

## TO OUR READERS

*Since its establishment in 1953, the Croatian Academy of America had planned to publish a learned journal on Croatian cultural, historical, political and economic developments. This present volume is a sincere endeavor toward fulfilling this idea conceived six years ago.*

*The Academy and the editors earnestly hope to acquaint their fellow American citizens with the realities, efforts and achievements of a comparatively small but essentially old European people who had settled on the eastern Adriatic shore thirteen centuries ago. Their land lay where the ancient Roman Empire was divided into two halves: where the Church was severed between the East and the West, where the Crescent was brought and took root alongside the Cross, and where powerful ideological, cultural and political influences violently clashed. These forces have been far stronger than the Croats themselves. Since they were situated at the crossroad of innumerable invasions, warfare raged throughout their country for centuries. They became involved in all the great conflicts of that part of Europe. Having found themselves in either the role of vanguard or bulwark at various times, they attempted to bridge the abyss between the vastly different worlds and cultures. In every one of these roles, they risked their very national existence. Their destiny therefore has been viewed in turn as both epic and tragic, great and miserable, and it has been questioned if they have not been too often romantic and unrealistic.*

*Their national saga, however, is a truly fascinating one. And their heritage is a colorful combination of both the ancient Slavic traditions and the Mediterranean, Central European and Oriental cultures and civilizations.*

*This present volume of the "Journal of Croatian Studies" is primarily devoted to history. It is our intention to eventually present the Croatian literature, art, folklore and cultural institutions in the succeeding volumes. We shall also try to cast some light upon the Croatian contribution to America, our new homeland.*

*The Croatian Academy of America shall strive to make its Journal a useful and worthwhile medium to all those engaged in research or interested in study in this field. A part of our program is to utilize the documents from American archives connected with Croatian history and we fervently hope to find the very same helpful assistance in the future as we have found in preparing this volume.*

*Having as an example and impetus the contemporary American scientific efforts, the "Journal of Croatian Studies" and its editors shall earnestly strive to accomplish their aforementioned aims.*

THE EDITORS