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THE ROLE OF THE TOWNS
IN THE BOHEMIA OF THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

by

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I

THERE is more than one reason why the early history of Bohemia's cities, and of the middle class that developed them during the later Middle Ages, should be an object of interest. Already in the 14th century those cities — with Prague at their head — reached a state of economic and cultural prosperity hardly surpassed anywhere in Europe. And in the following century — an era of tremendous upheavals that shook all Europe — the cities, for a while, took over the leadership of the nation in forms otherwise unknown in European history.

The cities of Bohemia were, in the main, legally established in the 13th century¹. Some of them had existed much earlier. Prague especially had, as early as in the tenth century, been a great trading center with many churches and some houses of stone², in addition to being the traditional residence of the ruler as well as of a bishop. But it was the 13th century which developed the city, especially the royal city, as a legal entity, a strong economic and military center, and a body of autonomous status within the feudal state.

It was the Czech kings of the first three quarters of that century, all of them strong and ambitious rulers, who are in the main responsible for

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1. The question of the founding of Bohemia's cities is the object of a considerable literature (see bibliography). There is, among others, a remarkable treatment, both concise and thorough, by Adolf ZYCHA, *Ueber den Ursprung der Städte in Böhmen und die Städtepolitik der Premysliden*, in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*, vol. 52, (Prague, 1914), also in a book edition.

2. See the visit to Prague reported by the Spanish Jew Ibrahim ibn Jakub, as quoted, among others, by O. SCHÜRER, *Prag*, 4th edition (Munich, 1940), p. 27.

this beginning: Přemysl Otakar I (1198-1230), Wenceslas I (1230-1253), and Přemysl Otakar II (1253-1278). Only two or three Bohemian towns received their founding charters from Přemysl Otakar I, but most of the important towns of Moravia, five in number, date back to his time. His son, Wenceslas I, seems to have been responsible for the founding of eight towns in Bohemia, and under Přemysl Otakar II no less than 21 places joined the number of the royal cities, while at the same time both temporal and ecclesiastical lords established dependent towns on their territories³.

Especially with Přemysl Otakar II this founding of cities became a planned and deliberate activity. The main reasons for it were economic. The cities, all of them endowed with marketing privileges, often also with brewing rights and special rights for the levying of tolls and storage fees, were in turn rich sources of tax-income for the crown⁴. This was especially true for the centers of mining, mainly silver mining, such as Kolín and Čáslav, in Bohemia, Jihlava in Moravia. Foremost among these mining towns however was Bohemia's second city all through the late Middle Ages: beautiful Kutná Hora⁵. As mining centers these towns had already existed by the first half of the 13th century, but it was again Přemysl Otakar II who gave the city charter to Čáslav⁶, and confirmed the older charter of Kutná Hora. Special mining laws were granted first to Jihlava and soon afterwards also to Kutná Hora by Wenceslas II (1278-1305)⁷. It was under the last-named king that Kutná Hora began its long career as the most often besieged, the most fought-over city of the kingdom⁸. The German king Albert I, unwilling to see Wenceslas rule over both Bohemia and Poland, invaded Bohemia in 1304 and immediately marched on Kutná Hora, without, however, being able to conquer the strong fortress⁹.

While the economic gains resulting from the existence of cities surely formed the main reason for this founding activity of the Přemyslide kings, there was in all likelihood also a political motivation. The position of the crown had still been somewhat shaky in the 12th century, partly because of constant disputes between members of the dynasty over the succession, partly owing to the still undiminished strength of the great baronial houses. But with Přemysl Otakar I primogeniture was firmly established and the central power of the king strengthened as against the competing claims of the high nobility¹⁰. In this situation the rise

3. See ZYCHA, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.

4. See e. g. J. ČELAKOVSKÝ, *Privilegia civitatum pragensium* (Prague, 1886), *passim*.

5. See A. HORAČEK, *Kutnohorsko* (Prague, 1911), p. 10.

6. K. ČERMÁK, *Čáslavsko* (Prague, 1911), pp. 69 ff.

7. HORAČEK, *loc. cit.*

8. See, among others, chapter 1 in J. ŠIMEK's *Kutná Hora v. XI. a XVI. století* (Kutná Hora, 1907).

9. See about this development J. SUSTA, *Soumrak Přemyslovců*, (České dějiny II, 1), (Prague, 1935), pp. 645 ff.

10. On him see the relevant passages in V. NOVOTNÝ's *Čechy královské v XIII. století* (České dějiny I, 3).

of towns, new and strong centers independent from the barons and their castles, proved to be an advantage which, while perhaps accidental in the reigns of Přemysl Otakar I and Wenceslas I, can hardly have escaped the attention of Přemysl Otakar II. In all likelihood it was at least an additional motive for the zeal with which, during most of the 25 years of his reign, the king continued founding additional cities throughout the length and breadth of his realm¹¹. But even if the political weakening of the high nobility should have been a by-product of, rather than a reason for, the founding of towns, the nobility saw in it a danger and felt increasingly antagonistic to him. It was largely the rebellion of part of the Czech nobility which fatally weakened Přemysl Otakar when he had to defend his extended empire — it stretched all the way down to the Adriatic Sea — against the new German king Rudolf of Habsburg¹².

The rebellion of the nobility against their liege lord, a man who was surely among the greatest rulers of his country, ended a period of successful imperialist conquest and one in which the Crown of St. Wenceslas occupied a truly commanding position in Central Europe, a position not successfully re-established till the time of Charles IV. Yet the Czech nobility might have claimed that its action was, at least partly, motivated by patriotism, or perhaps rather by a feeling for the Czech nation, the *lingua bohémica*¹³. For the Přemyslide empire as it existed around 1270 — when for once Shakespeare's "Bohemia by the Sea" was a historical reality — contained such a large proportion of Germans and Italians that, had it lasted, it would have been much more difficult for the Czechs to preserve their nationality. More clearly apparent, however, to the Czech barons of the time as well as to the hindsight of history, was another imminent threat to the survival of this Slavonic nation. It was the huge movement of German colonists which in the form of agricultural settlements had started essentially in the 12th century, but which had increased and had been extended into the newly founded cities in the 13th century¹⁴. While the first named wave of immi-

11. ZYCHA (*op. cit.*, p. 277) expresses the opinion that the creation of a counterweight balancing the power of the barons was only the result, not the purpose of these Czech kings most responsible for the founding of cities, but especially as Přemysl Otakar II is concerned he finds himself in disagreement with most historians who have written on that question.

12. See J. ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 212 ff., and for the background V. NOVOTNÝ, *Rozmach české moci za Přemysla II Otakara*, *České dějiny I*, 4, pp. 405 ff.

13. See on this early nationalism of the Czech nobility of the 13th century the so-called Chronicle of Dalimil, actually a rhymed account of the events of these and earlier times by a nobleman written at the beginning of the 14th century. An evaluation of his work in English is to be found in F. LÜTZOW's *Lectures on the Historians of Bohemia* (London, 1905), pp. 14 ff.

14. The standard work on the German colonization is by J. V. ŠIMÁK, *Německá kolonizace země českých v středověku*, vol. 5 of part I of the great Czech history (*České dějiny*) edited by Novotný and Krofta and published by Laichter, Prague. The problem is also dealt with, in the same great work, by V. Novotný in I, 4, pp. 461-499, containing a short bibliography to the problem (pp. 475-487). A good survey in English is to be found in S. HARRISON THOMSON's *Czechoslovakia in European History*, 2nd edition, (Princeton, 1954) pp. 130 ff. The theory propounded, and later defended quite belligerently, by B. BRETHOLZ (first in his *Geschichte*

gration had begun to push a ring of German-speaking people across the borders of Bohemia into the fringes of the country, the urban settlements of Germans were by no means limited to the border districts. Indeed it was German traders and, to a lesser extent, German craftsmen who formed the more important elements of the new city population even in Prague¹⁵, and it was German miners whose skill provided Kutná Hora and most of the other mining towns with their valuable silver ores. Bohemia's city civilization, during the 13th century, was essentially German, and if elsewhere, too, the baron looked askance at the newly acquired riches and strength of the burgher, he had even more reason to do so in Bohemia where the burgher was, more often than not, an alien, an immigrant, or at least the descendant and heir of one.

Nevertheless the power and self-confidence of the German patricians, especially in the two great cities of Prague and Kutná Hora, grew steadily during the last decades of the Přemyslide period, and did not diminish when, with the death of Wenceslas III at the tender age of 17, this oldest of Europe's Slavic dynasties became extinct in its male line. The struggle over the succession gave another chance to the cities to assert themselves though they had as yet no clear legal claim to a place in the electing diets¹⁶. The short episode of Rudolf's kingship¹⁷ was followed by another, only moderately longer interimrule, that of Henry of Carinthia (1307-1310), one of Wenceslas II's sons in law, under whose weak rule a veritable civil war broke out with the cities and the high nobility as the main actors, and with the king throwing an ineffectual support to the side of the cities¹⁸. Again the nobility, as it had done at the time of Přemysl Otakar II, took its stand against the king, and Henry lost his crown to John Count of Luxemburg, son of the Roman Emperor Henry VII.

If this was a set-back for the cities, it was not in any way permanent. Their representatives, especially those of Prague, already took a conspicuous part in the coronation festivities for the young king¹⁹. More important, this knight errant who wore the crown of St. Wenceslas, this noble adventurer who found satisfaction only in war and who eventually,

Böhmen und Mähren bis zum Aussterben der Přemysliden, München-Leipzig, 1912) according to which the German settlements in Bohemia were not the result of immigration during the Middle Ages but date back to ancient, that is pre-Slav times, has long been refuted by Czech historians (first by J. ŠUSTA, *Nový Antipalacký*, *Český časopis historický XIX*, pp. 420 ff.) and after that also by some German historians of Bohemia such as Zycha ("Eine neue Theorie über die Herkunft der Deutschen in Böhmen", in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen*, LIII, pp. 1 ff.).

15. To be mentioned here is especially the so-called Sobieslavum, that is, the document of privileges granted to the German merchant settlers of Prague early in his reign by Soběslav II (1173-1189), Přemysl I Otakar's elder brother. See ČELÁKOVÁKÝ, *op. cit.*

16. See ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, p. 695, and ZYCHA, *Über den Ursprung der Städte in Böhmen*, p. 591.

17. See ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 705-718.

18. See the chapter on Henry of Carinthia in ŠUSTA's *Král cizinec* (*České dějiny II*, 2).

19. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

blind and tied to his horse, died a hero's death in the Battle of Crécy, was all through his reign more in need of money than any of his predecessors. The cities, already by far the greatest source of income for the crown, would go far in their readiness to help, provided they received corresponding rights and concessions²⁰. Thus it was during John's reign (1310-1346) that city autonomy as well as city influence on public affairs received a firmer and more regularized status. Old rights, privileges and monopolies were confirmed, new ones granted. For the first time — at Domažlice in 1331 — we find documentary evidence for the participation of cities at one of the great diets of the kingdom²¹. And while the demand of the city of Prague for the right to build a city hall, as the permanent seat of city government, addressed in 1296 to Wenceslas II, had been refused, the same demand was granted in 1338 by John²². Prague was also one of the first cities where the city judge (whose title "rychtář" was, as the institution, of German origin) ceased to be the king's representative and thereby the highest administrative official. He was, however, still appointed by the king. Only beginning with the Hussite Wars was he elected by the city council to this important office, and only in 1439 was this right officially recognized by the king (then Albert II)²³. The limitation of the functions of the city judge eventually became the normal state of things, but it was not till the 15th century that this can be said of all the cities of Bohemia. Their town law was, in its origins, German, partly reflecting the influence of the famous Magdeburg town law, partly — and this is true in the case of Prague — the town law of Nürnberg²⁴. Yet it seems that, especially by some of the German historians of Bohemia, too much has been made of this apparent dependence on German law as part of German culture. The Bohemian cities, in the 14th century when they were still dominated by the German Patricians, and still more after the thorough Czechization that occurred early in the 15th century, formed and constantly developed their own law without feeling bound very closely by those codes that had been laid down originally in Magdeburg or elsewhere in Germany²⁵.

Even after the king had ceased to have his representative, in the form of the city judge, in each royal town, the cities were still under the control of a high royal official: the sub-chamberlain (*podkomoří, subcamerarius*), one of the court positions usually held by a member of the high nobility. It was his task, among other things, to confirm (or withhold recognition of) elections to all elective city offices, especially to the city councils.

20. ŠUSTA, *Karel IV. Otec a syn. 1333-1346* (České dějiny II, 3), pp. 294 ff.

21. See *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* III, p. 703.

22. See V. VOJTIŠEK, *Z. minulosti naší Prahy*, (Prague, 1919), pp. 105 ff.

23. See V. V. TOMEK, *Dějepis věsta Prahy* (Prague 1855) and later, vol. VI, pp. 4, 68, 70.

24. See V. VOJTIŠEK, *Z. právních dějin československých měst*, (Prague 1934), *passim*, and B. MENDEL, *Tak řečené norimberské právo v Čechách*, Rozpravy české akademie věd a umění, tř. I, c. 86, (Prague, 1938).

25. See J. ŠUSTA, *Karel IV. Otec a syn* (České dějiny II, 3) p. 59.

In matters concerning Prague and Kutná Hora, however, the king would usually reserve such decisions to himself, and in the case of a small number of towns, most of them along the Upper Elbe river and first in rank among them Hradec Králové, the last word was with the Queen.

While, with the abolition of the administrative duties of the city judge, the mayor (*purkmistr*) took over the position of highest administrative city official, he was usually only *primus inter pares*, and only in rare cases do we find a city mayor making history by acting independently of, or against, his city council²⁶. But it would be wrong to interpret this fact, at least during most of the 14th century, as showing much democracy at work. Rather it was an oligarchy, with the expression plutocracy hardly out of place²⁷. There was usually a limited number of families, most or all of them of German origin, who were able to preserve a monopolistic grip on all the influential city offices and especially on the membership of the city councils. These old patrician families, the "Geschlechter", considered themselves equal to the nobility, especially as they succeeded in amassing respectable landed properties. They did not find much difficulty in intermarrying at least with the lower nobility, the knights and squires. But such intermarriage was not infrequently the first step toward Czechization, sometimes hinted at by the fact that a Czech place name (from the property owned) was added to the German name traditional with the family²⁸. Some such families then could survive the fierce onslaught on the German ruling classes that occurred during the Hussite Revolution, even as the majority of the "Geschlechter" had to save themselves by emigration²⁹.

But the process by which the Czechs gained (or regained) control of the important urban centers of their country did not begin with that violent upheaval. The Hussite Revolution was rather the climax of a development which, as a phenomenon of social change and of growing nationalism, had been in full swing several decades earlier. Just as later the Dutch, the English-Puritan and the French revolutions, so the Czech revolution of 1419 was to a large extent the result of a period of vigorous growth and prosperity of a middle class no longer satisfied with the role hitherto allotted to it. In this sense then it was, at least partially and perhaps indirectly, a consequence of that Golden Age of Bohemia, as the reign of Charles IV (1346-1378) is known³⁰, an age that, in some ways, continued through the earlier years of the reign of his oldest son and successor Wenceslas IV (1378-1419).

26. For one such case, reported from Budějovice (the mayor or primator, a Czech, got into conflict with the German majority of the city council), see E. DROBIL and J. ŠAKAR, *Budějovicko a Hlubocko* (Prague 1911) p. 9.

27. See ŠUSTA, *Král cizinec* (České dějiny II, 2, p. 292).

28. See TOMEK, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 280 ff., and II, pp. 415 ff.

29. See SCHÜRER, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

30. The standard work on Charles IV and his time are the volumes by Šusta in the second part of the great *České dějiny* edited by Novotný and Krofta. Among English presentations see D. B. JARRETT, *Charles IV* (London, 1932), and the two chapters (by Krofta and W. T. Waugh) in vol. VII of the *Cambridge Medieval History*.

The economic prosperity of Bohemia, and in the first place of Bohemia's cities, was largely the result of the growth, there as elsewhere in Europe, of early capitalism. But there were a number of reasons why Bohemia should, at this time, have achieved a higher level of material, and perhaps also of spiritual, growth than the rest of Central or Eastern Europe. Bohemia was, under the strong and wise hands of this great ruler, far more unified and politically stabilized than, for instance, the neighboring Reich whose tendency toward increasing disintegration Charles IV could, as emperor, only slow down but not stop. Charles' economic policy, anticipating, as some of his other policies, the attitude of Enlightened Absolutism, shows at least some of the basic ideas of Mercantilism (or Colbertism, as his most thorough biographer has called it) ³¹. Basic to this however was the fact, that he radically broke with his father's spendthrift habits, that he increased the power and standing of the Bohemian Crown almost exclusively by peaceful means, and that he was therefore able to use his increasing income for essentially productive causes. (An exception was the large moneys spent for certain devotional purposes such as the purchase of relics). He received this income not just from taxation. There was also the still increasing yields of Bohemia's silver-mines, first among them those of Kutná Hora, which had, on a somewhat earlier and more primitive level, the same effect upon Bohemia's general economic development as had the precious metals of the New World upon Western Europe in the 16th century. From it the king received regular payments which made him less dependent on the willingness of the estates, still essentially influenced by the high nobility, to vote him taxes. To supervise the mining and minting at Kutná Hora in the interest of the city, the country and the King, Charles created in 1363 the special office of Mint Master (*magister monetarum*) which carried with it the governorship over the city and became a highly rewarding, and highly desired, position ³².

The rich creativeness of the Carolinian age is expressed in the architectural treasures of many a Bohemian city. It was during his reign, for instance, that Kutná Hora, fairly bristling with civic pride, began building the great, cathedral-like church of St. Barbara, surely one of the most imposing, most exciting creations of the late Gothic spirit to be found anywhere in Europe ³³. But it was, of course, his residence, the capital city of Prague, that received Charles' foremost attention and bears to this day the powerful imprint of his creative personality: the Cathedral of St. Vitus which he started building, the new bridge across the Vltava which has survived the storms of six centuries, the oldest buildings (the so-called Carolinum) of the University which he founded, and innumerable other great buildings, temporal and ecclesiastical, which arose during his reign and give the Gothic Prague its character to this day. More important than all these was the founding of the New

31. J. ŠUSTA, *Karel IV. Za císařskou korunou* (České dějiny II, 4) p. 250.

32. HORÁČEK, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

33. See about its history *ibid.*, pp. 30 ff.

Town, built in a wide ark around the original "Great Town" on the right bank (as opposed to the "Small Town" or "Small Side" on the left bank, below the Hradčany hill bearing the great royal castle). In the job of town-planning that went into the building of this great borough, just about doubling the size of the older capital, Charles took a very personal part, differing in this way from the earlier city-builders among his royal ancestors (including his great-grandfather Přemysl Otakar II) who had left the detailed work of the townplanning to the men whom they granted the right to build: the so-called locators ³⁴. The existence of the New Town, however, had important consequences far beyond the question of city-building and planning. It changed the character of this great center of the kingdom. In the Old Town as well as in the Small Side the rule of the "Geschlechter" had long been taken for granted. The New Town was, almost from the beginning, predominantly Czech. There were no old German families. The vast majority of the inhabitants, including the wealthiest and therefore most influential people ³⁵, belonged to the craftsmen in whose rank the Czechs had long been competing with the Germans. Beginning with the year 1356 the city council of the New Town had a clear majority of Czechs ³⁶.

But this was not an isolated phenomenon. Almost since the beginning of the century the competition forced upon the Czech people by the German immigrants in almost every field had done its work of spurring the Slav inhabitants to greater efforts and higher achievements. At the time of Charles it was no longer possible for the Germans to look down upon the Czechs, yet they were most reluctant everywhere to give up the monopoly position they held, and sometime soon after 1350, in a letter confirming the privileges of the royal town of Beroun in Central Bohemia, Charles felt it necessary to stipulate that half of the twelve city councilors should always be of Czech nationality ³⁷.

There is, indeed, no doubt that the position of the Czech people in the cities of Bohemia was immeasurably strengthened in this time of Carolinian glory, and that especially the urban middle class — the craftsmen — had gained in numbers, in experience, in self confidence and in influence. Yet it would be quite wrong to assume that Charles deliberately tried to weaken the position of the old patrician families with their German background. True, in one case (Breslau) where 32 members of the "Geschlechter" had established themselves as life-long councilors Charles intervened and (in 1348) ordered yearly elections to be

34. Apart from the detailed discussion of the founding and planning of the New Town in Šusta's great work (České dějiny II, 4, pp. 58 ff.) the best concise evaluation is probably Schürer's (*op. cit.*, pp. 68 ff.). See also TOMEK, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 1 ff., 219 ff.

35. Full citizenship was, at this time, still dependent on fairly high property qualifications (the minimum was ten threescores of groše, the equivalent of several hundred dollars). See ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 245.

36. Z. WINTER, *Dějiny řemesel a obchodu v Čechách v XIV. a v XV. století*, (Prague, 1906), p. 234.

37. Published by E. SCHIECHE in Časopis archiv. školy V, 1927, p. 151, as quoted by ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 251.

re-established³⁸. But this was only to safeguard royal control. Essentially he felt that the predominant position of the city aristocracy was theirs by rights. In particular he distrusted and frowned at the great organizational instrument used by the craftsmen to strengthen their economic position: the gilds.

The craft gilds of Bohemia had begun to develop vigorously in the early years of the 14th century³⁹. But while John had done little or nothing to stop this movement, Charles IV, quite early in his rule, tried to stem it as something of a revolutionary trend which in addition, because of its monopolistic practices, was responsible in his eyes for the rise of the price level that had occurred around 1350⁴⁰. Thus in 1352 he tried to suppress the gilds in Hradec Králové, Chrudim and Most, and in the same year excluded craftsmen from the city councils of Prague, even though individual craftsmen had been elected into the council of the Old Town intermittently ever since 1296⁴¹. It cannot be said that Charles was quite consistent in this policy which anyhow went against the trend of the time. Nor was he successful. The gilds, at the end of his rule, were decidedly stronger and more thoroughly organized than they had been at the beginning, and during the reign of Wenceslas IV there was no longer any question of suppressing them. They had become too powerful.

But this growth did not come about without a great deal of internal strife and friction. An open and bloody rebellion of the gilds against the patricians took place in Brno in the very year of Wenceslas' succession, and other similar moves followed, in Bohemia itself as well as in the other countries belonging to the Bohemian Crown, till in the year before Wenceslas' death, in 1418, a rebellion replaced the patrician city council of Breslau by one consisting entirely of gild members, an act in the course of which several of the former *ratsherren* were killed. Wenceslas, somewhat weak and irresolute and often inclined to favor the lower-born among his subjects, forgave the bloodshed and permitted the rebels to remain in power. But the revenge of the patricians was only postponed. Their willing executioner was Sigismund, King of the Romans and of Hungary, who should have succeeded to the throne of Bohemia when his elder brother Wenceslas IV died on August 16, 1419. In March 1420, while Sigismund held court at Breslau, twenty-three men who had been involved in the rebellion of 1418 were arrested, condemned to death by a court of patricians from other Silesian towns, and executed⁴². Sigismund might not have acted with so much dispatch, and might not have looked on with so much pleasure at the multiple decapi-

38. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

39. See B. MENDEL, «Počátky našich cech», *Český časopis historický* XXXIII, 1927, and Z. WINTER, *op. cit.*, pp. 180 ff.

40. ŠUSTA, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 249, and Z. WINTER, *op. cit.*, pp. 201 ff.

41. Tomek, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 608 ff.

42. *Magdeburger Schöppenchronik*, ed. Hegel, in *Chroniken deutscher Städte*, VIII, 1, p. 349, and Windecke, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitlators Kaiser Sigmunds*, ed. Altmann, (Berlin, 1893) p. 30.

tation, if the rebellion of Breslau had not reminded him of the much more thorough, much more dangerous rebellion of Prague, a rebellion which had indeed developed into a major revolution, shaking the country and even disputing his, Sigismund's, right to inherit the Crown of Bohemia. He was involved in the Hussite Wars which were to last for seventeen years and which were to change profoundly the whole character of Bohemia's society, and especially of that of her cities.

II

The Hussite Revolution cannot be explained merely as the result of the social frictions that had developed in the course of the 14th century. They were only one of at least three important factors contributing to this great movement which, in its long term results, was as creative as it was destructive in some of its immediate effects. Beside the revolt of the artisan and craftsman (helped by the day laborer) against the patrician there was the revolt of the Czech against the German trying to maintain his monopoly position. And above all there was the resistance of a great religious movement, symbolized by the Chalice (the cup for the laity), uniting large segments of all classes of the nation against the deadly reproach of heresy⁴³. This meant resistance to the great official organization of the Church of Rome, resistance to the Roman King who invaded the land of his birth as the sword-bearer of a crusade, resistance to that minority of Czechs, especially noblemen, who were faithful to (and usually had vested interests in) the old state of things.

The question was: who would organize this resistance? In a country in which government had essentially rested upon either a tug of war or a compromise between king and barons — who would now organize a government without king at a time when the barons were split in their loyalties and politics? The answer was: the cities, and first and foremost among them the city of Prague.

The task was made much more difficult by the circumstances under which it was undertaken. The government of the nation, and especially the conduct of the defensive war against Sigismund and his crusading armies, had to be organized while there were internal tensions and frictions in abundance. The great majority of the Germans, in Prague

43. While the Hussite revolution is treated with prominence in every major history of Bohemia from Palacký onward, and while there is a large monographic literature on it, there has been no up-to-date treatment of the whole movement in any language for many decades. The newest approach to it, and factually still important while in other ways rather obsolete, is vol. IV of Tomek's great history of Prague (*Dějepis města Prahy*), also published, in its second edition, as a separate work under the title *Dějiny válek husitských* (Prague, 1898). In the great *České dějiny* started by Novotný, the volume on this period (1419-1437), in preparation by F. M. Bartoš, has not yet come out. In western languages the work by F. von Bezold, *König Sigmund und die Reichskriege gegen die Hussiten*, (Munich, 1872); E. Denis, *Huss et la guerre des Hussites*, (Paris, 1878); and F. Lützwow, *The Hussite Wars* (London, 1914), are all somewhat out of date.

as well as in many other cities, had taken their stand with Sigismund and the Church of Rome against the Hussite creed and its protagonists. In a very few cities near the German border such as Budějovice or Cheb the Germans maintained themselves. In Prague they began to flee soon after the outbreak of the open conflict, and those that had remained and were not ready to vow allegiance to the cause of the Chalice were, in June 1420, expelled from the city⁴⁴. Prague thereby, for the first time in its history, became a purely Czech city.

But there were tensions inside Prague, partly religious, partly social. The more well-to-do burghers especially in the Old Town, some of whom had taken the place, economically speaking, of the expelled Germans, were inclined to follow the lead of the masters of the University, all of them Calixtines or Utraquists, that is, adherents of the Communion in both kinds. Foremost among them was the author of this ritual (or of its re-introduction), Jacobellus of Stříbro⁴⁵. These men, while firm in the defense of the Chalice against its enemies, were not ready to go any further in deviating from the accepted church doctrines or in supporting any revolutionary changes in the structure of society. On the other side there were the masses of the little artisans and craftsmen, often strengthened by the support of the poor day-laborers, who formed the majority of the people of the New Town. They found a gifted and effective leader in a preacher who had left a Premonstratensian monastery to take up the fight against the wealth and corruption of the Roman Church: Jan Želivský⁴⁶. It was Želivský rather than Jacobellus who succeeded in organizing all the forces the revolution could muster in Prague. It was his policy to ally the capital with the steadily growing sectarian movements in the provinces which were about to organize themselves in two great brotherhoods: in the south where, under the leadership of some priests, religious fanatics among townsmen and peasants had united in the newly founded fortress town which they called Tabor, and in the east where a similar but religiously less radical sect, called Orebites, dominated the region of the upper Elbe with their centre in Hradec Králové. Both sects or brotherhoods had originally a primitive democratic structure, both acknowledged priests as their spiritual and political leaders, and Tabor (not Oreb) temporarily developed even a tendency toward economic communism. While they received support both from the rural and the urban population their main significance

44. See the chronicle of Lawrence of BREZOVÁ, in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, ed. Goll, vol. V, p. 378. This chronicle is one of the main sources for the early years of the revolution.

45. On Jacobellus, see F. M. BARTOŠ, *Literární činnost M. Jakoubka ze Stříbra*, (Prague, 1925), F. BORECKÝ, *Mistr Jakoubek ze Stříbra* (Prague, 1945), and Z. NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu*, vol. II, (Prague, 1913), pp. 58-105.

46. For a monographic treatment of Želivský (outside the purely religious discussion) see the detailed evaluation of his role as a leader of the Prague paupers (*chudina*) by F. GRAUS in *Městská chudina v době předhusitské* (Prague, 1949). The book contributes valuable material to the knowledge about the social development of the lowest urban class, but overrates its influence upon the revolution. There is an older study by B. AUŠTECKÁ, *Jan Želivský jako politik* (Prague, 1925).

for the time up to 1434 was their ability to mobilize a growing number of the provincial towns as carriers of the religious and national ideas of the revolution. At this early time their growth did not yet seem incompatible with the leading role of Prague; on the contrary the alliance with the brotherhoods was of great advantage to Prague and Hussitism, especially as first the Taborite sect or brotherhood (including the elder cities of southern and south-western Bohemia which came under its influence) and later also the Orebites had put themselves under the military leadership of an elderly, one-eyed squire who happened to be both a great organizer and a military genius of the first order: Jan Žižka of Trocnov⁴⁷. It was the alliance of Prague, largely led by Želivský and supported by small contingents of some Hussite noblemen, with the forces of Tabor, led by Žižka, which achieved the miracles of the early years of the revolution. The most important of these were the successful defense of Prague against the enormous international armies led by Sigismund in the First Crusade, in the spring and early summer of 1420 (there were, altogether, to be five such crusades), and the conquest or liberation, in the first half of 1421, of most of the important cities of Bohemia. In the course of the great spring campaign of 1421 the city government of Prague established itself effectively as the supreme power in the land. All the towns that had either been conquered or that had voluntarily submitted now signed treaties of allegiance to Prague⁴⁸, and Prague appointed its own governors, usually members of the lower nobility who had taken service with the capital earlier. Žižka, the general of the Taborites without whose help this success could not have been achieved, did not object to this policy as long as the towns of the Taborite federation (as well as a few other cities such as Žatec and Hradec Králové, that is, the regional centers of the northwest and northeast) could maintain their autonomy. Meantime it was taken for granted that the city councilors of Prague should conduct the foreign policy of the kingdom, that they should send ambassadors to foreign countries such as Poland and Lithuania among whose princes they hoped to find a new king⁴⁹, or should address to the republic of Venice an offer of alliance against the common enemy Sigismund of Hungary, and his son-in-law Duke Albert of Austria⁵⁰.

An attempt at stabilizing this very fluid situation was made when, for

47. There is a considerable amount of literature on Žižka in Czech, starting with V. V. TOMEK's *Jan Žižka* (Prague, 1879), also in German translation), and so far ending with PEKAR's highly controversial *Žižka a jeho doba*, 4 vols., (Prague, 1927-33), treating not only Žižka the man but also the Taborite movement and somewhat wrongly identifying these two completely. The present writer's book on Žižka and the Hussite Revolution is due for early publication by the Princeton University Press.

48. For the texts of some of these treaties see *Archiv český* I, pp. 201, 204, and PALACKÝ, *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hussitenkrieges* (Prague, 1873), I, pp. 99, 123.

49. For the background of these negotiations see J. GOLL, *K. Sigmund und Polen*, in *Mitteilungen d. Instituts f. österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 1894, 1895, and V. NOVOTNÝ, *Několik příspěvků*, etc., in *Sborník Žižkův* (Prague, 1924).

50. PALACKÝ, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 39-43.

the first time after the outbreak of the revolution, the government of Prague invited the estates of the kingdom to a great diet which was held, early in June 1421, at Čáslav⁵¹. At this meeting, at which delegates of all estates from Bohemia and Moravia participated, the leading position of Prague was officially recognized, in that in its official documents⁵² the "Burgomasters and Councilors of the Great and the New Town of Prague" had precedence before the archbishop of Prague (who had shortly before joined the Hussite camp) and before the lords of the kingdom. The diet solemnly deposed Sigismund as King of Bohemia, emphatically endorsed the great Hussite charter called the Four Articles of Prague⁵³ and elected a regency council of twenty men, among them only five lords, the same number of knights, the rest representing the cities: four for Prague, two for the Taborite towns, another four representing other cities. Three of these were royal towns, the last one being one of the archiepiscopal towns which had always had a somewhat higher standing than the towns owned by secular lords.

At the time of the Čáslav Diet of June 1421 Prague probably reached the zenith of her power during the revolution. There was then no higher authority which could have told the burgomasters or councilors of the twin cities what to do, and the city judge likewise had become an elected official. Prague had become not only a city republic but to some extent a democracy, even though the frequent elections, reflecting the internal struggles, were probably never free of irregularities and quite often were performed simply by acclamation. Želivský proved himself a master in manipulating the masses and in building up what might almost be called the apparatus of a political party, but in the process the resistance against him, especially on the side of the more conservative masters of the University, began to grow. Twice Želivský lost his position of power through adverse elections brought about by energetic counteraction of his enemies, among them especially some members of the high nobility whom he constantly attacked as corrupt and treasonous. Eventually he took two important steps to consolidate his power. In July 1421, upon his recommendation, the two cities of Prague, Old and New Town, were combined into one great city with a common city council in which the representatives of the New Town, most of them his adherents, were more strongly represented than before⁵⁴. This change

51. See F. G. HEYMANN, "The National Assembly of Čáslav", in *Medievalia et Humanistica*, Fasciculus VIII, January 1954, pp. 32-55.

52. See especially *Archiv český*, III, pp. 226 ff.

53. The articles demand that 1.) the word of God be preached freely, 2.) the chalice be given to "all true Christians", 3.) all priests be deprived of worldly power and led back to apostolic poverty, and 4.) mortal sins be prohibited and punished. See about the origin of the charter F. M. BARTOŠ, *Do čtyř artykulů* (Prague 1926) and *Husitství a cizina* (Prague, 1931); and (overrating the influence of Wiclif): Mathilde UHLIRZ, "Die Genesis der vier Prager Artikel" in *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 175, 3, (Vienna, 1914).

54. See BREZOVÁ, *op. cit.*, p. 496, and TOMEK, *Dějepis města Prahy* IV, pp. 181 ff. The third borough, the Small Side on the left bank of the Vltava, had been so ruined by the fighting early in the war that for a few years it ceased to exist as a legal township.

did not last very long, nor did it prove a safe enough guarantee for maintaining Želivský's position, especially after a military defeat (in a battle with the Misnians at Most) had done considerable damage to his prestige. Some weeks later he objected to Prague's participation in a new diet called to Kutná Hora by the regency council, but was, after long negotiations, overruled⁵⁵. (It is characteristic for the position still held by Prague that without her full participation the diet could not even have taken place). Eventually Želivský tried to establish what for all practical purposes was his personal dictatorship. He had one of his followers, a youngish knight named Hvězda of Vícemilice, elected captain general of Prague with extraordinary powers not only over the military forces but also over the civilian population of the city⁵⁶.

Želivský's dictatorship was shortlived. It had been established at the time of the second crusade. The first campaign of this crusade had broken down when a large army from Germany proved unable to conquer the relatively small city of Žatec. More dangerous was the following invasion of eastern Bohemia by a strong Hungarian army led by Sigismund personally. But this army was defeated and largely destroyed in a series of brilliant victories won under the leadership of Žižka, notwithstanding the fact that the latter had meantime gone completely blind⁵⁷. But once the danger had receded and the victorious armies returned to Prague the internal struggle revived. It was mainly for reasons of religious policy — he had favored or at least tolerated the so-called Pikarts, a radical religious sect which questioned the real presence of Christ in the Holy Communion — that Želivský now found himself deserted even by his old allies of the Hussite "Left", that is by Žižka and the other leaders of Tabor. In what might be termed a first attempt at a Thermidor, Želivský and his friends were deprived of all their political power⁵⁸, and a few weeks later, on March 8, 1422, he and nine of his leading adherents were arrested and, without any trial, put to death⁵⁹.

With Želivský's death the party of the "Little people", especially in the New Town of Prague, did not die yet. It remained moderately active in the further course of the revolution, in rather close contact with the Orebite brotherhood of eastern Bohemia. But the end of Želivský's personal rule in the Old Town (even though immediately after his death the city council returned once more into the hands of his friends) helped to pave the way for the temporary return of the country to a monarchical government. After lengthy negotiations Grand Duke Witold, the great ruler of Lithuania and cousin of the Polish King Wladyslaw Jagiello, accepted the Bohemian crown (in what turned

55. BREZOVÁ, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 514.

57. One of these battles, fought before the gates of Kutná Hora, is particularly noteworthy as it is the first military encounter in history at which the offensive use of field artillery is reliably reported. (BREZOVÁ, *op. cit.*, p. 534).

58. See *Archiv český*, I, pp. 209-212.

59. See *Starší letopisové češti*, ed. Palacký, *Scriptores rerum Bohemicarum* III (Prague, 1829), appendix 4, pp. 480-485.

out to be a somewhat less than binding form) and sent to Bohemia, as his personal representative and viceroy, his nephew Sigismund Korybut. The new regent, after a short campaign against the adherents of King Sigismund in Moravia, entered Prague on May 16, 1422. Almost immediately the royal cities which had given their allegiance to Prague the year before, now vowed their loyalty to Prince Korybut as the representative of the "postulated king" Witold. At another great diet at Čáslav, held almost exactly a year after the first, Prince Korybut promised to abide by and fulfill the Four Articles of Prague, and was thereupon solemnly recognized, pending the arrival and coronation of Witold, as the regent of the Kingdom of Bohemia and the margravate of Moravia, and in addition received a special declaration of loyalty from Žižka and the two other captains representing the Taborite federation⁶⁰.

Korybut's regency had considerable significance for the development of the political situation of the cities during this stage of the revolution. His goal, clearly, was the restoration of a stronger monarchical power, and he therefore favored the more conservative elements in Prague as well as in other cities. True he did not take away the right of the city council to elect the city judge, but he re-established the office of sub-chamberlain which had been in abeyance since almost the beginning of the revolution. He took over the mint of Kutná Hora as well as the newly established mint in Prague. He introduced fairly strict police measures against political subversion, and even subjected the powerful guilds of Prague to new regimentation⁶¹. He also seems to have felt that the autonomous status of some of the royal towns — that is, those that had never acknowledged Prague as their liege lord and had therefore not, afterwards, transferred their allegiance to the prince-regent — could no longer be tolerated. Accordingly he undertook a special campaign to force the city of Hradec Králové, the center of the Orebite movement, to change its city government and do homage to him as their lord⁶².

While this tightening of the reins of government in relation to the cities did not find any resistance among the more conservative elements in the Old Town of Prague or among those barons that had always looked askance at the steadily increasing power of the cities, it was opposed by the "leftist" elements both in the New Town of Prague and in the Taborite federation, the latter probably fearing for their own autonomy after what had happened to Hradec Králové. However an attempt made by two Taborite generals to overthrow, in cooperation with the Želivist party of the New Town, the government of Prince Korybut was thwarted

60. An invitation to this diet appears in A. NEUMANN, *Nové prameny k dějinám husitství na Moravě* (Olomouc, 1930) p. 55. For Žižka's declaration see *Archiv český*, III, p. 301, and all editions of Žižka's collected letters and messages. The date of the diet has heretofore (based on a guess by Palacký) erroneously been believed to be April or early May 1422.

61. See TOMĚK, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 255.

62. *Starí letopisové češti*, p. 53.

by the watchfulness and the skill of the sub-chamberlain, William Kostka of Postupice⁶³. The counter-measures taken by Korybut smashed, for the time being, all attempts at re-establishing the former strong position of the Želivists⁶⁴. But this whole development toward a more authoritarian set-up was stopped or at least interrupted when, in the course of the intricate diplomatic game played between King Sigismund and the two royal cousins in Poland and Lithuania, Prince Korybut was, in the spring of 1423, recalled by his uncles.

Korybut's partial successes on this road encouraged the majority of the high nobility to rally to the defense of its position as the ruling class against the encroachments of the cities. In their eyes the main enemy to be subdued was now Žižka. The old general had, sometime late in 1422, parted ways with Tabor where he had found himself in constant conflict with the clergy over some questions of dogma and ritual, and had in the spring of 1423 organized a new field army in the region of the upper Elbe, enthusiastically supported by the priests and townspeople of the Orebiters, especially in Hradec Králové and Čáslav⁶⁵. When he gave his brotherhood and especially its field army a new, strictly binding constitution (usually called his Military Ordinance, "vojenský řád"⁶⁶) this step implied a claim to autonomy, also in regard to the status of Hradec Králové and other cities of this region. In Prague, on the other hand, it was taken for granted that with Korybut's departure the lordship over those cities had reverted to the capital. The result was a long and bitter civil war between the two main Hussite factions, with Prague coming more and more under the influence of the great barons. In October 1423 a diet was called to Prague, (known in history as the St. Gall Diet). Just as in June 1421 it elected a regency council, but it consisted entirely of members of the high nobility, twelve of them, only half of them Hussites (*barones sub utraque*), the other half Catholics (*barones sub una*). Neither Prague nor any of the other cities was represented⁶⁷. But the national government which was supposed to be established thereby remained strictly on paper. The barons were quite unable to enforce the old type class rule which they were striving for. There was an early reaction against them even in Prague, and in the provinces the civil war continued in Žižka's favor. In the spring of 1424, as the result of a lightning campaign into western Bohemia, several cities of the old Taborite confederation as well as Žatec and Louny joined him in his fight against the nobles of the Catholic "Landfrieden" of the Pilsen region. Then, on June 7th, 1424, he beat a strong army of

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

64. *Archiv český* I, p. 216.

65. See his letters, *Archiv český* III, pp. 301, and in all editions of Žižka's messages.

66. Žižka's Military Ordinance, one of the most interesting documents of this period, has been printed in various editions, last by F. SVEJKOVSKÝ, *Staročeské vojenské řády* (Prague, 1952). A partial and not quite precise English translation is to be found in F. Lützwow's *The Hussite War* (London, 1914).

67. See the resolutions of the diet in *Archiv český* III, p. 240.

Praguers and barons, both Hussite and Catholic, at the great battle of Malšov, near Kutná Hora, thereby completely smashing the strength of the coalition formed at the St. Gall Diet⁶⁸. After this one decisive battle almost all the great cities of Eastern Bohemia and the Elbe valley, which so far had remained under the suzerainty of Prague, including rich Kutná Hora, lay at his feet. His next step was directed against Prague herself, which he, who had repeatedly saved the capital, now began to besiege. But the situation inside Prague had changed again. Prince Korybut, urged on by his Czech friends as well as by one political group inside Poland (led by the Lord Chancellor Szafraniec), returned to Prague in defiance to his royal uncles, expecting to gain the crown of Bohemia for himself⁶⁹. He was well aware that he would never achieve his ambition as long as Žižka and the brotherhoods, which by now included the great majority of all the royal cities and other walled towns of the kingdom, stood against him. Thus he opened negotiations with Žižka (making use of a diplomatically gifted young cleric, Jan Rokycana) which resulted in the peace treaty of Libeň⁷⁰. It replaced the coalition of St. Gall which had been concluded along class lines, by a return to the all-Hussite coalition, but now more than ever with the brotherhoods and the cities in the lead.

The fight of Malšov and the peace of Libeň had checked the attempt at an early Thermidor of the Bohemian Revolution for a full decade. The new-won unity was expressed tellingly when a great all-Hussite army, led by Žižka and containing troops of Prague, of both brotherhoods (Orebite and Taborite) and of the Hussite barons undertook a campaign to liberate Moravia from the occupation by King Sigismund's son-in-law, Duke Albert of Austria. But just before crossing the border Žižka fell ill of the plague and died (October 11th, 1424).

A great soldier and strict disciplinarian and by no means a doctrinaire in his views of the high nobility, Žižka nevertheless had done more than anyone else to limit the power of the great nobles along with that of the church, and in his last year he went far in uniting the cities of the Kingdom, under the sign of the religiously orientated brotherhoods, into a single, overwhelmingly powerful federation. With his death their dualism remained, indeed the cities of the west and south which for a while had left the Taborite federation and joined the Orebite now returned to Tabor. The Orebite and especially their field army now called themselves Orphans to indicate the loss of their father — Žižka. But apart from some minor friction the two brotherhoods, both as town federations and as military organizations, cooperated closely.

The leadership of both brotherhoods — after a short interval following

68. *Starí letopisové čeští*, pp. 62 ff. See also the fine analysis of the battle in TOMAN, *Husitské válečnictví za doby Žižkovy a Prokopovy* (Prague, 1898), pp. 339 ff.

69. In a letter of challenge to King Sigismund (WINDECKE, *op. cit.*, p. 168) he calls himself the "postulated and elected King of Bohemia".

70. See, among other sources, the *Chronicon veteris Collegiati Pragensis*, in HÖFLER, *Geschichtsschreiber der hussitischen Bewegung in Böhmen*, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, Abt. I (Vienna, 1856) p. 87.

Žižka's death — fell into the hands of militant priests, both of them named Prokop. One of them, Prokop the Great or the Bald (Procopius magnus or rasmus), officially the head of Tabor, became the virtual leader of the nation in the years from 1426 to 1433, while the other one, Prokop the Lesser or the Short (Prokupek, Procopius Parvus), a personal friend of Žižka's, proved a highly competent military leader for the Orphans. The overall strategy pursued by Prokop the Great was to exert pressure on the enemy by invading his own territory (especially Hungary, Austria and southern Germany) as against the previous policy, determined by the University of Prague, of merely defending the soil of Bohemia⁷¹.

All through this time the cities of Bohemia were essentially small theocratic republics. In the capital Prince Korybut was only able to hold out till 1427. He had, in his dealings with the clerics of the University, backed the most conservative wing which favored reconciliation with the Church of Rome at almost any price. But in the inner struggles between the masters of the University it was the more determined Utraquists, led by John Rokycana, who won out. Under his spiritual leadership and under the intelligent, elastic and fairly popular administration of William Kostka of Postupice as sub-chamberlain, Prague weathered the following years well enough. Around 1430 there was even some reconstruction which made it possible for the Small Side to take her place again as the third of the boroughs of Prague. And while the Old Town continued to be ruled by city councils belonging to the moderate right, including the Czech successors of the former German patricians, the New Town, closely allied with the Orphans, was free to continue on a somewhat more democratic course and to elect some of Jan Želivský's former followers into its city council.

In the other cities, too, the priests remained powerful. In Tabor especially they were not only leaders of the army but also directed most of the civilian life. Their religious thinking developed in a direction ever more divorced from that of the Catholic and even of the Utraquist Church. For some time Prokop's great personality overcame the inner frictions and made it possible for the Czechs to speak with one voice when they finally, after all those years of fighting, stood before the great Church Council of Basel. The Basel Compacts, based on the Four Articles of Prague and permitting the Church of Bohemia to dispense the communion in the two kinds, were virtually secured when in 1433, following the siege of Pilsen (the last great stronghold of Catholicism) a new civil war broke out in Bohemia. It started with an invasion of the New Town by an alliance of all the elements that opposed the brotherhoods, a renewal, indeed, of the St. Gall coalition of 1423. This time, partly due to mistakes made by the leaders of the brotherhoods, the conservative coalition prevailed. The Battle of Lipany (May 30th, 1434) was the final answer of the nobility to the victory which Žižka's brotherhood

71. The work and organization of the field armies under the two Prokops as well as the personality of Prokop the Great are the object of an excellent monograph by R. URBÁNEK, *Lipany a konoc polních vojsk* (Prague, 1934).

had achieved, almost precisely ten years earlier, at Malešov. At Lipany there perished not only the two Prokops and many thousands of the Taborite "Warriors of God"⁷² but also the brotherhoods themselves and their field armies. With them perished the leading role which the towns of Bohemia, united in the two federations, had played during the last decade. While the Hussite reformation — like the later Lutheran and Calvinist reformations essentially a town movement — survived the blow, the Hussite revolution as a great social upheaval was ended. Characteristically the battle paved the way for the eventual recognition of the Emperor Sigismund (he had been crowned by the Pope in 1433) as King of Bohemia⁷³.

The defeat of Lipany and the social reaction that followed it restored to a considerable extent the power of the nobility. In purely economic terms it can indeed be said that the barons were the main winners as no other social class (without much regard to their religion) inherited such a large proportion of the huge tracts of confiscated church land. The knights, too, who played the role of the agrarian middle class, emerged from the war strengthened economically as well as politically. The main losers were the clergy on the one side, and the peasants on the other. But what was the result for the cities?

The answer cannot be simple. There are great gains on one side, painful losses on the other. One and the same process often meant gains and losses at the same time. Thus the expulsion of the Germans gave many Czechs the opportunity of establishing themselves in new economic positions, acquiring houses and land, and especially of taking over completely the government of those places. But it also deprived, in some cases, those cities of old skills, of experienced guidance and of liquid capital. In terms of Bohemia's cultural development (which was, of course, overwhelmingly a city development) the results were predominantly damaging. The vigorous flowering of the arts that had largely been a result of the cultural competition between Czechs and Germans ceased at once, many beautiful buildings, paintings and other works of art were destroyed and the Hussites (especially the Taborites) considered most forms of art — with the notable exception of music — as sinful just as did the English Puritans in the 17th century. The leading cultural institution of the country, the University of Prague, lost its splendid international standing and became instead a purely national school, concentrating completely on its task of theological clarification and guidance.

Yet the great holocaust of those seventeen years of war and revolution left a proud inheritance to the cities of Bohemia. They had withstood the fierce onslaught of huge foreign armies. They had organized, or helped organize, something like a national government by consent at the

72. This expression is used in the famous song, often called "Žižka's battle song", the melody of which is the Leitmotiv of the movement called Tabor in Smetana's tone poem *My Fatherland*, and of Dvořák's *Hussite Overture*.

73. About this battle see the final chapter in URBÁNEK, *op. cit.*

first diet of Čáslav, and had rallied in the federation of the brotherhoods, putting strong armies in the field which eventually forced the enemy to admit Hussite invincibility. They had done all this largely on their own, without any orders "from above". Throughout long times the city halls of Bohemia had been the places where the great national decisions were made. The burghers, craftsmen, little people of those towns had shaped their own fate, and had spoken freely in their own language.

Even after the defeat of the brotherhoods the nobility could not treat the cities as it had done in older times. In the following decades the cities kept their political place in the nation by forming the third Curia, after the Lords and Knights, of the national diet. Later on, during the rule of the Jagiellone kings (1471-1526) attempts were made to deny them this right. But the attack, for the time being, was repulsed. It was not till 1547 that a Habsburg king, the first Ferdinand, deprived Prague of many of its freedoms and privileges, and not till 1620 that, fighting for the last time for the freedom of their religion, the Czech cities succumbed and lost their voice.

Even in those dark times that followed their spirit was never quite killed. It lived in the works of their great refugees, men like Wenceslas Hollar or Jan Amos Comenius. It lived in the great religious traditions of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren. And this spirit had a magnificent awakening when the Czech people experienced their great national renaissance at the beginning of the 19th century.

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6

LE PROBLÈME ETHNIQUE EN ANATOLIE

par

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L'EXPANSION turque est dans l'histoire un phénomène d'une importance comparable aux invasions germaniques, à l'expansion slave, aux conquêtes arabes ; elle mérite donc une étude aussi poussée, pour autant que la documentation le permette, et il faut se défaire de ce qui peut parfois rester dans les esprits en Europe chrétienne de sous-estimation du phénomène ou d'attitude a priori hostile à son égard. Il se trouve que le principal Etat finalement issu de cette expansion, l'Empire ottoman, après avoir réalisé le plus durable des Etats supranationaux que l'histoire ait enregistré depuis Rome, a terminé sa carrière dans une atmosphère de décadence, a eu à lutter contre l'éclosion neuve des nationalismes parmi ses sujets chrétiens, souvent soutenus par le sentiment de l'Europe chrétienne, s'est laissé enfin aller, avec les massacres d'Arméniens, à d'évidentes atrocités : il en a résulté que tout ce qui est turc a été frappé souvent dans l'esprit public d'un discrédit qui, comme appréciation d'ensemble, n'avait aucune justification. Naturellement, du côté ottoman, on réagissait ; mais une première forme de cette réaction avait consisté à exalter les valeurs musulmanes de l'Etat ottoman, de manière à mobiliser au service du régime malade toutes les forces de l'Islam, si bien que l'on aboutissait là encore à une sous-estimation du fait turc en soi. Aujourd'hui où, dégagée de tout ce passé, se consolide une République qui est désormais essentiellement turque, rien ne s'oppose plus en Europe ni en Turquie à ce que le fait turc soit étudié en lui-même. Mais, par une seconde forme de réaction, bien compréhensible, et telle qu'en ont connue presque toutes les nationalités jeunes, quelques historiens turcs récents, par souci légitime de rassembler et dégager tout ce qui est spécifiquement turc, ont peut-être inversement parfois sous-estimé ce qui dans l'histoire turque a été réalisé en étroite symbiose avec les héritiers des civilisations antérieures, la musulmane en particulier. Le

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