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CULTURAL DIVERSITY VS. NATIONAL–SOCIALIST POSITIONS.
PAULA VON PRERADOVIĆ: AN ISTRIAN AND THE AUTHOR OF
THE AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

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ABSTRACT

*Paula von Preradović (1887–1951) constantly remained bound to Istria, and it is not only her first poems that deal with her homeland, which she did not really leave until she was 26. To the end, she dedicated herself in her works to Croatian topics. The article offers a detailed look at this fascinating author's relations to the fascist systems in Austria, relations which become all the more weighty when we consider that Preradović would go on to compose the Austrian national anthem, which is still in use today. Like other intellectuals—for example Karl Kraus, Franz Werfel, and Joseph Roth—she was close to the ideas of the authoritarian state of “Austrofascism.” However, in contrast to many others, this closeness is not only due to a common opposition to National Socialism. In many respects, she was close to its ideology, and this proximity is, for instance, reflected in her poetry collection *Lob Gottes im Gebirge* (1936). On the other hand, Preradović criticized National Socialism in her novel *Pave and Pero* (1940), albeit very discreetly, by presenting a multicultural society, praising unifying factors, and showing herself to be critical of nationalism. On the basis of the novel, we can see, too, that it was possible in the German Reich also to publish literature that did not conform to the reigning ideology.*

Keywords: literary Istria, Austrian national anthem, Austrofascism, national socialism, Petar Preradović, Paula von Preradović

DIVERSITÀ CULTURALE CONTRO POSIZIONI NAZISTE. PAULA VON
PRERADOVIĆ: UN'ISTRIANA AUTTRICE DELL'INNO NAZIONALE
AUSTRIACO

SINTESI

Paula von Preradović (1887–1951) rimase costantemente legata all'Istria, e non sono solo le sue prime poesie a trattare della sua terra natale, che lasciò realmente solo a 26 anni. Alla fine della sua vita si dedicò nelle sue opere a temi relativi alla Croazia. L'articolo offre uno sguardo dettagliato sul rapporto di questa affasci-

nante autrice con l'Austrofascismo, rapporto che diventa ancora più importante se si considera che Preradović compose l'inno nazionale austriaco che è ancora oggi in uso. Come altri intellettuali – ad esempio Karl Kraus, Franz Werfel e Joseph Roth – era vicina alle idee di uno stato autoritario „austrofascista“. Tuttavia, al contrario di molti altri, questa vicinanza non era dovuta solo a un'opposizione al nazismo. Per molti aspetti, era vicina alla sua ideologia e questa vicinanza si riflette, ad esempio, nella sua raccolta di poesie *Lob Gottes im Gebirge* (1936). D'altra parte, Preradović ha criticato il nazismo nel suo romanzo *Pave and Pero* (1940), anche se in modo molto discreto, presentando una società multiculturale, lodando i fattori unificanti di questa società e dimostrandosi critica nei confronti del nazismo. Sulla base del romanzo, possiamo anche vedere che nel Terzo Reich era possibile pubblicare anche opere non conformi all'ideologia nazista.

Parole chiave: Istria letteraria, inno nazionale austriaco, Austrofascismo, Nazismo, Petar Preradović, Paula von Preradović

INTRODUCTION¹

Paula von Preradović is still remembered as the author of the national anthem of the Second Austrian Republic – after all, she wrote a text that remains central for Austria's national consciousness. It is all the more remarkable that the poet's work and life are now nearly forgotten. In addition, work and life alike have been extremely influenced by her family: A few years after Paula's death, *Porträt einer Dichterin* (Portrait of a Poet, 1955), written by her husband Ernst Molden (1886–1953), the well-known re-founder and editor-in-chief of the influential newspaper *Die Presse*, was published. The perspectives presented by him have continued to determine and steer the scholarly literature today. In 1967, her *Gesammelte Werke* (Collected Works) were published by the publishing house of the son, the powerful media czar Fritz Molden (1924–2014), namely, by the chief editor Kurt Eigl, who provided forewords and afterwords. Of course, a directing of perception took place – one which has unfortunately been repeated in subsequent academic papers, especially those on political issues pertaining to Preradović. That is why the perception of the author requires supplementary examination and new perspectives in order to

1 This article was written at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, in the framework of the research project "Mountaineering Literature: Slovenia and Beyond" (J6-1808) and the research program "Intercultural Literary Studies" (P6-0265), both of which are funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

recall the unknown sides of her multi-layered biography and her ambivalent work, in which the turbulent first half of the blood-soaked twentieth century is reflected in a special way.

THE ISTRIAN PAULA VON PRERADOVIĆ

Paula von Preradović is not the only one who carries this surname in literary history. In particular, her grandfather Petar Preradović (1818–1872) remains of great importance for Croatian history. Indeed, the centrally located monument dating back to 1895 on the Zagreb square that bears his name also bears witness to his cultural importance. Petar is only partially suitable for a Croatian national narrative, as he was a supporter of the Illyrian idea and longed to see the South Slavic languages united within the Habsburg Monarchy. In any case, the granddaughter Paula often refers to her famous ancestor. In addition to her central work, in her only novel – *Pave und Pero* (1940) (about Petar’s first marriage) – she devotes poems to him, which is of great importance for her artistic self-staging. Also crucial is that she translated his poems into German, though she only ever published a few of these. But in Paula’s literary work the references to Croatia are more diverse; the landscapes, the ancestors, the history and culture of the country always inspired the poet. The author grew up in Pula, where her father was stationed as a naval officer of the Habsburg Monarchy. At the age of fourteen she left Istria to attend the middle school for girls run by the women’s “Congregation Jesu”, the “Institute of the English Maidens” in St. Pölten. After several years with her family in Pula she went to Munich in 1913 to do a nursing course run by the Red Cross. During the First World War, she and her family went to Vienna, to the hometown of her mother and aunts. Preradović was working in the war hospital, which was housed in the University of Vienna, and it is there that she met her future husband, the history teacher Ernst Molden. This meeting and the unstable and violent situation in her Istrian homeland (cf. Klabjan, 2018) meant that she was never to return to Istria. Paula von Preradović established herself as a writer, for which she had many pioneering women examples, especially in the Viennese environment (cf., for instance, Miladinović Zalaznik, 2018). Her work evinces a strong interest in Croatian regions, especially Istria. Today, one would appreciate these texts as intercultural literature or as migration literature. From the perspective of a life in the north, she writes about homesickness, culture shock and yearning – especially in her first volumes of poetry. In *Südlicher Sommer* (Southern Summer, 1929), she sings in a folk-song-like manner about coastal landscapes. In *Dalmatinische Sonette* (Dalmatian Sonnets, 1933), she includes several Croatian towns, among them, Trogir and Dubrovnik, and monuments, e.g., by Ivan Meštrović (1883–1962). The volume *Ritter, Tod und Teufel* (Knight, Death and the Devil, 1946), published directly after the Second World War, includes a large number of South Slavic ballads. Paula edited several South Slavic legends and stories, and she used such Croatian terms as “Vila,” “Guslar,” “Sabor” and “Junak” in her texts – while allowing no



Fig. 1: Paula von Preradović, portrait (<https://alchetron.com/Paula-von-Preradovi%C4%87#>).

German cultural dominance. For example, in her Christian novella *Königslegende* (King's Legend, 1950) – where she describes the alleged exile of the Croatian king Slavatz, who was defeated in his fight against the introduction of the Latin liturgy – the Croatian king laughs at the ordnance and equipment of the Normans, and their singing seems to him uglier “than the howling of wolves and jackals” (Preradović, 1950, 11). The tale is even followed by a glossary explaining some Croatian expressions and how to pronounce the letters. Thus, Franz Theodor Csokor (1885–1969) spoke of Preradović as a “poetess between two peoples” (Csokor, 1957, 15), while her husband Ernst Molden spoke of the “poetess of both homelands” (Molden, 1955, 14). Her friend, author Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti (1871–1955), had already welcomed her first work, *Südlicher Sommer*, for providing “sweet foreign sounds of the songs of the South Slavic” (Preradović, 1929, blurb). This benevolent perspective has been passed down in the secondary literature to this day, so it is not surprising that the questions on the influence of Croatian and South Slavic culture on Paula von Preradović are central in this scholarly literature (Kostić, 1957; Orlandić, 1979). Even when Preradović's works were rightly described as conventional, even epigonal, her first two books led to her being deemed a pioneer in using the subject and theme of the Adriatic region in German poetry. In these works, she sings emotionally of the sea, fishermen, shepherds and lighthouses, islands, tides and surf, dolphins, the salty winds, sun, stars, pebbles, shells, seagulls, olive trees, pines, and myrtle. In her poem “*Die Weihnachtsbucht*” (Christmas Bay), she reflects on her own biculturality and on the hours before the Viennese-style celebration spent with her father in the Mediterranean bay – without snow, but between hills full of juniper and thyme:

*Oh, blessed we who could cherish / in the awakened blood t w o fatherlands, / Hold in our hand t w o world balls, / Love the sweet bay of the south, / Framed by laurel and arbutus, / Like the harsh world of the Christmas tree.*² (Preradović, 1963, 36).

2 “Oh, gesegnet wir, die hegen durften / Im erwachten Blut z w e i Vaterländer, / Halten in der Hand z w e i Weltkugeln, / Lieben so die süße Bucht des Südens, / Eingerahmt von Lorbeer und Arbutus, / Wie die herbe Welt des Tannenbaums” (Preradović, 1936, 36).

Concerning Preradović, one can only speak of a bicultural world in a limited way. The Istrian landscape remains – as shown in the poem – a backdrop to a German-speaking, Austrian world of life and literature, in which the cult of the Croatian ancestors was cultivated. Her lyrical homesickness for Istria and the Adriatic remains stuck in the landscape and the climate. Nor did she deeply penetrate the Croatian or the Italian language and culture. After all, it was not only as a child that she lived in Pula; she also spent the formative years after the school leaving exam (between the ages of 19 and 26) there, not engaging in any professional activity. These eight years of relative leisure would have given an intelligent young woman ample time and opportunity to learn the local languages (Lughofer, 2019). In many letters to her friend and patron, the philologist, author and translator Camilla Lucerna (1868–1965), she laments her lack of knowledge of Croatian, which is probably not due to exaggerated perfectionism or any great modesty. Indeed, in contrast to Lucerna, she never really learned the Croatian language. Moreover, for the translations of the poems of her grandfather it was others who provided the raw translations. The lack of language skills remained an obstacle for Preradović even into her 40s, when she was doing the research for *Pave and Pero*. In a letter to Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti dated 29.05.1931, she muses on “The enormity of the fact that I do not understand Croatian has only now become so clear to me...” (Vospersnik, 1966, 11). She might have never deeply penetrated into the language, but Istria remained a key subject of her work until the end of her life. From her literary estate, fragments of her childhood in Pula were published; these were drawn from the autobiographical novel project with the beautiful title “Pelagia auf dem berstenden Stern” (Pelagia on the Bursting Star) in the *Collected Works* (1967).

THE SUPPOSED HABSBURG NOSTALGIC

Politics in the work of Paula von Preradović were perceived only as nostalgia for the Habsburg Empire. Schoolfield (1954, 286) speaks of “Preradovic’s enthusiasm for the Empire” in his early contribution to *German Life and Letters*. Maertens (1956, 5), meanwhile, describes Preradović as a new-romantic author full of mourning for the old Austria and of longing for the past. Kostić (1957, 7) also speaks of an idealization of the imperial past. Vospersnik (1960, 95) perceives the representation of the Habsburg Empire as being that of “an ideal view”. Trojanović (1977, 176) reads a political program into the author’s merging of both landscapes in poetry volumes – namely, the attempt to leave territories of Istria and Dalmatia “for all eternity in Austria’s spiritual possession.” The completely apolitical form of the texts could accomplish this even more convincingly. Sobczak (2016, 98) comments in a more relaxed manner: “In her novel Preradović lovingly painted an idealized picture of old Austria, together with its cultural diversity, intended to put the reader back into a better, supposedly perfect world”. Lughofer (2018b) has already been able to show that a strongly nostalgic reading is not a fitting approach – in the much-cited novel *Pave und Pero*, for example, it is by no means an idyll but a problematic, late feudal society that is full of child mortality and soldiers’ suffering.



Fig. 2: Single stamp issued to honor Paula von Preradović (<https://www.hipstamp.com/listing/austria-1996-7s-europa-issue-paula-von-preradovic-author-vf-nh/15722435>).

PROXIMITY TO AUSTROFASCISM

Even the critical literary scholar Trojanović does not say a word about the author's relationship to Austrofascism, the authoritarian system prevailing between 1933 and 1938 in Austria. Traditionally, there has been a Grand Coalition consensus on historiography in Austria, with left and right generally in agreement; but in the case of Austrofascism perspective differ. While large parts of the historical and political sciences fully recognize this term because of the origins and interventions in the economy and society of the former regime (Talos, 2017, 170–172), in conservative circles one still speaks of the “Ständestaat” and refuses the term “fascism” for this regime (Sandgruber, 2003, 70). Engelbert Dollfuss himself is seen by one side as a dictator, murderer of workers, and pioneer of Austria's destruction, while the other side regards him as an opponent and victim of National Socialism and inventor of social partnership. In 2014, a small explanatory text was placed next to his portrait, but it remained hanging the Österreichische Volkspartei clubroom (ÖVP, Austrian People's Party) in the Parliament until 2017. Then the renovations of the Parliament provided the possibility of transferring the controversial portrait to the Niederösterreichisches Landesmuseum (Lower Austrian State Museum) as a permanent loan. To this day, a deep-seated mistrust between Austrian Social Democrats and Conservatives is tied to the rift between the two over Austrofascism (Goldmann, 2019). The male members of the Molden family were clearly affiliated to such fascism. Firstly,

Ernst Molden was on the board of the Österreich-Deutscher *Volksbund* (Austrian-German People's Alliance), an organization that was founded in 1925, across party lines, to promote the connection of Austria to Germany. But under the impression of the rise of the Nazis, Molden refrained from thoughts of "Anschluss" and instead joined the Austrofascist state party *Vaterländische Front* (Fatherland Front) and supported Dollfuss in his defence against the Nazis.

Preradović herself was close to the political positions of her husband. And it is not only the opposition to the Nazis that brings her into the spiritual proximity of the Austrofascist regime. Her deep religiosity and her rejection of socialism supported this attitude, which is clearly shown in her texts of this time. Her poetry volume *Lob Gottes im Gebirge* (Praise of God in the Mountains, 1936), published by the Catholic publishing house Anton Pustet in Salzburg, is highly compatible with the regime of the time – even graphically: in contrast to the earlier volumes, which appeared in an Arial-like font, one reads there ancient "Gothic" letters. Created between 1934 and 1936 in Kühtai in Tyrol, "these powerful poems, which came out of the experience of the landscape, bear witness to the force and beauty of the Austrian Alps" (Röttinger, 1961, 16) and thus celebrate God. This position underlines the distance to Nazi Germany in several respects. Among other things, there is a "Gebet der Österreicher zum heiligen Leopold" (Prayer of the Austrians to the Holy Leopold), a typical, even programmatic Austrofascist text. The addressed Leopold III (1073–1136) from the House of Babenberger was canonised in 1485 by the Roman Catholic Church, and this canonisation was very much in the interest of the Habsburgs. As a result, he became patron saint of Austria and several Austrian federal states. So he is positioned as a German, anti-Nazi figure – the German nationalists in Austria were against the Monarchy and the Church. He is also clearly defined in the prayer as "our homeland's past ruler and son". The adoring lyrical *We* defines itself in this way:

*We people at the cusp from north to south, / We Germans from the eastern edge,
/ Since ever tempted by seductive love, / Since ever drenched with persecuting
hostility, / Enthusiastic, surrounded and misjudged.*³ (Preradović, 1936, 85).

Just as Austrofascism positioned the Austrians as "better Germans" (Sandgruber, 2003, 72), Austrians are taken here as "Germans from the eastern edge." The stanza, with its "seductive love," clearly refers to the large neighbouring German state of Nazi Germany, which has turned its expansive interest to Austria. The poem refers to the Kahlenberg, where in 1683 a German-Polish relief army under John III Sobieski defeated the Ottoman army – a central point of reference for the Austrofascists. The *Vaterländische Front* was founded in 1933, citing the jubilee of 250 years, with the motto "Österreich über alles, wenn es nur will" (Austria Above

3 "Wir Volk an der Wende von Norden nach Süd, / Wir Deutsche vom östlichen Rand, / Seit je von verführender Liebe ummüht, / Seit je von verfemender Feindschaft umsprüht, / Begeistert, umbuhlt und verkannt."

All, If Only She Wills). After that, the Hungarian wind, grapevines, and music are mentioned – all aspects that the Austrofascist patriotism design in its Habsburg and Baroque heritage correspond to. Especially in the turmoil of the inter-war period, which is moored in civil war and German expansion, the lyrical We remembers:

*The times are bursting, the world shakes, / and the trenches are opened. / With hatred the brother has surrounded the brother, / the best, fallen by murderous hand, / Fallacy and madness scream to heaven.*⁴ (Preradović, 1936, 85).

Leopold III is a cleverly chosen personality, because one of the most famous attributions to the historical figure is that he had renounced the candidacy to be elected German king – and in consequence emperor – in 1125. The poem implies and evokes the fight against the non-Christians, who could be decoded by the contemporary readers also as Nazis, and the renunciation of a career in the great German Reich:

*With pure mind you dared to walk / the way of fair compromise; / you who boldly chased away the pagan enemies / and who renounced the crown, full of humility, / The Crown of the Holy Empire.*⁵ (Preradović, 1936, 85).

Beyond Preradović's lyrical work, her attitude manifests itself in her "small propaganda book" (Vospersnik, 1960, 37), or her "multiple confessional book" (Molden 1955, 56), that appeared under the title *Jugendreich. Die Neuland-Schulsiedlung in Grinzing-Wien* (Empire of Youth. The Neuland School Estate in Grinzing-Wien, 1937). The booklet glorifies the organic life of the peasantry, which should also be brought closer to the city children imprisoned in the "inorganic" life. Austrofascism saw itself as a movement of down-to-earth Christians who wanted to take a stand against the sinful city and set up a natural order. The social ideal was seen in the farm, where everyone has their own place. The conceptions of the Christian social doctrine of the end of the class struggle and a sovereign authority were considered to be realized there. In his well-known programmatic speech at the Vienna Trabrennplatz in September 1933, in which Dollfuss announced that the wheel of history was to be turned back two hundred years, he described the image of this projected national community by means of a peasant family working together with the farmhands and drawing from a common soup bowl together from a common bowl under the cross. Preradović's text sounds very similar in its depiction of peasant life – exemplarily in Slovenia far from Nazi propaganda of blood and soil – is juxtaposed against the turmoil of the times.

4 "Es bersten die Zeiten, es schüttert die Welt, / Die Gräben stehn aufgetan. / Mit Haß hat der Bruder den Bruder umstellt, / Hinsinken die Besten, von Mordhand gefällt, / Zum Himmel schrein Irrsal und Wahn."

5 "Der lauterer Sinns du zu wandeln gewagt / Die Wege gerechten Vergleichs; / Der kühn du die heidnischen Feinde verjagt / Und der du voll Demut der Krone entsagt, / Der Krone des Heiligen Reichs"

The peasantry with its intensive, organically protected life is really a lost paradise for us civilized people. Like a golden age, it lies behind all those who once left it; its lifestyle full of strength and dignity is irretrievably gone for the race that once became unfaithful to it. [...] Never before had the organic form of life become so clear to me as when I visited a small Slovenian farm; never had the question tortured me so burningly, the question of how the fragmentation of modern cultural life could be guided towards unity, how an aim could be set for its aimlessness, how a generation born into intellectual, economic and political unrest could be given the peace and security necessary for growth. (Preradović, 1936, 5).

In addition, the booklet speaks of the formation of the “new men,” of “leaders,” as well as of the “realization of the idea of the kingdom of God,” which is against “racial and national hatred, and Class struggle.” The thrust against National Socialism and Socialism appears in several places. Nowadays, a martial image in a brochure depicting uniformed boys, drums in hand and waving a banner is as equally unattractive as the idea that in 1933 the anniversary of the defence against the Ottoman Empire was celebrated with “a great, exciting fighting game on the heights of Leopoldsberg,” rather than with solemn speeches and recitations as it was in other schools – and this is presented as evidence of the “free, cheerful spirit of the institution” (Preradović, 1937, 7, 10, 11, 10, 14, 19). Moreover, one should not forget that Preradović shares a closeness to Austrofascism with acknowledged colleagues such as Franz Werfel (1890–1945), Joseph Roth (1894–1939) or Karl Kraus (1874–1936), and that this proximity becomes more understandable if one considers the threat of National Socialism back then. For example, the “Ständestaat” was one of the few voices in the world protesting against the holding of the 1936 Summer Olympic Games in Germany – on account of anti-Semitic discrimination – and calling for a boycott.

In Preradović’s case, her belief and her distance from socialist ideas reinforce this attitude.

A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS BETWEEN AUSTROFASCISM AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Even after the Second World War, the Molden couple did not distance themselves critically from the conservative and reactionary intellectuals. Thus, in *Porträt einer Dichterin* Molden remembers in a very peculiar way the well-known XI Congress of International PEN in Dubrovnik at the end of May 1933 – Molden only remembers the beautiful souvenir, his wife’s poetry debut: “the Viennese branch of the PEN Club could hardly choose a better gift for its conference participants than that of this book by a Viennese poetess descended from the Croatian-Adriatic landscape who immediately received the most universal of recognition” (Molden, 1955, 45). The Congress has written another history, because there the virulent issues of the persecution of Jewish and communist authors in Germany and the book burnings

that had taken place just two weeks previously were not included in the official agenda as points of discussion. The actions of the National Socialists were not condemned by the plenum – because the PEN Club was originally founded as an explicitly apolitical club. Under the new president H. G. Wells, at least in other ways, a stand against the cultural practices of National Socialism was taken. When the exiled Ernst Toller was thus given the floor to comment on questions concerning German “cultural policy”, the German delegation left the room in protest. The real scandal was that members of the delegations from Switzerland, Holland and Austria – of the Austrians, namely, Felix Salten (1869–1945) and Grete Urbanitzky (1891–1974) – joined this protest. Democratic Viennese newspapers called this behaviour of the “PEN-traitors” a “cultural shame” (Amann, 1984, 28–30). The Austrian PEN club, on whose board Preradović was supposed to sit after the war, subsequently drafted a protest letter against the Nazi practices, which was accepted by a 25–15 margin, after which the club broke up. The 25 resolution signatories were stamped in right-wing papers as Jews and placed on blacklists in Germany. Thus, they were subsequently banned from publication: their books disappeared from German bookstores, their plays from the repertoire of German theatres. Many Catholic conservative authors, however, expressed their solidarity with the nationalists and National Socialists and a total of 53 authors left the Austrian PEN, which proved to be very profitable for them when it came to the German book market.

Preradović moved within these Catholic poetry circles, all of which were close to Austrofascism. For example, her close colleague Rudolf Henz (1897–1987), a member of the then Federal Cultural Council and head of the scientific department of broadcasting, staged a Catholic-Austrofascist festival theatre that aimed to have mass influence, such as *St. Michael, führe uns, Weihefestspiel* (St. Michael, Lead Us, Festival of Consecration, 1933), *1. Mai 1934. Huldigung der Stände* (May 1, 1934. Homage of Estates, 1934) or *Pfingstfeuer* (Bonfire of Pentecost, 1935). After the failed July coup of the Nazis in 1934, he wrote on behalf of Kurt Schuschnigg the text for a hymn of the Austrofascist youth movement with the title “Ihr Jungen schließt die Reihen gut” (You Boys Close the Ranks Well); this was hoped to be an Austrofascist counterweight to the infamous Horst Wessel song. During the 1930s and 1940s, the apartment of the Molden-Preradović-couple was even called “the most important intellectual salon in Vienna” (Eigl, 1995, 123). A closer look at other friends, with whom she had maintained closer contact, makes it clear that some in this environment kept no distance whatsoever from National Socialism. Max Mell (1882–1971) was, in the 1930s, a proponent of Austrofascism, and his legend plays were prominently placed in the literary landscape. After the condemnation of the book burnings of the National Socialists by the Austrian PEN Club he – albeit not at the first chance but in September 1933 – demonstratively left the club and openly and officially professed himself to be of the national camp. In 1937 he became president of the Association of German Writers of Austria, which was also close to Nazi Germany, publishing in 1938 and later on in various Nazi anthologies,

such as the notorious *Bekennnisbuch österreichischer Dichter* (Confessional Book of Austrian Poets), in which the “Anschluss” was enthusiastically welcomed and Hitler was celebrated. Mell had a firm place in Viennese literary politics as an embodiment of Catholic-national unity (Müller 1990, 290–302).⁶ Preradović’s close friend Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti (1871–1955) also resigned from the PEN Club in 1933 for the same reason as Mell, and in the same year she became a member of the Academy of Poetry in Nazi Germany.

Preradović’s German friend Ina Seidel (1885–1974), a versatile author who was appointed together with Gottfried Benn (and as the second woman, after Ricarda Huch) to the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1932, identified early with the ideology of National Socialism. In October 1933, she was among those 88 writers who signed the pledge of faithful allegiance to Adolf Hitler, a fact which was announced throughout the German press. This pledge did not remain her last homage to Hitler. Accordingly, in 1944 Hitler included her on the so-called “*Gottbegnadete Liste*” (God-gifted or Important Artist Exempt List), thus designating her as being among the six most important contemporary German writers. The enumeration of problematic contacts could be continued. But it should not be overlooked that, in contrast to these cases, some of Preradović’s Catholic friends also suffered or fled the Nazis – like Felix Braun (1885–1973), who emigrated to Britain from fascist Italy, or the great humanist and playwright Franz Theodor Csokor, who spent an adventurous emigration in central and southern Europe. On the whole, however, many conservative Catholic authors in Austria distanced themselves late or not at all from National Socialism.

PAVE UND PERO AND NATIONAL SOCIALISM

Unlike many of her friends and peers, Preradović was never close to National Socialism. Though she published little in that time, there was her novel *Pave und Pero* (1940), tracing the history of her grandparents. It was a hitherto well-kept family secret that her grandmother had committed suicide, and this story is now told in the novel: The young wife Pave has to leave both Vienna and her husband Pero (the poet and officer Petar Preradović), for health reasons and to go with her three children to the Veneto town of Motta di Livenza. There she loses another child, but does not tell her husband anything; instead she commits suicide. Molden (1955, 50f) underlines, “For the Austrian [reader], ‘Pave and Pero’ was more than a novel. It was a historical portrait of his homeland, which – even through the very

6 All in all, however, Mell’s relationship to National Socialism is ambivalent: he refused to accept the leadership of the Reichsschrifttumskammer in Vienna that was offered to him. In 1940, a performance ban for Mell’s drama *Das Spiel von den deutschen Ahnen* (The Game of the German Ancestors) and 1941 for *Sieben gegen Theben* (Seven Against Thebes) was issued. Although Mell was admitted to the NSDAP on June 1, 1940, he withdrew his application. He maintained a good relationship with the Gauleiter Baldur von Schirach, who also awarded him the ring of honour of the city of Vienna on the occasion of his 60th birthday.



Fig. 3: Petar Preradović, portrait (Wikimedia Commons).

affectionate portrayal it provided – sided with the past and against a hopelessly torn present; it was an Austrian book of the type that had not appeared for a long time.”

The date of publication truly gives the “Austrian” novel a special status: in 1940, during the Second World War, the author described the supranational world of the old monarchy. The Italian protagonist Pave, to whom the reader is brought close, does not share the slogans of this time when she puts little value on political orders: “The most important thing is that you can live where you were born, is it not? That one does not have to live in a foreign land, speak foreign languages, join in foreign customs, eat foreign food. Whether a German Emperor or an Italian King rules over one, is that not the same thing?” (Preradović, 1967, 579).

The positively marked protagonists are sceptical about nationalistic ideas. Even when asked if she feels like an Italian, Pave answers, “I feel like my husband’s wife and the mother of my children. Everything else is too complicated for me. I am Dalmatian and I am descended from Italy, my husband is an Austrian officer and comes from Croatia. My brother Toni says he feels like an Austrian, and my Pero does too, even if he is, at the same time, a passionate Slav” (Preradović, 1967, 671). Throughout the work, there is no resignation to the inevitable fact that the ancient Habsburg lands must be separated forever. Toni states: “But, you know, I often wonder whether the peoples will somehow unite later? Then our Austria, as we know it today, will no longer live, but a new kingdom, or whatever its form will be called, will unite the many again, because they will find it useful to be together. Today the new, warm feeling wants its due, but, who knows, in a hundred or two hundred years the glorious old thought will regain its strength” (Preradović, 1967, 582).

Amazing here is not only this early allusion to European unification, but also the fact that the publication date was 1940. This is, after all, a novel-length plea for multinational coexistence. So it’s less about the Danube Monarchy than a gentle critique of exaggerated nationalism. Nevertheless, Ernst Molden overstates the oppositional aspect when he emphasizes, “It may well be that this very earnest Austrian of the novel and that the implied position in the situation in which it came out and had an unexpectedly rapid success was the main reason for the fact that the regime of the Third Reich refused to provide [...] the paper for further editions” (Molden 1955, 50f).

Molden was wrong. It cannot be assumed that a Nazi censor was reprimanded because this novel had been published. Speaking against such an assumption are the beneficent contemporary criticisms – it was called in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* “one of the best novels of these years” (Eigl, 1967, 741); it gained the stamp of approval for a second edition in Nazi Germany, after the first sold out in just a few weeks (NN, 1950, 388), and there is also the examples of the courteous letter of the Nazi cultural adviser with the apology that this book could not be classified as a “nationally important literature” and that “despite full appreciation of its literary value” a third edition could not be supported in wartime (Eigl 1967, 742). Nor did the Nazis stand in the way of an international distribution: in the same year as the German original, a Croatian edition was also published – thus, still in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, before the Ustasha state – and the following year an Italian translation followed. That all protagonists came from countries that, around 1940, were Nazi-friendly certainly played a role.

The scholarly literature often followed Molden’s position and repeatedly emphasized Preradović’s clear opposition to the National Socialist regime. Mirjam Stančić (2013, 241, 307) exaggerates the liberal opposition, saying she was “Persecuted, arrested and abused by the Nazis for their liberal political views.” Kriegleder (2011, 411) tersely adds Preradović briefly to the “Christian opponent of National Socialism”. This modest formulation can be confirmed, even though hers was, understandably, no open opposition and the husband hyperbolized her Nazi resistance. In fact, the family came under pressure after the annexation of

Austria to the Nazi empire, because the eldest son Otto Molden (1918–2002) was in the federal leadership of a Nazi-hostile youth organization. Accordingly, he was arrested already on March 13, 1938. Like him, his brother Fritz, who also resisted the Nazis in the Catholic underground, was arrested several times and then put into the Wehrmacht. In 1945, the parents then ended up in Gestapo captivity for 17 days because of the sons who had deserted and disappeared, probably not because of the parents' own views and writings, as Stančić says. In 1949, Preradović recalls in a letter to her friend Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti:

This, the hardest time of my life began in the years 1941 and 1942, which are among the worst of times. My noble father-in-law died; our eldest son, Otto, suffered severe heart disease in Russia. He was taken, constantly lying, on an eight-day journey across the whole of the Greater German Reich to Pfalzburg in Lorraine, where he spent six months in the hospital; I myself, also after a serious illness, travelled and was allowed to be near him for nine days. Fritz, our youngest son, at that time still a high school student, was arrested again and again because of his Catholic connections, and at our place one house search after another took place; my beloved brother Peter died in Zagreb; my older brother Ivo was, because of his affiliation to the English General Consulate in Split, whose shipping advisor he was, imprisoned by the Italians and dragged from prison to prison for three years. He was released in May 1944, returned to the Yugoslav Navy, and died in December 1944 as a Yugoslav-British liaison officer aboard a British destroyer south of Lussin in our native waters. (Vospernik, 1960, 38).

Preradović's oft-mentioned distancing of herself from National Socialism is certainly not unjustified. But she was hardly anti-fascist. She even supported the authoritarian Austrofascist regime with her texts. At the end of the war, she also proposed very conciliatory tones towards the defeated Nazis – as in her pro domo, posthumously published letters “An meine Söhne” (To My Sons), in which she portrays the intimidating and enduring times of the end of the war: “I am very shocked to hear that at first the intention is not to give or leave a public office in Austria to any former party comrade. I would long for justice and objectivity in the place of petty vindictiveness” (Preradović, 1967, 1026). Since Nazi-era genocide and war crimes were already known at that time, this was a questionable, good-natured wish.

CONCLUSION

Right after the Second World War, much attention was paid to the Catholic poet. Her text for the new Austrian national anthem prevailed in 1946 over some 1800 submissions, including those by such famous authors as Alexander Lernet-Holenia (1897–1976), Rudolf Henz, and Franz Theodor Csokor. The lyrics were immedi-

ately criticized – and not only by musicologists who did not find it in harmony with the melody lines (e.g., Schollum, 1958, 507). In general, Austrians remained attached to the well-known “Emperor Hymn” by Joseph Haydn for a long time.

But only slight adaptations were demanded of Preradović’s lyrics already in 1946; in 2012 the text was only made gender-neutral. For such a long time there was no other anthem in use in Austria, which makes the political background of their author, who came from Istria to Vienna, even more important.

KULTURNA RAZNOLIKOST VS. NACIONALSOCIALISTIČNA DRŽA.
PAULA VON PRERADOVIĆ: ISTRANKA IN AVTORICA AVSTRIJSKE
DRŽAVNE HIMNE

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POVZETEK

Paule von Preradović, ki je odraščala v Puli, se še vedno spominjamo kot avtorice državne himne Druge avstrijske republike. Zato toliko bolj preseneča, da sta njeno delo in življenje danes skoraj pozabljena. Na recepcijo njenih del je močno vplivala njena družina, zlasti glede političnih vprašanj. Njena literarna dela se večinoma nanašajo na Hrvaško in Istro – na pokrajine, prednike, zgodovino in kulturo dežele, ki je pesnico vselej navdihovala. Danes bi njena besedila razumeli kot medkulturno ali migracijsko literaturo. S perspektive življenja na severu piše o domotožju, kulturnem šoku in hrepenenju.

Politika v delih Paule von Preradović je bila razumljena izrecno kot nostalgija po Habsburški monarhiji, kar pa je nekoliko neustrezno. Z avstrofašističnim režimom je ne povezuje le odpor do nacistov – takšno politično držo podpirata tudi njena globoka katoliška religioznost in zavračanje socializma, kar se jasno odraža v njenih besedilih iz tistega časa, kot sta na primer Lob Gottes im Gebirge (Hvalnica Bogu v gorah, 1936) in Jugendreich. Die Neuland-Schulsiedlung in Grinzing-Wien (Kraljestvo mladih. Šolska ustanova Neuland v Grinzingu na Dunaju, 1937). Obe deli podrobno sovpadata z avstrofašistično ideologijo. Na splošno je bil krog katoliških umetnikov, h kateremu je spadala tudi Preradovičeva, blizu avtoritarnemu režimu; nekateri dobri kolegi kot Max Mell, Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti in Ina Seidel so se celo pridružili nacionalsocializmu. Nasprotno pa se Preradovičeva nikoli ni zblížala z nemškimi fašisti, ki so bili na oblasti v Avstriji med letoma 1938 in 1945. V tem času je izdala malo del, a njen roman Pave und Pero (Pave in Pero, 1940) poziva k sobivanju različnih narodov. Ne gre toliko za Donavsko monarhijo kot za blago kritiko pretiranega nacionalizma. Na podlagi romana je razvidno, da je bilo v nemškem rajhu možno objaviti tudi literaturo, ki ni bila v skladu z vladajočo ideologijo.

Kljub temu pa sta njen mož in strokovna literatura njeni opozicijski drži pogosto pripisovala prevelik pomen. Družina je bila v nacističnem rajhu pod pritiskom, ker so bili sinovi Preradovičeve v katoliškem odporiškem gibanju. Nedvomno je bila avtorica nasprotnica nacionalsocializma, a nikakor ne antifašistka, kar je razvidno iz njene podpore avtoritativnemu avstrofašističnemu režimu.

Takoj po drugi svetovni vojni je bila katoliška avtorica deležna veliko pozornosti. Njeno besedilo za novo avstrijsko državno himno je leta 1946 prevladalo med več kot 1800 predlogi. Himna je še vedno v uporabi, kar daje političnemu ozadju avtorice, ki je prišla iz Istre na Dunaj, še večji pomen.

Ključne besede: literarna Istra, avstrijska državna himna, avstrofašizem, nacionalsocializem, Petar Preradović, Paula von Preradović

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