Mount Triglav to the Drina river, from the Danube to the Adriatic, which, from the moment of its creation, has existed as a state, should continue its existence in the future too.

According to the *Izjava*, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Italy, assisted also by England, had always attempted to reduce the freedom and rights of the Croatian people, who, therefore, could not expect to be granted freedom but should achieve it through its own endeavors. "Those doubting the ability of a nation to gain its own freedom disprove its existence. Nations that are given their freedom by others become their inferiors."

The *Izjava* stated that as far as the Slav and Yugoslav ideas were concerned the attitudes of Croatian politicians, Starčević and Kvaternik, should be taken into consideration, as well as the disappointing experience of Bishop Strossmayer, who was declined permission to visit Serbia by the Serbian government. "We do not want to turn either Serbian, Yugoslav or Serbo-Croatian, but are remaining Croatian, Slavic brethren,

in our own house, however, with our own rights which had been determining our historical evolution since our ancestors settled down in our present homeland."

Having severely condemned the Italian claims to the Adriatic, signatories of the *Izjava* accused the Chicago resolution for not having warranted the Croatian people independence in its development. It was pointed out in the conclusion that although Croatia had transferred its sovereign rights to the Habsburg dynasty, it would claim the right to its independent Croatian state after the war, with all the ensuing rights.

The signatories of *Naša izjava* were not only priests but also some distinguished public workers. Its impact on the Croatian immigration was very strong; it became a powerful instrument in the struggle against the Yugoslav Committee. Its supporters got to be called *izjavaši* and comprised a separate political group.

In spite of the intensive political engagement of the American Croats since the very beginning of the war, the American government did not pay attention to their aspirations until the very end of 1916. According to some American historians, this was the result of President Wilson's negative disposition toward the political demands of immigration communities. Also, the Yugoslav issue had not fit in the context of American policy until the second half of the war as American politicians were not sufficiently acquainted with the activity of the Yugoslav Committee. While the USA had thorough information on the official views of the Austro-Hungarian policy, little attention was paid to the aspirations of the constituent nations of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The American official circles knew nothing about the foundation of the Yugoslav Committee in London or about the Czechoslovak National Council.

During the electoral campaign of 1916, President Wilson was supported by the greater part of Croatian immigration. On June 18, Gršković wrote in the *Hrvatski svijet*, (...) "In future elections too he will get support and votes of all those wishing this country to continue enjoying all the benefits of peace, being at the same time a protector of national and international rights. When the time comes to discuss peace conditions after the war, we expect a free and strong voice to be heard from here in favor of the freedom of small and oppressed nations, in accordance with President Wilson's solemn promise and announcement."[66]

Most Croatian immigrants voted for Wilson. His victory was decided in California where several thousand Croatian immigrants gave him their votes. Should they have voted otherwise, Wilson's victory would not have been certain. This was why Croatian immigration won the Democrats' favor which helped those Croatian immigrants who wanted to influence American interest on the Croatian issue. The participants of the South Slav Conference in Pittsburgh sent a telegram to President Wilson on November 30, 1916, declaring their loyalty to his policy and the United States of America, pointing out the following, "We are pay-

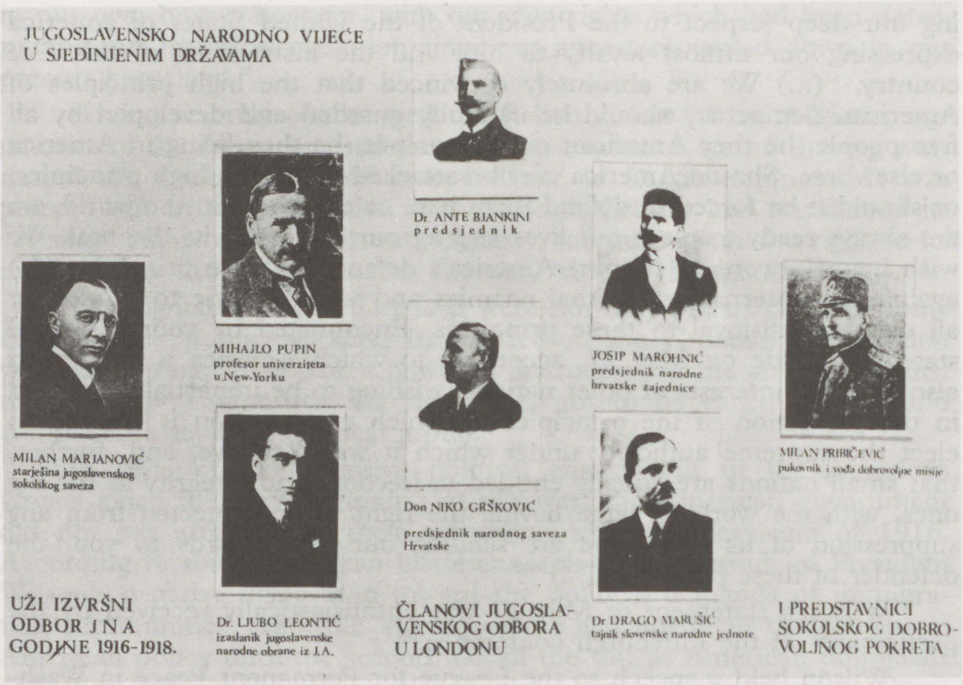
ing our deep respect to the President of the United States of America expressing our utmost loyalty to him and the institutions of this free country. "(...) We are absolutely convinced that the high principles of American democracy should be carefully guarded and developed by all free people, be they American citizens or not, be they living in America or elsewhere. Should America ever be attacked due to its high principles, or should it be forced to defend them here or elsewhere in the world, we are always ready to place our lives and all our powers at its disposal. We wish henceforward to support America's defense of these principles (...) against any internal or external enemies and will continue to stamp out all elements disloyal to these principles. Encouraged by your historical statement made on May 27, according to which America is concerned also with the interests of other nations, wishing to be impartially engaged in the protection of the principles by which every nation is entitled to elect the supreme authority under which it wants to live, and, further, that small nations are equally entitled to freedom and integrity as the big ones, with the world at large having the right to be protected from any suppression of its rights, we are sending our true regards to you, the defender of these principles (...)"[67]

Wilson's statement of May 27 was enthusiastically received by the participants of the Pittsburgh conference.[68]

Wilson held a speech to the League for Permanent Peace in Washington on May 27, 1916, concerned with the underlying principles for permanent peace in Europe pointing out that America's neutrality does not imply indifference to the events in Europe. He expressed agreement with the principles of protection of the small states, of freedom and rights to self-determination of all nations without exception. On that occasion he said, "(...) Each nation is entitled to elect the supreme authority it will live under."[69]

In the proclamation published in the *Hrvatski svijet* of June 1, 1916, Wilson's ideas met with the approval of A. Biankini, M. Marjanović, N. Županič, and N. Grškovič. It was pointed out that Croatian attitudes were in agreement with the spirit, methods and the historical mission of America as explained and emphasized by Wilson. The proclamation stated, "Our actions are not aimed at the neutrality of this country, on the contrary; they are in harmony with its spirit and its political program. (...) We are making every effort to show the situation and aspirations of our people here and in Europe to the American public and government in such a way that they should be aware of our justified struggle, giving it support at the right moment."[70] At the same time Marjanović and Županič, members of the Yugoslav Committee in London, asked through the immigration press of the Croatian immigrants in America to support publicly the policy announced by President Wilson in the name of humanity and national rights.

In May 1916, parades were organized in the USA to show the loyalty and readiness of the Americans to defend their country. They were intended to demonstrate that the American people were ready for armament and war. They gave the Croatian immigrants a chance for a public



Yugoslav National Council, select committee for the US

demonstration of their aspirations. The immigration press reminded the Croatians that their participation in the parades should prove them "a nation worthy of knowing".

On April 6, 1917, the USA declared war on Germany. Wilson's war announcement stated the following, "We are going to fight for what is kept in the most intimate depths of our souls, for democracy, so that all the suppressed can raise their voice and elect the government they wish; for the freedom of small nations, for the absolute sovereignty of rights, so that the union of free nations should ensure peace and existence to nations making freedom rule the world in its general and absolute form."[71]

After America's entry into the war, the Yugoslav National Council, the representative of the South Slavs of America, at the meeting of April 19, 1917, reminded the immigrants to express their loyalty to the USA not only by passive law abidance but by active participation in the preparations for the war and its waging. As the majority of Croatian immigrants were Austro-Hungarian citizens, some of them, under the strong influence of Austro-Hungarian propaganda, were confused. It was necessary to dispel possible doubts about the loyalty of Croatian immigration to the USA. To this effect, the Croatian immigration societies, communities and individuals took trouble to explain through the press the real aspirations of the South Slavs to the American public and the authorities.

The Croatian immigrants were granted safeguard in the USA only after its entry into the war against Austria-Hungary. Wilson's proclamation addressed to the Austro-Hungarian immigrants without American citizenship was issued on December 11, 1917. According to it, all persons loyal to the United States of America without endangering the public peace or breaking laws, and, further, who do not disclose confidential information or give aid and protection to the USA's enemies but who abide by the fixed regulations or those occasionally issued by the President, should not be disturbed in either their private lives or their work places. All citizens of the USA should be friendly towards these persons.[72]

Thanks to the attitudes of President Wilson and to the endeavors of the Yugoslav National Council, the situation of the Croatian immigrants was considerably improved in spite of their being former citizens of the country the USA was at war with. The extent of efforts to help Croatian immigrants was evident from the speech by Senator Albert Thompson of Wasshington held in the Congress on April 16, 1917, "We have ample evidence that the South Slavs, among them the Slovenes and Croatians, are loyal to the United States. Each member of the Congress can see the number of telegrams received from these people."[73]

In the course of 1917, Croatian immigrants had a chance to explain their problem to the Americans through the action of subscribing to a *freedom loan.* The whole immigration press was involved in this action. The Yugoslav Office in Washington informed the Treasury Department of the action, quoting all the immigration newspapers and excerpts from the articles on the loan campaign, thus drawing the attention of the American officials to the participation of Croatian immigrants, which made a favorable impression on the American government. To the four war loans opened by the USA during of the war, the Croatian immigrants made a subscription totaling 12 million dollars.[74] The immigration participation in the *freedom loan* was discussed by the Yugoslav National Council at its session of October 10, 1917. Since the Council was directly approached by the American authorities concerning the second loan, it decided to invite all the immigration organizations and individuals to purchase the largest number of war bonds possible thereby contributing considerably to the success of the action.

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With the USA's entry into the war the fraternal organizations were faced with the problem of defining their attitude to it. It was a great challenge for the National Croatian Society and its official publication, the *Zajedničar,* but they did not want to be the first to respond. The *Zajedničar,* therefore, quoted the editorial of the *Fraternal Monitor* titled *Fraternal Interests and the War,* which stated, "All fraternalists are supporters of peace but the love of their homes and families is of primary importance to them. The goal of the benefit organizations and their business is in the first place the protection of homes and families. They

pay benefits to sustain families, to protect them from extremity, to provide food and clothes for the needy. War is in contradiction with anything the fraternalists are striving for, but if the homeland is imperiled, or the free development of the country endangered, the whole army of fraternalists will move in their defense." The *Fraternal Monitor* also mentioned that the USA could have entered the war immediately after the *Lusitania* had been sunk, but they had not because its goals had to be set first and careful preparations made. As soon as the program of the Allies had been defined, though, and after the fall of the tsarist regime in Russia, the USA became aware of the legitimacy and rightfulness of the war. According to the *Monitor*, benefit organizations should make every effort to support and assist their homeland and its government by encouraging its members to answer the military call and increase the production of war industries. An increased number of deaths would lead

Delegates to the Thirteenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Chicago Illinois, 1918

to change in their business and being patriotic organizations, they would have to assist their members engaged in the war ensuring benefit payment to the beneficiaries of the killed members. Maximum solidarity was therefore required of the benefit organizations... "Welfare organizations will have to pay monthly dues for these members, which will require additional resources. Other members will be called to make their contributions. The by-laws of the benefit organizations have to be such as to enable legal collection of these dues. Benefit organizations have the by-laws entitling them to impose extra assessment of dues in specific circumstances. They can use this right to collect the necessary amounts for the war needs." This was considered an obligation of the benefit organizations because it was the war that gave them an opportunity to do something for the freedom of America.[75]

Accepting the attitude expressed by the *Fraternal Monitor,* the *Zajedničar* newspaper gave support to the American war policy. It assured all the members of the National Croatian Society enlisted in the

army that they would not have to pay their dues for as long as they were in the army, which would not endanger their membership adding that the war against Germany was in the Croatian interest. It was, therefore, their obligation to fight for their new homeland the more so as it was at the same time the struggle for the freedom of their old country. Many other Croatian newspapers shared the views of the *Zajedničar.* The *Hrvatska zastava,* for example, informed its readers of a large number of Croatian volunteers enlisted in the American army, adding that it would be worth revealing their names to the Croatian public as they were doing credit to their people.[76]

In its by-laws adopted at the Fourteenth Convention, the National Croatian Society required of its members full loyalty and fulfillment of their obligations towards their new homeland, America. So, Article 22 stated that the membership of the Society should be denied:

"a)To those who are proved not to observe the Constitution or abide by the laws of the USA, being therefore condemned and convicted due to their disloyalty to the USA;

b) To all draft registrants illegally evading army calls in the USA;

c) To those being members of the organizations disproving nationality or being marked by the USA government as disloyal and detrimental to the country's military readiness and the achievement of the war goals of America and its Allies."[77]

The National Croatian Society was one of the most active fraternal organizations in the purchase of Liberty Bonds. Through the Croatian immigration press, a vigorous campaign was carried out among the immigrants reminding them that the American war costs would amount to two billion dollars. This amount would be provided by the *freedom loan* which had to be subscribed by June 15, 1917. In the fulfillment of this patriotic duty, the American people should be joined by the Croats. Father Niko Gršković wrote on this occasion, "We, the Croatians by origin but the American citizens by our own free choice and oath and above all by our love and attachment to our new country, should not fall behind the others. According to our number and power we should be among the first, thus showing to the world and our fellow citizens the extent of our hatred of violence and captivity and the strength of our love of Justice and Freedom, which we fully grasped upon our arrival here."[78] Writing for the *Hrvatski svijet* Gršković pointed out that it was the National Croatian Union that had to set an example with its substantial subscription to the *freedom loan.* It had to be followed also by other Croatian benefit organizations, "so that through them America in its noble endeavors to protect its freedom, and its efforts to liberate other nations should be assisted by every capable Croatian."[79] On this occasion, the National Croatian Society's subscription totaled $100,000

and that of the Croatian League of Illinois $25,000.

The National Croatian Society and the Croatian League of Illinois were regular subscribers to the second, third, and the fourth *loans of freedom.* The *Zajedničar* gave the following commentary, "Your subscription to the fourth Loan of Freedom is the best proof of your love and loyalty to your new country, a powerful protector of our national life. Each of you is obliged to do your very best. The higher your investment into the Bonds of the Fourth Loan of Freedom, the stronger is the proof of your love of this country and your participation in the liberation war."[80]

The contributions of the Croatian benefit organizations to the subscription of the *loans of freedom* were highly appreciated by the US government. More about it could be learned from J. Marohnić's report to the Superior Board of the NCS at its session of January 23, 1918. He stated that the State Treasurer in December 1917 invited to Washington the deputies of benefit organizations associated in the Fraternal Congress of America. They were received by President Wilson who thanked them for their assistance in America's war efforts. He urged them to continue their engagement in the *loans of freedom* and the *War Saving Stamps* action requesting them to explain to their members that both actions provided an opportunity for safe investment of their savings. Marohnić also said, "We, the Croats, at this conference, only a drop in the ocean of American representatives of different organizations, expressed our loyalty and fidelity of our people to this banner of stars, assuring the representatives of the government that the Croats were the lovers of freedom and as such ready to support this great country in its struggle for human rights and the liberation of oppressed nations. Having made a name for themselves in government circles, the Croats should do their best to keep it."[81]

In the troubled and challenging years of World War One, the National Croatian Society was also providing its political support to its new homeland giving at the same time substantial aid to its compatriots in Croatia. This aid had become systematic since the Twelfth Convention in Cleveland in 1915. On that occasion, President Marohnić reminded the delegates that there were already one thousand children in Croatia whose fathers were killed fighting for foreign interests. A number of men became invalids. Croatia was in a very difficult situation, said Marohnić, without anybody but the American Croats to help it. According to Marohnić's motion, the National Croatian Society should set aside $15,000 from its National Fund in aid of the children of the Croatian soldiers killed in the war. To this purpose each lodge should provide the largest possible amount and every member of the Society at least one dollar each. Each lodge was required to elect a three or five-member

committee that would be in charge of collecting money from the Croats and their fellow Americans. Marohnić expected the Society to collect a hundred thousand dollars in this way. His motions were unanimously accepted by the Convention and the immigration press launched a vigorous campaign. The *Hrvatski svijet* wrote, "Since in your town and its vicinity there is quite a number of Croats and other Slav brothers, at the first session of your lodge a three-member committee should be elected. In their spare time they will visit our brothers who will make contributions of their own free will, thus aiding their own flesh and blood, our orphans deprived of their dearest, lacking everything. This committee should also visit your American friends and acquaintances, who will certainly respond humanely and feel deep respect for your work. This aid will be provided to the Croatian orphans and to your fellow countrymen who, fit and healthy, were forced to enter this awful war, coming back crippled and unable to earn their living or support their families."[82]

Unfortunately, the action was not successful. Namely, the Austro-Hungarian diplomats had deliberately launched a simultaneous action of collecting aid for the Red Cross in Croatia. They succeeded in assuring the immigrants that their money would be directly forwarded to those it was intended for. Besides, some newspapers wrote that the war victims in Croatia should not be assisted at all as they were the responsibility of the Austro-Hungarian authorities who had sent them to war. The National Croatian Society disapproved of such an attitude. On the motion of Marohnić at the session of the Supreme Board on May 26, 1917, 500 volunteers, all Society members, were to be exclusively engaged in collecting aid for Croatia, and the Office would provide special boxes for this purpose. As a result, at the Thirteenth Convention in 1918, the aid collected for the war victims in Croatia totaled $27,000. Between the two conventions only $9,000 was collected. The delegates of the Thirteenth Convention did not lose hope though. It was decided that each member of the Society should be assessed a dollar a month and that the conclusions of the Twelfth Convention should be further applied. This time the Society was more successful. The reported amount at the Fourteenth Convention in 1921 totaled $78,000.

At the Thirteenth Chicago Convention of 1918, a special assessment was voted for the Red Cross: for the American Red Cross $20,000, for the Red Cross in Yugoslavia $5,000, in Czechoslovakia and in Poland $1,000, and for the Russian Red Cross, $1,000 dollars. For the work of the Yugoslav Committee in London the amount of $10,000 was approved. However, due to the information about the greater Serbian aspirations and the policy of creating a Great Serbia, the Supreme Board made a subsequent decision of transferring this amount to the Fund for war victims in Croatia.[83]

Rodoljub Croatian Beneficial Society of Chicago, Lodge 229, February 2, 1918

Board made a subsequent decision of transferring this amount to the Fund for war victims in Croatia.[83]

At its session on December 5, 1918, the Supreme Board reached a decision that its officers should come into contact with the office of the American Red Cross in order to establish better collaboration with that institution. Since then, the National Croatian Society collaborated with its department, the American Yugoslav Relief. Through this department $30,000 was remitted to Croatia by the Society. It was distributed through the Red Cross branches in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Dubrovnik.

Although small in membership, the Croatian League of Illinois from Chicago provided substantial aid to war victims in Croatia. In June 1917, it became a member of the American Red Cross whereupon it requested all its members to remit aid to Croatia through this organization. In April 1919, it announced an extra one-dollar assessment intended for aid to Croatia. In May 1919, the Croatian League of Illinois was publicly given credit for its support to the *loan of freedom* by H. Ried, a high official of the Treasury Department.

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At the time when the Croatian immigration efforts in aiding Croatia were in full swing, the first news of Serbia's tendency to secure its political supremacy in the future united state of the South Slavs reached the US. They aroused deep dissatisfaction not only among the Croatian immigrants but also in the American official circles. On October 22, 1918, J. Simić, the Serbian Ambassador in Washington, informed his government in Corfu that America officially considered the parliamentary situation in Serbia unstable. Although the US did not want to interfere with the home affairs of the Allied countries, they had an influence on US policy towards them. According to Simić, the Americans with their political background had very subtle views on parliamentary rule. Their unfavorable opinions might, therefore, be detrimental to a country dependent on America. Although Serbia enjoyed great respect in the States, it might increase, according to Simić, if the Americans were convinced that the parliamentary situation was stable. Conversely, Serbia might suffer serious consequences. It was emphasized by Simić that the information about the partnership of all political forces engaged in the national policy would be welcomed by both the Yugoslav immigration and the official America.[84]

Simić repeatedly informed his government of the unfavorable American opinions on November 6, 1918, stating that the American Vice-Secretary of State mentioned that the Yugoslav aims were seriously threatened due to different, even opposite political streams. He also added that he did not fail to express the attitudes of the Serbian government and underline all the sacrifices Serbia had to suffer for the liberation and unification of the Yugoslavs.[85]

Simić also informed his government concerning the reception in the US of the proclamation of the unification of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of December 1, 1918. He immediately forwarded the respective information to the State Department, to the American press, to the Yugoslav immigration organizations, and to some distinguished immigrants.

According to Simić, the State Department, although always in favor of the unification of the Yugoslavs, received the news with some reservation. The American press published the information quoting some extracts from the proclamation, but with no commentaries.

The proclamation was welcomed by almost all the Serbs and by a number of Croatians and Slovenes. According to Simić, it was unfavorably received by a larger number of Croatians and Slovenes, being even severely criticized by some. Trying to find the causes of these reactions Simić said, "The fact that this-for our people a historical event had not been better received should not lead to the conclusion that the United

there is a certain lack of confidence. (...) A growing belief that not even the parliamentary regime is respected in our country is detrimental to all our national affairs, even those concerning the economic renewal of the country."[86]

Simić's report and the overall approach of the American government towards the Yugoslav issue leads to the conclusion that the American politicians were well acquainted with all the problems ensuing from the Yugoslav unification. Indeed, the official American policy was against the methods applied in the creation of the new Yugoslav state. This was certainly due to the endeavors of the Croatian immigrants to inform both the American public and politicians of the true aspirations of the South Slav nations.

Dissatisfaction by the American Croats and other South Slav immigrants with the manner the Yugoslav state was created along with the frequent news about the unfavorable political development in the new state had predetermined the political moves of the American Croats in the period between the two wars.

In April 1921, a very representative gathering of Croatian immigrants was held in Cleveland where almost all the immigration communities from 31 states were represented. On that occasion the Croatian Republican League of America was founded. It had a political program similar to that of Radić's Croatian Republican Peasant Party. Also, a resolution was carried pointing out, among other things, that the Yugoslav developments of the time were contradictory to the principle of the national self-determination advocated by President Wilson. The resolution was sent to President Harding.

At the inaugural meeting of the League a committee was elected with the task of describing in both America and Europe the Croatian issue as totally unsettled. A deputation was sent to President Harding in the hope that he would support the creation of a pacifist Croatian republic. Harding allegedly gave the following reply, "Both the Irish and the Croatian issues are on my mind. I did not let Italy annex the town of Rijeka because Rijeka belongs to Croatia. This is a proof of my thorough knowledge of the Croatian issue. I shall keep it in mind."[87]

An increasingly open criticism of the undemocratic regime in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes gradually became topical in the progressive organizations of the South Slav immigrants and their official publications. The most serious and consistent was the *Zajedničar.* With a number of its articles it acquainted its readers with the brutal clashes in the regime, especially between the police and the Croatian peasants. By the end of 1921 and in the course 1922, it also analyzed

the political regime in the new state. In a series of articles entitled *Let the Facts Speak, not Phrases and Lies* (Neka činjenice govore, a ne fraze i laži) the newly adopted 1921 "Vidovdan Constitution" was closely examined, its democratic value being denied. The *Zajedničar* proved the constitution to be instrumental in the Karadjordjević dynasty and of the great-Serbian financiers in imposing their rule on the citizens of the whole Kingdom. When the reprints of these articles appeared in the press in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and not only in the Croatian newspapers but also in other national papers, the situation became very serious. The Belgrade authorities had, therefore, issued a decree imposing a ban on both the import and distribution of the *Zajedničar* in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The response of the National Croatian Society and the editorial board of the newspaper was very sharp, "Although we have already come to the conclusion that our countries are ruled by a government headed by a couple of old men and their lackeys who with guns and bayonets hush any frank and straightforward but also justified word, we did not expect them to go so far as to place a ban on the distribution of the *Zajedničar* in our countries, the newspaper being most widely read paper among the Yugoslav immigrant workers in America. The SHS government has thus broken all ties with the larger part of our immigration in America. It has made impossible for the *Zajedničar* to reach those members of the National Croatian Society living in their homeland. They will henceforth have no chance to follow the work of their organization and be in touch with their brothers they have left here."[88]

The *Zajedničar* editorial board addressed an open letter to the ambassador of the Kingdom of SHS in Washington, S. Grujić, asking him to explain the reasons for the ban since none of the *Zajedničar* statements were denied. The letter stated the following, "This is nothing else but a declaration of war to all Yugoslav or rather Croatian immigrants in America. The ban was imposed on the import of the official organ of the world's largest Croatian organization, with a circulation larger than all the other Croatian, Serbian and Slovene newspapers in America. It reaches every corner of this spacious country and every man from the old country living here."[89]

In July 1921, the Supreme Board of the NCS also passed a protest resolution because of the *Zajedničar* being under a ban in the Kingdom of SHS. It stressed among other things that the *Zajedničar* would continue to keep a watchful eye on the political situation in the old country, informing the South Slavs and other immigrants in the USA of the true developments in the new state.

The National Croatian Society, having pleaded for the unification of all the South Slav nations in a common state before and especially during World War One, was deeply disappointed. At the Fourteenth Convention, therefore, it adopted an unambiguous resolution, "All former governments, imposed on our people in the old country (i. e. the Kingdom of SHS), carried out orders and, by the Mamelukes, proclaimed laws. Through their mercenaries they violated the natural rights of man to a worthy and dignified life, depriving the working people of their right to the freedom of conscience, press and gathering, as well as of the fruits of their labor, thus rendering impossible any endeavor or struggle for liberation from exploitation and violence of different capitalist and bankers' cliques. Today, in the so called the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, a similar clique is holding in their hands all the privileges, natural resources and fruits of labor, using them for their own ends.

As a result, the Fourteenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, being the representative and voice of the immigrant Yugoslav working people, concluded the following:

The conclusion, condemning severely the ruling methods and expressing deep contempt of those who, by deceit and force, are exploiting and holding the working people in the darkness of slavery, should be recorded in the minutes of the Convention and distributed through the *Zajedničar* to the general public.

At the same time, the representatives of the working people attending the Fourteenth Convention of the NCS concluded that they, "will support with their words and deeds the struggle of their brothers in the old country with the ultimate end of liberating the presently rightless and exploited part of our people and of uniting them in the social system in which the legislative, executive and judicial authority will be in the hands of the working people through their legally elected representatives."[90]

Notes:

1. Ivan Čizmić, *Prilog za životopis Nika Grškovića,* Krčki zbornik, vol. 1, Krk, 1970
2. *Naša nada,* Kalendar za 1932, Cleveland, 1932, p. 57
3. Tresić Pavičić, op. cit., p. 146
   Ivan Čizmić, *The First Period in the Activities of South Slavic Socialists in the United States of America (1894-1919), In the European Grain,* American Studies from Central and Eastern Europe, VU University Press, Amsterdam, 1990, p. 104
4. George J. Prpić, op. cit., p. 199
5. *Naša nada,* kalendar za 1926, Cleveland, 1926, p. 139

6. *Zajedničar,* September 12, 1956
7. *Hrvatski glas,* Winnipeg, May 3, 1954
8. *Hrvatski glasnik,* January 7, 1914
9. The Minutes of the Sixth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Allegheny, Pa., 1900, p. 15
10. The Minutes of the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society, Kansas City, Kansas, 1912, p. 18
11. *Zajedničar,* September 12, 1956
12. *Dom,* Zagreb, January 15, 1903
13. *Narodni list,* Zadar, October 19, 1904
14. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ-a,* p. 14; *Zajedničar,* 1912. No. 56, Year VIII.
15. Bogdan Krizman, Korespondencija Stjepana Radića, I, Zagreb, 1972, p. 398
16. *Narodni list,* No. 84, New York, March 24, 1920
17. *Dom,* June 18, 1903
18. Bogdan Krizman, op. cit. p. 492
19. George J. Prpić, op. cit. p. 181
20. *Hrvatski glasnik,* March 19, 1910
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid, April 2, 1910
23. *Central Slovakian Cultural and Publishing Society* was banned in 1875. The massacre in Černova occurred on October 27, 1907, when the Hungarian police force killed 15 peasants because the village refused to accept the Hungarian parish priest to replace the suspended priest, A. Hlinka. For more extensive information see: Jaroslav Šidak, *Razvoj slovačkog nacionalnog pitanja od 1860 do 1914. godine,* Historijski pregled, No. 4, Zagreb, 1963, p. 258-266
24. *Narodni list,* Zadar, April 1, 1911
25. Tresić-Pavičić, op. cit. p. 238
26. Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ-a, p. 40
27. *Zajedničar,* May 29, 1912
28. *Narodni list,* New York, May 11, 1912
29. *Zajedničar,* November 27, 1912
30. Ivan Čizmić, *O atentatu Stjepana Dojčića na komesara Ivana bana Skerlecza 1913,* Historijski zbornik, Zagreb, XIX-XX, 1966-1967, p. 339
31. Reprinted in the newspaper *Hrvatski pokret,* Zagreb, October 25, 1913
32. *Zajedničar,* May 7, 1913
33. Stjepan Radić, *Javna politička poruka probudjenoj seljačkoj braći, naročito u Americi i po ostaloj tudjini,* Zagreb, 1913, p. 8
34. See: Ivan Čizmić, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret u SAD i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918,* University of Zagreb, Institute of the Croatian History, Zagreb, 1974
35. *Zajedničar,* July 8, 1914
36. Ibid., July 15, 1914
37. *Glas svobode,* July 28, 1914
38. *Radnička straža,* August 12, 1914

39. *Hrvatski svijet,* August 1, 1914
40. *Zajedničar,* August 12, 1914
41. Eleanor E. Ledbetter, *The Yugoslavs of Cleveland,* Cleveland, 1918, p. 5
42. The *New-Yorški listy,* the *New Yorški denik, Hrvatski svijet, Ruskoje slovo, Hlasludu, Srbobran, Srpski dnevnik, Slovensky sokol, Slovensky pokrok, Denik, Slovak v Ameriki*
43. *Zajedničar,* August 5, 1914
44. *Hrvatski svijet,* July 28, 1914
45. *Zajedničar,* August 5, 1914
46. *Radnička straža,* August 5, 1914
47. Quotation from the *Zajedničar* newspaper, August 5, 1914
48. Institute for Migration and Nationalities, Zagreb, The Archives of the Commissariat for Emigration, No. 45494
49. *Hrvatski svijet,* March 15, 1917
50. Arthur S. Link, Wilson, *The Struggle for Neutrality 1914-1915,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1960, p. 647
51. Matijaž Klemenčič, *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji,* Založba Obzorja, Maribor, 1987, p. 90
52. *Zajedničar,* August 19, 1914
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., January 19, 1915
56. Franko Potočnjak, *Iz emigracije,* III, Zagreb, 1927, p. 149
57. Franko Potočnjak, op. cit. p. 43
58. Franko Potočnjak, *Jugoslaveni za svoju slobodu,* Chicago, 1915, p. 15
59. *Neka se oglasi i drugo zvono iz Amerike ...,* New York, 1927, p. 21. The booklet brings the reprints of numerous articles published in the *Hrvatski list* and the *Danica hrvatska* of New York, arguing with some statements from Potočnjak's book *Iz emigracije,* III published in Zagreb in 1927
60. Franko Potočnjak, *Jugoslaveni za svoju slobodu,* Chicago, 1915, p. 15
61. *Hrvatski glasnik,* August 21, 1915; *Zajedničar,* September 15, 1915
62. *Hrvatski svijet,* August 2, 1915
63. The Minutes of the Twelfth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Cleveland, Ohio, 1915, p. 31.

    At this convention only 138 delegates represented 400 lodges and 35,112 members of the Society. The assets totaled $581,074.80. The reduction in the number of delegates was due to an important by-law change at the 1912 Convention when the delegates voted to elect one delegate for each 200 Society members.
64. *Naša izjava* i *K našoj izjavi, stanovište hrvatskog i slovenskog svećenstva u Americi gledom na jugoslavensku, bolje veliko-srpsku propagandu u Americi* (Attitudes of the Croatian and Slovene priests in America concerning the Yugoslav, or rather the great-Serbian propaganda in America), published by the *Narodni list,* New York, 1916
65. The program required the unification of the Croatians in Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Rijeka, Međimurje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Istria within the Habsburg Monarchy, possibly also of the Slovene countries. The program agreed to the joint

administration of the whole Monarchy in which the Kingdom of Croatia would be on equal footing with the Kingdom of Hungary and other countries of "His Majesty" (See: Šidak, Gross, Karaman, Šepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860-1914,* Zagreb, 1968, p. 146)

66. Quotation from the *Radnička straža,* June 28, 1916
67. The Archives of the Yugoslav National Defense of South America, Zagreb, 1934-1935, p. 326
68. Ibid.
69. *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson I,* vol. 2, 1924, p. 274
70. *Jugoslavenska država,* Antofagasta, November 12, 1916
71. The Archives of the Yugoslav National Defense of South America, 1934-1935, p. 324
72. The Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade, The Archives of the Serbian Embassy in Washington
73. Congressional Record, Washington, April 17, 1917, p. 744
74. *Jugoslavenski svijet,* New York, August 11, 1918
75. *Zajedničar,* May 23, 1917
76. *Hrvatska zastava,* June 2, 1917
77. *By-Laws and Regulations of the National Croatian Society* (Zakoni i pravila NHZ-a), Pittsburgh, 1918, p. 55
78. *Zajedničar,* June 13, 1917
79. *Hrvatski svijet,* May 20, 1917
80. *Zajedničar,* October 2, 1918
81. The Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, January 23, 1918
82. *Hrvatski svijet,* October 19, 1915
83. The Minutes of the Supreme Board of the NCS, December 5, 1918; The Minutes of the Fourteenth Convention of the NCS, 1921
84. Dragoslav Janković, Bogdan Krizman, *Građa o stvaranju jugoslavenske države,* vol. II, Belgrade, 1964, p. 379
85. Ibid., p. 489
86. Ibid., p. 725
87. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Chicago-Pittsburgh, July 21, 1925
88. *Zajedničar,* June 21, 1922
89. Ibid., June 28, 1922
90. Zajednički kalendar 1923, Prosvjetni odbor NHZ-a (The Educational Board of the NCS), Pittsburgh, 1923, p. 49

Chapter Seven

ALL CROATS - ONE SOCIETY: THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION OF AMERICA

The fraternalists did their utmost to help their new homeland in its war endeavors during the turbulent events of World War One without ever forgetting their fellow countrymen in Croatia. Thanks to their patriotism and contribution to the promotion of the fraternalist program, the Croatian fraternal societies flourished in spite of the war. When addressing the members of the Thirteenth Chicago Convention, Josip Marohnić spoke of 65 societies in America whose assets were between one and thirty million dollars. He emphasized that the National Croatian Society was just about to join the benefit societies worth a million dollars. However, Marohnić stressed, the property and the position of an organization must not only be judged according to its assets, but its obligations, its members' age and, last but not least, its total membership insurance in force should also be taken into account. Some societies possessing several million dollars were nonetheless weak considering the age of the certificate holders, their number, and the total insurance in force. These facts had to be particularly emphasized, Marohnić said, as numerous members, in all good faith, were still convinced that the Society possessed too much money. They kept forgetting that the total amount of the insurance in force amounted to less than 30 million dollars. The Society was well off, but conforming to the laws of some states, it had not yet reached the sum needed for the normal operation of a benefit society. The amount would soon be reached and only then might it be possible to exempt the members from paying some annual dues. Marohnić told the delegates that the National Croatian Society belonged to the best fraternal societies thanks to its leadership's inexhaustible work in trying to adopt a table of rates. He reminded the delegates that he had proposed the introduction of a rate table assessment principle as early as the New York Convention, but the motion was rejected. He finally succeeded in convincing the delegates to partly adopt it at the Eleventh Convention in Kansas City. Had the decision not been made, "They would have long ago been in conflict with the law of several

states, and bankrupt too because of little property and insufficient means, which would mean the disruption of the Society. (...) All that, brothers and sisters, warns us to be careful when making our by-laws and electing the Society leaders, because nothing equals decline. It is easy to destroy, but extremely hard to create. Our aim and duty must be to construct and not to destroy. The Croats have never created a greater or richer organization than the National Croatian Society." The Croats have achieved all this, said Marohnić, in a free America and in a comparatively short period of time. Marohnić also mentioned that there was not a cent in the treasury when he had become Treasurer twenty two years before; yet through hard work and persistence, the Society was established. It proved to the rest of the world that Croatians were worthy and deserving of freedom both in America and in Croatia.[1]

The delegates to the Thirteenth Convention, content with their Society's achievements, sent President Woodrow Wilson a telegram saying, "The 42,000 NCS members (...) proud and loyal American citizens, represented by our delegates and assembled at the Thirteenth Convention in Chicago, Illinois, feel it as our duty to greet you humbly and express our unshaken loyalty to the ideals and principles of freedom and humanity, the principles of which you are the first apostle and defender today. (...) As citizens of this country, we join our Allies in this gigantic struggle, physically and spiritually. We want to make justice, freedom, equality and democracy in political and everyday life the heritage of all people. Inspired by patriotic loyalty to democratic principles, faithful to our fathers' ideals in defending human rights and freedom, we pledge

Delegates to the Fourteenth Convention of the National Croatian Society, Pittsburgh, PA, 1921

our lives, our property and our holy honor to America and to its invincible star-spangled banner, the leader of all the oppressed and exploited peoples."[2]

In response to this telegram, President Wilson answered, "Your message sent in the name of the National Croatian Society of the United States has been a great satisfaction to me, and I do hope with all my heart that the justified endeavors of the Croatian people will come true!"[2]

At the Thirteenth Convention held in Chicago in 1918, 169 delegates represented 414 lodges and 37,685 members. The total assets amounted to $948,635.54. The Society had disbursed $1,231,771.94 for the deceased, disabled and sick members during the past three years. The assets had increased to $277,276.73 in 1912 which proved its constant growth. In the period between the Eleventh and the Twelfth Conventions, the assets had increased by $303,807.07, and by the Thirteenth Convention, by another $367,560.74. In other words, the Society's financial position was improved by $671,367.81, an increase of two and a half times, in only six years. The assets of the lodges were also firm and had grown to $414,095 by January 1, 1918. Added to the Society's assets, they would have amounted to almost a million and a half dollars.[3]

The successful operation and increase in membership made the delegates to the Thirteenth Convention tackle the problem of improving the Society's operation. With this in mind, it was very important to resolve the issue of sickness benefit centralization. The conventions had dealt with it before but it was thoroughly discussed for the first time at the Thirteenth Chicago Convention.

Centralization actually meant the establishment of a central treasury for sickness benefits. Conforming to the system, all members would pay sickness benefit dues into a separate treasury instead of paying monthly dues for the sickness benefit within their lodges. The central treasury was situated in the Home Office in Pittsburgh. A member who became ill would be given sickness benefit from the central treasury, after having presented the doctor's and all the other necessary certificates required by the lodge board. The payment of dues to the central treasury would not depend on the payments of death benefit dues according to the table of rates. This meant that the members of all lodges would pay to the central treasury the identical sum for the sickness benefits.

The motion for the centralization of sickness benefits caused a lot of controversy. Some delegates pointed out the necessity for centralization which would improve some smaller and less powerful lodges. With its introduction, each member could be assured of benefits and the Society members would therefore be encouraged to enroll in small lodges too. This had been avoided in the past. Some delegates observed that there had been doubts when the table of rates was introduced, but the membership had in the meantime got used to it. Centralization should be accepted because many organizations which had already done so were pleased with the results. One important argument put forward was the lodges' experiences with strikes. During the strikes, a great number of lodges had had financial difficulties and some were about to cease operating; only those lodges in which centralization had been previously introduced survived.

Unfortunately, many delegates did not approve of centralization. They argued that in centralized organizations the members got around the by-laws as it was not easy to control the administration of the lodges. Lodges became careless after they had ceased paying out sickness benefits. Other delegates argued that the membership was neither ready nor aware of the advantages offered by centralization. The negative experiences of some other organizations that had already introduced centralization were also heard; these had been forced to introduce an assessment in dues nearly every two months. The technical possibilities of paying out benefits were also discussed since the members who were living far from the Home Office would have more difficulty in realizing their claims than the ones living in the vicinity of Pittsburgh.

The delegates were unable to reach an agreement and Marohnić asked that the centralization issue be postponed for some time. But delegate Niko Gršković, a man of great authority, dealt with the problem quite differently. He warned the delegates that many of them did not understand the importance of the question for the Society's development. He thought they were not well enough informed to be capable of participating in the decision making of the Convention. The issue was not yet ready to be deliberated because the *Zajedničar* failed to explain the real importance of centralization. Gršković gave the matter a social and political meaning, announcing, "Our people have been educated and taught by their history in such a way as to ask for smaller bodies or groups of people to be given more freedom. Centralization should be compared to the democracy of our future state. It is necessary for sound

units in a large group to be powerful. We must not worry about the small and weak ones which cannot survive. I respect the opinion of the people shown during the election but I am afraid that that man, who has never been faultless, might misuse the freedom he has. It is my opinion that the final decision on this issue cannot be made at this moment. The war will not only change but it will also destroy everything that is old and rotten, everything that has accumulated in the course of centuries in various political systems, and everything that has been detrimental to the working people. The war will destroy capitalist power and the social position of labor will be changed; our organization is going to feel most the consequences of war. A majority of our best members will return to this free country and everything will be born again. We had better wait and see what happens after the war has ended. In the meantime, let us do our best to help bring an end to it for the benefit of our national cause."

Gršković thereby calmed a brisk discussion at the Convention and put off the centralization issue until the next convention. Marohnić joined him saying that centralization must be discussed seriously, although the arguments showed that many lodges had not been operating well enough to put centralization into effect properly. The previous practice had to be kept: the lodges would support the sick members for a three month period, and the Society would do so during the following two years and three months. However, the issue was put to a vote: 110 delegates voted against the motion and only 26 in favor.[4] The centralization issue was postponed to the following convention.

The National Croatian Society - a "Millionaire"

The Fourteenth Convention was held in Pittsburgh in 1921, and its opening was quite sad; President Vinko Vuk informed the delegates that the outstanding Croatian fraternalist and patriot, Josip Marohnić, had recently died. After having paid him tribute, and having approved Niko Grškovi's motion, the Convention adopted a resolution about setting up a monument to Josip Marohnić in Pittsburgh. The resolution read, "Let this monument be a sign of our respect for the man who has worked with so much devotion for the welfare of the NCS members, who has dedicated all his ability and energy for the promotion and greatness of the Society."[5]

At the Fourteenth Convention held at the Moose Temple on 14 E. North Avenue, North Side, Pittsburgh, 159 delegates represented 406 lodges and 38,517 members. Total assets passed the million-dollar mark for the first time. With assets grown to $1,143,275.57, the National Croatian Society found itself among the 73 existing organizations whose assets had reached between a million and 46 million dollars. An amount of $207,099.75 was left in the treasury after total expenses ($2,337,369.13) had been subtracted from the income ($2,544,468.88).[6]

It was impossible to send the money to Austria-Hungary as that was the enemy state. This is why the Alien Property Custodian, Washington, D.C., demanded that the money be deposited in special bank accounts. Consequently, the National Croatian Society opened the NCS Foreign Account, depositing death benefit money for the beneficiaries in

Vinko Vuk, the Supreme President of the National Croatian Society, February 1921 - October 1921

Croatia with the intention to disburse it after the war. By the time of the Fourteenth Convention, the account totaled $494,801.79, from which the beneficiaries, both in America and Croatia, were paid $483,027.41.[7]

The delegates to the Fourteenth Convention were completely aware of the war time consequences in Croatia and a question of helping their compatriots was put forward. At the time, an amount of $48,381.56 was deposited in the treasury which had, among other sources, been collected from the assessment in dues paid thus far, a dollar per member. One of the decisions reached at the Convention was a remittance of $25,000 to the *Hrvatski radiša* of Zagreb for mothers' and childrens' aid; $6,187.50 were disbursed to the *Narodna zaštita* and the same amount was paid to a war invalid organization by the name of *Ratni invalidi*. It is interesting to note that the Convention decided to assign the significant amount of $11,000 to the starving people of Russia. The victims of natural disasters in Pueblo, Colorado, were sent two thousand dollars.[8]

Thanks to Josip Marohnić, the work of the Supreme Board had improved considerably. It was at that time that the Executive Board of the NCS came into being; its members were the Supreme President, the First and Second Vice-Presidents, the Financial Secretary, the Supreme Secretary, and the Supreme Treasurer. Some professionals were engaged in the Home Office for the administration work. One personnel change provoked a certain mistrust among the Society's membership when in October 1920, the *Zajedničar* editor, Franjo Kolander, was replaced by Juraj Ubojčić, former outstanding socialist.[9] It was the beginning of serious political divisions which became obvious at the Fourteenth Convention when the centralization problem was put on the agenda once again. The socialist delegates pointed out that the unresolved problem of centralization did a lot of harm to the small lodges, and most of all to those in the mining and steel communities whose membership, frequently unemployed, could not even pay dues regularly. Unfortunately, such lodges were numerous, so the Society's prospects were not really hopeful.

NCS lodge membership in 1915 and 1924

Membership	1915.	1924.
and under 50	177(44%)	144(38%)
and under 51 - 100	126(2%)	118(31%)
and under 101 - 200	77(19%)	80(21%)
and under 201 - 300	18(5 %)	26(7%)
and under 301 - 400	/	10(3%)
and under 401 and over	/	8(2%)
	398(100%)	376(100%)

However, at this Convention as well as at the previous one, many delegates were still against sickness benefit centralization because it would automatically require establishing an extra assessment in dues or introducing additional payments. Only 30 delegates voted in favor of centralization and 139 against. Consequently, this important issue was again put off for the Fifteenth Convention.[10]

Political disintegration was obvious in connection with Gjurović, the Supreme Financial Secretary. His bookkeeping proved to be superficial and inadequate, and he was accused of corruption. He had been elected to the post to replace Josip Marohnić at the 1909 Calumet Convention. But Gjurović was chosen as a result of a compromise between the followers of the New York *Narodni list,* on one side, and some priests on the other. Some delegates backed him unsuccessfully even at that Convention, but Gjurović resigned in October 1918 because of alleged health reasons. However, the Supreme Board filed impeachment proceedings against him to the High Trial Board for inadequate bookkeeping.[11]

The majority of the delegates to the Fourteenth Convention were leftists which was proved by the members elected to the new management team. They were mostly former socialists and active members of the Socialist Party of America. Tomo Bešenić was elected President and Milan Kirin Vice-President, the Secretary was Franjo Mavrić, the Financial Secretary Vinko Šolić, and the Treasurer was Vinko Vuk; Juraj Ubojčić was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Zajedničar.* All the new management members were actively participating in the educational movement, attempting to spread their ideas by help of the National Croatian Society.[12] They paid special attention to the *Zajedničar* newspaper and decided to publish it as a ten-page weekly; its price would be ten cents per month. The Fourteenth Convention carried a special resolution regarding the need of a merger of all the Croatian fraternal societies of America; the Croatian League of Illinois and the National Croatian Society were to be the initiators of the procedure.

The new NCS management did not consider its educational activity to be only theoretical but tried hard to make it work in practice. A separate section about educational work was therefore included in the by-laws and was kept there for decades. It said:

Tomo Bešenić, the Supreme President of the Croatian National Society, 1924–1926

"Paragraph 1. At its annual sessions each lodge is obliged to elect three members to the Educational Board. The duties of the Board are:

A) to find ways and means of educating the membership in order to render them efficient lodge and NCS members for the benefit of all the Croatian immigrants;

B) in places with several lodges, all the elected Educational Board members should meet at a common session and elect a joint committee;

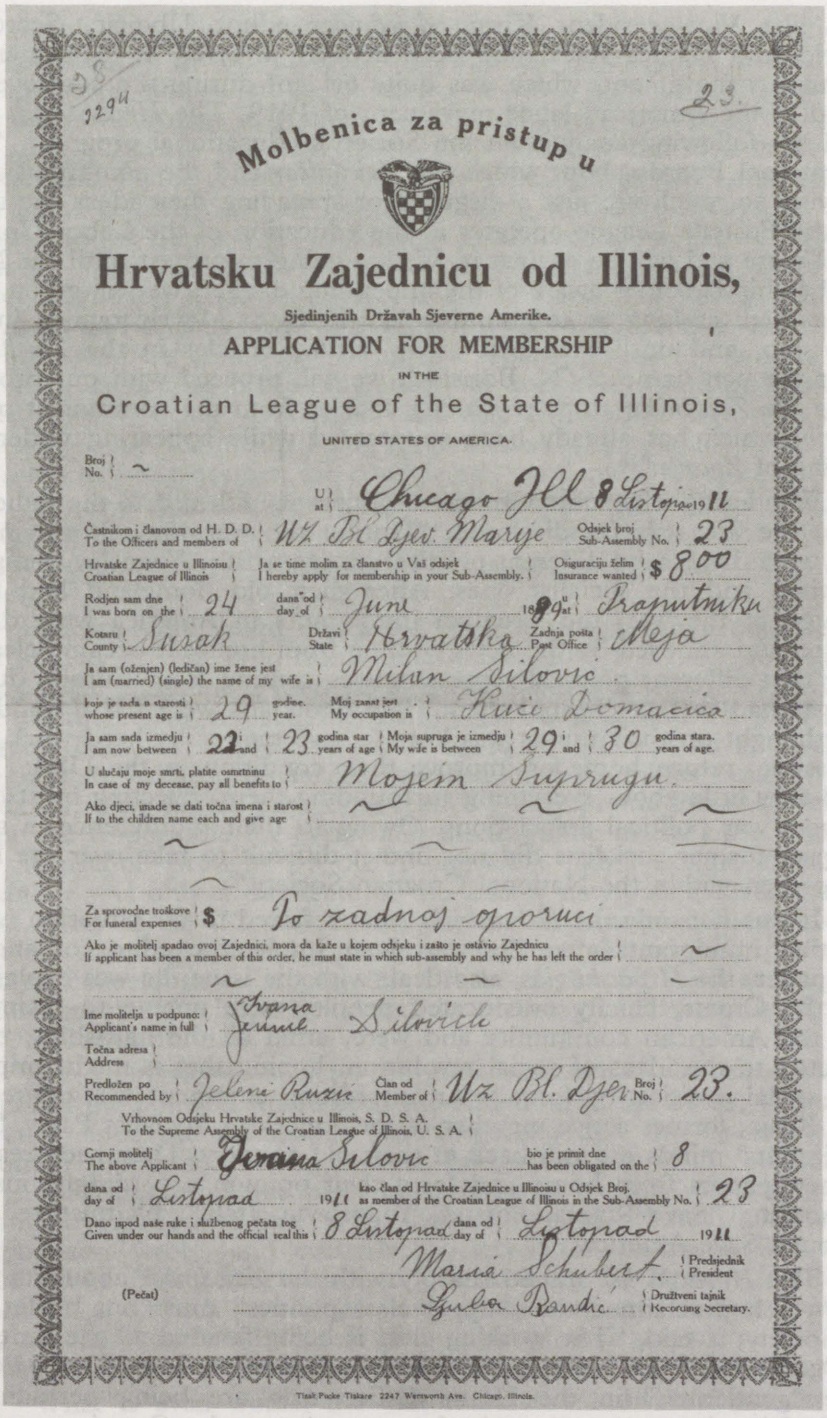
C) to provide information in the *Zajedničar* about the progress of the lodges, important events within the community, the workers' problems, and anything else that might be of interest and use to the NCS lodges.

Paragraph 2. It is the obligation of the Educational Board to look after and help the illiterate members. Once a week, at least, a board or a lodge member might teach them to read and write.

Paragraph 3. Wherever possible, the lodges should establish a library with the best and most instructive books."[13]

The Convention also adopted a resolution concerning educational work. The newspaper *Zajedničar* was to deal above all with the educational program, and all the lodges were supposed to form educational boards and start courses for the illiterate. "The respect and love of the Society will grow hand in hand with the education of our members and other workers and its ranks will, beyond all dispute, increase in number." In accordance with the resolution and other decisions of the Fourteenth Convention, a coordinating body was appointed within the Society Home Office, operating in fact as a reduced educational board.[14]

The educational program provoked mistrust of some fraternalists although its content was good and acceptable to the membership. Much doubt was expressed in connection with the former socialists who might be spreading their views by means of the Society's educational boards. Some lodges and a part of the Croatian press started censuring the management, and in particular the writings of the *Zajedničar*. The newspaper was accused of having allegedly taken a leftist standpoint in the labor movement of America. The *Hrvatski list* and its editor-in-chief, Stjepko Brozović[15], an old and tireless critic of the NCS, tried in his numerous articles to prove that there was a link between the Supreme Board and the American radicals. According to Brozović, some Home Office mem-



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Molbenica za pristup u

Hrvatsku Zajednicu od Illinois,

Sjedinjenih Državah Sjeverne Amerike.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

IN THE

Croatian League of the State of Illinois,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Broj / No. ~

U / at Chicago Ill 8 Listopada 1911

Častnikom i članovom od H. D. D. / To the Officers and members of Uz Bl. Djev. Marije Odsjek broj / Sub-Assembly No. 23

Hrvatske Zajednice u Illinoisu / Croatian League of Illinois — Ja se time molim za članstvo u Vaš odsjek / I hereby apply for membership in your Sub-Assembly. — Osiguraciju želim / Insurance wanted $ 800

Rodjen sam dne / I was born on the 24 dana od / day of June 1889 u / at Trapatniku

Kotaru / County Susak — Državi / State Hrvatska — Zadnja pošta / Past Office Meja

Ja sam (oženjen) (ležičan) ime žene jest / I am (married) (single) the name of my wife is Milan Silović

Koje je sada u starosti / whose present age is 29 godine. / year. — Moj zanat jest / My occupation is Kuć Domaćica

Ja sam sada izmedju / I am now between 22 and 23 godina star / years of age — Moja supruga je izmedju / My wife is between 29 and 30 godina stara. / years of age.

U slučaju moje smrti, platite osmrtninu / In case of my decease, pay all benefits to Mojem Suprugu.

Ako djeci, imade se dati točna imena i starost / If to the children name each and give age ~ ~ ~

Za sprovodne troškove / For funeral expenses $ To zadnoj oporuci

Ako je molitelj spadao ovoj Zajednici, mora da kaže u kojem odsjeku i zašto je ostavio Zajednicu / If applicant has been a member of this order, he must state in which sub-assembly and why he has left the order ~

Ime molitelja u podpuno: / Applicant's name in full Ivana Jemuć Silovića

Točna adresa / Address

Predložen po / Recommended by Jelene Ruzić — Član od / Member of Uz Bl. Djev. — Broj / No. 23.

Vrhovnom Odsjeku Hrvatske Zajednice u Illinois, S. D. S. A.
To the Supreme Assembly of the Croatian League of Illinois, U. S. A.

Gornji molitelj / The above Applicant Ivana Silović — bio je primit dne / has been obligated on the 8

dana od / day of Listopada 1911 — kao član od Hrvatske Zajednice u Illinoisu u Odsjek Broj, / as member of the Croatian League of Illinois in the Sub-Assembly No. 23

Dano ispod naše ruke i službenog pečata tog / Given under our hands and the official seal this 8 Listopad dana od / day of Listopad 1911

Marija Schubert, Predsjednik / President

(Pečat)

Luka Bandić, Družtveni tajnik / Recording Secretary.

Tisak Pucke Tiskare 2247 Wentworth Ave. Chicago, Illinois.

Croatian League of Illinois application form

bers, like Vice-president Kirin, *Zajedničar* editor Ubojčić, Secretary Mavrić, and Danica Rački had been actively involved in the American communist movement, which was quite evident during the controversial period of the American labor movement of 1919. The *Hrvatski list* provided the following analysis on the Society's educational program, "The Educational Boards about which the *Zajedničar* and the communists are worrying so much are just a disguise for spreading their ideas the same way the Foster's League operates in the education of the Labor Unions. (...) We are and will be against it. We are going to protest until the NCS membership becomes aware of the impending danger; we will go on censuring them as long as communists like Kirin or Mavrić remain in the leadership, and until Stanković stops writing articles in the *Zajedničar* under the pen name of 'N. Borislav'; we will proceed with our protests unless the *Zajedničar* stops reprinting articles from the communist paper *Radnik*, which has already been suppressed while appearing under the heading of *Znanje*."[16]

Wondering why some Croatian immigrants adhered to the radicalist views, the *Hrvatski list* disclosed, "During the war, the Croats in the USA were divided by different political programs: the Yugoslav, the great Croatian, and the socialist ones. After their old homeland had been defeated in the war, the Croatian immigrants in America were disappointed and annoyed by the news coming from home; it became clear to them that different political representatives coming from Europe during the war had in fact cheated them. The Croatians were fed up and the only thought on their minds was how to save money by hard work and, if possible, return home or improve their condition in the USA. They cared very little about everything surrounding them, rejecting most of all the post war political associations. Owing to their indifference, a small group of former socialists did not find it difficult to take over the leadership even within the National Croatian Society."

It was not only the *Hrvatski list* that referred to the situation of the Croatian immigrants after the war. Ivan Lupis, the editor of another newspaper, the *Hrvatski glas*, also dealt with the issue; he was explaining that the Croats, chiefly uneducated people, were unable to assimilate with the American community and were, amid all the hardships, easily attracted to the ideas of social revolution, hoping that it might improve their social position by force.[17] An interesting comment was offered by Josip Kraja, former active member of the American Socialist Party, "The immigrants' minds are still back in their old country. They keep reading the newspapers from home and form their opinion accordingly; instead of shouting "Save Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy"; by mistake, they call out, "Save America"."[18]

The *Hrvatski list* argued sharply with the *Zajedničar* about its writings which proclaimed that "upper-class politics" must not be let into the Society; it said, "The working class is being favored all the time and the "gentlemen" are being criticized and shouted at. Let us see who are these "gentlemen" in the Home Office who are being permanently attacked by the communists. As far as we know, the Croatian workers, helped by a few educated persons who were in most cases even poorer than the unskilled workers, founded the Society and led it to prosperity.

Our people who distinguished themselves by their skills or position in the community sat on different committees. They were invariably of peasant origin and all of them started to work hard immediately upon their arrival in America. Helped by great diligence, by saving and learning, many of them not only made their fortunes but also gained our respect and honor. Have they thus become "gentlemen" and rejected their name and their origin? On the contrary, they have always been true Croats and the devoted descendants of their forefathers. All we have said refers as well to Ljubić, Gvozdanović, Marohnić, Vrbos, Badovinac, Šepić, Pavlinac, Krstović, Božić, Hajdić, Lacković, Pavel, Rebrović, Budrović, and to many others because they have all been at one time or another members of the NCS Supreme Board. Those few among them who attended school in the old country or over here would not have succeeded by only being "gentlemen" had they not worked hard with all the others. If being rich means being a "gentleman", then as far as we know, our *salooners* or tradesmen are considered "gentlemen" in spite of having only attended elementary school, while people with college education can hardly make both ends meet. It goes without saying, that no such "gentlemen", as discussed in the old country, can possibly exist in our Society."[19]

The Supreme Board began worrying, however, when objections to their activity arrived even from some lodges. Lodge 435 of Youngstown accused the Supreme President and the *Zajedničar* editor. The Board was demanded to replace the editor, J. Ubojčić, and to punish the Supreme President T. Bešenić according to the NCS by-laws, article 30, paragraph 6, because of having partaken in the perilous writing of the *Zajedničar*. The quoted paragraph read, "The Supreme President and the editor are responsible for everything made public in the official organ." The accusation brought by the Youngstown lodge explained that the *Zajedničar* was only a duplicate of the *Znanje* newspaper advocating the Labor Party of the US and its internationalist principles; the editor was therefore violating article 30, paragraph 4 h) which said, "Keep alive the national consciousness among the Croats in the US and at the same time accentuate the importance and the meaning of Slavic mutuality and the US Constitution."

The Youngstown Society members reproached the *Zajedničar* for criticizing the political situation in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes since the newspaper kept forgetting that the Croatians were nationally suppressed in such a state. Lodge 438 was of the opinion that the *Zajedničar* editor was behaving arbitrarily by not publishing those writings by the lodges that he did not approve of, whereas whatever his sympathizers wrote, and even the Society's non-members, was always made public. The editor was therefore breaking the by-laws, article 30, paragraph 4f), which states, "The lodges are instructed to carry out their duty regularly and their letters and those of their members are to be published, whenever they are of interest to the Society and fraternalism."

"What is even worse, the editor includes individual articles from the *Znanje* newspaper, in which the lodges and their membership are constantly being criticized only because they do not adhere to the same political views. Herewith the editor of the Zajedničar newspaper is also

violating the by-laws article 30, paragraph 4g), which reads, "The articles expressing the need for unity of purpose among the individuals and the Society, with the aim of both instructing the members and educating them socially, are to be made public." The editor was also violating article 5 prohibiting "quarrels and personal attacks."

The impeachment by Lodge 438 was made public by the *Zajedničar,* but it was also called in question as its facts and data were incorrect and its interpretations completely wrong. The members of Lodge 438 were informed that the Croatian national consciousness was kept alive among the Croatians, but at the same time the *Zajedničar* explained Slav mutuality and warned all those who would use it for their own personal purpose. The Supreme Board, at its meeting held on July 29, 1921, reacted to the attacks by some Croatian papers and by several lodges and passed a special resolution. On the other hand, the *Zajedničar* carried the following conclusion, "Keeping all this in mind, to each intelligent person it is clear that the "accusations" are constructed so as to help disagreement and hatred enter the Society and thus enable "editors" like Tolić or Krajina and similar pretendents to the NCS President's office, to fish in troubled waters. How long is the membership going to allow such irresponsible people to trifle with their benefit Society, people who do not care in the least what the consequences of such plotting might be?"[20]

The Croatian fraternalists in America understood very well that the deepening of the political and ideological disagreements was quite unfavorable at this time because a much more significant issue was unfolding the merger of all the Croatian benefit societies into a unique and powerful association

The Merger of the Croatian Fraternal Organizations

The negative consequences of having several lodges break away from the National Croatian Society to lay foundations for other organizations were soon felt. The necessity of reuniting was reconsidered after this period of great crisis. There was a good deal of support by other Croatian newspapers when the *Zajedničar* in its articles backed the idea of a merger. In 1911, the *Slobodna štampa* (Free Press), the organ of the Californian Croats, approved the suggestion made by the *Zajedničar* that the Supreme Board of each association should nominate three members who would offer a unique proposal, establish common regulations, and present them to the convention of each association. Only after they had all expressed their agreement, all the Croatian fraternal organizations would merge. Yet, the *Slobodna štampa* was quite categorical in announcing that the membership was all for the merger action but the Supreme Board members were not as they obviously enjoyed being paid well and were afraid of losing good positions. The newspaper left no doubt that the organizations would unite only after their leadership had reached an agreement.[21]

Another Croatian newspaper from California, the *Jadran* of San Francisco, also spoke in favor of the merger and published the following text, "We do not care to investigate the reasons that have made the

HRVATSKA-SVEZA-NA-PACIFIKU

INKORP. U KOTARU SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA

Ovaj certifikat, izdan po glavnom odboru HRVATSKE SVEZE na PACIFIKU, dokazuje da je Ivan Jurić primljen — kao član ove organizacije, dne 10 lut 1915 te je osiguran na osmrtninu od hiljadu dolara ($ 1000.00) i ine pogodnosti, koje uživaju članovi ove organizacije uz uvjet, da su nje gori navodi prigodom pristupa u ovu organizaciju istiniti, te da se pokorava njezinim ustanovama i pravilima, koja su danas u krijepost i u buduće u krijepost stupe, kako se to od vremena do vremena zaključi na konvencijama. Gore označena osmrtnina imade se, nakon smrti gore spomenutog člana isplatiti kako slijedi:

Ivi Ani a svoj zakonitoj djeci na jednake dijelove

U svjedočanstvo toga, a u ime Hrvatske Sveze na Pacifiku, podpisuje ovaj certifikat glavni predsjednik i glavni tajnik; uz podpise udara se pečat Hrvatske Sveze na Pacifiku,

U SAN FRANCISKU, CAL. 6 srpnja 1925

Petar Knego
Glavni predsjednik

Glavni tajnik

Certificate, Croatian Unity of the Pacific, 1925

esteemed *Zajedničar* propose on several occasions the merger of all the Croatian organizations of America. The essential thing is that the idea is good and sound, and that it might be put into effect. But we did not want to consider the proposal and have waited for the decision made by the First Convention of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific. We have already informed the public in our latest issue that the Supreme Board of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific will be contacting the representatives of the two other organizations to discuss the matter."[22]

Useful information was also offered by the Croats from California. However, the right decision could only be made by the fraternalists from the states where most of the Croatians actually lived and where the most numerous organizations were in operation. This was clearly the case with the National Croatian Society and the Croatian League of Illinois.

The NCS Membership in Eleven American States
Years 1912 and 1921

State	Active Membership 1912	State	Active Membership 1921
Pennsylvania	8,210	Pennsylvania	12,626
Illinois	2,741	Illinois	4,061
Ohio	1,785	Ohio	3,484
Michigan	1,301	Michigan	1,371
Colorado	1,184	Montana	1,085
California	987	California	1,081
Montana	950	Indiana	1,047
Washington	776	Colorado	983
Missouri	747	Minnesota	929
Minnesota	708	Missouri	757
Total	19,389		27,444

The Croatian League of Illinois had also developed quite well. At the Fifth Convention held on May 3, 1915, the delegates learned that the League had a total membership of 7,000 organized in 99 lodges. Since its beginnings in 1905 until January 1, 1915, the League had disbursed $183, 879.50 in disability and death benefits.

The old-time intolerance that the League members had of the Pittsburgh fraternalists gradually disappeared, particularly during the war years when the two societies cooperated in numerous political and humanitarian activities. Niko Gršković was quite right when announcing in the *Hrvatski svijet*, "As far as we know, a great number of members of the League of Illinois are also NCS members, which is the best proof that all the differences between these two national organizations have been cleared away and that their members have become real brothers; they understand now that by promoting the interests of one organization they are also doing a lot of good to the other one. We are all sons of the one and the same nation that has suffered a great deal, the nation that could always trust only its own compatriots. It is mostly due to the latest conventions and their delegates' efforts that a spirit of mutual cooperation was entered into the by-laws, and everything that might have caused division among the members was left out. The efforts resulted with the mutual understanding between the two Croatian organizations, that is, between the Croatian League of Illinois and the National Croatian Society."[23] The opinion of the League members was very much in favor of the merger. At its Seventh Convention held in Milwaukee in June 1921, an official resolution was adopted stating that an effort should be made to unite all the Croatian societies of America. The same resolution was passed at the NCS Fourteenth Convention, and consequently the road to unity was opened.

The merger of the fraternal organizations was in all probability not only a question of good will. First of all, it was a process by which many complex issues could be solved. The immigrant press gave its whole attention to the matter and suggested most favorable solutions. The need and the reasons for the merger were to be analyzed. All this was especially clear with respect to the arrival of the new immigrants. A large number of Croatians came to the States towards the end of the 19th century and during the first decade of the 20th century. Therefore, many of the larger and smaller immigrant organizations were formed at that time. They were hoping that the new immigrants, upon arriving from the old country, would enroll in the societies. But World War One unexpectedly changed this situation. The arrival of newcomers was interrupted and the European immigrants in America were asked by the government officials of their countries to return home and join the army. This explains why the number of immigrants in America significantly decreased. However, the people from the countries that had been defeated in the war were expected to start immigrating in large numbers; conversely, the citizens of the states that had won the war were supposed to leave America and return home. Although in the first post-war years the process of returning somewhat increased, the expected mass return of immigrants never really occurred. Besides, the American authorities introduced additional restrictions with reference to immigrants so that the number of new arrivals was not as large as was expected.[24] All this was very much felt in the fraternal organizations as they received no more newcomers from the homeland. The elderly members, who used to return home in order to spend the rest of their lives with their families, did not do so any more. All these changes had a negative impact on the operation of the Croatian societies and the percentage of death benefits paid out grew significantly.

It goes without saying that the process of arrival and return of immigrants in America was closely linked with the development and survival of the relief organizations. Their successful operation depended directly on the number of members and they were therefore forced to find ways of increasing membership. Due to these new circumstances, the management of numerous relief organizations was making efforts and looking for the best solutions. Three sources could influence the growth of the membership. First, the number of members could be increased by a merger of the previously established organizations; second, there were still many immigrants who had been in America for several years but had not yet joined any of the organizations; the efforts to persuade these people to enroll were constant. The third and quite an important source was the Junior Order within the fraternal organizations.

The Croatian benefit societies were, first of all, of the opinion that the Croatian fraternal societies should be united as they had about 50,000 members in the first post-war years. The *Zajedničar* commented correctly, "It would be favorable for all organizations, for their membership and for all Croatian people in this country if the merger occured as soon as possible. None of our brothers or sisters should be denied this great opportunity because otherwise it would only harm both them and our national need as a whole. Let us all work together in harmony as

Antun Gazdić, President of the Croatian League of Illinois, 1915-1926, and the Supreme President of the Croatian Fraternal Union, 1926-1932

true brothers so that all of us might soon be joined together in a powerful union — the Croatian Fraternal Union."[25] The *Zajedničar* pointed out to all the Croatian fraternalists that further operation of several benefit societies was no longer of any use and that the time had come for the Croatian immigrants to work closely together. The main interest of the American fraternalists, if they were to survive, was a merger of all their organizations into one powerful union. The need of a merger was the most vital issue in the social life of the American Croats as a whole and was not only a wish and a necessity of the immigrants. Even American laws made this clear by requiring that the benefit societies operate well and be solvent at all times; in other words, all the societies were obliged to provide a special permit for their work, the so-called valuation. One should keep in mind that the merger was reflecting a national need: only if united could the Croatian immigrants promote their national conscience and create a better future for their juniors.

The Croatian fraternalists did not hesitate once the merger process started. Attempting to put into effect the resolutions passed at the previous conventions, they organized a meeting in the Chicago Office of the Croatian League of Illinois on February 20, 1922. The session was chaired by Anton Gazdić and the delegations of all fraternal societies attended, both their presidents and the supreme board members. The following delegations were present: the Croatian League of Illinois, the National Croatian Society, the St. Joseph Society of Kansas City, and the New Croatian Society of Whiting, Indiana. There were no representatives of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific, the Slovenic-Croatian Union of Calumet, and the Croatian Fraternity of Montana. However, they did support the merger proposal but could not send their delegates because of high costs. They promised to send their representatives once the idea and the basic merger principles had been adopted.

Anthony L. Lucas, the Legal Counsel, and Josip Grahek, the Medical Director, also attended the meeting. It was by no means insignificant that even the American experts for benefit societies were present. The most important item discussed was how the merger could be put into effect most easily and successfully. The number of members, properties, and total assets of particular organizations were specified exactly. The

laws of some American states in which benefit societies operated were analyzed in detail. Although the individual laws were practically identical or similar in at least all the states, the question of how the charter was to be issued in each particular state required careful consideration. A reduced committee was elected, next to the merger committee, in order to collect any further data about the benefit societies willing to join the merger. Consequently, the reduced committee was given the task of creating a draft for a merger contract. The draft was to be presented for approval to the merger committee. The American Insurance Commissioners would then be asked to prove the legal issues of the draft and find out whether it was equally useful and fair to all the parties so that no advantages could have been achieved by any of them. The charter for the merger could be issued only after all the contract articles had been examined and approved. The Chicago session also decided that the newly established organization would take over the obligations of all the merged societies. Accordingly, a member who was insured to a certain amount in several organizations would, if he continued to pay the same amount in dues, still have the identical insurance in force within the new union.

The merger would be put into effect only after each of the parties had been issued a charter by the respective state authorities and after two thirds of the delegates to the convention had agreed to the proposal for the merger contract. In order to reduce all unnecessary expenses, the NCS Legal Counsel, A. Lucas, suggested that the merger be carried out so that all other organizations joined the National Croatian Society. However, nobody agreed to such a suggestion because each of the organizations decided that a merger was in question and not an annexation. In any case, the charter would not have been easily issued to the new organization by the respective states unless it was proved that an actual merger was in process.

The members of the reduced committee elected at the Chicago meeting were Anton Katić of the National Croatian Society, Božo Jonić of the Croatian League of Illinois, Josip Renko of the St. Joseph Society of Kansas City, and Marko Smiljanić of the New Croatian Society of Whiting. Anton Katić was appointed President and Božo Jonić Secretary.[26]

The merger committee was faced with another complex task. Before the actual merger act could be drawn up, a great deal of work was to be done in view of the complex legal system of the respective states. Many of the jobs were time-consuming which forced the committee to meet a year later, on February 19, 1923, once again in the Chicago Office of the Croatian League of Illinois. The committee members agreed to the contract proposal, which was to be confirmed by all the interested parties. The contract is one of the most important documents in the history of the Croatian Fraternal Union and will, therefore, be quoted here in its integral form.

Merger Contract

of the Croatian Societies of America

The articles of the Contract signed among the Croatian League of Illinois, a fraternal and relief society, established and existing in accordance to the

law of the State of Illinois, with its seat in Chicago, Ill.; the National Croatian Society of the USA, a fraternal and relief society, established and existing in accordance to the law of the State of Pennsylvania, with its seat in North Side Pittsburgh, Pa.; the New Croatian Society, a fraternal and relief society, established and existing in accordance to the law of the State of Indiana, with its seat in Whiting, Ind.; and the St. Joseph Society of Kansas City, a fraternal and relief society, established and existing in accordance with the law of the State of Kansas, with its seat in Kansas City, Kansas.

Testify the following: the above mentioned societies are all established with one and the same aim and purpose, among others, to support the Croats and the Slavs and their families in times of need, and to promote their members to be worthy citizens and loyal towards the United States; and

Since it is desirable for the individual societies to merge and thus offer better protection to their countrymen; and

Since the management and the operation of the above mentioned societies can and should merge, for the sake of economizing and more successful activity, for the benefit of the respective societies' members, in order to lower the office rents and other expenditures, the salaries of board members and other officials as well as the other operating expenses;

Therefore, taking all the above mentioned facts into consideration, and promises made by the individual societies, they have signed this contract today, specifying as follows:

1) The above mentioned organizations are to merge into one organization, under the name of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

2) This Croatian Fraternal Union of America has all the rights, powers and privileges included in the charters of the respective organizations.

3) The said organizations, parties in this Contract, hereby approve all the by-laws and other rules of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America. The members of the parties in this contract, and the members of the Croatian Fraternal Union, have to behave in accordance to the included by-laws and all the subsequently added corrections and supplements to this Contract.

4) After the said organizations have merged, their members in good standing shall immediately become members of the newly established Union, and those members who have been suspended by their respective societies, with a right to reinstatement, shall become members of the new Union only after they have been reinstated.

5) The membership of each particular society is to be divided into groups according to age limits and according to a table of rate dues sufficient to cover the benefit claims of all certificate holders, the dues to be paid on the basis of a rate table no higher than the "American Experience Table of Mortality", at 4% interest: the payments are planned to be lowered according to a loan lent

to the members, and to be distributed fairly in accordance to the respective society assets, following the annual reports made on December 31, 1922.

6) The respective societies' members will, after the merger has come into being, gradually become members of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America, and will henceforth have the same protection, rights, power and all other privileges which the merged Union offers.

7) Each member may keep the certificate issued by the society he had originally joined, with the enclosed document showing the amount of the membership dues paid in and witnessing that the Croatian Fraternal Union of America has taken over all obligations; or, one can exchange the old certificate for the new CFU certificate, with no additional costs or dues.

8) Subsequent to the signing of this Contract, all possessions and real estate, wherever located, are to be moved and become the property of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America; each particular organization, i.e. each party in this Contract, is expected to distribute, duplicate and deliver all assets, ledgers and records in the form prescribed by the law, and do everything necessary in order to put into effect the duplication or transfer; the Croatian Fraternal Union of America subsequently takes over all obligations of disbursing death benefits and other compensation claims ensuing from the respective societies, and accordingly fulfills all other valid and lawful obligations for which the individual organizations had previously been responsible.

9) The board members of the above mentioned merged societies shall do their best to put the spirit of this contract into effect and offer all necessary help.

10) The board members of various lodges will keep their posts and perform their duties until new members are appointed and until the choice of their successors is approved according to the by-laws of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

11) The Contract parties have agreed that all medical certificates, guarantees, applications and membership entries are and shall be valid and obligatory for the members and their successors in every respect as though they had originally been made for or with the Croatian Fraternal Union of America.

12) The Croatian Fraternal Union of America is authorized to collect all monthly fees and assessment in dues not paid to date and claimed for by any of the above societies, as well as those assessed to the members in the future; the Croatian Fraternal Union of America is subsequently responsible for every payment of death benefit, and other claims that are, or will be due for payment, in accordance to this Contract.

13) All property belonging to the lodges of the respective societies, the parties in this Contract, remains the property of the respective lodges.

14) The Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America includes the following twelve appointed persons:

Mato L. Matanović, Božo Jonić, Mato Depeder, Tomo Bešenić, Vinko Solić, Vinko Vuk, Stjepan Bernardić, Vincent Piskulić, Tomo Vlašić, Marko Smiljanić, Dragutin Sambol, Michael J. Tomašić.[27]

They will be in charge of all the CFU operations together with the board members, the boards themselves and the other officials needed for the execution of this Contract and for all the CFU operations based on the Statute and the by-laws enclosed in this Contract.

In the six month period after this contract has been approved and has come into being, the Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America will be held and will include the following: the delegates elected in accordance to the CFU by-laws, the members of the merger committee, and the temporary board members of the respective societies who, according to the existing by-laws, and by virtue of their honor, have the right to be delegates to the Convention.

In order to fulfill the above conditions, the Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America is obliged to organize elections for the First Convention and to decide about the Convention site.

15) The CFU Supreme Board will offer further support to the home offices of all the respective societies as long as necessary, with the purpose of achieving a successful merger of the membership and establishing the operation of the merged societies. Before the First Convention is held and the by-laws approved, in the event of an unforeseen emergency, the Supreme Board is authorized to ask for help from the individual society officers and other officials in order to put the spirit and meaning of this contract into effect.

16) The Croatian Fraternal Union of America will maintain its temporary Headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pa., and fulfill its duty in accordance to the law of the State of Pennsylvania and the charter that had been issued to the National Croatian Society until the First Convention of the CFU. The Convention is to elect the final Headquarters and Home Office as well as branch offices wherever they may be necessary.

17) None of the board members or any other person has been promised any reward, commission, payment, gift or compensation of any kind for their services in helping or promoting the proposed merger of the above mentioned societies which are parties in this contract.

18) This Contract will be put into effect after it has been approved by a legal body or by the bodies of the Contract parties, and only after the approval of the Insurance Department of the states in which the respective societies have so far operated. It is the President's and the Secretary's duty to sign the Contract and seal it after it has been approved by a legal body or other authority of the respective party. It has been agreed that the Contract is not to be offered for approval to the Superintendent of Insurance until all its parties, who are willing to do so, have so agreed in the first place; the Contract is valid only when it has been approved without exception by each Superintendent of Insurance in the respective states and whose approval is a warrant of its validity.

The contents of the contract became known when they were made public by the immigrant press. The next step was to find principles for the merged organizations to rely on in accepting the contract. The National Croatian Society membership discussed the matter at the common session of the merger committee and the Supreme Board held in Pittsburgh on April 30, 1923. The session was supposed to determine how a legal vote could be organized through which the merger contract would definitely be adopted. After careful deliberation, the delegates concluded that the vote should be carried out at an Emergency Convention, which according to the by-laws and with a purpose of avoiding all risks, was to be held in Pittsburgh. The decision was reached unanimously.[28]

The St. Joseph Society of Kansas City considered the merger issue and the contract referring to it at the Supreme Board sessions of January 30, and February 14, 1923. The contract was unanimously "supported and thereby put into effect".[29]

Although the Croatian League of Illinois advanced and promoted the merger process, a certain amount of disagreement was obvious among its membership. In June 1923, a circular letter was published by Lodge 15 inviting the members to vote against the merger action. A statement was quoted by NCS Supreme President Bešenić who was reputed to have said that subsequent to the merger, the membership would be forced to pay much higher assessment in dues. The signatories to the circular letter thought that the membership should have been warned about it in advance.[30] Similar letters occasionally appeared and they, without doubt, discouraged the members. In the *Hrvatski glasnik* of Chicago, Ivan Lupis launched a real campaign censuring the way in which the merger was being carried out. Throughout his numerous articles, he analyzed the inadequacies of procedures, the violation of laws, and many other alleged faults and defects, all this with the purpose of preventing the merger. Lupis's perseverance made many of the fraternalists suspicious about his actual motives. In fact, Lupis had been sent to America by the Belgrade regime with a clear aim of exerting influence on the immigrants because the Belgrade authorities resented a possible establishment of a powerful Croatian union.

The Croatian League of Illinois was on the point of reaching a decision when the *Zajedničar* disclosed that the merger contract provided a new table of rates for the merged societies. This was clearly explained in the immigrant press so that it would be quite obvious what the real interests of the fraternalists were. The membership of the Croatian League of Illinois was aware of all these facts when it reached its final decision, having dealt with the issue for two and a half years. The St. Joseph Society of Kansas City had accepted the contract by that time and so had the New Croatian Society of Whiting. The National Croatian Society members adopted the Contract too, and the Supreme Board decided to hold the Emergency Convention on April 14, 1924. Had the

members of the Croatian League of Illinois rejected the merger action, the *Zajedničar* wrote, the whole campaign for merger would have proved useless, and so would the NCS Emergency Convention. With these words, the newspaper obviously influenced the opinion of the Illinois League membership in their fight with the forces opposed to the merger within their own ranks. [31]

In accordance to the law of the State of Illinois, the merger resolution could not have been passed by the Convention, but by an all member assembly. Each member had to be invited but was not obliged to attend the assembly meeting. In case of absence, a member could be represented by an authorized person. The Supreme Board decided to hold the assembly on January 13, 1924, and it was to be presided over by a special committee consisting of the same number of people who approved the merger and who opposed it. Heated and bitter arguments were exchanged at the debates that followed. Some members expressed the opinion that former societies were practically disappearing in the merger process and that new ones were being formed with a very uncertain future. The new union required higher dues to be paid which most of the members would not consent to. As a matter of fact, the criticism was mostly leveled at a too high table of rates. Many reproached the American attorney, Landis, for having planned and suggested a rate table that would have been justified only if the Croats had been employed in the most dangerous and risky jobs; on the other hand, quite a number of young people who had joined the Society were not engaged

Delegates to the National Croatian Society Emergency Convention, Pittsburgh, PA, April 14, 1924

in any hard or dangerous activities. Therefore, the rate table was not suited to the socio-economic position of the membership. Some delegates were afraid that such a rate table might even make a lot of elderly members and their families leave the society, although they had originally founded it and invested considerable sums of money by paying dues for years.[32] The members of Lodge 15 were complaining about the non-democratic manner of the merger procedure and the campaign launched against them due to the circular they had published.

Yet, a majority of the delegates spoke in favor of the merger and considered their opponents' arguments to be only general statements without any real proof. All fraternal organizations which thought of the future would eventually accept the usual rate table. The final count showed that 2,833 members voted in favor of the merger, whereas 1,301 voted against it.[33] At that time, the Croatian League of Illinois had, together with its Junior Order Department, 14,660 members gathered in 149 lodges and 100 nests.. Their assets totaled $597,887. In spite of the fact that only a minority of the membership attended the assembly, the resolution passed was valid as numerous members represented had voted by proxy. Having adopted the resolution, the Croatian League of Illinois actually agreed to the merger contract. However, the members of Lodge 15 did not give up attempting to prevent it and brought charges to the Chicago Court of Justice claiming that the Insurance Department, according to the law of the State of Illinois, was not authorized to allow the affiliation of an Illinois society with those operating outside the State. The accusation referred to the St. Joseph Society and the New Croatian Society.

The Supreme Board of the Croatian League of Illinois was discouraged by the legal proceedings which eventually concluded with the decision in favor of the merger. Consequently, the Central Educational Board of the Croatian societies of Chicago forwarded a letter to the Croatian League of Illinois Supreme Board demanding that the merger resolution passed at the assembly be put into effect.[34]

Though the Supreme Board of the St. Joseph Society had unanimously agreed to all the merger articles, everything did not go smoothly there either. According to the law of the State of Kansas, the merger could have been decided upon either at the Emergency Convention or through a vote of all the delegates who had attended the previous Convention plus the Supreme Board members. The Board decided on the latter and held the vote by mail. The result was 20 in favor and 10 opposed. The merger was agreed to, but the members of Lodge 1 went to court accusing the Board members of corruption. The validity of the resolution was once again postponed.[35]

The National Croatian Society held its Emergency Convention on April 14, 1924. It went smoothly and there was no significant opposition. A few delegates stated they had originally meant to vote against the merger, conforming to the instruction of their lodges, but they were completely reassured by the arguments they heard. The vote confirmed the firm wish of the membership to create a large Croatian organization; 184 votes were in favor and only five were opposed.[36]

Expressing its pleasure and approval of the resolution carried out by the Convention, the newspaper *Zajedničar* wrote, "All the boards of the merged societies as well as the merger committee are pleased that their endeavors were successful and were met with so much understanding among the membership. The Convention's resolution and the brave behavior of the delegates during the vote should make every honest member happy. The *Zajedničar* welcomes the final decision, feeling confident that making the articles public and backing the merger were quite fruitful, in spite of those who by their writing permanently tried to prevent it, claiming the Convention was not legal etc. (...) The *Zajedničar* has always been straightforward and honest. In its fight against selfishness, it has always been the winner at all levels. But during the course of the last year, its only concern was the merger of the societies. Having understood the need of our people to unite in this country, it spoke the honest truth in such a way that the reputed friends of the nation were not able to deny a single word it wrote; therefore, they started to scold those working for the merger. (...) Our people in America are quite conscious that their Croatian name cannot be taken away from them, and consequently, the Croatian cause cannot be endangered; the Croatian national feeling is not a piece of cloth that can be sold on the market. By the merger of the Croatian societies, the Croats have lost nothing; quite the contrary, they have been brought so closely together that they

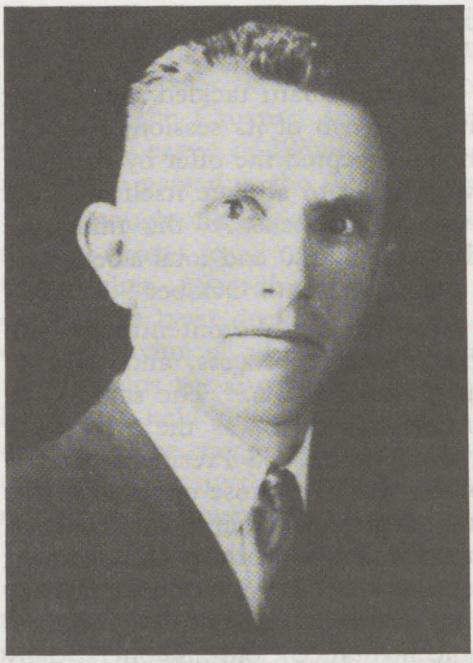
are capable of fighting back any attack on its organization, and they will, no doubt, fight bravely to the end."[37]

The National Croatian Society Supreme Board tackled the merger issue and all the problems linked with it at two of its sessions: June 4, and August 1, 1924. The Board members accepted the offer by the New Croatian Society of Whiting which was willing to affiliate itself with the NCS and include its membership and total assets. At the time, the membership, including the Junior Order, totaled 580 and total assets were $12,000. Yet the merger contract was not signed until October 9, 1925.

The Supreme Board members stressed their discontentment with the opposition demonstrated during the merger process, and tried to find ways to withstand a small group of malcontents.[38] The same issue was dealt with at the Fifteenth Convention, which was the final NCS convention, held in September 1924, in Detroit. NCS President Bešenić addressed the delegates with the following words, "Those opposed to the management would go to any lengths to achieve their goals; there is nothing they would not do in order to replace the working management and therefore exert even more influence on the NCS membership. They filed impeachment for the proceedings to the courts of law, brought accusations to the authorities and to the Insurance Commissioners; daily use of all sorts of deception and slander was on the agenda with one and the same aim."[39]

The Fifteenth Convention was held on September 15 to 17, 1924, at the Romanian Hall in Detroit, Michigan. There were 184 delegates in attendance representing 405 lodges and 44,081 members. The total assets had grown significantly too. At the 1921 Convention, the total assets had passed the million-dollar mark ($1,143,275.57) and had in the meantime grown to $1,681,909.36.

The Convention dedicated most of its time to the achievements of its educational work. In his address, the President explained in detail the activities of the Central Educational Board. He pointed out the publication of a primer entitled *Abecedarka*, printed in 7,500 copies, whose purpose was to teach young members Croatian. The Educational Board had also ordered from Zagreb 8,000 copies of instructive and amusing titles by well known Slav authors. *Čitanka* (Reader) was also published and 7,500 copies were printed; its aim was the mastery of the mother tongue. Furthermore, two interesting booklets were issued by the Central Educational Board in several thousand copies. The first one was meant for the adult immigrants and contained some instructions on how to become American citizens. The other one taught the immigrants how to organize and lead sessions and tackle items on the agenda so as to achieve the best results. The Central Board sold some ten thousand copies of the above mentioned titles, selling them in low-price sets and distributing them to the communities; as a result, 44 Croatian libraries were established at the time.



Dragan Sambol, President of the Sv. Josip Society, Kansas City, Kansas

Along with the activity of the Central Educational Board, the educational boards within many fraternal organizations and their lodges were in operation too and were contributing to the expansion of its influence.

The delegates to the 1924 Convention were quite satisfied with the educational work of the Society and adopted a resolution supporting the former educational work and recommending to the boards even more intensive and productive activities in the future. Yet this worthwhile activity became less intensive as the board members were soon involved in political disputes. The members, trying to avoid such political conflicts, gradually withdrew from the educational boards which consequently grew smaller. Even the cultural activities were faced with the same crises for the same reason.[40]

The delegates to the Fifteenth Convention did not forget their compatriots in the old country. Having heard about the effects of a severe drought in the homeland, the Supreme Board collected $13,000, and with $10,000 more from the National Fund, forwarded the money to Croatia. The amount was deposited in a special fund in Zagreb and was meant to aid the families of the immigrants who had disappeared or had been killed or hurt in various accidents in America. The *Narodna zaštita* (Civil protection) of Zagreb took care of the money.

The Fifteenth Convention also adopted the resolutions concerning the merger which had been passed at the previous Emergency Convention held in Pittsburgh. By this act, the National Croatian Society, the most successful benefit organization of the American Croats to date, ceased to exist.

The merger process of the relief societies was slowly but successfully coming to an end. Finally, on January 26, 1925, the Chicago Court of Justice closed the proceedings connected with the controversy within the Croatian League of Illinois. The court passed judgment in favor of the merger adherents. Consequently, the Department of Trade and Commerce sent the NCS management in Pittsburgh a letter announcing, "For the reasons explained by the Attorney General and those given by the Head of this Department, the merger is granted of the Croatian societies, that is, of the Croatian League of Illinois, the National Croatian Society of the USA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the St. Joseph Society

of Kansas City, Kansas, and the certificates of the approval have been sent to the respective government departments."[41]

Another piece of good news was heard from Kansas City where the Supreme Court rejected the accusations brought by the opponents of the merger and all further proceedings in this affair were canceled. As a result, the affiliation of the St. Joseph Society with the other two organizations was formally confirmed. It must not be forgotten, though, that the disputes had an unfavorable influence on the Society itself resulting in a decrease in membership and total assets. Late in 1922, there were 1,200 members, while during the merger period there were only 366 of them left, and the total assets had been reduced to $98,825.53. Even a debt of $2,600 was incurred. But this was a minor matter compared to the overall success of Croatian fraternalism during the merger. On December 31, 1925, the total assets of the newly merged organization had grown to $3,032,914.50.

The Supreme Board of the new organization, the Croatian Fraternal Union, assembled at its first session on November 30, 1925. According to the merger contract, its members were: Mato L. Matanović, Božo Jonić, Mato Depeder, Tomo Bešenić, Vinko Šolić, Vinko Vuk, Stjepan Bernardić, Vincent Piškulić, Tomo Vlašić, Dragutin Sambol, and Michael J. Tomašić. The Board was of a temporary character and its first and foremost goal was to prepare the First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union; but it also had to solve some technical problems. First of all, the management of the new organization was elected: Tomo Bešenić became President, Dragutin Sambol, Vice-president, Mato Matanović, Secretary, and Božo Jonić, Supreme Treasurer.

The Supreme Board had to resolve the transfer of the previous organizations' assets to the Croatian Fraternal Union. It also determined in which banks and in what way the CFU branches would deposit the money. The certificates were carefully defined, and the signing and handing in to the new members were precisely determined. The Board adapted the new organization by-laws to those of the merged societies. The by-laws of the lodges and some other issues were also analyzed in detail, like the Junior Order, the Orphanage and the educational activities of the former organizations. It was agreed that the First Convention was to be held in Cleveland on May 3, 1926.

A great deal of members dropped out of their organizations because of various court proceedings that prolonged the signing of the contract for almost three years. This was why the Supreme Board decided that each person whose membership had ceased, because of the failure to pay membership fees and assessment dues in the course of 1925, may join the Croatian Fraternal Union, provided that a health certificate was produced and the regular monthly dues paid. It was resolved also that the *Glasnik* newspaper, issued by the Croatian League of Illinois, and the *Izvjesnik*, the organ of the St. Joseph Society, would stop publication and only the *Zajedničar* would continue publishing the new orga-

nization's reports; the membership was to be informed about all the conclusions.

The new emblem of the Croatian Fraternal Union was also discussed. After President Bešenić had offered several drafts, the majority of the Board members voted in favor of a round checkerboard crest on a white background framed in blue. The Croatian coat of arms was topped by the American eagle and the text around it read 'Croatian Fraternal Union of America'. The official checkerboard crest has 25 alternating red and white squares but so many could never have been incorporated in the emblem because that would have made it too large.

Sharp arguments were exchanged within the Supreme Board as to the seat of the new organization. Four cities were suggested, all onetime centers of the Croatian societies: Pittsburgh, Chicago, Kansas City, and Cleveland where the First Convention was to be held. Feeling the issue was not easy to solve, the Board members decided to let the *Zajedničar* channel the discussion "in such a way as to offer very little chance to the membership for serious conflict, as arguments and controversy would be detrimental to the approaching convention."[42]

The merger of the Croatian fraternal societies was, in spite of all the controversy and the difficulties that accompanied it, a great achievement for the Croatian fraternalists and for all American Croats. By this they proved their capability of following the development of American fraternalism and of understanding the social changes in their new country. They became thoroughly aware of the ways in which they could help their homeland Croatia best. The establishment of the Croatian Fraternal Union meant the beginning of a new era of American fraternalism - a new era for all Croats of America.

Notes:

1. The minutes of the NCS Thirteenth Convention, Chicago, 1918; the Supreme President's report.
2. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Pittsburgh, September 25, 1918.
3. The minutes of the NCS Thirteenth Convention, Chicago, 1918; the Supreme President's report.
4. *Zajedničar,* July 27, 1920.
5. The minutes of the NCS Fourteenth Convention, Pittsburgh, 1921, p. 79.
6. Ibid.; the Supreme President's report.

   "Since the establishment of the National Croatian Society until August 1, 1922 , the number of deceased members was 6,251 and 1,396 of their spouses; death benefits paid out amounted to $5,734,718.75. Within the same period and in accordance to the NCS by-laws, the amount of $816,920 was disbursed for disability benefits. The NCS activated sickness benefit in September 1902, and until August 1, 1922, it covered 3,281 members, while the amount disbursed was $1,175,388.84. In the twenty-eight year span, the lodges spent some $9,000,000 for sickness benefit coverage and charities. (*Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* p. 36)

7. The minutes of the NCS Fourteenth Convention; the Supreme President's report, p. 9.
8. *Zajednički kalendar 1923,* the NCS Educational Board, Pittsburgh, p. 76
9. Franjo Kolander replaced Father Niko Gršković at the post of the *Zajedničar* editor-in-chief in 1912.
10. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Chicago-Pittsburgh, September 8, 1921.
11. *Jugoslavenski svijet,* New York, December 5, 1919.
12. See Chapter Five *National Croatian Society in the American Workers' Movement,* p.
13. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* p. 13.
14. Ibid., p. 152.
15. In 1921 the *Narodni list* editor, Stjepko Brozovi, ended his long term cooperation with Franjo Zotti. Publication of the *Narodni list* ceased and Stjepko Brozović launched the *Hrvatski list.*
16. *Hrvatski list,* New York, September 26, 1922.
17. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Chicago, April 20, 1921.
18. Ibid., March 23, 1922.
19. *Hrvatski list,* September 19, 1922.
20. *Zajedničar,* July 5, 1922.
21. Ibid., September 6, 1911.
22. Ibid., September 27, 1911.
23. *Hrvatski svijet,* New York, February 1, 1915.
24. For the Eastern and Southern European states, strict immigration limits were introduced. The US immigration law, passed in 1921, limited the number of immigrants into the USA to precisely 3% of the total population of the respective country of emigration according to the 1910 census. In conformity with this law, the limit for the Yugoslav immigrants to the US was 6,426 persons a year. In 1924, however, the new restriction law was passed, allowing only 2% of the total population of the respective country of emigration, now according to the 1890 census. According to this law, the immigration quota for Yugoslavia was lowered to only 671 persons a year.

    In spite of a small number of immigrants from Yugoslavia, rumors of rough or cruel treatment on Ellis Island were often heard. Consequently, at the Fourteenth Convention, the NCS Supreme Board decided to employ an extra official with the Elis Island Immigration Office; he would take care of the Croatian immigrants. The conclusion was supposed to receive support both by the other South Slav benefit societies and the American authorities. (*Hrvatski glasnik,* Chicago, October 21, 1921).
25. *Zajedničar,* March 7, 1923.
26. Ibid., March 8, 1922.
27. Ibid., March 14, 1923. The contract was made public on November 29, 1925, by the *Svijet* newspaper of New York. A list of the Supreme Board members known to date was also published. The explanation for publishing the integral text of the contract is quite interesting, "We have noticed that a large number of members of the merged societies were not familiar with the contract approved by voting and confirmed by the state authorities. The contract (including temporary by-laws) was already published at the beginning of last year, but many of those who read it have surely forgotten what it said, and many of them do not it any more to read it again. For these reasons, we consider that it would be useful to the membership of the Croatian soci-

eties, that is to the Croatian Fraternal Union members, if we published the contract in its integral form. And one more suggestion to our friends: keep it, just in case."

28. *Zajedničar,* May 23, 1923.

29. The St. Joseph Society was established in 1892. In the beginning, the Slovenes were part of it too. A misunderstanding arose later when they demanded that not a single Croatian be allowed to assume any office as long as there were seven Slovene members in the Society, and that the Croatian language must not be used at the sessions. The Croats decided that both languages should be used and that officials should be chosen from among all the members. Subsequently, the Slovenes left the Society, but despite that it developed well. (Davorin Krmpotić, *Povijestne crtice hrvatske župe svetoga Ivana Krstitelja,* Kansas City, Kansas, 1900-1925, p. 10).

30. *Zajedničar,* June 20, 1923.

31. Ibid., January 2 and 9, 1924.

32. The high and unfavorable table of rates was an everlasting problem causing a lot of discontent. The *Hrvatski list* wrote, "Injustice has been done to us, the old-time members. It is us, the elderly people, who have established numerous lodges and have made hundreds and thousands of members join the Society; we have laid solid foundations by convincing our brothers to join our ranks, we have built this firm house and today - instead of being rewarded for our hard and sacrificing work - we are being thrown out of our own home. ... By the New Year, we are being forced to choose: either we become new members and pay dues according to our age or we leave the home we have been building through hard work and which we have finally built! For us old-time members it is best to be quiet and remain in the National Croatian Society." (*Hrvatski list,* January 3, 1925).

On the eve of the merger, the NCS membership age was very favorable:

The NCS membership age groups in 1918 according to life insurance:

Age		Life Insurance					Total
		200	400	600	800	1000	Spouses
16-25 years	31	222	94	4853	1062	43	6305(15%)
26-35 "	76	490	173	14410	1413	1291	17853(42%)
36-45 "	39	292	126	9360	699	1715	12231(29%)
46-55 "	14	141	37	3807	90	1088	5177(13%)
56-65 "	1	6	/	850	/	351	1208(/2%)
		0%	3%	1%	78%	8%	10%
Total	162	1151	430	33280	3264	4488	42774(100%)

Out of the CFU total membership of 53,945, in May 1926, there were 5,139 aged 50 - 60, and 1,880 persons aged 60 - 83. Total: 7,019.

33. The minutes of the Emergency Assembly of the Croatian League of Illinois, Chicago, January 13, 1924.

34. Ibid.

35. The minutes of the St. Joseph Society Supreme Board, Kansas City, April 21, 1924; *Zajedničar,* April 9, 1924.

36. *Zajedničar,* April 23, 1924.

37. Ibid.

38. The minutes of the NCS Executive Board, Pittsburgh, June 4, 1924.

39. *Zajedničar,* September 24, 1924.

40. Poor work of the educational boards caused by the introduction of politics will be shown through the experience of the Croatian Society of Cleveland. Croatian radicals there were trying hard to exert greater influence upon the lodges of the Croatian fraternal organizations. In 1921, the educational boards in Cleveland initiated courses for the illiterate, helped the activities of the *Sloboda* choir and the choir of St. Paul's Church, of the *Balkan* tamburitza orchestra and others. They helped build the *Hrvatski dom.* The work of the educational boards went so well that the Central Educational Board was founded, affiliating all the Cleveland boards. The Yugoslav section members of the Labor Party felt that the growth of cultural and educational activities might be useful in fulfilling their plan to "submit the cultural interest to the working class interest". They were naturally met with resistance by the Croatian Catholic parishes but much more so by the "Yugoslav Educational Union"(...) That clash weakened the activities of the educational boards and the failure of the Yugoslav section of the Labor Party showed that after all they had no significant influence on the Croatian ethnic community in Cleveland. (I. Čizmić, *Povijest hrvatske naseobine u Clevelandu, Ohio, 1880-1930,* Institut za migracije i narodnosti, Zagreb, 1990, p. 129).

41. Ibid., November 18, 1925.

42. Ibid., December 9, 1925.

Chapter Eight

THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES

During the 1920's, a new political disintegration occurred among the Croatian immigrants in the USA. It was caused by the occasional economic crises and unemployment. The dissatisfaction among the immigrant workers was reinforced even more by the American Government's restrictive measures concerning immigration and its attempt to register non-citizens, which essentially meant discrimination. Therefore, an increasing leftist attitude and even radicalism was strongly felt among the workers and the Croats alike. This was used by the Croatian communists who gathered around the Yugoslav section of the Labor Party (later the Communist Party) of the USA, having without doubt the largest number of members in it.[1] Since 1922, they grew more and more interested in the Croatian fraternal organizations, incessantly criticizing in their official organ the *Radnik* the allegedly counter-labor politics of these organizations. However, it should be pointed out that the Croatian communists advocated the merger of the fraternal organizations through the *Radnik* newspaper and by means of the propaganda activities among the members in order to take over the leadership of the merged societies. The September 1, 1922 issue of the *Radnik* wrote, with respect to the communists' program, "Their intention is not to establish the Communist Party out of the National Croatian Society, but as the NCS representatives and using its influence, to agitate successfully for the communist cause and spread its literature, thus winning over the members of the National Croatian Society to join the Labor Party of the USA." The communists founded the Progressive Labor Bloc among the NCS members. Its program stated, among other things, that it was not true that they wanted to destroy the Croatian Fraternal Union but, conversely, that they were on its side. They claimed that it was not true that they were going to transform the Society into a political party as accused of by some Croatian newspapers. It was the mission of the Croatian com-

munists to oppose "the united Yugoslav reaction which wants to submit the Croatian Fraternal Union to the American and Yugoslav bureaucracies."[2]

Uneasiness was felt among the Society members caused by the communists' plans. Some Croatian newspapers claimed that the resistance on the part of the fraternalists was actually resulting from fear of submitting the merged Society to the communists' influence.

The revival of numerous political activities among the Croats in the USA was also a result from the constant news coming from Croatia about the national oppression of the Croatian people by the great-Serbian regime in Belgrade. Croatians of different political orientations, including the communists, were all united in their political support of their compatriots in Croatia. A platform for a new Croatian national program among the American Croats was established and its adherents from the fraternalists' ranks gathered around the so-called National Bloc which was founded by the Chicago fraternalists.

The uneasiness caused by the communists' efforts to gain predominance in the Croatian fraternal organizations was first shown by the "educators" who gathered around the *Znanje* newspaper and the Yugoslav Educational Alliance. They had exerted influence on the National Croatian Society ever since the 1918 Convention and took over the Society's management. By means of their educational program and the organization of educational boards within the NCS, they basically offered the American Croats a worthy program of education, literacy and enlightenment. But to the "educators", the former members of the Socialist Party of the US and presently the members of the Labor Party, the educational program meant "reformism, revisionism and opportunism" among the workers.[3] Therefore, fierce arguments were exchanged on the pages of the *Zajedničar* and in the writings of the *Radnik* newspaper between the "educators" of the NCS and the communists. The *Zajedničar* was blamed for the reputed censuring of the workers' organization activities. The *Zajedničar* editor, Milan Petrak, struck back sharply. He warned that the *Zajedničar* was the official organ of the Society membership, and not of any party. Through its writings, the newspaper did its duty in defending the honor of the Society and its members. Petrak claimed that he was completely right in his censuring of the activities of the communist Zinić who, even though was not a Society member, was instrumental in the election of the Detroit Convention delegates. It was not right, said Petrak, that the interests of a small political "sect" should be above the interests of a whole Society.[4]

As time passed, the "educators" lost their influence among the fraternalists because of their "political idealism" at a time when more and more American Croats joined workers' and political organizations. These organizations advocated better and clearer ways of solving the social problems in America and of offering greater help to the people in Croatia. A growing number of Society members and many "educators" joined

the National Bloc; Milan Petrak, the editor of the *Zajedničar,* was among them. Besides, the communists were supported by Niko Gršković, a prominent and longtime public worker who, in the meantime, had left the priesthood.

Gršković had never formally joined the communists but came to feel an affinity for the revolutionary events of the time, obviously very much impressed by the changes of the world after the war. The national party adherents severely reproached him because of this. Their leader, Ivan Butković, attacked the "red internationalists" ("crveni bezdomovinaši") because of their threats to take over the leadership of the Society at the following convention, warning them that the Croatian Fraternal Union would remain a Croatian national relief organization in the full sense of the word. "We shall not allow the American officials to break through the Home Office of the Union which has gained the reputation of being a true representative of the American Croatians and their national feeling. We shall not allow the activities of a conspiring group for which the CFU might lose its charter. Niko Gršković is active again, and so is his aspiration to control the public activities of the Croats in America." Butković reproached Gršković for not allowing his abilities serve the Croatian people. He reproached him for changing his political attitudes already while in Croatia where he began as a member of the Party of the Right, and a supporter of the National Party. In America he became a Yugoslav, a monarchist, a republican and, finally, an adherent of Stjepan Radić's Croatian Peasant Party. In Butković's opinion, Gršković should have finally been asked to explain himself to the Croatian public in America and to take an honest stand on the Croatian Fraternal Union.[5]

The nationalists were quite worried about the outcome of the first CFU Convention, so they developed a rather strong propaganda among the membership. Consequently, in March 1926, they sent a letter to the American Croats which read, "We find ourselves facing some important developments, maybe the most important ones in the history of the American Croats. Three of our largest societies in America have been merged to form the great Croatian Fraternal Union, and this is, beyond argument, the greatest and the most important event in the history of the immigrant Croats." The signatories of the letter pointed out that the Convention of the merged societies was about to happen, so it was their duty to warn all the lodge leaders that the future, the reputation and the welfare of the Croatian immigrants depended on the election results of the Convention. They reminded them of the leaflets and letters that had been sent along with accurate instructions on how to elect delegates; now they were being asked to bring together all the nationalists, regardless of their political convictions, and to elect as delegates only the nationalists. The signatories cautioned the lodge leaders that the Croats lived in a democratic America whose public opinion was opposed to radicalism and bolshevism. Therefore, the people who were not welcome to a free America would be of no use to the leadership of the Croatian Fra-

ternal Union. "To maintain the reputation of the Union and all the immigrant Croats, we appeal to you as Croatians and patriots and lodge leaders, to use all your power, respectability and influence so as to elect as delegates only those faithful to the national cause and having nothing in common with communism. Only if the delegates to the Convention are persons of integrity and strong character will the Convention be proper and genuinely national."[6] However, some newspapers were against bringing politics into the Union membership. The *Hrvatski list* and *Danica Hrvatska* wrote that good Union members, workers by profession and Croats by feeling, should strive for a greater, steadier and more effective Croatian Fraternal Union which should be no party's agent. There must be no party or religious dissension within the Union if it was to operate better, more justly and more appropriately for the well-being of its membership.[7]

The First Convention, the longest on record in CFU history, was held from May 3 to 22, 1926 at the Slovene Auditorium in Cleveland, Ohio. There were 310 delegates present from all three of the merged societies, along with 54 officers, all with voting rights. It was the largest voting body of Croatians ever assembled at a fraternal society convention. The new organization had 467 lodges and a combined membership of 53,945, with total assets of $3,628,932.08. In addition to being the longest convention in the history of the Society, never equaled before or after, it was also the most expensive, costing the membership $137,181.07. Ivan D. Butković of Pueblo, Colorado, was Chairman. He was later to serve as the Supreme President of the Society.

The first CFU Convention aroused great interest on the part of the press. It was covered by the *Novi svijet* and the *Radnik* newspapers, both of Chicago, the Cleveland newspapers the *Enakopravnost* and the *Radnička borba,* by the *Naša nada* and the *Prosveta* and the New York *Svijet.* Journalists from the Foreign Language Information Service were covering the American press. The Convention sent greetings to the President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, "The delegates of the CFU of America, representing eighty thousand American Croats gathered at the Convention, are sending their greetings and congratulations to you as the President of the United States." A telegram with the same content was also sent to Governor of the State of Ohio D. Danohey. Chief Justice John P. Dempsey greeted the Convention on behalf of the City of Cleveland. He congratulated the Croatians on the level of unity of purpose that had been achieved. He explained to the delegates that he got to know the Croatian people quite well as it so happened that he had spent some time on the Adriatic coast after World War One.

First of all, the Convention had to solve the problem of the Union headquarters. Four towns were suggested as future convention sites too: Pittsburgh, Chicago, Kansas City and Cleveland. After the first vote, none of them received a majority: Pittsburgh got 153 votes, Chicago 117, Kansas City 53 and Cleveland 35 votes. In the second ballot, 203 votes were in favor of Pittsburgh, whereas Chicago got 155 votes; and so Pittsburgh was chosen as the CFU headquarters. Tomo Bešenić remind-

ed the delegates, "Once upon a time, the State of Pennsylvania formed four fifths of the membership. All that we have today and that we are proud of has originated in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was the foundation stone on which the future of our organization was built. There are no valid reasons to change the headquarters of our biggest organization. The center of the USA is not as important as the center of our people in the USA, and that is Pittsburgh. Everything is fine there; we have a

Delegates to the First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Cleveland, Ohio, 1926

charter and we will not have any problems."[8] The election of Pittsburgh was approved by all the delegates. A. Gazdić, the President of the former Croatian League of Illinois, stressed that nobody should feel any envy because of the election of Pittsburgh, but that everybody should strive for continued fraternal progress and strength of the Croatian Fraternal Union.

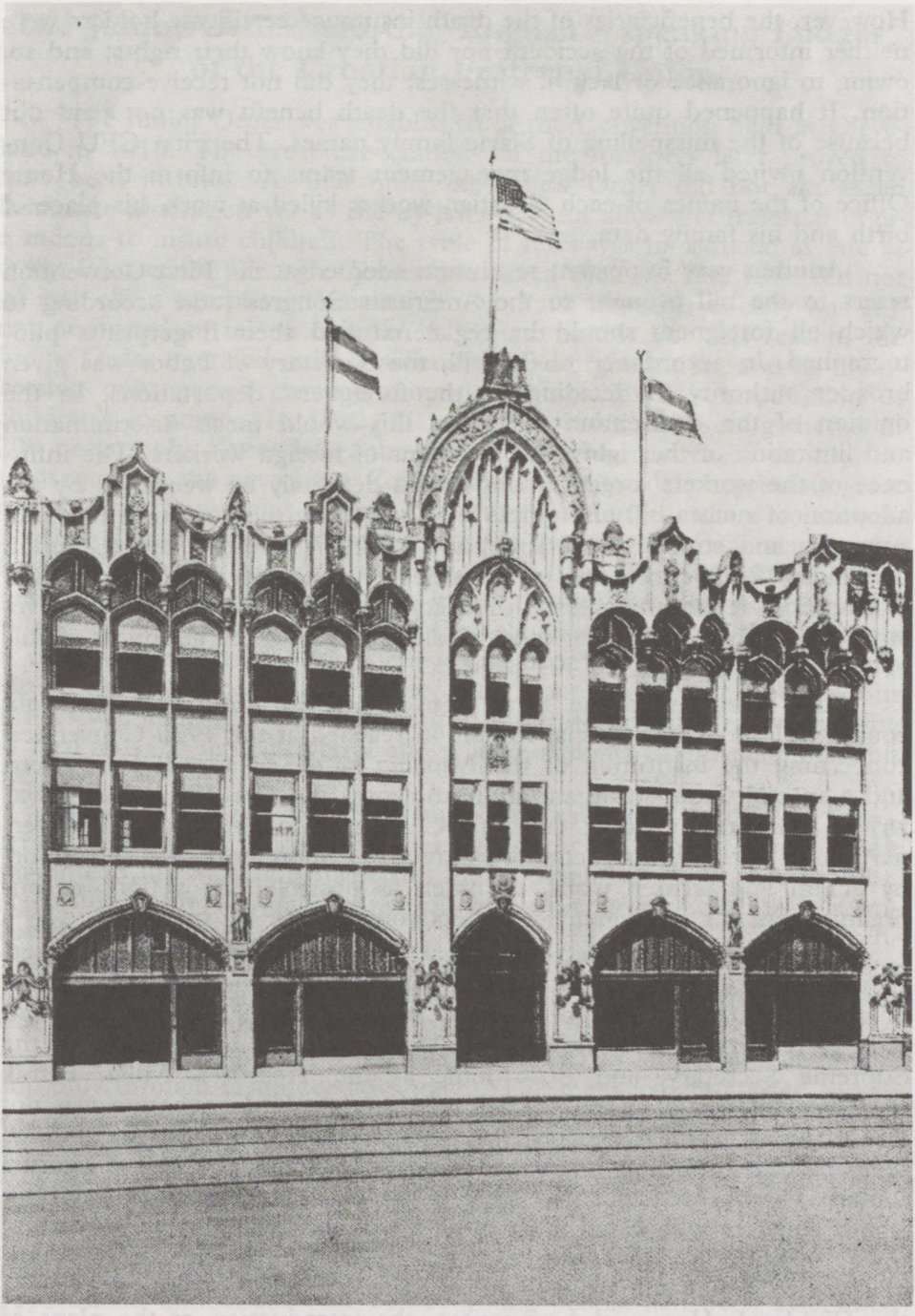
The problem of the Union's Home Office building was also deliberated at the Convention. Both the National Croatian Society and the Croatian League of Illinois had their own buildings respectively in Pitts-

Laying the foundation stone for the new Society building, 3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA

burgh and Chicago. However, the Pittsburgh offices were no longer suitable for the activities of such a big organization, so the delegates decided to sell the offices both in Pittsburgh and Chicago and to have a new building built. The conclusion reached reads as follows, "Owing to the fact that existing buildings no longer answer the new demands, the First CFU Convention has reached a conclusion to authorize the future CFU Supreme Board to take all the steps needed in order to sell the buildings at their best price. It is also concluded that the Supreme Board should in the nearest future build or buy a new building which should answer the best interests of the CFU in the years to come."[9] The decision was realized and the new Home Office building of the CFU was built at 3441 Forbes Avenue in Pittsburgh's Oakland district.

According to the by-laws, the next convention should have taken place in four years' time, but the delegates changed it and moved that the second convention of the Union be held in 1929, in St. Louis, Mo. At the First Convention, a few key resolutions were reached confirming that the CFU is a workers' and a patriotic organization.

The resolution providing the benefits for the families of the killed workers stated that many Croatians were killed at work. A right of compensation was insured to the families of the deceased by the state laws.



The CFU Home Office, 3441 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA

However, the beneficiaries of the death insurance certificate holders were neither informed of the accident nor did they know their rights; and so, owing to ignorance or lack of witnesses, they did not receive compensation. It happened quite often that the death benefit was not paid out because of the misspelling of Slavic family names. The First CFU Convention invited all the lodge management teams to inform the Home Office of the names of each Croatian worker killed at work, his place of birth and his family data.

Another very important resolution adopted at the First Convention refers to the bill brought to the American Congress and according to which all foreigners should be registered and their fingerprints photographed. In accordance to the bill, the Secretary of Labor was given broader authority in deciding on the foreigners' deportations. In the opinion of the Convention delegates, this would mean discrimination and limitation of the rights and freedoms of foreign workers. The influence of the workers' organizations would definitely be weakened by the adoption of such a bill and employers, helped by the government, could supervise and control the immigrant workers. Therefore, the resolution demands, "Be it concluded by the delegates gathered at the First CFU Convention representing sixty thousand Croatian-Americans in Cleveland, Ohio, that we protest most resolutely against the adoption of this or any other similar bill."

The delegates to the First Convention did not forget their old country, Croatia. In a special resolution reached at the 1926 Convention concerning the institution of the *Narodna zaštita* (National Protection) and a special Croatian organization known as the *Hrvatski radiša*, it was written, "Be it concluded: this First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union herewith instructs the future CFU Supreme Board to support by action and written word, as much as possible, the actions of our organizations for the benefit of the economy in the old country."

Under the firm leadership of Ivan Butković, the Convention elected the new leadership of the Union: Antun Gazdić, the former President of the Croatian League of Illinois, was elected Supreme President; Kuzma Kuharić was elected as the Vice-President, Vinko Šolić as the Supreme Secretary, and Božo Jonić as the Treasurer. Milan Petrak remained the editor of the *Zajedničar.* Although the Convention was not free of some political debates, the delegates spent most of the time in deliberations regarding important problems of the Croatian Fraternal Union. They proved that they were in the first place Croatian fraternalists of America who cared most of all about the evolution and future of their organization. This was particularly obvious in the debates and conclusions regarding the juniors, the so called "English-operating lodges", the Children's Home, and of course, the introduction of the plans of insurance to the CFU. It was on the grounds of the debates and conclusions of the First Convention that these important CFU institutions were developed in the years ahead.

The Junior Order and the 'English - speaking Lodges' of the Croatian Fraternal Union

The Junior Order was established at the Convention held in Cleveland in 1915. The great expectations of the founders later proved to have been justified. At that time, the Junior Order did not act as an insurance institution yet as the by-laws did not allow the fraternal organizations to insure children. The table of rates was introduced as late as at the Thirteenth Chicago Convention. Even then the rate table did not go into effect completely because the National Croatian Society was still not permitted to insure children in certain states. For this reason, the Junior Order operated only as an educational organization, and its membership only started growing somewhat later with the introduction of children's insurance. In 1922, there were 12,000 members gathered in 200 nests; only a year later, the membership had increased to 13,000. Consequently, the newspaper *Zajedničar* issued an article expressing great contentment; it reads as follows, "By its promotion in various communities our Junior Order is getting a solid basis which will render the National Croatian Society more powerful. The more our membership continues giving moral support to its youth, and if it does so in harmony and agreement with the Junior Order management and the members of our lodge boards, the more our young people will be attracted to the Junior Order; with coming of age, and according to our by-laws, our juniors will join the NCS ranks, and as a result our organization is going to turn into the most powerful and reliable support to our people in this country."[10]

According to the NCS Supreme Board estimates, 1,100 new members were expected to join the Junior Order each year, which would have guaranteed the Society a successful future development. To achieve this, especially in the merger period, the *endowment policy* was to be introduced. Based on such an insurance system, each member with the twenty-year coverage of premium would have the same amount of money plus the corresponding interest refunded. The endowment policy meant a more favorable investment than most of the banks could offer.

However, the Junior Order was not trying to attract new membership only through insurance advantages. The management started to win over new members systematically: the *Zajedničar* began the practice of publishing the names of those members who had not joined the NCS, although they could have done so. Afterwards, many were usually persuaded by their friends to join the Society.

While addressing the delegates at the First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Mrs. Danica Rački, head of the Junior Order Department, announced that 19,000 young people had been assembled in 250 Junior Order nests so far, and that the assets totaled $135,000. She also informed the Convention that 90 per cent of the members who had come of age joined the Society ranks as soon as the credit rate table was approved at the NCS Fifteenth Convention in Detroit.[11]

The mere phenomenon of such membership growth in the Junior Order proved at the 1926 CFU Convention that, in adition to the usual topics, the situation of the young people and their program of activities within the Junior Department needed thorough analysis. The question resulted in considerable controversy in the *Zajedničar* in the early thirties and special attention was given to the issue by the editor of the newspaper's English section, Michael J. Horvat. As a child, he arrived in America with his parents and was educated in the USA. Horvat observed that many fraternal organizations took greater care of their Junior Order only after it had become evident that their membership increased considerably. He did not refer only to the organizations influenced by the immigration restriction laws; even the fraternal organizations of ethnic groups not included in the USA immigration restrictions organized campaigns in order to attract the young people's interest. Horvat's opinion was that the membership growth in the NCS Junior Order would also draw attention of their parents for the benefit and promotion of the Society at large.

The CFU Junior Order membership grew continuously. The important factors of its advancement were the changes introduced in order to establish better work with the youth, a favorable insurance rate table and credit system, advantageous death benefits, etc. The Junior Order's most important mission, that of turning the junior membership into the Society's adult members, had become quite a practice.

Many contributors to the *Zajedničar* criticized some practices of the Order, being fully aware of its importance for the very promotion of the Society. This is how they criticized the nests and their operation in an article, "The monthly sessions are in most cases not sessions in the real sense of the word. A few officials are sent there only to collect dues, while the majority of our youth never learns anything about the true merit of the Society. Sooner or later we shall have to educate our younger members in the real social spirit and prepare them for the moment when they will leave the Junior Order and enter the ranks of regular membership. Unless we fulfill this task, we have done nothing if we want to preserve our Croatian Fraternal Union forever."[12]

Zajedničar editor M. J. Horvat observed that there was really no reason for the nests to be so passive. The English section of the newspaper received numerous letters from the Junior Order members in which they expressed their interest for more activity in the nests. The same issue was also deliberated at the Second Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union held in St. Louis. A. Gazdić observed that some nests were managed by members who did not interact very well with the juniors; what they mostly did was collect membership dues. Gazdić's opinion was that some younger people should be employed who would be able to relate more successfully with the youth in the social, educational and entertainment activities. Unless this was done, the Junior Order members were sure to leave the nests, therefore failing to acquire the positive views offered by the CFU fraternal program. In addition, young people would not automatically join the regular membership, or even worse, they might never become Society members at all.

The idea of starting a special youth newspaper was also discussed at the Second Convention. Its aim would be to improve the operation of the Junior Order. The importance of the issue was proved by a resolution passed at the Convention. The increasing number of members in the "English-speaking lodges" of the Junior Order was mentioned in it, as well as the improvement of their activities. The resolution suggested the possibility of adding to the *Zajedničar* two pages per month in English which would be dedicated to the Junior Order members, and above all, to those in the "English-speaking lodges". "The introduction of one or two additional pages for the youngest members, entitled the "Children's Page", was proposed; if necessary, they could be also illustrated. It was suggested that the *Zajedničar* should start a special supplement carrying only articles for children and the young. According to the resolution passed, the Second Convention was given the right to elect an editor who, apart from participating in the management of the Junior Order, would be in charge of the proposed supplements to the *Zajedničar.*

In accordance to the resolution, the head of the Junior Order was mandated to be a resident officer of the CFU Head Office in charge of the Junior Department. John J. Lončar was elected head of the Department and held this position until 1933, when he was replaced by Božo Jonić who was succeeded by John Badovinac in 1934.

Unfortunately, the great economic depression in the USA stopped the progress of the Junior Order and the rich program of its activities. The depression left tragic consequences both in the fraternal organizations and their junior departments. The membership decreased and the Junior Order, which in the period of the Second Convention totaled 29,187 members, counted only 30,477 members late in 1934. It is interesting to note that 115 junior members, on an average, joined the regular membership each month.[13] The minutes of the CFU Executive Board offer insight into the way the Society managed to keep at least some growth in its Junior Order, "I do not believe there is any fraternal organization, particularly among our Slavic ones, which provides more aid to its members in order to keep its ranks free from decay as long as possible. Despite all the advantages and the financial aid at its disposal, a certain number of members dropped out of the organization. The Supreme Secretary, brother Solić, will inform you about the decline in membership, whereas the head of the Junior Order, brother Jonić, will explain the position of the Junior Order members. The decrease has been caused by the overall situation, which is not likely to change. Everything possible has been done to prevent the membership decline we have experienced and nobody is expected to do the impossible. We shall do our utmost to bring back those who left us, and shall continue looking for the best way of attracting new members willing to join the ranks of the CFU and its Junior Order".[14]

The CFU membership survived all misfortunes and crises. At the Fifth Convention of 1939, the delegates were able to ascertain with pleasure that the Junior Order had expanded. Ten thousand new members

had joined during the past seven years and the increase was thought of as a successful achievement both for the Junior Order and the Society as a whole. In 1939, the 25th anniversary of the Society's founding was celebrated, and the occasion was used for the launching of a campaign to attract new members to the Junior Order. The convention was to be held during the same year, and it was decided that only a member who managed to persuade 25 new ones to join the Junior Order could be a delegate to the Convention.

The First Junior Order Convention was held August 13-15, 1939, in Des Plaines, Illinois, at the site of the former Children's Home. In attendance were a record 210 young delegates from all over the United States and Canada. The Convention was a new incentive for further Junior Order activities. It only proved what had been already been foreseen: the Junior Order might become the primary source of the CFU membership. Besides, the Junior Order was financially stable by then; therefore, the Supreme Board made a practice of writing off five or six monthly assessment in dues annually. It was quite clear that the insurance coverage in the Junior Order was much more favorable and very competitive for the commercial companies.[15]

Following the CFU Supreme Board conclusion of March 1940, the *Junior Magazine* was reestablished and was to become the best known youth magazine in English for the second and third generations of Croatian immigrants to the USA and Canada. Offering a variety of information and rich in news on cultural and sports activities of the individual nests, the magazine was filled with instructive texts for both children and youth.

The following Junior convention was exceptionally successful since several thousand young people joined the Order immediately afterwards. The Second Junior Convention was held on August 17 to 19, 1941, in Kansas City, Kansas, where the first CFU Nest was organized in 1915. A total of 102 delegates attended. However, there was during this time a considerable fluctuation of membership in the Junior Department as a large number of them had become of age and almost all, sometimes about 200 a month, left the Order and joined the regular CFU ranks.

In December 1948, 32 years after the establishment of the Junior Order, 507 nests were in operation comprised of 29,480 members; the total assets amounted to $731,697.94. This is shown in the following table:[16]

Year	Membership	Assets
1916	3,398	$ 327.07
1926	23,004	$ 176,175.25
1936	27,229	$ 468,192.31
1946	28,599	$ 648,588.17
1948	29,480	$ 731,697.94

In the fifty year period of the development of the CFU, the Junior Order played a positive, complex and important role. The parents were given a chance of insuring their children under very favorable conditions,

and the Croatian Fraternal Union started to educate its membership since their early age. The effects were obvious because 41,010 members, or more than a half of the total CFU membership, joined the Society ranks in the period between the Junior Order establishment and the end of 1948.[17]

In the twenties, the young members also began gathering in the so called "English-speaking lodges". The push was first given by Lodges 99, 47, 22 and 21 of Cleveland; they sent a letter to the CFU Supreme Board in Pittsburgh on November 30, 1925, asking permission for the younger members of the Society to assemble in special departments where they could use only the English language. After having carefully considered the issue, the Supreme Board decided to grant such permission. As a matter of fact, some other Slav benefit societies had done the same in order to keep their English speaking youth within the organization. The Board gave an affirmative answer to the Cleveland lodges and also informed the others that they should provide all the documents needed to those who wanted to establish the "English-speaking lodges".[18]

The First CFU Convention, held in Cleveland in 1926, tackled the same issue and allowed all the members who attended schools in English, and were consequently not fluent in Croatian, to establish their lodges and run them only in English. The Convention also ruled that these members were free to leave their previous lodges and organize new ones. Immediately afterwards, the "English-speaking lodges" were established in Bessemer, Pennsylvania, in Cleveland, Ohio, in Los Angeles, California, and in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

At the Second CFU Convention of St. Louis, the Chairman, Vjekoslav Mandić, invited the delegates of the "English-speaking lodges" to "express their opinion in English unless they were able to speak Croatian well enough."[19]

The "English-speaking lodges" developed quite fast. At the 1939 CFU Convention, it was made known that more than one hundred of the lodges had so far been established with several thousand members. The Convention supported such growth because young people were eager to join their parents' activities and thereby contribute to the benefit of the Croatian Fraternal Union. The CFU President, Ivan Butković, pointed out that the elderly members ought to follow the example of the youth, but also explained he was sure the juniors would continue to cherish everything their elders had created. Butković added, "There is a considerable number of "English-speaking lodges" within all our communities. As a matter of fact, their number will grow as our older members slowly leave us and the younger generation takes their place. It will not be long before the management of our lodges and the Society itself is in hands of our members born here, on American soil. They shall assume full responsibility for it very soon. This process can be neither prolonged nor stopped because it happens by itself, as does every change in the lives of people."[20]

Even the "English-speaking lodges" experienced a crisis in their development as a result of World War Two and its consequences. Thousands of young Croats went to war as American soldiers. Their absence was felt everywhere, at the sessions of the lodges, at social gatherings, at

different campaigns, etc. However, it was clear that the crisis was only a temporary one, and in the Croatian Fraternal Union they were still counting on the membership of the "English-speaking lodges".

The majority of activities within the Junior Order referred to sports. This was quite understandable since from the very beginning, young people tried to establish sports clubs within their societies. As early as 1930, young Croats from Cleveland founded softball teams strongly supported by their lodges. Some were also started in Pennsylvania and in New York; consequently, sports tournaments were initiated among the lodges. The young Croatian fraternalists also began establishing basketball teams in the copper mining area of Calumet where the well-known National CFU Basketball Tournament was first founded.

Bowling was another popular sports activity, and competitions between the individual lodges began throughout the States. Consequently, the Bowling League of the CFU lodges of Chicago, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh was established. In the thirties, there were numerous tournaments in ten-pin and duck-pin bowling, whereas the young CFU members of Canada developed five-pin bowling.

It is obvious that sports activities could not have developed within the CFU lodges unless they were supported by the Home Office in Pittsburgh. Yet, there was no separate fund to aid the sports activities. The drawback was solved at the Sixth Convention in Chicago. It resolved to establish a special sports fund into which each CFU member was to pay two cents a month.[21] The decision was reached thanks to one member, Stephen F. Brkić, the editor of the *Zajedničar* English edition. His articles made the sports activities within the CFU lodges popular. The sports fund came into effect only in 1947, which was a turning point in the sports life of young fraternalists. The fund was also established thanks to the *Zajedničar* in which long articles were regularly published about young Americans of Croatian origin who became all-American sports champions.

Croatian Fraternal Union Children's Home

Very few questions ever caused so much deliberation and controversy as did the issue of the Croatian Orphanage, or what was later to be called the Children's Home. On the eve of the merger, the Home Office of the National Croatian Society decided to close the Orphanage for the Croatian children at Des Plaines, and to establish an Old People's Home there instead. The Home children should have been taken care of by their parents or by the friends who would in return be granted financial aid from a special fund. Yet, the opinion of the Home Office was not accepted by the delegates to the First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, and the following conclusion was reached instead, "The Croatian Orphanage is to remain where it was established, and to continue operating for the benefit of the Croatian orphans who need protection and care in America, and who will very soon find both within the Croatian Orphanage at Des Plaines. However, the management will in

the future be in the hands of the Croatian Fraternal Union, which is responsible for the activity and business operation of the Croatian Orphanage."[22]

Although the decision arrived at the Convention concerning the Children's Home was perfectly clear, the exchange of arguments continued in the columns of the *Zajedničar*, and later at the CFU Second Convention. In his opening speech, Supreme President Gazdić emphasized the following, "One issue still needs to be thoroughly reconsidered, no matter how much time it might take us, and this is the future of our Children's Home." Gazdić informed the delegates about the different options: a part of the membership thought the Children's Home should be sold as its maintenance was too expensive. In the event that it was not sold, the Home might be run by the Sisters of Charity and expenses would be lowered. Others proposed a reconsideration of the old proposal to turn the Children's Home into an Old People's Home. There were a lot of elderly members who needed care. Besides, during the economic depression, a great deal of workers found themselves in a hopeless situation although they had been Society members for more than 25 years.[24] The majority of members and the delegates to the Convention were against the closing of the Children's Home, but at the same time insisted that all problems should be eliminated and its operation improved. The Second Convention passed a special resolution pointing out that the Home was the property of all Society members who were willing to continue paying five cents a month for its maintenance. The resolution emphasized that many parentless children could not have made use of the Home just because they were too far away from it, and

Junior members of the CFU Croatian Home

had therefore been put into other American institutions all across the States. The Croatian Fraternal Union was ready to refund the expenses of those organizations with a monthly amount of $15. It was also resolved that a special five-member board be established which would be responsible to the Supreme Board for the overall control of the Home management .

At the time of the Second Convention, there were 46 children living at the Home; only three years later, the number had grown to 118. A Junior Order nest was also active within the Home as all children were Junior Order members. By learning about the aims and the program of the fraternalists, they were becoming ready to enter the Society ranks in the years to come. It goes without saying that a wide range of cultural activities was developed; a choir and a tamburitza orchestra were established which performed in Croatian communities across America.

The CFU Children's Home was a benefit organization with a strictly limited scope but quite significant for the Society's image and reputation. The care of the Society for its orphans was greatly appreciated by its own members as well as by the other welfare organizations in the States. The Fourth Convention in 1935 therefore resolved to support the Children's Home, and a loan of $50,000 was approved for the new Home building.[25] By 1949, the Children's Home had provided shelter for 424 children; 355 of them left the Home during that span of time and 69 still lived there. Altogether, 80 children received a two-year college level education; 85 boys and three girls joined the US armed forces; Mike Vučetić, Tom Svast and John Krpan were killed in the war.

In the 1940's, the number of children began decreasing quickly, which was also the case of all the institutions that, according to the by-laws, were allowed to receive only the children of the CFU members. What actually happened was this: the situation in many families greatly improved in the intervening time so that either the parents or the relatives were ready to take their children back home. Besides, a few large humanitarian organizations came into operation in America and tried to settle as many children as possible with their families instead of letting them be brought up in various institutions. The best known were *Aid to Dependent Children*, *Social Work*, and *Case Work*. A decrease in the number of protégés of the CFU Children's Home was especially pronounced during the war years when it was not difficult to find a well-paid job, even to those under sixteen. As a result, the Croatian Fraternal Union started to seriously consider the possibility of closing its Children's Home and of selling the premises and the building site.

Insurance in the Croatian Fraternal Union

An insurance policy of the Croatian Fraternal Union was characterized by the tendency of providing greater insurance coverage without increasing premiums and with more favorable refunds to certificate holders.[26] This tendency was expressed at the First Cleveland Convention when the insurance rights increased by 50% against an increase of premiums by only 25%. The delegates to the Second Convention neither

realized nor assumed that the payment of benefits without coverage would rise and did nothing to prevent it. In fact, it was decided at the same convention that the CFU members could insure on death benefit only allowing withdrawal to those who had other benefits. The oncoming depression made matters even worse. Within three years, until the end of 1931, disability benefits rose to $422,825 resulting in a deficit of $25,000 in the respective fund. By the 1932 Convention, the deficit doubled. As the Convention did nothing to improve the situation, the payment of benefits in 1932 reached the amount of $173,000. Now the Supreme Board was compelled to propose a decrease in the payment of benefits by 50%. As this was the only solution, the proposal was accepted. From May 1, 1933, until the end of 1934, the Society paid out only a half of the required amount for disability and hospitalization benefits. Also, an extra assessment of 10 cents per month was levied to cover the deficits. Thanks to these measures, the situation in the respective fund improved so that by the end of 1934, a slight surplus of $2,462 was recorded. However, the Depression, together with the above measures resulted in a heavy loss of almost half the membership insured in that fund. How seriously the fund was affected was best illustrated by the fact that the paid benefits in 1934 amounted to only $44,000, whereas two years earlier, more than $173,000 were paid out. Nevertheless, several years after the Depression, according to the statement of the 1939 Convention, disbursement of benefits reached the 1932 level. The conclusions, however, of the convention were premature - the Disability and Hospitalization Fund disclosed rapid losses again. The Convention did not seem to be aware that from 1929 to 1939 the Society had lost almost 30,000 certificate holders of that fund, mainly young people whose premiums were much higher than the refunds they received.

From 1940 until 1942, the annual refunds exceeded the deposit by $20,000. In order to stop this rapid fall and prevent the crisis the Society experienced ten years earlier (when the refunds sank by 50%), the Supreme Board at its session of September 1942, reached a decision to levy an extra assessment of five cents a month and prepare new restrictive regulations for the following 1943 Convention. The Convention adopted the proposal to increase monthly dues by five cents which totaled 25 cents a month, but it was also decided that hospitalization benefits especially to new members should also be limited. As for disability benefits, they were to decrease, especially if disability causes could not be accurately identified. The 1943 Convention adopted another important improvement: each member of the Society would have a right to a double refund insurance certificate. Prior to the merger, members entitled to this privilege were only those who belonged to two different organizations and could effect their rights in either of them. Thanks to this decision, in 1947 the Disability and Hospitalization Fund came to be solvent for the first time in the Society's history. In fact, the number of 27,000 members during the crisis period grew to 46,242 by June 1949. This increase would have been even greater had the Society not lost some 5,000 members who, being in the army, were not insured in disability benefits.

In spite of all the difficulties, in the course of 55 years of its existence, the Society paid out through the Disability and Hospitalization Fund benefits of over six million dollars.

An important measure of protection offered by the Society was the Health Benefit Fund. A thorough examination was required to establish this fund. It was easier, for example, to fix the dues for death benefits because the Society had already had experience in determining the approximate length of human life to be able to fix the amount of dues necessary to cover the payment of death benefits. Health benefits, however, were a different matter: it was difficult, for example, to foresee the number of sick persons and the type and length of sickness. Systematic estimates were, therefore, necessary to provide the basis for fixing the table of rates.

At the First CFU Convention held in Cleveland, it was resolved that $1 a day within the first year of insurance should be paid for the health benefits, to be followed afterwards by $5 a week for the members of Class A, $10 a week for the members of Class B, and $15 a week for the members of Class C. For this kind of insurance, three classes were established with the following amounts in dues: 75 cents per month for Class A, $1.65 for Class B, and $2.65 for Class C. However, soon after the Convention, it was obvious that the amount of dues was not sufficient, so in the same year the Supreme Board put to a vote a proposal to raise the amount of dues to $1 for Class A, $2.25 for Class B, and $3.50 for Class C. The membership accepted the proposal and the amounts of dues remained the same until the 1932 Convention. These were only regular dues which were increased on several occasions with extra assessments.

Between 1926 and 1928, the amount of $2,012,000 was paid out in sickness and maternity benefits to the members of all three classes. By the end of 1928, there were only $30,000 or 50 cents per member left in the funds of all three classes.

The delegates to the Second Convention were fully aware of the difficult situation. President Gazdić reminded them that there were very few fraternal organizations supporting their members in case of sickness with such amounts for such a long time. Most of them usually paid only death benefits to the beneficiaries of the deceased members, and their sick members received sickness benefits from their lodges only for a limited period of time. Gazdić also mentioned that since the First Convention, health insurance had been obtained by 28,445 members who received sickness benefits amounting to $1,893,569.62. The Sickness Benefit Fund also paid out $70,875 in maternity benefits which totaled $1,964,444.62.[27]

According to some delegates at the Second Convention, the problem could be resolved by revoking the centralization system. Gazdić reminded them, "Ever since extra assessments were levied, a part of the

membership has been objecting to and writing against centralization. Some advocate revocation of centralization and that the sickness benefit payment should be returned to the lodges. I believe that among you there are some who share this opinion or are instructed by your lodges to oppose centralization, advocating its revocation. I, therefore, appeal to you, brothers and sisters, that you should not allow this to happen but should support centralization with some modification if we want to prevent the breakdown of the lodges in some smaller communities and preserve them within the centralized system."[28]

The Society was hard-hit by the Depression. A number of sick members, being unemployed, used the sick benefits for a much longer period of time than under normal circumstances. Others, although employed, were also using it extensively. Regular premiums of the Sickness Fund, hardly sufficient under normal conditions, could not cover the increased expenses. The Supreme Board had, as early as 1930, levied an extra assessment of 50 cents a month for the members of Class A, $1 for Class B, and $5 for Class C. But with expenses constantly growing, the assessment, although extended over 1931, could not cover the increasing payments.[29] The Supreme Board proposed limited amounts of benefit payments but, since the membership refused the proposal, the assessment of dues was again raised to $1.50 a month for Class B, and $7.50 for Class C.

The Statement of the Second Convention indicated that, in spite of increased assessments of dues, by the end of 1931, the fund of Class A had disposed of only $4,000, the Class B fund had a deficit of $62,000, and Class C, comprising of only 133 members, also had a deficit exceeding $20,000. In the past three years, the sickness benefit payments amounted to an enormous $2,600,000 for all three classes. This was $600,000 more than in between the First and the Second Convention. It has to be also emphasized that between 1929 and 1931, the Society recorded a loss of 7,000 members in the Sickness Benefit Fund.

The Third Convention of 1932 was faced with the problem of how to retain the membership of the Society and resolve the sickness benefit issue. In his address to the delegates, President Gazdić stated with resignation, "This matter has to be every fraternalist's concern, especially of the delegates to this Convention. It is their obligation to resolve this issue at least by avoiding future assessment of dues, which upset the membership. There is none of us here who wants to pay a lot and receive little. But many of us would like to pay little and receive a lot. Nevertheless, if we are sincere members of this organization, we have to admit that this is impossible. In these serious times, we should deceive neither the membership nor ourselves. We have to be honest to ourselves and the membership at large in telling them what they can or cannot expect from what they pay."[30]

The Supreme Board officers assumed that the delegates would propose the revocation of centralization as a way to resolve the difficult issue

of the sickness benefit insurance. In order to prevent it, they launched a campaign in favor of centralization through the *Zajedničar.* The newspaper wrote that the sickness benefit issue was undoubtedly the most important item on the Convention agenda. The financial difficulties of the membership during the depression highlighted all the sickness benefit deficiencies which had to be eliminated. All these deficiencies had been attributed to the centralization of the health insurance by a part of the membership, who thought that its revocation would eliminate the difficulties experienced by the Sick Benefit Fund. The other part of the membership continued to support centralization, underlining the need to improve it so as to render any misuse of the central Sickness Benefit Fund impossible. According to these members, one of the ways of achieving this was to introduce the same table of rates for health benefits as was earlier introduced for death benefits.

The *Zajedničar* supported the idea of centralization as a step forward in the development of the Society's insurance system. Dictated by circumstances, it was introduced following the experience of many other fraternal organizations. The system had some deficiencies which would not seriously affect the membership under the normal circumstances, but before the decision was made on its revocation, all ensuing negative effects would have to be considered very carefully. The *Zajedničar* wrote, "We are convinced that the desires of our membership and the needs of the Society would be better fulfilled if the deficiencies of the centralized system were corrected to avoid any possible misuse than if the already developed system were revoked."[31] The *Zajedničar* was correct - a heated discussion on centralization followed at the Third Convention where the delegates, aware of its importance, voted 201 in favor and 63 against.[32]

The only actual decision of the Third Convention regarding health benefits, implemented afterwards, was the revocation of Class C, which together with its membership and its deficit, joined Class B thereby raising its deficit to $80,000.

Months after the Third Convention, the Sickness Benefit Fund was recording an ever growing deficit. The debts of Class B, now joined by Class C, grew from $80,000 to $144,000. The Supreme Board was, therefore, forced to introduce drastic measures to save it. According to them, the sickness benefit payments to the certificate holders of Class A were reduced by half, and to Class B holders, to a quarter of the regular amount. Also, ways were sought to provide the fund with a safer footing. Relying on the experience of some other fraternal organizations, the sickness benefit premiums were determined on the basis of the kind of sickness, and the member's right to this benefit depended on the length of his payment of dues according to the table of rates based again on the age of a certificate holder at the date of entry. It was also decreed that this system should be retroactive to 1924 when centralization was first introduced. Because of the Depression, there were no other solutions and the membership agreed to the proposal whose implementation

started early in 1933. In March 1933, however, the membership agreed to the Supreme Board's proposal to revoke Class B because, in spite of the above mentioned measures, its deficit totaled $159,501 by the end of 1932.

In spite of the fact that in 1932 the Sickness Benefit Fund recorded a loss of 8,000 members, the payment of benefits reached the highest amount in the history of the Society - $966,399. In the intervening years, from 1926 until the end of 1932, the amount of $5,560,000 was paid in sickness benefits and $973,000 in compensation. Within seven years, a total of 6.5 million dollars was paid out in benefits by the Society.

Due to the difficulties during the Depression, extra assessments of dues, reduction in the payment of benefits, as well as the decision that withdrawal from the Society was allowed, the number of members in the Sickness Benefit and Compensation Fund fell from 57,528 in 1929 to only 26,932 members in 1934. During five years of the Depression, the Croatian Fraternal Union lost more than 30,000 members. Its membership was reduced to 27,000, a number lower than in 1909.

The new system of payment in sickness benefits in 1933 proved successful so that in 1934, the deficit of the previously revoked Class B was discharged and Class A showed a surplus of $22,000. It has to be pointed out, however, that the disbursement in sickness benefits which in 1932 reached almost a million dollars, fell to $367,000 in 1933, and was as low as $195,000 in 1934. This sharp reduction of disbursements in sickness benefits and the fact that it was retroactive to eight years, due to which a number of members receiving sickness benefit from 1925 until 1933 lost their right to it, resulted in a further decline in membership as well as in lawsuits and complaints to the Sickness Benefit Fund.

The Supreme President, Ivan Butković, in his report to the Fourth Convention of 1935 referred to this difficult period with the following words, "Already at the time of the Third Convention the mentioned Fund was in a difficult situation. It was like a patient in need of a serious operation because all medication had failed to restore him to health. In spite of all extra assessments since the First Convention, the Fund did not recover and the deficit increased. The Third Convention, instead of taking, if necessary, drastic measures, simply resorted to some insignificant changes expecting that the future Supreme Board would resolve this important problem. Of course, the current Supreme Board was faced with an unpleasant situation, aware of the fact that whatever it might undertake would give rise to dissatisfaction on the part of the membership. As we were informed that a new law would be enacted in the state where we were chartered demanding solvency of all the funds within the fraternal organizations that wished to keep their charters, the Supreme Board had no other choice but to do what had to be done. In order to prevent further deficits in the Fund, it was decided that as of September 6 this year, the sickness benefits should be reduced by half and that a new method of disbursing sickness benefits should be put to

a vote, which, if adopted, would go into effect early in 1933. The membership, aware of the necessity of these changes, voted for the proposal of the Supreme Board thereby averting, at least temporarily, this precarious situation. At the same time, a decision was arrived at to increase the premiums of the Compensation and Hospitalization Fund in order to prevent further deficits. Since the measure had no favorable effects, the Supreme Board, at its session of March 1933, made a decision that another measure should be put to a vote, namely, that as of May 1, 1933, all compensation and hospitalization benefits should be reduced by half. The membership followed the advice and proposals of the Supreme Board thereby renouncing its claims. Their self-sacrificing behavior helped to lay a safer foundation for the organization; today, these funds are doing well so that the Fourth Convention will be able to increase the payment of sickness, compensation and hospitalization benefits to a certain extent."[33]

With the Depression coming to a close and an economic recovery on its way, insurance dealings of the Society improved. At the Fourth Convention a decision was reached that monthly dues for health benefits should be 10 cents lower. The decision proved to be inappropriate, though. In 1937, Class B was reinstalled, but as some limitations imposed earlier on the payment of sickness benefit to members of Class A were canceled, the effects were negative. Instead of a monthly surplus of some $5,000 recorded in Sickness Benefit Fund in 1935, a year later it decreased by 50%, the same trend persisting in 1937 and 1938. In this period, the surplus amounted to only $8,000 instead of the expected $60,000. This trend eventually led to a deficit of $17,000 dollars in 1937. The delegates to the Fifth Convention did not seem to be concerned though; they even expanded the sick benefit coverage. Namely, they decided that the payment of sick benefits would begin after the third day of sickness instead of the seventh, and could be extended over a period of 90 days instead of 60 days. This produced new difficulties. The state officials warned the Supreme Board that the dealings of the Sickness Benefit Fund were not safe, and in some states even withdrew charters of the insolvent funds. Eventually, when in 1941 a deficit of $40,000 was recorded, the Supreme Board decided to introduce radical measures again. In September 1932, a decision was arrived at to levy a permanent monthly assessment of 10 cents per member of Class A and even 50 cents for Class B.

At the Sixth Convention held in 1943, the sickness benefit issue was deliberated more thoroughly than ever before. Supreme President Butković said, "Even if we had kept the dues on the same level as in 1933, our dealings would slowly decline. It is clearly proved when we analyze the membership, sickness and sickness benefit figures of the 1936, 1937 and 1938 statements. A careful examination of these figures indicates that our decline was not only caused by the decreased dues. There is yet another factor that has to be eliminated in order to provide a sound foundation for our dealings. It is a fact that our membership is aging while the influx of younger members is not sufficient to keep the

average age of our membership up to the age level on which the table of rates was based in 1933. This means that the table of rates should have been better understood and improved throughout these years. Unfortunately, I have to admit that we do not even know what the basis of our insurance system is in our Society, a system we adopted in 1932. We are not familiar with a single factor for its calculation. It has never been put down in writing. No wonder so many mistakes have been made at our conventions."[34]

The changes in the dealings of the Sickness Benefit Fund adopted at the 1943 Convention together with those initiated by the Supreme Board in September 1942, had positive effects. Instead of yearly deficits continuously growing since 1935, and exceptionally high in 1939, a surplus of $52,000 dollars was recorded in 1944, to be followed by $366,000 in 1947.

In spite of the favorable developments, the state officials, inspecting the Society's dealings, required safer securities of the insurance funds. In 1947, new by-laws were adopted according to which benefits were reduced to all members. It was also decided that no benefit was to be granted for the first seven days of sickness and that within a year, the sickness benefit would not exceed $270. Full benefit was to be paid for the maximum of 60 days a year and members of 65 years of age would receive the full 60-day benefit only once a year; thereafter, it was to be reduced by half. These reductions negatively affected all the Society members, especially those over 66 years of age. However, the favorable effect was that the Society, for the first time in its 55 year long existence filled with hardships (unavoidable, unfortunately, sickness benefit being the most complex activity of benefit organizations), finally achieved a safe status for this branch of its activity.

It is worth mentioning some data from the Society's past. In the period prior to the merger and centralization, when the sickness benefit for the first three months was disbursed by the lodges, the Society's management paid out more than half a million dollars in sickness benefits. Three years subsequent to centralization, the sickness benefit payments totaled more than two million dollars. During the four Depression years, the membership of the Society received more than three and a half million dollars in sickness benefits and more than half a million dollars in other compensations. Within eight years following the above mentioned reductions, the disbursements in sickness benefits exceeded three and a half million dollars, although the number of certificate holders was lower than at the time of the merger.

The total amount paid out by the Society in sickness benefits following centralization in 1925 and until 1949 reached $10,283,402.82. In the period preceding centralization, the amount of 9 million dollars was disbursed, which means that until 1949, a total of 25 million dollars was paid out.

Unlike the health insurance, the life insurance caused no difficulties to the Society. At the Fifteenth NCS Convention held in Detroit in 1924, the American Experience Table of Mortality was adopted with a

4% bonus on the initial deposit. Early in 1938, a new rate table of the American Experience Table of Mortality was applied with a 3.5% bonus on the initial deposit, to be followed in early 1947 by the rate table with a 3% bonus.

Up until 1927, the Society provided only life insurance on death benefits and from 1927, members could take twenty-year Payment Life Insurance or Endowment at the Age of 70. From 1936, a Twenty-year Endowment was available. At the 1947 Convention a decision was adopted with the maximum insurance available raised to $5,000.

Since the establishment of the Society until 1948, 24,752 members had died and 46,175 members withdrew from the organization. Refunds on certificates were received by 5,838 members; $29,800,212.55 were paid into the Death Benefit Fund, and $22,080,662.21 were paid out.

The *Zajedničar* - The Official Organ of all Fraternalists

All fraternal organizations, even those with a small number of members, usually had their own official organ. The main purpose of such an organ was the promotion of the interests of each organization and the protection of the reputation and dignity of its membership. The fraternal press was expected to develop patriotism and devotion to the new homeland and to cherish the old country by preserving and cultivating its cultural heritage.

Fraternal newspapers had another practical aim - to keep its reading public informed in detail about everyday events, particularly in reference to the labor movement, the political and social scene. Their important mission was the coverage of fraternal activities, their goals and achievements; the newspapers were becoming a basic link between the Home Office, the lodges and the membership. The papers were also supposed to make the membership aware of each extensive campaign launched to attract new members, to the important changes in the operation of fraternal organizations, and to complex issues concerning the fraternal activities. The official organs of fraternal organizations were obliged to report on all social changes, reflecting the views of their editors, the Supreme Board members and other officials of the Society.

The activity of each official organ, as a matter of course, revealed the operation of the fraternal organization. The newspaper was like a mirror in which the multiple processes within the Society were clearly reflected. The newspapers were expected to display how active and successful a particular organization was and what its general tendencies were. All crises and dilemmas of an organization were clearly portrayed in the contents of its paper. However, the official organ was not supposed to only reflect the life of a fraternal organization but also to be an active participant in its overall advancement. In this sense, each newspaper was a sort of vanguard, a defense against everything that might be detrimental to life and work of the Society, thereby fully respecting its by-laws.

In the activities of the Croatian Fraternal Union, the role of *Zajedničar* was a major one from the very beginning. Its mission was of special importance at the time of merger when American Croats became more interested in the social life of their communities and the Society at large. With an increasing number of readers and diverse news items, editor in chief Ubojčić had to be given assistance. In 1923, the Supreme Board decided to appoint Mato Vrkljan, an official of the organization, assistant editor. However, after the Fifteenth NCS Convention in 1924, the Supreme Board elected Milan Petrak editor in chief, and his employment marked a new and complex period in the history of the *Zajedničar.*

According to the by-laws passed at the First CFU Convention, three important guidelines of the official organ were determined: above all, the strengthening and promotion of the Society's interests, followed by promotion of other fraternal societies, and finally, acquainting the membership with all important world events and changes. The *Zajedničar*'s editorial board was closely collaborating with the Supreme Board members, the lodge leaders and the membership at large. In almost every issue, through articles, notes and reports, the advantages and privileges offered by the Society to its membership were explained in detail. There were also reports published about the activities of the Society boards, of various departments, and of individual board members. A directory of the lodge boards was made public at fixed intervals as well as the reports on lodge activities and community life. In the columns of the *Zajedničar,* readers were frequently advised about the need for harmonious and efficient work in the Society.

The editor in chief regularly wrote editorials and other articles if necessary, and personally took care to expand the correspondent network. The editorials and articles carried comments and other news items on the events in the world and in the States. A special column entitled *Iz svijeta rada i kapitala* (From the World of Labor and Capital) contained information from the world of labor. Another column entitled *Iz stare domovine* (From the Old Country) or *Iz hrvatskih zemalja* (From the Croatian Lands) informed the readers about events in Croatia. These headings were of special significance for the paper and that is why they were carefully deliberated at the Second CFU Convention held in St. Louis. Taking into consideration the very close connections of the American Croats with their homeland, it was concluded that the *Zajedničar* should have constant collaboration with the old country so as to keep its readers informed about all significant political, economic and cultural events in Croatia. Many delegates thought that such collaboration would increase the readers' interest in the newspaper and provide more correct interpretations of the numerous happenings, particularly political events, in the old country.[35]

The *Zajedničar* editorial board tried to establish close collaboration with its reading public and succeeded in doing so. In the course of three years, in the period between the First and the Second Convention, the newspaper published 1,682 articles written by its readers and exactly as

many by the Junior Order members. Besides announcing the deaths of Society members, it also printed items about social activities and announced sessions and parties.

The collaboration between the Society membership and their official organ was constantly improving. The *Zajedničar* informed its readers in detail about the overall collaboration achieved with the membership in the period between the 1929 and the 1932 conventions.

"One thousand letters were received from lodge members referring to general matters and the situation in communities; 306 letters were received referring to the Junior Order Nests; 875 announcements were received concerning our deceased brothers and sisters; 3,876 news items were received on various entertainment, celebrations, picnics and other gatherings; 876 general reports were received on social activities in communities. Altogether, 8,090 news items were received."[36]

The relationship of the newspaper and its reading public was so friendly and varied that at the Second Convention, editor Milan Petrak announced that the *Zajedničar* itself received more letters from the Croatian communities in America than did the rest of the Croatian papers.[37]

Through its activities in the Junior Order and the "English-speaking lodges," the second generation of American Croats became more and more prominent and influential in the ranks of the Croatian Fraternal Union. English was their language of communication. This forced the *Zajedničar* editorial board to consider a possible expansion of the newspaper by adding some extra pages in English. The Second Convention also tackled the issue and decided to introduce two additional English pages and engage another editor. Michael J. Horvat was offered the position of editor of the *Zajedničar*'s English section. The Convention agreed to editor Petrak's motion to participate at the annual meetings of the National Fraternal Congress of America. He made use of his presence at the Congress by promoting numerous articles on Croatians, American Croats, and the Croatian Fraternal Union. Some of them were published in the almanacs of the National Fraternal Congress, and many of them in the *Fraternal Monitor* magazine.

The financing of the *Zajedničar* was among the issues that were given careful consideration at several conventions. In the three year period between the First and the Second Convention, $121,000 were spent on the newspaper. It was not easy to raise such an amount from the management maintenance fund into which the members paid only five cents a month. The *Zajedničar* had a circulation of 60,000 copies at the time and the Second Convention resolved that eight cents a month should be paid by each member to be used exclusively for publishing costs.[38] The decision was changed later and the membership was asked to pay 10 cents a month in the management maintenance fund.

The Croatian Fraternal Union was not related to any political party, religious institution or ethnic group. According to Article 4. of the by-laws, it was a fraternal and relief organization which left no room for any party politics or for any religious division. Consequently, its official

organ did not permit anything to enter its columns that might offend the members' feelings or restrict their freedoms. The newspaper regulations were basically identical to the program of the Society as a fraternal organization. The *Zajedničar* was therefore forbidden to adhere to what only certain groups or individual CFU members considered to be correct. The newspaper stood for democracy in American society; it advocated solidarity among the Slavs of America and the interests of labor, and fought against each and every narrow-minded chauvinist. It must be kept in mind that the newspaper was, to begin with, an organ of the American and Canadian Croats who were for the most part citizens of the respective countries, and therefore anxious to maintain the public honor and reputation of the Society. They could do so only as long as their behavior was not opposed to that of American or Canadian citizens, particularly since nobody prevented them from cherishing their own national heritage and the name of the nation they belonged to. The *Zajedničar* was the newspaper of the working class and as a result, not indifferent to any subject matter associated with the life or rights of the worker. On the other hand, the members of the Croatian Fraternal Union could not let themselves be manipulated by any radical political group or faction which might have made the Society go astray.

Although the program and concept of the *Zajedničar* were clearly defined in the Society by-laws, the political disagreement about the newspaper was constantly present. At the Second CFU Convention held in St. Louis in 1929, a formal discussion developed in two directions. A number of the delegates were of the opinion that the newspaper should be issued once a month and carry only information on the Society and the activity of its lodges. They argued that the old-time members could not afford to buy a copy every week. Therefore, some money would be saved and paid into the CFU National Fund for the aid to the aged. Besides, they suggested a supplement of a few extra pages in English to be added to the paper. Objections were also heard that the *Zajedničar* had turned into the private property of the editor who printed only articles of his own choice.

More delegates argued, however, that the newspaper should continue as an eight page weekly, with two supplementary pages in English. There were also others who proposed issuing the paper even twice a week, with two extra English pages. The majority of the delegates began gradually to support the introduction of English texts in the *Zajedničar.* They explained it was necessary for the Junior Order members, particularly for those from the "English-speaking lodges," to participate much more in the activities of the Croatian Fraternal Union, and the pages in English would be offering them a good opportunity. In the event that the *Zajedničar* ceased to be published as a weekly, it would have practically no influence on the members of the Society. A few resolutions were sent to the Convention proposing that advertising should also be included in the newspaper. With a circulation of 60,000 copies, they proved that the *Zajedničar* was a widely read newspaper, distributed both in the USA and Canada, and therefore advertisements could be in great demand.

After long deliberations about the newspaper, editor Petrak asked for permission to speak longer than the usual five minutes. He pointed out immediately that the issue was of great importance and it was no wonder the opinions differed so much. Yet, it was naive to believe that one should economize in the *Zajedničar* for the sake of the "old-timers". It was them who founded the newspaper, it was them who changed it from a monthly into a weekly and expanded it from four to ten pages. The old-time members were fully aware of the importance of the official organ, and if asked, they would surely consent to a larger and a better newspaper. Those who advocated economizing on the newspaper were not as thrifty elsewhere where it might be for the benefit of the Society. They economized on the publication of such an important instrument for the coordination of the CFU. It is absolutely untrue, Petrak said, that many other societies had no official organ of their own. Even the smallest ones kept their newspapers going. Strangely enough, the very delegates who argued against a weekly issue of *Zajedničar* had only recently turned the *Radnik,* a monthly party organ, into a weekly. Petrak ended with the following, "The *Zajedničar* has been published for 25 years so far, getting bolder and stronger with the time, the guardian and protector of the Society's interests; so let it be in the years ahead."

The issue was eventually put to a vote; 171 delegates decided the newspaper was to continue as a weekly and only 71 saw it as a monthly publication.[39] The Convention had finally resolved that the CFU official organ should be a weekly newspaper with two additional English pages and advertisements.

During the Third Convention, harsh disputes on the subject continued although President Butković praised the achievements of the newspaper as well as the introduction of the English pages explaining it as follows, "You have witnessed that numerous members have contributed to both newspaper sections by writing articles in Croatian and in English. Such collaboration of the young and the old-time members has done a great deal of good, in spite of the depression, but all the aims could not have been reached. Had they not worked together, our members would have never achieved anything. Besides, foundations have been laid to build on later, after the war is over, whatever one might consider useful or necessary for the future of the Society and its membership."[40]

After severe arguments, elections were held to fill the position of a new editor in chief. There were only two candidates: the former editor, J. Ubojčić, and the new one, M. Petrak. Milan Petrak was elected with 121 votes, as only 84 delegates voted for Ubojčić. Horvat, the editor of the English section, was elected unanimously. The Convention passed a separate resolution concerning the *Zajedničar* which confirmed the important role of the official organ. In fact, the members had always, from the very beginning and in spite of all costs, spoken in favor of an expanded journal with a larger circulation and better quality of the articles. So there was absolutely no need for the CFU to impose any limitations upon the newspaper or even stop publishing it when no other fra-

ternal society did so, regardless of the depression. Eventually, no changes were made because such ideas were proposed by the delegates who obviously had very specific political reasons in mind.[41]

The constant discussions about the political ideas that were in the background of the newspaper went on until the beginning of World War Two, and then ceased, temporarily at least, as a result of the tragic situation in the world and above all in Croatia. Looking back at the beginnings of World War Two, editor Petrak addressed the delegates to the CFU Sixth Convention, with the following, "Since the last Convention, we have experienced most unusual and great events and have been subjected to a trial not only as individuals but also as a nation and society. The historical process which started three years ago when Europe was struck by the war, has turned into an overall, widespread fire crossing all boarders; I am afraid our new homeland will not be spared either, nor will Canada. (...) As editor in chief of the official organ, I have always tried, even before our country was drawn into the war, to act in unity of purpose with our Society. I did so in an attempt to help the American Croats by means of our editorials and all the Supreme Board declarations published in the newspaper. The newspaper always reminded the Croatians of America that, in spite of being immigrants, they should do their duty in this country as conscientious and loyal citizens. Their duty was to fight for, and to fight with America and its Allies, and their true task was — hard work and sacrifice being the one and only aim - a full and a speedy victory for America and the Allies."[42]

Petrak was not elected editor at the Sixth Convention as the Croatian leftists were not satisfied with his work in the Society, particularly not with the articles in the newspaper. The candidate for the office was Filip Vukelić, who eventually won by a narrow margin. After Vukelić had become editor in chief of the *Zajedničar,* it did not change significantly. However, the paper offered more information about the political activities of American Croats who became engaged in the antifascist movement of the Slavs in the States and supported the partisan uprising in Yugoslavia.

The establishment of its own printing-office meant better technical equipment for the newspaper. Such an improvement was first suggested by Petrak during the 1932 Convention, but a printing-office of its own during a Depression was only wishful thinking. The Convention held in 1935 reached a decision about the printing-office, which was to be put into effect only in 1938. According to the conclusion adopted at the 1939 Convention, the printing-office was to be run by two editors in collaboration with the Supreme President of the CFU. Its role was of great significance because, apart from the *Zajedničar,* it printed all sorts of CFU publications.

Filip Vukelić, Editor of the Zajedničar

The Croatian Fraternal Union and its Membership in Canada

Until World War One, only 3,000 Croats immigrated to Canada. They arrived mostly from the United States where, prior to their departure for Canada, they had spent some years. They expected better earnings in Canada, especially in the coal mines and in the fishing industry of British Columbia. A greater number of Croats immigrated to Canada, a prosperous country at that time, only after 1924, when the USA put a limit to the immigration quota. Until 1930, some 11,000 Croats immigrated to that country.[43]

The Croats arriving in Canada from the USA already had some experience in social gatherings. The Croatian political and workers' organizations in Canada had their roots in the identical organizations in the USA. The same applied to the fraternal organizations which, from the onset, acted as lodges of the National Croatian Society, and later the Croatian Fraternal Union. The first lodge was founded by Croatian miners in Ladysmith, British Columbia, in 1903. Its number was 268 and it was named *Sv. Nikola.* In 1907, Lodge 281, *Sv. Ćiril i Metod,* was founded in Trail, B.C.. Another, Lodge *Anđeo čuvar,* was founded in Grand Forks, B.C.. Lodge *Sv. Petar i Pavao* came into existence in Thorold, Ontario, in 1909. In 1923, the *Radnička grana* Lodge started its activity in the small town of Schumacher, Ontario, followed by the *Hrvatski sinovi* Lodge in Welland, Ontario, and the *Matija Gubec* Lodge in Hamilton, Ontario, both established in 1924. By 1930, 27 lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union were active in Canada, comprising some 2,000 members.[44]

The Croatian Fraternal Union was permanently attending to the needs of its membership in Canada. At the First Convention in 1926, the Supreme Board was required to obtain a charter from the Canadian authorities as early as possible. Also, a rather high table of rates of the Manchester Unity Experience was adopted and in the by-laws a special section was included on the Society's operation in Canada, this being a condition for obtaining a charter. The First Convention issued a special resolution on the growth of the Croatian Fraternal Union in Canada, mentioning a rather small number of lodges in spite of an increasing inflow of young and healthy Croatians to Canada. It was resolved, there-

fore, that one of the Supreme Board officers should visit the Croatian communities and lodges in Canada once a year and see to it that the existing lodges were expanded and new ones organized.[45]

Although all the conclusions of the Convention were implemented, a misunderstanding arose in 1931 between the membership in Canada and the Society management in Pittsburgh. A campaign for separation from the parent organization was launched by some Canadian members who supported the affiliation with the *Hrvatska sloga* independent society of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The local newspaper, *Kanadski glasnik,* strongly supported the affiliation. According to the paper, the Canadian membership was paying too much to the mutual treasury. Moreover, without a charter, the operation of the Society branch in Canada could be banned by the Canadian authorities. The reason for the breakaway attempt was an extra assessment of dues levied by the Supreme Board to cover a deficit in the Sickness Benefit Fund.

The Croatian workers' relief organization *Matija Gubec,* Lodge 644 of Hamilton, addressed a letter and a resolution to the Society membership in Canada reproaching both the Supreme and the Executive Boards of the CFU with insufficient interest in keeping the Canadian membership within the organization. The Home Office was, therefore, required to open a separate office in Canada which would operate according to Canadian regulations and do business in Canadian currency. Should the Home Office fail to do so, the Canadian membership would seek aid and protection from the Canadian authorities.[46]

The disagreement was short-lived though. At the Third CFU Convention in 1932, the Supreme President informed the membership that, due to the fall of the Canadian dollar and in accordance to the demands of the Canadian membership as well as the consent of the Insurance Commissioner, it was decided that business operation in Canada would be done in Canadian currency. This decision went into effect on February 1, 1932. It meant additional work for the Home Office. This was accepted without complaint so as to please the Canadian membership. Their request was hard to comply with because of the difficult economic situation causing the Canadian dollar to fall by 20-30% below the American dollar. The President also stated that although the charter had not yet been granted, the Insurance Commissioner did not raise difficulties.[47]

The main reason for the close cooperation between the Home Office and the Canadian membership was the insecure social situation of Croatian immigrants in Canada. Therefore, the Fourth Convention determined that the Supreme President and the Legal Counsel should pay a visit to all Croatian communities and Society lodges in Canada, and ask of the Canadian authorities to guarantee the safeguard of Croatian workers at their work places.[48]

At its session on September 20, 1938, the Supreme Board arrived at a decision about launching a campaign to win new membership in Canada. It also gave the Canadian members credit for their self-sacrificing work. The Board invited, "the whole membership of Canada to

deliberate and make plans for their participation in the campaign for the new membership of the lodges and Junior Order nests. At the end of the jubilee campaign, which is taking place from February until the end of July 1939 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the founding of the Society and its Fifth Pittsburgh Convention, the delegates will be able to announce that the Society's motto has been realized in Canada: all Croatian-Canadians are also members of the Croatian Fraternal Union."[49]

The Canadian campaign obviously obtained good results because at the Fifth Convention, 1939, the President informed the delegates of the progress the Society had made in Canada. At the preceding convention, the Canadian membership was represented by four delegates, whereas at the Fifth Convention, 13 delegates from Canada were in attendance. The President also said that the time had come for one of the Canadian delegates to be elected to the Home Office. So it was done and the delegate Canjar became a member of the High Trial Board.

The growth of the CFU membership in Canada continued unabated and at the Sixth Convention held in 1943, attended by 18 Canadian delegates, it was decided that the Canadian membership would be from then on represented by one member in the Supreme Board.

During World War Two, membership in Canada grew by leaps and bounds. The newspaper *Novosti* of Toronto estimated that out of 12,000 Canadian Croats, almost 5,000 were CFU members.[50]

Immediately after World War Two, a strong movement occurred among the Canadian Croats for return to Yugoslavia. The issue was on the agenda of the Seventh Convention held in 1947, and after careful deliberation, it was concluded that these could not be condemned, though a departure of several thousand Croats from Canada would definitely affect the Society's membership. It was agreed that the returnees should be persuaded to remain members of the Society and to keep their death insurance certificates, otherwise, and according to the by-laws, they would lose their rights to the health and accident insurance claims. Nevertheless, the delegates' concern about the return home of Canadian Croats was not justified as the actual number of returnees turned out to be lower than assumed, whereas a number of returnees re-emigrated to Canada. Therefore, the Croatian Fraternal Union continued to flourish in Canada.

The Croatian Fraternal Union - The Workers' Organization of the Croats in the USA and Canada

The Depression in America, jeopardizing the very existence of the people, grew worse between 1929 and 1932. The state was threatened not only with an economic collapse but also a political one. A solution was expected from the presidential elections. Herbert Hoover was the candidate for the Republican Party, which showed little concern for the situation in the States. They considered the danger to be "far away". The Democrats' views were much more realistic. Their candidate was

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Governor of the State of New York. He recognized the consequences of the Depression, stating openly that a revolution was by no means out of the question. The panic-stricken population found his approach to the problems more acceptable and gave him a seven million vote advantage over Hoover. The Croatian immigrants, hard-hit by the depression, gave most of their votes to Roosevelt.

Roosevelt's election as President opened up new paths for American foreign policy. He pronounced himself in favor of the peace policy and collaboration with all nations, and focused his attention on the solution of home issues. The American financial system collapsed, the enterprises partially in operation had no money to pay their workers, a majority of banks closed with the explanation that they were without any money. Roosevelt demanded from Congress to pass a law putting all the banks in the USA under state control. Having adopted it, Congress also passed several laws on public works requested by the President in order to give employment to several million of unemployed workers.[51] One of them was the *Law on the Industrial Revival of the Country,* which was of historical importance for the American workers, giving them - for the first time - the right to enter the trade unions freely without fear of losing their jobs. At the time, a movement was initiated across the States for the establishment of new, more progressive industrial trade unions - the *Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)* - in which the Croatian workers accounted for a large part of the membership. The Croatian Fraternal Union with its lodges across the USA, a number of other immigration organizations and societies, immigration homes and clubs were all active collaborators with the National Labor Union Board of the CIO, which led the organizing campaign. Some members of the Croatian Fraternal Union assisted the entry of more than a thousand workers into the labor union.

In the context of an extensive engagement of the Croatian immigrants in the labor union movement of the USA in the late 20's and 30's, the interesting figure of Milka Sabljić has to be mentioned.

In 1927, a strike broke out in the coal mines of Colorado. Although some workers were members of the *Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)* and others of the *United Mine Workers,* they made a mutual protest against the difficult working conditions in the coal mines. In Walsenburg, in the vicinity of the old Ludlow mines, the police resorted to terror, killing nine miners of the Columbine mine. At the time, in Trinidad, there lived a daughter of a Croatian miner named Milka Sabljić who worked in the local laundry. Disappointed with the fact that some miners had to be persuaded to take part in the strikers' guard, she began to volunteer in it. She regularly appeared at the miners' and guards meetings. The immigrants remembered her reddish-blond hair and her passionate speeches, so they called her Flaming Milka *(Vatrena Milka)*. Flaming Milka was once caught by the state police, tied to a horse, and dragged behind it. In spite of being imprisoned, she contin-

ued to fight. Flaming Milka became popular around the USA and was invited to the East to collect money for the strikers. She held speeches at a number of meetings, winning popularity across the USA.[52]

The National Union of Miners was founded in September 1928 in the Yugoslav Workers' Home in Pittsburgh. A decisive role was played by Toni Minerich, Frank Borich, Vinko Kamenovich, and Mike Stanovich. All of them took part in a number of clashes between the miners and the companies including the strikes in Harlan County, Kentucky, where the miners were especially persistent in the struggles for their rights. Borich was elected secretary to the new union.

The Croatian Fraternal Union was deeply involved in the labor union movement of the 1930's, encouraging workers to enter the industrial and labor union associations. In the Society, they were quite conscious that well organized workers would be more successful in gaining the protection of their rights, the insurance of better wages, the improvement of working conditions and safeguards at work. Then the workers, members of the Croatian Fraternal Union, would be able to pay their dues regularly, the number of sick-leaves and injuries at work would be cut, which would ultimately result in lower pays from the Society's funds. The delegates to the Second Convention held in St. Louis in 1929 adopted, therefore, a resolution which condemned the American employers for pressuring the unqualified workers with "saving" and "speed-up" systems which led to excessive unemployment, lower wages and worse working conditions. According to the resolution, the goal of the "company unions" was to mislead the workers; craft trade unions were outdated and unacceptable to the majority of workers, a large number of them being members of the Croatian Fraternal Union. The American labor union movement, on the other hand, was developing into a modern industrial unionism involving all workers, regardless of their qualification, nationality or race (unqualified labor, too) which meant also a number of members of the Croatian Fraternal Union. "As the industrial unions are leading them all to a more humane way of life, the Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union welcomes the new spirit of the industrial unionism. It offers its moral support to this noble work, believing that the new unions would improve the working conditions and life of many members of the CFU, thus easing the burden of their obligations to the Croatian Fraternal Union."[53]

At the height of the Depression, when its membership fell from 61,208 to 52,547 members, the Croatian Fraternal Union held its Third Convention in Gary, Indiana, in 1932. The Convention adopted a resolution censuring unemployment, the decrease of wages and the longer working hours. It was pointed out that the workers' rights achieved to date were threatened. Therefore, the trade unions and the political organizations should defend the workers' achievements and force the employers to maintain better working conditions and wages. The state was also invited to provide the unemployed workers with better social security.

The resolution also called on the Croatian immigrants and other Slavs to support the programs of the workers' unions and the political parties fighting for workers' rights.[54]

The resolution of the Third Convention was quite radical, welcoming and supporting "any workers' movement and any workers' organization, both industrial and political", demanding from the workers to take advantage of any chance to ensure their rights. The Society, for the first time, raised the question of the social security of unemployed workers. This can be explained by the influence of the delegates belonging to the Progressive Workers' Bloc. In 1930, they changed the name of their organization into the Left Wing. It operated within the Croatian Fraternal Union; its members systematically attacked the Home Office. The *Radnik* newspaper of April 13, 1933, published a proclamation addressed to the lodges and the membership of the Society which began as follows, "The Croatian Fraternal Union is in jeopardy. The Supreme Board proved incapable to control the devastating effects of the Depression sapping the Society's strength. The membership should immediately take steps to save its organization."

The proclamation further stated that the Society's solvency was in question due to a drop of the bonds by $770,000. A number of bonds were null and void, and the debt due to the unpaid interest totaled more than $88,000. In the insolvent banks there were $132,000. In all the Society's funds the deficit rose because the money inflow decreased and expenditures increased. The Sickness Benefit Fund was nearly bankrupt and the Compensation Fund was not doing any better. The number of members, especially the young ones, was decreasing. The Society would be losing its most needy members, and remain with only a handful of more prominent individuals - "speculators, merchants, priests and others."

The proclamation criticized the Supreme Board for the lack of an appropriate revival program and for not taking any adequate measures to resolve the problems. The Central Committee of the Left Wing suggested, therefore, that a national conference of the representatives of all lodges and the Society groups should be held and discuss the following:

"How to stop the increasing deficit in all the funds;"

"How to coordinate the operation of the Sick Benefit Fund with the present situation and the membership ability to pay dues;"

"How to keep the solvency of the Society, invest the money and discharge the debt of the lodges;"

"How to reorganize the Society administration in order to cut expenses;"

"How to retain the membership of the Society and, finally,"

"How to support best the struggle for a federal state protection of the unemployed and the infirm."[55]

In response to the statements made by the "leftists", the *Zajedničar* was very sharp, stressing that nobody had ever tried to disclaim the serious consequences the Society had suffered due to the depression. It should be remembered, though, that even financially stronger societies and with a longer tradition, also underwent a severe crisis accompanied by serious threats to their financial stability. Nobody had ever denied the fact that the value of the Society bonds had fallen resulting in the decrease in interest on them or that it had suffered losses in the bankrupt banks. The Society was no exception. Equal losses were suffered by all financial institutions. True, some Society funds showed a deficit that affected the whole membership. But it was not accurate to say that all funds showed large deficits. Hard-hit were only those funds that, owing to the circumstances, had high disbursements. The statement that the value of a number of bonds had fallen was, therefore, incorrect unless at the same time their titles and value were identified. Further, it was not true that the Supreme Board had not taken steps or made conclusions regarding the reconstruction and financial rehabilitation of the Society. In fact, at its recent meeting, it resolved to settle business in the Sick Benefit Fund and retain the Society's solvency. The questions of capital investments were also defined as well as of the Society's administration. Finally, the *Zajedničar* reminded its readers of the following, "In conclusion, we recommend that both the lodges and the membership of the Society follow only the by-laws of the organization, which is in the full interest of the Society and its membership. According to them, no wings or separate supreme offices should be accepted except the Supreme Board, entrusted with the management of the Society by the Convention. It is responsible through the Convention to the same membership that elected it."[56]

Nevertheless, the "leftists" did not stop openly censuring the Supreme Board. They did not do it only in the columns of the *Radnik* but launched another paper in Cleveland, the *Borbeni Zajedničar* (Fighting Fraternalist). Consequently, the concern of the Home Office was growing. At the semi-annual meeting of the Supreme Board on March 16, 1934, the Supreme President, Ivan Butković, described the opposition with the following words, "The Communist party of the USA, an exclusively political party, hidden behind the Left Wing of our organization, is interfering with the inner affairs and operation of our Society. Although our organization has its by-laws, its charter, its aim and mission, although it is clearly defined as a fraternal, relief and humanitarian society with, for the past forty years, its national Croatian characteristics, these uninvited guests, through a part of our membership, are trying to undermine the sound foundations of our Society. It is well known to the whole membership what has been undertaken by these elements in the last few years to gain control over the Society, its treasury, its official organ and its lodges. At that, they showed no respect for anything. When their efforts bore no fruit, they resorted to the foul business of

spreading the news among the membership which might destroy all that our immigrants have acquired during the last forty years. Their slogan is, "Either to gain rule over the Society leading it to where they wish in order to serve their destructive policy, or destroy it." This Left Wing board of theirs, together with some leftist boards in some of our lodges, dedicate all their time, their newspapers, their meetings to the single purpose of defaming our Supreme Board, of provoking disobedience to its conclusions, of creating disorder and dissatisfaction among the membership, telling it daily that the Society is on the brink of disaster. All activity in some of these lodges has stopped; all they have on their agendas are resolutions, always concocted in the communist kitchen. Their secret and open rumors about the Society facing disaster induced many a member to leave the Society believing these communist, leftist schemes."[57]

The Supreme Board accepted Butković's disclosures and some officers added that the Left Wing activists called on the Society's membership to disobey the decisions and orders of the Supreme Board. Other Board members pointed out that such political groups could operate in political parties, unions and similar organizations, but not in fraternal organizations primarily attending to the social needs of their members. They also quoted examples of some fraternal associations whose activity ceased due to such or similar political groups. Finally, the Supreme Board concluded unanimously that against the most prominent "leftist" leaders, S. Lojen, N. Bušić and N. Muselin, the Executive Board should file impeachment proceedings to the High Trial Board.

The sharp disagreement within the Croatian Fraternal Union was primarily the result of the Depression, which made its consequences even more severe. Unfortunately, neither group was correct in their attitudes. The adherents of the National Bloc were not right in claiming that the "leftist" goal was to gain certain positions in the Society or destroy it. The "leftists" were all good Croatian fraternalists wishing to have a strong Croatian fraternalist organization. They were misled, though, by their belief that this could be achieved by the political program of the Communist Party of the USA. Neither was correct. Their claim that the adherents of the National Bloc who sat in the Society management were not sufficiently engaged in managing the business during the Depression for the benefit of the organization. So, for example, the Supreme Board at its session of March 14, 1931, discussed the aid to thousands of unemployed Society members who could not even cover their dues to the Society. The Supreme Board tried to find the most appropriate solutions for both protecting the Society's interests and aiding the needy members. A decision was made that the dues of these members should be paid from the reserves for as long as they existed. They would therefore be entitled to both the death and all other benefits. The unemployed members signed loan certificates against liability of return once they found employment again. It was also resolved that the

available amount of $8,000 from the National Educational Fund and Aid Fund should be used for the coverage of dues of the unemployed workers and their families who had been the Society members for at least 15 years. It was further decided that the Insurance Commissioner would be required to grant permission for the transfer of $50,000 dollars from the Surplus Fund to the National Educational Fund to pay out aid to the unemployed members.[58]

Social insurance of unemployed workers was the most topical issue during the Depression years. A bill known under the name of *Lundeen's Bill H. R. 2827* was on the agenda of the American Congress. The bill was supported by the Fourth Milwaukee Convention held in 1935. The Executive Board was obliged to address a request to all Senators and Congressmen to pass the Bill. However, it was not even discussed in the Congress but returned to a legislative body. This provoked a stormy reaction of the American public. Senator Frazier of North Dakota submitted, therefore, a new bill known as the *Workers Social Insurance Bill, S, 3475.* At its meeting on March 12, 1936, the Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union supported Frazer's Bill because "it provided insurance for all unemployed workers, farmers, shopkeepers, professional workers, part-time workers. It also regulated old-age pensions and maternity compensation, all to be covered by the state, without any direct or indirect assessment of the recipients or discrimination on the basis of nationality, religion, race, citizenship, politics and length of stay in either the place of residence or state."[59]

The Croatian Fraternal Union systematically supported the organization of the American workers in labor unions. In one of its resolutions addressed to President Roosevelt in March 1937, it gave full support to his efforts for reconciliation between the divided American labor organizations associated in the American Labor Federation and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. In fact, the preference of the CFU was for the unions united in the Congress of Industrial Organizations because they assembled the largest number of workers employed in the steel industry where a considerable number of CFU's members found employment. In its resolutions of September 18, 1936, and March 1937, the Supreme Board supported a movement of the steel industry workers for the establishment of a large and all-inclusive industrial union, stating the following, "The Supreme Board sincerely welcomes the great organizing movement of the steel industry workers and their past successes as an important step of American labor at large toward organizing within large industrial unions. The Supreme Board believes that it is the industrial organizing that guarantees the American workers a better future and the insurance of rights they, as creators of the country's prosperity and welfare, are entitled to. It, therefore, calls on the Croatian workers in America, primarily the members of the CFU, to give the movement its moral and, if possible, a financial support and cooperation. Being an elected representative of a large organization of Croatian immi-

grant workers, it promises to do its very best on every occasion, within the limits of its powers and rights, to assist the steel workers movement and contribute to the final victory of the American workers."[60]

The Croatian Fraternal Union was well aware of the fact that many difficulties experienced by unemployed Croatian workers were due to the fact that they did not have American citizenship. Through its official organ it frequently reminded them of the importance of having American citizenship, and in 1939, it carried the following resolution, "Since from the very beginning the Society considered its task to educate its members as good American citizens, the Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union at its semi-annual meeting makes an appeal both to its membership and to its Lodges across the USA to take the immediate and necessary steps to become American citizens, unless they have already done so. Those who are already American citizens should individually and through their Lodges see to it that all Croatian immigrants, non-citizens of the USA, take the appropriate steps to acquire American citizenship."[61]

By mid-1936, the Antifascist Front of the American Croats started its activity. It comprised members of almost all Croatian immigration organizations: the Croatian Fraternal Union, the Croatian Catholic Union, the Croatian Kolo, the Alliance of the Croatian Workers' Clubs, the Croatian Peasant Party, and other independent benefit, cultural and educational societies. It assisted the democratic movements in America in their struggle against war and fascism. However, it also supported movements for workers' organizing in the industrial labor unions of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, its program including higher wages, social insurance and aid to the unemployed as well as protection and equality of immigrant workers. Within the Antifascist Front, central committees of the lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union were founded which, in some places, brought together not only the Society lodges but also other local, relief, cultural and educational organizations, which jointly organized the *Croatian Day,* a manifestation of the unity of all American Croats. In those days, the *Radnički glasnik* newspaper wrote the following, "We are faced with an important issue, that of the unity of all Croatian immigrants in America, and all Croatian immigrants have to be acquainted with it. Then the Croatian workers of America, organized in different organizations and societies, will initiate a unity movement of immigrant Croats in which the Croats will be united in their request for help in the struggle of Croatian people in the old country, and in their demand for a better and safer life in America. These are the ideas that can be fundamental to the unity all Croatian immigrants."[62]

In Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Youngstown, New York, St. Louis, and other towns, the places of residence of tens of thousands of Croatian immigrants, the committees of the merged Croatian Fraternal Union lodges and other immigration societies were organized. Pittsburgh witnessed the organization of the first such united committee

comprising 40 Croatian Fraternal Union lodges of the Allegheny district. On the initiative of the central committee of Chicago, the first united conference of 15 central committees was held in Pittsburgh in September 1936. There were 243 immigration organizations representing some 27,000 members.

In the years prior to World War Two, on the pages of the *Zajedničar* and in the resolutions of the Supreme Board, the Croatian Fraternal Union emphasized the need for unity between Croatian workers and other Croatian immigrants of America and Canada. The resolution of the Supreme Board of September 1938 stated that in the past years, the Croatian Fraternal Union had witnessed a growth in membership and a consolidation of its assets, which increased its reputation among the Croatian immigrants and other Americans. This was achieved thanks to the commitment of the Supreme Board and all the members of the Society. The Supreme Board consistently followed all the democratic and progressive movements in the States, especially those supporting the cause of the social status of workers. According to the resolution, the CFU assisted morally and financially the organization of labor unions, supporting President Roosevelt in his efforts for the adoption of more favorable social legislation. The Society's policy opposed the policy of the fascist countries threatening world peace and conquering other nations. A better understanding and collaboration among the numerous Croatian organizations was therefore achieved. The resolution ended with the following words, "It is in the interest of the Society's progress that this course be followed. Strictly following its non-party attitude, the Croatian Fraternal Union guarantees its membership full political and religious freedom. Holding its principles of democracy and knowing that

Delegates to the Second Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, St. Louis, Missouri, 1929

the Society's membership supports freedom, peace and democracy, the CFU will continue to assist workers in the organization of their labor unions and favor the joint efforts of the AFR and CIO on a program suited to the workers' needs. The Society will assist the unemployed workers in their struggle for adequate aid and employment in public works. It will side with all democratic and progressive forces in their endeavors to hinder political reactionaries, and save American democratic traditions and institutions. It will support the struggle for world peace and the progress of mankind."[63]

The Increase in Membership and Assets, and the Business Affairs of the Croatian Fraternal Union

The merger of the Croatian fraternal organizations into the Croatian Fraternal Union created a new, broader and high-quality basis for the operation of Croatian fraternalism in America. Thanks to the different activities of the Home Office, lodges, Junior Order, and the "English-speaking lodges", and through the *Zajedničar* newspaper, the Society's growth in membership and assets continued unabated. On January 1, 1926, the Society membership had grown to 55,646 adult members and 22,366 members of the Junior Order. The assets of the merged societies totaled $3,628,932.08.

At the Second Convention held in St. Louis in 1929, 232 delegates and 20 voting officers represented 513 lodges and 57,528 members. The assets totaled $4,665,415.68.

An analysis of the growth of the Society's total membership and assets from the end of 1925 until the end of 1931, shows the following trend: after 1925, the assets of the CFU totaled $2,994,968.78, whereas by the end of 1928, they were $4,083,617.79 which means that the

three-year increase amounted to $1,088,649.01. The assets of the Junior Order totaled $141,870.79 by the end of 1925, whereas by the end of 1928, they had grown to $254,178.24, the three-year increase amounting to $112,207.45. The statement of the CFU total assets by the end of 1928 showed the following:

Membership assets	$ 4,083,617.79
Junior Order assets	$ 254,078.24
Children's Home assets	$ 325,605.28
Total:	$ 4,663,301.31

By the end of April 1929, the Croatian Fraternal Union comprised 513 lodges with 57,286 active and 283 passive members. The Junior Order included 29,187 members within 400 nests. By the end of December 1931, there were 61,208 members in 574 lodges and 30,477 junior members in 404 nests. Late in 1931, the assets of the regular members amounted to $5,582,410.56. Since the previous convention, the assets of the regular membership had increased by $1,498,792.77. At the same time, the assets of the Junior Order totaled $363,189.54. Compared to the 1928 statement, the increase amounted to $109,111.30. By the end of 1931, the assets of the Children's Home totaled $352,097.72 so that in comparison with 1928, the increase had grown to $24,377.09. By the end of 1931, total membership assets including the Junior Order and the Children's Home totaled $6,297,697.82; in comparison with the 1928 statement, they had increased by $1,632,281.16.

Delegates to the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932

At the Third Convention held in Gary, Indiana, in 1932, 244 delegates and 21 voting officers represented 574 lodges and 61,208 members. The assets totaled $5,582,410.56. Within three years following the preceding convention, the Society's membership grew by 3,922 members. The oncoming depression, however, affected the results. So, from 1930 until 1934, the number of members fell from 61,183 to 51,000. The treasury was also affected. Out of $4,733,061 invested in public utilities, 43% of the shares lost almost all value. Deeply concerned, the *Zajedničar* wrote, "This ordeal is especially hard on the membership of the Society employed in heavy industry. Under the circumstances, thousands of the Society's members were forced to ask assistance from their lodges in the payment of dues. Today, when the treasuries of most lodges are exhausted, their members are obliged, as far as the payment of dues is concerned, to protect their membership rights, ensuing from years of payment, by "reserve" on their certificates or by asking immediate assistance from the organization itself if this assistance can be provided by a limited fund such as the National Educational and Aid Fund."[64]

At the Fourth CFU Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1935, 207 delegates represented 557 lodges or 51,179 members. The assets totaled $7,719,926. The decrease in membership was due to the effects of the world's worst depression. Also, due to the high costs, it was decided that conventions should be held every four years.[65]

Subsequent to the economic revival in the USA, the first task of the CFU was to increase its membership. At the session of the Supreme Board on September 19, 1936, it was announced with satisfaction that the campaign launched in the first half of the year obtained good results - the membership had even increased by 10,000 members. It was dis-

covered, however, that tens of thousands of Croatian immigrants were still not members of any organization, although the previous campaign proved that many of them might become members of the CFU if proper efforts were made. It was decided then that the Executive Board launch another campaign in order to reach the ultimate aim of 100,000 CFU members.[66]

On September 22, 1938, the Supreme Board of the CFU met in Pittsburgh to organize the 45th anniversary of the Society's founding. The Board decided that yet another jubilee campaign should be launched to increase the membership of the Society and the Junior Order Nests. The declaration of the Board stated, "The Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union has reached this decision in the belief that due respect would be thus paid to the pioneer members of the Society who with their self-sacrificing work in the most troubled times, laid foundations 45 years ago of the organization which today ranks very high not only among the Croatian and Slav organizations but among the American and Canadian fraternal organizations at large."[67]

At its formal session on March 16, 1939, the Supreme Board, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the CFU, in a special resolution, gave credit to all the members dedicated constantly to the Society's expansion and strength. It also invited the entire membership to organize appropriate celebrations in their lodges and communities, gathering together "the Croatian immigrant descendants born here as well as the immigrants, the Society non-members, thereby giving the Society a new lease on life and providing the conditions for its further promotion."

Delegates to the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1935

In 1926, the three largest Croatian immigration organizations merged with the Croatian Fraternal Union. However, in many Croatian communities, a number of small, independent benefit organizations still existed. The American authorities were ill disposed towards them because of their small membership and insecure business. They were seriously threatened by the depression. The Society's officers approached their management in an attempt to persuade them to merge with the CFU. The *Dalmatinska sloga* of South Chicago with its 134 members became affiliated with the CFU in January 1931, to be followed in October 1931 by the *Croatian Independent Sick Benefit Society* of West Allis, Wisc., with 67 members, and by the *Hrvatsko potporno društvo Milwaukee*, Wisc. with 163 members in January 1932.

Two larger relief organizations, the *Slovenic-Croatian Union* of Calumet and the *Croatian Unity of the Pacific* of San Francisco, also wished to merge with the CFU. The latter was going to be affiliated with the CFU at the beginning of the merger action, but the merger was refused by a part of the membership at the conventions. Nevertheless, in July 1937, the Supreme Board of the CFU in Pittsburgh sent a special invitation to all independent Croatian societies and fraternal organizations to become affiliated with CFU. Special attention was paid to the *Croatian Unity of the Pacific* and the *Slovenic-Croatian Union* of Calumet. The Supreme Board sent its officers to the conventions the two organizations held in July 1937. Final decisions on the merger with the CFU were reached which met with the approval of the CFU Supreme Board. On their session of September 22, 1938, on behalf of the whole Society, they pointed out the following, "The merger of our fraternal organizations into a single, undivided and strong fraternal Society is the best

Plaque of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific

guarantee of mutual protection and social development of the Croatian workers of America and Canada."

In 1935, the *Croatian Unity of the Pacific* comprised more than 800 adult members and 200 Junior Order members. Its total assets amounted to $153,282.52. From 1910, in the intervening 25 years, the Unity paid out $230,000 in death benefits and $81,000 for hospitalization benefits and refunds to members. Health benefit payments amounted to $138,000 a total of almost half a million dollars.[68] In spite of a successful business operation of the organization, its membership decreased. Therefore, a real campaign was launched for the merger with the CFU. Josip Krpan wrote in the *Zajedničar*, "According to the report submitted to the 1927 Portland Convention, the *Croatian Unity of the Pacific* had 1,010 adult members all in good health. Four years later, at the Ninth Watsonville Convention, we had 907 members, whereas at our last Convention, there were only 776 members reported in good health. This means that in the intervening ten years we lost 234 members, or almost one fourth of our membership. This is indicative of our development. Boasting though we are of the statement of accounts, it is absolutely clear that the *Croatian Unity of the Pacific* is left without its membership, that is, there is no Unity at all."[69]

Ivan D. Butković, the Supreme President of the Croatian Fraternal Union, 1932–1947

According to the decision of the Executive Committee of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific reached at the session of January 24, 1938, the proposed text of the merger was to be accepted and the respective voting concluded by July 1, 1938.[70]

The main article of the merger stated the following, "The Croatian Unity of the Pacific will transfer all its assets, bonds, deposits, securities and other assets to the Croatian Fraternal Union of America, which will, in return, include in its membership without delay all members of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific issuing membership certificates to them in accordance to its by-laws."[71] The merger determined all conditions for life, health and compensation insurance. It also had a provision on the Unity's share in the Junior Order, the use of the Children's Home, and its participation in the management and the funds. According to the merger, the members of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific were to

become rightful members of the Croatian Fraternal Union. In July 1938, the merger was voted by a big majority of the Unity's membership.

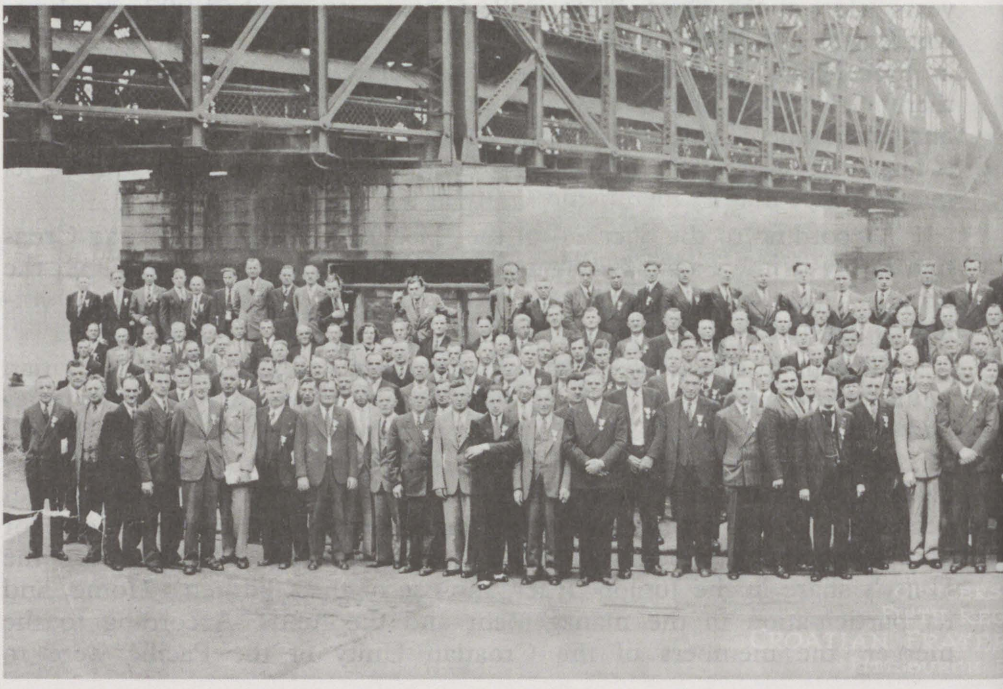
The Slovenic-Croatian Union, founded in Calumet, Michigan in January 1903, operated in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Canada. Its official organ was the newspaper *Hrvatska* of Chicago. In 1929, it had 1,400 members and 30 lodges. The membership comprised an almost equal number of Slovenes and Croats. In 1933, however, the number of members decreased to 1,053 members and 389 members of the Junior Order. The assets totaled $258,491.16.

In August 1937, a merger with the Croatian Fraternal Union was voted by a big majority. Abiding by the laws of the State of Michigan, the final decision about the merger was made by a special convention held in the same year.[72]

The process of merging with the Croatian Fraternal Union was concluded. Only a few organizations with small memberships remained outside the CFU.

Parallel to the merger of the Croatian fraternal organizations, a proposal on the unification of all South Slavic fraternal organizations was made. The idea originated in the *Slovenska narodna potporna jednota* (Slovene National Beneficial Association) and was well received in the Croatian Fraternal Union. So, at the First CFU Convention held in Cleveland in 1926, the Supreme Board was recommended to work in

Delegates to the Fifth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Pittsburgh, PA, 1939



the unification of the South Slavic benefit organizations into the Yugoslav Federative Union. The Second Convention in St. Louis also made a decision that the Slovene proposal should be accepted and implemented.

Initiated by the Slovene National Beneficial Association, a meeting was held in Cleveland on April 8, 1930, between the representatives of the Croatian Fraternal Union, the Slovene Beneficial Association, the Slovene Liberal Union, *(Slovenska svodobomislena zveza),* the Yugoslav Benevolent Alliance *Sloga (Jugoslavenska potporna zajednica Sloga),* and the Serbian National Alliance *(Srpski narodni savez).* It was learned that the South Slavic benefit organizations could not always meet all the needs of their membership and that it could be better accomplished by a large, unified organization. Nevertheless, most delegates were of the opinion that it should be only an alliance of different organizations and not an undivided association. The basic activities of the future federative organization were also discussed such as educational, cultural and economic activities, as well as a mutual program of education of young members and the membership at large. The need for a common stand in American public life was underlined as well as the need to be attentive to complex American legislation concerning fraternal organizations.

Although in its essence the idea of the Yugoslav fraternal federation was good and useful, it was not realized. The largest number of fraternal organizations did not show enough interest in it, and during the Depression years, they were preoccupied with their own existence. Another

unfavorable effect was caused by the news from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia about the great-Serbian regime oppressing other nations; the idea of unification on the Yugoslav basis lost its credibility.

At the Fifth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union held in Pittsburgh in 1939, 247 delegates represented 634 lodges and 55,896 members. The assets totaled $9,316,645. In his report, Supreme President Butković mentioned that in 1932, the organization had 84,812

Delegates to the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Chicago, Illinois, 1943

members, in 1935, the number decreased to 75,721 members, and at the time of the 1939 Convention, there were 91,000 members together with the Junior Order. Butković underlined that credit for this should be given to the well organized and frequent campaigns involving the self-sacrificing work of the membership. He especially highlighted the 1936 campaign launched on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Junior Order, stating "The campaign itself as well as the celebrations were very successful everywhere. They were, however, particularly successful in the headquarters of the Society on which occasion a memorial tablet was

unveiled to honor the man, fraternalist and former President, our late brother Josip Marohnić, who initiated the idea of the Junior Order at the 1915 Convention. This idea of his as well as his recommendation were heartily welcomed by our membership so that today our Junior Order is providing a new force - new members for our adult membership."[73]

Delegates to the Seventh Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Pittsburgh, PA, 1947

Financially recovered, the Croatian Fraternal Union continued to offer humanitarian aid, particularly at the time of natural disasters. In 1936, it granted $10,000 in aid to the flood victims in Pennsylvania, and a $7,000 subsidy to the victims of drought in Croatia in 1938. They also launched a campaign for the collection of money for special-purpose funds.

At the Sixth Convention held in 1943 in Chicago 282 delegates represented 643 lodges and 64,403 members. The assets totaled $11,652,206.01. In the preceding four years, the Society's assets grew by $2,536,000. In the same period, $800,060 from the assessment fund were refunded to the adult membership and $111,000 to the Junior Order members. It is worth mentioning that as of 1928, a total of $2,400,000 were refunded to the Society members from the assessment funds.

At this Convention, the President singled out the campaign launched on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Junior Order and the Second Convention of the Junior Order held in Kansas City, where the first Junior Order Nest was founded. On the same occasion, the first conference was held of the adult Society members appointed by the Supreme Board to win new members for the Society. The Supreme Board was, as a matter of fact, especially concerned with increasing the membership of the Society, so campaigns to that purpose gained in importance.

In 1947, Pittsburgh was the site of the Seventh Convention. Three-hundred and ten delegates represented 71,043 adult members. It was during this period, between 1943 and 1947, that the Society's membership reached 100,000 adults and juveniles for the first time in the Society's history. Assets totaled $15,865,921.52. It was reported that the Society had collected almost $450,000 for the Yugoslav War Relief from 1941 to the end of 1946. By the end of June 1949, the Society had 613 lodges comprising 71,576 members; the Junior Order had 507 nests with 29,484 members; the total membership was 101,060 members. By the end of 1948, total assets amounted to 16.5 million dollars.

The increase in the Society's membership was due to the fact that in the intervening years during the merger action, some smaller Croatian organizations became affiliated with the Croatian Fraternal Union: *Banovina Hrvatska,* Schumacher, Ont., Canada, on June 1, 1940; *Hrvatsko more,* Joliet, Ill., December 1, 1942; *Sloga Hrvata i Slavena,* Eureka, Calif., February 1, 1942; *Hercegovačko-hrvatsko pogrebno društvo Sv. Ante* (Herzegovian-Croatian Funeral Society *Sveti Ante*), of South Chicago, Ill., January 6, 1943. Sometime later, in 1956, the Society was joined by *Hrvatsko bratstvo* of Great Falls, Montana, with 500 members and assets of $167,716.78.

Notes:

1. See: Ivan Čizmić, *Hrvati u životu SAD,* Chapter *Hrvati u radničkom pokretu Amerike* (Croats in the American Labor Movement).
2. Hrvatski list i Danica hrvatska, Chicago, May 25, 1926
3. See: Ivan Čizmić, Hrvati u životu SAD, Chapter Hrvati u radničkom pokretu Amerike
4. *Zajedničar,* June 16, 1926
5. *Hrvatski list i Danica hrvatska,* March 13, 1926
6. Ibid.

7. Ibid, May 25, 1926.

8. *Zajedničar,* June 16, 1926

Tomo Bešenić was born in August, 1877, in the village of Petkovac near Varaždin. He was a qualified tailor and quite active in the social-democratic movement of Croatia. He immigrated to America in 1906, and became in 1907 a member of Lodge 1 of the National Croatian Society of Pittsburgh. As a delegate, he attended the Eleventh Convention of the National Croatian Society held in 1912. At the following Cleveland Convention of 1915, he was elected Secretary to the High Trial Board, and at the Fourteenth Pittsburgh Convention of 1921, the Supreme President of NCS. He is to be credited for the merger of the Croatian fraternal organizations into the Croatian Fraternal Union and was elected its first President and later became its honorary President for life.

9. Ibid, January 16, 1926.

10. Ibid., March 28, 1923.

11. The minutes of the First Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Cleveland, 1926.

The most favorable insurance plan in the Junior Order was the Term Certificate which offered coverage up to the 18th year of age. The certificate holders received no dividends except for the death benefit, but were granted exemption from the monthly dues for the period specified by the Supreme Board. When a member reached 18, he was obliged to enter the adult membership and get the appropriate loan. Unless he had done so in the course of 60 days, the certificate was annulled and the insurer lost the rights to coverage. The guaranteed coverage amounted to $600 and the death benefit depended on the date of entry and the length of the Junior Order membership.

12. *Zajedničar,* April 20, 1932.

13. The minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932; *Zajedničar,* June 22, 1932.

14. The minutes of the Executive board of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Pittsburgh, March 16, 1934.

15. The minutes of the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Chicago, 1943, p. 37.

16. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ,* p. 228

Several plans of insurance were gradually opened in the Junior Order. In September, 1943, a *20 Year Endowment Plan* was introduced. Its premiums were determined on the basis of the *American Experience 3%, Illinois Standard Table* and it offered full coverage of members above 10 years of age. Dividends were provided after a two-year membership. Upon enrollment in the adult membership, a member would be refunded 12 cents a month per each month of the membership in the Junior Order. After the expiration of the certificate, the certificate holder, if he wished so, could receive a full disbursement, but would not be provided with insurance in that case. According to this plan, the maximum insurance available was $2,000.

In January, 1949, a *20 Year Payment Life Certificate* was introduced. It was based on the *American Men 21/2%, Illinois Standard-Bowerman's Extension* and provided full coverage after the member's fifth year of age. Dividends were paid out after two year membership. Upon enrollment in the adult membership, a member was refunded 12 cents per each month of the Junior Order membership.

Payor Benefits was the cheapest plan of protection provided both for members and their parents. It was introduced in June, 1949, and included monthly membership dues paid by the parent or guardian of a child holding a *20 Year Payment Life Certificate.* Therefore, the child's certificate provided insurance both for the parent or guardian. Should the parent or guardian of the child have died before the expiration of the child's certificate, the Junior Order did not pay the dues on the child's certifi-

cate until the age of 21. After that, the child continued to pay the membership fees until the certificate fell due.

17. Ibid, p. 231.
18. The minutes of the First Session of the CFU Supreme Board, Pittsburgh, September 30, 1925.
19. *Zajedničar,* July 9, 1932.
20. The report of Supreme Board Officers, the Supreme Board and Honorary Officers of the Croatian Fraternal Union at the Sixth Convention of the CFU held in Chicago in 1943, p. 14.
21. The report of the Supreme Board at the Seventh Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union 1947, p. 8.
22. *Zajedničar,* May 19, 1926.
23. Ibid, June 12, 1929.
24. Ibid.
25. The report of the CFU Supreme Board at the Fourth Convention, Milwaukee, 1935, p. 193.
26. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ-a,* p. 183.
27. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, St. Louis, 1929, p. 36.
28. Ibid.
29. The report of the Supreme President at the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932, p. 187.
30. Ibid., p. 188.
31. *Zajedničar,* June 13, 1932.
32. Ibid., August 3, 1932.
33. The report of the Supreme President at the Fourth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Milwaukee, 1935, p. 6.
34. The report of the Supreme President at the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Chicago, 1943, p. 214.
35. *Zajedničar,* June 12, 1929.
36. The minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932.
37. Ibid.
38. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, St. Louis, 1929; *Zajedničar,* June 19, 1929.
39. *Zajedničar,* June 27 and 28, 1932.
40. The minutes of the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932; *Zajedničar,* July 22, 1932.
41. *Zajedničar,* July 10, 1932.

Milan Petrak was born in Srijemska Mitrovica in 1889. He completed his education at the Grammar School in Zagreb and registered at the Law School, University of Zagreb. Upon his immigration in 1913 to the USA, he found a job as a clerk in the Office of the National Croatian Society. He collaborated with several Croatian immigration newspapers, almanacs and periodicals. From 1914, he worked on the editorial staff of the *Hrvatski svijet* in New York. After the editor in chief, Gabro Rački, died he took over his post and remained with the paper until 1924 when he was elected editor in chief of the *Zajedničar.*

Michael Horvat was born in Karlovac in September, 1891. As a boy, together with his mother, he joined his father in Philadelphia. He started his education in America where he was trained to be a typographer. In 1914, he opened a printing office, running it until 1927. From 1909, he was an active member of the National Croatian Society Lodge 13 of Steelton. He was a delegate for the first time to the Pittsburgh Emergency Convention of 1925. At the First CFU Convention of 1926, Horvat was elected Secretary to the Board of Trustees and remained in office until 1929 when he was appointed editor-in-chief of the English section of the *Zajedničar.*

42. The minutes of the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Chicago, 1943, p. 75.
43. See: Anthony W. Rasporich, *For a Better Life - A History of the Croats in Canada,* Toronto, 1982.
44. Lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union in Canada, the Province of Ontario: Lodge 608 - Schumacher; Lodge 618 - Creighton Mine; Lodge 617 - Welland; Lodge 628 - St. Marie; Lodge 638 *U slozi je spas* - Ford City; Lodge 644 *Matija Gubec* - Hamilton; Lodge 648 - Kirkland Lake; Lodge 650 *Slavensko bratstvo* - Toronto; Lodge 651 - Levack; Lodge 657 - Timmins; Lodge 672 - Bracebridge; Lodge 679 - Port Arthur; Lodge 685 - Hunstville; Lodge 689 - Sudbury.

    The Province of British Columbia : Lodge *Lovinac-Bratstvo* - Princeton; Lodge 681 - Britannia Beach; Lodge 683 - Blakeburn; Lodge 268 - Ladysmith; Lodge 281 *Sv. Ćiril i Metod*; Lodge 627 - Copper Mountain; Lodge 694 - Vancouver.

    The Province of Nova Scotia: Lodge 682 - Springhills.

    The Province of Alberta: Lodge 686 - Raymond; Lodge 688 - Calgary.

    The Province of Quebec: Lodge 666 - Arvida, Lodge 678 - Noranda. Independent society *Hrvatska sloga* of Winnipeg, Manitoba.
45. The minutes of the Second Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, St. Louis, 1929; *Zajedničar,* June 26, 1929.
46. *Svijet,* New York, November 8, 1931.
47. The report of the Supreme President at the Third Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Gary, Indiana, 1932, p. 11.
48. *Zajedničar,* July 10, 1935.
49. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, Pittsburgh, September 22, 1938.
50. *Novosti,* Toronto, September 7, 1946.
51. According to some authors, the USA recorded 13 million unemployed workers in 1933 (Theodor Rosenof, *Dogma, Depression, and the New Deal,* Port Washington, NY, 1975, p. 3).
52. Compare with *We Are Many, An Autobiography* by Ella Reeve Bloor, International Publisher Co. Inc. Copyright 1940, p. 219; *Rabble Voices, An I. W. W. Anthology,* Edited with introductions, by Joyce L. Kornbluh, Ann Arbor, 1964, p. 353.
53. *Kratki pregled povijesti HBZ-a,* p. 47
54. Ibid., p. 107.
55. *Radnik,* Chicago, April 13, 1933.
56. *Zajedničar,* April 26, 1933.
57. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, Pittsburgh, March 16, 1934.
58. *Zajedničar,* March 25, 1931.
59. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, March 21, 1936.
60. Ibid., March 9, 1937.
61. Ibid., June 16, 1939.
62. *Radnički glasnik,* Chicago, June 20, 1936.
63. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, September 22, 1938.
64. *Zajedničar,* June 13, 1932.
65. Some data on the expenses of the Fourth Convention: transportation costs amounted to $8,323.99; per diem expenses reached the figure of $40,228. Together with some additional costs, the expenditure of the Convention totaled $52,664.67.
66. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, Pittsburgh, September 19, 1936.
67. Ibid., September 22, 1938.
68. *Zajedničar,* November 10, 1935.
69. Ibid., March 2, 1938.
70. The minutes of the Executive Committee of the Croatian Unity of the Pacific, San Francisco, January 24, 1938.
71. *Zajedničar,* February 2, 1938.

72. The contract was identical to the one signed by the Croatian Unity of the Pacific and was published in the *Zajedničar* of September 28, 1938.
73. The minutes of the Fifth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Pittsburgh, 1939, p. 236.

Chapter Nine

THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION DURING WORLD WAR TWO

The unfavorable political situation in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes between the two world wars had a significant influence on the political activities of the American Croats. They received news from home through letters and newspapers sent by their relatives in Croatia. The American press and the immigrant newspapers expressed unfavorable opinions with respect to the political situation in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the journal *Our World,* Herman Bernstein explained that the Peace Conference for Yugoslavia had been a mistake. He personally traveled to Yugoslavia in order to learn more about the situation there. According to him, the mistake had been serious, the people were uneasy, and disorder could break out at any time unless further misunderstandings were prevented in a country that was already at war. "The origin of disturbances lies in the fact that a part of the people supported the military state, while the others wanted to establish a republic. The Serbs strive for a powerful, military Serbia under the name of Yugoslavia, whereas the Croatians and Slovenes want a republic in order to survive quietly as a nation."[1]

The American Croats were terribly upset when they heard about the assassination of the Croatian Peasant Party delegates in the Belgrade National Assembly. An extreme Serbian nationalist, delegate Puniša Račić, assassinated two delegates and injured several more in the course of the assembly session on June 20, 1928. Stjepan Radić, who was among the injured, died in Zagreb seven weeks later. Therefore, the Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union dedicated the whole of its session of July 26, 1928, to the disturbing situation in Croatia; it judged the situation in Croatia to be unbearable, so the Croatian Fraternal Union was compelled to give its full support to the political leadership in Croatia and help it change the political system for the benefit of the Croatian nation as a whole. The Supreme Board called on all Croatians in the USA and Canada to support the political resistance of their compatriots. A resolution was adopted reflecting this position and was

sent to the political leaders of Croatia and to the families of the assassinated delegates. The editorial boards of the immigrant newspapers were asked to publish the integral text of the resolution, whereas its English translation was sent to some American newspapers.[2]

The delegates to the Second Convention, held in St. Louis in 1929, protested against the dictatorship introduced by King Alexander Karađorđević of Yugoslavia. They emphasized, "We wish to express our deep sympathy with the labor class; we appeal to them to stand together in their struggle against the brutality of military dictatorship and to proceed in their fight until final victory and freedom have been achieved." The discussion during the Convention indicated clearly how carefully the American Croats followed the political life in the old homeland. Several delegates required the Convention to support the establishment of the so called Balkan Federation. The idea was backed at the time by a number of progressive politicians in a few Balkan states; as to such political concepts, each nation within the Federation would enjoy full freedom.[3]

During those harsh political protestations against the situation in Croatia, the Croatian Fraternal Union was additionally shaken by the so called "medal scandal".

In the early thirties, some ethnic communities from the Pittsburgh area suggested the establishment of "ethnic rooms" the University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning, with the aim of acquainting the immigrants with their cultural heritage. The Yugoslav ambassador, Konstantin Fotić, offered help to the CFU Supreme Board and ordered some furniture to be delivered from Yugoslavia. The Supreme President, Antun Gazdić, and the Supreme Treasurer, Božo Jonić, were invited to Washington to pick up the furniture for the Yugoslav "ethnic room". After some hesitation, they decided to go. In Washington, Ambassador Fotić used the occasion and presented Gazdić and Jonić with the 'Sv. Sava' order, which both of them disliked and removed immediately upon leaving the embassy premises. But rumors were heard about it and the whole affair was made public by the Chicago newspaper *Radnik*. Lodge 99 forwarded a resolution to the Supreme Board demanding that Gazdić and Jonić be suspended and the issue forwarded to the High Trial Board. The resolution was backed by 300 lodges which meant the majority of the membership. However, it was obvious that Gazdić and Jonić were no sympathizers of the Belgrade regime and that they had actually been tricked. According to some delegates, the Supreme Board should only have reprimanded them. But the leftists wanted to seize the opportunity in order to harm the Home Office. The *Zajedničar* commented on the whole affair with the following words, "The medals have been bestowed upon them as members of the Yugoslav Board for the establishment of the Yugoslav "ethnic room" at the University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning which is just now being constructed. But as they are, at the same time, the supreme leaders of the Croatian workers' organization; the mere fact of their having accepted the medals by the Belgrade authorities, gave a large majority of our members good reason to be truly and honestly embittered, while the other part of our mem-

bership was once again given a chance for such political maneuvers as they have always frantically practiced and are still doing so. "[4]

At the Third Convention, Antun Gazdić was no longer a candidate, and Božo Jonić was not elected. The Convention strongly censured the regime led by King Alexander of Yugoslavia and his military clique. All the progressive Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes of America were invited to fight together against the non-democratic political regime in Yugoslavia.[5]

An attempt to start publishing the *Croatian Review* in English was a contribution of the American Croats whose aim was to provide Americans with more information on the true situation in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the journal did not last long. Another event in Yugoslavia drew the attention of America and the rest of the world. It was the assassination of Milan Šuflaj, the historian. The treacherous act was explicitly condemned, among others, by Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann who addressed their protest to the League of Human Rights in Berlin, asking that it be forwarded to the International League of Human Rights in Paris which was then expected to protest on behalf of the whole civilized world "against the Belgrade reign of terror and dictatorship". In Einstein's and Mann's letter, the assassination of Šuflaj was described in detail as well as the attempt of the authorities to hide the circumstances and protect the terrorists as well as the *Mlada Jugoslavija* organization. The letter read, "In regard to the terrible situation, we demand that the International League of Human Rights undertake everything necessary to put an end to that interminable despotic regime (...) and that formal protest be raised against the reign of terror governing in Croatia."[6]

In August 1931, the International Committee for Political Prisoners of New York raised a protest to the Yugoslav ambassador in Washington against the death sentence given to Marko Hranilović and Matija Soldin, and ten other Croatian patriots who had been sentenced to several years' imprisonment. The Committee pronounced them all innocent and explained that the assassins of journalist Schlegel were known to be abroad.

Towards the end of November 1933, a group of 41 of the most outstanding American men of letters, politicians, editors and other intellectuals directed their protest to the Belgrade government, emphasizing that the world press had often written about the terror and the dictatorship in Yugoslavia and demanded that arrests and tortures in prisons be stopped. Among other American literary men, Theodor Dreiser, John Dos Passos, and Upton Sinclair signed the protest.[7]

The protestations resulted in the *New York Times* and *St. Louis Star* referring extensively to the dictatorship in Yugoslavia, while the *Christian Science Monitor* continued to inform periodically about the difficult political situation in the country. In August 1932, in a series of articles on Yugoslavia, the journal pointed out that the basic cause for the political crisis was the striving of the Croatians for a federal system in place of the Belgrade hegemony. The New York journal *Editor and Publisher* termed the Yugoslav politics as the "Slavic darkness". This is how the *New York Times*, in an article entitled "Yugoslavia, the Country of National Diversities", described Croatia, "It is like Ireland in a kingdom with the strongest government opposition in Belgrade itself. The exas-

peration with Serbian rule was obviously manifested in constant civil unrest, sometimes mild, but sometimes as violent as the assassination of King Alexandar in Marseilles was."[8]

The American Croats were persistent in informing the public about the Yugoslav problems. Their resolutions of disapproval were made public on different occasions like festivals, concerts, picnics and other celebrations held in all American cities. They also addressed protests to American newspapers, senators, congressmen, and the American government. Although the activities were rather successful, dilemmas occurred on some occasions.

In 1934, Branko Jelić came to the USA; he was one of the supporters of Ante Pavelić who was at that time living as an emigrant in Italy. The arrival of Jelić lead to some uncertainties among the Croats. These were particularly demonstrated in connection with the political organization *Croatian Kolo* where a part of the membership joined Jelić and his organization *Domobran* (Croatian Home Guard). But Jelić's activity prompted suspicion among with the American authorities. The editor of *Hrvatski list* and *Danica Hrvatska,* Ivan Krešić, was informed that the State Department was not pleased with Jelić's stay in the USA. As a matter of fact, those responsible within the State Department were in possession of articles that Jelić had been publishing in the Pittsburgh newspaper *Nezavisna država Hrvatska.* The authorities also investigated whether or not Jelić had forwarded the money collected by the immigrants to Pavelić, and whether he had persuaded the American Croats to join the Ustasha movement. Eventually, Jelić was refused permission for further stay in the USA, and according to Krešić, the American authorities afterwards lost sight of him.[9]

The Fourth Convention, held in Milwaukee in 1935, passed another very harsh resolution against the dictatorship in Yugoslavia, emphasizing the following, "The Convention demands from the dictatorship regime that the army, police, gendarmerie and other forces of oppression be immediately withdrawn from Croatia and all the Croatian lands, so as to secure for Croatians the freedom to choose and decide their own destiny, without any constraint or employment of force". However, the resolution likewise condemned the European Ustasha movement, and decisively reproached Pavelić for his endeavors to link Croatian politics with the fascism of Mussolini and Hitler. "The Croatians do not want their brave struggle to result in an exchange of one dictator for another; on the contrary, they are trying to be free of all slavery, whether of Belgrade or of Rome; they are simply trying to shake off the yoke."[10]

The Croatian Fraternal Union, from the very start and particularly from the beginning of the century, was closely linked with the political views and politicians who were opposed to regimes alienated from the people. First of all, this link referred to Stjepan Radić, the founder and leader of the Croatian Peasant Party. Later, in the 1930's, the leaders and the membership of the Society almost entirely accepted the political program of the Peasant Party, particularly since that Party turned into an overall movement of the Croatian people for their independence. The members of the Party were at that time representatives of various politi-

cal tenets both in Croatia and in the American immigrant community. The Supreme Board with its numerous resolutions, as well as the *Zajedničar* in its editorials and other articles, gave absolute support to the Croatian Peasant Party and its leader Dr. Vladko Maček.

The Supreme Board, at a meeting in September 1936, expressed its gratitude to Dr. Maček because the aid meant for the drought victims in Croatia had been so fairly distributed. Here are the words addressed to Dr. Maček, "We wish to send our warmest greetings to you and the Croatian nation, on behalf of eighty thousand members of the Croatian Fraternal Union who sympathize with the Croats in their struggle against injustice and violence imposed by the regime on our old country; our members are ready and willing to help this struggle on every occasion and by all means placed at their disposal, so that Croatians may be sovereign rulers in their homeland."[11]

The resolution passed by the Supreme Board in 1937 pointed out that the American Croats had already supported their compatriots in their struggle against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Unfortunately, after the fall of Austria-Hungary, the Croats did not gain liberty, and were not allowed to realize their national rights in a democratic way. This was why the Croatian Fraternal Union gave its full support to Dr. Maček, the acknowledged Croatian leader, and invited its compatriots to persist in fulfilling the program of the Croatian Peasant Party.[12]

In 1939, the political leaders of the Croatian Peasant Party made an agreement with the representatives of the Serbian democratic opposition. In August, the so called Cvetković-Maček agreement on *Banovina Hrvatska* was signed and supported by Prince Regent Pavle Karađorđević. After the signing of the agreement, the Supreme Board sent President Maček the following note, "The Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union at its semi-annual meeting expresses its approval of the agreement made, under your leadership, with the joint Serbian democratic opposition, in order to gain freedom for Croatia. We keep a vigilant eye on your endeavors to win the difficult struggle of the Croats for their freedom, and are willing to help as much as possible. Although the agreement does not include all the Croatian requests, we believe that realizing the proposed goals will mean a gain for the Croats and will be remembered as one of the Croatian victories in their fight for full liberty. We are aware that the Belgrade oppressors and other Croatian enemies will do their utmost to render our demands impossible; therefore, a still more decisive victory is necessary to make them retreat. The fight will be even more successful if the Serbian people, suffering from the same Belgrade oppressor, take part in it. We greet you and ask you to gather all your strength; do not surrender, but go on fighting for the rights until they are fully obtained. For this reason we shout for joy. Long live the Croatian struggle for liberty and equality! Long live the people of Croatia!"[13]

The leadership of the Croatian Peasant Party made attempts to achieve a direct link with the Croatian Fraternal Union by help of their own representatives as well as those of the *Hrvatski radiša* organization who frequently visited Pittsburgh and the CFU Home Office. Maček

Ivan Butković and Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb, in 1938 during the first organized visit of the Croatian immigrants to Croatia

forwarded his personal message to the Fifth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, which read, "I wish to greet the delegates to the Fifth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, our oldest, and the greatest and worthiest of all Croatian organizations in the New World. In the name of all Croats, I express my gratitude also for the material help abundantly granted by the Society during all the times of distress and misfortune that faced their brothers."[14]

In the middle of 1938, a larger group of Croats from America led by CFU President Butković visited Croatia. Their aim was to help their compatriots at home. The visitors were met with a warm welcome in Zagreb and President Butković was personally received by Dr. Maček and by Alojzije Stepinac, the Archbishop of Zagreb, as well as by the leaders of the *Hrvatski radiša* and many other renowned personalities. Butković also visited several other places in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina to inform the people about the activities of the American Croats. At the Mostar meeting, the Belgrade regime was explicitly censured by Butković and his escort, which eventually caused the whole group to be expelled from Yugoslavia.

A powerful and absolute political support to the people in Croatia in the late 30's resulted from the fact that the CFU members felt and understood that the world situation was growing more and more dangerous, and therefore was leading directly towards a great war which would not spare their old country either. They were also fully aware that their

Welcoming the Croatian immigrants at the Zagreb main railway station in 1938

organization was an American institution, and that in turbulent times, its destiny would be closely linked with their new American homeland. That is why the Society leadership committed itself to the American politics, which at the time assured full democratic rights and stability in the

Ivan Butković and Dr. Vladko Maček during the 1938 visit to Zagreb

years ahead. President Roosevelt's political option was supported by numerous CFU resolutions passed during that crucial period of American history. Even before that, in March 1937, in a resolution of support addressed to the President, the Supreme Board asked him to help put into practice the American Constitution and American legislation interpreted in favor of all American social classes. In March 1938, on the eve of World War Two, in the name of 80,000 Americans of Croatian birth or extraction, the Board dispatched another resolution to the President, asking him to stick to his decision that American weapons would not be sold to the enemy countries which should be strictly distinguished from their victims. After Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President for the third time, the Supreme Board, in its letter of congratulations, emphasized the fact that more than 90% of the Croats in the States had cast their votes for him.

Thanks to their correct evaluation of world policy, and of the situation in Croatia and America during the turbulent times of World War Two, the leadership and the members of the Croatian Fraternal Union proved once again to have acted in the right way.

World War Two - A Time of Great Challenges

No sooner had Yugoslavia joined the Tripartite Treaty then the news reached the USA. On March 27, the American press reported under big headlines that the people in Belgrade had crowded the streets, demonstrating against the Tripartite Treaty. The German and Italian troops invaded Yugoslavia on April 6. Some ten days later, the news of the founding of the so-called Independent State of Croatia was heard in America.

Immediately after the invasion of Yugoslavia, President Roosevelt and State Secretary Cordell Hull condemned the aggression and decided to offer Yugoslavia moral support and material aid. The American Government made the following announcement, "The barbarian raid on Yugoslavia and the attempt at destroying this country by using rough force represents a further step in a planned march towards world supremacy and conquest. Another small nation is destroyed by the conqueror's attacks, which proves once again that there are no geographic borders or obstacles of any kind in their raid to master the world. The American people sympathize with the nation which was attacked in such a dastardly manner and we keep a vigilant eye on the brave fighting of the Yugoslav people in order to protect their homes and preserve their freedom. This Government, faithful to its policy of helping those who defend themselves against conquerors, will send as quickly as possible its military and other aid to Yugoslavia."[15]

On April 11, the State Department issued an act according to which it approved relief drives for Yugoslavia. At the beginning of June 1941, US Government officials publicly proclaimed that neither the break up of Yugoslavia nor the puppet Axis regimes would be recognized. The only legitimate body for the Americans was the Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which escaped from the country. The raid of Nazi Germany on Yugoslavia gave rise to bitterness and harsh protests

among the immigrants. All democratic organizations and groups of immigrants, condemning the Fascist invasion, pointed out the need of launching a relief drive to help the people in the old country. The first impetus was given by the Croatian Fraternal Union. From the Supreme Board meeting of April 8, 1941, the following proclamation was sent to the CFU membership and to the Croatian people of America:

"The dark shadow of enslavement has spread its sinister wings above our native soil, the thousand year old country of our ancestors, Croatia and Yugoslavia, releasing a torrent of havoc and terror. The century-old enemies, oppressors and alienators of our and all Slavic peoples Rome and Berlin with Hitler and Mussolini embodying their present plundering and bloodthirsty policy these cursed enemies of freedom, democracy and humanity, have unjustifiably burst into our old country. The pages of the future history of mankind will bear the inscription saying that the peoples of Yugoslavia never provoked or caused the outburst of this outrageous slaughter (...)

History will bear witness that Yugoslav peoples (...) would rather suffer total defeat in the battle with the superior and a hundred times stronger enemy than become voluntary allies of the most infamous scribblers of the darkest pages in the history of mankind."

The conclusions about starting relief campaigns to help the destroyed country were reached at the same Supreme Board session. The Board called upon all the immigrants, all relief, cultural and other organizations to immediately start relief drives to the aid of the war victims. The Croatian Fraternal Union lodges were recommended to affiliate with all immigration societies and institutions in order to act more efficiently. A close cooperation with respective boards of other South-Slav immigrant organizations was suggested whenever possible.

The main task was to gain a unity of purpose of all the immigrants. At the previously mentioned meeting of April 8, the CFU Supreme Board considered, apart from relief drives, that its most important task was the promotion of unity of the South-Slav people in every way imaginable. The Board warned the Society members not to be misled by the traitors' activities in Croatia, and also drew their attention to the need of rendering impossible any attempt to separate the American Croats. The Supreme Board pointed out, "Let all our work and strivings be used in supporting and, with all our might, fighting the battle so as to enable our unfortunate people in the old country to regain their freedom, in accordance to the ideals of humanity, democracy and freedom expressed in the written documents and works of the greatest sons of this country (...) and most magnificently expressed in the Declaration of Independence of the American Republic."[17]

A successful relief drive could not be carried out without coordinative action of all immigrant organizations of the Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes. At the same meeting, the Supreme Board resolved to call on all Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian organizations to elect their representatives and to establish a central board of the South-Slav organizations. The board was supposed to function as a representative body to the American public. The Serbian immigrants were also organized at the

same time. Through the Serbian National Alliance *(Srpski narodni savez)*, they invited all Serbian organizations to cooperate and provide relief to the devastated homeland. The same was done by the Slovene immigrants who, by means of the press, called on all Slovene societies to the meeting in Chicago where they founded the Slovene Board whose task was to organize all American Slovenes for the purpose of providing relief.

The Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union elected a special committee authorizing it to arrange a meeting with the Serbian and the Slovene Boards with the aim of launching an extensive relief drive to the aid of people in the old country. The meeting was held on May 10, 1941, in Cleveland, where the Yugoslav Relief Committee was established. The general consent of the immigrant organizations representatives was best shown in the statement made by the President of the *Slovenska potporna jednota* (Slovene Relief Association), Vincent Cainkar. He was pleased to point out that the union of the Croatian, Serbian, and Slovene organizations proved that the South-Slav immigrants of America realized the importance of world events in the destiny of their people. They therefore showed common consent and devotion for their new country, rejecting all disagreements. Cainkar said that it was the only way for the South Slavs of America to offer moral and material aid to their compatriots in the old country.

A proclamation to all the Croats of the USA was sent from the meeting of the *Hrvatsko kolo*. The proclamation made clear that the complex war circumstances were full of temptations both to the Croats in their homeland and to the Croats in the USA. In Croatia, one tyranny was replaced by another, whereas in the USA, some severe impeachments were launched against the Croats. In such circumstances, the American Croats should adhere to the President Roosevelt's politics and to the USA, which would eventually help the Croatian people to live to see better days of freedom and peace, justice and democracy.[18]

After the capitulation of Yugoslavia, the Croatian immigrants had to wage a double struggle: first of all, the struggle against the left wing organization of the *Domobrans* (Croatian Home Guard) who were very close to the Ustaša's movement in Croatia. However, the activity of that pro-Fascist organization was suppressed by the American authorities at the very beginning of the war.[19] But the Croatian immigrants had to wage another fight, a much harder one and with incomparably more serious consequences. It was the struggle against a right-wing Serbian organization, the Serbian National Defense *(Srpska narodna odbrana)* and its official organ the *Američki Srbobran*. This organization and its newspaper condemned all the Croats for the atrocities of the Pavelić Ustašas and for the fall of monarchic Yugoslavia. The *Zajedničar* newspaper wrote, referring to the anti-Croatian propaganda, that after the break up of Yugoslavia, the enemies of the Croatian people had tried, using the world press, to present all Croats as fascists. In the USA, they wanted to provoke confusion and distrust of the American Croats, condemning them for the Fifth Column and condemning the Croatian leaders for adhering to Hitler and Mussolini. All this was done in order to make the American Croats reject their nationality and national ideals.

"The enemies of the Croatian people went so far as to try to accuse the Croats of the break up of Yugoslavia."[20]

When the Pavelić Government declared war on the USA, the situation for the American Croats got worse. The *Zajedničar* pointed out that this was the reason why the American Croats found themselves in such an unfavorable position. It stands to reason that the declaration of war was not an act of the Croatian people neither in Croatia nor in America because there was no basis for it.[21]

The Croatian Fraternal Union leaders spared no pains to smooth away all differences between the Croats and Serbs. In this respect, the Society's Home Office sent the following message to the Serbian National Alliance, "There are no valid reasons for mutual hatred and discord between the American Croats and Serbs. One and the same enemy jeopardizes our freedom and of our children's freedom, wanting to destroy our people in the old country we are all descended from."[22]

Immediately after having received the message on April 7, 1942, the management of the Serbian National Alliance visited the Croatian Fraternal Union Home Office. In conversations with the CFU leaders, they expressed their wish for cooperation among the American Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in launching relief drives to the aid of war victims and in taking a common stand towards the aggressors and their plans to break up Yugoslavia. In these discussions, the representatives of the Serbian National Alliance underlined that, "the Alliance and its management, the membership and the American Serbs in general were ready to work and cooperate with all loyal American citizens who could corroborate by action their loyalty, as well as with every person who strives for the defense of democratic principles the USA and its Allies are fighting for."[23]

The American Croats opposed Fotić's propaganda which hit them hard. Ivan Krešić wrote in his letter, "Fotić takes great pains to defame the Croats. I know that for sure. Our situation is terrible. He has status and influence, and what is most important of all, the millions." In another letter, Krešić explains, "He always has the last word, has got a lot of money, buys anything he likes. He blackens our name wherever he comes, and makes much use of Pavelić for that purpose."[24]

The Croatian Fraternal Union sent the following message to Fotić through the *Zajedničar*, "Mister Fotić, as representative of Yugoslavia, is free to give orders to those over whom he has power, but he definitely cannot give orders to the Croatian Fraternal Union. He can and he has every right to perform his diplomatic duty as the representative of his country to the American authorities, but he cannot command the Croatian Fraternal Union what to do."[25] About twenty Croatian societies of Detroit demanded the Yugoslav Government in London to dismiss Fotić from his office of ambassador. Dinko Tomašić, professor at the University of Bloomington, suggested establishing a committee whose members would be public workers, American Croats, and whose task would be to systematically oppose Fotić's great-Serbian propaganda. In the course of 1941 and 1942, Tomašić published many articles in the Croatian immigrant press on the position of the Croats and their duties during the war.

In the meantime, A. Smith-Pavelić published in New York a booklet entitled *The Truth about the Croats.* The booklet was distributed to a great number of distinguished American personalities. Its contents had to convince the Americans that the Pavelić regime in Croatia was established against the will of the people because for the most part, the Croats were on Maček's side, firmly opposing the Axis forces. Together with the booklet, a memorandum was distributed concerning general Nedić and his regime so as to convince the Americans that there were no differences between the two regimes mentioned.

However, the endeavors of the South-Slav immigrants to become close were severely disturbed by the great-Serbian propaganda in the USA. In October 1941, an anti-Yugoslav campaign was launched in the *Srbobran* newspaper and within the Serbian National Defense of Chicago. Their aim was to furnish evidence that the Serbs were against Yugoslavia. They attacked everything that was Croatian, Slovene, or Yugoslav, using bitter chauvinistic arguments. The *Srbobran* newspaper and the Serbian National Defense tried to present themselves as the representatives of the Serbian public opinion. The leaders of the Serbian National Defense of Chicago and the Serbian National Alliance of Pittsburgh were the same people. Many persons connected with the Yugoslav embassy in Washington were quite active in this matter. Ambassador Konstantin Fotić gave the action full support to its very end. Bishop Dionisije and Ruth Mitchell were the honorary presidents of the Serbian National Defense. Colonel Savić, head of the Yugoslav military mission, and Yugoslav Consul Mirković also took part in the action.

At the beginning of World War Two, the American Croats distanced themselves from the events in Yugoslavia. On July 16, 1941, the Croatian Fraternal Union sent a message to President Roosevelt, underlining:

"that the Croats are loyal citizens of the USA;

"that they fully support the politics of the USA and of its Allies, convinced that the victory of the Allies will be the victory of their old country;

"that they do not recognize the Independent State of Croatia; and

"that they will co-operate with other South-Slav immigrants in the accomplishment of the US war program."[26]

The *Zajedničar* stressed that the American Croats would support to the end their new homeland and the American Government in the struggle against the enemies of the Croatian and other Slavic peoples.

At the very beginning of the war with Japan, the Executive Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union sent the following message to President Roosevelt, "In these trying times, when the enemy, Japan, in the apparent agreement with their allies, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, have attacked the United States in an insidious, treacherous and dastardly manner, endangering the liberties of the people and the free institutions of this country, and when they have been joined in their declaration of war upon the United States by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the Executive Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union, an American organi-

zation, representing nearly one hundred thousand members, citizens of the United States, hastens to extend to you, and through you to the Government of the United States, the expression of our complete confidence, and to the country, our unshaken loyalty.

In these serious and eventful times, the Croatian Fraternal Union, its officers and its members, stand ready to offer their entire moral and material support, and the sacrifice of their very lives, to aid the struggle which you, as President and Commander-in-Chief of our nation's armed forces, so honorably lead.

We assure you, Mr. President, that in these times there is no obligation too heavy, no sacrifice too great, for us as American citizens of Croatian birth or extraction, to contribute our part in this struggle which must end with a decisive victory for the United States of America and her allies, a decisive victory over the barbaric forces of Japan, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, their allies and accomplices, thus to guarantee an exalted heritage to all the democratic peoples of the world - complete national liberty and lasting peace."[27]

At the meeting held on December 12, 1941, the Society's Executive Board reached a decision on the first war aid, a $5,000 subsidy assigned to the American Red Cross. The Board also called on all the lodges to support the American Red Cross as much as they could.

The policy of the American Government toward the activities of immigration communities was based on the idea of full unity of the American nation. To this effect, immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the State Department issued a proclamation calling the immigration communities to be restrained from any political activities in the USA that might be linked with their old countries. Immigrants were therefore recommended to suppress their worry about the future of their native countries, leaving it to be the concern of the Government in Washington. A major reason for issuing the proclamation, which largely determined the behavior of immigrants, was to attain national unity.[28]

Another document of the American Government in 1941 stated that, "The American Government accepts that, considering the same racial background, American citizens, acting as such and absolutely loyal to the USA may, nevertheless, sympathize with the national aspirations of their countries of origin, get organized to express their sympathy and support to such aspirations."[29]

The Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, on the occasion of the Slavic Congress in Detroit in 1942, stated the following, "Full support to our war efforts given by the American citizens of Slav origin, a considerable factor in our production programs, is of extreme importance. In these efforts, however, the differences ensuing from the racial background should be minimized in favor of the fundamental unity of this country."[30]

The American Government, insisting on the national unity in the interest of war, acted as a mediator in some disputes among the South Slavic immigrants. M. Elmer Davis, director of the War Information

Agency, Mr. Berle, Undersecretary of State, and Allan Cranston, director of the Office of Foreign Languages summoned the representatives of the American South Slavs to the State Department on September 18, 1942. On this occasion, E. Davis mentioned that the American Government knew about the misunderstandings and disputes among the American South Slavs which was detrimental to the American war program. He said, "The American authorities are well acquainted with the ongoing struggles among the Croats and even more among the Serbs concerning the inner structure of Yugoslavia. They have acquired undesirable intensity in the *Srbobran* attacks on all Croats in the old country and those living here as American citizens. These attacks are unsubstantiated because the State Department had confirmed proof that the majority of Croats in their old country were against Pavelić, giving resistance to and fighting against Hitler and Mussolini. At the same time, the vast majority of Croats in America, settled here, or as citizens of the USA, are loyal to this Government, although initially, there were some who sympathized with Pavelić, instigating hatred between the Croats and Serbs. Consequently, each attack by the American Serbs on all Croats because of the traitor, Pavelić, or an attack by the American Croats on all Serbs because of Nedić's betrayal of the Allies, is insubstantial and only detrimental to the American war efforts, an abuse to our cause and grist to Hitler's mill."[31]

At the same meeting, the following resolution was unanimously adopted, "We shall all follow the American Government in its striving for the unity of Americans, irrelevant of their national or racial origin, in their mutual effort to win this war for freedom. We shall resist any attempts pushing the Americans of Yugoslav origin to mutual conflicts."

The Slav Congress and the Congress of the American Croats played an important part in acquainting the American public with the work of the American Croats and the current situation in Yugoslavia. The Slav Congress was held in Detroit on April 25 and 26, 1942, with the consent and support of the American authorities. President Roosevelt sent the following message to the Congress, "You, whose old country has been robbed and enslaved, need no words of explanation to understand who the enemy is and what devilish intentions he has. You, who contributed substantially to American national culture, need no explanation to understand its significance and benefits. You, who have sent your sons to the battlefields and who produce the arms that will bring victory, do not need words of encouragement to lift your moral strength and your faith. Because with our joint force, we shall defeat the tyrants, clean out your old country, and bring freedom and peace to all people,"[32] Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, also voiced his support to this Congress, which, according to him, was contributing to American unity.

Although defining the program of the Congress was a difficult and delicate task, Slovak Štefan Zeman should be given credit for it. According to him, the Congress of the American Slavs had as its main goal to unite and win over 15 million Americans of Slav origin for President Roosevelt's foreign policy and for the greatest possible support to the countries and nations fighting for their national independence and

against Nazi aggression. The leadership of the Congress, knowing that more than 50% of the American Slavs worked in the war industries, asked both the manufacturers and the workers to avoid anything that might lead to work stoppage, until democracy had won the war. An important task of the Congress, according to Zeman, was giving moral and financial aid to their Slavic countrymen in their struggle against Nazism. The Congress also demanded equality of rights of Slavic peoples in the union of nations after the war. It is interesting to note that at the same time, an action was initiated to awaken interest for Slavic culture and for a thorough study of both the Slavic languages and their culture in the USA.[33]

The First Congress of the American Slavs in Detroit was attended by more than 2,000 delegates and 1,000 guests from all over the States. The Croatian delegation of more than 500 delegates was the most numerous of all. The Congress adopted two resolutions. One was addressed to the Americans of Slav origin, requesting them to do their utmost to insure the victory of the USA and its allies over the Fascist Axis forces. The second, addressed to the Slavic nations in Europe, stated the following, "We are with you! While you are fighting your battle, we shall do our duty both in American factories and on farms, and on the distant front-lines of this great world battle." The Congress elected the Committee comprising the representatives of all Slavic organizations with the task of implementing the conclusions of the Congress. Leo Krzycky, a Pole, was elected President of the Congress and Štefan Zeman, a Slovak, its Vice-President. Among the Croatians, Ivan Butković was elected Vice-President and Vinko Vuk, Treasurer.

In the summer of 1942, a meeting of the leading figures of the American Croats was held in New York. It was attended by the members of the Executive Board of the CFU and the Croatian Ban, Ivan Šubašić. It was decided that the Congress of American Croats should be convened and that its organizing committee should be made up of the attending members. Among other things, their proclamation stated the following, "Guided by our devotion to our homeland, America, and our sincere love of our Croatian people, we are going to gather and unite all our forces in order to contribute to the victory of the United Nations over the brutal forces of German nazism, Italian fascism, and Japanese militarism. No sacrifice is too large for our America and for the salvation of Croatia and other freedom-loving nations."[34]

The Congress of the American Croats was held in Chicago in February 1943. It organized hundreds of thousands of Americans of Croatian origin to give support to the USA in the war against the fascist Axis forces, but also to provide moral and material aid to the liberation war waged by the Yugoslav peoples against fascism. It was one of the greatest movements in the history of Croatian immigration.

The Congress was attended by 716 Croatian-American organizations from around the USA and Canada. The anti-fascist program, as well as the program of moral and material support to the anti-fascist struggle of the Croats in Yugoslavia, were enthusiastically approved by the attending 927 delegates. Besides activating the American Croats, the

Congress had a strong impact on American public opinion. A number of American Senators, Congressmen, Governors, Mayors and high officials from Washington sent their greetings to the Congress, expressing their support to the liberation war in Yugoslavia. The Governor of the State of New Mexico, John J. Dempsey, said among other things, "The Croatian people are fighting a glorious struggle against the despotic intruders in their country. Their struggle is an inspiration not only for American Croats, but for all freedom-loving nations."[35]

The Congress was attended by some distinguished American politicians. The member of the Senate Board for Foreign Affairs and a close collaborator of President Roosevelt, Senator Claude Pepper of the State of Florida, in his address to the Congress mentioned that, ..."our dear Croatia will again be free and a member of the free nations of a new world."[36] In attendance were also the Mayor of Chicago Edward J. Kelly, President of the Pan-Slavic Congress Leo Krzycky, and many others.

According to one of the participants, "The Congress was the largest and the most representative gathering of the American Croats in the history of our immigration. Not only did it offer political guidance to the vast majority of Croatian immigrants, but it also influenced the American public attitude towards the Croatian immigrants and Croatians at large.

As the Congress of the American Croats was in favor of the territorial integrality of all Croatian regions, the following conclusion was made, "In the regions occupied by Italy, the Croatians are subject to the severest, criminal exterminations. The Congress, is, therefore, protesting against any annexation to Yugoslavia's disadvantage; it is against the former annexation of Dalmatia and Hrvatsko Primorje to Italy ..."[37]

One of the most significant and immediate results of the Congress was the establishment of a standing committee, popularly called the Council of the American Croats. Its task was the implementation of the conclusions of the Congress, so it became a coordinator of all actions of the American Croats in providing moral, political, and financial aid for the old homeland.

The primary tasks of the Council of the American Croats were the following:

1/ Elimination of misunderstandings and the gathering of American Croats;

2/ Establishment of friendship, and cultural and economic ties between America and the Croatian people in Yugoslavia;

3/ Struggle for the demands and rights of the Croatians to the regions inhabited by them, as well as for the right of other South Slavs to their territories under foreign occupation (i. e. Italian and Hungarian, as stated in the resolution of the American Croats).

The Congress also initiated the foundation of a broader committee comprising the representatives of other South Slavic nations. The resolution proposed that a united committee of Americans of Slav origin be founded, comprising the representatives of the central organizations of all American Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and Bulgarians. Through the

Council of the American Croats, a meeting was organized of the representatives of the Congress of the American Croats, the Serbian Vidovdan Congress, the Congress of the American Slovenes, and the Union of the American Macedonians. On August 7, 1943, the United Committee of the Americans of Yugoslav Origin was founded with writer Luj Adamič as President and violinist Zlatko Baloković as Vice-president. Its primary tasks were activities towards the unification of the national groups and immigrant organizations, and permanent information of the American public about the actual situation in the old homeland. The election of Adamič and Baloković to high offices of the United Committee guaranteed credibility to its work.

In September 1943, the Sixth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union was held to resolve a number of issues relevant to its further existence and work. As it was held in the middle of the war, besides informing the membership of the successful work of the Society, it had to set the political goals of its future activities. It backed the war efforts of the USA and the Allies and gave every support to the liberation war in the old homeland, sharply condemning Pavelić and his collaborators. Its membership and all Americans were called to devote their strength to the manufacturing of arms for American and Allied forces so as to win an early victory over the Nazi enemy.

At the Convention, a resolution on the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was adopted. It condemned the unjust solution of the Adriatic issue after World War One and the annexation of the Croatian and Slovene territories to Italy when 300,000 Croats and 400,000 Slovenes came under Italian rule. The Convention adopted the tenets of the Atlantic Charter and supported the great anti-Hitler coalition. Expressions of support were addressed to President Roosevelt, to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and to Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin. Greetings were sent to Dr. Vlatko Maček, Dr. Ivan Ribar, the President of the Anti-fascist Council of Yugoslavia, and to Vladimir Nazor, President of the Anti-fascist Council of Croatia. Also, full support was given to Zlatko Baloković, President of the National Council of the American Croats, and to Luj Adamič, President of the United Committee of the Yugoslav Americans. The Sixth Convention expressed agreement with the activities of the Congress of the American Croats, underlining that, "The Convention of the CFU, supporting the decisions of the Congress of the American Croats, invites its lodges and the membership to cooperate with all other American-Croatian organizations in the implementation of these decisions. Further, it decides that the future Supreme Board and the official organ of the Society should promote fraternal unity of purpose among the membership of the Society."

Along with moral and political support, the Croatian immigrants also offered generous material and other assistance to the USA: they volunteered for the American army, purchased American War Bonds, and engaged in the self-sacrificing work in the American war industries.

When the war broke out, the American Government founded the President's War Relief Control Board whose task was to collect aid for the countries of the Anti-Hitler Coalition. The Board founded a special fund for each country which received financial resources from the general fund. By using his Washington connections, K. Fotić succeeded in organizing for Yugoslavia the so-called United Yugoslav War Relief Fund, headed by a Committee comprising many prominent Americans. The Fund informed the public of its activities via the *New Bulletin United Yugoslav Relief Fund* published in New York. As the Croatian immigrants unanimously refused to cooperate with the Committee of the Fund, it had no influence on Croatian immigration.

The Supreme Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union elected a special relief board for Yugoslav people, which met with the Serbian and Slovene Boards in Cleveland, on May 10, 1941, to found the Yugoslav Relief Board. However, due to political misunderstandings among the Yugoslav immigrants, the Board disintegrated, and with the approval of the American authorities, three separate boards were founded, a board for Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia respectively.

It was as late as the second half of 1944 that a united relief fund was proposed. So, the War Relief Fund of Americans of South Slavic Descent was founded on December 14, 1944. It was headed by Zlatko Baloković who later wrote that in no board founded by the American Slavs had there ever been so many distinguished Americans as in that one. The Honorary President was Eleanor Roosevelt, for example. The Board's meetings and performances were attended by Senators, Congressmen, Mayors, Governors, artists, scientists, and writers. In churches, synagogues, and schools, money was collected for aid in clothes, medicines, food and other necessities. Until 1949, when its work was terminated, the Fund had collected a total of $3,264,649 in clothes and money.[38]

The Croatian Fraternal Union alone invested six million dollars, almost half of its assets, in War Bonds. Besides, a campaign was launched among the immigrants for the purchase of War Bonds. Therefore, more than four million dollars worth of War Bonds were sold. Almost every Croatian worker also purchased War Bonds at his or her workplace. Members of the board in charge of the campaign received high decorations from the American Government for their work.

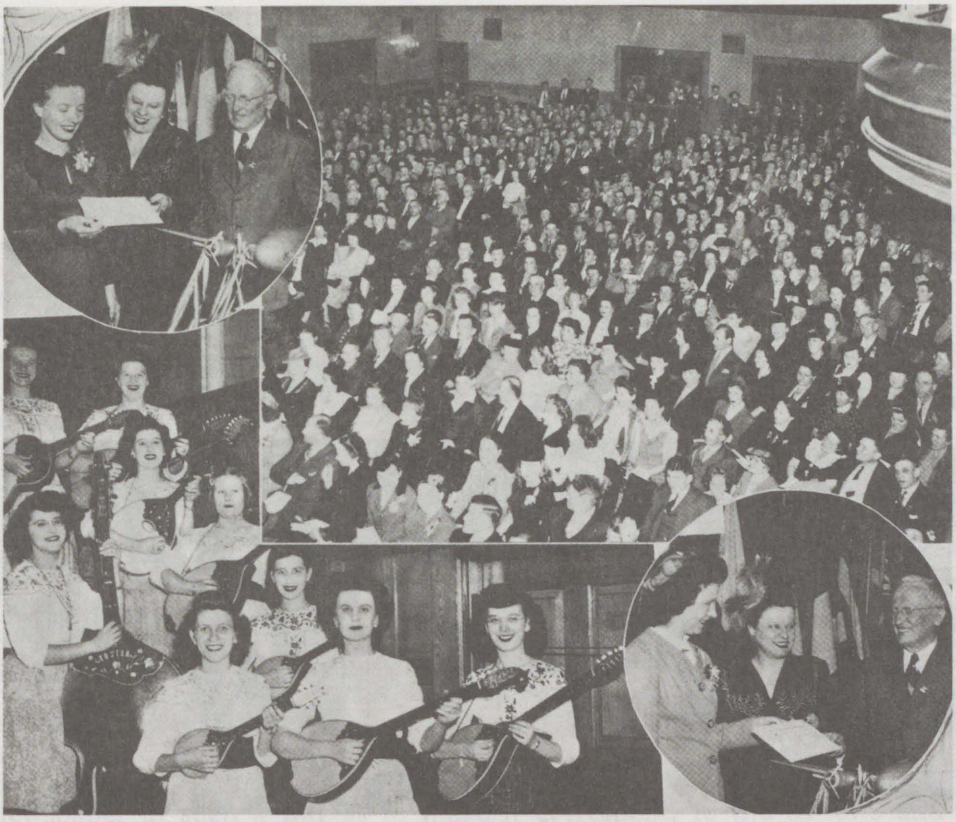
Since the attack on America, all lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union and other Croatian organizations and institutions had been investing almost all their assets into the War Bonds and the American Red Cross. There was hardly a member of the Society or an American of Croatian descent who didn't invest the largest part of his or her savings into the War Bonds. Although the exact assessment of the amount invested by the Croatian immigrants was not possible, the data collected by the Council of the American Croats were impressive. Among all national communities launching War Bond drives, the Croats ranked among the first. Two bombers, bearing the inscription *Spirit of American Croatians* and *Croatian Fraternal Union,* were bought with their money. The Council of American Croats in Detroit bought another bomber, and

the small Croatian community in Monessen, Pennsylvania, bought the equipment for an American military hospital. With the CFU's money invested in the War Bonds, one American hospital was built and equipped. A copper plaque was fixed at its entrance with the following inscription, "Built and equipped with the resources of the American Croats." The extent of the Croatian immigrants' involvement and their immediate participation in the war America was waging attracted nation-wide attention of the American public.

The exact number of Croatian immigrants and their sons fighting in the American forces is not known. It is known, though, that there were several tens of thousands of them known for their courage. Among them there was a large number of volunteers, and many received high decorations. Among the members of the Croatian Fraternal Union, 15,000 fought in the American forces, in other words, 23% of the total membership. Of these, 308 were killed in the war.

The percentage of the CFU membership in the Canadian army and navy was higher than in the American forces. The Canadian membership invested equal amounts of money into the Canadian War Bonds

CFU campaign for War Bonds



as that in the USA. The Croatians' assistance to the Canadian Red Cross was also substantial.

The CFU members engaged in the war enjoyed special benefits. It was decided by many fraternal organizations and insurance societies that the beneficiaries of their members killed in the war would receive only the premiums paid to the organization, or their "reserve". The CFU, on the other hand, decided by referendum that full death benefit would be paid out to the beneficiaries of the members killed in the war, and full disability benefit to the disabled veterans.

With the war drawing to a close, the activities of the American Croats grew in intensity. At the Second Slav Congress held in Pittsburgh in 1944, one thousand delegates represented numerous Slavic organizations. The Croatian delegation was the largest one and was given credit for its devoted work. The Second Congress of the American Croats, held in April 1947, was attended by 600 delegates. It was opened by the President of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Vjekoslav Mandić, and the main report on the activities of the American Croats was submitted by the *Zajedničar's* editor, Filip Vukelić. The Congress invited the American Croats to agree with the democratic movement in America and to

First million dollars collected for War Bonds

demand the return to President Roosevelt's program of world peace and a better life in America.

The Second Congress of the American Croats ended with a meeting attended by 2,000 people. The Congress marked the end of a period in the political history of the American Croats which began late in the 19th century when the first Croatian immigrants tried to introduce the Croatian people and its struggle for freedom to the Americans. Fighting against Austria-Hungary and later against the anti-national regimes in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the American Croats were credited for acquainting the world and the American public with the situation of the Croats in both Croatia and America during World War Two.

Political Disputes After World War Two

Immediately after the Sixth Convention held in 1943, the Supreme President, Ivan Butković, and his followers withdrew from the Council of the American Croats. The act was censured by their political opponents in the Croatian Fraternal Union and the most rigid critic was the editor in chief of the *Zajedničar*, Filip Vukelić. He reprimanded Butković for having violated the conclusions of the Sixth Convention which had approved the resolutions of the Congress of the American Croats and decided that the Supreme Board should collaborate with the Council. However, Butković pointed out that he and his adherents were under no obligation to stick to the program of a political party (a communist one) that was imposed on the Council; namely, as an American citizen, he had every right to a political choice of his own.[39] The conflict grew worse in 1946, and Vukelić came to distinguish the "positive" Supreme Board members from the "negative" ones, the followers of the former nationalist bloc being naturally considered as "negative".

The Seventh Convention held in Pittsburgh in 1947, was an opportunity for opposing parties to test their powers. War circumstances, political conflicts in the USA, and the current situation in the new Yugoslavia had a direct effect on the members of the Croatian Fraternal Union. The adherents of the nationalist bloc were not in majority any more, and the leftists enjoyed a significant support of the Society membership and its leaders, who were no communists but sympathized with the current political tenets in the USA, in Yugoslavia, and in the whole world. This is why the attempt of the "nationalists" to get control over the Supreme Board and the lodges in the course of the CFU Seventh Convention was doomed to failure. But, at the very beginning of the Convention, Butković severely attacked his main opponent, Vukelić, thereby hoping to influence the delegates' opinion. He stressed that the editor of the Croatian section of the *Zajedničar* had turned the official organ of the organization into a party organ by publishing articles that the majority of members could not agree with. He divided the Supreme Board members in the positive and the negative ones, not according to their work, but according to their political beliefs. Butković stressed, "The *Zajedničar* is the organ of all members and it is the editor's duty to influence the newspaper in such a way as to make it correspond to the by-laws and

the spirit of the organization. If not, you can be sure that the factious spirit, now practiced by our official organ, will soon be felt in the Society, which can be only detrimental to the organization."[40]

Butković offered the delegates some basic rules to follow when electing the new Society management, "The Society is an American institution of immigrant Croats who have by now become nearly a hundred per cent American citizens; as such, it is devoted and dedicated to the ideals and principles of American democracy. It is also a fraternal society of immigrant Croatians whose purpose is the mutual help and social promotion of its members in keeping with the spirit of this new homeland of ours. The Croatian Fraternal Union is not a political organization and, because of its own progress, it cannot and must not adhere to any political tenets, not even when carefully hidden behind the alleged progressive Croatian idea of Roosevelt's Americanism.[41]

Butković's principles proposed for the CFU's future work was actually no news at all. Since the very beginning of the National Croatian Society, these fundamental elements were to be followed by the fraternalists, but various groups within the NCS, and later in the CFU, had always tended to interpret them to suit their own purposes.

The Seventh Convention deliberated over the quality of the editor's work for a day and a half and harsh words were heard. However, 161 delegates supported Vukelić's editing policy, and 107 delegates were against it. Filip Vukelić was reelected, although the other candidate for the office was former editor, Milan Petrak.[42]

The nationalists had by then understood they were only a minority at the Convention. They strongly criticized the situation in the Society, and consequently, 114 of their delegates left the meeting in protest. However, there was still the majority of 192 delegates left, enough to continue the meeting and decide about the program of activities for the oncoming period, as well as to elect the new management. Ivan Butković was not elected, and his position was taken over by Vjekoslav Mandić.[43]

The delegates who had withdrawn from the meeting made a separate statement in which they explained their act. Here are the main points:

- The Convention had not agreed to a motion that the minutes should enclose the statement about some outstanding communists being among the Supreme Board members;

- It is inadmissible that the Convention should consent to the report and the working principles proposed by the editor in chief;

- The Convention was not willing to accept a motion concerning the necessity of an investigation in order to prove that the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives were exerting influence on the Society through some Board members;

- The Convention sent greetings to the new Yugoslavia.

The conflict did not come to an end with the declaration made by the opposition. The new management, according to the CFU by-laws, should have taken over duty on November 17, 1947, but it was unable to do so because some CFU members succeeded in obtaining an injunc-

tion. The injunction was abolished by the courts at the end of December; the new management took over its office on January 5, 1948.[44]

The opposition could not be reconciled with the defeat. At the end of 1948, they applied to the Pittsburgh courts demanding the reopening of the case against the CFU operation. However, Vukelić made it clear that the opposition should understand that the Croatian fraternalists in America were no longer what they used to be twenty years before, both immigrants and foreigners. In the meantime, they had become not only American citizens of foreign birth, but they had become deeply rooted to their new homeland. Their children had been educated there too, and had fought for freedom as American soldiers. With respect to the Society, Vukelić had to say the following, "The Croatian Fraternal Union is the mainstream of the Croatian national feeling and consciousness in America. The Society, being the second most powerful Slav fraternal organization of America, is the core, or rather the axis around which our American life is turning. This is why it has always been dealt with so favorably by the American press."[45]

The Supreme Board took a stand toward the constant attacks from the opposition, adhering to the following principles:

- for the unity, fraternalism, and mutual understanding in the Croatian Fraternal Union, in accordance to the long tradition and path taken by its founding fathers;

- for the Croatian Fraternal Union's constant strengthening by enrolling new members and by the development of sports for the sake of gathering together the young and the adults, thus promoting the fraternalist spirit in the Society;

- for the support to all the workers' attempts to preserve and expand the rights already achieved, especially those they had been granted during the rule of President Franklin D. Roosevelt;

- for the promotion of better understanding and friendly relationship of the new American homeland and the old one of their forefathers, the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Supreme Board informed some American politicians about the situation and the activity of the Croatian Fraternal Union and was consequently given their support. Louis Graham, the State of Pennsylvania representative, praised the Croatian Fraternal Union when addressing Congress in Washington. As a result, his integral speech and a resolution dispatched by the Executive Board to the Congress were entered in the minutes. Through the resolution, the Congress was acquainted with the fact that the Croatian Fraternal Union was an American benefit society not participating in any political competition; on the other hand, the Society did not prevent its members in their own political activity.

Beyond all dispute, the Society fostered the Croatian cultural and national heritage, and was above all an American institution.[46]

The news about the establishment of a communist system in Yugoslavia was first heard in 1946. The abolition of a multi-party political system and the people's sufferings upset the American Croats who learned about it all through the *Zajedničar*. It goes without saying that

the Croatian radicals in America strongly opposed the CFU newspaper because of such viewpoints. Most objections could be read in the *Narodni glasnik,* the organ of the radicals, but Vukelić did not spare them either in the *Zajedničar,* stating, "The *Narodni glasnik* offers a distorted truth when accusing us of being against 'Russia and the Russians'. We just do not agree with the Soviet authorities and their communist policy, instigating revolutions and civil wars in other countries and aiming to achieve the domination over all humanity. We do not agree with Tito because of communism; we simply do not believe in it. We do not know and cannot say exactly what is actually going on in Yugoslavia, but we are convinced that a system, denying both the individual and the family, could not possibly achieve anything but make its people unhappy forever."[47]

The *Zajedničar* regularly followed the court proceedings connected with the accusations made against the Zagreb Archbishop, Alojzije Stepinac, in 1946, and in a series of articles, severely criticized the way he was treated.[48] When Stepinac was released from the Lepoglava prison and confined to his native Krašić, the newspaper published a protest explaining that Stepinac was not actually set free. In 1957, the CFU Executive Board, on behalf of its membership, sent a special resolution to the American Government, "The Croatian Fraternal Union of America, whose members are almost exclusively Roman Catholics of Croatian birth or extraction, is devoted to the principles of religious freedom for all nations of the world; inasmuch as the CFU of America stands for freedom of the people, it deeply feels that by the limitations incessantly imposed on his Eminence Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac of Zagreb, Croatia, Yugoslavia, as to his rights and the privileges of his high status within the Roman Catholic Church, the very principles of religious freedom in which we so firmly believe, are constantly being violated, henceforth, the Executive Board has reached the decision that the Secretary of State and the State Department of the USA are to inform the Government and the peoples of Yugoslavia as follows: the membership of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America demands that all rights and privileges of His Eminence Cardinal Stepinac be granted, and that he, as Primate of the Roman Catholic Church, be allowed to perform his duty and take his respective responsibilities as Archbishop in the Roman Catholic Church of Yugoslavia."[49]

The dissension in the Croatian Fraternal Union after the Seventh Convention in 1947 would have soon been solved had not the new immigrants arrived after the war, the majority of whom were forced to leave Croatia for political reasons.[50] They formed a special category of American Croats which could not easily become part of the Croatian ethnic community. They were politically linked with the "nationalists" (populist party followers) and supported the opposition to the new CFU management. The opinion prevailed that the censuring was not coming from the CFU membership but more often from the so called "old homeland gentlemen" *(starokrajska gospoda)* and from those who had for various reasons been expelled from the Society and had unfortunately also been joined by some CFU members. Among the newcomers, the

leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Giunio Zorkin, was censured most of all. He joined the CFU upon his arrival in the USA, and immediately afterwards, in front of the Un-American Activities Committee, denounced the Society as a leftist nest.

The *Zajedničar* expounded that it was not the first time that the newcomers tried to disrupt what the Croatian fraternalists had been so painstakingly creating for so many years. Those who knew nothing about the circumstances of the American Croats were trying to impose on them the European mentality, and get them involved in their own problems, thereby spoiling the unity and achievements of the American Croats. In the *Zajedničar* Vukelić explained, "Whoever knows anything about the history of our first immigrants, not by his own experience, but only by having heard about it, knows very well that the first to come were those who had worked hard and fought for everything the Croatians are today enjoying in this country. One must only remember the numerous strikes that have become the bloodiest pages of American history. Our people have, in spite of countless hardships and setbacks, even built churches, and created and improved the Society we have today; they have preserved our language and our Croatian folk songs, in other words, all our customs and traditions. All these values have been promoted by our ordinary people with so much love and joy. (...) True, our peasant and our worker have come into close contact with the American worker and became acquainted with his way of life and his hardships; he was educated by his own toil and perseverance to succeed until he finally entered the first ranks of American labor. Through this process, our man has still managed to preserve his personality and his soul, not allowing to be fully merged with the Americans. But he did contribute to the welfare of his new American homeland. All we have achieved by now, our newspapers, our Croatian societies, organizations, and all the rest, is the result of the unselfish and invincible will of our old-time immigrant, of the Croatian peasant and the American worker."[51]

Wishing to be properly understood and trusted by the new immigrants, Vukelić explained they were wrong not to appreciate the achievements of their Croatian forerunners. But some other fraternalists were rather harsh in their reactions, like Nick Šarić, who wrote in the *Zajedničar*, "They have had their hard times and we wish them all the best and much happiness. They can engage in their politics, but there is one thing they should remember: they should leave alone the 'old-timers' and their achievements. The 'old-timers' did everything by themselves, established the organizations and their national life in immigration, so all they want is to be left alone and not be embittered by the newcomers and their biting party politics. The newly arrived should not teach the others what to do, and should be at least so polite as to respect everybody's private opinion in this free country."[52]

The Croatian Fraternal Union wanted the newcomers to join the Society and so increase the membership, but they usually rejected it claiming that the CFU was led by communists. The *Zajedničar* published a pungent answer, "It is silly of those to say, 'Out with the communists if you want me to enroll in the CFU.' Such persons should not have

come to America in the first place as there are also communists among Americans; likewise, one might have just as well told the American immigrant commissioner, 'I will not get in the States until all communists are thrown out.' And not only that, one would have to prove where the communists actually are. There are very few communists even in Croatia today where they have all the advantages, and their number in America is practically insignificant. We are members of the CFU because it is our national and patriotic organization and because of our own benefit."[53]

The newcomers objected to the Croatian Fraternal Union for not being Croatian enough and for having management leaders who were not even Croatian. The Society rejected such assertions in the *Zajedničar,* "The people in the CFU management feel like Croatians. There have been examples of members who were not of Croatian descent, but honorable people who have always considered the CFU to be a Croatian Society and to remain such. It is so and will be so in the future. After the Tenth Convention, some factious immigrant newspapers announced that the Convention had not been led in the Croatian spirit because the Convention leaders were born in the States and Canada. The old homeland politicians tried to distort the facts so as to show that they should personally enter the management of the Croatian Fraternal Union. We have frequently repeated that the CFU was the mainstream of the Croatian feeling in America. It has promoted Croatian folk music and Croatian culture in the broadest sense of the word. It has done more in order to strengthen the Croatian national conscience among our younger generation than all the political parties, including their publications, have ever been able to do. By help of its official organ, the Society keeps promoting the Croatian idea both at the social and cultural levels. The new leaders of the Croatian Fraternal Union, both born and raised as Americans, have proved from the very start to be fond of the Croatian Fraternal Union such as it is, precisely because it is our Croatian and national organization. This fact is a guarantee that it shall remain so even when the old-time immigrants are with us no more."[54]

With the passing of time, the common national interests of the American Croats contributed to the solution of all differences and misunderstandings. The Society Supreme Board frequently invited the Croats to unite and the *Zajedničar* expounded the idea in the following way, "As a matter of fact, we should not be divided as we are descended from one and the same nation, and it is entirely wrong to do so in spite of all our differences. The older immigrants have become more American in the course of the years as they have had a richer life experience in this country. They have been imbued with American progress, have become modern and have received a better education. On the other hand, they have also lost much of what they had brought from their old homeland, and have in that sense perhaps been somewhat left behind; anyway, they have lived their lives much in keeping with American standards. They could not have done anything else because those better adapted to American life have always been more successful. Our new brothers who have recently arrived have not yet become so American-

like. They still have strong feelings for the old homeland life and are much more sensitive about it. It is constantly on their minds and they need all our understanding and sympathy. We must care for them and help them as our brothers; but they will change with time anyway. The young people have to respect the old ones at least as their elders, and try to understand them and collaborate with them. The more they get to know each other, the better will be their mutual understanding. This is essential, all the rest is irrelevant and of a temporary interest."[55]

The newcomers gradually became aware of the positive role that the Croatian Fraternal Union played in the lives of the American Croats. More and more new immigrants joined the Society and new lodges were established whose members were new immigrants only. Croatian intellectuals came to respect the CFU achievements as well. At the session of the Croatian Academy of America in 1959, the following words were heard, "Naturally, we cannot help mentioning the importance of the Croatian Fraternal Union because it has contributed so much to the promotion of the Croatian immigrants' cultural life in the course of the last fifty years."[56]

It is true that the new immigrants arriving in America after World War Two neither collaborated with the old-time Croatian immigrants nor did they associate with the Croats born in the States. The only things the newcomers shared with the former immigrants was their mother tongue, the sense of belonging to one and the same nation, and the memories from their common homeland. However, there were many things that separated some from the others such as their different levels of education, their completely diverse experiences, and above all, their opposing viewpoints about the tumultuous war years in the old country. Besides, the English language was what really distinguished the newcomers from the young Croats born in America, and so did their interests, and partly at least, their education. But, some things drew them together, for instance, similar levels of education and occupations. The links between one-time immigrants and the new ones became stronger as their language improved. Gradually, the differences between the groups diminished and the newcomers started taking over an intermediary role between the "old-timers" and their American born sons. Karlo Mirth, a new immigrant himself and an intellectual wrote, "Our 'old' immigrants are glad someone is able to tell their sons more about Croatia than they have themselves ever been able to tell them. These young Americans are pleased to learn that the homeland of their forefathers is not a poverty-stricken land awaiting only their parcels and dollars; on the contrary, it is a country they can be proud of. Of course, the whole process of adapting to a new country by the newcomers will last long, (...) and during that period, the educational and intellectual burden of Europe, joined to American empiricism and pragmatism, will have a strong impact on this process. The previous experiences enriched with the new ones will surely be the most useful combination imaginable in the formation of American Croats today and in the future."[57]

Notes

1. *Hrvatski glasnik,* Chicago, October 12, 1922.
2. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, August 26, 1928.
3. *Zajedničar,* June 26, 1929.
4. Ibid., June 11, 1930.
5. The minutes of the CFU Third Convention, Gary, Ind., 1932, p. 55.
6. *Zajedničar,* May 27, 1931.
7. Ibid., December 6, 1933.
8. *The New York Times Magazine,* October 21, 1934.
9. See *Immigration History Research Center,* St. Paul, Collection of Josip Kraja. The collection contains the correspondence between Ivan Krešić, editor of *Hrvatski list* and *Danica hrvatska,* and Josip Kraja, President of the *Croatian Kolo.* The data have been taken from Krešić's letter to Kraja, written on October 25, 1934.
10. The minutes of the CFU Fourth Convention, Milwaukee, Wisc., 1935, p. 60.
11. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, September 19, 1936.
12. Ibid., March 19, 1937.
13. Ibid., September 11, 1939.
14. *Zajedničar,* September 8, 1939.
15. Ibid., April 9, 1941.
16. Ibid., April 16, 1941.
17. Ibid.
18. *Hrvatski list* and *Danica hrvatska,* New York, October 30, 1941.
19. The *Federal Bureau of Investigation* was ordered by Attorney General Francis Biddle to confiscate all documents of the *Domobran* newspaper suspected to be working for Germany. (See also *Hrvatski list* and *Danica Hrvatska,* No. 18, February 10, 1942).
20. *Zajedničar,* October 22, 1941.
21. Ibid., January 7, 1942.
22. Ibid., July 8 1942.
23. Ibid.
24. *Immigration History Research Center,* St. Paul, Collection of Josip Kraja, a letter to Kraja written by Ivan Krešić, June 23, 1941.
25. *Zajedničar,* May 14, 1941.
26. Ibid., July 16, 1941.
27. The minutes of the CFU Executive Board, December 12, 1941.
28. *1944....Crucial Year, The Need of Dynamic Unity in the Immigrant Groups,* Two Addresses by Louis Adamic, *The United Committee of South Slavic Americans,* New York, N Y.
29. *Zajedničar,* January 21, 1942.
30. *Hrvatski narodni kalendar,* Pittsburgh, 1947, p. 17.
31. *Zajedničar,* September 30, 1942.
32. *Hrvatski narodni kalendar,* Pittsburgh, 1947, p. 17.
33. Ibid.
34. *Kalendar Matica,* Zagreb, 1958, p. 97.
35. *Spomen knjiga Američko-hrvatskog kongresa,* Pittsburgh, 1943, p. 34.
36. Ibid.
37. Vojmir Kljaković, *Jugoslavenska vlada u emigraciji i Saveznici prema pitanju Hrvatske 1941-1944, Časopis za suvremenu povijest,* No. 1, Zagreb, 1973, p. 73.
38. *Final Report of the American Committee for Yugoslav Relief,* New York, 1949, p. 11.

39. The report of the Supreme President to the CFU Seventh Convention, 1947, p. 12.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., p. 15.
42. Filip Vukelić was born in 1892 in the village of Cerovec, Croatia, where he completed his elementary education. He immigrated to Pennsylvania before World War One and got a job at an Aliquippa steel mill. As a young man, he read the books written by the brothers Ante and Stjepan Radić, the founders of the Croatian Peasant Party, whose political program he supported. From Aliquippa, he regularly sent contributions to the newspaper *Hrvatski glasnik* of Chicago. He later moved to Chicago and lived there until 1943, when he was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Zajedničar*. Vukelić was a devout American fraternalist. In trying to find solutions to the political and social controversies among the American Croats, he was always applying the program and ideas from the legacy of American fraternalism.
43. Ivan Butković was born on September 29, 1890, in Bilaj near Gospić. He arrived in the States in 1906 and worked in the steel industry until 1912. Afterwards, he got a job in trade. Butković enrolled in the National Croatian Society in 1909, and in the same year, in Pueblo, Colorado, he founded *Sv. Jakov* Lodge 402. As delegate, he attended the First CFU Convention held in Cleveland, in 1926, and was elected President to the Board of Trustees. From 1932 until 1947, he served as President of the Croatian Fraternal Union. In 1967, he was conferred the title of Honorary National President for life.

    Vjekoslav Mandić was born in 1897 in the village of Radetići in Istria. He attended a business school in Sušak. In World War One, he was enlisted in the Austrian army and was taken prisoner of war by the Russians. Mandić joined the Yugoslav volunteer division in Odessa and was injured in a battle against the Bulgarians. In 1917, Mandić came to America as member of the volunteer mission of Milan Pribičević. From the very beginning, he took an active part in the National Croatian Society and later in the Croatian Fraternal Union. He was a leader and delegate to numerous conventions until he was elected Supreme President in 1947. Vjekoslav Mandić was conferred the title of Honorary CFU President for life.
44. The minutes of the CFU Supreme Board, January 5, 1948.
45. *Zajedničar,* December 17, 1947.
46. Ibid., November 16, 1949.
47. Ibid.

    During 1949, the editorial board of the *Zajedničar* was frequently receiving letters from their subscribers in Croatia who asked to cancel their subscription to the newspaper as it caused suspicion by the authorities.
48. For more details see the *Zajedničar*, September 10, 1956.
49. *Hrvatska revija,* Buenos Aires, February 1, 1957, VII, vol. I, p. 100.
50. The Croatian immigrants who had to leave Yugoslavia in the post-war years, mostly illegally, used to spend some time in European countries first, to be then sent overseas either as refugees or as displaced persons. According to the 1948 American law on displaced persons, 17,238 such persons from Yugoslavia entered and settled in the States. Following the 1953 law on refugees, 17,425 persons immigrated to the States, whereas the respective legal acts of 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960 allowed 9,599 persons to enter the USA. Based on the laws passed in 1965 and 1966, 29,328 persons immigrated. In the post-war period, from 1945 up to 1976, 84,022 displaced persons born in Yugoslavia, immigrated to the USA. Many of them did so on the basis of the 'quota principle', which according to the 1952 law allowed 933 persons a year. Therefore, the total number of Yugoslav immigrants to the USA between 1946 and 1968 was 99,152, and in the next period, 1969-1976 there were 49,171 persons altogether. Considering the post-war immigration of the Croatians into the USA, according to Jure Prpić, "There were around 5,000 displaced Croats who arrived in 1953 (Refugee Relief Act). Approximately 8,000 came over based on the 1953 regulations, and from 1945 up to 1956, there were 5,000 Croatian immigrants from the homeland (non refugees). Around 25,000 Croats immigrated from 1956 until 1965 (all

categories). The final figure of all Croatian immigrants after 1945 amounted to approximately 43,000" (see George J. Prpić, *The Croatian Immigration to America After 1945,* Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, p. 9).

51. *Zajedničar,* July 25, 1951.
52. Ibid., August 10, 1960.
53. Ibid., October 21, 1954.
54. Ibid., March 9, 1960.
55. Ibid., October 19, 1960.
56. Ibid., March 18, 1959.
57. Karlo Mirth, *O Hrvatima "Uncle-a Sam-a", Hrvatska revija,* Buenos Aires, December 1960, X, vol. 4, p. 769.

Chapter Ten

THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION - PROTECTOR AND PROMOTER OF THE CROATIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural and educational work of the Croats in the USA is an integral part of the history of the Croatian immigration in this country because a strong need for such activities had been felt since the earliest immigration days in the late 19th century. Underlying this need was the desire of the immigrants to hold together and develop a feeling of fraternalism within an immigration community which struggled for recognition of their national identity among the native population and other immigrants. Evidence is found in different newspapers in the Croatian language, some of which still exist, in a number of American papers issued in English, or most frequently, in Slavic languages, in various anniversary programs and other commemorative documents, in the minutes of meetings and in public correspondence, all of which are a source of information on the dynamic cultural and educational activities of the Croatian Fraternal Union and the American Croatians at large. It is at the same time their contribution to the history of Croatian culture.

The pioneers of the cultural and educational work of the Croatian immigration in the USA were by and large modest and unknown people, often peasants and workers. Hard work in factories and mines had changed their former everyday routine; nevertheless, the need for their cultural advancement was fulfilled in a way known to them in their old homeland.

The Croatian immigrants brought with them their cultural tradition which they maintained in their new environment according to their desires, abilities and possibilities. The results are astonishing as they were achieved without adequate professional knowledge, substituted by sheer love and devotion to one's own country.

The leading role in the cultural life of the Croatian immigration was played by choral societies. With their primary aim of social gather-

The *Zora* Singing Society of Chicago, founded in 1902

ing, they bore resemblance to such earlier societies in the old country. In fact, even today this seems to be the main goal of many societies, while some grew into real cultural centers, recording important achievements in vocal music.

Choral societies have a long and rich tradition in the Croatian immigration in America. Along with the benefit societies, they were the earliest Croatian societies on the American Continent. They drew together young and old immigrants alike. Through singing, they were united in thought with their native country; the songs reminded them of their villages, relatives and friends, of the long gone days of their youth. Filled with fervor for their homeland, they resorted to their native tunes in sorrow and joy alike. They praised and cherished them because through them they safeguarded their mother tongue, their customs, and their native culture.

A "singing movement" at home had a strong impact on the development of the Croatian choral societies in the USA. Just at the turn of the century, when some half a million Croats emigrated to America, the

The *Preradović* Singing Society of Gary, Indiana, founded in 1914

"singing movement" was in full swing in Croatia with hardly a town or place without its own choral society. One of the most prominent cultural institutions of the time was the Croatian Choral Association, established in Zagreb in 1874. Allied in it were 263 choral societies with more than 12,000 singers and 30,000 supporting members. Of course, it found an echo among the Croats abroad. Soon, similar societies emerged among the Croats in the USA. For example, the immigrants from Karlovac and its neighboring area founded the *Zora* choral society in Chicago in 1902 as a reminiscence of the Karlovac *Zora.* It developed into the most distinguished and influential of all Croatian choral societies in America. Soon after its foundation in 1907, the *Zora* of Chicago, having become a member of the Croatian Choral Association in Zagreb, intended to establish a similar alliance in America. With the slogan "Work and song will lead us to culture and freedom" inscribed in their banner, the *Zora* of Chicago was tireless in its activities among the Croatian immigrants. On the occasion of its guest performance in Zagreb, I. Lupis Vukić wrote the following, "For three and a half decades the *Zora* has been culturally active among the Chicago Croats. (...) Throughout its long and noble work it has never failed to take part in the events dictated by either humanitarian needs or by the honor and prestige of the Croatian immigration." Before the choir returned to the States, the representatives of the Croatian Choral Association had met in Zagreb adopting a resolution which underlined the need for cultivating the Croatian cultural heritage. It was signed by Walter Kazich, vice-president of the *Mihanović* Župa, Zlatko I. Kerhin, its organizer, and Ivan Jakupić, its treasurer, and by Rudolf Matz, on behalf of the Croatian Choral Association.[1]

The *Preradović* Society of Gary, Indiana, established in 1914, made a significant contribution to spreading and cultivating the Croatian song and language among the Croatian immigrants. After World War Two, the Society organized the Children's Tamburitza School. Along with singing and playing the instrument, the children of Croatian immigrants were also taught the Croatian language in special courses.

Another choral society, established at a later date in Chicago, the *Croatian Glee Club Harmony*, brought together a considerable number of young singers, children of the Croatian immigrants.

One of the very first choral societies established in the USA was the *Javor* of Pittsburgh named after the Society from Jastrebarsko in Croatia. Its foundation was initiated by Zlatko I. Kerhin who was working in Pittsburgh early in the 20th century. Its first concert was performed in 1906.

A very popular name for the choral societies was the *Slavuj* (Nightingale), brought to the States by the emigrants of Petrinja and its vicinity. Wherever they settled, their communities founded choral societies of that name.

Croatian immigrants brought to the USA a rich cultural heritage; they never forgot the old folk songs, folk dances, costumes, poetry and customs. Croatian singers, although without professional advice or support, developed a lively activity. The number of choral societies was

The *Javor* Singing Society of Pittsburgh, PA

steadily increasing; so between the two wars, special *župas* were organized with the task of coordinating their work. The *Faller Župa* of Pittsburgh, for example, comprised six choral societies, the *Mihanović Župa* of Gary, Indiana an equal number, etc.

After World War Two, there was an obvious need for the Croatian choral societies to be united. Therefore, the American-Croatian Choral Association was born, an organization of great importance for the Croats across the Atlantic.

It was founded in Cleveland on March 6, 1949, at the conference of all *župas* of the Croatian choral societies in the USA. At the conference, a proposal was carried on the establishment of the Association together with the regulations of the future organization. It was decided that the Croatian choral societies of America should be organized as an American-Croatian Choral Association. The following was underlined, "The object of the Association is to promote our folk songs and musical culture among our immigrants and their descendants in the USA. It will present choral festivals and contests, open competitions for music about both the old and new country, thereby raising in our American generation pride in our Croatian culture and music, inviting our young musicians and artists to add motifs of our folk music to American music, as our contribution to the American culture. Its other goal is to support Croatian artists and talented musicians born in the USA."[2]

The Cleveland Conference was also attended by the representatives of the Croatian Fraternal Union who, well aware of Association's importance to the immigration, offered its cordial support. At the semi-annual meeting of the Supreme Board in April 1949, it was decided that the Society would assist the American-Croatian Association in every possible way. The *Zajedničar* gave the following comment, "The Croatian Fraternal Union, as a national and cultural society, has a fine tradition in spreading education and culture among its people. According to its by-laws, it is obliged to promote education and support the societies established to this purpose. It is, therefore, offering help in moral and material terms to the choirs united in their Choral Association. We are underlining this to bring home to our lodges and all our members that, like our Society, they should give moral and material support to our choirs and choral societies."[3]

On the occasion of its foundation, the Society aided the Association with $500 to be followed by $1,000 grants from each subsequent Society convention. The Society also covered the expenses of printing music for the Association.

The First Annual conference of the new Association was held in Gary, Indiana, on May 30, 1949. Zlatko I. Kerhin, the life honorary President of the *Preradović* Choral Society, was elected President. This tireless cultural worker was an ardent supporter of the idea that all choral societies should be united, and deserves every credit for its realization. An active educator in the old country, born in Sisak in 1881, he

continued his work upon his arrival in America. He was a founding member of the *Zora* in Chicago, the *Javor* in Pittsburgh, the *Preradović* in Gary, the *Hrvatska vila* in Pueblo, Colorado, and of a number of other choral societies, some of which ceased to exist after his departure. For half a century, Zlatko I. Kerhin kept in touch with Croatian composers and numerous cultural institutions in the old country, never tiring of spreading culture, the musical culture in particular, among the American Croats. No wonder, therefore, he was elected the first President of the American-Croatian Choral Association.

The American-Croatian Choral Association received its first recognition on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Croatian Fraternal Union on September 4 and 5, 1949. Twelve Croatian choral societies with 500 singers performed at Carnegie Music Hall. In addition to the Croatian audience, the performances were attended by a large number of Americans, among them some prominent politicians and artists.[4]

The American-Croatian Choral Association held regular annual conventions where the representatives of choirs and choral societies discussed their work and exchanged their experiences. These conventions were also regularly attended by the representatives of the Croatian Fraternal Union. The Association executives appreciated the support of the Society, and at the Cleveland Convention of November 10, 1953, they made the following statement, "One of the most important items on our agenda was to express our recognition and thanks to the Croatian Fraternal Union for both their financial help and writing in the *Zajedničar,* which helped us to be so successful in spreading our songs. This Convention decided, therefore, to express thanks to the Supreme Board and the editors, Filip Vukelić and Steve Brkić, as well as to the director of sports and education, Frank Braidic. We believe that in the future they will continue offering equal support to the American-Croatian Choral Association."[5]

The Festival of the American-Croatian Choral Association held in Chicago on May 26 and 27, 1956, was one of its most successful performances. The program included the individual performances of the Association choirs, but the central event was the concert of the joint choir which demonstrated the scope of artistic achievement of the American-Croatian singers in vocal music. This significant review of Croatian culture, an important event in the life of American Croats, took place at the *Orchestra Hall* in Chicago.

The great success of the festival was proof of extensive cultural cooperation among the immigrants in the USA; it brought together, both on the stage and in the auditorium, all those dedicated to the recognition of Croatian cultural values in America. The following societies took part in the main festival performance: the *Hrvatska* of South Chicago, the *Sloga* of East Chicago, the *Slavuj* of Detroit, the *Zora* of Chicago, the *Preradović* of Gary, the *Abraševič* of Cleveland, the *Javor* of Pittsburgh and the *Jadran* of Aliquippa. Guest performers were the

dance group *Kolo-Aces* of Cleveland, the youth choir and the dance group of the Croatian Fraternal Union from Gary. The program included the works of the most distinguished names of Croatian music.

The tamburitza has always been a faithful companion of the Croatian immigrants in America. From the very first days of emigration until today, this ancient folk instrument had been of prime importance in the life of Croatian immigrant communities across the world. Not only has it been an embodiment of the native soil, but also a link between the immigrants and their native country, its people and customs.

Ever since the end of the last century, the tamburitza has been a symbol of the Croatian cultural heritage for the American public. In time, some tamburitza orchestras and societies emerged. At the beginning, they were small ensembles but they soon attracted the attention of the American public. Before long, they were often invited to perform, and their reputation quickly spread across America. As early as 1900, the Croatian Tamburitza Orchestra gave a successful concert at Carnegie Hall in New York. In the same year, the tamburitza orchestra *Živila Hrvatska* was invited to the White House to play for President Roosevelt. For many decades, until today, hundreds of tamburitza orchestras have been active in the USA. Some were short-lived, but many are still active today. They were frequently featured in many American radio programs and recorded hundreds of records. Some tamburitza players deserve credit for the popularity of the instrument, for

The tamburitza group *Živila Hrvatska*

The *Sv. Nikola* Ensemble, Ambridge, PA

example, Ilija Spiletak of Dubrovnik, who founded more than twelve tamburitza orchestras and eventually, the Association of Croatian Tamburitza Orchestras of California.

In American Universities, in addition to scientific and educational work, there is a range of activities giving their participants an opportunity to win social popularity. So there are music societies, athletics and football clubs. Duquesne University of Pittsburgh won popularity with its tamburitza ensemble *Duquesne University Tamburitzans* whose shows became famous not only in America but across the world. A great deal of their program included artistic interpretations of Slavic folk dances and songs, Croatian in particular. Their numerous performances encouraged the foundation of tamburitza ensembles in a number of Croatian immigration communities.

A predecessor to the *Duquesne University Tamburitzans* was the *Tamburitza Trio* founded by A. Lester Pierce at St. Thomas College, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1932. Its first members were Matt L. Gouze, Frank Gouze, and Anthony Antoncic.[6] After guest performances at a number of American universities, they came to Pittsburgh in 1933. Assisted by executive officers of the CFU, A. Lester Pierce founded the *Slavonic Tamburitza Orchestra* at Duquesne University in 1937. In 1939, A. Lester Pierce was followed by Matt Gouze as artistic director and manager of the ensemble which was renamed the *Duquesne University Tamburitzans,* the name still used today. In 1952, Matt L. Gouze left Duquesne University, and his post was taken over by Walter W. Kolar.[7] The

The St. George Ensemble, Cokeburg, PA

Duquesne University Tamburitzans went on tour in Yugoslavia in 1950 and 1952. Like the American-Croatian Choral Association, it was receiving support in moral and material terms from the Croatian Fraternal Union for a long time, until the management of the ensemble changed its concept and program.

Owing to the popularity of the instrument, massive tamburitza movements developed in the Croatian Fraternal Union. Numerous tamburitza ensembles were made up of members of the Junior Order. According to an unwritten rule, the tamburitza orchestras did not accept players unless they were members of the Junior Order, so they appeared under the name of *Junior Tamburitzans.* These CFU ensembles comprised 15-80 tamburitza players from 7 to 18 years of age. They cultivated both Croatian folk songs and dances *(kolo).*

Well aware of the importance of the tamburitza movement for the preservation of the Croatian cultural heritage, the Croatian Fraternal Union realized at the same time that the movement was not properly organized, lacking, therefore, appropriate results. In an attempt to improve the activity, upon the initiative of the United Lodges of Western Pennsylvania, Bernard M. Luketich, Supreme Treasurer of the CFU, and Milan Vraneš, its Vice-President, extended an invitation to the representatives of all tamburitza ensembles in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio to meet and decide on establishing a united organization which would coordinate the work of tamburitza ensembles and hold festivals and competitions. At several meetings in the CFU Home Office, a program was drawn up for the future work of the CFU Junior Cultural

The *Jelica* Ensemble, Clairton, PA

Federation. The first members of the Federation Board were Edward Stoken of Rankin, Henry Giammario, Bernard M. Luketich and Frank Brletich of Cokeburg. Their first task was to make a draft for the by-laws of the Federation to be adopted by the representatives of the tamburitza ensembles. The following was pointed out, "The main object of this Federation is to bring together all our junior tamburitza ensembles, *kolo* troupes and choirs, to enable their mutual joint performances and cooperation, and to organize annual festivals, where they would get to know one another, and show their musical talents."[8]

Bernard Luketich also tried to get professional support for the Federation. He therefore contacted John Gregurić and Joseph Osselborn, managers and directors of the *Pittsburgh Junior Tamburitzans,* who agreed to join the Federation. Walter Kolar, director of the *Duquesne University Tamburitzans,* also gave his assent.

A call for union and cooperation of all Croatian tamburitza societies and ensembles in the USA and Canada was put forward at the first Junior Cultural Federation Tamburitza Festival held in Des Plaines at the beginning of July 1967. Out of 19 societies, members of the Junior Cultural Federation, 11 of them took part at the festival: the *Zagreb Jr. Tammies* of Collinwood, Ohio; the *St. George Jr. Tamburitzans* of Cokeburg, Pennsylvania; the *Junior Croatian Tammies* of St. Louis, Missouri; the *Versailles Jr. Tamburitzans* of Versailles, Pennsylvania; the *Sloga Jr.* tamburitzans of Farrell, Pennsylvania; the *Cleveland Jr. Tamburitzans* of Cleveland, Ohio; the *Happy Hearts* of Youngstown,

The Detroit Tamburitza Orchestra, Detroit, Michigan

Ohio; the *Golden Triangle* of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the *Youth Choir of Nest 221* of East Chicago, Indiana; the *Youth Choir of Nest 10* of Gary, Indiana and the *Junior Tamburitza Orchestra* of the Croatian Fraternal Union of Chicago. At the first Junior Cultural Federation Tamburitza Festival, some 400 youngsters performed, a number never recorded before in the history of the Croatian communities on the American Continent.

While visiting Croatia in 1966, Bernard Luketich arranged for the *Lado* Croatian Folklore Ensemble to visit the States and Canada in order to promote Croatian folklore in America.[9]

The Second Tamburitza Festival of the Junior Cultural Federation was held in Des Plaines again (1968), but later this great annual event changed its sites every year. The statistics about the number of participants at each particular festival speak for themselves about the advancement of the Junior Cultural Federation. Today, it has assembled 44 tamburitza orchestras and choirs from all over the United States and Canada.

The activities of the Junior Cultural Federation were closely connected with the CFU Junior Order Department. More than a hundred young delegates attended the Junior Order Seventh Convention in Pueblo, Colorado, in 1970. The JCF Fourth Junior Tamburitza Festival was also held at the time, with more than 600 young performers. The annual festivals were afterwards held at the following sites: Cleveland, Ohio, in 1971; Detroit, Michigan, in 1972; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada,

The Happy Hearts Junior Ensemble, Youngstown, Ohio

in 1973; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1974; Chicago, Illinois, in 1975; Zagreb, Croatia, in 1976; St. Louis, Missouri, in 1977; Hollywood, Florida, in 1978; Cleveland, Ohio, in 1979; Pueblo, Colorado, in 1980; Zagreb, Croatia, in 1981; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1982; Cleveland, Ohio, in 1983; Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 1984; Chicago, Illinois, in 1985; Zagreb, Croatia, in 1986; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1987; Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1988; Cleveland, Ohio, in 1989; Seattle, Washington, in 1990; Orlando, Florida, in 1991; Chicago, Illinois, in 1992; and Nashville, Tennessee, in 1993.

The CFU Junior Cultural Federation has its own Board, consisting of the representatives of various ensembles, which meets three or four times a year in American and Canadian cities where the Junior ensembles have their seats. The delegates elect the JCF President and other executive officials.

At the JCF meetings, all important issues related to their ensembles are deliberated such as folk costumes, instruments, scores, guest performances, annual concert facts, and the annual festival site.

The JCF Board also elects an honorary conductor each year, usually a musician who distinguished himself either in talent or diligence; besides that, credit is given regularly to the previous conductors. At the opening concert of each annual festival, the honored conductor conducts the performance of all ensembles.

Generations of young tamburitzans, members of the JCF, cease being active performers of tamburitza orchestras at the age of twenty-one. But, in most cases, they go on playing tambura music as a pastime. This is the reason why the fraternalists have decided to keep the adults as active members of the tamburitza ensembles. On the initiative of the National President, Bernard Luketich, a meeting of all representatives of the adult tamburitzans was held in January 1987 in the CFU Home Office. The conclusion reached at the meeting was that a tamburitza federation for adults should be established under CFU patronage. This would give an opportunity to adult tamburitza players to actively continue developing their musical talents. Numerous participants were of the opinion that the annual concerts given by the adults would make the tamburitzans better acquainted with one another, and the Croatian cultural heritage would then be promoted. To date, the adult tamburitzans have presented six such festivals.

The special attention given for tamburitza music within the activities of the CFU Cultural Federation is, unquestionably, a basis of another powerful tamburitza promotion that has turned into a sort of movement. The aims and principles of such activities have been clearly expressed in the *Zajedničar* as follows, "The tamburitza has by means of its cultural activity educated a whole generation of artists among the Croatian working people, and other Slavs as well. This sort of education

The Croatian Junior Tamburitzans, St. Louis, Missouri

The St. George Junior Ensemble, Cokeburg, PA

of our new generation has drawn the attention of others to our cultural heritage and so assured its dignity and respect. Our heritage is so beautiful that it is worth being respected, cherished, handed down to our younger generation, and presented to the world. (...) The tamburitza is going to preserve our cultural legacy in its original value, to protect the heritage of Croatian villages through folk songs, dances and instrumental music. It tries to make all the listeners understand and become familiar with the rich culture of our forefathers. (...) We are not doing this out of sentimentality or homesickness (...) we were born and educated here, this is our homeland. We are doing this for the cultural heritage of our forefathers since their songs, *kolo* and music have a value of their own. They are all worth looking at and listening to, they are all worth studying or performing for one simple reason: they are lovely and unique. They represent art in its purest form."[10]

Although the words of the *Zajedničar* were not directly related to the activities of the CFU Junior Cultural Federation, they seem to correspond to what the tamburitza movement of the new generation attempted and managed to realize. The tamburitza is no longer a source of mere entertainment; it is a witness of the existence of a rich folk heritage and the instrument of authentic music.

The best confirmation of these statements is found in the words of Filip Vukelić, "These American-born young people with Croatian blood in their veins enjoy and promote Croatian folk culture everywhere, in the

steel mills, in the mountains of Pennsylvania, and in small coal mining settlements, exactly as their fellow countrymen do in Posavina, Pokuplje, Slavonija, Zagorje and in other places of our beloved Croatia. Consciously or unconsciously, between the ones in America and those in Croatia, there exists a strong spiritual link, in their blood, in their hearts and in their souls, and it is imbued by our ancient folk culture."[11]

A significant contribution to the popularity of Croatian folk music, songs, and dances has been given by Croatian language radio broadcasting all over the USA and Canada. Radio broadcasting of musical performances of American Croats has a long tradition. As early as 1935, a Croatian-American radio club came into being. However, the pioneer of Croatian radio programs was John Birek, member of the *Sv. Nikola* CFU Lodge 47 of Cleveland. Already in 1945, he felt a need for an extra Croatian radio-hour; however, was unable to achieve this through the Cleveland radio station, and so the program was broadcast from Akron, Ohio. Since then, he has had his regular broadcasts on Cleveland radio and the Croats living in the vicinity were given a chance to listen to their music and information about their Society. Birek staged shows and concerts of numerous singers from Croatia in Cleveland. When he retired in 1983, the *Zajedničar* dedicated to him the following words, "We are extremely grateful to him for his service done for the benefit of our CFU lodges operating in the vicinity of Cleveland. He has always

Participants to the Junior Cultural Federation Festival, Zagreb, 1981

been pleased to announce our entertainment events, picnics and other fraternal activities. We wish to particularly emphasize his significant part in the 1976 drive when $7,000 were collected by the CFU United Lodges for the Educational Fund of our Society. These are only a few of the qualities of our brother Birek who will always be happily remembered."[12]

Several Croatian radio-hours were gradually introduced in the USA and Canada, two of which should be especially mentioned: the Croatian radio-hour in Etna, led by Marko Vinski, and the *Balkan Gaieties*, led by Charlene Vukela. Almost all radio broadcasts informed the public of the activities of the Croatian Fraternal Union and its lodges, but none of them was either closely linked to the Society or exclusively interested in its work. It was only in 1954 that the United CFU Lodges were established in four regions of Western Pennsylvania and their radio-hour introduced. It was led by Bernard Luketich and the programs were directly related with the Croatian Fraternal Union. Here is what the *Zajedničar* had to say, "The only exception is the radio broadcast led by brother Bernard Luketich of Cokeburg, Pennsylvania. His broadcast is the first and an only radio-hour in America dedicated exclusively to the interests, expansion and strengthening of the Croatian Fraternal Union; it is the sole radio program of our Society."[13]

With the passing of time, other CFU radio programs were initiated, for instance *Glas HBZ-a* (Voice of CFU) of the United Lodges of

Seattle Junior Ensemble, Seattle, Washington

The *Sv. Juraj* Junior Ensemble of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Western Pennsylvania, led by Ruth E. Zofchak; *Glas hrvatske baštine* (Voice of Croatian Heritage) under the leadership of John Plesh and Walter Kolar; *Tamburaški sat* (Tamburitza Hour) led by Edward Sabolić; *Internacionalni sat* (International Hour) led by Johnny Krizančić and the *Zlatni tamburaški sat* (Golden Tamburitza Hour) led by Mike Hegol. Particularly active was the *Glas HBZ-a* (Voice of CFU) radio-hour of the United Lodges of Mahoning Valley in the vicinity of Youngstown, Ohio.

The Croatian Fraternal Union radio-hours, though very successful, did not always satisfy the needs of the Croatian listeners. For this reason, a few Pittsburgh radio announcers suggested putting on an annual festival of Croatian music and songs. The proposal was heartily accepted by the Croatian radio listeners and the festival is considered to be an important item in the Croatian Fraternal Union's activity. In White Swan Park near Pittsburgh, music festivals under the name of *Croatian Jubilee* were held every year; regular performers were singers from Croatia as well as more than twenty tamburitza ensembles from all across the USA and Canada. The festival program was also recorded and a large number of records was meant for the CFU membership. Unfortunately, the Pittsburgh airport bought the site of White Swan Park and this interesting cultural event came to an end.

Croatian Homes had played an important role in the cultural-educational life of Croatian communities ever since the end of the last century. Recently, however, the Croats started moving from their old settlements to richer parts of towns or to other places. For a number of Homes, this meant the end of their activity. New and more up-to-date

Homes were built in the new communities. In the old, compact Croatian communities though, Croatian Homes retained their important role. Due to the growing desire for large social gatherings, the Croatian Homes, lacking the necessary space, became inadequate. Therefore, new Croatian Centers were being built and opened in the vicinity of bigger towns, with an open-air stage and other facilities for artistic and cultural activities, sports grounds, parking lots and picnic facilities for several thousand people. Among the Croatian Centers of the United Lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union especially noted are the following: the Croatian Center of the United Lodges of the Croatian Fraternal Union of West Pennsylvania near Millvale, Pennsylvania; The Croatian Center of the United Lodges of Mahoning Valley near Youngstown, Ohio; the Croatian Center of the United Lodges of Cleveland, Ohio; Croatian-American Center of Detroit, Michigan; the Croatian Center, Lodge 644, Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada.

Individual lodges could not cope alone with the organization of different sports, cultural and other activities in the Centers. Their work was, therefore, coordinated by special bodies such as the United Lodges, Federations, and Central Committees of Lodges especially in those states or regions where the Croatian Fraternal Union was particularly active.

The *Od Srca* Ensemble, Youngstown, Ohio

The *Lado* Ensemble of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Different events taking place in the Croatian Centers played an important part in the social gathering of Croats. The *Zajedničar* wrote, "These entertainment events and get-togethers give our members from different parts of America and Canada an opportunity to meet once a year, to create new friendships and rekindle some old ones, and have fun listening to our beautiful music, enjoying our delicious Croatian culinary delights and home-baked specialties and, at the same time, to promote our Croatian heritage. These festivities are attended by our members and friends from far away, even from other states. The main purpose of these gatherings is for all of us to point out: we are proud to be Fraternalists; we are proud to be Croats."[14]

A very important cultural event was "Croatian Day"; the one organized in Kennywood Park near Pittsburgh has a long tradition. As early as 1932, M. J. Horvath, together with a group of members of "English-speaking Lodges", staged performances of Croatian songs, music and other cultural programs in the park. This cultural event is still alive today.

Sports activities have always been of great importance for the Croatian Fraternal Union. Through them, the Society has been attracting an ever increasing number of young people and the growing interest in the work of the Society. Sports has, therefore, always been on the agenda of the Society conventions since 1943, when the Educational and Sports Department was established, and the membership assessed two

The *Sloga Junior* Ensemble, Farell, PA

cents a month to cover the expenses. At the Eighth 1951 Convention, this amount was increased to four cents a month, and at the Twelfth Convention of 1967, to five cents. In the conventions that follow, these amounts have always been the topic of deliberations.

Sports activities that started in the early 1930's have been recording a continuous rise. So, the one-time softball competitions among the lodge clubs of Cleveland, Pittsburgh and New York developed into a very successful tournament held in Akron, Ohio in 1975. Nine clubs participated in it. Basketball, which started to be played in Calumet in the 1930's within the National CFU Basketball Tournament, also recorded a significant growth. So, in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1982, sixty-two clubs took part at the great CFU Basketball Tournament, playing fifty-seven games in five sports halls within three days.

Bowling, the most popular sport among members of the CFU, was also introduced in the early 1930's. At the time, the first inter-lodge bowling leagues were started in Chicago, Cleveland and Pittsburgh, including ten-pins, duck-pins and five-pins. The greatest and most successful bowling tournament took place in Cleveland in 1970 with 314 bowling teams and 2,000 bowlers participating. Another successful tournament with 180 teams (90 male, 70 female and 20 junior teams) was also played in Cleveland in 1982.

Golf also became popular so that several tournaments a year are played, the best known being the *Joe Rady Memorial.*

On the importance of sports in the Society the *Zajedničar* gave the following comment, "A large part of our membership is taking part in sports competitions on the national and local levels, in Canada too. Active are not only our younger members, but also a good deal of our adult membership. At the bowling tournament in Detroit, a large number of our adult members from all parts of America took part."[15]

More recently, since 1971, fraternalists have also organized skiing trips. These trips are an excellent opportunity for the social gathering of a number of fraternalists every year.

As sport turned into a large activity in the Croatian Fraternal Union, late in 1990 the Sports and Culture Department adopted special by-laws for the members participating in sports competitions. According to them, players were entitled to take part in any sports competition of the Society if they had been its members since January 1 of the current year. Participants of the basketball and softball tournaments had to wear special uniforms with an emblem of the Lodge or Nest they belong to. No other advertising was allowed. Participation of each player at the competition had to be approved by the President or the Secretary of the Lodge and all applications had to be submitted 21 days before the competition. All players who behaved improperly could be suspended, and should any damage be caused, offenders were obliged to pay for it.[16]

Numerous cultural and sports activities were sponsored by the Croatian Fraternal Union primarily because of its junior membership. Among other events, Juniors' Month of the Croatian Fraternal Union

The American Zagreb Junior Order Ensemble, Cleveland, Ohio

The St. Lawrence Junior Ensemble, Steelton, PA

was held, recapping the young fraternalists' achievements in all fields. The Society National President, Bernard M. Luketich, wrote the following in reference to the importance of the young members, "The Society's juniors of today are the Society's tomorrow. Without their interests we are nothing else but an insurance society. They will hand down the proud tradition of our founding fathers to the future generations of the CFU. They will be the leaders of our lodges both on the local and national levels. They have to be taught now how to be proud of their Society, the Society that cares'."[17]

The rich program of different cultural, educational, and sports activities, as well as the promotion of the Croatian cultural heritage, made the Croatian Fraternal Union one of the most successful fraternal organizations of the USA and Canada. However, the Society was fully aware that results could be only achieved by establishing lasting cultural, educational, and sports ties with the mother country, Croatia. At the Second Convention in 1895, and at several of the following conventions, the delegates made decisions on a collective visit to Croatia. Unfortunately, their plans did not come true. The first collective trip to Croatia was organized as late as 1938. After World War Two, the Society was seriously considering the establishment of relations with the old homeland. However, the "cold war" and the general political circumstances were quite unfavorable. The Croatian Emigration Institute was founded in Zagreb in 1951, and had the task of establishing cultural-educational and other relations with the Croatian emigrants. The Croatian Fraternal Union, however, did not trust the institution at first, as it was considered to be state controlled. Émigrés from Yugoslavia, seeking exile in the USA and Canada in those days, were against any connection between the Croatian emigrants and Croatia or Yugoslavia because they disapproved of the regimes there.

Nevertheless, in the Croatian Fraternal Union the opinion prevailed that visits should be paid to the old country and in 1956, the campaign "Let us Visit Our Old Homeland" was launched to this effect. It was explained by the *Zajedničar* which wrote, "Underlying this campaign is the fact that our people love visiting their old country without taking into consideration some individual opinions and attitudes to the present regime in Yugoslavia. Regime is one thing, and the old homeland and its people another. (...) In this world, everything is subject to change: systems, social orders, governments, dictators. Remember the power of Mussolini, Hitler and other power-wielders; today they are mere shadows. We lived through Austria-Hungary. We survived the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Karađorđević Kings, Nedić, Mihajlović and Pavelić. We shall certainly outlive Marshal Tito and the present Yugoslav regime, but we shall not outlive the Croatian people. We are steadily following the path of the CFU pioneers - we, the present Home Office, will always support our people, work for them and never turn against them."[18]

As a result, 150 fraternalists visited Zagreb in August 1956. They were cordially received and in their honor, an exhibition of the work of the Croatian Fraternal Union and its lodges was organized at the Fine Arts Gallery in Zagreb. In the years to come, more groups of the CFU members came to visit Croatia; in 1959, *Zagreb film* made a documentary film. In the same year, one of the more important streets of Zagreb, in the vicinity of the Home of the Emigration Institute of Croatia was named after the Croatian Fraternal Union.

At that time, the Society continued to send humanitarian aid to Croatia. A total of $6,000 was given in aid to the Zagreb hospital *Bolnica Sestara Milosrdnica,* and $15,000 after the flood in Zagreb in 1964.

An important event which demonstrated the ties between the Croatian Fraternal Union and Croatia was the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the CFU in Zagreb in 1969. The celebration started in the building of the Croatian *Sabor,* to be continued in many Croatian regions. It was attended by 200 members of the Society, and the *St. George* Junior Tamburitza Orchestra of Cokeburg held fifteen concerts throughout Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In 1973, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the peasant rebellion under Matija Gubec, the Society members came to Croatia to attend the formal unveiling of the monument in Stubica, a town near Zagreb. The monument commemorated the leader of the rebellion, Matija Gubec. The celebration was attended by the National Board of the Croatian Fraternal Union and the National President, John Badovinac, as well as by the *Happy Hearts* tamburitza orchestra of Youngstown, and more than 400 CFU members. The National President gave the representatives of Croatia a check for $16,000, the amount collected by the Society members for the monument.

The Croatian Fraternal Union developed a variety of cultural contacts with Croatia, especially in music and folklore. In 1974, for exam-

ple, the Music School of Varaždin was on an American and Canadian tour on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Croatian Fraternal Union. In 1980, the *Studio* vocal group, singer Tatjana Mršić, and the tamburitza ensemble of Zagreb Radio and Television held eighteen concerts in the USA and Canada, as well as performances in some Croatian Homes, with total audience figures exceeding 20,000 people.

Guest performers of the Croatian Fraternal Union in the USA and Canada were also the *Slavonski bećari* ensemble with Krunoslav Slabinac and Mirjana Primorac as vocal soloists. They had eighteen concerts in many American towns and always filling the halls to capacity. They also appeared at the traditional show *Mjesec kulture naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije* (Cultural Month of the Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia) in Pittsburgh, and at the *Jadranski susreti* show in New York.

The Folklore Ensemble *Jože Vlahović* of Zagreb took part at the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the CFU in 1984. Under the artistic leadership of dr. Ivan Ivančan, they held eighteen all-evening concerts and eight parties. The concerts were presented in the Croatian communities in Steelton, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Columbus, St. Louis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, Washington, Buffalo, Welland, Toronto, and Hamilton. These guest performances were a significant contribution to the popularity of the Croatian cultural heritage, and encouraged, at the same time, a number of immigration ensembles to further their activities. On September 2, 1984, the *Jože Vlahović* Folklore Ensemble performed at the main commemoration of the CFU's 90th anniversary at the *Hilton Hotel* in Pittsburgh. In attendance were more than 2,000 Society members from the USA and Canada.

Among the entertainers, guest performers of the CFU in the USA and Canada, were Vice Vukov, Djuka Čaić, Duško Lokin, Dušan Dančuo, Vera Svoboda, Tereza Kesovija, Marina Tomašević, Maja Županović, Mirjana Bajzec, tamburitza ensembles *Ex Panonia, Slavonski bećari, Dike, Gazde, Zagrebački muzikaši*, and the folklore ensembles *Lado, Jože Vlahović, Milica Križan* of Osijek, and *Lazina* of Draganić.

The purpose of these guest performances was, among other things, to offer professional assistance to numerous immigration ensembles in improving their performances and expanding their repertoires.

The *Jugoton* recording company of Zagreb, in collaboration with the CFU, released in 10,000 copies the record entitled *Splet pjesama iz domovine* (Collection of Songs from the Old Homeland), intended for the large CFU membership. It included all the compositions of all ensembles and vocal soloists that performed in the USA and Canada as guests of the CFU. With this recording, the Croatian artists congratulated the CFU on its 90th anniversary.

As the CFU folklore ensembles needed professional advice and assistance, Stjepan Sremac, a guest choreographer from Croatia, was hired at the 14th Festival of the Junior Cultural Federation in Denver as

professional consultant in its preparations. Likewise, Ivan Šulina, a long-time choreographer of the *Lado* Cultural Society of Zagreb, spent, on several occasions, a few months in Pittsburgh as a professional adviser and instructor of the CFU ensembles, participating in the preparations for annual festivals of the Junior Cultural Federation.

A number of other cultural activities of the Society were realized in collaboration with the Croatian cultural institutions. In the CFU Museum in Pittsburgh, for instance, a permanent exhibition of national costumes was staged by the Croatian Ethnographic Museum of Zagreb. It was the largest and best exhibition of the kind ever staged in the USA and Canada. Several institutions from Croatia helped build the library of the Croatian Fraternal Union; the first large consignment of books was sent to the Society by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. It is essentially a reference library for students and scientists studying Croatian history and other scientific disciplines.

The Croatian painter Ivan Lacković Croata spent a month in Pittsburgh in 1983 as the Society's guest. During his stay, he made 18 paintings for the Society, which introduced him to the American public through television and some leading Pittsburgh newspapers. Also, an exhibition of his works was organized. Lacković kept up his contacts with the Society and made a donation of 32 paintings and 9 sculptures by notable Croatian naive artists to the Society on the occasion of the main celebration of Society's 90th Anniversary at the Zagreb Music Hall *Lisinski.* They are now exhibited in the Museum of the Croatian Fraternal Union in Pittsburgh.

The Croatian Fraternal Union was also host to some other renowned Croatian painters, organizing their exhibitions in the USA: Joko Knežević, who restored Vanka's pictures in St. Nicholas' Croatian Catholic Church in Pittsburgh, Josip Generalić, Ivica Fišter, Josip Cugovčan, and Mladen Veža, who still illustrates Christmas, New Year and Easter issues of the *Zajedničar* and the *Junior Magazine.*

In 1982, Croatian Television and the Croatian Fraternal Union coproduced Branko Lentić's documentary entitled "The Secret of Grandpa's Tamburitza". The film is the story about Croatian immigration in the USA and the Croatian Fraternal Union, focusing on the issues of ethnic communities and the descendants of the Croatian immigrants. The film was featured on TV programs in America, Croatia, and Australia.

Cooperation with Croatia was also established in sports. The basketball team *Cibona* of Zagreb, during their 1979 tour of the USA, played several matches with the teams of the Croatian Fraternal Union. The Basketball Association of Croatia was host to the CFU club, *All*

Stars which played matches in Vukovar, Osijek, Slavonska Požega, Split, Dubrovnik and Zagreb.

The Croatian Fraternal Union has always expressed interest in the studies of emigration and the life of Croatian immigrants. In 1984, on the occasion of the commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the CFU, a symposium was held on Niko Gršković, a distinguished fraternalist, in his birthplace, the village of Vrbnik, on the island of Krk. As part of the same festivities, Zagreb was the site of the main celebration held at the *Vatroslav Lisinski* Music Hall, where the exhibition *Ninety Years of the CFU* was opened, bringing to light the rich history of the Society. It was successively staged in several Croatian towns, to be eventually transferred to the Frick Gallery in Pittsburgh. On this occasion, a panel discussion was held at Pittsburgh University, dedicated to the meaning and significance of the Croatian Fraternal Union.

In 1979, when the Society's 85th Anniversary was celebrated, Ivo Latin, Mayor of Zagreb, visited Pittsburgh, on which occasion a declaration on twinning the two cities was adopted. The Charter was signed a year later in Zagreb by the Mayor of Pittsburgh, Richard Caliguieri. The text of the Charter underlined that the twinning of the two cities was initiated by the Croatian Fraternal Union because it was in Pittsburgh that more than 250,000 Croatian immigrants and their descendants established themselves.

At the *Marriott Hotel* in Pittsburgh, a manifestation called the Zagreb Week *(Tjedan Zagreba)* was organized in 1982 when a number of manufacturers and businessmen from Zagreb introduced some of their products to the American public.

In 1984, the Croatian Fraternal Union and the *Generalturist* travel agency of Zagreb organized a tour of Croatia for the fraternalists called "On the Trail of Ivan Meštrović" *(Tragom Ivana Meštrovića)* in memory of the centennial anniversary of the sculptor's birth. On this occasion, the Emigration Institute of Croatia staged an exhibition of photographs of Meštrović's works. These were then donated to the Croatian Fraternal Union and are now on permanent display in the *Meštrovićeva soba* (Meštrović room) of the CFU Home Office. In the same year, the Emigration Institute of Croatia had a casting of Meštrović's sculpture *Povijest Hrvata* (History of Croats) made in the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, also to be donated to the CFU. Today it graces the CFU Home Office.

In 1987, an exhibition of a number of lexicographic publications of the distinguished European lexicographic publisher, the *Miroslav Krleža Lexicographic Institute* of Zagreb, was staged in the Home Office of the CFU in Pittsburgh, later to be shown in some other American cities.

Ivan Lacković Croata, famous Croatian naive painter

A summer school for learning Croatian language and folklore for the descendants of the Croatian immigrants was organized for the first time in Croatia in 1980 by the Emigration Institute of Croatia and the Croatian Fraternal Union. In the USA, the same school was organized by Lawrence University of Kansas City and the CFU. The school has been attended by descendants of Croatian immigrants from all continents and is still active today.

The Croatian Fraternal Union and the Emigration Institute of Croatia were also involved in finding appropriate textbooks for the learning of Croatian. Five issues of the textbook *Hrvatski u razgovoru* (Conversation in Croatian) were published in 50,000 copies. The Center of Foreign Language Learning in Zagreb published the textbook *Učimo hrvatski* (Let's Learn Croatian), which also aroused great interest among the CFU members.

Within the comprehensive framework of cooperation between the CFU and Croatia, an event of special significance was the 10th Festival of the Junior Cultural Federation of 1976 held, for the first time in the history of the Federation, in Zagreb. Due to its exceptional success, it was decided that every fifth festival of the JCF should take place in

Zagreb. So far, Zagreb has been the site of two festivals of the Junior Cultural Federation, one in 1981 with 14 participating ensembles, and one in 1986 with 24 ensembles of the JCF from the USA and Canada taking part. Both the American and the Croatian immigration press paid attention to the performances of young fraternalists in Zagreb, and the American journalist, Eleanor Prech, wrote the following in the *Cleveland Press,* "We extend congratulations to the Croatian Fraternal Union on the development of such outstanding activity through which our young Americans have a chance to become aware of the cultural wealth and significance of their old homeland. If only there were more organizations of the kind!"[19]

Comprehensive and permanent cooperation between the CFU and Croatia was favorably judged by both the American and ex-Yugoslav authorities. It was viewed as one of the ways of promoting good interstate relationships. For the participants of these rich cultural, educational, and sports programs over many years, for the hundreds of young fraternalists and Croatian cultural and sports activists, it was a chance to meet and associate with their young counterparts from Croatia. This cooperation was primarily a way for all of them to cherish and promote

Richard Caliguieri, Mayor of Pittsburgh, signing the Charter which twins the city of Pittsburgh with the city of Zagreb, 1980. Looking on is the Mayor of Zagreb, Ivo Latin.

the Croatian cultural heritage, and assist the Croatian Fraternal Union in its efforts to assert and build itself into the American cultural and ethnic mosaic.

Notes:

1. *Novi iseljenik,* Zagreb, July 1, 1938
2. *Matica,* a paper of the Croatian emigrants, Zagreb, 1966, p. 264
3. *Zajedničar,* April 16, 1949
4. Ibid., August 24, 1949
5. Ibid., October 28, 1953
6. Walter W. Kolar, *A History of the Tamburitza,* Vol. II, Pittsburgh, 1975
7. Ibid.
8. *Zajedničar,* July 20, 1966
9. The first guest performance *Lado* staged in the USA and Canada was in 1967 at the time of the World Exhibition in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. During eight days, they performed in both New York and Los Angeles.

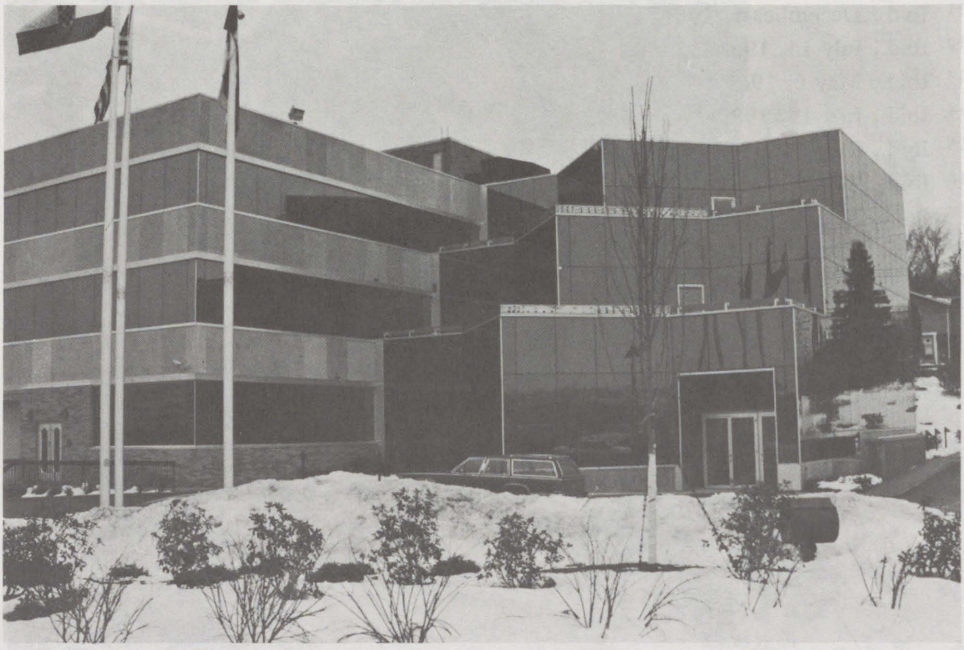
   Its second guest performance in the USA was staged from October 15 to November 18, 1970. During this engagement, *Lado* held 21 concerts in 13 states. In addition to performances in big cities like Washington, Pittsburgh, New York, Detroit, Chicago, Cincinnati and others, it also appeared at seven American universities, and in Florida, where it was for the first time that a folklore ensemble from Croatia held a performance. *Lado's* performances were attended by more than 60,000 people. *Lado's* special honor was its repeated appearance in the well-known *Ed Sullivan Show,* dedicated to the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Organization. It is estimated that the show, transmitted by almost all American TV stations, was watched by more than 60,000 people.
10. Ibid., April 19, 1967
11. Ibid., December 5, 1951
12. Ibid., July 15, 1983
13. Ibid., May 6, 1964
14. Ibid., July 19, 1989
15. Ibid., May 12, 1954
16. Ibid., November 21, 1990
17. Ibid., February 20, 1980
18. Ibid., March 14, 1956
19. Ibid., July 16, 1981

Chapter Eleven

THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION - A MODERN FRATERNAL SOCIETY

American fraternalism played an important role in American immigrant society, and it has remained so until today. There are 204 fraternal relief societies in America in operation at the moment. Among them, 167 are members of the National Fraternal Congress, and 18 are enrolled in the Canadian Fraternal Union.[1] During 1990, 108 fraternal societies signed insurance contracts worth $24,648,975,955. The total insurance in force amounted to $147,714,157,821.[2]

Present Home Office structure



This vast and complex activity is coordinated by the National Fraternal Congress of America. Its fundamental tasks are:

- promotion and expansion of all fraternal activities of common interest to all Congress members;
- keeping the general public informed about fraternal societies, their programs and activities;
- providing all necessary assistance to the Congress members.

Every fraternal society may become a member of the National Fraternal Congress if it agrees to its program and its regulations. In other words, the members must not be shareholders or make any profits, but should work only for the members' welfare. Fraternal organizations are supposed to act via their lodges, whose delegates elect the Society's management at the Convention. The Society's Home Office takes care of all business operations by introducing the most favorable table of rates, and by expanding the program of fraternal activities.

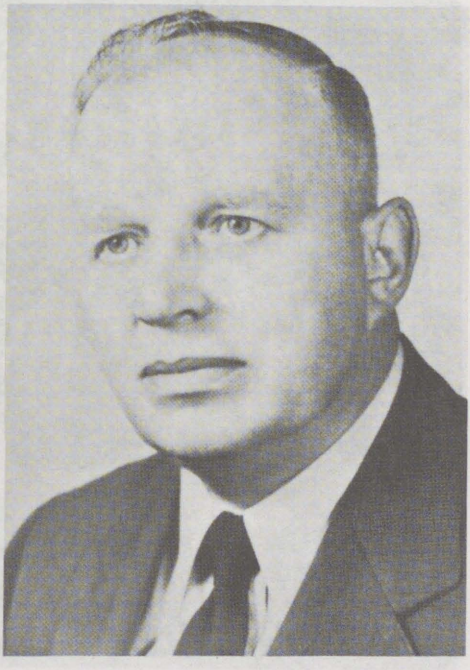
The boards within the National Fraternal Congress control the current legislative system, financial transactions, and all investments. The boards have also been established to coordinate relations between the fraternal congresses of individual states and fraternal societies. The *ad hoc* boards acting in the Congress solve problems that emerge through operations. Professional committees, which also make up part of the Congress, deal with the numerous managing operations, both in the Congress and the fraternal movement. The Congress operations are managed by a twelve member board made up of various fraternal societies among the Congress members. The Home Office of the Congress has its seat in Chicago, Illinois.

The Canadian Fraternal Union, operating in Canada, follows practically the same principles of the National Fraternal Congress of America. Several fraternal societies, the Croatian Fraternal Union among them, are members of both the above-mentioned organizations.

The South Slavic immigrants from former Austria-Hungary founded eight fraternal societies, seven of which are members of the National Fraternal Congress:

- the *American Fraternal Union* (Američka bratska organizacija), a Slovene fraternal organization established in 1898, with its seat in Ely, Minnesota. It has a charter valid for seventeen American federal states and total assets of $17,522,847;
- the *American Slovenian Catholic Union* (Američka slovenska katolička zajednica), established in

Vjekoslav I. Mandich, President of the CFU, 1948 - 1967



1894, seated in Joliet, Illinois. Its charter was issued for sixteen federal states, and its total assets amount to $27,174,122;

- the *Croatian Catholic Union of the USA* (Hrvatska katolička zajednica Amerike), established in Gary, Indiana, in 1921, with its Home Office in Hobart, Indiana. Its charter was issued in sixteen federal states of America and its total assets are worth $6,189,673;

- the *Croatian Fraternal Union of America* (Hrvatska bratska zajednica u Americi), with its charter valid in twenty-six federal states, both in Canada and America, and with total assets of $86,812,884;

- the *Serbian National Federation* (Srpski narodni savez), founded in Pittsburgh in 1909, with a charter issued in ten federal states and Canada, and with total assets of $11,581,821;

Delegates to the Ninth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Philadelphia, PA, 1955

- the *Slovenian National Benefit Society* (Slovenska narodna potporna jednota), established in Chicago, Illinois, in 1904, with the Home Office in Imperial, PA. Its charter was issued by twenty-one federal states, and its total assets amount to $50,651,844;

- the *Western Slavonic Association* (Zapadnoslavensko udruženje), established in Denver, Colorado, in 1908, with a charter valid in five American federal states, and total assets of $15,797,410;

- the *Bratska sloga Life Insurance Society* (Osiguravajuća zajednica *Bratska sloga*) founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1908; its charter is valid only in one federal state, and its total assets amount to $2,141,489. It is not a member of the National Fraternal Congress of America.[3]

The Croatians, considering their number both in the USA and Canada, belong to smaller ethnic communities. However, the Croatian Fraternal Union belongs to a group of larger fraternal societies in pro-

portion to its membership and total assets. There were, for example, 150 fraternal organizations operating in America in 1950 with total assets amounting to more than a million dollars. The Croatian Fraternal Union was 26th in rank among them. Already by 1971, it moved to 14th place and was the second largest Slavic fraternal society in the USA, immediately after the Polish National Union. In 1983, it reached the 13th position, the highest ever achieved, but fell to the 21st position in 1989.[4]

The Croatian Fraternal Union, being one of the most successful fraternal organizations, has a very important role within the activities of the National Fraternal Congress. Its board members are fully aware of the importance of taking part in the actions of regional fraternal congresses, particularly of the Congress of the State of Pennsylvania. They hold responsible posts at these congresses. The CFU National President Bernard Luketich is director of the National Fraternal Congress of America.

The significant role the Croatian Fraternal Union plays in the American fraternal movement results from the endeavors of a large number of fraternalists and its management in promoting the most diverse fraternal activities in the Society. Its progress can be clearly seen through its convention minutes.

At the Eighth Convention, held in Los Angeles, California, in 1951, 315 delegates represented 610 lodges and 71,523 adult members. The total assets were $19,427,210.19. At the Ninth Convention, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1955, 311 delegates represented 586 lodges and a membership of 71,770. The assets totaled $23,203,183.11. The Tenth Convention of Detroit, Michigan, held in 1959, was attended by 309 delegates representing 577 lodges. The total number of mem-

Delegates to the Tenth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Detroit, Michigan, 1959

bers, both adults and juniors, was 110,158, and the CFU total assets had increased to $26,948,097.25.

The following program tenets were applied in the course of the CFU Conventions:

- to hold successful and purposeful conventions of limited duration, in the spirit of fraternalism, and having in view common goals;
- to elect board members to the management in accordance to their competence and credit, and not according to their political background;
- to operate the Society in accordance to the counsel given by the National Fraternal Congress;
- to shun every discrimination or unnecessary political argument about the CFU activities;
- to promote patriotic feelings and relations with Croats in the old homeland;
- to expand educational, cultural and sports activities;
- to organize membership campaigns;
- to take care of the Children's Home and the education of the children;
- to continue the *Zajedničar* editing policy of solidarity and collaboration, in the spirit of the American democracy.[5]

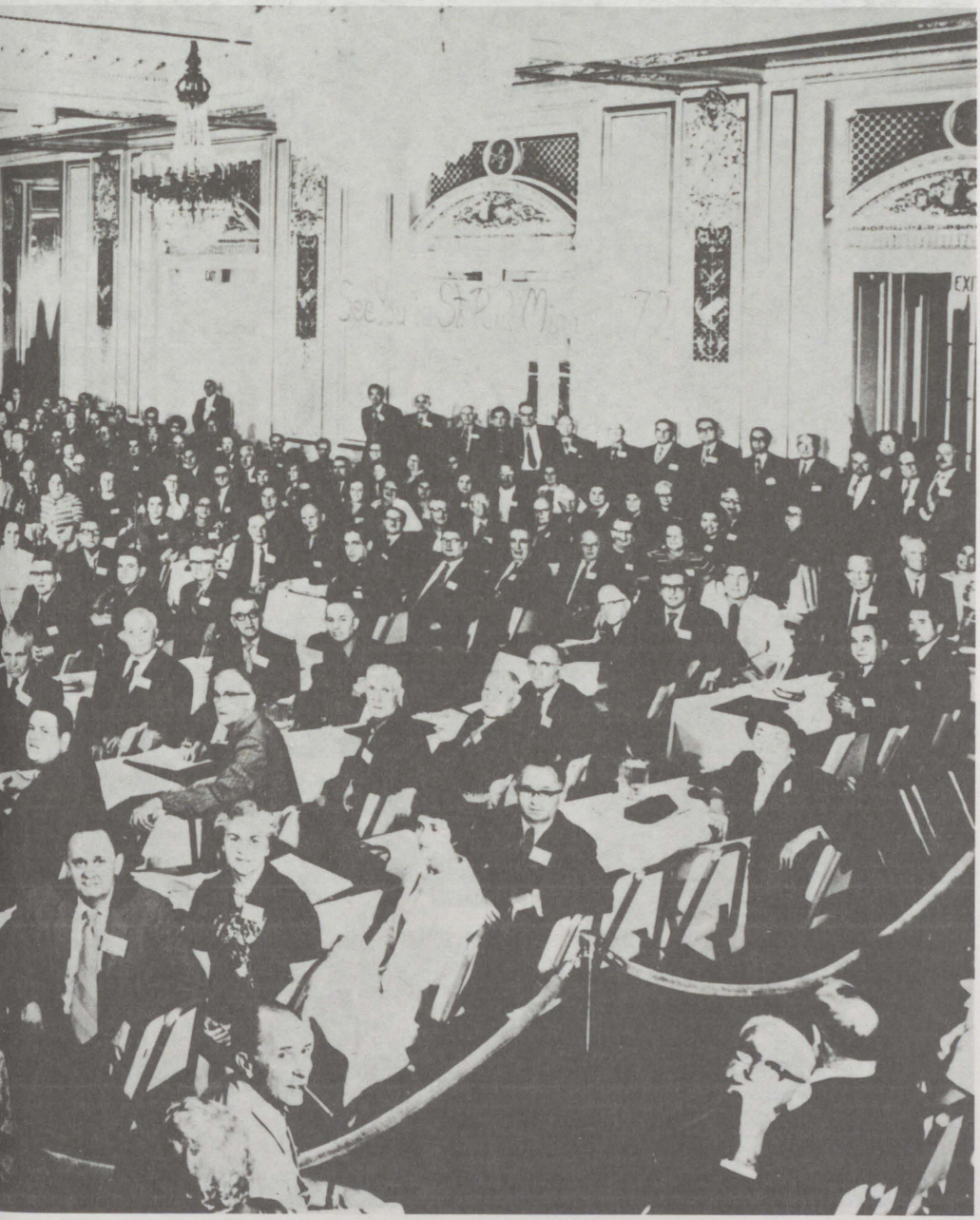
The Eleventh Convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1963, in agreement with the above principles; 296 delegates were representing 552 CFU lodges. At the time, the Society consisted of 73,067 adult members and its assets totaled $31,609,659.17. The Junior Order Department was organized in 460 nests, so the CFU membership totaled 112,000. The Society was operating in 33 American states and 6 Canadian provinces.

The state authorities which did not require reports on the number of members but on the total number of insurance certificate holders, were informed about 118,491 certificate holders.

The Twelfth Convention was held in Pittsburgh in 1967. It was attended by 283 delegates representing 527 lodges and 67,343 members. The CFU assets totaled $35,848,711.72. The Convention deliberated several issues of relevance to the Society's operation; the newly elected National Board was asked to tackle the problem of the Children's Home

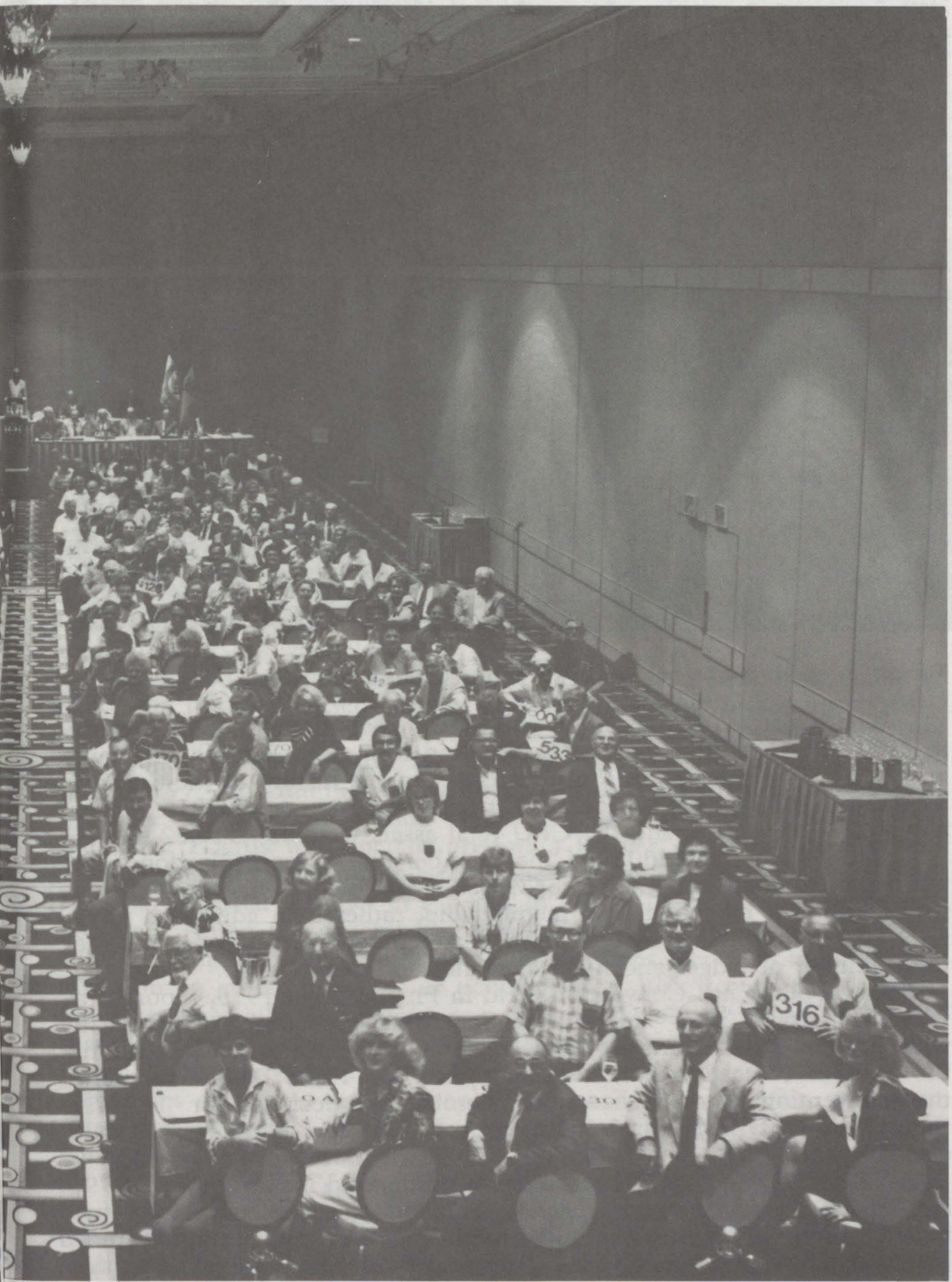
Delegates to the Thirteenth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, San Francisco, California, 1971

and its activities; it was also required to offer aid to the aged and reorganize the operations of the Home Office. With reference to the approaching 75th anniversary of the Croatian Fraternal Union in 1969, the National Board was about to start preparations for a well-organized campaign in order to attract new membership to the Society. John Badovinac was elected National President to replace Vjekoslav Mandić.



Delegates to the Eighteenth Convention of the Croatian Fraternal Union, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1991

Badovinac was the first President born in the States ever to be elected to the office.[6]



Members of the Supreme Board chosen at the Thirteenth CFU Convention

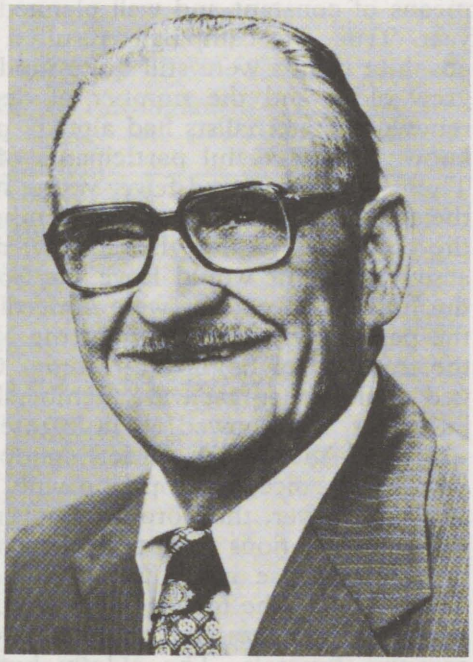
The Thirteenth Convention was held in San Francisco, California, in 1971. This was the shortest Convention on record, lasting only four and a half days, but it was the most costly in the history of the Society. The total cost was $299,536.91; 270 delegates represented 915 lodges and 97,224 members, and the CFU total assets were $39,547,82.97.

Through a referendum of the membership, a reorganization plan was adopted, abolishing the Junior Order Department. This resulted in a new method of reporting total membership, rather than adult and juvenile separately. The report on lodges and members, therefore, shows the total number of lodges and nests, and the total membership.[7]

The Fourteenth Convention, held in Pittsburgh in 1975, reported a very high growth rate. The total insurance in force was $161,800,129 which meant a significant growth in relation to the previous Convention; the number of certificate holders increased to 111,787. Unfortunately, the Convention reported a serious membership decrease for the first time in the CFU history: 92,664 members were represented by 270 delegates.

The reports on the Fifteenth Convention, held in Toronto in 1979, announced an even greater success. The total insurance in force was increased by 13.92% and amounted to $175,000,000, whereas the number of certificates was 106,135. By electing Bernard M. Luketich to the

office of the National President, the Convention, in fact, confirmed his previous nomination of June 1, 1978.[8] Bernard M. Luketich was elected to his first full term as chief executive of the Society after succeeding the late John Badovinac who had retired from the post the previous year.



John Badovinac, CFU President, 1967 - 1978

The most outstanding CFU business results were reported at the Sixteenth Convention, held in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1983. The total life insurance in force had grown to $331,099,379 which meant an 88.6% increase, and twice as much as reported at the previous Convention. The total assets had risen to $57,000 000. There were 86,098 members dispersed in 408 lodges and represented by 268 delegates from across the US and Canada. Even the Seventeenth Convention, held in Florida in 1987, proved to be another CFU new business triumph. The total insurance in force had risen to $383,521,956, the total assets were $76,354,000.78, and the total membership was 82,273.

In spite of the fact that the Croatian Fraternal Union was quite a successful fraternal society, and its assets were steadily increasing together with its total insurance in force (as a result of the introduction of the most modern and favorable rate tables), since the Fourteenth Convention of 1975, the number of members was almost permanently decreasing. The issue on the agenda of all sessions of the National and the Executive Boards was how to prevent a further drop in membership. The phenomenon was not related to the CFU only, but was characteristic of all fraternal societies in general. In fact, it might be called a membership crisis in the general fraternal system of the USA and Canada. Why was this happening? Fraternal organizations were commonly organized on an ethnic, religious or political basis. Was it perhaps a certain indifference to ethnic, religious or political viewpoints by the Americans that caused their loss of interest in fraternal societies? Besides, more favorable insurance conditions offered by powerful professional insurance companies started to attract people. In Canada, the situation was even worse because the Canadian federal government advertised extremely favorable insurance rates.

It goes without saying that the Croatian Fraternal Union did not easily reconcile with such a state of affairs, and its executive officials did their utmost to stop this decreasing tendency and enable the membership to increase again. New members were being persuaded to join by

means of constant and well planned campaigns launched several times a year. True, the campaigns resulted in thousands of new members, but absolute results were still quite modest. The membership, on the whole, grew older and the number of deceased was increasing. Most of the renowned fraternalists had already passed away, members who had been known as successful participants of numerous membership campaigns. There were fewer and fewer young members to replace them. Sometimes the number of the deceased members could hardly be made up for by the new ones joining the Society; many of the new members were not active at all, or would leave the Society soon after enrolling. Not even the Junior conventions were noticed to give any results as they used to in the past. One of the items of the National Board's agenda was whether the tradition of holding the Junior Order conventions was to be continued or not when even the membership itself was not capable of organizing them and showed so little interest. Therefore, the National Board suggested the Junior Order members should, in the columns of the *Zajedničar,* voice their opinion with respect to holding these conventions at all. However, the Toronto Convention decided independently that the Junior conventions were to be organized regularly.

A decrease in activity and inefficiency was noticed in numerous CFU lodges. The management was reminding the board members of the lodges that it was not enough to collect the dues, visit the sick, and organize funerals. The elderly board members were tired and complained about the young members who avoided taking any responsibility in the lodges. Some of the lodges lost membership because there were individuals who refused to pay monthly dues. A number of the members who had a *20 Year Endowment* asked that their premiums be paid out after the term had expired, instead of asking for a more favorable insurance table of rates to be applied; they were therefore practically refusing to remain CFU members.

The problem of regular payment of dues in the lodges became quite an important one. A number of secretaries had been collecting them for years and, as they were getting old and sick, they would no longer take on such obligations. They sometimes found a replacement by themselves, but there were cases when nobody wanted to take over. In other words, the lodges did not try hard enough to keep their members so that some of them just dropped out even without being aware of it.

The Executive and the National Boards kept reminding both the lodge members and their leaders that they should not only care about insurance for fear that the Society turn into an insurance company. For this reason, the lodges were required to promote different cultural and sports activities, and, above all, fraternal ideas, so as to turn the lodges into true *town meetings* within the Croatian communities.

Many lodges were active and quite successful in organizing entertainment and celebrations; this happened mostly in Pennsylvania, but also in other states. Some other communities, however, were extremely passive, and the fact that some lodges did not undergo a decrease in membership proved that good results could be achieved only if the members gave their best effort. The other proof was that a certain number of new lodges had been recently established even in those communi-

ties where the CFU presence had not been strongly felt, like in New York State, California, and in some Canadian provinces.

Lodges According to Enrollment

Lodge number	Lodge seat	Membership
146	Versailles, Pennsylvania	1,260
351	Detroit, Michigan	1,207
170	Gary, Indiana	1,142
354	Cokeburg, Pennsylvania	1,075
202	Chicago, Illinois	1,050
5	Johnstown, Pennsylvania	1,048
66	Youngstown, Ohio	1,021
304	Ambridge, Pennsylvania	969
248	Clairton, Pennsylvania	965
856	East Chicago, Indiana	904

Nests According to Enrollment

Nest number	Nest seat	Membership
27	Versailles, Pennsylvania	484
122	Cokeburg, Pennsylvania	423
39	Clairton, Pennsylvania	377
10	Gary, Indiana	347
309	Youngstown, Ohio	339
4	Johnstown, Pennsylvania	333
318	Detroit, Michigan	295
15	Steelton, Pennsylvania	279
272	Canonsburg, Pennsylvania	266
190	Farrell, Pennsylvania	254

Source of Information: the *Zajedničar,* February 10, 1988.

Numerous CFU lodges initiated a merger with other lodges, mostly in the same place. This was a positive process which was to be supported as it strengthened the lodges' social activities. The phenomenon became rather significant in the early 1960's; in 1962 alone, 46 lodges were merged. In the past, a few lodges would sometimes be operating even in the same town. But little by little, long distances grew unimportant with the modernization of transportation which apparently influenced more merger actions between the lodges.

Despite the difficulties in attracting new members, the CFU leaders did not become pessimistic. The Executive and the National Board members, as well as most of the membership, firmly believed that the Society still had a future. The Society was in need of new ideas, new programs, and needed to show permanent care of its new membership. It was also essential to collaborate with the other fraternal societies with-

in the program of the National Fraternal Congress and the regional fraternal congresses.

Hundreds of thousands of Croatian immigrants and their descendants living in Canada and the USA were of great interest for further CFU activities. This was especially so with the Canadian Croats, who were in the majority newcomers, and their interest in fraternal programs was no doubt great. All Croatians, both in the USA and Canada, were to be convinced that the Croatian Fraternal Union was the oldest and the world's largest Croatian organization, and that there was room in it for all the Croats and other Slavs of various political and religious beliefs, as long as they appreciated liberty and fraternalism. All those concerned should be clearly informed about the advantages the Society offered, like health and life insurance under the most favorable conditions. But the most important advantage was the CFU humanitarian, cultural, educational, and sports programs. Besides this, the Junior Order Cultural Federation was operating within the Society, the Tamburitza Federation for Adults, and sports clubs for a variety of disciplines. Through the Educational Fund, the CFU granted scholarships to numerous student members. Associated with the Society were many Croatian clubs, centers, lodge and committee unions exemplifying the most appropriate ways of social gathering and of preserving the Croatian cultural heritage. Parallel to the establishment of the free and independent state of Croatia, the American Croats will initiate more successful and complex cultural, educational and sports collaboration with the old homeland, which will ultimately enable the Croatian Fraternal Union to promote, enrich and expand its activities all across the USA, Canada, and Croatia.

The newspaper *Zajedničar* frequently dealt with the CFU situation and its future prospects, "Looking back upon the advancement of our Society in the past and taking into consideration everything it promoted and established, we feel it is our duty to take care of the CFU. Our first and foremost obligation, both as members and Croatians, is to look after our fraternal and ethnic organizations. We need to be rather proud about it, to accept the duties of board members in our lodges and nests and to participate in all entertainment staged under the CFU patronage. (...) Parents too have to educate their children so as to make them join and remain a part of the Society. If the parents encourage their children to take part in sports, cultural and social activities held within our lodges and organizations, we are certain the young people will learn to appreciate their share in the Society, and will remain its loyal members throughout their lives. On the other hand, if the parents do not enroll their children in a junior tamburitza orchestra or a sports club, or do not care to bring them to the Society's social gatherings, nothing in the whole wide world will help us keep those children in the ranks of the Croatian Fraternal Union. Our primary task is insurance, but we must offer much more if we want to be more powerful than the insurance companies which have only profit in mind."[9]

The newspaper also reported on the cultural and sports activities and their importance for the promotion of the Croatian Fraternal Union, "The sports and cultural programs, in which thousands of our members

take an active part, keep attracting new members. Besides this, through fraternal activities, members get to know one another. All of our sports programs are increasing and improving. (...) Sports activities, like softball, basketball, bowling and golf, are numerous already, and the skiing trip is more successful each year. As to the cultural events, our Junior Cultural Federation is quite successful in endeavoring to make hundreds of youngsters take part in it. Boys and girls have not only learned about the Croatian heritage, but have also, through their performances, introduced our culture, and informed the American and Canadian public, all over the country and abroad, about our cultural legacy. Besides, the young people represent a significant part of the CFU membership. In order to develop our cultural life, the Society has established the Tamburitza Federation for Adults. (...) This Federation, as well as the Junior one, will attract new members as it has already gained a great deal of respect and interest all across the country by our many choirs. "[10]

The fact is that the American Croats in the USA and Canada searched for their own roots with as much interest as they showed in preserving the Croatian cultural legacy. And they would surely be successful in it if they joined the Croatian Fraternal Union whose ethnic programs were quite ample. It is no wonder that National President Luketich published the following invitation in the *Zajedničar,* "We request all our members to join us in an attempt to assure further advancement and prosperity of our organization. In this decade, our lodges and nests will be facing many challenges, the greatest among them being how to succeed in attracting new membership. Our Society will surely be financially stable in the 1980's, and it will make a good name for itself in the world of business. To make new members join us, our lodges and nests must offer the most attractive programs so as to assure a large number of participants at public manifestations, and consequently, effect an increase in membership. Good business operations in the lodges, as well as successful collaboration among our members, will give rise to an increase in number of members and the promotion of our Society in the years ahead. With 791 lodges and nests, assets totaling $52,000,000 and a solvency factor of 117 %, our Society has proved to be operating on a solid basis." Luketich also reminded the lodges to accept the changes offered by the National Fraternal Congress, which would, no doubt, exert a positive influence on the overall CFU operation. Luketich explained to both the Board and lodge members that they should be more active in the social life of their communities and discuss with their American and Canadian friends the activities that might still be necessary. After all, the Croatian Fraternal Union was both an American and Canadian institution. Luketich addressed the lodges with the following words, "The fundamental thing is that the promotion of our organization is measured by our lodges' advancement. Accordingly, unless they are working well, they will hardly be able to receive new members in their ranks. We know that fraternal organizations have several advantages over insurance companies because most of our work is done on a voluntary basis. The Croatian Fraternal Union has yet another advantage: our social entertainment events, organized by the lodges, are much more successful and less expensive than the ones offered by

other institutions. All this gives us an opportunity to succeed in our attempt of attracting new CFU members in the next decade."[11]

Thanks to the efforts of the management and the good work of most lodge board members, the Croatian Fraternal Union has continued to operate successfully in the years preceding its hundredth anniversary.

The CFU Operating Development

Year	Insurance in force($)	Certificate holders life insurance	Certificate holders health insurance	Assets	Insurance	# of Lodges
1984	383,919,877	99,200	35,832	62,164,534	29,505,350	754
1985	356,772,431	97,333	34,127	67,799,019	42,298,983	749
1986	383,521,956	96,471	32,664	76,354,678	50,255,640	734
1987	389,554,532	93,916	30,652	82,281,394	35,682,022	684
1988	391,478,741	91,369	28,954	86,812,884	35,602,456	683

Source: *Zajedničar*, April 6, 1989

In recent years, the CFU assets have been permanently increasing, and the amount of $92,780,268 was reached in December 1989. During that year, the Society disbursed to its members $1,864,107, which was the CFU highest dividend ever paid. The CFU Reserve Fund also grew in 1989, reaching the figure of $8,487,943. In September 1991, the total insurance in force was $409,183,222, and the total assets were higher than a hundred million, 103.4 million dollars to be exact. The *Zajedničar*, expressing a great deal of pleasure wrote, "A few years ago we set before us an aim, which we considered to be suitable for our hundredth anniversary celebration (...) to reach a total of one hundred million dollars in assets. In the latest issue of the *Zajedničar*, our National Secretary brother John P. Plesh published his Monthly Statement, and we are now delighted to announce that this year, on April 30, the Society has reached the top assets totaling $101,133,432.51. We have surpassed one hundred million dollars and realized our goal set several years ago. This is an exceptionally valuable achievement by our Home Office and it deserves every praise for having done an excellent job."[12]

Again in 1993, the Croatian Fraternal Union reported a significant growth of its assets which reached $137,433,741, and which was 12 million dollars more than in 1992. In December 1993, the total life insurance in force reached the sum of $405,649,814.

It was not only thanks to the USA fraternalists that the Croatian Fraternal Union operated so profitably. The Canadian membership was also an important factor contributing to the growth of the Society. In the late 1940's, 2,500 Croatian fraternalists returned to Yugoslavia from Canada, but the membership problem was soon solved. By the Ninth Convention held in 1955, the membership in Canada reached 8,300, and at the following Tenth Convention of 1959, it reached 9,585. [13] The Society was the most active in the Province of Ontario where 38 lodges were in operation, represented by 33 delegates and a membership of 5,855. In Welland, two lodges and one nest were operating; in Hamilton,

two nests and two lodges, and Sudbury and its surrounding area reported four lodges and three nests in operation.[14]

CFU Lodges in Canada According to Enrolment

Lodge	Seat	Membership
954	Hamilton, Ontario	404
975	Toronto, Ontario	350
617	Welland, Ontario	305
644	Hamilton, Ontario	293
919	Sault Ste Marie, Ontario	192

CFU Nests in Canada According to Enrollment

Lodge	Seat	Membership
631	Toronto, Ontario	100
274	Welland, Ontario	95
397	Hamilton, Ontario	76
468	Sudbury, Ontario	56
509	Calgary, Alberta	47

Source: the *Zajedničar,* March 20, 1988.

Although the Croatian Fraternal Union operated in Canada quite successfully, its representatives were frequently left out of the Home Office posts, which caused disapproval of the membership. In order to organize more efficiently, and to be better represented in the Society's management, the Canadian lodges established the Southern Ontario Federation of CFU Lodges in July 1973. The Federation was rather successful, so it began holding its own conferences and 'fraternal days' in the Croatian communities of Canada. An outstanding role was played by Marijan Kružić, a renowned Croatian fraternalist.

Social and Humanitarian Work of the Croatian Fraternal Union

The sickness or death insurance of the membership was one of the most important reasons for the founding of the Croatian Fraternal Union, and this significant activity has been kept up until today. However, the insurance system in the USA and Canada was constantly improving, offering its beneficiaries new and more favorable conditions. The Croatian Fraternal Union was also updating its portfolio, providing more insurance coverage for all their members. Much care, time, and effort was required for the work, especially in obtaining charters from the American and Canadian authorities. Apart from introducing new plans of insurance, very competitive for the commercial insurance companies, an important activity was developed to educate lodge board members and other recruiters to answer complex insurance programs. The Soci-

ety, therefore, organized numerous courses in its Home Office and in the lodge operating areas.

By the end of 1959, the Society added to its portfolio a *Single Premium Payment Plan*, the cheapest life insurance first started by the financially stronger fraternal organizations. According to such an insurance plan, a CFU member could purchase the whole life insurance certificate at once. Therefore, the payment was significantly lower than if paid in monthly rates. *Term Certificate* of an 18 year duration was prolonged to 25 years and could be changed into a *Modified Life Certificate* which also gave a certain advantage. Besides this, *Double Indemnity* was added to the Society's portfolio which for a death at work provided double the amount of the insurance certificate value. The Society also offered the so called *Premium Waiver* if the member was completely or partly disabled, providing the payment of all insurance from the time of the accident. The members could also decide to choose *Settlement Options* which made it possible for a member or his/her beneficiaries to obtain insurance under very favorable conditions in rates. The Society also adopted the so called family protection, that is, family insurance based on one contract only.

The Croatian Fraternal Union has also recently introduced *IRA programs* and the *Pre-Need Insurance Coverage* which enable the fraternalists, especially the elderly, to have the insurance refunded at very favorable conditions.

The sickness benefit was from the very beginnings the most popular and important insurance plan. The members were granted sickness benefits throughout their lives or until the money they had invested was refunded according to the contract conditions. However, this insurance plan was canceled on January 1, 1948. The sickness benefits had in the past, given a great deal of trouble to the Society's management, as the expenses always exceeded the earnings. This is why a new insurance plan was introduced in 1948 - an insurance coverage up to the age of 65, after which the certificate holder would lose all the rights to insurance. Not even that proved to be a good solution, as the expenses of hospital treatments permanently grew, and the Society eventually gave up this insurance program too.

It should be pointed out that the Croatian Fraternal Union has recently revised the premium payments. The majority of large fraternal organizations introduced the system of direct assessment in the payment of dues so that the lodge secretaries were spared from the operation. This was taken over by the Home Office. Such a system was introduced in the Croatian Fraternal Union too, and since January, 1991, the new system has completely prevailed.

The Croatian Fraternal Union had another issue to deliberate and to decide: the further activity of the Children's Home. With a permanent improvement of the social conditions in the USA, such homes lost their previous importance, as less and less children needed their hospitality. This is why in April 1967, the Supreme Board decided to close the Children's Home in Des Plaines, Illinois. In May 1971, the site was sold and the Society earned $1,235,000. At the 1971 Convention, a board elected for this purpose, suggested the money should be deposited in a bank, and the profits used for: 1) aid to orphans, 2) the secretaries' and the

nest managers' salaries, 3) the CFU Scholarship Foundation *(Školarinska zaklada)*, 4) sports, educational and cultural activities, and 5) aid to the elderly CFU members. The amount earned by the sale of Home, plus the 1991 interest totaled $3,607,469. It must be emphasized that the largest part of the sum was spent for the aid to the elderly CFU membership and for the Scholarship Foundation expenses.

The aid to the elderly was an unavoidable item on the agenda of numerous conventions and eventually, at the 1971 Convention, it was decided that $48,000 were to be spent for the 2,600 older members. At the Fourteenth Convention held in 1975, two clear conclusions were reached. The first one was that the Society covered death benefit expenses up to $1,000 and the administration costs for all members aged over 75 who had been members for at least 50 years. The sickness benefit expenses and the aid to the disabled were not included. The other decision provided that the Society should cover all dues to those who had been members for longer than 60 years, and had reached the age of 80. Both suggestions were put into effect on January 1, 1976.

According to the decision reached at the Ninth Convention in 1955, and the one made by the Supreme Board in March 1956, the CFU Scholarship Foundation was established so that $4,000 were remitted to the sports and educational funds meant to help the student fraternalists. That idea was backed by Filip Vukelić and Stjepan Brkić, the *Zajedničar* editors, who proposed that the fraternalists pay into the Scholarship Foundation the amount of money they were ready to spend for Christmas greetings. The newspaper, in return, listed in its columns the names of all those who helped, and also published their Christmas greetings. A special board was established later, consisting of the Home Office members and other fraternalists, which made a draft for the Scholarship Foundation activities; the board was given a work permit on June 27, 1958. According to the permit, all those who contributed money to the Foundation were allowed an income tax deduction for the amount paid. In the meantime, five separate funds were established within the Scholarship Foundation for contributions offered by the fraternalists. The money was collected each year within the so-called Christmas campaign for the benefit of the Scholarship Foundation, which was an important humanitarian activity. Since 1958, 3,723 students have been given scholarships in the total amount of $514,975. Very pleased with the Foundation work, the *Zajedničar* wrote, "As members of the largest Croatian organization on the American continent, we can be proud of our fraternalists' efforts to help educate the CFU juniors, who will take the leading role in our Society in the future. (...) We must go on trying to make our juniors capable of playing important roles and contribute to the welfare of our firms, colleges, industrial enterprises, and trade."[15]

Activities of the National Board and the Home Office of the Croatian Fraternal Union

According to the by-laws adopted at the Seventh Convention held in 1947, the Supreme Board consisted of thirteen Board members, that is, five members of the Executive Board and seven members of the Board of Trustees. The Supreme Board was headed by the President of the Society. Each member was responsible for his/her work to the Executive Board, Board of Trustees and to the Supreme Board. The activities of the Supreme Board and the Home Office administration were governed by the President. As time passed, the membership of the Executive Board was reduced to four members, and at the 1983 Convention, to only three members: the National President, Bernard M. Luketich, Vice-President / Members Services, Joseph Brigich, and National Secretary / Treasurer, John Plesh.[16] When John Plesh died in 1993, Edward W. Pazo was elected to the office.

By the decision reached at the Tenth Convention held in 1959, the Promotion Department was established within the Society's Home Office. The Department Director's task was to ceaselessly explain through the *Zajedničar* and in working with lodges the advantages of insurance plans introduced by the Society. The ultimate goal of the Department was to increase the Society's membership. It was to the great credit of Milan Vraneš at the beginning, and Michael Stivoric at a later stage, that the Department developed successfully.

A great part of the Home Office activities was related to uninterrupted connections with regional fraternal congresses and the National Fraternal Congress. These connections were kept to mutual benefit. In 1985, at a session of the US Congress, a motion was discussed to abol-

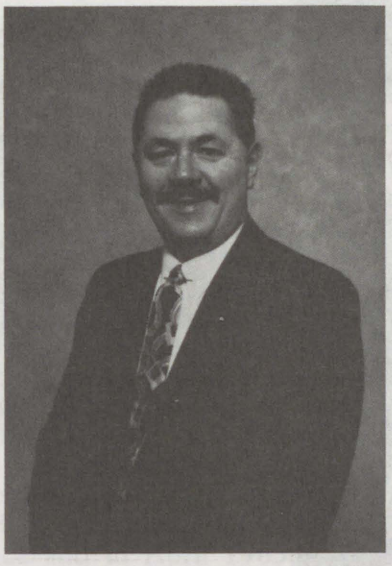
Cardinal Franjo Kuharić visiting the CFU Home Office, 1990

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF THE CROATIAN FRATERNAL UNION OF AMERICA, 1994

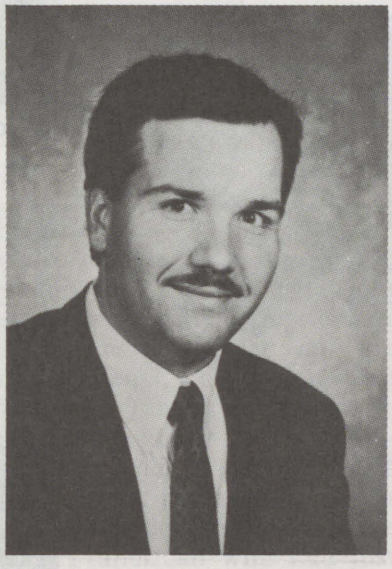
THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bernard M. Luketich, National President

Joseph M. Brigich, Vice-President Member Services



John J. Sicko, Second Vice-President



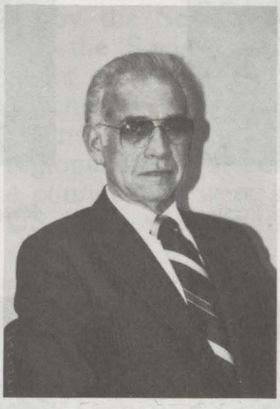
Edward W. Pazo, National Secretary/Treasurer

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

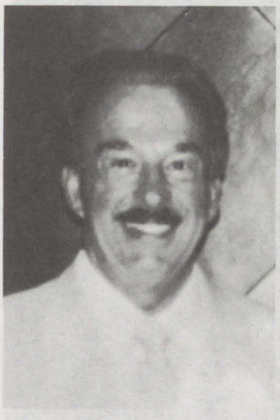
Mary Krilich Joyce,
President

Richard L. Major

Edward C. Rudar

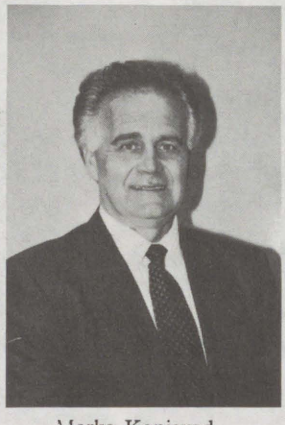


George Vidakovich,
Secretary



Steve Cvitkovich

Carolyn Kotvasz



Marko Konjevod

ish the privileges of fraternal organizations and to impose taxes so as to put them on the same level with other business institutions. The National Fraternal Congress informed all organizations concerned and the Croatian Fraternal Union made a great effort, through its friends and especially with the help of Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich, a CFU member in Lodge 240 in order to prevent the adoption of the Bill. If the Bill had been passed, many cultural and educational activities of the fraternal organizations would not have been carried out any longer.

In the last few years, the Croatian Fraternal Union gradually and successfully became computerized. With the passing of time, it adopted a few of the most modern computer programs with which the CFU today completes all its services to its members very quickly and easily. In order to fulfill all requirements of the multiple programs of complex dealings, the Society moved to the new Home Office Structure at 100 Delaney Drive in Pittsburgh in 1961. In the new quarters, the needs of Board members and the Society's Administration were fully met. In 1981, the Home Office building was completely restored and adapted according to the new needs. By the decision of the Seventh Convention of 1987, it was resolved to expand the Home Office. The addition to the CFU Home Office was finished in 1993, and the Rededication Ceremony and Blessing Service of the beautiful new structure was conducted on May 1, 1994 by His Excellency Ćiril Kos, Bishop of Đakovo - Srijem.

It also has to be pointed out that the Home Office building houses the CFU Museum, the library, and the records office. The Museum owns the world's largest collection of Croatian national costumes. Other ethnic exhibits deriving from the cultural heritage of the Croatian people can be seen in the Museum too. A very rich library houses the collections of books on Croatian history, literature, and science. The minutes of all conventions, Supreme and Executive Boards sessions, as well as the minutes of other Croatian fraternal organizations and many lodges are deposited in the records office. It is worthwhile mentioning that the Society's management is continuously adding to the exhibits of the museum, as well as to the library and the records office, paying special attention to the banners, emblems and other lodge and society symbols.

The editorial board of the official organ *Zajedničar* is also situated in the CFU Home Office. Thanks to the direct link with the National President and the Executive Board and the National Board members, the editor and his assistants are in a position to receive immediate information and to follow as closely as possible the activities and events in the Society. The *Zajedničar* has always been an important agent for the promotion and progress of the Society. However, as the Society and the circumstances in it changed, the *Zajedničar's* contents, conception, and volume changed too. Already in the 1950's, the Junior Order sports members demanded that the newspaper write more about sports activities, and in English. At the Eighth Convention held in 1951, it was decided to divide the newspaper in two sections: six pages in Croatian and six pages in English. In 1962, editor Filip Vukelić retired from the office and in April 1963, Bosiljko Bekavac, a Franciscan who had just settled in the USA, was elected new editor. The relevance of having two editors were then discussed. Therefore, at the Twelfth Convention held

in Pittsburgh in 1967, it was decided to have only one editor for the newspaper. At the next 1971 Convention, the delegates deliberated the very high expenses of the newspaper which amounted to $200,000. No decision was reached, but at the 1975 Convention, the expenses and another quite painful topic were discussed again. It was noted that the interest for the Croatian part of the *Zajedničar* was weakening, and quite often there were not enough articles for even three or four pages of the newspaper. When the *Zajedničar* started to be issued with more pages in English, the opposition almost accused the Home Office of intending to

The editorial board of the *Zajedničar* today; Ivan Begg, Ann Goetz, Edward J. Verlich, the editor, Nancy Clawson, Drago Luketich

cancel the Croatian section of the *Zajedničar*. This was not true. In the course of 1974 and 1975, the conception and the contents of the newspaper gave rise to much controversy in the columns of the *Zajedničar*, after which the following view-points were agreed to:

- the Croatian pages do not have to be identical with the English ones, with the exception of the information referring to the Executive and the National Boards, and some important articles, as well as the addresses of the National President;
- it is not necessary to publish the entire speeches made at banquets, picnics and other festivities, but only summaries in one of the languages only;
- there is no need to publish photos and biographies of the campaign winners, especially not in both languages;
- in order to be generally understood, information on lodge meetings and on other important activities can be made public only in English;

Bernard M. Luketich and John Plesh visiting Stipe Mesić, the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, 1993

- sport activities should be given enough space in the newspaper, but annual membership campaigns must be highlighted first and foremost;

- the Croatian section of the *Zajedničar* should continue issuing news from Croatia and publishing political and historical studies on the Croatian people;

- there is no need to divide the newspaper into four Croatian and four English pages, but to publish the contributions received suited to the situation;

These principles took effect thanks to the new editor and professional journalist, Edward J. Verlich, who was elected to the post on June 1, 1975.[17]

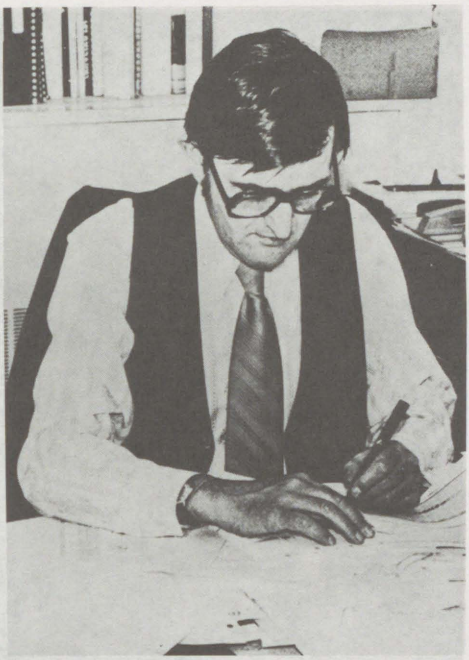
The Croatian Fraternal Union and the Creation of the Independent Croatian State

In its hundred year old history, the CFU has always supported the Croatian people in their struggle for freedom. During the latest tragic events in war-torn Yugoslavia, the Society was assisting the Croats morally, materially and politically in order to help found the free and independent Croatian state. When the Communist system of the former Yugoslavia disintegrated, the CFU upheld the democratic processes in Croatia.[18] As soon as news of the founding of an alternative Croatian political party, the Croatian Democratic Union, and the negative reactions of the Belgrade regime to the program of the party reached Amer-

ica, the *Zajedničar* wrote, "When Serbia and Serbians want and seek the same thing, they claim they are doing it in the name of democracy and equality, but when other nationalities in Yugoslavia (especially Croatians) ask for the very same thing, they are accused of nationalism and anti-Serbianism. Whenever the Croatians ask for equality - their rights, according to the democratic principles and sovereignty set forth at the formation of the post-war Yugoslavia - they are accused of being "ustaše" and promoting "ustaše" ideology. (...) The Croatian Democratic Union's program for needed changes is based on the belief that only through real democratic reform can the Croatian, Slovene, and other Yugoslav nations become part of the rest of the world in the 21st century."[19] When the authorities in Croatia tried to suppress the activities of the Croatian Democratic Union, the *Zajedničar* reacted severely, "Are Croatians the only people in the world who are forbidden to discuss their own destiny? Are we living on the eve of the 21st century or in the time of the Balkan wars, when achievement was measured by atrocities and the number of cut-off heads? Who is afraid of a democratic and pluralist Croatia?" Having reminded its readers of the political exile and imprisonment of Dr. Franjo Tuđman and the suppression of his books, the newspaper emphasized, "Our option is sincere and simple: agreement among individuals and among nations will give birth to a better future for everyone, a future of their own choice and not an imposed one."

The *Zajedničar,* reflecting the political views of its readers and the CFU membership, endorsed all new political parties which seeked to bring freedom and democracy to the Croatian people who only wanted

The fraternalists viewing one of the 400 containers with aid to Croatia sent during the Homeland War



John Plesh, National Secretary/Treasurer, 1974 - 1993

to become rulers of their own destiny, "We are particularly aware of the democratic movements in Croatia, the country of our forefathers, and give to all the alternative political parties and their leaders, our unconditional moral support. The Croatian Fraternal Union has throughout its history stood by the Croatian people in their struggle to be free people, even in the times of their greatest oppression, the times when it was unpopular to be associated with that country. The CFU did its utmost to let our Croatian people know that it was aware of their oppression, sufferings, and that they were not alone in their struggle. The Croatian Fraternal Union is again standing by its people, encouraging them to continue in their struggle for freedom in which they can enjoy their own language, sing their own songs and proudly say, 'Yes, I am Croatian.' We wish the same for all the peoples and nationalities. Only when we are free to acknowledge who we are can we live alongside our neighbors in peace."[21]

The CFU did not approve of American politics towards Croatia in the days of disruption of the former Yugoslavia and war-ravaged Croatia. Therefore, President Luketich, on behalf of the members of the National Board, sent a letter to President George Bush underlying the following, "We firmly believe that the time has come for our esteemed President to reexamine his policy, that is, State Department policy, toward Yugoslavia and divert our country's support from the Communist Serbian government and the Communist Yugoslav Army to the democratic peoples of Yugoslavia, that is, to Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. (...) It is absolutely unrealistic that the militant Serbs should demand to be a part of Serbia, just like Kosovo. They are wrong in believing that the Croatian government will cede a part of Croatia to Serbia."[22]

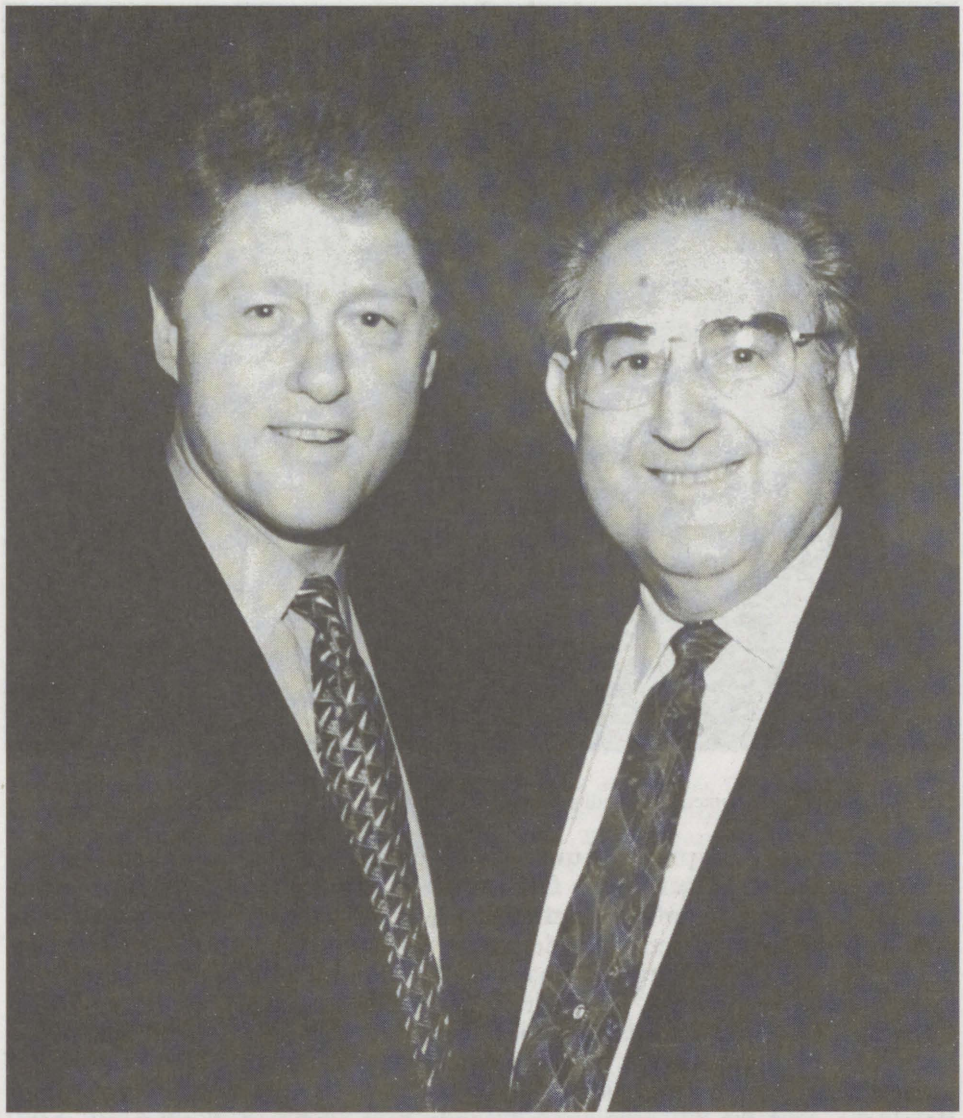
Appalled by the massacre of fifteen young Croatian policemen in Borovo Selo at the beginning of May 1991, National President Luketich sent an open letter to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, on behalf of the entire CFU membership. In the letter, Luketich condemned the criminal attacks of the Chetnik terrorists, judging the inefficiency and inaction of the Yugoslav Army as collaboration under the guise of a peace-keeping, neutral force, "Please know the entire membership of the Croatian Fraternal Union and all good Croat-

Dr. Franjo Tuđman, President of the Republic of Croatia during his visit to the Fraternal Croatian Union, Pittsburgh, 1993

ian people are supportive of your efforts and the efforts of the new Croatian democratic government to stand firm and undaunted. We pray to God for the conflict in Yugoslavia to be be resolved in a peaceful manner, for a better and happier life for all the people, Croatians and all others who are in the quest for freedom, democracy and justice."[23]

The CFU members were horrified by the news of the devastation of Osijek, the town with which they were connected by wonderful memories during their stays in Croatia. In the letter sent to the Mayor of Osijek, Zlatko Kramarić, President Luketich expressed his concern and anxiety of the CFU membership, "Many CFU members visited the City of Osijek so often in the past. We have many close friends and acquaintances there, and consequently, we are very worried. It is our great hope and wish everything will be resolved in a peaceful manner. To show our deep concern, we have launched a relief campaign among our members and friends to provide medicine, medical supplies and other necessities that are in great demand while your area is exposed to terrorist attacks. We are anxious about our Croatian people, particularly about our friends and acquaintances in Osijek. We pray to God to stop this terrorist war and to allow democracy to prevail in Croatia."[24]

In the middle of the Communist Yugoslav Army aggression on Croatia in September 1991, the Eighteenth CFU Convention was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The barbaric raid on Croatia was condemned by the delegates in their speeches, as well as by the resolution carried at the



Bill Clinton, President of the United States of America, and Bernard M. Luketich, President of the Croatian Fraternal Union of America

Convention. The Convention also initiated the establishment of the CFU Croatia Humanitarian Aid Fund into which $50,000 was remitted by the Convention itself, and another $6,000 was raised by the delegates during the session. In the distressing days of war-ravaged Croatia, the National Board called on the CFU membership and all their friends to get in touch with President Bush, Congressmen and Senators, State Governors, legislators, and the UN Offices, and to demand more efficiency in their pleading for peace and freedom on the war-torn territory of the former Yugoslavia. Issue after issue, The *Zajedničar* was publishing

President Bernard M. Luketich in audience with the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II

the addresses and phone numbers of Congressmen, members of the Senate, and the Government Offices in Washington, urging the readers to call them and to influence them to help re-establish peace in Croatia and stop this brutal, senseless destruction, killing, and abuse. In November 1991, the CFU National Board dispatched a letter to President Bush stating that by now he had surely received thousands of letters from Croatian-Americans, Croatian-Canadians, and Croatians from the world over. The National Board, the letter said, had received copies of many of those letters. They all basically made the same request - that you, dear President, and the US recognize Croatia as a free and democratic state. The letter also pleaded for a peacekeeping UN force to be sent to Croatia and for the return of the country to its original borders. "Our letter is being written, Mr. President, to proclaim that we are very disappointed, even bitterly disappointed, in your performance and that of your Administration toward the country of Croatia and the Croatian people.

We share the feeling of God-awful helplessness that has caused grievous heartache to our brothers and sisters in Croatia. By ignoring our pleas, you have compounded our disappointment and helplessness.

From the outset, we have tried to warn you and your Administration what would happen once the Croatian people voted for democracy; but you and your advisors kept insisting that you support an unworkable 'Yugoslavia'. Grudgingly, after thousands have been massacred, thou-

The members of the Main Board of the National Federation of American Croats at their founding assembly held on January 22, 1994. Sitting from left to right: Janko Prezgar, Leo Majich, Edward W. Pazo, Joe Cindrich, Ivan Botic, Mary Krilich Joyce, Dr. Martin Hrgovcic, Mary Robert, Father Toni Petrusic, and Dr. Nick Bartulica; standing from left to right; Prof. Edward Damich, Dr. Vladimir Gross, Mike Volarich, Anthony Peraica, Frank Brozovich, Josip Kristic, Dr. Zdenka Delalic, Joseph Cupich, John Klaric, Steve Rukavina, and Joseph M. Brigrich

sands more wounded, and 400,000 forced to flee their homes and belongings, the Administration has changed its attitude somewhat, but not enough to stop a single bullet.

In the meantime, you and the European Community, along with the United Nations, have placed an arms embargo on Croatia. In effect, you have tied the hands of the Croatian people behind their backs, while they face the warplanes, the warships, tanks, missiles, mortars, artillery and weaponry of the third largest army in Europe. Incidentally, these warplanes, warships, etc. were supplied by our US Government and the Soviet Union. Our own tax dollars are being used to savagely massacre our people in Croatia. Can't you find it in your heart to even lift the arms embargo so that our people can defend themselves? The Croatian people don't want to attack anybody - they just want freedom and democracy (...)

All of us here in America, including our parents and grandparents, came from Croatia for the opportunity to embrace democracy, to learn to love it so much that we want to share freedom and democracy with

our brothers and sisters in Croatia. And now that they have learned our lessons and embraced democracy, we have abandoned them in their most desperate hour of need.

Our heartache, our disappointment, our helplessness is so great, so all-consuming, that we can only cry out to you in our most desperate voice - Please, President Bush, help Croatia."[25]

Early in December 1991, Sophie Masloff, Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, issued a proclamation expressing full support to the citizens of the Republic of Croatia who freely elected a non-communist government dedicated to transforming its one-party, socialist system into a democratic structure with a western-modeled economy, individual freedoms and respect for human and minority rights. She condemned the activities of the Yugoslav Army resulting in the death and injury of thousands of Croatian citizens and causing the mass destruction of countless Croatian sacral buildings, cultural monuments, natural refuges, civic institutions, schools and hospitals. She reminded them that since 1980, the City of Pittsburgh had been a "Sister City" with the Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, and home to tens of thousands of Croatian-American citizens. As a mark of sympathy for Croatia and her citizens, she proclaimed December 7, 1991, as Republic of Croatia Day in the City of Pittsburgh in the spirit of peace, freedom and independence.[26]

In the pre-election campaign in 1992, the majority of the CFU membership supported the candidacy of Bill Clinton for US President as he in his pre-election speeches upheld the independence of Croatia. Therefore, in March 1993, the National President Bernard Luketich sent a letter to the US President reminding him to carry out the promises of his campaign, "We admired your statement, Mr. President, during the campaign where you stated the conflict must end with the recognition of the borders as they existed before the war. (...) We pray and know you will find the means, time and determination to bring an end to this slaughter of innocent people. (...) We respectfully suggest that immediate steps be implemented to end the hostilities. This you promised during the campaign that provided a ray of hope for the people of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina."[27]

The Croatian Humanitarian Aid Fund established at the Eighteenth Convention turned into a permanent and the foremost CFU activity in aiding the homeland. The names of donors were published in every issue of the *Zajedničar,* and $900,599 were raised by April 20, 1994. At the same time, the Society continued to offer assistance, supplying medicines, food, medical equipment, clothing and other necessities, and shipped to Croatia more than 400 containers to the amount of $40,000,000. At the session held in March 1994, the National Board thanked all the donors with the following words, "We are, as always, grateful to our loyal members and friends who have given their wholehearted support to the CFU Croatia Humanitarian Aid Fund. With our humanitarian aid, we have helped thousands of people, the victims fighting for their survival in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Our membership's excellent response to this program proves once again the unchanged commitment and the one hundred year-old tradition of the Croatian Fraternal Union".[28]

The Croatian Fraternal Union didn't limit itself to organizing humanitarian aid for Croatia. The CFU members knew how great the historical role of political organizations such as the Croatian Alliance in World War One, and the Council of the American Croats in World War Two were. Therefore, in February 1994, the National Federation of the American Croats was established, being fully supported by the Croatian Fraternal Union. Its program was to promote and protect the interests of the Croats in the United States and all over the world.

Supporting the democratic changes in Croatia and upholding its people in their struggle for independence, the Croatian Fraternal Union, as an American organization, asserted that its views derived from the principles of American democracy and the right on national self-determination. The CFU also proved to be a true fraternalist organization, based on a program of benevolence and humane relations. As an American-Croatian association, the Society showed clearly that even after a hundred years, its membership was aware of its roots, of being part of the Croatian people. Based on these beliefs and principles, the Croatian Fraternal Union can look ahead with optimism, expecting yet another century of successful work.

Notes:

1. *Zajedničar,* August 30, 1989
2. Ibid., September 21, 1990
3. Ibid, August 30, 1989
4. The Minutes of the Thirteenth CFU Convention, San Francisco, 1971; *Zajedničar,* September 26, 1983
5. The Minutes of the Ninth CFU Convention, Pittsburgh, 1955; *Zajedničar,* May 18, 1955
6. John Badovinac was born on October 10, 1907, in Calumet, Michigan. He attended high school in Hopedale, Ohio. He completed courses bookkeeping and administration at night school at Cleveland College. He started working as a clerk in a commercial firm, and then in the office of an automobile factory. From 1932, Badovinac worked in the CFU Office. In 1934, he was elected Junior Order Director and later served as the Supreme Secretary until 1967 when he was elected Supreme President.
7. For successful and efficient management of the Society's Administration, much credit goes to John P. Plesh who left the office of High Trial Board Director to be elected in 1974 as National Secretary/Treasurer.
   John P. Plesh was born in 1925, in a fraternalist family, and since his early childhood, he was a member of Lodge 304 of Ambridge, Pa. He distinguished himself in ethnic activities, and was especially successful in his work for the Croatian Home in Ambridge. Plesh spent many years working as a designer at the famous Pittsburgh firm Penn-Art Inc, which he left after being elected to the new office in the CFU.
8. Bernard Luketich was born on August 17, 1931, in Cokeburg, Pa., in the fraternalist family of Ivan and Ema Luketich. As a child, Bernard was enrolled in the Junior Order Department. He attended primary school in his native town of Cokeburg, and was a student at the high school in Ellsworth, Pa. He worked for some time in the Bethlehem Steel coal-mine. From 1952 to 1954, he fought in Korea as an American soldier. From his early youth, Luketich was active in Lodge 354 of Cokeburg where he initiated the purchase of a building for the local Croatian Home. In 1949, he organized the first Junior *kolo* troupe which was later to become one of the most renowned Junior tamburitza orchestras, *St. George Jr. Tamburitzans.* Since then, Luketich took part in every CFU membership campaign. He initiated the Federation of the CFU Lodges of Fayette, Green, Washington, and Westmoreland and led their radio-hours. At the 1959 Detroit Convention, he was elected to the CFU Board of Trustees, and since 1964, served as the Society's Treasurer. Bernard M. Luketich

was elected to the office of the National Senior Vice-President in 1977, and on June 1, 1978, was appointed National President, after John Badovinac's retirement.

9. *Zajedničar,* June 6, 1979
10. Ibid., September 23, 1987
11. Ibid., August 6, 1980
12. Ibid., June 22, 1991
13. Ibid., February 11, 1959
14. Ibid., February 20, 1957
15. Ibid., March 25, 1987
    The Croatian Business Association was established early in 1987 on the initiative of some National Board members, with the mission of gathering both businessmen and intellectuals. Their most important task was to help and advise the fraternal students, and young people on the whole, so as to become useful members not only of the Society, but of the Croatian communities in the USA and Canada in general. The members of the Croatian Business Association hold meetings from time to time, exchanging opinions and experiences of importance to the Croatian Fraternal Union.
16. Joseph Brigich was born in a fraternalist family. Very early on, his parents enrolled him in the Society's Junior Order Department. At the age of 16 he joined *Franklin D. Roosevelt* Lodge 567 of Canonsburg, Pa., whose president he was for many years. In 1965, he was elected to the Board of Trustees, and in 1978, to the office of the CFU Vice-President/Member Services. In 1994, the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh chose Joseph M. Brigich as its Fraternalist of the Year. Brigich has dedicated his life to fraternal activities and has long been active in the Fraternal Societies, both locally and on a national level.
17. Edward J. Verlich was born in a family of fraternalists, members of Lodge 248 of Clairton, Pa. He completed his primary and secondary education in Clairton. Verlich graduated in journalism from Duquesne University in 1959, and has been in journalism ever since.
18. Croatian immigrants all over the world played quite an important role in the creation of the independent state of Croatia. The Croatian Fraternal Union, as a significant part of the Croatian immigration, has always been supportive of the Croatian people to stand firm and undaunted. With reference to this CFU activity, we have limited ourselves to the basic facts only, leaving it to historians and the passage of time to provide relevant opinion on it.
19. *Zajedničar,* April 12, 1989
20. Ibid., July 19, 1989
21. Ibid., March 21, 1990
22. Ibid., May 22, 1992
23. Ibid., May 8, 1991
24. Ibid., August 7, 1991
25. Ibid., November 27, 1991
26. Ibid., December 18, 1991
27. Ibid., March 10, 1993
28. Ibid., May 6, 1994

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STUFFED SAUERKRAUT
SAUERKRAUT LIKA STYLE
THICK BARLEY AND BEAN SOUP
GORIČAN GOULASH
HERD'S GOULASH
HICKEN STEW
AMB AND POTATOES
MB WITH PEAS
DALMATIAN STYLE
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WITH GNOCCHI
ASH WITH PASTA
ARD PORK CHOPS
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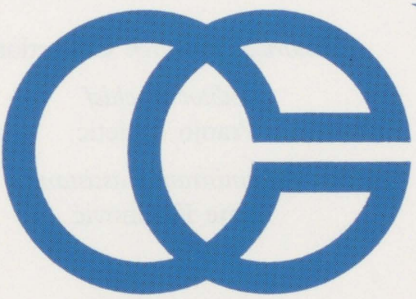

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