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## **SLOVAK IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES AND ITS RELATION TO THE AMERICAN SOCIALIST AND LABOR MOVEMENTS**

### **SUMMARY**

Slovak immigrants in the United States of America did not show a considerable interest in taking part in the American labor movement. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that young single men would come to the United States in order to get rich, and then to get back home as soon as possible and purchase land there. On the other hand, Slovak immigrant leaders did not have a desire to gather American Slovaks together in the American labor movement. Slovak clergymen in the United States took it upon themselves to maintain their body of believers in the Catholic faith. The outcome of it all was a small number of American Slovaks founding workers' organizations and papers, and they were very distant from one another, too. The number of Slovak immigrants in the ranks of the socialist party of America is negligible.

If one looks at the large number of books and articles that Slovak Marxist historians have written about Slovak immigrants and their relation to the socialist and labor movements, one will get the impression that most Slovak immigrants to the United States joined socialist organizations and took a leading role in the American labor movements.<sup>1</sup> There is very little evidence to support such conclusions. As I will demonstrate in this paper, most Slovak immigrants came to the United States as single young men who wanted to make their »fortunes« and return home, and their leaders were more concerned with promoting Slovak nationalism than with any socialist or labor ideology.

Slovaks left their homeland in Hungary in the 19th century for three basic reasons: lack of land, lack of industry and lack of opportunity. While serfdom was abolished during the Revolution of 1848, there was no corresponding land reform. Therefore, the nobility (ten per cent of the population) continued to hold more than half of the best arable land. The vast majority of freed serfs held fewer than five hectares of land and soon they began to break up even these meager holdings among their children. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Hungary, unlike the Austrian part of the Empire, did not promote much industry (the nobility preferred the »rustic« life to pollution and grime) and, hence, the growing number of landless peasants found it

<sup>1</sup> See for example: Miloš Gosiorovský (15; 13). While Gosiorovský set the tone others followed. Examples are: 6; 5; 25; 41; 48; 47.

increasingly difficult to make ends meet (43:11—13; 2:432). In addition, the Slovaks had only a tiny middle class which was engaged in an uneven struggle with the Hungarian government over the issue of 'Magyarization' (the forcible assimilation of non-Magyar nationalities by the Magyars). This small number of individuals, faced by government discrimination, could not possibly either build up industry large enough to employ all the job-seekers or force the government into land reform (2:480—486). Therefore, by the 1870's it had become common practice for Slovak peasants to migrate each summer to the Hungarian (and in some instances Austrian) lowlands and take in the harvest of the wealthy nobles. Others, particularly from Trenčín county, had begun to wander all over Europe as tinkers who would offer to fix household implements, sharpen knives and scissors and do other odd jobs for the few pennies tossed them by sympathetic housewives. Others still sought work in the booming metropolises of Vienna and Budapest (17:55; 32a; 32b).

Meanwhile, after the American Civil War had ended, the United States of America began to industrialize in earnest. The railroad, coal, steel and oil industries began to greatly expand and they required large numbers of cheap, unskilled laborers, to make them profitable. American industrialists refused to pay the Irish and other immigrants who were already in America a decent wage, and the industrialists also rejected the alternative of Black labor. Instead, they sent agents to Europe to seek workers who would settle for wages of around 1.50 a day and the agents found such people in eastern and southern Europe (16:239; 35; 33a; 33c; 33e; 1c; 1d).<sup>2</sup>

To a Slovak peasant, who could not make a living on five hectares of land, and who earned only the equivalent of 15 to 30 cents a day on a noble's estate, if he could find the work, \$ 1.50 a day was a very handsome salary. Therefore, a few Slovaks responded to the entreaties of railroad agents (who advanced them the \$ 70.00 it would cost to make the trip) in the 1870's and went to America. By then steamships began to carry immigrants across the Ocean in the relatively short time of two weeks (16:285). And, while the work on the railroads, in the mines or mills was long and hard, the Slovaks put up with all these hardships because they had not come to stay. Instead, the vast majority were single young men (or newly-married) who came to make their 'fortunes' (usually \$ 1,000) and then hoped to return home, buy enough land to make a living, and settle down to the good life in Hungary. Living in cramped boarding houses, the frugal Slovaks managed to pay off the cost of the trip in six months and after that they began to send money home to support their families and to also bring additional relatives to America (52:34—35). Once this process got underway the trickle of Slovaks turned into a deluge in the 1880's and 1890's and peaked in 1905 when over 50,000 made the voyage. Altogether 650,000 Slovaks migrated to the United States between 1870 and 1924 (when immigration was largely halted by the U.S. Congress) and 500,000 eventually chose to remain in the New World (55:171—179; 10:973). Those who did then sent for their wives and children. Most Slovaks settled in the industrial Northeast and Midwest, half in Pennsylvania and the rest in New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota (10:984).

While life was more livable for Slovaks in the New World than in the Old, they did soon come to realize that they were being exploited and

<sup>2</sup> See also the governor's correspondence in the Slovak State Archives for the Abov county, Košice, 460/1900.

started to strike. The first recorded strike by Slovaks in the United States was in Bessemer, Pennsylvania in January of 1886 when 300 men, led by Stefan Stanek, walked off the job because the mine operators refused their modest request for an increase from 27 cents per wagon of coal produced to 30 cents per wagon. The mine owners decided to disperse the strikers with local police forces but the miners' wives saved the day by hurling stones at the police and preventing them from making many arrests (336). After this Slovaks were found participating in all the major strikes that affected the coal and steel industries, whether in the great Connellsville coal and coke strike of 1891, the Homestead steel strike of 1892, the Anthracite coal strike of 1894, the Lattimer coal strike of 1897, the Anthracite strikes of 1900 and 1902, the Bethlehem Steel strike of 1910, the Westmoreland coal strike of 1911-1912 and the 1919 »Hunky« steel strike (30; 33h; 33i; 34c:241-250; 51:97-98). In the Lattimer strike, which turned into a massacre when sheriff's deputies opened fire upon 1,000 peaceful marching strikers, six Slovaks were killed, along with eight Poles and two Lithuanians, and 35 other workers were wounded.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the Slovak willingness to strike for better wages and conditions, one might conclude that they were ripe for recruitment by socialist ideologies and organizations. Such was not the case. As early as 1890 the editor of the workers' weekly *Slovák v Amerike* (The Slovak in America) denounced socialism for two reasons: he charged that socialists advocated the violent overthrow of the capitalist system, an action which he deemed immoral; and socialism propagated internationalism, which to the beleaguered Slovaks who were fighting 'Magyarization' meant national suicide (33d). A.S. Ambrose, the founder and editor of *Slovák v Amerike*, had been an organizer of the ill-fated Knights of Labor, who made the first attempt to create an industrial union of unskilled workers in the United States in the 1880's (34c:58-62). Thus, while Ambrose was sympathetic to the plight of the workers, he rejected socialism and most other Slovak leaders in America followed suit. In a later article the Reverend Štefan Furdek, who was the most respected of Slovak Catholic clergymen in America, rejected socialism as well, principally because he felt it violated human nature — »people are not sheep« — and also because it opposed organized religion and wanted to root out belief in God (22:190-198). Since both secular and clerical leaders of Slovak-Americans opposed socialism in the United States, it had little chance of success among the masses.

This is not to say that socialist societies and newspapers did not arise among American Slovaks. They did, but when compared to other Slovak organizations, the socialist ones came relatively late and in such small numbers that they made very little impact upon Slovak-American life. For instance, A.S. Ambrose joined with P.V. Rovnianek (an ex-seminarian) to found the first nation-wide National Slovak Society of the United States and Canada in 1890 (between 1882 and 1890 more than 40 local fraternal had been established by American Slovaks) (45:128-130; 11:67). Besides providing for fraternal-benefit insurance, the National Slovak Society became the leading nationalist and second-largest Slovak fraternal in the United States by 1918 (7:88,89). The largest was the First Catholic Slovak Union, also founded in 1890, but by the Reverend Štefan Furdek. Its goals were fraternal-benefit insurance for its members, and defense of the Catholic faith and the Slovak nation, as embodied in its slogan »Za Boha a národ« (For God and the Nation) (39:passim).

<sup>3</sup> The most complete account of the Lattimer strike is given by Michael Novak (35).

Since American Slovaks had interests that went beyond those espoused by the National Slovak Society and the First Catholic Slovak Union, they established even more fraternal societies. The two aforementioned societies initially admitted only men. Therefore, the wives of the men in these societies established the *Zivena* (Giver of Life) Beneficial Union in 1891 and the First Catholic Slovak Ladies' Union in 1892 (37; 21). Lutherans followed suit with the Slovak Evangelical Union in 1892 (38:11). A regional group founded the Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Slovak Union in 1893 (1a). Militant nationalists established the Slovak Gymnastic Union *Sokol* in 1896 (from which devout Catholics split off to found the larger Slovak Catholic *Sokol* in 1905) (1b; 23:35—51) and even Slovak Calvinists, a tiny minority, founded their Slovak Calvin Presbyterian Union in 1901 (all of these later established women's counterparts) (57:37,38). By 1918 twelve of the largest nation-wide Slovak societies in the United States enrolled over 200,000 members. The religious ones led with a total of 145,053 (51,817 in the First Catholic Slovak Union), with Catholics enrolling 133,904 and Lutherans 11,149. Secular societies had 69,315 members, and the National Slovak Society led these with 29,118 (7). By 1940 these societies, largely by enrolling their members' children, had doubled their combined membership to over 400,000.

Meanwhile, a few isolated Slovak socialist organizations appeared at the turn of the century. The most important one arose in Chicago in 1902. In that year Štefan Martinček arrived from Budapest, where he had been a member of the Hungarian Socialist Party since 1897 and editor of the Slovak Socialist newspaper *Nova doba* in 1898—1899. He had also helped organize socialist cells among Slovaks in the southernmost counties of the Banát and Bačka. However, by 1902 he tired of the Hungarian government refusal to allow the creation of a Slovak Workers' Society on the old pretext that »there is no Slovak nation«, and left for Chicago where a friend had preceded him. Soon after his arrival Martinček organized the First Slovak Workers' Educational Society »*Rovnost*« (Equality), which affiliated with the Czech Workers' Section of the Socialist Party of America. The latter had been founded in 1901 (29:25—28). In the next few years other Slovak socialist societies sprang up in Cleveland, Newark, N.J., and New York City, and elsewhere. By 1911 these various societies decided to federate into the Slovak Section of the American Socialist Party (14:45). The aim of all of them was to try to spread the socialist ideology among their people and help the Socialist Party win as many elections as possible in order to eventually turn the United States into a socialist country.

Meanwhile, Martinček also wished to establish a Slovak Workers' (fraternal-benefit) Society but found too few potential followers and had to postpone this project until 1915. In that year he managed to persuade 60 members of the Slovak Socialist Section to meet in Newark and organize the Slovak Workers' Society. By the time of its first convention in 1917 it had enrolled 507 members (14:49). It slowly grew to 11,107 by 1939 by actively recruiting not only among Slovaks but also among Czechs, Ruthenians and even Magyars, thereby giving credence to the Slovak nationalist charge that Slovak socialists were not good Slovaks (14:14,49; 41:124). The tremendous unemployment of the Great Depression also contributed to its growth. On the other hand, the Slovak Section of the Socialist Party in 1919, and the Slovak Workers' Society in 1920 joined the Third International and thereby adopted the communist cause, losing significant numbers of members in the process (41:124; 44d:38).

If one looks at the Slovak-American newspaper press, one will likewise find a dearth of Slovak-American socialist newspapers. The first Slovak-American newspaper was founded in Pittsburgh in 1885 as a commercial venture to provide news from home (8:29-32). By 1918 121 Slovak-language newspapers had sprang up in this country (although only 41 were still publishing by then) and of 93 newspapers on which there is information regarding their ideology, 54% were Slovak nationalist, 18% were Magyarone, 17% had no political orientation, 4% were »Czechoslovak«, 4% were socialist and 2% were neutral. Furthermore, in terms of religious orientation, 79% had none, 15% were Roman Catholic, 5% were Lutheran and one was Calvinist. Thus, the Slovak-American press was, by-and-large, secular and nationalist between 1885 and 1918 (50).

Only four Slovak-American socialist newspapers appeared between 1885 and 1918, and only one survived. The first sprang up as the weekly *Robotník* (Worker) in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, in 1889, but little is known about it and it died a quick death (8:101). The second was founded by the brilliant ex-Jesuit (he could speak twelve languages) František Pucher-Čiernovodský in 1894. Entitled *Fakla* (Torch), this New York monthly lasted for only nine months because there was not enough of a demand for it (8:101; 13). The third (and only successful) attempt to establish a Slovak-American socialist newspaper occurred in Chicago in 1906 when a small group, led by Štefan Martinček, established the monthly *Rovnosť ľudu* (Equality of the People). It became a weekly in 1908 and a daily in 1926. The newspaper changed its name to *Ludový denník* (The People's Daily) in 1935 and to *Ludové noviny* (The People's News) in 1945; it folded in 1981 (8:104-107).<sup>4</sup> The fourth (and last) attempt to establish a Slovak socialist newspaper in America occurred in New York in 1914 when a local group founded the *Hlas svobody* (Voice of Freedom) to principally serve as the official (fraternal) organ of the about-to-be organized Slovak Workers' Society. It lasted only to 1917 because it opposed World War I and such a stand became untenable after the United States entered the war the same year (8:47).

Having surveyed Slovak immigration to the United States and the establishment of two of its three principal institutions, fraternal-benefit societies and newspapers (the other institution was the parish church), the question that now arises is why the socialist movement among American Slovaks was so weak, especially when compared to other ethnic groups who also came from southern or eastern Europe? We know, for instance, that the Czechs, Slovenes and Finns had very vigorous socialist organizations and newspapers.<sup>5</sup> Why did not the Slovaks?

The answers are very complex and involve the type of immigrant who came to America, what region he/she came from, who the leaders were, their hopes and aspirations, and the wishes of the immigrants themselves. As we have already seen, most Slovak immigrants who came to the United States in the 19th century were single young men who hoped to make their fortunes and return home. Furthermore, the vast majority came from eastern Slovakia, particularly from the counties of Spiš, Šariš, Zemplín and Abov. This was the most over-populated and economically depressed area of Slova-

<sup>4</sup> For a general discussion of the Slovak-American press see — M. Mark Stolarik (54).

<sup>5</sup> In a pamphlet entitled: Socialist Party Meeting National Committee, May 1915: Reports of Foreign Federations (No publisher, place or date given), in papers of the Slovene National Benefit Society, Box 6, I. A, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, groups such as the Czechs, Slovenes and Finns were reported with tens of thousands members but Slovaks had only 751. See also the articles about these groups in — 18.

kia and also the weakest in national feeling (56:221—247). The principal concerns of the peasants who left this area, whether seasonally to the Hungarian lowlands, or across the Ocean to America, was to find work, save their money, help their families survive and, perhaps, even buy some land back home. Until the 20th century they had virtually no knowledge of or contact with socialist ideology. Hungary itself had only a weak socialist movement that got underway in the late 19th century, principally in Budapest (20:54—58; 29:25).

Immigrants from western Slovakia, particularly from Bratislava and Nitra counties, were different. They held more land than their counterparts in the east, were more nationally-conscious, had frequent contacts with their neighbors the Czechs, and often worked on the estates of rich Austrian nobles. They encountered socialist ideas in both the Czech lands and in Austria (Austria had the third-largest socialist movement in terms of votes in Europe in 1912) and brought such ideas with them to America (41:115; 46:75—103; 446).<sup>6</sup> Thus, not only did František Pucher-Čiernovodský the founder of the socialist *Fakla* (1894) hail from Burský Svätý Jur, in Bratislava county, but the majority of the members of the Slovak Workers' Society also came from western Slovakia (13; 41). That region, on the other hand, sent only a small number of immigrants to America, and, hence, the »pool« of potential Slovak socialists in the United States was very small (4:30).

American Slovak leaders, whether secular or clerical, tended to come from central Slovakia. When one looks at the priests, fraternal leaders and journalists who presented themselves as the leaders of American Slovaks, one is bound to notice (as did Hungarian government leaders) that the majority came from the central Slovak counties, particularly from Orava and Turiec—the most nationalist of all Slovak counties. Indeed, the intellectual central of Slovak nationalism in the 19th century was the little town of Turčiansky Svätý Martin. Here the Slovaks established their *Matica slovenská* (a combination of National Library and National Academy) in 1863 (the Hungarian government closed it in 1875) and also their *Muzeálna Slovenská spoločnosť*. (Slovak Museum Society) in 1893 (31:236—306; 12:208—17). Slovak-American leaders who originated here, such as the Reverend Štefan Furdek (Orava), mentioned above, or Ján Spevák (Turiec), the second publisher of *Slovák v Amerike*, or Matúš Jankola (Orava) founder of the first Slovak-American religious order of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, or Albert Mamatey (Turiec) wartime president of the Slovak League of America, were first and foremost Slovak nationalists.<sup>7</sup> To all of them socialism was anathema because it preached internationalism which, one of them pointed out, meant for the Slovaks national suicide. Therefore, while most Slovak leaders in America were sympathetic to the plight of Slovak workers, they steered them away from socialist ideology. For instance, while the publisher of *Slovák v Amerike* might condemn the Pennsylvania state constabulary as »State Cossacks« for their brutality in breaking up a 1912 strike (49h), his colleague Jozef Hušek (from Liptov, in central Slovakia) in the Cleveland monthly *Kritika* would blame the violence of the Colorado miners' strike of 1914 upon »socialist agitators« (in this case the Industrial Workers of the World) (26).|

<sup>6</sup> In *Rabotnický Kalendár* (44b) the editors give the world-wide socialist vote in 1912 as follows: Germany 4,238,919; France 1,120,000; Austria 1,041,948; USA 905,768; Finland 330,000; Hungary 80,000.

<sup>7</sup> See Paučo (40) for the biographies of Furdek (pp. 72—127), Jankola (pp. 208—222) and mamatey (pp. 269—275); See Culen (8: 125) for the origins of Ján Spevák.

Furthermore, at least one powerful Slovak leader was corrupted by greed. P.V. Rovnianek, a co-founder of the National Slovak Society and for many years editor of the first and largest Slovak-American newspaper, *Amerikánsko-Slovenské noviny* (American-Slovak News), allowed himself to be bribed by mine owners during the Connellsville coal strike of 1891. Rovnianek told the miners in his paper that their cause was hopeless and urged them to return to work. The strike collapsed shortly thereafter (30). Thus, whether they were concerned with the cause of Slovak nationalism, with keeping their people religious, or with lining their pockets with money, most Slovak-American leaders did nothing to advance the cause of socialism among their people. On the contrary, they opposed it whenever they felt it was necessary. Slovak socialists in America could only lament this stand by »our conservative and clerical leaders« (44b:15).

Furthermore, Slovak socialists (and later communists) in America eventually fell victim to the allure of capitalism. When one looks at the almanacs published by Slovak socialists, one will notice a slow but steady trend away from socialist or communist zealotry. For instance, the first Slovak socialist *Robotnícky Kalendár*, published in 1914, rather than having a religious calendar at the beginning, had one featuring secular heroes; it did not list Christmas; it had many attacks upon the Roman Catholic Church, whether in articles, jokes or cartoons; and it carried only three advertisements, two by fellow socialists who were selling artificial limbs and socialist newspapers (44b). The contents of these almanacs started to change with the second issue (1915) which restored the Roman Catholic and Lutheran calendars, as well as Christmas, and also printed twenty-four advertisements by small businessmen, most of them socialists (44c). By the time the 1949 *Ludový Kalendár* (it changed its name in 1935) appeared, it carried Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Greek Catholic and American Saints and heroes, it actually listed Christmas as the birth of Christ, and it had no anti-clerical articles whatever. Indeed, it published the pictures of two Roman Catholic nuns who were daughters of its communist readers! Furthermore, it published 405 advertisements of small businessmen, many of whom were also ostensibly communists (28). Thus, even though the United States government forced the Slovak Workers' Society (which had joined the International Workers' Order in 1931) to disband as a »subversive« society under the McCarren-Walter Act in 1953, the seeds of its dissolution really lay in the success of many of its members in becoming entrepreneurs and also in their children's apparent lack of interest in continuing the old struggle (14:76,71).<sup>8</sup>

In view of the relatively late appearance of Slovak socialists in America, their small number, and insignificant organizations, one is left wondering why Slovak Marxist historians have made so much of them. One reason may simply be pride in the fact that the Slovak socialist movement occurred on both sides of the Atlantic. A more plausible reason is, I think, the fact that Slovak-American socialists helped to organize the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. While most Slovak-American socialists had become communists by 1920, this kind of split had not yet occurred in the newly-created Czechoslovakia. Therefore, Slovak-American communists sent Jozef Schiffel of Newark, N.J., and Marek Culen of Chicago (both western Slovaks from the Záhorie region) to Slovakia to size up the situation and help lead their

<sup>8</sup> Even the covers of the Slovak communist Almanac cited above changed dramatically over the years. The 193 cover, for instance, featured a very revolutionary scene of worker's storming the barricades, whereas the 1950 cover showed a rather bourgeois photograph of a beautiful Slovak mother and child.

comrades to the »right path.« Schiffel quickly had himself elected secretary of the more radical wing of the socialists and called a meeting of fellow-radicals in Lubochna in January, 1921, which his colleague Marek Culen chaired. Culen was then elected president of the »Action Committee« which planned the organizing meeting of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in May. At this meeting Jozef Schiffel was elected to the Central Committee of the newly-formed Czechoslovak Communist Party. Schiffel later returned to the United States while Culen remained in Slovakia (14:52—53). Thus, just as American Slovaks had helped create the Czechoslovak Republic during World War I, so they helped to establish the Czechoslovak Communist Party.<sup>9</sup> And, this may be the principal reason why Slovak Marxist historians have paid so much attention to the Slovak-American socialist movement which, in the context of Slovak-American history, was relatively unimportant.

Meanwhile, what about the Slovak workers and their reactions to labor organizing? This is largely *'terra incoqnita'* at the moment. Paul Krause recently wrote a fine article about the willingness of Slovaks to join with their Anglo-American fellowworkers in organizing and striking at Homestead in 1892 (24:121—142). I have previously given examples of the willingness of Slovak workers to strike, both in this paper and in my doctoral dissertation (sec above p. 4; 52:65—67), in my recent study of Slovaks in Bethlehem, I found them joining in the 1910 strike against Bethlehem Steel and again in 1941 (51:98). In the latter case they also helped organize the Congress of Industrial Organizations in Bethlehem, just as Thomas Bell, the Slovak-American writer had his hero do in his novel *Out of this Furnace* (3:395—404).

On the other hand, Slovaks were also guilty of scabbing and joining company-controlled unions. The Slovak press occasionally reported such practices, whether or not it approved of them (33f; 33h 34c:246—250). Furthermore, Slovaks in Bethlehem joined company-sponsored unions in the 1920's and such activities were detrimental to true union organizing (51:98).

To complicate matters further, American labor organizers were not always receptive to foreigners.<sup>10</sup> The Knights of Labor had tried to organize an industrial union in the coal fields in the 1880's and did welcome immigrants such as A.S. Ambrose into their ranks, but the union ultimately failed due to poor leadership. In the 1890's skilled workers organized themselves into the American Federation of Labor and systematically excluded unskilled immigrants from their ranks, particularly in the steel mills, and this was one of the main reasons for the failure of the Bethlehem Steel strike of 1910 (19:194—208). Only the United Mine Workers and the Industrial Workers of the World, which appeared in the early 1900's, successfully recruited and organized immigrant unskilled laborers, the Slovaks among them (34a; 49—64; 49d; 49c: 49f; 34b:144—156; 34c:241—250). While the UMW grew into a large and powerful union, the IWW was destroyed by the United States government during World War I because, as a socialist-syndicalist organization, it opposed American entry into World War I.<sup>11</sup> Only in the 1930's, during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's »New Deal«, did labor organizers not have to worry about government interference in their efforts to establish a union.

<sup>9</sup> For the story of the World War I liberation movement see: 53.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent article on immigrants and the American labor movement see David Brody's contribution »Labor« (18: 609—618).

<sup>11</sup> For the story of the IWW see Melvin Dubofsky (9). The section on their destruction appearson pages 350—462.



That was when the Congress of Industrial Organizations, boosted by organizers from the United Mine Workers, finally managed to organize unions in most of America's heavy industries.<sup>12</sup>

While Slovaks did join the UMW and the CIO in large numbers, the role played by Slovaks in the creation of these unions remains largely unknown. In my research I ran across no Slovak equivalent to Terrence Powderly (the leader of the Knights of Labor), Big Bill Heywood (a leader of the Industrial Workers of the World), John L. Lewis (a leader of the United Mine Workers) or even a Helen Gurley Flynn (an IWW organizer) or a Giuseppe Ettor, another IWW organizer. There may well have been such figures at a lower level of organizing because Anglo-Americans, and later Irish-Americans, tended to dominate the leadership of America's labor unions.<sup>13</sup> If there were Slovaks who took a lead in organizing labor unions at local levels, they remain to be discovered.

Thus, we have seen that socialism and socialist organizations did not attract the vast majority of Slovak-Americans, in spite of what Slovak Marxist historians have written. Furthermore, Slovak-Americans cannot be said to have taken a leading role in the organization of American labor unions, although they may have played minor roles at local levels, and if so, these roles remain to be discovered. Various factors such as the place of origin of the majority of Slovak-Americans (eastern Slovakia), their leadership (conservative and clerical), the weakness of socialism in Hungary, and the initial desire of Slovak-Americans to make their »fortunes« and return home, all worked against the establishment of strong socialist and labor movements among Slovak-Americans.

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<sup>12</sup> The role of the CIO in organizing many of America's heavy industries was outlined by Sidney Lens (27).

<sup>13</sup> David Brody makes this point about the ethnic composition of America's labor leaders in his article (18: 611,615).

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#### SLOVAČKA IMIGRACIJA U SJEDINJENE DRŽAVE I NJEZIN ODNOS PREMA AMERIČKOM SOCIJALISTIČKOM I RADNIČKOM POKRETU

##### SAŽETAK

Slovački iseljenici u SAD nisu pokazivali neki veći interes za sudjelovanje u američkom radničkom pokretu. Tome je jedan od razloga što su mladi neoženjeni muškarci dolazili u SAD da bi se obogatili i da bi se što prije vratili kućima i kupili zemlju. S druge strane, slovačke iseljeničke vođe nisu pokazivali želju da američke Slovake okupe oko američkoga radničkog pokreta. Slovački svećenici u SAD brinuli su se da svoje vjernike održe u kršćanskoj vjeri. Rezultat svega toga bio je mali broj američkih Slovaka koji su osnivali radničke organizacije i novine, a bili su međusobno i vrlo udaljeni. Vrlo je zanemarljiv broj slovačkih iseljenika u redovima oScijalističke stranke Amerike.