

CHURCH, STATE, AND THE “HABITUS OF RESISTANCE”

Power and weakness of the Catholic Church in Carinthia, especially in the Austrofascist Era 1933–1938

Johannes Thonhauser

UDK 322(436.5)“1933/1938”329
329.18:26(436.5)“1933/1938”

1. *Introduction*

Historians claim that among the Austrian federal states Carinthia underwent an exceptional development.¹ Its political and social structures are extraordinary: Nowhere else in Austria the conflict with a minority (the Slovene speaking Carinthians), was (and maybe still is) more troublesome than in Carinthia. Before 1938, in no other Austrian province the rate of participants of the illegal NSDAP was as high as in Carinthia.² Until today, the political landscape in Carinthia has been a special one: There are strong right-wing parties and powerful Social Democrats; all of them having a strong anticlerical tradition.³ At the same time, the People’s Party with its catholic origins is traditionally weak. Moreover, Carinthia has the highest rate of “illegitimate” children in Austria.⁴

All these developments have been examined several times. This paper refers to the role of the church in context of these developments. Although most people do have a strong connection to tradition, nevertheless the church is weak in Carinthia — in comparison to other rural Austrian federal states, like Lower Austria or the Tyrol, where the church is still relatively strong. Empirical data for Carinthia⁵ show a quite strong distrust in clerical

* Johannes Thonhauser, E-Mail: johannes.thonhauser@kath-kirche-kaernten.at Katholische Pädagogische Hochschuleinrichtung Kärnten

1 Cf. Valentin, Hellwig: Der Sonderfall. Kärntner Zeitgeschichte 1918–2004/08, Klagenfurt/Wien: Hermagoras 2009.

2 Cf. Valentin, Hellwig: Kärnten. Vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart, Klagenfurt: Haymon 2011 (= Haymon-Taschenbuch 56), 70f.

3 Cf. Valentin, Sonderfall, 2009, 50f.

4 Cf. *ibidem*, 9.

5 European Values Study 2008: Austria (EVS 2008). GESIS Datenarchiv, Köln. ZA4754 Datenfile Version 1.1.0, URL: <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=4754&db=e&doi=10.4232/1.10152> [18.11.2016].

authority. This sort of distrust is very similar to the well-known distrust in state authority, nowadays represented by the Viennese government and, as a supranational authority, by the European Union.⁶

This paper states, that the above-mentioned developments in Carinthia refer to a “habitus of resistance” against state and church. The habitus is, as the Sociologist Norbert Elias taught us, some sort of a “native soil” of a society and the result of long-term developments.⁷ To illustrate this habitus for Carinthia, the depicted woodcarving of the Carinthian artist Switbert Lobisser (1878–1943) might offer some insights:



[Abb. 1: Bauernspruch, Switbert Lobisser, 1928]

The picture shows the three estates of pre-modern societies: on the left side the king, who stands for secular power, on the right side the pope, representing sacral power. In the middle of the picture, one can see a Carinthian peasant with his family. The artist makes them speak for themselves: The king says: “With my power I conquered countries and realms”, the pope claims: “With my teaching I bring people to god”. Both, king and pope, are depicted in mega-size, and both are looking outside of the picture, not into

6 Cf. Dörner-Hörig, Christian: *Habitus und Politik in Kärnten. Soziogenese und Psychogenese*, Wiesbaden: Springer 2014, 183.

7 »[J]eder Mensch [...] trägt ein spezifisches Gepräge an sich [...], das er mit anderen Angehörigen seiner Gesellschaft teilt. Dieses Gepräge, also der soziale Habitus der Individuen, bildet gewissermaßen den Mutterboden, aus dem diejenigen persönlichen Merkmale herauswachsen, durch die sich ein einzelner Mensch von anderen Mitgliedern seiner Gesellschaft unterscheidet.« Elias, Norbert: *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1987, 244.

the viewer’s eye. The peasant in the middle of the triptych is the only one in correct size relations. He, his family and his servants are looking into the viewer’s eye. In the background god and two angels are residing above the peasant’s house. He says: “If god didn’t give and I didn’t work, you both would have nothing to eat.”

This picture was made 1928. The artist Switbert Lobisser was a Benedictine monk in the monastery of St. Paul, where he stayed until 1932. Then he had to leave because of a love story that ended tragically: His beloved committed suicide, a few months after she had given birth to a child. Lobisser broke with the church, turned anticlerical and became a supporter of the Nazi–regime.⁸ Picture and artist are prototypical examples for the relationship of church, state, and people in Carinthia.

To characterize and explain this, some historical aspects of the region have to be considered. At first, long–term developments in Carinthian history will give interesting insights. Then the paper will focus on the 1930ies, on the era of the austrofascist regime, the “Ständestaat”. She was ruled by an authoritarian regime whose political elites were supported by the Catholic Church. During this period, the long history of resistance against state and church culminated into the Nazi–movement. Its origins already can be found centuries ago.

2. *Church and state in Carinthian history*

One of the origins of the weakness of church— and state power in Carinthia lies in their territorial inhomogeneity in the Middle Ages. By the time of 1500 there were six different bishops who possessed territorial propriety in Carinthia. Most of the alpine regions were difficult to reach and far away from the centers of power in Salzburg, Bamberg or Aquileia. This problem appears similar for the central secular power in Graz and Vienna. The Habsburgian Sovereigns never had a residence in Carinthia,⁹ which gave the local aristocracy an opportunity to accumulate their regional power. This local power had its climax in the 16th century, when almost the whole Carinthian nobility and with them their subjects “converted” to Protestantism.¹⁰ In no other Austrian federal state Martin Luther’s Reformation was as successful as in Carinthia.¹¹

8 Cf. Thonhauser, Johannes: Mönch — Künstler — Nazi. Switbert Lobisser und der Kärntner Habitus, in: *Carinthia I* 206 (2016) 553–573.

9 Cf. Fräss–Ehrfeld, Claudia: *Geschichte Kärntens. Das Mittelalter*, Klagenfurt: Heyn 1984.

10 Cf. Fräss–Ehrfeld, Claudia: *Geschichte Kärntens. Die ständische Epoche*, Klagenfurt: Heyn 1994.

11 Cf. Dorner–Hörig, *Habitus*, 2014, 172.

According to this, the Counter Reformation in Carinthia started late, by the time of 1600, and was not very successful. It had to be carried out by military force and the protestant nobility had to leave the country.¹² From then on, the peasants became the social group that resisted the force to confess catholic the most.¹³ Especially the regions in Upper Carinthia are well known for their story of crypto-Protestantism ("Geheimprotestantismus"): many peasants lived as "illegal protestants" while they had to imitate catholic behavior.¹⁴ In the 18th century, in the era of absolutism, they were observed and persecuted; many of them had to leave the country and were deported to Transylvania.¹⁵ By this time the catholic priest, who always had been not only pastor but even the tax collector as well, became more and more a spy, an agent of the state. He had to discipline the subjects and proclaim state laws from the church pulpit. By that time, the church was noted as the state's tool for disciplinary action. This strengthened anticlerical attitudes among Carinthian land folks.

In the 19th century, Carinthia was more and more influenced by nationalist debates that divided the population into German speaking and Slovene speaking Carinthians. Interestingly enough, the elites on the side of the German speaking Carinthians were mostly liberal and anticlerical, whereas the elites of Slovenian speaking Carinthians were mostly clerics: The priests Urban Jarnik and Andrej Einspieler or Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek are important examples.¹⁶

Moreover, German nationalism in Carinthia had a strong connection to protestant club life and protestant political societies.¹⁷ To be *catholic* meant

12 Cf. Höfer, Rudolf K.: Gegenreformatatorische Maßnahmen in Kärnten 1590–1650, in: Wadl, Wilhelm (Ed.): Glaubwürdig bleiben. 500 Jahre protestantisches Abenteuer, Klagenfurt: Verl. des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten 2011 (= Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte und Topographie 101), 202–217. Cf. also Leeb, Rudolf: Reformation, Gegenreformation und katholische Konfessionalisierung in Kärnten, in: Carinthia I 190 (2000) 203–225.

13 Cf. Leeb, Rudolf: Die Zeit des »Geheimprotestantismus«, in: Carinthia I 196 (2000) 249–264.

14 Cf. Tropper, Christine: Geheimprotestantismus in Kärnten, in: Leeb, Rudolf (Ed.): Geheimprotestantismus und evangelische Kirchen in der Habsburgermonarchie und im Erzstift Salzburg (17./18. Jahrhundert), Wien u.a.: Böhlau u.a. 2009 (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 51), 123–154.

15 Cf. Tropper, Peter G.: Rekatholisierungsmaßnahmen — Bedrängung — Transmigration, in: Wadl, Wilhelm (Ed.): Glaubwürdig bleiben. 500 Jahre protestantisches Abenteuer, Klagenfurt: Verl. des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten 2011 (= Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte und Topographie 101), 284–294.

16 Cf. Baum, Wilhelm: Urban Jarnik und das Selbstbewusstsein der Kärntner Slowenen im Vormärz, in: Krahwinkler, Harald (Ed.): Staat — Land — Nation — Region. Gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein in den österreichischen Ländern Kärnten, Krain, Steiermark und Küstenland 1740 bis 1918, Klagenfurt, Wien u.a.: Mohorjeva Hermagoras 2002 (= Unbegrenzte Geschichte 9), 167–194.

17 Cf. Drobosch, Werner: „Einst wird das ganze Deutschvolk singen: Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott“. Die protestantische Vereinskultur in Kärnten als Instrument der Glaubensvertiefung

to be *Slavic* and *anti-German*. "Los von Rom", which was a call for leaving the Catholic Church, was one of the radical watchwords at the end of the 19th century.¹⁸

This conflict between German and Slovene speaking Carinthians culminated during and after the "Kärntner Abwehrkampf", the Carinthian defense fight from 1918 to 1920. This historical event is definitely one of the most investigated and broadly discussed incidents in Carinthian history. It is not necessary, to give one more additional comment. On the contrary, the era of the austrofascist "Ständestaat" from 1933 to 1938 never got that much attention by historians as it might deserve. For the understanding of the role of church and state in Carinthia, this era somehow represents the culmination of the past centuries. As by the time of Counter Reformation, state and church again built a union to control and discipline the "simple" people. Again, clerics represented and supported the authority in Vienna; and again, resistance fighting the authoritarian regime became strong in the underground — this time by the Nazis.

3. *The Church and the Christian »Ständestaat« (1933–1938)*

In 1933, the Austrian Chancellor from the Christian Social Party, Engelbert Dollfuß, took advantage of the dissolution of the Austrian Parliament and established an authoritarian regime. He smashed opposite parties and the workers movement and imitated the political landscape of fascist Italy and Germany.¹⁹ In contrast to Italy and Germany, the Catholic Church gained an influential political position. Dollfuß wanted to rebuild the political institutions after the ideal of a Christian corporative state ("Christlicher Ständestaat"), like the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* from 1931 had proposed.²⁰ This was the attempt to establish Austria as a "better Germany" and to establish a common Austrian identity, based on German language, the

und politischen Ideologisierung 1867–1938, in: Wadl, Wilhelm (Ed.): Glaubwürdig bleiben. 500 Jahre protestantisches Abenteuer, Klagenfurt: Verl. des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten 2011 (= Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte und Topographie 101), 381–396.

18 Cf. Burz, Ulfried: »Katholisch sein heißt deutschfeindlich sein!«. Die Los-von-Rom-Bewegung in Kärnten, in: Wadl, Wilhelm (Ed.): Kärntner Landesgeschichte und Archivwissenschaft. Festschrift für Alfred Ogris zum 60. Geburtstag, Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten 2001 (= Archiv für vaterländische Geschichte und Topographie 84), 465–476.

19 Cf. Tálos, Emmerich: Das Herrschaftssystem 1934–1938: Erklärungen und begriffliche Bestimmungen, in: Tálos, Emmerich / Neugebauer, Wolfgang (Ed.): »Austrofascismus«. Beiträge über Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur 1934–1938, Wien: Verl. für Gesellschaftskritik 1988 (= Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik 18), 345–369, 357f.

20 Cf. Hanisch, Ernst: Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des »Austrofascismus«, in: Tálos, Emmerich / Neugebauer, Wolfgang (Ed.): »Austrofascismus«. Be-

memory of the glory of the Habsburg Empire and the clerical tradition of the Counter Reformation. The symbol of the regime, the Kruckenkreuz, is not only an imitation of the swastika, but also a symbol of the crusades.²¹

3.1 The exodus from the church

The Catholic Church supported the regime. Her intention of a new "Re-catholization" of the people awakened bad memories of the past, especially in Carinthia. The "habitus of resistance" led to a more or less huge support of illegal movements, especially the Nazi movement. They promoted the withdrawal from the church or the conversion to Lutheran Protestant Church. Their success was definitely one of the reasons why the Carinthian Bishop Adam Hefter (1871–1970) did not oppose the Nazis intensively.²² Once he stated:

»Die Bischöfe Waitz und Gföllner haben leicht reden und können es sich leisten, energisch gegen den Nationalsozialismus in ihren Diözesen aufzutreten, da die religiösen Verhältnisse in Tirol und Oberösterreich doch ganz anders sind als in Kärnten, wo die Gefahr des Abfalles eine ungeheure ist!«²³

With the establishment of the Christian "Ständestaat" in 1933 and 1934, the number of withdrawals from the church increased noticeably. In 1932, 345 people fell away from the Catholic Church (whereas 151 joined or recurred), two years later, the number increased up to 1.033 (whereas 290 joined or recurred).²⁴ Compared to other Austrian dioceses the number of church exits in Carinthia by this time was one of the highest.²⁵ Of course, these numbers cannot be compared to the exits from the church in 1938, where 4.814 people in Carinthia fell away.²⁶ Of course, compared to today's exit numbers the number of exits was small. Nevertheless, for this time,

iträge über Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur 1934–1938, Wien: Verl. für Gesellschaftskritik 1988 (= Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik 18), 53–73, 54.

21 Cf. *ibidem*.

22 Cf. Tropper, Peter G.: *Das Christentum in Kärnten. Vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*. Kehl am Rhein: Sadifa Media 2005, 18–20.

23 Obersteiner, Jakob: *Die Bischöfe von Gurk (1824–1979)*. Klagenfurt: Verl. des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten 1980 (= *Aus Forschung und Kunst* 22), 190. "The bishops Waitz and Gföllner can easily oppose National Socialism in their dioceses because the religious circumstances in the Tyrol and in Upper Austria are totally different to Carinthia, where there is an enormous danger of falling away from the church." [Translated by the author]

24 Cf. Tropper, Peter G.: *Ordnung der Frömmigkeit — Normierung des Glaubens. Kirchliche Ordnungsvorstellung und katholisches Laienchristentum in Kärnten zwischen 1848 und 1938*. Klagenfurt / Wien u.a.: Hermagoras-Verl 2011, 69.

25 Archiv der Diözese Gurk in Klagenfurt, Alphabetische Ablage, Religionswechsel, Karton 28.

26 Cf. Tropper, *Ordnung*, 2011, 69.

when the church was still powerful and in charge of religious and cultural hegemony, the increase of church exits was alarming to the clergy.

3.2 Secret reports from the parishes

The situation during these years can also be illustrated by letters from Carinthian priests to the chair of the diocese, reporting the political situation in their parishes.²⁷ The first letter is from the city parish priest of Spittal a. d. Drau and shows the way the church dealt with apostates:

»Zum letzten Geheimerlaß wird bemerkt, daß schon seit längeren Jahren in Spittal die aus der Kath. Kirche ausgetretenen auf einer Tafel innerhalb der Pfarrkirche namhaft gemacht wurden, wozu seinerzeit der Hochwürdigste Fürstbischof mündlich seine Zustimmung gegeben hat.«²⁸

This letter was sent in July 1933, four months after the establishment of the austrofascist regime and one month after the signing of the concordat with the Vatican. In the upcoming months anticlerical conflicts increased.

At Christmas 1933, the Austrian bishops published a pastoral letter that clearly supported the authoritarian regime of Chancellor Dollfuß; all over Austria, it led to protests, but in Carinthia protests were very brutal and caused riots with two casualties in Klagenfurt.²⁹ In several parishes started a smear campaign against the Catholic Church and agitation for the exit of the church. Nazi activists raised swastikas at church towers or disturbed funerals. The following example reports anticlerical demonstrations during the funeral of one of the casualties of the above-mentioned riots:

»Das ergebenst gefertigte Pfarramt meldet [...], dass am 13. Jänner 1934 nach dem Begräbnis des in Klagenfurt, gelegentlich eines kleinen Tumultes erschossenen Josef Rabitsch, 20 junge Burschen aus Ferlach ihren Austritt aus der katholischen Kirche gemeldet haben. [...].«³⁰

If you read on, the pastor reports from the funeral:

27 All following reports are sources from the archive of the Diocese Gurk: Archiv der Diözese Gurk in Klagenfurt [= ADG], alphabetische Ablage, Religionswechsel, Karton 28. The reports below are cited with the name of the author, the parish, date, and archive notes.

28 Habernig, Josef: Dekanalamt Spittal (17.07.1933), ADG, Kart. 28. "According to the last secret decree it is noted that for several years in Spittal those who resigned from the Catholic Church had been identified on a board in the parish church which was approved orally by the Most Reverend Prince-Bishop." [Translated by the author]

29 »Schwere Ausschreitungen nat.-soz. Arbeitslager. Zahlreiche Festnahmen. — Zwei Tote in Klagenfurt«, in: Kärntner Tagblatt 41/9 (12.01.1934), 1.

30 [Geramb, Edgar], Pfarre Ferlach (15.01.1934), ADG, Kart. 28. "The devoted parish office reports that on 13th January 1934 after the funeral of Josef Rabitsch, who was shot during a small riot in Klagenfurt, 20 young boys from Ferlach declared their exit from the church." [Translated by the author]

»Unterwegs kam die Menge entgegen, die von der Gendarmerie zurückgetrieben wurde; es waren cca. 100 bis 200 Menschen, hauptsächlich Frauen, mit viel geschrei [sic!], aber ohne den Pfarrer irgendwie zu behelligen. [...] Während der Zeremonien drang zeitweise das Geschrei bis zum Friedhofe.«³¹

The Nazi propaganda promoted a deep rage against the church, mostly among young male adolescents. The parish priest of Altenmarkt reports the troubles he had with the pupils of an agricultural college during a lesson of religious education:

»Unsere landwirtschaftlichen Fortbildungsschüler müssen von einer noch unbekanntem Seite in rohester Weise beeinflusst werden. Denn die Fragen[,] welche in der Religionsstunde gestellt werden, sind förmlich vom Haß gegen die hl. kath. Kirche herausgehaut.«³²

Nevertheless, not only young boys were main supporters of anticlericalism. Men and women from different social backgrounds were agitating against the church. The following passages illustrate this:

»Da hat z.B. ein besserer Besitzer zu seiner Frau die ziemlich täglich zur hl. Kommunion geht die gotteslästerliche Bemerkung gemacht, ‚solche, die diese Blat'l'n aus dem Kelche nehmen (kommunizieren), sind dem Teufel näher als die Pfoat' (Hemd[])]. Eine ledige Frauensperson soll vor ihrem plötzlichen Tode öfters gesagt haben, sie würde nie einen Priester gemocht haben. Ein Stier machte ihr schnell das Ende. Eine Bauersfrau klagte, ihre Dienstboten seien gar nicht zum Kirchengehen zu bewegen. ‚Ich kann mit meiner freien Zeit machen was ich will‘, ist die Antwort.«³³

One of the most important events in that period was the attempted Nazi-Putsch in 1934, where Chancellor Dollfuß was murdered in Vienna. Nowhere else in Austria, the fights during the Putsch have been as heavy as in Carinthia. While the Putsch was suppressed by armed forces of the government on 25th of July, the battles went on in Carinthia until 29th of July. One of the centers of the Putsch in Carinthia was the Lavanttal (district Wolfsberg),

31 [Geramb, Edgar], Pfarre Ferlach (15.01.1934), ADG, Kart. 28. "A bunch of people came towards and was forced back by the police. They were about 100 or 200 people, most of them women, screaming a lot, even during the funeral the screaming was heard at the graveyard." [Translated by the author]

32 Rudolph, Paul: Abfallsbewegung Pfarre Altenmarkt (05.02.1935), ADG, Kart. 28. "Our agricultural college students must be influenced by a still unknown source. The questions they raise during the religious education lesson are driven by rage against the holy Catholic Church." [Translated by the author]

33 Rudolph, Paul: Abfallsbewegung Pfarre Altenmarkt (06.11.1935), ADG, Kart. 28. "A wealthy landlord for example, told his wife who goes to communion daily that 'those who take the bread from the cup (go to communion) are closer to the devil than his shirt.' It is also reported from an unmarried woman before her sudden death that she never liked a priest. A bull made her die fast. A peasant woman complained that her servants could not be moved to church attendance. 'I can do whatever I like in my spare time', they claim." [Translated by the author]

where 21 people died. 1.300 Nazis were active there, 600 could flee, and the rest was imprisoned.³⁴

During that period, the Protestant pastors were agitating among the imprisoned putschists and gained much sympathy among the Carinthians. The following example characterizes the situation in Wolfsberg:

»Pastor Foelsche hält Sprechabende, ist Dietwart des deutschen Turnvereines & tritt immer kecker für den Nationalsozialismus ein. Bei der Pfarrereinführung hat er sich erlaubt, die Gefangenen im Anhaltelager öffentlich zu begrüßen, was einen Hauptschuldirektor zum Ausspruch veranlaßte, ‚der getraut sich wenigstens etwas zu sagen‘.«³⁵

In July 1936, the successor of Chancellor Dollfuß, Kurt Schuschnigg, was forced by an agreement with Hitler³⁶ to promulgate an amnesty to 80 imprisoned putschists. This strengthened the Nazi movement again and finally led to the "Anschluss" of Austria to Nazi Germany in 1938.

4. *Conclusion and contextualization*

The austrofascist era brought the long tradition of anticlericalism in Carinthia back on the surface. The rage against the Dollfuß–Schuschnigg–regime was connected to the rage against clerics and the church. At the same time, many people saw their exit from the church as an act of resistance against the regime. A summarizing statement regarding this aspect can be found in a report from a priest who was told by the leader of the local Hitler movement: "Einer Religionsgemeinschaft, die eine solch ungerechte Regierung gutheißt, können wir nicht mehr angehören ..."³⁷

In the perception of many Carinthians, it was again the abhorred government in Vienna that tried to enslave the freedom-loving folks of Carinthia by using the power of the church for indoctrination and moral constraint. The

34 Cf. Klösch, Christian: *Des Führers heimliche Vasallen*, 2007, 81–86.

35 Streiner, Balthasar: *Abfallsbewegung Dekanat Wolfsberg (28.04.1935)*, ADG, Kart. 28. "Pastor Foelsche offers consultation evenings, is Dietwart [= orator and responsible for the ideology of the gymnastic clubs] of the German gymnastic club and is agitating for National Socialism with more and more brashness. During the introduction into the new parish, he dared to welcome the imprisoned from the detention camp. This led a school principal of a secondary school to the statement that 'this one at least dares to say anything'".

36 Cf. Valentin, Kärnten, 2009, 46; 51. For details cf. Rumpler, Helmut: *Der nationale Dambruch nach dem Juliabkommen des Jahres 1936. Die wirtschaftliche und politische Situation Kärntens im Vorfeld des „Anschlusses“*, in: Rumpler Helmut (Ed.): *März 1938 in Kärnten. Fallstudien und Dokumente auf dem Weg in den „Anschluß“*. Unter Mitarbeit von Ulfried Burz, Klagenfurt: Kärntner Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft 1989, 14–31.

37 Oberguggenberger, Pfarre Lavamünd (August 1933), ADG, Kart. 28. "We can no longer be part of a religious community which endorses such an unjust government." [Translated by the author]

success of the Nazi movement shows that, indeed, the church seemed and seems not to be very powerful in Carinthia — compared to other Austrian regions.

On the other hand, if we put the facts in a broader context, we should not overestimate the exceptionality of Carinthia. What we can observe in Carinthian church history is more or less a prototypical development of secularization in the European context. Traditionally, sociology of religion emphasized on Max Weber’s thesis that rationalization and the increase of prosperity are the roots of secularization. Today, this model is not plausible anymore. From a global point of view, Europe seems to be the only continent, where “secularization” is taking place. This leads to a more and more important look at the historic role of the church and her linkages to secular power in Europe. From a long-term perspective, the process of alienation of church and people can be observed paradigmatically in Carinthia. From this perspective, Carinthia is not that much an exception, but a prime example.

Abstract

CHURCH, STATE, AND THE “HABITUS OF RESISTANCE”

Power and weakness of the Catholic Church in Carinthia, especially in the Austrofascist Era 1933–1938

This article focuses on the role of the church in Carinthian history, especially in the Austrofascist Era 1933–1938. The Austrofascist Regime and its political elites in Vienna were very unpopular in Carinthia and National Socialism rose in the underground. For many Carinthians this regime was the return of the Counter Reformation. As by the time of 17th and 18th century, state and church built a union to control and discipline the “simple” people. For this reason, many people left the Catholic Church and converted to Protestantism. This was the culmination of a long-term development that formed a “habitus of resistance” against state and church authority, especially among land folks in Upper Carinthia.

The first part of the article has the aim to explain these developments and gives a historical frame for the second part, which deals with the Austrofascist Era. To illustrate the anticlerical atmosphere of that time, secret reports from priests, who informed the bishop about illegal movements in their parishes, will be analyzed.

KEY WORDS: Austrofascism, Catholic Church, anticlericalism, Carinthia, Counter Reformation, Nazi movement