

UDK 929Fabijanić, N.
262.2(73=163.42)“19”
Izvorni znanstveni rad
Primljeno: 1. 11. 2013.
Prihvaćeno za objavljivanje: 28. 3. 2014.

FROM PRISONER OF FASCIST ITALY TO PASTOR IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK: REV. NICHOLAS FABIJANIĆ (1913–1980)

Stan GRANIC, Ottawa (ONT), Kanada

Using several sources the author provides an overview of the life, imprisonment by Fascist Italy, and role of Krk native Rev. Nikola (Nicholas) Fabijanić (1913–1980) in the Croatian community in the United States. Following his arrival to the US in 1948 as a stateless person, this Catholic priest served as an assistant or full pastor at various parishes of the Archdiocese of New York. Although assigned to regular American Roman Catholic parishes, he also conducted religious, social and cultural outreach efforts among the people of Krk living in New York City. This activity provided continuity to people uprooted from Krk and assisted them along the path of integration into American society. Among these efforts was his publication in New York of the annual almanac Krčki kalendar from 1952 to 1955 and his regular celebration of the Feast of the Pentecost which held special meaning for the cluster of immigrants from Omišalj, Krk in New York City. The publication of the annual almanac and the social gatherings he organized also served to raise funds to purchase and collect desperately needed humanitarian assistance to help the people of Krk rebuild their lives, community and diocese in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the Second World War. With respect to the broader Croatian American community, he contributed to the Croatian press in America, joined his fellow clergy in signing a 1954 memorandum regarding religious persecution in Yugoslavia that was delivered to US President Eisenhower and enhanced the institutional development of Croatian Americans by participating in the establishment of the Croatian Academy of America in 1953 for which he served as Vice President (1955–1956) and President (1956–1958).

KEY WORDS: *Nikola (Nicholas) Fabijanić, Fascist Italy occupation, Krk immigrants, Krčki kalendar, Croatian Americans, Croatian Academy of America, Archdiocese of New York.*

Introduction

In early October 1980 *The Catholic News* of New York reported on the death and funeral of Rev. Nikola (Nicholas) Fabijanić.¹ Fabijanić was the pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Pine Plains, New York when he passed away on 26 September 1980. He was born on Krk, a 406-square kilometre island with a current population of just under 18,000 that belongs to the Kvarner group of islands along Croatia's north western coast.² Fabijanić was one of an estimated 398 Croatian Catholic priests living abroad during the late 1960s. Of these, ninety-three served at ethnic Croatian parishes or missions.³ *The Catholic News* article went on to state that Fabijanić was a chaplain who served a youth group in his homeland until the Second World War abruptly interrupted his ministry.

Fabijanić departed from Naples and arrived in New York on 29 July 1948 as a stateless person.⁴ He was one of over 500 Catholic clergy who were displaced persons that settled in the United States after the Second World War.⁵ Along with clergy, a significant number

¹ »Pastor in Pine Plains«, *The Catholic News*, 2 October 1980. The author is grateful to Sister Marguerita SMITH, Archivist of the Archdiocese of New York Archives, for providing a copy of this article and additional information about Fabijanić.

² In 1964 out of a total population of 13,682, the Island of Krk had ninety priests (fifty-five diocesan and thirty-five members of religious orders) of which thirteen served outside the diocese or abroad. In 2009 out of a Catholic population of 37,000, the Diocese of Krk had seventy priests and ten novices (seminarians and theology students). Mihovil BOLONIĆ, »Krčki glagoljaši i njihova služba izvan Krka«, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 35, no. 2 (1965), p. 356; Anton TAMARUT, »The Isles Shall Wait for His Teachings«, in *The Krk Diocese: The Isles Shall Wait for His Teachings*, ed. Franjo Velčić, trans. Margaret Casman-Vuko and Miroslav Vuko (Krk: The Krk Diocese, 2009), p. 26.

³ Marijan KOPIĆ, »Problemi hrvatske inozemne pastve«, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 38, no. 1 (1968), p. 26. For an overview of ethnic Croatian parishes and missions abroad see Vladimir STANKOVIĆ, ed., *Katolička crkva i Hrvati izvan domovine* (Zagreb: Vijeće za hrvatsku migraciju i Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1980) and Vladimir STANKOVIĆ, »Hrvatska inozemna pastva«, *Crkva u svijetu*, 35, no. 4 (2000), p. 393–403. In 2004 there were 195 ethnic Croatian Catholic parishes or missions abroad, thirty-three in the United States and eighteen in Canada. Tomo VUKUŠIĆ, »Hrvatska inozemna pastva i duhovna zvanjak«, *Župni vjesnik hrvatskih rimokatoličkih župa Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville*, no. 19 (9 May 2004), p. 10.

⁴ Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa) (hereafter LAC), Ancestry.com, [database on-line], New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957, Manifest of In-Bound Passengers (Aliens), microfilm serial T715, microfilm roll T715_7634, manifest no. 54, line 20.

⁵ The figure of 531 displaced Catholic clergy is cited in Haim GENIZI, *America's Fair Share: The Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945–1952* (Detroit: Wayne Univ. Press, 1993), p. 185. At a 1952 meeting of the US Catholic episcopate, St. Louis Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter (1892–1967) provided the figure of 543 displaced Catholic clergy living in the US, as reported in the article »Koliko je DP svećenika došlo u Amerikua«, *Danica* (Chicago), 26 November 1952, p. 4. In summer 1946 the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was providing assistance to 1,335 clergymen in Europe who were displaced persons. By March 1948 the number of clergy receiving assistance from the International Refugee Organization declined slightly to 1,119 from the 597,000 refugees still located in Austria, Germany and Italy. LAC, Deputy Minister of Immigration fonds, RG26 vol. 121 (R223–80–9-E), file 3–32–2 »Displaced Persons, Admission to Canada, General File«, »Displaced Persons Receiving UNRRA Assistance: Classified by Occupation, Summer 1946«, p. 5; Louise W. HOLBORN, *The International Refugee Organization a Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work 1946–1952* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), p. 306. For the efforts of Croatian Roman Catholic clergy abroad to assist their fellow DP nationals, both Catholic and Muslim alike, see the many articles, reports and letters found on the pages of the diaspora press in the post-war years, particularly the weekly *Danica* (Chicago). For the international response to the displaced person and refugee crisis during and after World War II see also Malcolm J. PROUDFOOT, *European Refugees: 1939–52. A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1956); Mark WYMAN, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute

of writers, scholars, professionals, publishers, journalists, and teachers were also found among the Croatian displaced persons.⁶ Many of these individuals, including Fabijanić, went on to participate in existing organizations and also took part in the establishment of new educational, cultural and social institutions serving the Croatian immigrant community.⁷

Like most displaced persons who settled in the United States, Fabijanić succeeded in integrating into American society. This process of integration did not occur overnight, but took several years to be fully realized. His integration was certainly accelerated by his being assigned to regular American parishes of the Archdiocese of New York rather than to those that were established by the Croatian American community. However, in addition to these assignments at American parishes, Fabijanić also maintained linkages to the Croatian American community, particularly through his religious, social, cultural and humanitarian outreach efforts among the people of Krk who settled in New York City. This overview of Fabijanić's activities will focus on his contributions to the Croatian community in America. It will reveal that even pastors who were assigned to regular American parishes could, and often did, make important contributions to the Croatian ethnocultural community in the United States.

Education and Ordination

Fabijanić was born to Ivka (née Antončić) and Petar Fabijanić on 1 June 1913 in Omišalj, Island of Krk. Krk was an important center of Croatian Glagolitic culture where the famous early twelfth century Baška Tablet originated.⁸ It was on Krk that Fabijanić attended elementary school in Omišalj and then continued his schooling in Požega and finally Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina. He graduated from the Visoko high school in 1933 and from

Press, 1989); *The Story of the UNRRA* (Washington, DC: Office of Public Information, UNRRA, 1948); *Migration from Europe*, IRO General Council Document 199 (Geneva: International Refugee Organization, 1951).

⁶ An estimated 5,000 Croatian displaced persons (DPs) arrived in the US between 1948 and 1953. An additional 8,000 came to the US under the Immigration Act of 1953. Approximately 45,000 Croats immigrated to the US from 1945 to 1968 as DPs, refugees, relatives joining their loved ones, and those with US visas. George J. PRPIC, *The Croatian Immigrants in America* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971), p. 439 (note 35).

⁷ See »The Immigrants after 1945«, in PRPIC, *The Croatian Immigrants*, p. 406–412; Ivan ČIZMIĆ, Ivan MILETIĆ and George J. PRPIC, *From the Adriatic to Lake Erie: A History of Croats in Greater Cleveland* (Willoughby, OH and Zagreb: American Croatian Lodge Inc. »Cardinal Stepinac« and Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, 2000), p. 185–209, 267–329; 411–475; Vladimir MARKOTIĆ, ed., *Biographical Directory of Americans and Canadians of Croatian Descent: With Institutions, Organizations, Their Officers and Periodicals*, 4th ed. (Calgary: The Research Centre for Canadian Ethnic Studies, 1973).

⁸ This monument is seen as the beginning of Croatian literature. On the Island of Krk itself, the Glagolitic liturgy was used since the ninth century and the stone monuments, manuscripts, missals, breviaries, printed books, public documents, statutes, hand books, and birth and marriage registers written in Glagolitic and preserved on the island are the reason that celebrated Slavist Vatroslav Jagić (1838–1923) designated it »the cradle of Glagolitic heritage.« For the Glagolitic heritage of Krk see Anton ŠULJIĆ, »The Cultural and Artistic Treasure of the Krk Diocese«, in *The Krk Diocese*, p. 32–35; Mihovil BOLONIĆ, *Otok Krk: kolijevka glagoljice* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1981); Vjekoslav ŠTEFANIĆ, *Glagoljski rukopisi otoka Krka*, Djela JAZU, no. 51 (Zagreb: JAZU, 1960).

1933 to 1937 he studied at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. He was ordained on 29 June 1937 in the Diocese of Krk by Bishop Josip Srebrnič (1876–1966) who was of Slovenian origin. Fabijanič's education and travels enabled him to learn Italian, Latin, Slovenian and English, and he could also communicate in French.⁹

Following his ordination, Fabijanič ministered to adolescents and young adults. From the time of his ordination to 1941 he served as chaplain on the Islands of Rab, then Pag (Novalja) and finally Krk (Vrbnik). However, only four years after beginning his first pastoral assignment, Fascist Italy annexed Fabijanič's native region and this young priest, who was known as Fr. Miko, became one of the thousands of victims of the Italian occupation authorities.¹⁰

Life under Fascist Occupation

Italian Fascist civilian and military occupation authorities engaged in a policy of forced Italianization of the native Croatian population. The occupation authorities adopted methods that included physical harassment, destruction and plundering of property including parishes, imprisonment of civilians without cause, deliberate shelling of homes, the deliberate targeting of fleeing civilians, and summary executions of non-combatants. The names of streets, locales, settlements, and towns were systematically replaced with Italian designations. Croatian personal and surnames appearing on identity cards issued by the occupation authorities were transformed into Italian equivalents. All cultural, educational, social, and sport clubs that refused to be associated with the Fascist Party were banned outright. As well, those instructors who taught in Croatian schools lost their positions and the schools Italianized. As the resistance of the local population increased, the Italian occupiers escalated their efforts against civilians through the use of mass deportations, internment operations, the policy of collective punishment, and the establishment of concentration camps.¹¹

⁹ Archdiocese of New York Archives, »Diocesan Clergy Registration: Reverend Nicholas Fabijanic«, 24 February 1964, copy provided to the author by Sister Marguerita SMITH, Archivist, Archdiocese of New York Archives; »Fabijanic, Nick«, in Francis H. ETEROVICH, ed., *Biographical Directory of Scholars, Artists, and Professionals of Croatian Descent in the United States and Canada*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Francis H. Eterovich, 1965), p. 23.

¹⁰ Another individual who experienced persecution at the hands of Fascist Italy was Indiana University Professor of South Slavic Languages and Literatures Ante Kadić (1910–1998) who lived in the coastal city of Split. When Italian forces arrived, Kadić was imprisoned for two weeks and then expelled from the city after which he escaped to Switzerland. Ante KADIĆ, *Moji izgoni iz Jugoslavije i povratak u Hrvatsku* (Split: Književni krug, 1992), p. 233 and »Rim u mojim sjećanjima«, in Ante KADIĆ, *Valovi života: putopisi* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1993), p. 50.

¹¹ LAC, Department of External Affairs fonds, RG25, vol. 3233, file 5566–40, contains the 10-page report »Conditions of Yugoslavs in Italian Concentration Camps« of the Royal Yugoslav Ministry for Foreign Affairs sent to Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs by the Royal Yugoslav Legation to Canada in Ottawa on 7 August 1943; Zdravko DIZDAR, »Italian Policies toward Croats in Occupied Territories during the Second World War«, trans. John Peter Kraljic, *Review of Croatian History*, 1 (2005), p. 179–210; Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, *Report on Italian Crimes against Yugoslavia and Its Peoples*, report no. 94 (Belgrade: The State Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes, 1946); James WALSTON, »History and Memory of the Italian Concentration Camps«, *The Historical Journal*, 40, no. 1 (1997), p.

The monitoring, controlling, harassment, detention, deportation, and imprisonment of ethnic Croatian priests occurred regularly in regions under Italian occupation. Diocesan priests and members of religious orders, particularly Franciscan Tertiaries who used Old Church Slavic in religious services (Glagolites), were seen as prime targets for oppression in the campaign to Italianize the population.¹² Fabijanić, like thousands of other Croats, Slovenes and Jews, was rounded up by the Italian authorities. He was snatched near midnight in Vrbnik on 18 August 1941 by a security agent and several Italian carabinieri.¹³ He was then taken away and the following day was incarcerated in Trieste. By 25 October 1941 he was in a concentration camp in Pisticci, Basilicata, southern Italy.¹⁴ Despite interventions on behalf of Fabijanić by his immediate superior Bishop Srebrnić, the Apostolic Nuncio to Italy and later Cardinal Francesco Borgongini Duca (1884–1954) and the Cardinal and Vatican Secretary of State Msgr. Luigi Maglione (1877–1944), Italian authorities refused to release him.¹⁵

Following Italy's signing of an armistice with the Allies on 8 September 1943, the German Nazis became Fabijanić's new prison keepers. However, he later succeeded in escaping his Nazi jailors.¹⁶ This period of Fabijanić's life was briefly covered in a 20 April 1967 article by John McNally appearing in *The Catholic News*. McNally wrote:

169–183; Maca GRŽETIĆ, »'Ča je lip naš hrvatski jezik'«, *Novosti* (Toronto), 30 April 1946, p. 4; Thomas FULLER, »Survivors of War Camp Lament Italy's Amnesia«, *NewYorkTimes.com*, 29 October 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/29/news/29iht-camp-ed3_html, accessed 9 February 2012.

¹² See the section »Represije protiv svećenika i redovnika«, in Ivan KOVAČIĆ, *Otok Krk u Drugom svjetskom ratu 1941.–1943.* (Krk and Rijeka: Povjesno društvo otoka Krka and Adamić, 2005), p. 108–116 and the section »Postupci Talijana s hrvatskim stanovništvom« in Jure KRIŠTO, *Katolička crkva i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941.–1945.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institute za povijest and Dom i svijet, 1998), vol. I, p. 55–68.

¹³ Fabijanić described his arrest and detention at several prisons prior to his transfer to a concentration camp in southern Italy in a piece published in the second volume of *Krčki kalendar*. [Nikola] Miko FABIJANIĆ, »Grem na put koga ne znam ili uzorak bez vrijednosti (iz njegovog napisnika)«, in *Krčki kalendar za godinu 1953.*, ed. Nikola Fabijanić (New York: [Nikola Fabijanić], [1952]), p. 32–38.

¹⁴ Franjo VELČIĆ, »Nikola (pop Miko) Fabijanić: svećenici i redovnici sa područja krčke biskupije – žrtve II. svjetskog rata i poraća« (instalment 13), *Kvarnerski vez: list za vjerski, kulturni i društveni život*, no. 178 (29 February 2012), <http://biskupijakrk.hr/Clanak.aspxacid=241&izb=47>, accessed 14 March 2012. The 1943 report of the Royal Yugoslav Ministry for Foreign Affairs to Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs included a list of 80 concentration camps, 26 judiciary prisons and penal houses, and 50 places of confinement run by Italian fascist authorities. LAC, RG25, vol. 3233, file 5566–40.

¹⁵ Several of these interventions are found in Jure KRIŠTO, ed., *Katolička Crkva i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941.–1945.: dokumenti* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institute za povijest and Dom i svijet, 1998), vol. II, p. 162–163, 188–189, 306, 307. Other clergy from the Diocese of Krk who were imprisoned by Italian authorities included: monastery Superior Romano (Metod) Antončić, Jerolim Čubranić, Catechist Milan Defar, retired parish priest Karlo Hlača, Janko Medved, Josip (Nikola) Milčetić, Bishop Srebrnić's Secretary Ivan Žic-Rokov, Alfons (Teobald) Vlašić, Josip Volarić, and Petar Žic, KOVAČIĆ, *Otok Krk 1941.–1943.*, p. 109–111, 114–115, 180.

¹⁶ A total of 135 people from Krk, almost exclusively ethnic Croats, died in Nazi concentration camps, fascist prisons or during apprehension, while 381 died as members of Croatia's anti-fascist forces. See the section »Pregled broja poginulih Krčana, boraca u jedinicama NOV i žrtava fašističkog terora«, which includes a list of victims by village, in Ivan KOVAČIĆ, *Otok Krk u Drugom svjetskom ratu 1943.–1945.* (Krk and Rijeka: Povjesno društvo otoka Krka and Adamić, 2008), p. 420–471. A partial list of Croats imprisoned in German concentration camps is found in John Peter KRALJIĆ, »Croatian Inmates in German Concentration Camps«, *CROWN – Croatian World Net*, online (New York), 31 March 2005, <http://www.croatia.org/crown/articles/6261/1/E-Croatian-Inmates-in-German-Concentration-Camps.html>, accessed 12 February 2012. For information on Croats killed by Nazi forces see John Peter KRALJIĆ, »Ethnic Croatians Killed by Nazi and Fascist Forces during World War II – A Partial List«, *Croatia: Overview of History, Culture, and Science* (Zagreb), online, http://www.croatianhistory.net/kraljic/kraljic_introduction_v1.html, accessed 12 February 2012.

Father Fabijanić was captured by the Italian Fascists in 1941 and imprisoned until 1943, when he was turned over to the even less-tender mercies of the SS men of Hitler. Fortunately a friendly Italian guard aided an escape effort and Father Fabijanić was able to hide out in the mountains of northern Italy [...] Finally, the Allied invasion a few months later resulted in his freedom.¹⁷

Activities within the Croatian Community of New York City

Although Fabijanić served in regular parishes of the Archdiocese of New York, he also associated with the Croatian community and its priests and religious living in the United States. This included his participation at religious ceremonies during special occasions at ethnic Croatian parishes.¹⁸ When Croatian-born Nikola Mosunić was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of New York in 1964, his first mass was celebrated at the Croatian community's Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. Special permission was granted from the Vatican for the mass to be held partly in Old Church Slavic and partly in the Croatian language. At this mass, Fabijanić delivered the homily on the theme »The Priest and Sacrifice.«¹⁹ Fabijanić also conducted pastoral visits and celebrated mass during the Feast of the Pentecost for the cluster of people from Omišalj, Krk living in New York City. The Feast of the Pentecost was a special religious holiday that continues to be celebrated annually by members of the parish in Omišalj.²⁰ By taking part in this ritual in New York, Fabijanić shared with other people from his native region an event that signified cultural and religious continuity with traditions from their common hometown and parish.²¹ Besides his pastoral visits, Fabijanić also occasionally contributed to the Croatian press in the United States. In a 1952 article in the weekly *Danica* (Chicago), published by the Franciscans of the Commissariat of the Holy Family,²² Fabijanić paid tribute to Sister

¹⁷ John McNALLY, »Fr. 'Nick' Traveled Long, Hard Road to Newburgh«, *The Catholic News* (New York), 20 April 1967.

¹⁸ On 9 October 1960 he presided over the marriage of his cousin Paul Fabijanić to Coralie Zimmerle at a ceremony in the Croatian community's Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church in New York City. »Vjenčanje Fabijanić-Zimmerle u New Yorku«, *Danica*, 7 December 1960, p. 4.

¹⁹ »Prva sv. misa na staroslavenskom jeziku u Americi (vlč. Nikola Mosunić – mladomisnik)«, *Hrvatski glas* (Winnipeg), 27 July 1964, p. 4. Through the intervention of New York Archbishop Francis Cardinal Spellman, Mosunić obtained a student visa and was accepted into St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers. Contrary to the report in *Hrvatski glas* describing the mass as the first in Old Church Slavic on American soil, it should be noted that the Croatian community's St. Joseph Church in St. Louis, Missouri held a mass in Old Church Slavic already in 1905. [Hinko SIROVATKA], »Glagolica u Americi«, editorial, *Hrvatska zastava* (Chicago), 30 November 1905, p. 4.

²⁰ The rituals of the Omišalj parish during the Pentecost celebration included an early morning procession from the parish church during which the Litany of the Saints was sung in the old manner followed by a special Pentecostal mass with hymns sung primarily in Old Church Slavic. Anton BOZANIĆ, *Omišalj, drevna župa i iseljenici u New Yorku* (Omišalj: Župa Omišalj and Općina Omišalj, 2010), p. 76.

²¹ For the importance of religion to transplanted communities see R[obert] F. H[ARNEY], »Religion and Ethnocultural Communities«, *Polyphony*, 1, no. 2 (1978), p. 3–10; John T. ELLIS, *American Catholicism*, 2nd rev. ed. (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 167.

²² In 1945 the Franciscans of the Commissariat of the Holy Family purchased the New York-based newspaper *Hrvatski list and Danica Hrvatska* that was owned by Ivan Krešić and published since 1922. The Franciscans shortened the name of the newspaper to *Danica* and published it as a weekly until 1990.

Pavlimira Matić (1894–1952) who was the superior of the Croatian members of the Congregation of the Daughters of Divine Charity. Members of this order served several parishes including Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church in New York, which was also attended by many people from the Island of Krk.²³ The Sisters assisted in the day-to-day operation of parishes, provided catechism instruction, directed choirs, tutored immigrants from Europe in the English language, and also taught Croatian to children at affiliated schools. In his piece about Sister Matić, Fabijanić underscored her dedication to helping families in need and those struck by hardship, as well as her tireless efforts in gathering and sending humanitarian assistance back to the old homeland.²⁴

On 24 January 1955 Fabijanić became a citizen of the United States.²⁵ Though he served in regular parishes of the Archdiocese of New York, Fabijanić remained concerned about conditions in post-war Krk and the lack of religious freedom for members of the Catholic faithful in his home diocese and throughout Yugoslavia. As a result, in 1954 he joined 142 other Croatian Catholic clergy from the United States, Canada and other parts of the world in signing a memorandum that was delivered to US President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House in Washington.²⁶ The memorandum sought to raise awareness in policy circles in the West about the plight of the people and of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. It also demanded that Yugoslav authorities cease their oppression and persecution of Catholic clergy, its bishops and the spiritual leaders of other religious communities in the country.²⁷

During this period Fabijanić encouraged and participated with other individuals who drew their origins from Krk in organizing fundraising drives through their mutual benefit socie-

²³ Among the key members of the Croatian community during the establishment of the parish in 1913 and the purchase of the church in 1914 was Nikola Jederlinić from Omišalj on Krk. BOZANIĆ, *Omišalj*, p. 136; »Hrvatska župa u New Yorku«, in Ljubo KRASIĆ, ed., *Hrvatski kalendar 1997. Hrvatske župe u Americi i Kanadi: povijest, statistike, stanje* (Chicago: Croatian Franciscan Press and Croatian Ethnic Institute, 1997), vol. 54, p. 114–115.

²⁴ Nikola FABIJANIĆ, »Umrlo je sestra Pavlimira Matić«, *Danica*, 23 July 1952, p. 6.

²⁵ »Diocesan Clergy Registration«. He filed his petition for naturalization on 11 November 1954. LAC, Ancestry.com [database on-line], Index to Petitions for Naturalization filed in New York City, 1792–1989, New York Southern District.

²⁶ Nikola ŠOJAT, »Delegacija hrv. svećenika u Washingtonu kod predsjednika Eisenhowera i američkog Senata«, *Hrvatski glas*, 21 June 1954, p. 5; »Delegacija hrv. svećenika u Washingtonu kod predsjednika Eisenhowera i američkog Senata«, *Danica*, 30 June 1954, p. 1; »Delegacija hrvatskih svećenika u Washingtonu«, *Hrvatski glas*, 5 July 1954, p. 5.

²⁷ Croatian Catholic Clergy, *Memorandum to Various Governments, Leading Statesmen and Religious Leaders, Publicists and News Agencies Regarding the Religious Persecutions and True Status of Croatia and Its People* ([Chicago: Croatian Franciscan Press, 1954]); Karlo MIRTH, »A Memorandum of the Croatian Catholic Clergy of the United State«, *Croatia Press*, 8, no. 138 (1954), p. 1–11. For an overview of the use of the state's security apparatus and legal mechanisms to eliminate political opponents and religious leaders during the first years of post-World War II Yugoslavia see *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj 1944.–1946. Dokumenti: Zagreb i središnja Hrvatska*, ed. Vladimir GEIGER, et al (Slavonski Brod and Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje and Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2008); Nada KISIĆ-KOLANOVIĆ, »Vrijeme političke represije: 'veliki sudski procesi' u Hrvatskoj 1945.–1948.«, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 25 (1993), p. 1–23; Josip JURČEVIĆ and Katica IVANDA, »Djelovanje jugoslavenskih komunističkih vojnih sudova u Hrvatskoj potkraj Drugog svjetskog rata i u poraću«, *Društvena istraživanja*, 15, no. 6 (2006), p. 1063–1086; Ana JURA, »Komunistička represija u Hrvatskoj prema pisanju lista *Vjesnik*, svibanj – kolovoz 1945. godine«, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 44, no. 1 (2012), p. 1–23.

ties and social clubs to secure several tons of humanitarian aid.²⁸ Among the humanitarian items that the people from Krk living in New York and across America and Canada secured included an ambulance, operating room tables, hospital equipment, medicine, food, clothing, and many other basic necessities.²⁹ This humanitarian assistance was shipped back to the people of Krk from 1948 to 1955 to help them rebuild their lives and community in the aftermath of the devastation of World War II. Aid was also sent to the Diocese of Krk to support the needs of its young seminarians and to help repair its damaged churches.³⁰ Fabijanić also engaged his fellow expatriates from Krk in New York City through the organization of various social events which included drama and musical performances. These social and cultural outreach events brought together recently uprooted people with those who had been in America longer and also served to help raise the necessary funds to purchase and send humanitarian assistance back to Krk.³¹

²⁸ The home of his cousin Paul Fabijanić often served as a collection point where boxes of humanitarian goods were packed and stored prior to shipment to Krk. Paul Fabijanic himself took part in packing the boxes of humanitarian relief. Telephone interview of Paul FABIJANIĆ of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio on 22 January 2013.

²⁹ Croats from Krk of all ideological persuasions living abroad regularly engaged in humanitarian efforts to support their region back home. In 1925 the New York branch of the Benevolent Society of St. Anthony of Omišalj collected donations to support infrastructure work at the Pesja beach. During the late 1930s the fraternal St. John Society of New York, established in 1933 by immigrants from Omišalj, donated instruments to a music club back on Krk. People from Vrbnik who settled in Vancouver, British Columbia collected donations in 1938 to support a youth tamburitza orchestra at the Croatian Workers' Home in their hometown and also to help the five men with Krk origins in Canada who went to fight on the republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Women from Krk living in Vancouver raised \$9,000 in 1945, while the following year Krk natives in Toronto raised \$1,400 for the humanitarian needs of the old country and in 1947 over \$5,000 was raised throughout Canada for the hospital on the Island. In 1938 the United Sons and Daughters of the Island of Krk collected donations in New York City, East Chicago and Pittsburgh to help build a hospital on the island and by 1940 had raised \$3,000. In the early 1950s this organization sent specialized medical equipment to Krk and in 1954 collected donations for a hydro-electric infrastructure project for the island. [Philip VUKELICH], »Narod i vladak«, editorial, *Zajedničar* (Pittsburgh), 9 July 1952, p. 2; »Iseljenici sa otoka Krka za svoje u Španiji«, *Slobodna misao* (Toronto), 2 September 1937, p. 3; »Hrvatska mladež 'Križari' u Omišalju na Krku«, in Ivan KREŠIĆ, ed., *Hrvatski list and Danica Hrvatska koledar 1938*. (New York: Hrvatski Publishing Co., 1938), vol. 15, p. 109; Blaž VOLARIĆ, »Kako Vrbanci pomažu svojim«, *Slobodna misao*, 6 January 1938, p. 3; »Iseljenici iz Amerike podižu bolnicu u Krku«, *Zajedničar*, 11 January 1939; J. DUDO, »Drago mi je kad vidim, da naši otočani ne zaostaju...«, *Slobodna misao*, 14 February 1939, p. 3; Nikola CRVARIĆ, »Bračić sa otoka Krka u Sjed. Državama i Kanadi«, *Hrvatski glas*, 11 March 1941, p. 8; Josip CEPERIC, »Iseljenici otoka Krka sakupili \$700.00 za pomoć narodu u Jugoslaviji«, *Hrvatski glas*, 17 July 1945, p. 5; Marica BURMA (ANTIĆ), »Žene otoka Krka za pomoć narodu u domovini«, *Novosti*, 31 January 1946, p. 3; Ivan LINARDIĆ, »Neka ovaj uspjeh posluži i ostalim Otočanima za primjer«, *Novosti*, 12 September 1946, p. 4; LAC, Radnik Papers fonds 1946–1948, MG10J1, microfilm reel H-2037, Schedule no 1: Analysis of Contributions for Relief of Specified Areas to December 31, 1947; Sonja MATOŠEC, »Pomoć iseljenika starom kraju«, *Zajedničar*, 20 October 1971, p. 10; Klement MARAČIĆ, »Za elektrifikaciju otoka Krka sa spojenjem s hidrocentралom 'Nikole Tesle' u Triblju«, *Zajedničar*, 12 May 1954, p. 4. These types of humanitarian efforts were common throughout the diaspora. For the efforts of the Croatian Fraternal Union in sending medicines and various supplies to schools and day-cares see Janko KOVAČ, »Pošiljka pomoći našem narodu u staru domovinu od H.B. Zajednice«, *Zajedničar*, 7 February 1951, p. 5.

³⁰ Anton BOZANIĆ, *Hrvatsko iseljeničtvo u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama i Krčani u New Yorku*. Krčki zbornik. vol. 34 (Krk and New York: Povijesnog društva otoka Krka and Krčki klubovi u New Yorku – »Dubašnica« Social Club of America, Women's Club of otok Krk and Klub »Otok Krk«, 1996), p. 73; Anton SPICIJARIĆ, »Molba na iseljenike otoka Krka«, *Danica*, 11 February 1953.

³¹ »Hrvatska priredba u New Yorku«, *Danica*, 19 November 1952, p. 6.

Publishing an Annual Almanac Dedicated to Krk

With the goal of bringing together the people of Krk who immigrated to the United States and settled in New York City and elsewhere, Fabijanić launched the annual almanac *Krčki kalendar* in 1952.³² He edited and published this almanac in New York from 1952 to 1955. The publication celebrated the culture, specific dialect, ethnography, history, religion, and achievements of the people who inhabited the Island of Krk. A review of the 1954 volume in the Croatian American press described it as containing »rich contents from the history of the Island of Krk« that included the accounts of the lives and achievements of eminent persons born on the island.³³ The almanac was an example of the kind of publication often produced by diaspora clergy that functioned »as the cultural arteries joining the old world culture and its new world colonies.«³⁴

The almanac was supported financially by individuals from New York who drew their origins from the Island of Krk. Several organizations which established by the people from Krk to serve their particular needs also donated to support its publication. Among these were the St. Michael Society of Sveti Vid, the Dubašnica Social Club, the Benevolent Society of St. Nicholas of the Island of Krk, and the Social Club Dobrinj. The publication was also given the imprimatur of New York Archbishop Francis Cardinal Spellman (1889–1967) who took a keen interest in the Church behind the iron curtain and the treatment of then imprisoned Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac (1898–1960).³⁵

During preparations to publish the first volume of *Krčki kalendar*, requests from Krk for medicines like penicillin, streptomycin, para-aminosalicylate sodium, and other items, continued to arrive. The money that was earmarked for the almanac's production was instead used to purchase medicines for shipment to the island. As a result, the first volume of the almanac was mimeographed.³⁶ The title Fabijanić chose for the almanac was adopted from the original publication which lasted from 1938 to 1941 and appeared un-

³² For a survey and analysis of almanac (calendar) print culture in the diaspora see Marija DALBELLO-LOVRIĆ, »Croatian Diaspora Almanacs: A Historical and Cultural Analysis«, Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Information Science, University of Toronto (1999), http://www.collectionscanada.ca/obj/s4/t2/dsk1/tape9/PQDD_0007/NQ41133.pdf, accessed 19 May 2009.

³³ A.R., »'Krčki kalendar' za godinu 1954«, *Danica*, 7 April 1954, p. 5.

³⁴ [Roger JONES], »Church Records and Publications«, *Polyphony*, 1, no. 2 (1978), p. 11.

³⁵ Spellman's esteem for Stepinac was exemplified in the building of Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains near New York. In less than a year Catholics of New York raised four million dollars to build this school in 1948. James HENNESEY, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 289. For more on Spellman's career and contacts with leading figures in the Croatian diaspora in the US see John COGLEY, *Catholic America* (New York: The Dial Press, 1973), p. 229–237; »Bilješka o kardinalu Spellmanu i Hrvatima«, in Karlo MIRTH, *Život u emigraciji* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2003), p. 323–326; »Predobjava proslave: kardinal Spellman predsj. počasnog odbora za proslavu 50-god. Hrv. katoličke župe u New York-u«, *Hrvatski glas*, 28 October 1963, p. 3.

³⁶ The front cover was designed by the artist Ivan Galantić a native of Krk whose art adorned the Croatian community's Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church in New York. Galantić went on to become a professor of fine arts at Wayne State University (Detroit), Emmanuel College (Boston) and Tufts University (Medford, MA). Nikola FABIJANIĆ, »Mjesto predgovora«, as cited in »Hrvatski kalendar u Americi: Krčki kalendar (za prestupnu god. 1952. izdao i uredio Rev. Nikola Fabijanić, New York)«, *Danica*, 5 March 1952, p. 8; »Razgovor sa slikarom Galantićem«, *Danica*, 3 September 1952, p. 5.

der the auspices of the Association of Croats from Krk in Zagreb, established in 1936.³⁷ In 1993 *Krčki kalendar* once again began to be published with this new series referencing both previous publishing endeavours.

The themes of the Fabijanić edited almanac were similar to those of the pre-war publication and in some cases included reprints from the first series, particularly contributions by Msgr. Matej Hijacint Polonijo (1876–1967).³⁸ The contents of the four volumes of the publication followed in the tradition of Croatian almanac print culture. The almanac contained the religious calendar for the upcoming year and pieces on: Catholic saints and patron saints of the Island of Krk; the history and customs of the people of Krk; the accomplishments and activities of people from Krk living in America, including their various clubs; figures of national prominence from Krk; the successful humanitarian drives undertaken on behalf of the island; and, obituaries and memorials. What differentiated the New York *Krčki kalendar* from its previous appearance was its emphasis on the lives and activities of the people of Krk transplanted in their new American setting.

In a review published in the weekly *Danica* about the appearance of the first volume of *Krčki kalendar*, Polonijo's writing and his »deep understanding« of the history and culture of Krk was singled out for praise.³⁹ The established writer Antun Bonifačić (1901–1986), a native of Punta on Krk and a founding member of the Association of Croats from Krk who contributed to the pre-war *Krčki kalendar*, also contributed to the New York almanac as a member of the diaspora. Bonifačić went on to review the 1952, 1953 and 1954 issues of *Krčki kalendar* with the purpose of presenting the publication and the unique cultural history of Krk to the broader Croatian immigrant community.⁴⁰

In the 1954 issue of *Krčki kalendar*, Fabijanić wrote a poignant account about the determination of Krk Bishop Josip Srebrnić to protect the people in his diocese from the various regimes and occupying powers during the turbulent years of 1923 to 1953. Srebrnić had to navigate through the dictatorship of the first Yugoslavia, the occupation of Fascist Italy, the occupation of Nazi Germany, and finally the dictatorship of communist Yugoslavia. His actions during the Italian, followed by the German occupation, were underscored by Fabijanić. Srebrnić intervened on behalf of the people of Krk interned at various prisons in Italy, as well as the thousands of Slovenes who were imprisoned by the Italians on the Island of Rab. Through the Bishop's efforts via the Holy See, pressure was exerted on Fascist Italian authorities to close down the Rab concentration camp in 1942. Throughout the Italian occupation, Srebrnić intervened to try and stop the forced mobilization of Croats, resolutely defended the use of the Glagolitic liturgy and the Croatian language and stood firm against forced Italianization.⁴¹

³⁷ Tomislav GALOVIĆ, »Osnivanje 'Društva krčkih Hrvata u Zagrebu' 1936. i njegova djelatnost do 1941. godine (s dodatkom društvenih Pravila, odobrenih 1937. god.)«, *Studia lexicographica*, 2, no. 2 (2008), p. 127–157.

³⁸ Mihovil BOLONIĆ, »Mato Polonijo«, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 37, nos. 3–4 (1967), p. 481–484.

³⁹ »Hrvatski kalendari u Americi«, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Antun BONIFAČIĆ, Reviews of *Krčki kalendar*, in *Hrvatska revija*, 2 (1952), p. 170–171; 3 (1953), p. 88–89; 4 (1954), p. 78–79.

⁴¹ [Nikola] F[ABIJANIĆ], »Dr. Josip Srebrnić: 30 godina Krčki biskup (23. XII. 1923. – 23. XII. 1953.)«, *Krčki kalendar za godinu 1954.*, ed. Nikola Fabijanić (New York: Rev. Nikola Fabijanić, 1954), p. 23–24;

When German forces occupied the Island of Krk on 13 November 1943, their officials accused the bishop of having ties to anti-fascist Partisan forces. Despite German suspicions, Bishop Srebrnić succeeded through his interventions in saving some 100 people from Punat who were rounded up by the Nazis and deported to Rijeka. He also intervened with the Nazis to save seventy young women from Krk who were destined for deportation to Germany. As Fabijanić underscored, Srebrnić »did not succeed [in his interventions] to the extent that he had wanted, but he did all that he could« and he always did his best »to improve the desperate situation of individuals regardless of their [political] views.«⁴² Near the war's end, the Nazis had mined key infrastructure points in Krk and planned to detonate them prior to withdrawing. Here again the bishop intervened and succeeded in convincing them to desist with their plans.⁴³

When the Partisans briefly held Krk between 9 October and 13 December 1943, several locals were immediately taken into custody. Here as well, the bishop intervened to try and set these individuals free, but was unsuccessful. Partisan officials made it clear that they would not tolerate such interventions on his part. Bishop Srebrnić found himself in an intolerable, no-win situation. For his interventions to save people from the grip of the Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, he was repeatedly praised by the Partisans during the war and labelled an enemy of Italy and Germany by the occupying powers. As Croatia's broad based anti-fascist National Liberation Struggle became transformed into a communist revolution, Communist Party officials increasingly accused Srebrnić of collaboration with the enemy for his attempts to save those from Krk who were imprisoned or starving, by knocking on any and all doors. Like other Catholic bishops in postwar Yugoslavia, Srebrnić was subjected to mob attacks that were orchestrated by the new regime. On 17 April 1945, communist authorities placed Srebrnić in jail without charge, never put him on trial and eventually released him.⁴⁴

Throughout its four-year life as a publication, *Krčki kalendar* and Fabijanić as its publisher and editor faced criticism from members of the Croatian community that reflected the ideological divisions within it. On the one hand, some criticized the publication, labelling it 'separatist' because it primarily concentrated on a specific region. On the other hand, some expatriates from the Island of Krk in the United States felt the publication was

»Yugoslav Bishop Appeals to Pope against Italian Ruthlessness«, *Catholic Herald* (London, UK), 20 November 1942, p. 1.

⁴² FABIJANIĆ, »Dr. Josip Srebrnić«, p. 24.

⁴³ Additional details about Srebrnić's interventions on behalf of those imprisoned and persecuted, Italian resistance to his efforts, and his public pronouncements critical of fascism and in support of minorities are found in »Nova stajališta u odnosu na svećenstvo«, in KOVAČIĆ, *Otok Krk 1943.–1945.*, p. 180–188. For Srebrnić's successful interventions with German commanders in 1944 to free 172 people that they held, as well as his efforts to stop the Nazis from their planned destruction of key infrastructure points on the island prior to their withdraw see the sections »Nova obilježja utjecaja dijela krčkog svećenstva na NOP«, »Kontroverzna stajališta o ulozi biskupa dr. J. Srebrnića« and »O ulozi i djelovanju biskupa dr. J. Srebrnića«, in KOVAČIĆ, *Otok Krk 1943.–1945.*, p. 122–126, 208–211, 312–317.

⁴⁴ FABIJANIĆ, »Dr. Josip Srebrnić«, p. 25–26; »Srebrnić, Josip«, in Slaven RAVLIĆ, ed., *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2008), vol. 10, p. 174; »The Details of the Persecution in Yugoslavia: 243 Priests Dead; 169 in Prison; 89 Missing«, *Catholic Herald*, 26 October 1945, p.1; Max JORDAN, »Bishops of Tito's Realm Reported Oppressed Victims«, *The Guardian* (Little Rock, AR), 2 November 1945, p. 5; H.M. WADDAMS, »Communism and the Churches«, *International Affairs*, 25, no. 3 (1949), p. 295–306.

too pro-Croatian and snubbed it. Due to the inherent challenge in publishing for a target audience that was limited in size, ideologically divided and which belonged to different waves of emigration with dissimilar life experiences and in various stages of the process of integration and assimilation into American society, Fabijanić decided to cease publication with the 1955 volume.⁴⁵

Involvement with the Croatian Academy of America

As underscored by New York Auxiliary Bishop Edward E. Swannstrom (1903–1985) who served as executive director of Catholic Relief Services from 1947 to 1976 and played a key role in the resettlement of displaced persons and refugees in the United States, Eastern Europe immigrants placed great importance on the preservation of their ancestral languages and cultures. They also strove to learn English, to adopt and to find their place in their new American homeland. Being generally better educated than previous waves of immigration from their respective homelands, they also typically felt duty-bound to acquaint their fellow Americans with the riches of their respective cultures.⁴⁶ It is in this context that a group of Americans of Croatian origin, including recent arrivals to the United States, began to explore in the early 1950s the possibility of establishing an academic society tasked with presenting the history and culture of the Croatian people to a North American audience.⁴⁷

In the early 1950s when Fabijanić was enrolled in graduate courses in Sociology at New York's Fordham University, Walter J. Reeve (1915–1958) was an Assistant Professor of History at Fordham's School of Education and a participant in cultural programs hosted by the Croatian American community in New York City.⁴⁸ Reeve, together with American-born Clement S. Mihanovich (1913–1998), a professor of sociology at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri played crucial roles in heading up an ad-hoc committee in 1952 to establish what was provisionally called the American-Croatian Guild.⁴⁹ This organization was envisioned as a scholarly society bringing together academics, professionals and intellectuals of Croatian origin in the United States and Canada. The organization was finally established in New York City on 19 April 1953 under the name of The Croatian Academy of America. Fabijanić was among the seventeen founding members of this soci-

⁴⁵ BOZANIĆ, *Hrvatsko iseljništvo*, p. 76.

⁴⁶ Edward E. SWANSTROM, »The Newer Catholic Immigration«, in *Roman Catholicism and the American Way of Life*, ed. Thomas T. McAvoy (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame, 1960), p. 52.

⁴⁷ There were earlier attempts to acquaint the American public with Croatian history and culture through publications with scholarly pretensions. The Croatian Circle's publication of two issues of *Croatian Review/Hrvatska smotra* (Philadelphia, 1931) focused on Croatia's status in Yugoslavia, while the Croatian Historical Research Bureau's two issues of *The American Croatian Historical Review* (Youngstown, OH) in 1946 presented Croatian contributions to America. Both periodicals ceased after producing only two issues respectively.

⁴⁸ »Prof. Walter J. Reeve«, *The New York Times*, 11 June 1958, p. 35; »Hrvatski festival u New Yorku«, *Danica*, 11 November 1953, p. 5.

⁴⁹ »Organiziranje hrvatskih intelektualaca«, *Hrvatski glas*, 10 November 1952, p. 3; »Organiziranje hrv. intelektualaca«, *Danica*, 5 November 1952, p. 5.

ety which also included Rev. Ivan J. Ilijčić (1918–1987), who was born in Rijeka and drew his roots from Omišalj.⁵⁰

Following its establishment, The Croatian Academy of America organized various cultural evenings, lectures, readings and round tables. On 26 January 1957 Fabijanić presented a paper at the Academy's cultural evening held at New York's Baltic Freedom House. The paper, entitled »Croatian Society in the 18th and 19th Centuries«, analyzed the development of Croatian society and the social, economic, political and cultural forces that impacted on its advancement during the period.⁵¹ As an active member of the Croatian Academy of America, Fabijanić presided over its annual general meetings and went on to serve a term as Vice President (1955–56) and two terms as President (1956–57 to 1957–58) of the organization. During his tenure as the Academy's third President, he helped to secure its certificate of incorporation as a non-profit learned society in the State of New York on 17 December 1956. Also during his time as President, the Academy's future interdisciplinary publication, provisionally entitled *Res Croaticae*, was changed to the *Journal of Croatian Studies*.⁵² Launched in 1960, this periodical continues to be published to today. However, due to his increasing pastoral duties, Fabijanić could not continue to dedicate the requisite time to be an active President of the Academy and in 1958 he made the decision to step down from his position.⁵³

Service to the Archdiocese of New York

Following the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943, Fabijanić was liberated and was no longer a fugitive in hiding from his Nazi captors. However, he could not return to his home diocese which was still under German occupation. As a result, he remained in Italy as an »out-of-camp« displaced person and with his knowledge of Italian engaged in pastoral work in the country until he departed for the United States.⁵⁴ In 1948 he arrived in New York City and by July of that year was already serving as Associate Pastor at St. Martin Tours Church in The Bronx.⁵⁵ He went on to serve in the same role, although the designation changed over the years, at various parishes of the Archdiocese of New York. He was assigned to St.

⁵⁰ »Constitution of The Croatian Academy of America, Inc.«, in *The Croatian Academy of America, Inc.* (New York: The Croatian Academy of America, 1968), p. 7.

⁵¹ »Kulturna večer Hrvatske akademije u Americi«, *Hrvatski glas*, 11 March 1957; [Vinko NIKOLIĆ], »Viš Nikola Fabijanić održao predavanje«, *Hrvatska revija*, 7 (1957), p. 81.

⁵² *The Croatian Academy of America: Announcement*, no. 9 (1955), no. 10 (1956), no. 12 (1958); »Twenty-Fifth Anniversary«, *Journal of Croatian Studies*, 20 (1979), p. 164–165.

⁵³ »Godišnja skupština Hrvatske akademije u Americi«, *Danica*, 18 February 1959, p. 5, 6.

⁵⁴ When Allied forces landed in Sicily in 1943 and moved further north, they had to contend with some 50,000 non-Italian refugees, mostly Croats, Slovenes and other South Slavs. HOLBORN, *The International Refugee Organization* p. 17.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that Catholic clergy like Fabijanić who were displaced persons (DPs) faced challenges in order to emigrate. First, a priest could not leave his post without the written approval of his bishop. Since the Diocese of Krk was part of communist Yugoslavia, his bishop, who was the victim of harassment and persecution from the new authorities, would have faced additional sanctions from the state for granting permission to any priest under his authority to emigrate to the West. However, without this written permission, no bishop in the US would accept a DP priest like Fabijanić into his jurisdiction. GENIZI, *America's Fair Share*, p. 184.

James Church, Manhattan on 2 August 1949; to Our Lady of Loreto Church, Manhattan on 2 June 1951; and, to St. Brendan Church, The Bronx on 8 September 1953. Following these assignments he was transferred further north to Holy Trinity Church, Poughkeepsie, on 10 June 1961; and, to St. Patrick's Church, Newburgh, on 15 June 1963. Fabijanić was eventually incardinated into the Archdiocese of New York on 27 July 1964 and thereby ceased to be a priest of the Diocese of Krk.⁵⁶ On 15 December 1969 he was appointed Pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Pine Plains, New York.⁵⁷

At St. Anthony's Church Fabijanić served a congregation of approximately 200 families when he was appointed its pastor at the end of 1969. A number of societies and clubs functioned within the parish community, including an Altar Rosary Society, a Women's Club, a Children's Choir, and a Sunday school in which adolescent parishioners often took an active part as volunteers. The parish community, its societies and its pastor organized annual events including a St. Patrick's Day Social, a Penny Social and a Summer Bazaar (fair) which provided an outing for families and children of the parish. Fabijanić engaged and encouraged his parishioners in their efforts related to their various societies and was never one to shy away from pulling up his sleeves and helping to ensure the success of the parish's projects and events.⁵⁸

While serving as pastor at St. Anthony's, Fabijanić oversaw two significant renovation projects that expanded the size and greatly enhanced the church's overall aesthetics. In 1971, only a few years after his arrival, the church was renovated to increase its seating capacity by thirty percent, a vestibule was constructed at the main entrance to the church, and new stained glass windows were installed along the extension. In 1979 another renovation project was initiated to extend the church building to allow for the construction of a larger sacristy and a new sanctuary. The church hall was also expanded to provide additional space to better accommodate the parish's Sunday school classes. These improvements helped to better address the religious, educational and social needs of parishioners.⁵⁹ In his 1967 piece in *The Catholic News*, McNally described Fabijanić as a »modest and unassuming« priest who was welcomed wherever he served. At the time of the announcement of his assignment to serve St. Patrick's Church, Msgr. William J. Guinan described Fabijanić to a local Newburgh newspaper as being a »fine theologian and a wonderful priest.«⁶⁰ The pieces appearing in *The Catholic News* and in community newspapers like *The Evening News*, *The Pine Plains Register-Herald* and *The Millbrook Round Table* re-

⁵⁶ For this reason, Fabijanić's name, unlike the names of other priests and religious who served at ethnic Croatian parishes abroad, does not appear in the exceptionally detailed *Opći šematizam Katoličke Crkve u Jugoslaviji / Cerkev v Jugoslaviji*, eds. Krunoslav DRAGANOVIĆ, Srećko BEZIĆ, Josip CRNKOVIĆ, Rafael LEŠNIK, Ivan MRŠO, Zdravko REVEN and Hinko WEBER (Zagreb: Biskupska konferencija Jugoslavije, 1975).

⁵⁷ A summary of his pastoral assignments was provided to the author in correspondence from Sister Marguerita SMITH, Archivist, Archdiocese of New York Archives, 31 August 2010; »Installation Held for Rev. Fabijanić«, *The Evening News* (Newburgh, NY), 4 February 1970, p. 12A.

⁵⁸ »Altar Society Plans Dance«, *The Pine Plains Register-Herald* (Pine Plains, NY), 20 March 1975, p. 14; »Large Crowd Attends Fair«, *The Pine Plains Register-Herald*, 31 July 1975, p. 1, 5.

⁵⁹ RWL, »Reconstruction at St. Anthony's«, *The Millbrook Round Table* (Millbrook, NY), 24 September 1970, p. 5; »St. Anthony's Church, Pine Plains«, *The Round Table-Register Herald* (Pine Plains, NY), 22 December 1971, p. 11; »St. Anthony to Get New Addition«, *The Pine Plains Register-Herald*, 18 January 1979, p. 3.

⁶⁰ »New Priest Named for St. Patrick's«, *The Evening News*, 15 June 1963, p. 3A.

veal that Fabijanić not only effectively served his assigned parishes, but also successfully integrated into American society.⁶¹

Conclusion

In a 1952 article Walter Dushnyck characterized displaced persons arriving to American shores as »the world's toughest people.«⁶² This description certainly applied to Rev. Nikola (Nicholas) Fabijanić. A native of the Island of Krk who was ordained in his home diocese, Fabijanić served as a chaplain when Fascist Italy forces occupied Croatia's coastal region. Along with other ethnic Croatian Roman Catholic priests, he was targeted by Italian occupation authorities. In 1941 he was arrested and transported to a concentration camp in southern Italy and two years later transferred into the hands of the Nazi Germans. He succeeded in escaping and then evading his Nazi captors until he was finally liberated by the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943.

Fabijanić was one among the millions of people from all walks of life and from various ethnic groups that were displaced by the Second World War. The ranks of the displaced swelled further at war's end when millions more fled Central and Eastern Europe ahead of the advancing Soviet army. At the conclusion of the war some eleven million non-Germans were displaced throughout Europe and among these were over 1,300 clergy and religious. One of the over 500 displaced Roman Catholic priests that eventually immigrated to the United States was Fabijanić.

Despite the imprisonment, malnutrition, and psychological and physical mistreatment that Fabijanić endured at the hands of his Italian Fascist and Nazi German captors during the war, he never lost his humanity. As underscored by McNally, Fabijanić had an »indomitable« spirit and he »refused to be downed, even by the rigors of concentration camp life.«⁶³ These experiences did not diminish his faith nor did they dampen his commitment to helping others. This was exemplified in his pastoral work in Italy from 1943 to 1948 and his humanitarian engagement in support of the people of Krk struggling to rebuild their lives and community after the destruction and trauma of the Second World War. It was also demonstrated in his organization of cultural events and socials among the people of Krk living in New York City in order to help them try and maintain their faith, language and culture while adjusting to and integrating into American society.

Like the overwhelming majority of Croats who immigrated to the United States, Fabijanić integrated into American society. He successfully served as an assistant and full pastor at several parishes of the Archdiocese of New York. By the early 1960s his duties and

⁶¹ His cousin Paul Fabijanic remembers Rev. Fabijanić as being a devout priest who was committed to his new American homeland. Telephone interview of Paul FABIJANIĆ, 22 January 2013.

⁶² Walter DUSHNYCK, »The World's Toughest People: 'Displaced Persons' Make a Place for Themselves«, *Challenge*, 1, no. 3 (1952), p. 8–15.

⁶³ Fabijanić seldom discussed his experiences while imprisoned in Italy. In rare conversations with his cousin Paul Fabijanic he relayed that he was kept in a cold, damp cell and narrowly avoided execution prior to his escape. Paul Fabijanic helped Rev. Fabijanić to better integrate into American society and Rev. Fabijanić assisted with the conversion to the Catholic faith of his cousin's fiancée Coralie Zimmerle. Telephone interview of Paul FABIJANIĆ, 22 January 2013.

responsibilities required him to relocate further north of New York City. Notwithstanding his duties in regular American parishes, Fabijanić maintained connections with the Croatian community in the United States and particularly with those from Krk who settled in New York City. These immigrants from Krk described him as a priest who exhibited a »lively disposition, resourcefulness, fondness of music, sociability, [and] a great devotion to his people.«⁶⁴

Coming from a region where the religious, political and cultural leaders of his people were exposed to persecution, imprisonment and even worse, Fabijanić felt an obligation to help preserve the Croatian community's ethnoculture. This he endeavoured to accomplish through his organization and participation in religious rituals and cultural programs among the people of Krk who immigrated to and established new lives for themselves and their families in New York City. This was also seen in his editing and publishing of the annual almanac *Krčki kalendar* from 1952 to 1955. Through this publication, Fabijanić attempted to provide the people from Krk living in the United States a sense of their unique heritage and its connection to broader Croatian culture. And through his involvement in the establishment of the Croatian Academy of America, he helped to create an organization that continues to play an important role in presenting the rich history and culture of the Croatian people to a North American audience.

With his increased duties at parishes of the Archdiocese of New York, Fabijanić's involvement in Croatian American organizations waned in later years. He was pastor of St. Anthony's Church for just under eleven years when he passed away on 26 October 1980 at the age of sixty-seven. He was laid to rest at Evergreen Cemetery in Pine Plains, near Red Hook, New York. In one final act of kindness toward the people of his home town of Omišalj on the Island of Krk, Fabijanić bequeathed his family home to the local parish. Today, the Fabijanić family home is the residence of members of the Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus who serve the people of the parish of Omišalj, Island of Krk.⁶⁵

The roles of those clergy and religious assigned to ethnic Croatian Roman Catholic parishes, missions and monasteries in the United States are appropriately underscored in studies on the faith, educational, social, and cultural life of Croatians in America.⁶⁶ Besides their religious roles in service to ethnic Croatian parishes, these priest and religious were often at the forefront of the establishment of language schools, folklore ensembles and tamburitza groups. They served as editors and publishers of an assortment of religious and secular newspapers, periodicals and almanacs, and often ran Croatian language radio programs and participated in many other social, benevolent and cultural initiatives and organizations. However, as this overview of the activities of Rev. Fabijanić reveals, those clergy and religious who served at regular American Roman Catholic parishes also pro-

⁶⁴ VELČIĆ, »Nikola (pop Miko) Fabijanić«.

⁶⁵ BOZANIĆ, *Omišalj*, p. 81–82.

⁶⁶ KRASIĆ, *Hrvatski kalendar 1997. Hrvatske župe u Americi i Kanadi: povijest, statistike, stanje*, vol. 54 and Ljubo KRASIĆ, ed., *Hrvatski kalendar 1998. Hrvatske župe u Americi i Kanadi: povijest, statistike, stanje (2. dio)* (Chicago: Croatian Franciscan Press and Croatian Ethnic Institute, 1997), vol. 55; Michael J. COLARUSSO, »'Between the Earth and the Skies': The Challenges to Catholic Institution-Building in Pennsylvania's Croatian Communities, 1894–1924«, Masters thesis, Department of History, The Pennsylvania State University (1998); PRPIC, *The Croatian Immigrants*, p. 127–132, 432–436.

vided important contributions to and left an enduring imprint on the Croatian community in the United States. The contributions of clergy like Fabijanić also need to be taken into consideration and integrated into accounts of the religious and general history of Croats in America.

Sažetak

FROM PRISONER OF FASCIST ITALY TO PASTOR IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK: REV. NICHOLAS FABIJANIĆ (1913. – 1980.)

Koristeći nekoliko izvora autor prikazuje život, zatočenje od strane fašističke Italije te aktivnu ulogu katoličkog svećenika Nikole Fabijanića (1913. – 1980.), rođenog Krčanina, u životu hrvatske zajednice u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama. Nakon što je došao u SAD 1948. godine, ovaj je katolički svećenik bez državljanstva služio u crkvama kao pomoćni, a kasnije i kao glavni župnik po mnogim župama nadbiskupije New York. Iako je kao svećenik bio dodijeljen američkim rimokatoličkim župama, provodio je vjerske, društvene i kulturne aktivnosti među Krčanima koji su u to vrijeme živjeli u New Yorku. Svojom je aktivnošću umanjio osjećaj osamljenosti koji su novopridošli Krčani imali u novoj američkoj sredini, budući da su bili »otrgnuti« od svojih ognjišta. Fabijanić je, između ostalog, bio zaslužan za stvaranje Krčkog kalendara u razdoblju od 1952. do 1955. godine i za proslavu blagdana Duhova u New Yorku, posebno značajnog za Krčane iz župe Omišalj. Bio je zaslužan i za organiziranje društvenih okupljanja tijekom kojih su se prikupljala financijska sredstva, lijekovi te mnoge druge humanitarne donacije. Sve su te donacije Krčanima pomagale izgraditi »novi« život nakon Drugog svjetskog rata. Aktivno je surađivao i s hrvatskim novinama u Sjevernoj Americi te je potpisao memorandum o progonima katoličkog svećenstva i vjerskim slobodama u Jugoslaviji. Memorandum je bio upućen i predan američkom predsjedniku Eisenhoweru 1954. godine. Sudjelovao je u osnivanju Hrvatske akademije u Americi 1953. godine. Od 1955. do 1956. obnašao je dužnost potpredsjednika, a od 1956. do 1958. godine preuzeo je ulogu predsjednika Akademije. Svojom je aktivnošću ojačao poziciju hrvatskih Amerikanaca u SAD-u.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *Nikola (Nicholas) Fabijanić, zaposjednuće fašističke Italije, krčka emigracija, Krčki kalendar, američki Hrvati, Hrvatska akademija Amerike, nadbiskupija New York.*