

JAN HUS' CHALICE:
SYMBOL OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

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To Coco

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one.

-Martin Luther, *Freedom of a Christian*

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Jan Hus and the Hussite Revolution is a rarely told story of the victory of Christian freedom against the forces of corruption in the medieval church. It is the tale of how a young priest from an obscure town in southern Bohemia, led a nation to reform the corrupt and unbiblical practices of simony, indulgences, and immorality of the clergy. And it is also a story of how that courageous stand would ultimately cost Hus his life. But Hus's death was by no means the end of the story. After Jan was burned at the stake, the grieving Czech nation picked up his banner of reform and against all odds, defeated crusade after crusade in defense of its beliefs in the Word of God as the ultimate basis of truth for the Church.

This thesis will review the Jan Hus's career, his conflicts with Church authorities, and his ultimate conviction and execution at the Council of Constance in 1415. It will also look at the specific content of Hus's theological beliefs and contrast those beliefs with the heresies for which he was accused at the council. And it will also review the subsequent Hussite uprising, including its valiant victories against numerous Church-sponsored crusades, and Bohemia's ultimate victory of attaining permission to worship according to biblical principles in the Compactata of 1433.

The battle cry of the Hussite movement was the "chalice"- that is, the opportunity to offer the laity both bread and wine in Holy Communion, as opposed to bread only, which was the medieval practice. The final portion of this thesis will specifically look at this and other eucharistic questions that arose in the Hussite revolution. It will seek to answer the question as to whether the eucharistic debate was one rooted in the search for theological and

sacramental truth, or whether it was simply a symptom of the greater Hussite quest for Christian liberty.

CHAPTER 1 EARLY BACKGROUND

Upbringing

Jan Hus was born around 1373 in the village of Husinec near the town of Prachatice in southern Bohemia.¹ Little is known about Hus's upbringing, except for the fact that he studied Latin at the school in Prachatice to prepare for theological training. Hus's father died shortly before he left for the University of Prague. Upon arrival at the university, Hus registered himself there as Jan of Husinec, and has thereafter been referred to as Jan Hus. Being of relatively modest means, Hus had to work in the church and tutor other students to earn the money to pay for his schooling.² Some sources reported that the young Hus even had to beg in the streets for his livelihood. He wrote, "When I was a hungry little student I made a spoon out of bread till I had eaten the pease, and then I ate the spoon also."³

As Hus advanced in his studies, he gained the reputation of being a stern and ascetic Christian, even at this relatively young age.⁴ He earned his first theological degree, the Bachelor of Arts, at the university in 1393,⁵ and this was followed by his Bachelor of Divinity in 1394, and Master's of Arts in 1396.⁶

The most productive years of Hus's life were during his professorship at the University of Prague. Hus was elected the dean of the faculty of liberal arts in 1401, rector of the school of Liberal arts in 1402, and later rector of the university in 1409.⁷

¹ Joseph Paul Bartak, *John Hus at Constance: An Interpretation*. (Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 1935), 20.

² *Ibid.*, 21.

³ Eustace J. Kitts, *Pope John XXIII and Master John Hus of Bohemia*. (London: Constable and co. LTD, 1910), 32.

⁴ Bartak, 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

The University of Prague was relatively new university, having been established by Charles IV in 1348. It consisted of students and faculty from Bohemia and the surrounding countries. As such, the constitution of the University of Prague allowed for one vote for each “nation” (Bavarian, Silesian, Polish, or Czech) of masters represented at the school.⁸

In 1383, Richard II of England married Anne, the daughter of Charles IV (Holy Roman emperor and King of Bohemia), and with this union many English influences and cultural contributions entered the country. The most controversial of these influences were the writings of John Wyclif.⁹ Wyclif had been condemned as a heretic in 1381 for his teachings against transubstantiation and his opposition to a corrupt clergy.¹⁰ Jerome of Prague (a friend of Hus’s) had brought Wyclif’s works, *Dialogus*, *Trialogus*, and *De Eucharistia* back from Oxford where he had studied from 1399-1401.¹¹ Wyclif’s works quickly spread throughout Bohemia and they grew in popularity.

Hus’s Career

Hus had been educated at the university under the tutelage of Stanislav of Znojmo, who headed up the realist curriculum at the university.¹² Stanislav became a proponent of many of the teachings of John Wyclif, who was also a realist. Stanislav wrote his *De Corpore Christi* in 1403 in support of Wyclif’s remanist teachings¹³ (remanism was the belief that the substance of bread and wine remained in Holy Communion after the consecration).¹⁴

⁸ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 22.

⁹ Bartak, 23.

¹⁰ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 256.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹² Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 21.

¹³ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 64.

¹⁴ Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 102.

In 1402, Hus was ordained a priest,¹⁵ and on March 14th of the same year he was installed as only the third pastor of the Bethlehem Chapel.¹⁶ This chapel, located in the center of Prague, had been funded by two wealthy benefactors named Millheim and Criz (a shopkeeper), and was established as a chapel where services would be held in the Czech vernacular.¹⁷ The chapel's capacity to hold around four thousand congregants made it an influential bully pulpit for reformist thought in Prague, and its preaching in the vernacular made it highly influential with the working people of the city.¹⁸ The chapel also attracted many women of noble rank, and they started an aid society for the poor there.¹⁹ Of note among these ladies was Queen Sophia herself, who made Hus her personal confessor.²⁰ Hus soon became prominent in the royal court, and wielded considerable influence there.²¹ Worship at Bethlehem Chapel also included hymn singing among the laity, and Hus himself composed a number of hymns that were sung there,²² and even began a school for song at the chapel where new hymns were composed, and where old Bohemian hymns were once again brought back into the church.²³

On May 28, 1403 the German masters of the university, led by John Huebner (a Silesian), wrote a listing of 45 treatises against the teachings of John Wyclif. The Germans, due to their formidable voting block, were able to carry the day, and Hus and other sympathizers of

¹⁵ Bartak, 23

¹⁶ Kitts, 33.

¹⁷ Bartak, 23.

¹⁸ Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*. (Prague: Orbis, 1958), 24.

¹⁹ Bartak, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹ Kitts, 33.

²² Paul Roubiczek and Joseph Kalmer, *Warrior of God: Life and Death of John Hus*. (London: Micholson and Watson, 1947), 124.

²³ Kitts, 40.

Wyclif, while voting for the minority, failed to openly defend his teachings, in Hus's case out of a fear of sinning.²⁴

In 1404, Hus started work on a commentary of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.²⁵ At this time, Hus's writings were quite conservative, and he even held that a man who was falsely excommunicated should suffer humbly for righteousness sake (a position he would live out at the end of his life).²⁶ And although theologically conservative, Hus used the pulpit at Bethlehem Chapel to rail against the growing immorality in society, and the Church itself. Many compared Hus to John the Baptist, as he seemed to mimic his confrontational style of preaching.²⁷ And little by little during 1405 and 1406, Hus began preaching against the corrupt clergy, demanding the defrocking of priests who engaged in sexual irregularities, and against priests who "fleeced" the faithful by demanding contributions for performing the sacraments.²⁸

Hus was originally supported by many in his efforts to reform the Church. For instance, the Czech Archbishop of Prague, Zbynek Zajic, originally had a warm rapport with Hus and the reform-minded masters.²⁹ In 1405, he assigned Hus and others to investigate a reported miracle of a bleeding consecrated communion wafer at Wilsnok, in Brandenburg (NW of Berlin). This relic was first displayed in 1383 and attracted pilgrimages from Bohemia, Hungary, and Germany. In fact, it was purported to be the most famous object of devotion in central Europe at the time, and miracles were attributed to the host. One such miracle was the incidence of a knight who was able to kill his opponent in a duel through the power of the

²⁴ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 23.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ Bartak, 23

²⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 25.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

bloody wafer. Another purported miracle was the story of a robber named Peter who was able to break his chains and escape from prison through the eucharist's power.

The investigation was started when a man with a withered hand came to the church in Wilsnok hoping for a cure. He placed his silver prosthetic hand on the altar, and was declared to be cured by the officiating priest. However, he then rebuked the priest, calling him a liar and revealing to the congregation his unchanged shrived hand. After a visit to Wilsnok, the investigating committee deemed the relic a fraud, and the archbishop prohibited all future pilgrimages from Bohemia to Wilsnok on June 15th, 1405.³⁰ It had become clear that the fraud was being perpetrated to pay for repairs to the damaged church at Wilsnok, where a fire had occurred the year before. The investigation also determined that the priests in that city were falsely dipping wafers into animal blood.³¹

This experience led Hus to take a dubious view of relics for the rest of his career. In fact, he completely rejected any relic which claimed to contain a part of Jesus' body, such as hair, foreskin, or blood. Since Jesus's body was ascended into heaven, Hus felt that all such relics of Jesus' body had to be, by their very nature, frauds.³²

Besides having the confidence in the reformers to appoint them to the investigating committee at Wilsnok, the archbishop also appointed one of the reformers, Stanislav of Znojmo, as preacher at a clerical synod in 1405, and he also appointed Hus to the same role in the October 23rd, 1405, and October 18, 1407 synods.³³

It is important to remember that the archbishop and Hus were originally of one mind in their opposition to the corruption that plagued the church. For instance, in November of

³⁰ David S. Schaff, *John Huss: His Life, Teachings and Death After Five Hundred Years*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 64.

³¹ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 67.

³² *Ibid.*, 68.

³³ Bartak, 25-26.

1403, he instituted many reforms to curb abuses by the clergy, including prohibiting demands of payment for administering the sacraments.³⁴ However, by 1408, the relationship between Hus and the archbishop began to take a turn for the worse. Because of complaints from other priests, Hus was denied his previous role as a synodical preacher. In addition, the archbishop was irked by Hus's insistence on defending an exiled priest, Nicolas of Velenovik. Nicolas had been punished because he taught that laymen as well as the clergy should be able to preach the scriptures. Hus had argued that it was inherently unfair for an ethical priest like Nicolas to be punished while so many priests who committed simony, fornication, or worse, were never punished.³⁵

But it seems fair to say that where Hus and Zbynek parted company was over many of the theological reforms that were beginning to arise in Bohemia. Hus was open to some of these changes (especially in the areas of liturgical practices and ecclesiology), while the archbishop took a uniformly hard line against them. Kitts feels that this difference on theological reforms had a great deal to do with Hus's and Zbynek's differing backgrounds. While Hus had spent most of his lifetime in the academic world, Zbynek, while ordained a priest, had instead spent most of his career as a soldier. So while Zbynek shared Hus's opinion on combating corruptions in the priesthood, he had little knowledge about, or patience for, theological novelties. In addition, as Kitts pointed out, the archbishop showed a "good soldier's readiness to carry out all commands received from headquarters."³⁶ Zbynek would simply not disobey church authorities for the sake of reform.

In addition, the reforming party's tirades against their fellow priests' corruption garnered strong reaction, and on May 20th, 1408 the Czech masters ordered that no one could believe

³⁴ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 67.

³⁵ Bartak, 26.

³⁶ Kitts, 34.

Wyclif's 45 thesis in their heretical sense, and only masters were allowed to read his *Trialogus*, *Dialogus*, and *De Corpore Christi*.³⁷ In addition, the Archbishop asked that all Wyclif's books were to be turned into him, an order with which Hus complied. This order garnered a great deal of opposition, since it required that all of Wyclif's writings, theological, as well as the non-offensive philosophical and scientific writings, should be turned in as well. Many of the university masters objected to destruction of these books because of their rarity, not to mention their expense. It was rumored that the archbishop had ordered that all Wyclif's works be surrendered since he did not have the academic background to discern the heretical writings from the benign.

News began to leak abroad regarding the theological conflict within Bohemia, and many Church officials in Germany began to suspect the Bohemian Church of heresy. And so on July 16th, 1408, at the urging of the king, the Archbishop announced the absence of heresy within his diocese.³⁸

As the year wore on however, the opposition to Hus continued to grow, and by August formal charges were placed against Hus by the Episcopal court³⁹: 1) that remanence was held by some in Hus's congregation, 2) that Hus had stated that any priest who received payment for sacraments was a heretic, and 3) that Hus had stated that he wanted his soul to be where Wyclif's was.⁴⁰ To these accusations Hus replied that, 1) his accusers needed to specifically point out the alleged remanists, 2) that he had only said it was improper to demand payment,

³⁷ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 28.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

and 3) that he did not dare to condemn anyone, and so he hoped that Wyclif's soul was in heaven.⁴¹

⁴¹ Ibid., 30.

CHAPTER 2 THE GREAT SCHISM

The politics of Europe was highly volatile in the 14th and 15th centuries due to the Great Schism. The great schism was the split between the two popes, Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon, France, who had been elected by two separate groups of Cardinals in 1378.⁴² This separation still existed in the early 1400s, with Gregory XIII ruling as pope of the Roman line, and Benedict the XII ruling as the pope of the Avignon line. Wenceslas, the king of Bohemia, gave his support to the revolting cardinals of Benedict XII, in order to gain the political clout to recover the title of emperor (which he lost when he was deposed by the electors of the empire in favor of the German Ruprecht III in 1400). Since Pope Gregory XIII had given his support to Wenceslas's enemy Ruprecht, Wenceslas favored the candidacy of Gregory's rival, Benedict XII.⁴³

Hus and the Czech masters had sided with King Wenceslas in the controversy, while Archbishop Zbynek had sided with Pope Gregory. And this of course contributed to the negative feelings between the Archbishop and the reforming party within his diocese. In addition, the university masters split mostly on ethnic lines on the issue: the German masters sided with the archbishop, while the Czech masters sided with the king.⁴⁴ This so angered the king that on January 18, 1409, he pronounced the edict of Kutna Hora, which was named after the town that he was residing in at the time.⁴⁵ This edict changed the constitution of the university to allow 3 votes for the Czech masters, while giving the other "nations" only 1

⁴² Daniel Didomizio, "Jan Hus's De Ecclesia, Precursor of Vatican II?" *Theological Studies*, 1 June 1999, 247.

⁴³ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

vote for the three remaining “nations” combined.⁴⁶ The German masters responded by leaving the university en masse and starting their own new university at Leipzig. Under the new rules, Hus was easily elected as rector once again.⁴⁷ However, these exiled masters maintained the pressure within the church against Hus and his co-reformers.⁴⁸ By the end of 1408, the archbishop suspended Hus from his duties as priest: an order Hus ignored.⁴⁹

The Council of Pisa was the first attempt by the Church to resolve the split papacy. On June 26, 1409, the council suspended the two contenders, Gregory the XII and Benedict XIII and elected Alexander the V.⁵⁰ King Wenceslas embraced the papacy of Alexander but the archbishop held out his support. In response to the archbishop’s intransigence and his persecution of Hus, the king retaliated against the archbishop by confiscating all his episcopal properties. Feeling the pressure, the archbishop seemingly capitulated, and agreed to the jurisdiction of Alexander V. In response, King Wenceslas returned all of the archbishop’s properties and offices. And Alexander V, in an attempt to win Zbynek’s loyalty, approved his own anti-reformist policy for Bohemia on December 20th, 1409, which included strict punishment for those who would not surrender Wyclif’s writings. It also limited preaching to cathedrals, monasteries, and churches, (thereby making the Bethlehem chapel a prohibited preaching locale).⁵¹ However, Hus continued to preach at the Bethlehem chapel, pending an appeal against the mandatory book turn in that he filed the following year with Pope John XXIII (who succeeded Alexander V after his death in 1410).⁵²

⁴⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁷ Bartak, 27.

⁴⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 34.

⁴⁹ Bartak, 28.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁵¹ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 34.

⁵² Ibid., 36.

Meanwhile the archbishop increased the persecutions against Hus and the reformist masters. On June 16, 1410, he ordered the burning of all Wyclif's books that had been surrendered.⁵³ Reaction was strong against the book burning, and many songs soon began to circulate regarding the burning and the archbishop's theological ignorance, like the following,

“Zbynek, Bishop A.B.C.
Burnt the books but ne'er he knew
What in them was written”⁵⁴

The archbishop also retaliated against Hus's appeal to the pope by excommunicating him.⁵⁵ and all of the priests who signed the appeal⁵⁶ from his diocese. Two days after the book burnings, on 22 July, 1410, local peasants who were outraged at the excommunications of Hus and the other reformers, stormed the Episcopal cathedral and forced the archbishop and forty other priests to flee for safety.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Hus and his supporters became even more vocal in their support for reform and for Wyclif's teachings. At a disputation on July 28th, 1410, Hus defended Wyclif's treatise, *De Trinitate*, saying that it contained no heresy or error, and his friend Jakoubek defended Wyclif's *Dialogus* at the same disputation.

It was around this time that Hus's appeal was referred to the theologians of the University of Bologna.⁵⁸ Hus had refused to appear at Bologna since he felt he would likely be murdered or kidnapped along the way. In addition, both King Wenceslas and Queen Sophia had sent letters to the papal nuncio requesting that Hus be excused in light of possible

⁵³ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁴ Kitts, 47.

⁵⁵ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 37.

⁵⁶ Bartak, 30.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 37.

dangers in making the journey.⁵⁹ The theologians at Bologna determined that the archbishop was not justified in burning all of Wyclif's works (such as the non-heretical works on logic and philosophy), but the theologians did determine a number of his books to be heretical. However, one of the king's emissaries to the Roman curia secretly sided with Archbishop Zbynek and presented gifts from him to the court officials. Due to this active lobbying, the case was subsequently turned over to a Cardinal Odo de Collona, who called Hus to appear at the court to answer the accusations against him. Collona later excommunicated Hus for not appearing at the papal court in February of 1411.⁶⁰ Hus justified his failure to appear on the fact that none of his appeals had been formally heard, and the fact that other emissaries who were sent as messengers with those appeals had been imprisoned.⁶¹ In addition, numerous false reports had been sent to the papal court by Hus's enemies within Prague. They included reports that he preached while another priest said the mass, that he preached no presence of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist, and that he said that an old woman sitting in the congregation was holier than the pope himself.⁶² However, even the papal ban of Hus was ignored by the local Bohemian civil authorities, and this forced the archbishop to place the ban on the civil authorities as well.⁶³

But it is important to remember that the bans ordered by the archbishop against Jan and the civil authorities had little effect as long as the king supported Hus. Since the king would not carry out the archbishop's orders, Hus's excommunication had little practical meaning. The strong support of King Wenceslas at this time allowed Hus a great amount of latitude in his preaching and in his writings.

⁵⁹ Kitts, 49.

⁶⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 38.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶³ Bartak, 31.

Later that year, the pope, who needed Wenceslas's favor, was convinced by the king to sequester the diocese's income and properties in order to pay back those whose books had been burned by the archbishop.⁶⁴ Zbynek sought peace with the king in order to have his properties returned to him, and he offered to profess no heresy within Bohemia, and drop all the lawsuits against Hus. However, he soon reneged on this agreement and fled to the court of Sigismund, the King of Hungary, Wenceslas's brother.⁶⁵ As an interesting footnote, it was Sigismund who would eventually replace Wenceslas as Holy Roman Emperor.⁶⁶ However, this combat between the archbishop on one side, and Hus and the king on the other, quickly ended when archbishop died of an unknown illness in Bratislava, on September 28th, 1411.⁶⁷

In that same month, a Dr. John Stokes from Cambridge University in England visited Prague, and the reforming scholars at the university, thinking that he was a Wyclifite, invited him to a disputation. However Stokes, who was a staunch conservative, refused to appear on two separate occasions. Hus decided to deliver an address called "*replica magistri Iannis Hus contra Anglicum Iioanem Stokes Vuicleffi clalumiatorum.*" In this treatise, Hus again stated that he hoped Wyclif was among the saved, although he did not definitively state whether he was saved or not.⁶⁸

King Wenceslas, concerned about international rumors of Bohemian heresy, called a synod to try to resolve the issue of Wyclifite heresy within his domain. That synod was scheduled to be held on February 2nd, 1412 at Cesky Brod, but was instead held at the episcopal palace, in order to exclude Hus. The king attempted to obtain additional powers over the church at this synod, seeking, for instance, the authority to approve or disapprove of

⁶⁴ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 39.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁶ Josef Macek, 27.

⁶⁷ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 41.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

episcopal condemnations. However, the synod was dismissed without any reconciliation between the king and the Church.

The Indulgence Sale

The controversy in Prague was further inflamed over the issue of indulgences. Five months earlier, on Sept 9th, 1411, Pope John XXIII had ordered a bull of indulgences to finance his war against King Ladislaus of Naples (an ally of Gregory XII).⁶⁹ A priest named Wenceslas Tiem arrived in May of 1412 with a team of priests to lead the indulgence selling campaign within Bohemia.⁷⁰ Tiem personally led the sale within the city of Prague with sales at three of the largest churches, St. Vitus Cathedral, the Tyn Church, and the Vysehrad.⁷¹ Hus denounced the indulgence sellers in his sermons, while not denouncing the indulgences themselves, which were a longstanding church practice. Instead, he concentrated his opposition on the unethical methods used by the indulgence sellers. And while the king had been sympathetic to Hus's teachings in the past, this time he opposed Hus and allowed the sale of indulgences within his realm.⁷² The only restriction on the indulgence sale made by the king was that the gospel should be read at each sale, and that no charge should be made for confessions that were heard. However, even these minimal restrictions were ignored by Tiem and his preachers.⁷³ Tiem also delegated the indulgence sale to agents who guaranteed Tiem a price for each indulgence sold, and were allowed to keep any profit that was made over the commitment price. As such, it was in the seller's best interest to fleece the populace as much as possible.⁷⁴ Hus wrote about the indulgence sale,

⁶⁹ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 43.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷¹ Roubiczek and Kalmer, 125.

⁷² Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 44.

⁷³ Roubiczek and Kalmer, 125.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

“The sale of indulgences seemed to me completely unworthy and scandalous because Master Wenceslas trafficked in them with the archdeaconate, the deaconates, and the parishes, for fixed sums of money, just as though houses, inns, and taverns trafficked with sluggish, coarse, adulterous, and unbelieving men who had done many an evil deed and taxed the people miserably in their faith only in order to increase the selling price and make still more profit. Many thereby made large sums of money and thus stained their souls with simony and avarice.”⁷⁵

Hus was also deeply disturbed by the immoral effects the indulgence sale would have on the consciences of the people. He later wrote, “I was driven by the anxiety, not that the people were being plundered against all right, but especially that they should not, seduced by the peddlers of indulgence, abandon true penitence, and that I should not myself be made an accomplice in this sin.”⁷⁶

The immoral effects of the indulgence sale were compounded by the fact that the Church had no true power to offer forgiveness in exchange for money. Hus wrote, “By such indulgences the foolish rich are led to cherish vain hopes, the laws of God are held in contempt, the unschooled populace more readily become sinners, heavy sins are acted but light and the people in general are plundered...the Pope cannot possess such a power.”⁷⁷

This decision by the king to allow the indulgence sale was the beginning of the end of their close relationship.⁷⁸ Hus held a disputation on the question of indulgences on 7 June 1412, however his old friend Stephan Palec, now a dean within the university, forbade all bachelors of divinity from attending.⁷⁹ Hus issued a 12 point treatise “*Contra Bullum Papae Ioan XXIII*,” spelling out the reasons for his opposition to the sale,⁸⁰ which included his view

⁷⁵ Ibid., 125.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 124.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 130.

⁷⁸ Bartak, 33.

⁷⁹ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 44.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 45.

on the immorality of funding a Christian vs. Christian war with the use of church funds.⁸¹

Nevertheless, most of the faculty at the university supported the indulgence sellers.⁸²

Among the populace however, the opposition to the indulgence sale was widespread.

Popular demonstrations, which often included the burning of indulgence certificates, erupted in the streets. Roubiczek gives an excellent account of one of these protests:

“On June 24 the courtier Voska of Waldstein, a friend of Jerome [a reforming priest and friend of Hus’s] and probably in league with him, organized a strange procession through Prague. On a wagon drawn by students there stood two well-known prostitutes with the papal bulls [of the indulgence sale] dangling round their necks. They were covered with little silver bells which rang at every moment like the bells at mass. The wagon was accompanied by several hundred students with sticks and daggers, some of them dressed up as executioners and torturers. They shouted out, “We are taking the bulls and writings of a certain heretic to the stake. Make way! We are taking the bulls and writings of a heretic to the stake!” The procession passed the palace of the archbishop, went over the main bridge, and through the whole Old and the New Towns as far as the Charles Square. The way was lined by a crowd agog with excitement, controlled by the students and courtiers but also incited by them. Before the pillory of the New Town a bonfire was lit and there the bulls were burnt, a contemptuous revenge for the burning of the books of Wyclif. Beside the fire stood an iron chest, like those used for indulgences, and lampoons and libelous compositions and songs were thrown in it.”⁸³

The king ordered the end of these protests, and ordered the university faculty to write up a defense for the sales of indulgences, the result of which was the treatise, *Tractatus Gloriosus*. The king also summoned the opposing parties to the castle of Zebrač in an attempt to force reconciliation, but none was attained.⁸⁴

The protests quickly spread into the churches themselves, and many church members were seized and whipped in retaliation for their disruptions. At the time, Hus believed Stephan Palec and Stanislav of Znojmo, two of his fellow reformers who had switched sides and become staunch conservatives, were behind many of the reprisals. The climax of these

⁸¹ Bartak, 33.

⁸² Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 45.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

retaliations was the arrest of three young men, identified in Hus's letters as two students and a shoemaker named Martin, John, and Stasek.⁸⁵ While it is unclear who, one of the men disrupted a priest who was giving a sermon in New Town and said, "You lie. We heard something quite different from Master Hus. It's all fraud and lies."⁸⁶ The priests immediately seized the young man and imprisoned him in the Old Town Hall. Soon the two others were also brought to Old Town Hall after similar disruptions at two other churches. It was rumored at the time that Jerome was the mastermind behind the coordinated disruptions by the three men. At the Town Hall, the young men were tortured in attempt to extract recantations from them. Hus soon arrived, followed by 2,000 angry townspeople and he offered to be arrested in their stead: an offer that was summarily refused. He was then told by the Town Council that nothing would happen to the young men if Hus was willing to disperse the crowd. Hus agreed. However, despite the Council's promise, after most of the crowd left for their homes, the three men were shuffled to the executioner's block. What was left of the crowd, seeing the impending execution, blocked the guards from reaching the execution area. However, the Council guards quickly cleared a space in the crowd and beheaded the men on the spot.⁸⁷

The faithful led a procession and interned the three martyrs at Bethlehem chapel.⁸⁸ A hymn which was reserved for martyrs was sung which contained the lyrics, "They are holy, for God's testament they have offered their bodies to death."⁸⁹ The working people of the town, armed with weapons, soon surrounded the town hall and had to be forcibly put down

⁸⁵ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 46.

⁸⁶ Roubiczek and Kalmer, 132.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁸⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 47.

⁸⁹ Roubiczek and Kalmer, 133.

by the city guards.⁹⁰ The incident led Hus to later proclaim that all communion between Roman and Czech Christians within Bohemia had been severed by these barbarous executions.⁹¹

King Wenceslas then sought to squelch any resistance against the indulgence sale from within the university itself. He ordered the faculty of the University to meet in front of the Prague Town hall while he read the proposal written at Zebrač castle – which included a prohibition of preaching heresy, a prohibition of any opposition against the papal bull of indulgences, and a prohibition against any defense of the 45 theses of Wyclif. However, in defiance of these pronouncements, Hus later announced 7 articles of Wyclif that he would not condemn.⁹²

Pressure was also applied to the reformers at the papal court. A young priest named Michael De Causis was sent as a delegate by Bohemian clergy who were loyal to Rome, and he reported that Hus was openly defying the previous ban, defending Wyclif, and speaking against indulgences.⁹³ The heat was further turned up against Hus when the papal representative, Cardinal Peter degli Stephaneschi placed an even a stricter ban on Hus. He announced that if Hus would not appear at the papal court, an interdict would be placed on all churches in any city in which he resided. In other words, if Hus remained in Prague, the Church itself would be prohibited from holding masses and services there.⁹⁴ It was also declared illegal to provide Hus food, drink, or lodging or to sell anything to him. And furthermore, he was ordered to be taken immediately into custody and Bethlehem chapel was

⁹⁰ Macek, 26.

⁹¹ Bartak, 34.

⁹² Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 47.

⁹³ Bartak, 34.

⁹⁴ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 48.

ordered to be torn down.⁹⁵ Under such intense pressure, Hus was forced to leave Prague, and he moved out of town to the castle of Kozi Hradec, near Tabor, in southern Bohemia.⁹⁶

While in exile, Hus wrote many of his most important works, including *Exposition of the Faith*, *Exposition of the Decalogue*, *Exposition of the Lord's Supper*, and also *Concerning Simony*.⁹⁷ In *Concerning Simony*, Hus actively called upon the nobility to expunge Bohemia of all corrupt Church officials. He wrote,

“O, ye faithful kings, princes, lords and knights, awake from the heavy dreams into which the priests have lulled you and drive heresy out of your domains, the heresy of simony, as otherwise I doubt not there will be storms and no real peace in the land such as is granted to people of goodwill. And remember that God has entrusted you with governing the people according to his order. Therefore do not allow them to commit simony or other sins; do not allow them to be robbed by means of the devil's cunning; and do not allow the property of your estates to be taken out of your country to your detriment. O, if you dare to resist those that take away cattle, then oppose likewise those that secretly cheat the poor of their money and thus rob their souls as well as the souls of the poor. O, know ye that to spread simony among the people does them more harm than to rob them in any other way.”⁹⁸

Hus also met with some Waldensian reformist preachers who were present in that area, and led an active preaching ministry among the peasantry there.⁹⁹

Hus's Ecclesiology

But most importantly, it was there that Hus wrote his most famous work, *De Ecclesia*, which was heavily based on Wyclif's work of the same name. In *De Ecclesia*, Hus rejected the Roman definition of the Church, with the pope as its head and the cardinals as its body,¹⁰⁰ and instead saw the church as consisting of the Lord's elect members, with Christ himself as the Church's head. He also opposed the idea that salvation was dependent upon the Roman church structure and obedience to a local bishop, but instead linked salvation to faith in the

⁹⁵ Bartak, 35.

⁹⁶ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 48.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁸ Macek, 112.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 49.

gospel message found in the Holy Scriptures. Hus also claimed that the “power of the keys” was not an absolute power of binding and loosing on behalf of the episcopate, but was rather a proclamation of God’s own acts of justice according to his biblical promises.¹⁰¹ In a similar way, he saw Peter and the apostles as holding their positions of authority because of their faith in Christ, and willingness to follow his commandments. In Hus’ view, God would have replaced the apostles if they had not displayed faithfulness towards the gospel. And therefore the legitimacy of the pope and bishops in Hus’s day was also dependent on their faithfulness and piety.¹⁰²

In *De Ecclesia*, Hus attacked the corruption that was so rampant in his day. He believed that much of the Church’s trouble started as a result of the famous Donation of Constantine. This document, which was fraudulently created to give princely power to the popes in Rome around 752, was believed to be genuine in Hus’s day. It was supposedly written by Emperor Constantine in the 4th Century to allow the pope the power to act as a civil ruler. Hus felt that this donation had allowed “pontiffs... [to] have headship over all the earth, as judges over kings.”¹⁰³ And in his mind the illegitimate role of the church as a civil power led to all types of power-grabbing, avarice, and other vices.

De Ecclesia also spoke out about the interdict that had caused Hus to leave Prague. Hus questioned whether it was lawful for the pope to deny an entire populace the services of the Church and the sacraments in order to punish one individual, in this case, himself. He wrote,

“Who even doubts that to hear confession and consult unto salvation and to preach the Word of God are works of mercy? Similarly to present the sacrament of the eucharist to the devout people and to baptize are works of mercy. What therefore, is the reason for withdrawing these things from the people of God without any demerit on their part?...Therefore, if one soul, through this severity, with which this whole household was

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 50.

¹⁰² Didomizio, 247.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 247.

anathematized, should in passing out of the body, perish without baptism, the death of innumerable bodies, if innocent men are to be violently drawn from the church and put to death, it is not to be compared with this damning injury.”¹⁰⁴

And he also considered the interdict a political expedient which would never have been used in the primitive church. He wrote, “What apostle observed this method or what saint after the apostles? Never was it is the method of Christ, that head of the holy Church, in whose method all truth useful for the Church is contained.”¹⁰⁵

In a way, Hus’s view of the true Church was very similar to the idea of an “invisible church” of true believers within the visible church structure, that was held by later Reformation leaders such as Luther and Calvin.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps Didomizio said it best when he described Hus’s view of the Church as “essentially an eschatological reality known only to God.”¹⁰⁷

Also in *De Ecclesia*, Hus stressed that Christ, and not the pope, was the head of the Christian Church. Speaking of the Church he wrote, “Because not upon the pope but upon the head, Christ, does her life depend. And blessed be God that, when a pope is insane or become a heretic, the church militant remains the faithful spouse of the Lord Jesus Christ!”¹⁰⁸ And furthermore, Hus argued, how could one follow the leadership of a single church leader, when due to the Great Schism one could not even determine who the legitimate pope should be? He wrote, “For now Balthazar, called John XXIII, is in Rome; and Angelo Correr, called Gregory XII, is in Rimini; and Peter de Luna, called Benedict, is in Aragon. Why does not one of them, called most Holy Father, out of the fullness of power constrain the others with

¹⁰⁴ John Huss, *The Church*, tr. by David S. Schaff, D.D. (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1915), 288-9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹⁰⁶ Bartak, 32.

¹⁰⁷ Didomizio, 247.

¹⁰⁸ John Huss, *The Church*, 295.

their adherents to submit to his jurisdiction? By authority of which one does the Roman curia speak; which one has the fullness of power over every man on earth?”¹⁰⁹

As one might expect, *De Ecclesia* was seen as highly offensive to the conservative Church establishment. Hus’s old friend turned enemy, Palec, replied with his own *De Ecclesia* and a harsh invective against Jan called *Antihus*.¹¹⁰

Hus’s years at Kozi Hradec may have proved to be some of his most influential, since his works that were written there were carried as far as Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and Austria. However, the temperature in Rome did not become any cooler for Hus, since a general council there in January of 1413 condemned Wyclif’s writings and ordered that they be burned.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 295.

¹¹⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 50.

CHAPTER 3 THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

In 1414, Emperor Sigismund called for the Council of Constance to once again address the split papacy, since the Council of Pisa had failed to solve the matter.¹¹¹ Pisa, which elected Alexander V as a replacement for both Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, did not succeed in removing the loyalties that supporters had for either of these papal contenders. John the XXIII (who succeeded Alexander V), since he had been accused of simony, agreed to come to the council only on the condition that he be received with papal dignity.¹¹² This council began on November 5th 1414, and concluded on April 22nd, 1418,¹¹³ and its major accomplishment was the deposition of the two papal contenders, John XXIII and Benedict XIII, the forced abdication of Gregory XII, and the election of a new and only pope, Martin V.¹¹⁴

In the Spring of 1414, Hus accepted assurances from Emperor Sigismund for safe passage to and from the Council of Constance, on the condition that Hus would answer the charges made against him. Although Hus would not appear at a papal trial for reasons stated before, he welcomed the chance to defend his views in front of the distinguished theologians at a church council.¹¹⁵ And he knew that he could not ethically refuse to appear at the council, since his reasons for his previous refusals appeared to have been removed by the assurances of the emperor.¹¹⁶

Hus left Bohemia accompanied by two knights, John of Chlum and Wenceslas of Duba, as well as a party of 30 others. He arrived on November 13, 1414, and he stayed with a local

¹¹¹ Joseph Paul Bartak, *John Hus at Constance: An Interpretation*. (Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 1935), 36.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁵ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 51.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

widow there named Frida.¹¹⁷ Upon his arrival, fliers had already been placed upon church doors announcing that Michal z Německého Brodu, would be debating Hus, “the heretic”. Chlum and Duba announced Hus’s arrival to the pope, and obtained verbal assurances of his continued freedom.¹¹⁸ On the 28th of November, the Bishops of Augsburg and Trident, as well as the mayor of Constance and a knight named Poden, met with Hus at a preliminary meeting to discuss his teachings. Chlum accompanied Hus at this meeting, and both he and Hus were arrested and incarcerated at the episcopal palace after its conclusion.¹¹⁹

On that day, Hus’s party did not yet have a copy of the letter of safe passage from the emperor. This is because since Henry of Lacembok, the knight assigned to obtain and deliver the letter, had been delayed due to his attendance at Emperor Sigismund’s coronation on November 8th. Henry arrived the next day with the letter, but by that time Hus was already imprisoned.¹²⁰ Lacembok’s lack of urgency may have foreshadowed his future lack of support for the reforming cause. After Hus’s death, Lacembok left the reforming movement when political expedience demanded it.¹²¹ There is also some historical debate as to whether the order of safe conduct which was signed at Spires on October 18, 1414, may have only guaranteed freedom until a fair trial, but nevertheless, the letter was not respected in either case.¹²² The emperor protested the arrest as a violation of his free passage guarantee to Hus, but soon rescinded his demand for Hus’s release under political pressure from the Council.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Bartak, 36.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹²¹ Ibid., 77.

¹²² Ibid., 71.

¹²³ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 53.

Chlum was soon set free, by Hus was retained, and on December 6th he was moved to the dungeon of the Dominican monastery, where the general congregation of the council was to meet. Hus suffered from high fever due to the unsanitary conditions in his cell, and was soon moved to a cleaner cell at the request of his friends.¹²⁴ On December 10th, an investigating commission began asking Hus for his views on Wyclif's 45 theses. Hus admitted his agreement with nine of them, and this admission verified some of the eyewitness accounts that were received by the council before Hus's imprisonment.¹²⁵

On March 21st of the following year, John the XXIII, fearing imprisonment by the council for simony and other abuses, fled Constance in disguise. The search for John XXIII threw the entire city into confusion, and Hus was left in his cell without food for 3 days. John of Chlum managed to get Hus moved again (this time to the tower of the castle at Gottlieben), where he believed Jan would receive better care. It was not until June 5th that Hus was once more moved back to the Dominican monastery for his trial. At the monastery, a commission of three, consisting of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the Bishop of Luebeck, and the Bishop of Tiefern, was assigned to hear his case and report back to the council. In addition, another commission, consisting of Cardinal D'Ailly, (chancellor of the University of Paris who later known as the "hammer of heretics"),¹²⁶ Cardinal St. Mark, Cardinal Brancas, and the Cardinal of Florence, as well as two generals of order and 6 doctors of theology, were assigned to review Hus's writings.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Bartak, 38-39.

¹²⁵ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 54.

¹²⁶ Bartak, 66.

¹²⁷ Bartak, 39.

The prosecutor's strategy in the trial was to tie Hus's preaching and theology to Wyclifism, since all of Wyclif's writings had been condemned as heresy the year before.¹²⁸ In fact, the council had so detested the memory of John Wyclif; they ordered that his body be exhumed so that he could be burned as a heretic post mortem.¹²⁹ Therefore, if one could prove that Hus adhered to the beliefs of a proven heretic, he could then easily be convicted as a heretic himself.

The cards were also consistently stacked against Hus during his trial. First, he was denied an advocate at his trial, a decision that almost surely guaranteed his conviction.¹³⁰ The prosecution was also greatly assisted by the Bishop of Litomysl, who had raised funds in Bohemia for the prosecution of the trial. Litomysl later led soldiers into battle in the Hussite wars and for his courage was known as "John the Iron."¹³¹ In addition, the trial was buoyed by the testimony of Hus's old friend Palec and Michael de Causis.¹³² Palec had been a close friend of Hus's, but after Pope John XXIII's bull against Hus, Palec broke with the reformers and became a staunch advocate of the papacy.¹³³ In addition, another staunch enemy of Hus's, Michael Broda, led protests in the streets of Constance for Hus's conviction. He and his supporters erected placards around the city and attempted to sway public opinion against Hus. One of the placards even stated that Hus claimed to be the fourth person of the trinity.¹³⁴ The main goal of all these efforts was to create such an overwhelming pressure on Hus that he would be hard pressed not to recant.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 53.

¹²⁹ Bartak, 52.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

However, Hus's friends didn't rest easily either in defense of their friend. Chlum posted a protest on the main door of the Council hall, and showed the Emperor's bill of safe passage to whoever would listen to his pleas for Hus's release. In addition, Chlum got the Czech delegation to the council involved in seeking Hus's freedom, and he had also sent Lacembok back to the emperor to report the flouting of his safe passage order.¹³⁶ Many letters of protest were received in defense of Hus, most notably a May 12th letter from 250 nobles of Bohemia and Moravia. These efforts helped to force the conviction process against Hus out into the open. The council had hoped to condemn Hus privately and avoid an open trial at a plenary meeting of the council. This was one of the reasons that Hus had been placed at Gottlieben after his poor treatment at the Franciscan monastery.¹³⁷ The council had hoped that he could be convicted and executed quietly outside of the city of Constance. And while his friends had hoped for better treatment at Gottlieben, his treatment there was even worse than when he was at the monastery. In fact, it was reported that Hus was tortured there by being tied hand and foot and then being exposed to cold winds.¹³⁸ Fortunately, the protests of his friends forced the council to move Hus back to the council locale for an open trial.¹³⁹

The Papal System at Hus's Trial

Most actions against accused heretics, either in the Middle Ages or today, come down to the issue of church authority, and Hus's case was no exception. Jan's great sin was his preaching and writings against the infallible authority of the church, and the council concentrated its efforts against these heresies.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 41.

¹³⁷ Bartak, 42.

¹³⁸ Macek, 27.

¹³⁹ Bartak, 42.

Hus was brought before the council on June 5th, the same day as his move back from Gottlieben castle. At this initial session, the council vented its rage against Hus to frighten him into recanting.¹⁴⁰ On the third day of the trial, Hus was asked to 1) confess to have erred in all the articles brought up against him in the trial, 2) promise not to think or preach any of those beliefs in the future and 3) recant publicly.¹⁴¹ At the trial, Hus attempted to deny those charges that were false, and to be corrected on those remaining charges according to scripture.¹⁴² He also attempted to have the council separate those accusations which he acknowledged from those that he denied ever believing.¹⁴³ But Hus was repeatedly told to remain silent during the proceedings by Cardinal D'Ailly and Cardinal Zabarella.¹⁴⁴ In fact, the hearing itself was somewhat of a kangaroo court since the sentence was drawn up before the last day of Hus's trial, and this hearing would not even have occurred except for the intercession of Emperor Sigismund himself (who was now present at the council).¹⁴⁵

Hus was ultimately condemned on thirty articles of heresy.¹⁴⁶ Most of these articles had been extracted from *De Ecclesia*, and also from his polemical works against Stephan Palec and Stanislav.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, it was Stephan Palec's work with the council (along with the help of Michael de Causis) that was responsible for providing the evidence for most of the charges.¹⁴⁸ And even though Hus was accused of espousing Wyclif's beliefs on ecclesiology, he attempted to clarify many of his beliefs on church authority and the role of the pope. He first distinguished the office of the pope from the pope's character – that is –

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴¹ Bartak, 44.

¹⁴² Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 70.

¹⁴³ Bartak, 45.

¹⁴⁴ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 70.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 71.

¹⁴⁶ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 60.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 69.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 69.

Hus believed a pope's office was valid even if he was among the reprobate.¹⁴⁹ He also denied the Wyclifite belief that Pope Urban should have been the last pope, and that the church structure should no longer include the papal office.¹⁵⁰

While Hus did not specifically oppose the church's authoritative structure of popes, cardinals, and bishops, Jan saw the church as an invisible and mystical body headed by Christ. He considered the true church to be the totality of the elect in the world. And he also believed that it was the obligation of popes and cardinals to follow the dictates of scripture¹⁵¹, and that the pope's teaching should mirror the teaching of the Apostles.¹⁵² Therefore, according to Hus, obedience to church authority should be based on the church hierarchy's obedience to God's law, rather than to a blind obedience in the papacy regardless of its sins or corruptions.¹⁵³

And ironically, although the council grilled Hus on his support of the papal system, the council itself was held to correct the failures of the papacy. During the Council of Constance itself, three popes were deposed, and one of those popes, John the XXIII, had been accused of simony.¹⁵⁴

Hus's greatest obstacle in his own defense was that the Council had no intention of arguing theology with a presumed heretic,¹⁵⁵ and the only purpose of the trial, in its own eyes, was to obtain a recantation from Hus. But Hus was ultimately unwilling to recant

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁵² Ibid., 61.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 63.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 62.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 71.

positions he never held, or positions that could not be shown to be in error in light of scripture.¹⁵⁶ And Hus felt it would be deeply unethical to lie simply to save his own life.¹⁵⁷

At the end of the day, the emperor repeated the terms to Hus: either renounce errors attributed to him at the trial or be turned over to the secular authorities for punishment as a heretic.¹⁵⁸ However, there was a delay in Hus's ultimate condemnation for about three weeks so that additional efforts could be made to induce Hus to recant.¹⁵⁹ On July 1st, another assembly met with Jan at the Franciscan monastery. Anticipating this renewed effort, Hus arrived at the assembly with a written statement explaining why he would not recant.¹⁶⁰ This was followed by a personal visit of the Cardinal of Ostia as well. Finally, on July 5th, the Cardinals of Cambrai and Florence, as well as 6 bishops, the Patriarch of Antioch, and a doctor of laws drew up a milder letter of recantation in hope that Hus would sign it. The council also brought his friends Chlum and Duba along so that their presence might convince Hus to end the trial and save his own skin. However, this effort failed as well.¹⁶¹

Hus was formally condemned at a July 6th plenary session of the council in the cathedral church of Constance.¹⁶² On that fateful day, the bishop of Concordia read him his condemnation and sentence. All of Hus's writings were to be destroyed; he was declared a heretic, defrocked, and given over to the secular authorities for punishment.¹⁶³ In the deconsecration ceremony that followed, a chalice was placed in his hand and then taken from him. The archbishop of Milan declared, "O cursed Judas, who left the realms of peace and allied himself with the Jews, we take from thee today the chalice of salvation." Hus replied

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 73.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 74.

¹⁵⁸ Bartak, 45.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶² Ibid., 48.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 52.

that he hoped he would be drinking that chalice that very day in heaven.¹⁶⁴ The bishops present at the session declared, “We commit thy soul to the devil, while Hus declared, “And I commit it to the most sacred Lord Jesus Christ.” A crown with figures of the devil painted on it and the words “Archheretic” was placed on his head. Hus declared, “I wear with joy the crown of opprobrium for the love of Him who wore a crown of thorns.”¹⁶⁵ Finally, Hus’s clerical vestments were ceremonially removed as well.¹⁶⁶

The Elector Louis Count Palatine, the vicar of the empire, turned Hus over to the chief magistrate of Constance, to carry out the capital sentence.¹⁶⁷ It would be the same Louis, who would lead an army against the Hussites in 1420, and would organize a confederation against the Hussites in 1430.¹⁶⁸ Led by four town sergeants and 800 armed men, Hus was paraded through the streets and past the city gate of Schnetzthor, to an open field near the city gardens, where he was tied to the stake.¹⁶⁹ After straw was piled around him, Hus was once again asked by the council messengers to recant his views. Hus replied, “The prime endeavor of all my preaching, teaching, and writing, and of all my deeds has been to turn people from their sins, and this truth that I have written, taught, and preached in accordance with the Word of God and the teaching of the holy doctors, I willingly seal my death today.”¹⁷⁰ Hus’s last words were, “My brethren, learn that I firmly believe in my savior: it is in His name that I suffer, and this very day shall I go and reign with Him.” As the fire was lit all around him Hus began to sing, “Christ thou Son of the living God have mercy on me.” After completing half of the second verse, “Who was conceived of the Virgin Mary..” he

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 54

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 68.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 54

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 70.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁷⁰ Macek, 28.

died.¹⁷¹ Hus would be followed in martyrdom at the Council of Constance by his fellow reformer Jerome of Prague in the following year on May 30th 1416.

One hundred years after his death, Hus's teachings had a strong influence on Reformation theology. On June 23rd, 1520 Luther wrote, "I have hitherto taught and held all the opinion of John Hus unawares; so did John Staupitz; in short, we are all Hussites to a word."¹⁷² Hus is also known for inspiring the start of the Church of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren.¹⁷³ After the 30 Years War ended in 1648, Bohemia and Moravia were once again completely returned to the Roman Church and Roman Catholic theology. This led over 30,000 Bohemian and Moravian Brethren to leave the Czech lands and settle on the Herrnhut estate of Count Zinzendorf in Germany.¹⁷⁴ It was these "Herrnhuters" who preserved Hussite theology into the present day.

¹⁷¹ Bartak., 55.

¹⁷² Ibid., 52.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 55.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 56.

CHAPTER 4 THE HUSSITE UPRISING

When the news of Hus's and Jerome's deaths reached Prague, it only accelerated the church reforms that had already begun to take place in Bohemia. (A specific discussion of these changes will be presented later under the chapter on the eucharistic controversy.) But soon revolts in town after town overthrew the nobles and church authorities, and new governments were set up that were run by the town burghers and peasants. This Hussite uprising was preceded by an uprising at Plzen, where the preacher Wenceslas Koranda led the people to rise up and overthrow the monastery and the town government. The uprising at Plzen was followed by other successful uprisings in the towns of Klatovy, Zatec and Domazlice between the years 1416 and 1419.¹⁷⁵

In Prague, the nobility ran the city government, and the Bethlehem Chapel was no longer the hotbed of resistance it once was, since its new pastor, Jakoubek of Stribo, was loyal to the local government there. Instead, the church of the Virgin Mary of the Snows in New Prague was now where the Hussite legacy of protest prevailed under the preaching of Hus's former student, Jan Zelivsky. Along with Zelivsky, two German scholars, Peter and Nikolaus of Dresden had been active in Prague in starting a school for the children of the town burghers. Nikolaus preached that the days of the corrupt Church would soon be over, and he paraded placards through the streets which compared the rich and corrupt church leaders with the simple and sacrificial lives of the twelve apostles.¹⁷⁶ Nikolaus was forced to flee Prague in 1417, and in that year he was burned at the stake as a heretic in the nearby town of Meissen.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*. (Prague: Orbis, 1958), 32.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

Zelivsky often preached from the book of Revelation, prophesizing an imminent day of the Lord, when the Antichrist would be defeated. And he identified the church authorities and the nobles as having the marks of Antichrist. He also preached that as Christians, the people should take up arms and defeat these enemies of God.¹⁷⁸ In an April 19th, 1419 sermon, Zelivsky preached that the Church and nobles were simply leeching off of society, and were acting in a manner that was completely antithetical to the apostolic way, and could only lead to sin. He wrote,

“Every Christian should earn his living through work. The Popes and mendicant friars lie if they say that they are the successors of the Apostles. The Apostles worked with their own hands and worked with the people. ‘For that if any would not work neither shall he eat’ (2 Thess. 3:10). All courtiers and lackeys, ladies in waiting, wealthy priests, chaplains and canons, yearn for an idle life. Idle women fall into many an evil out of sheer slothfulness. The apostles says, ‘But the widow that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth’ (1Tim. 6). Toiling people fall less easily into sin...For the day has not yet dawned, but when it comes, Christ will appear and on that instant make us prosper.”¹⁷⁹

On June 30th 1419, Zelivsky led a heavily armed mob of the common people from his church, drove the priests out of the conservative church of St. Stephen, and then headed to the New Town hall, where a number of Hussite reformers were being imprisoned. The crowd took over the town hall, killing its guards and tossing the city fathers out of the windows to their deaths. This “defenestration” was the official beginning of the Hussite uprising.¹⁸⁰

The uprising also grew in the countryside when another priest, named Mikulas of Hus, led forty thousand pilgrims to a mountain retreat in southern Bohemia that he named Mt. Tabor (after the biblical mountain of the same name). These retreats were repeated by other

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 33.

preachers on many mountaintops across Bohemia.¹⁸¹ At all of these events communion would be offered in both species of bread and wine, unlike the usual ecclesiastical practice where the wine was reserved for the priesthood alone. Offering communion in both species had previously been administered by Jakoubek of Stribo and Nikolaus of Dresden, and Jan Hus had also approved of this practice late in his life. The chalice for the laity soon became the battle cry for the entire Hussite movement.¹⁸²

Many of the Hussite preachers began to prophecy an imminent judgment of God upon the entire nation. Only the five cities where uprisings had already occurred (and the mountaintops) would be saved from God's destructive wrath.¹⁸³ The preachers also held the chiliast belief that Christ would soon institute a millennial kingdom, whereby all the forces of evil would be destroyed, and where Christ and the elect would enjoy a thousand year reign of peace.¹⁸⁴ The millenarian priests who led the Taborites included Koranda, Martin Huska (also known as Loquis), Mikulas of Pelhrimov, and Jan of Jicin.¹⁸⁵

After the townspeople of Prague attended a retreat on Mt. Tabor during the summer of that year, the Bohemian revolt accelerated. Local peasants joined the townspeople in a revolt on the town of Sezimovo Usti, and the nobility and church leaders in the town were driven into exile. From that point on, Sezimovo Usti became the home base for the Mt. Tabor movement.¹⁸⁶ However, the Taborites soon decided that they needed to build a new settlement for their society which was to be classless and patterned after the New Testament Church. On March 30th, 1420, they burned the town of Sezimovo Usti to the ground, and built a fortress on the river Luznice, where the castle of Hradiste had once stood, and named

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸² Ibid., 35.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 35.

the settlement Tabor. Tabor gained international fame and attracted settlers from Germany, Austria, Silesia, and Poland.¹⁸⁷ The Taborites outlawed all of the practices of their former feudal and ecclesiastical overlords. No rents or taxes could be levied, and no private property could be held: everything was to be owned communally.¹⁸⁸ Everyone at Tabor was required to deposit all their possessions in tubs placed outside of the local church, and the “clerks of the tubs” then distributed the property according to everyone’s needs. They also used the funds to provide for the outfitting and supplying of the Taborite army. These “tubs” were also set up in other towns such as Pisek and Vodnany. Tabor also held elections for all offices, including community leaders, military officers, and even parish priests.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 38.

CHAPTER 5 THE HUSSITE WARS

The early success of the Bohemians in Hussite Wars was in a large part due to the dynamic leadership of John Zizka. Zizka was a petty noble from southern Bohemia, who had left his home manor to earn money in military service. He was soon received into the Royal Army of Bohemia and received battle experience in the battle of Grunwald against the order of German Knights in 1410. While at the royal court, he became a strong advocate of Hus's movement.¹⁸⁹ In 1419, Zizka left for Plzen, and he volunteered to lead Hussite armies against the Catholic nobility. However, the burgers of Plzen expelled Zizka and Koranda and they were forced to retreat to the safety of Tabor. In Tabor, Zizka was elected one of the four "captains" of the Taborite Army.

The Taborites' first victory was at the battle of Mlada Vozice. Soon thereafter, the Taborites overwhelmed the fortress of Sedlec and the castle of Rabi. In both of those conquests, Hussite forces destroyed the gold, jewels, and valuables they found in the invasion, since they saw these valuables as the root of all the evils of the nobility. And so they destroyed the captured booty in order to defend themselves from becoming seduced by these trappings of wealth.¹⁹⁰ This practice of the burning of enemy riches also occurred earlier at the "defenestration" in Prague.¹⁹¹

By July of 1419, the Prague city burghers had completely overthrown the government and church, and the German nobles had been forced to flee the city. The German nobles, although technically foreigners, had wielded a huge economic influence over of the people of

¹⁸⁹ Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*. (Prague: Orbis, 1958), 39.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

the city. They had owned most of the land within the city, often charging exorbitant rents, and they limited the activities and production of the guilds as well.¹⁹²

Later that year King Wenceslas died, and this spurred an even greater expectation of an imminent day of the Lord among the chiliast preachers in Bohemia. The Taborite peasants' army gathered on a hill in Na Kriskach, and marched into Prague intent on bringing the city under Taborite control. The city burghers responded with an army of their own in a unified campaign with the Czech nobility and Queen Sophia.¹⁹³ The burgher army proved successful in their defense of the city, and they were able to defeat the Taborites after chaotic street fighting. The Taborite loss forced the chiliast preachers and their followers (including Zizka) to retreat into the mountains.

The heir to Wenceslas's throne was the aforementioned Emperor Sigismund, Wenceslas's brother, and the King of Hungary. Upon his brother's death, Sigismund asked the Prague burghers to immediately surrender and abdicate their control of their city to him. However, the burghers quickly refused since they knew of a similar situation in the town of Wroclaw, where 28 burghers had been executed after their surrender. In addition, it was also well known that Sigismund had also captured a Prague burgher named Krasa, who was tortured and killed for adhering to Hus's teaching.¹⁹⁴

In 1420, Pope Martin V declared a crusade against Prague, promising forgiveness of sins and Hussite property to those willing to take up arms. As usual, this offer of a crusade received an overwhelming response from pious believers and adventure seekers from across Christendom. And in that same year, King Sigismund besieged Prague with a crusader army of around one hundred thousand men. Facing almost certain death, the moderate Hussites,

¹⁹² Ibid., 42.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 44.

called Calixtines (from the Latin “users of the chalice”¹⁹⁵), who consisted of the town burghers and the Hussite nobility, nevertheless decided to fight against the invaders. Zelivsky’s forces of mostly peasants also sought to join the fight, but insisted upon making Hus’s teachings the theological basis of the resistance.

In order to forge unity between these two socio-economic strata, the Four Articles of Prague were drafted up¹⁹⁶ by the principle theologians of the University of Prague.¹⁹⁷ The first of these articles was the guarantee of free preaching of God’s Word. And this article was designed to protect the activities of the Hussite chiliast preachers.¹⁹⁸ It also decriminalized heresy, and protected these preachers from capital punishment that would have otherwise been their lot for being heretics in the Church.¹⁹⁹ The second article guaranteed that the chalice would be offered to the laity during the sacrament of Holy Communion. This article sought to remove the distance between the priests and the laity within the Church itself, by offering the wine to the people, which had heretofore only been consumed by the priesthood. This practice in Latin was called *sub utraque specie*, and the Calixtines therefore called themselves Utraquists.²⁰⁰ The second article also encouraged all Christians to partake of the sacrament every week, and this was a much more frequent reception of the sacrament than was practiced at the time.²⁰¹ The third article made charging feudal rents, and increasing interest and taxes, crimes which were punishable under law,²⁰²

¹⁹⁵ K. Knight, “Utraquism,” in Catholic Encyclopedia (vol. XV) [online encyclopedia] (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 2003 [cited 24 July 2006]); available from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15244b.htm>; INTERNET.

¹⁹⁶ Macek, 45.

¹⁹⁷ Count Luetzow, *The Life and Times of Master Jan Hus*. (New York: E.P Dutton and Co. 1909), 343.

¹⁹⁸ Macek, 45.

¹⁹⁹ F. M. Bartos, *The Hussite Revolution 1424-1437*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs - English Education Edition, 1986), 155.

²⁰⁰ Macek, 46.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 46.

and stressed uprooting evil in the world and retaliating against it.²⁰³ And the fourth article stated that the Church must return to the apostolic poverty found in the book of Acts.²⁰⁴

And while the Czech nobles agreed with the four articles, many did so simply as a means of confiscating church property. For instance, Oldrich of Rozmberk, a Hussite noble, claimed the land of the monastery of Zlata Koruna during the years 1419-1420. However, in 1420 he switched sides, doing penance and joining Sigismund's crusaders. But he kept the church lands, calling himself a "Catholic protector" of the monastery estate.²⁰⁵

Despite the abuses of some turncoats, the Four Articles did prove to have a strong unifying effect on the Bohemian people. And they allowed for a highly unified army which included all strata of society. The Taborites avidly joined the defense as did forces from the towns of Zatec, Louny, and Slany, not to mention peasants from all across Bohemia who volunteered to defend the Motherland.²⁰⁶

The crusaders garnered nothing but resistance in their advance, as they held to the barbaric practice of killing everyone they encountered who spoke Czech. And the crusaders were soon met with their first defeat by Hussite forces under the command of Zizka at the battle of Trocnov on July 14, 1420. Zizka's advance pushed the invaders from Viktov Hill, and dispersed the crusading forces into flight. However, this victory was short-lived, and by the end of 1420, Sigismund assembled a new army to once again siege Prague.²⁰⁷ However, this army was also defeated at the castle of Vysehrad on November 1st, 1420.²⁰⁸

Zizka kept his troops in focus by stressing religious themes, and this gave his men a theological purpose to their struggles. This emphasis can be clearly seen in one of his letters

²⁰³ Ibid., 129-130.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 46.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 47.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 48.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 49.

written in 1422, in which Zizka called the people of Domazlice into the Hussite campaign. He wrote, “Order your priests in their sermons to arouse the people to arms against such forces of Antichrist.”²⁰⁹

By August of 1420, Zelivsky and the Taborites attempted to impose biblical law on the city of Prague as they had done previously in Tabor. However, this was opposed by the University masters and the burghers of Prague, and the effort ultimately proved unsuccessful.²¹⁰ In that same year, Tabor established its own independent church which was completely separate from the Catholic Church. It elected a bishop, Mikulas of Pehlimov, who was placed over the peasant chiliast preachers. And so, even in radical Tabor, a medieval class structure existed in the church. Church leaders who were sympathetic to the burghers and the nobility held sway over the church leaders of the peasantry. And this was also the case in the military realm, with Zizka, who favored the control of the burghers and the nobility, in a commander’s role over Mikulas of Hus, the leader of the peasant forces.

The separation of power between Zizka and Mikulas also created a conflict of opinions over who should succeed King Wenceslas as king of Bohemia. Zizka supported a Polish prince named Sigismund Korybut in his efforts for the crown, while Mikulas of Hus opposed any return of the monarchy for Bohemia.²¹¹ However, this controversy ended quickly with the death of Mikulas on Christmas Eve, 1420. Zizka was then made chief commander over a combined burger/peasant Taborite army. And with Zizka’s influence, Tabor developed along the lines of typical medieval towns with the power base held by the town burgers and the nobility. Tabor’s hopes for a classless and apostolic society diminished quickly.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 123.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 50.

²¹¹ Ibid., 51.

²¹² Ibid., 52.

This change in the town government elicited a strong reaction by the poorer elements of Tabor, and the preacher Martin Huska and his followers soon become disillusioned about what Tabor had become. The peasantry within the army staged a revolt against Zizka's leadership, but Zizka was able to defeat the uprising. He also had 60 of the leaders of this peasant rebellion burned at the stake as heretics, citing their disbelief in the real presence of Christ within the eucharist.²¹³ Martin Huska also preached the "real absence" of Christ in the eucharist, because he saw the real presence as a means by which the priesthood was able to deceive the populace. He too attempted to leave Tabor to reach the new settlement.²¹⁴ However, along the way he was captured by Lord Divis Borek of Zizka's forces, and was handed over into the custody of a more moderate priest named Ambrose, at Hradec Kravlove. It was there that Ambrose worked for two weeks in an attempt to change Huska's mind on his eucharistic theology. However he failed, and on June 22nd he turned Huska over to Archbishop Conrad Roudnice, who had him imprisoned and tortured in an attempt to induce him to recant his heretical beliefs. Huska refused all opportunities to recant, and was subsequently convicted and burned to death at the stake for heresy on August 21st 1421.²¹⁵

And even though the Taborites persecuted the millennialist preachers harshly after Zizka's rise to power, it should still be understood that Tabor, even at this time, was still much more radical than was Prague. This can be clearly seen when one compares the Taborite articles to the Prague articles. The Taborite articles were the theological basis for the Taborite towns and were much more religiously extreme. For instance, the Taborite articles actually allowed the common people to mete out punishment against sinful clerics and nobles, unlike in Prague where such punishment could only be prosecuted by authorized

²¹³ Ibid., 53.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 54.

²¹⁵ Kaminsky, 431.

civil authorities.²¹⁶ And the reason they were so radical was because they were based on the extreme chiliast views of the Taborite preachers. In fact, the Taborite articles stated that anyone who would not go into the mountains (to the Taborite communities) would be destroyed by the blows of God.²¹⁷ And not only was God the avenger, but he had assigned the people of Tabor as his avenging angels, and it was their role to execute His punishment.²¹⁸ Some of the targets of destruction were Catholic churches, which were seen as idolatrous, as well as the homes of the clergy.²¹⁹ Priests were to be stripped of their property, Latin prayer books, chalices, vestments, and monstrances were to be burnt, and masses were heretofore to be said only in the vernacular.²²⁰ The Taborites also opposed any resumption of the monarchy, since Christ himself would rule in the new millennial kingdom.²²¹

Furthermore, the Taborite hillside retreats were seen in light of the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Each person was asked to leave his or her sinful home town behind, even if their families refused to leave their homes to head for the mountains. And unlike Lot's wife, they would not look back, but would rather save themselves from the sinful cities and God's impending destruction. And as an added bonus, the chiliast preachers told the faithful that God would free those who left from the debts they owed their landlords.²²²

Zelivsky and Zizka soon began a united campaign to conquer surrounding towns that were still controlled by Catholic Church authorities and local nobility. Their two leagues of towns, the Prague League and the Tabor League, were united into one army. The Prague League of

²¹⁶ Macek, 55-56.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 130.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 131.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 132.

²²⁰ Ibid., 133.

²²¹ Ibid., 133.

²²² Ibid., 132.

Towns was a confederation of 22 towns that either voluntarily joined Zelivsky, or were conquered by his armies.²²³ Alongside this league was the Tabor League, a federation of 6 towns under the leadership of Zizka.²²⁴ This confederation of the two leagues became the predominant military and political force in Bohemia.²²⁵

By the summer of 1421, the crusaders invaded once again, laying siege to the town of Zatec. The troops under the Prague League (commanded by Zelivsky) suffered defeat at the hands of the crusaders, but Zizka (now old and blind) led the Taborites into battle, snatching victory out of the jaws of defeat. Late in 1421, Sigismund attempted once more to defeat the Czech forces, originally occupying the town of Kutna Hora, which was known for its silver mines and the royal mint. But Zizka's forces quickly responded to the threat, and they defeated Sigismund once again at the town of Nemecky Brod.²²⁶

Despite the Hussite successes on the battlefield, domestic political dissention threatened to jeopardize the Hussite Revolution. In June of 1421 the Diet of Caslav was held to create a governing body for Bohemia. Twenty representatives comprised the new legislative body, including eight from the Prague League (four of whom were town burghers), as well as two representatives from the Tabor League, namely Captain Zbynek of Buchlov, and Zizka himself.²²⁷ But by the next year, the Prague burghers began to fear Zelivsky, since his military successes had provided him with a threatening power base. And on March 9, 1422, they invited him and his entourage to the Town Hall where they assassinated him.²²⁸

²²³ Ibid., 57.

²²⁴ Ibid., 58.

²²⁵ Ibid., 57.

²²⁶ Ibid., 58.

²²⁷ Ibid., 60.

²²⁸ Ibid., 59.

In June of 1423, differences in beliefs concerning vestments and the eucharist between Taborite and Prague priests were sought to be reconciled at a meeting at Konopiste, but no reconciliation was accomplished. A similar failed meeting was later held at the castle of Prague on 16 October 1424, where the Prague priest Pribram attacked the Taborite views on the eucharist.²²⁹ In these religious negotiations, Zizka sided with the Prague theologians and especially the priest Ambrose, and the intransigence of the Taborite clergy led him to leave Tabor and to create a new settlement call New Tabor (or Lesser Tabor) at Hradec Kravlove.²³⁰

In June of that year his army also defeated a united Army of Praguers, Calixtines and Catholic barons at the Battle of Malesov.²³¹ After the defeat, Prague had lost all of its defensive allies and was forced to submit to Zizka's control. Zizka triumphantly entered Prague and assumed control of the majority of Bohemia. His national popularity led many Praguers join his army in its campaign into Moravia,²³² which sought to expel Albrecht of Austria from that country.²³³ But Zizka was unable to accompany the army into Moravia since he died on October 11th, 1424.²³⁴ However, his army was still successful in its capture of the town of Trebic in that campaign.²³⁵

The resulting army of New Tabor/Prague, whose members called themselves "orphans" after Zizka's death,²³⁶ were characterized by their strong evangelical beliefs. The army had always included preachers to lead the army spiritually, and their millennialist faith was the

²²⁹ Bartos, 2.

²³⁰ Bartos, 3.

²³¹ Macek, 62.

²³² Ibid., 62.

²³³ Bartos, 1.

²³⁴ Macek, 63.

²³⁵ Bartos, 1.

²³⁶ Macek, 65.

idealistic engine that drove their military efforts. Since they believed that their cause was divinely sanctioned, they called themselves the “Warriors of God.”²³⁷

Much of 1425 was characterized by skirmishes between Taborite forces and the armies of Prince Korybut and the “Orphans”. And in that same year, unsuccessful negotiations began at Brno between the burghers of Prague and King Sigismund regarding Sigismund’s efforts to assume the crown of Bohemia. This meeting only served to anger the Bohemians and to unify the quarreling factions into a unified army against Sigismund.

In October of 1425, a lasting truce between the quarreling Hussite forces was signed at Vrsovice, near Prague. Both parties agreed to obey twelve representatives of a newly formed Bohemian council. Six of the representatives were from Prague (four of the six were town burghers), along with four military captains from Tabor, and one representative each from Zatec and Louny. Each side gave the other twenty-two hostages, and each side also pledged 300,000 groschen to be paid to the other side if the pledge of unity was broken. They also negotiated an exchange of prisoners and allowed exiles to return to their homes.²³⁸

The resultant unified force, under the command of Prince Korybut, now resumed the campaign in Moravia, expelling Duke Albrecht, and then invading Austria, even going as far as Retz and capturing the town.²³⁹ In early 1426, Prokop Holy (a prominent Hussite priest who was originally a follower of Zelivsky) took command of the united Hussite army. The word “holy” was used to describe Prokop because it meant “clean shaven,” and this distinguished him from many of the other Hussite preachers.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Ibid., 64.

²³⁸ Bartos, 8.

²³⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁴⁰ Macek, 66.

Prokop led his army to attack the German forces under Frederick the Elector of Saxony at the battle of Usti in early June of 1426.²⁴¹ Reinforcements were sent to assist the besieged crusaders on June 11th but a howitzer attack by the Hussites sent the crusaders fleeing in disarray.²⁴² The Hussites captured the Usti castle, and then burned it to the ground, since it was highly likely that it would be recaptured by enemy forces and once again pose a threat to the Bohemians. In the same campaign, Hussite forces also captured Strekov and Blansko castles.²⁴³

Yet despite Prokops' successes on the battlefield, he was not without his detractors, and many of the establishment in Prague favored Prince Korybut's elevation to the throne of Bohemia. The university masters had lost income on their properties when the City Council had ended all perpetual rents in 1421. Because of the lack of funds, classes were no longer held, and the university only functioned ceremonially when an election of a dean or rector was made. Many of the University masters had left the school for parish ministry and those that had stayed saw Prince Korybut as a leader that could bring the university back to its former prominent position in society.²⁴⁴

In mid-February of 1427, Korybut made a pact with the Silesian princes, and many of the Hussite nobles, to usurp the power of the city council and install himself as king. On April 16th, he revealed his plan to two of his highest officials, Svojse of Zahradka and John Rozvoda of Stekory, who betrayed Korybut and revealed his plans to the city officials. The City Council immediately mustered their military forces and Prince Korybut was captured and imprisoned. And while Korybut managed to secure release in the autumn of 1428, the

²⁴¹ Ibid., 67.

²⁴² Bartos, 15.

²⁴³ Ibid., 16.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

incident forced him to leave Bohemia, and abandon his aspirations for the Bohemian crown.²⁴⁵

While these power struggles were occurring in Prague, efforts were being made in Germany to launch yet another crusade. On 15 January 1427, Frederick Hohenzollern, the Margrave of Brandenburg issued a manifesto in Bamberg, Germany announcing his opposition to the so-called “deplorable corruption” of Christianity in Bohemia, and dedicated himself to wage war once again against the Hussites. And the Imperial Diet of Frankfurt issued an April 27th order to once again advance against the Bohemians.²⁴⁶ However, Pope Martin V ultimately chose Cardinal Henry Beaufort of Winchester to lead the crusade instead of Frederick.²⁴⁷ Another imperial Diet, which was held in November of 1427, created a Supreme Commander, Henry, and a panel of nine assessors (six German princes and three town managers) to manage the crusade. But unfortunately Henry was called to the French Theater of Operations in March of 1428 in support of Joan of Arc, and the crusade was called off.²⁴⁸

Preparations for the Council of Basel

Meanwhile the Hussite forces held a Silesian campaign in 1427, which allowed them to capture and bring back a large cache of booty (most notably cattle) from their conquests. And this allowed the Hussites some relief from an economic blockade that had been imposed upon them, as well as temporary safety from an attack from that country.²⁴⁹

In the latter part of 1428, King Sigismund decided to utilize diplomatic efforts to break up the Hussite alliance, since he was unable to accomplish this militarily. Sigismund started by

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 26.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 29.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 36.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

forming alliances with the old Korybut allies.²⁵⁰ He also worked with Frederick to enlist the support of those Catholic nobles who had joined the uprising under pressure from Prague and Tabor.²⁵¹ Sigismund hoped to gain the support of the major political forces within Bohemia, so that he could be crowned King of Bohemia at the upcoming Council of Basel.²⁵²

After gathering his forces as much as possible, he asked a Bohemian royalist noble, Menhart of Hradec, to request a diet between himself and Hussite forces on January 1st 1429 at a town called Cesky Brod, which was inhabited by the “orphans” of Zizka.²⁵³ This diet, in which noble delegates demanded that Sigismund be installed as king, was also followed by a counter demand by the Hussite priest Peter Payne that the King needed to accept the Four Articles.²⁵⁴ Payne was an English Wyclifite who had fled persecution in England in 1414, and was taken in by German Waldensians.²⁵⁵ He soon left Germany to join the Hussite movement upon hearing of their religious reforms there. The diet at Cesky Brod was so highly confrontational that it accomplished little.²⁵⁶ However, this failed negotiation was quickly followed by another diet that was held in the king’s home territory at Bratislava (which was then called Pressburg).²⁵⁷ Among the most notable representatives for the Hussite delegation was again Peter Payne, and Prokop himself, who presented the Four Articles as the basis of any negotiation. Sigismund refused to accept these conditions, and the Hussites offered a counter-proposal that would merely allow the residents of his castles in Moravia and Bohemia to accept the Four Articles, but this request was denied as well. The King

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 39.

²⁵² Ibid., 43.

²⁵³ Ibid., 39.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 39-40.

²⁵⁵ Anne Hudson, ed. *Selections from English Wycliffite Writing*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3.

²⁵⁶ Bartos, 39-40.

²⁵⁷ Macek, 67.

demanded that the Hussites agree that they would adhere to the theological decisions made at the upcoming Council of Basel. But Payne countered that the Holy Scriptures should be the final arbiter of faith and morals instead of the council.²⁵⁸ After no conditions could even be agreed upon to conduct the diet, Prokop, Payne, and the rest of the Hussite representatives left the meeting in protest.²⁵⁹

However, the negotiations between Sigismund and the Hussites began to improve after Jakoubek of Stribo's death on August 9th, 1429. Jakoubek was one of the major obstacles to the negotiations because of his insistence that Basel be an ecumenical council. This meant that the council would not only include Catholic and Hussite clerics, but that it would also include Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox representatives as well. Jakoubek believed that this would help the Hussite cause, since both of the eastern churches also held to communion in both species for the laity.²⁶⁰

Another impediment to a settlement was the constant internal strife that plagued the city of Prague. Prague itself was separated into an old city and a new city each with its own local town council. Old town was dominated by the town burghers and city nobles, while New Prague was dominated by Taborite and "orphan" leaders and clergy. However, peace between the competing factions was completed on September 25th, and a disputation of the eucharistic question was held between Old Town and New Town clergy. The main players at the disputation were Pribram, a conservative priest just returned from exile who adhered to the transubstantiation position, and Peter Payne, who supported the "real absence" position. This disputation was well attended by the community, and it was judged by a panel of eight

²⁵⁸ Bartos, 42.

²⁵⁹ Macek, 68.

²⁶⁰ Bartos, 44-45.

local theologians. And most importantly, the debate was characterized by an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect between all parties.²⁶¹

On the military front, the Hussite armies had been on an offensive campaign against the neighboring lands since 1426, and in these campaigns Prokop had used the anticlerical attitudes of the peasantry in the adjoining areas to his advantage.²⁶² Its outstanding success was due to the fact that the army limited its attacks to church lands and monasteries, and had for the most part left the peasant towns in peace. This tactic resulted in large defections of enemy peasant troops to the Hussite side.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Ibid., 46.

²⁶² Macek, 69.

²⁶³ Ibid., 70.

CHAPTER 6 THE GLORIOUS RAID AND DOMAZLICE

The Glorious Raid

The failure of Catholic forces to organize a crusade allowed an opportunity for the Hussites to initiate a major invasion of their own before the Basel Council.²⁶⁴ The result was a huge offensive in 1429-1430 into Germany called the “Glorious Raid of Prokop.” This raid, which ran through Leipzig and as far as Nurnberg, met with little opposition due to the sympathies of the local peasantry.²⁶⁵ It was also greatly assisted by Elector Frederick’s decision to disband his crusader army in late December 1429, due to disagreements with his allies over how the mercenary army was to be paid.²⁶⁶

The Hussites quickly took the state of Franconia on 30-31 January.²⁶⁷ In Bamberg, the city’s poor seized the city government and expelled the nobles, in cooperation with the Hussite army. This forced the three southern nobles, the Burgrave of Nurnberg, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and Friedrich von Hohenzollern to sign a truce with Prokop at the castle of Beheimstein on 10 Feb, 1430. The truce called for a payment to the Hussites of twelve thousand florins (six thousand on the spot in cash), with the remainder to be paid in annual levies.²⁶⁸ In addition, Frederick himself agreed to pay an additional nine thousand florins, and the Count Palatine, another German noble, agreed to pay eight thousand florins.²⁶⁹ The truce also called for the creation of the Hussite embassy in the main square of Nurnberg where, on April 23rd, Hussite theologians would be allowed to proclaim the Four Articles of Prague to the people of the city. The event on April the 23rd would also include a disputation

²⁶⁴ F. M. Bartos, *The Hussite Revolution 1424-1437*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs - English Education Edition, 1986), 49.

²⁶⁵ Macek, 71.

²⁶⁶ Bartos, 51.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁶⁸ Macek, 72.

²⁶⁹ Bartos, 53.

with Roman Catholic theologians.²⁷⁰ However, this embassy was outlawed by the papal nuncio in Rome shortly after the Hussites returned home.

One of the most historically notable results of the Glorious Campaign was the creation of an apology (or manifesto) for the Four Articles that was written in German during negotiations between the Hussites and Frederick later that same year. The fact that the manifesto was written in German was fortuitous, since it was used by German reformers in the next century as a theological precedent for their own reformation.²⁷¹

Interestingly, this “Glorious Raid” is even today celebrated in the small town of Naumburg, where their “Cherry Feast” remembers the invading Hussite forces and how they fed cherries to the children of the town during their bloodless invasion.²⁷²

Early 1431 was characterized by further diplomatic activities to end the Hussite rebellion and resolve the conflict. The Hussites held a Bohemian diet at Kutna Hora for three weeks starting at the end of January 1431.²⁷³ Prokop also attended these negotiations, which created conditions for the safe passage of Hussite representatives to the Council of Basel.²⁷⁴

And while the Hussite uprising was popular among the peasantry in Bohemia, Moravia, and the surrounding nations, Roman propaganda had so slandered the Hussite movement that it was almost universally held in disrepute outside of the Czech/German/Polish lands. For instance, Joan of Arc had sent a letter to the Hussites on 23 March 1431, in which she demanded that the Bohemians send representatives to France to be instructed on correct

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 53.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 55.

²⁷² Macek, 72.

²⁷³ Bartos, 61.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 62.

Christian doctrine, or she herself and her armies would send a crusade to crush the Hussite uprising.²⁷⁵

The Battle of Domazlice

And although Sigismund still held out hope for the possibility of a negotiated settlement, the papacy still believed that military victory was the only possible solution for dealing with the Bohemians. Rome was simply unwilling to negotiate with a small nation of heretics.²⁷⁶

And on 20 March 1431, Frederick once again began assembling a crusade in .²⁷⁷ These preparations continued throughout the Spring, and on June 28th, the Hussite forces, hearing of the crusader buildup, united their own forces at Plzen. The next day Cardinal Cesarini inaugurated the crusade at St. Sebaldus Church in , and invested Frederick with the title of Supreme Commander.²⁷⁸

So in August of 1431, an army (of mostly mercenaries) streamed into Bohemia and lay siege to the fortress at Tachov, but resistance was so strong that the effort was quickly abandoned. The mercenaries then turned on the countryside, slaughtering the peasants (most of whom were Catholic) and razing the surrounding villages.²⁷⁹ The crusaders next turned their sights on Domazlice (a Taborite stronghold). The Taborites offered to surrender after the suburbs of the town were burned and a bombardment was begun. Five knights and their entourage then entered the town to negotiate a surrender, but some members of that party fired on the Taborites (to restart active fighting) in order to prevent losing the booty that could have only been obtained by an outright victory. This attack ended any hope of a negotiated surrender, and in the confusion one Bohemian soldier was able to escape the siege

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 58.

²⁷⁶ Macek, 73.

²⁷⁷ Bartos, 63.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 66.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 68.

to alert the Hussite army.²⁸⁰ The Hussites responded by sending a united force under Prokop, which had earlier been joined by Polish Hussite forces under the command of Sigismund Korybut. The two armies met at Domazlice on 14 August, and their battle song became the hymn “Ye Warriors of God.”²⁸¹ This powerful hymn was a reminder of how God was supposedly behind the Hussite cause, and would lead its armies into victory. Verse 5 of the hymn sums up its message nicely,

Fear not your enemies,
Do not heed their great numbers,
Keep your Lord in your hearts,
Fight for Him and with Him,
And never retreat before your enemies.²⁸²

Infighting between Frederick, Cardinal Cesarini, and the Elector of Saxony, doomed the crusade almost from the start. Frederick and his men were deeply fearful of the approaching Hussites, and began a quick retreat, but Cardinal Cesarini confronted Frederick, calling him a traitor. In response to Cesarini’s plea, Frederick set up a hilltop defense for the cardinal and his entourage. But this defense was quickly dispersed by the Hussite cavalry,²⁸³ and the crusader army retreated all the way back to Nurnberg.²⁸⁴ The booty captured by the Hussites from the battle included 3700 carriages of provisions and ammunition.²⁸⁵

The battle of Domazlice became a turning point in the Church’s strategy to defeat Hussitism. Not only did this battle make it clear that a military solution would never prove successful, but Hussite propaganda had been exported into Germany by the Glorious Campaign and was severely agitating the political status quo. Many German towns, such as Magdeburg and Passau had already experienced Hussite-inspired peasant uprisings that had

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 69.

²⁸¹ Macek, 73.

²⁸² Ibid., 135.

²⁸³ Bartos, 69.

²⁸⁴ Macek, 73.

²⁸⁵ Bartos, 70.

expelled the Church hierarchy from those cities.²⁸⁶ Hussite propaganda spread as far as Picardy, in the northeast of France, where Gilles Mersault distributed hundreds of tracts which explained the Four Prague Articles and described the movement as a fight for “God’s Truth.”²⁸⁷ Prokop himself wrote many of these tracts, commonly called “Tabor Manifestos” which were then translated into the vernacular languages of many nations and warned the peasants against joining the crusader armies. The tracts often targeted ecclesiastical authorities as well, and told peasants that the prelates who drafted them into the army would be too cowardly to join them in battle.²⁸⁸

But Prokop was also eager to negotiate treaties with opposing forces. He was first able to negotiate peace pacts with local jurisdictions like Upper and Lower Lusitania in 1432, and he also won some of the Silesian princes over to the tenets of the Four Articles. Prokop signed a peace treaty with the Polish King Wladislas at Pabjanice, as well.²⁸⁹ His united army then defeated the Order of the German Knights in Gdansk on September 1st, 1433. Other successful advances occurred in the same year against Sigismund’s forces in Poland and Slovakia. The Hussites also conducted another campaign against the Margrave of Brandenburg and Friedrich of Hohenzollern (for renegeing on previous treaty agreements), and their army nearly reached Berlin. The success of this mission was also due to the Hussite’s cooperation with Waldensian communities in that part of Germany.²⁹⁰

However, Prokop’s military might and adept diplomacy proved inadequate to sustain the revolutionary movement. An economic blockade that had been placed on Bohemia began to take its toll on the well being of the people. In addition, the years 1431-1432 were drought

²⁸⁶ Macek, 74.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

years, and Bohemia fell victim to famine and widespread disease.²⁹¹ The Roman authorities explained that these calamities were God's punishment for Hussite heresies. Because of the poor situation in Bohemia, when Cardinal Cesarini contacted Prokop the Great on behalf of the Council of Basel to begin negotiations for a lasting peace, Prokop was receptive.

Meanwhile a diet was held in Prague on 10-27 February of the following year (1432) to unify the Hussite forces and settle any intra-Bohemian squabbles before a delegation reported to the Council. "Orphan" forces had accused Prokop's Taborites of abandoning them in battle against Hungarian forces during the winter. But a level of reconciliation was reached and all sides concurred that the terms agreed to at Cesky Brod (1429) should form the basis of their participation at the council.²⁹²

²⁹¹ Ibid., 82.

²⁹² Bartos, 77.

CHAPTER 7 THE COUNCIL OF BASEL

On 9 May of 1432, a preliminary meeting with Emperor Sigismund to again discuss safe travel to the Basel Council was held at Cheb. It was agreed that the Hussite party would appear at the council as equals to the papal representatives, and not as accused heretics. Also, at Cheb it was decided that all disputes would be decided by reference to the Word of God. The Cheb agreement stated, “In the dispute about the Four Articles which the Bohemians advocate, the law of God and the practice of Christ, the apostles and the primitive Church, together with the councils and doctors truly founded on this practice, shall be accepted at the Council of Basel as the truest and indisputable judge.”²⁹³

And this was a major victory in itself for the Hussite forces since it allowed an outside party to discuss, on an equal basis, the theology and structure of the Catholic Church.²⁹⁴

Upon learning of the successful negotiations to attend the council, Prokop wrote,

“We know from several letters dispatched from the Council of Basel that the great storms of war caused the fathers of the church, meeting in the Council of Basel, to give us a hearing which we consider a precious gift granted by God that the redeeming truths should become known to all nations; and finally that these very storms of war and vices, by God’s agency, [may] turn many minds to those truths which is a great gain for the Church Militant.”²⁹⁵

In response to this gesture by the representatives of the council, the Hussites were willing to accept promises of safe passage by the Pope, Elector Frederick, and Emperor Sigismund, without demanding that hostages be taken as insurance for the safety of the Hussite representatives.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ F. M. Bartos, *The Hussite Revolution 1424-1437*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs - English Education Edition, 1986), 80.

²⁹⁴ Macek, 85.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁹⁶ Bartos, 81.

The Hussites were also intent on stressing a moral tone at Basel as well, and they requested that all brothels be removed from the city, to avoid the immoral atmosphere that a previous generation of Czechs had witnessed at the Council of Constance.²⁹⁷

On 30 August 1432, another Bohemian diet met at Kutna Hora to prepare to send the delegation to Basel. However, by this time the Hussites had only received written guarantees of safe passage from the council itself, and had not yet received such written assurances from either Sigismund or any other nation. Therefore, a general truce with all nations participating in the Council was rejected, and the diet began seeking truces with German states that could guarantee safe passage.²⁹⁸ These efforts proved quite successful, and they included a guarantee of safe passage from Elector Frederick.²⁹⁹ The diet also selected 18 delegates to the council. It was also decided that only two would initially appear at the council so they could make arrangements (including guarantees of safe passage) for the 16 others to appear.

The Council had already opened on 23 July, and many of the council members feared that their previous refusal to discuss Hussite theology might be rewarded with an invasion of Basel by Hussite forces.³⁰⁰ Therefore in the spirit of the Cheb agreement, on 28 September a resolution was passed inviting the Hussites to Basel for open discussions. Cesarini himself issued this invitation to the Hussites on October 15th.³⁰¹

But by this time the advance Hussite party had already left from Prague for Basel on September 29th. They reached Basel, made arrangements for safe passage for the other delegates, and returned to Bohemia on November 1st, where they met the rest of the delegation at Domazlice. They also sent a message to the imperial forces at Cheb for an

²⁹⁷ Macek, 99.

²⁹⁸ Bartos, 84.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 86.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 70-71.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 71.

escort to Basel.³⁰² They were met by forces provided by Elector Frederick and Count Palatine John to escort the Hussites through their territories.³⁰³ One of the Bohemian delegates, Matthew Louda had created a banner with the motto, “The Truth Conquers All,” which elicited a great deal of negative response by the council upon his arrival.³⁰⁴ The Hussites spent the rest of the year touring the city of Basel (an international and somewhat liberal center of learning at the time), and being entertained by members of the Council.³⁰⁵

However, the pope was not pleased by the decision to hold the Council in Basel. In fact, Eugenius IV dissolved it in late October,³⁰⁶ and transferred the council to Bologna on 12 November, since he felt any council which invited the Hussites was an insult to the papal see. But he quickly dissolved the Bolognan council on 18 December, after receiving protests from both the emperor and Cardinal Cesarini (the cardinal even threatened to resign from his council chairmanship).³⁰⁷ At Basel, both sides argued their own theologies and came to no agreement, except to continue the discussions in Prague.³⁰⁸ The Council then sent a delegation to Prague where it found sympathizers among the town burghers, who had become highly motivated to end the blockade which had so limited their economic activity.³⁰⁹ The masters of the university were also motivated to reach a peace agreement, because they sought to reopen the university which had been closed since the hostilities began. They convinced the papal legates that allowing the reception of the chalice by the laity would be enough of a concession to bring about a reconciliation.³¹⁰

³⁰² Ibid., 86.

³⁰³ Ibid., 87.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 88.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 89.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 71.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 78.

³⁰⁸ Macek, 86.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 87.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 87.

The Bohemian delegates returned to the council on January 10th of 1433, and were introduced into the council's plenary session, where Cardinal Cesarini, in his opening homily, welcomed the Hussites back into the fold of the Catholic Church.³¹¹ But behind the warm diplomatic cordialities, Catholic theologians had been preparing arguments to refute Hussite theology for about a year before the Bohemians' arrival. In addition, concerns had arisen within Basel regarding proselytizing by the Hussites, and laws were passed within the city to prohibit participation in Hussite worship services, and also to prohibit any contact by city residents with the Hussite representatives.³¹²

On January 16th the Hussites began their defense with a speech by Matthew Louda, who was mentioned before as the "Truth Conquers All" banner holder. Louda was a lay person who was nevertheless well versed in Latin. He began by stating that it was the Church and its corruption, not the Bohemians, that was responsible for the Hussite wars. Peter Payne followed, reviewing the Four Articles with the council, and in referencing Psalm 104:22, said that the articles were like the sun that would bring unity to the Church.³¹³ Payne also defended the necessity of poverty for the clergy.³¹⁴ Jan Rokycana, the vicar of Tyn Church in Prague, delivered a defense of the chalice that took two days, and an impatient Prokop finally broke into this speech, specifically requesting the chalice for the laity. Nicholas of Pelhrimov, a representative of the Taborites, defended the article which called for the punishment of public sins, and his speech included an unrestrained attack against simony, indulgences, and other church corruptions. Nicholas's words were often responded to with

³¹¹ Bartos, 89.

³¹² Ibid., 90.

³¹³ Ibid., 84.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 92.

boos and catcalls from the council.³¹⁵ Another Hussite representative, a priest named Ulrich of Znojmo, defended the freedom to preach the Word of God and defended the memory of Hus. He criticized all immoral priests, and stated that Hus had become a victim of such priests.³¹⁶ But the Hussites refused to be dragged into answering the council's questions of whether they adhered to the theologies of Hus and Wyclif. Knowing that answering such questions positively would be an admission of following the doctrines of convicted heretics, they wisely avoided a response.³¹⁷

On January 31st, the Catholics began their rebuttal to the Hussite statements with a withering speech by Stojkovic, a Croatian Dominican, who forcefully attacked the Hussite heresies. The Bohemians were so insulted by his speech, that Rokycana and Prokop refused to be present whenever Stojkovic spoke for the duration of the council.³¹⁸ The Hussites were also stonewalled in their initiatives throughout the disputation, and after its completion, they dejectedly sought safe passage home.

Attempts were made to have the Hussite theologians remain at the council until Emperor Sigismund arrived. One proposal would have included the Hussites on the Council itself. However, since this would only have made the Hussites subject to any decisions passed by the Council, they rejected this initiative.³¹⁹ Another initiative proposed at an 11 March meeting, asked the Hussites to give up their main concession at Cheb (that the Bible was to be the basis of solving disagreements), as a condition for a peaceful settlement. This proposal was naturally rejected as well. It soon became apparent to the Hussites that

³¹⁵ Bartos, 84.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 92.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 92.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

³¹⁹ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 314

remaining at Basel would only serve to give an advantage to the Catholic negotiators.³²⁰

However on 19 March, Duke William of Bavaria, who had been appointed protector of the council,³²¹ organized a committee to hammer out an agreement (with four representatives from each side), and a settlement was reached which became the precursor to the famed Compactata of 1433.³²²

Having cobbled out a tentative treaty, the Hussite delegation departed from Basel on the 13th of April. The next day, the departing Hussites were joined by a delegation of council negotiators also headed for Prague. The council hoped that it could influence some of the more sympathetic Bohemian nobles to help push the agreement through the Prague diet.³²³

The diet began at the Carolinium (the main building at the University of Prague) on the 12th of June. On the 14th the council representatives once again proposed that Bohemia abandon its negotiated gains from the Cheb meetings and submit to the Catholic Church.³²⁴ On June the 18th, Rokycana responded that this proposal was unacceptable.³²⁵ The Basel delegation then met privately with many of the more right wing Hussite lords and mentioned that they might be willing to grant communion in both species if the Bohemians would submit to the Catholic Church in all other respects. However the diet ended on 3 July with no agreement between the two sides.³²⁶

While the negotiations gained for the Hussites at least some concessions for their cause, the autumn of the same year proved disastrous for the Hussite armies on the field of battle. A

³²⁰ Bartos, 98.

³²¹ "Council of Basle," in Catholic Encyclopedia (vol. II) [internet encyclopedia] (New York: Robert Appleton Company Online Edition, 1907 [cited 24 July 2006]); available from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02334b.htm>; INTERNET.

³²² Bartos, 97.

³²³ Ibid., 99.

³²⁴ Ibid., 100.

³²⁵ Ibid., 101.

³²⁶ Ibid., 102.

Hussite campaign into Poland failed to capture the city of Gdansk, and a Hussite siege of Plzen also failed to capture that city.³²⁷ And to make matters worse, on the return from Plzen their army was ambushed near the town of Hiltersried and lost most of the booty that was captured on that campaign. The commander of that campaign, John Pardus of Horka, was disgraced, and Prokop Holy replaced Pardus with a new commander, Otik of Loza. The battle failures led the Bohemian Diet of 1433 to attempt to push Prokop from his position as de facto ruler of all Bohemia.³²⁸ They elected Ales Vrestovsky, a lesser noble, to become provincial administrator and to assume the responsibilities heretofore held by Prokop. Prokop attempted to assemble an army to defeat Vrestovsky and his new government, but he was unable to muster many of the towns in the Taborite League to take up arms against Prague.³²⁹ Prokop's failure to gain support precipitated a power struggle within the Taborite army, and he was ultimately wounded, imprisoned, and replaced by another ranking leader, Captain Tvaroh. Although Prokop was soon released from prison, his departure from the military proved to be a huge loss for the future success of the Hussite armies.

By 11 August, the Hussite delegation had already returned to the Council at Basel.³³⁰ It was at this session that the council formally offered to allow the chalice to be served in Hussite territories in Bohemian and Moravia, but made this offer contingent upon the Hussite churches accepting all other Catholic rites. The hope was to isolate the Prague Church (which would probably find such a deal palatable) from the more radical Taborite and "Orphan" churches.³³¹ However, this was not to be the case, since on 21 November the compromise was announced to the diet at Prague and was uniformly well received by all the

³²⁷ Ibid., 105

³²⁸ Macek, 87.

³²⁹ Ibid., 88.

³³⁰ Bartos, 107.

³³¹ Ibid., 109.

representatives. On 30 November, Taborite, “Orphan”, and Prague priests all agreed to the compromise.³³² Unfortunately, no formal agreement or truce was signed since the Hussites wanted the chalice to be offered in all of Bohemia (including the Catholic towns) and not just in the Hussite territories.³³³

The End of Hussite Unity

But it was quite important that the Hussites were able to negotiate for the chalice in 1433, since the year 1434 proved to be militarily disastrous for the success and unity of the Hussite cause. For instance, the siege and blockade of Plzen was constantly hampered by many breaches which allowed supplies and food to be delivered to the beleaguered city. In early May, such a breach was made by the traitor Pribrik of Klenove, and it prevented an expected fall of the city. The Taborite commander Captain Tvaroh was also killed in the fighting at Plzen.³³⁴ In addition, Capek of Sany, who had by now usurped the power over both the Taborite and “Orphan” armies, proved to be a much weaker field commander than had Prokop Holy.³³⁵

The weakening of the “brotherhoods,” as the Taborites and “Orphans” were called, was taken advantage of by the nobles, and on May 5th representatives of the diet united the Calixtine and Catholic nobility with the Prague burghers to create a Barons’ League. It was planned that this league would attack the center of the brotherhoods’ political base at New Prague, while their armies were engaged in the campaign in Plzen.

The barons captured and took over the New Prague City Hall on May 9th, 1434. The brotherhood armies, upon hearing of the coup, lifted the siege of Plzen and returned to

³³² Ibid., 110.

³³³ Ibid., 111.

³³⁴ Ibid., 116.

³³⁵ Ibid., 116.

Prague,³³⁶ but they could not recapture the city and were forced to head to Kolin in retreat.³³⁷ They were pursued by Baron's League forces, and they set up defenses at the town of Lipany and counterattacked on May 30th 1434.³³⁸

After the beginning of the attack, the noble army moved its wagons away from the front line (which was interpreted by the Hussites as a surrender). The Hussites gave chase and left the defensive position that they had prepared. The noble army counterattacked and defeated the Hussites decisively. By this time, the Taborite forces had reinstated Prokop Holy as their commander. But even his leadership failed to avert defeat, and they were routed with over ten thousand troops (and even Prokop himself) killed in the battle. Capek managed to escape by fleeing to Kolin, but was so disgraced by his cowardice that he was later forced to leave the country.³³⁹

What was left of the Taborite armies fled to Hradec Kravlove under their captain Jan Rohac of Duba; however they were forced to flee that town as well after they were exiled by the town burghers.³⁴⁰ Rohac and another former captain under Zizka, Jira of Recice, were captured by the Hussite nobles, while about one thousand less fortunate souls were caught by the Catholic nobility and were rounded up into nearby barns and burned alive.³⁴¹ The forces of the barons soon besieged Kolin to crush what was left of Capek's forces. In exchange for lifting the siege, they gained an agreement from Capek that he would not attempt to reassemble the brotherhood armies and would submit to the Prague Diet (to be held 23 June-3 July).³⁴² The brotherhoods were then removed from having seats at the diets, and were

³³⁶ Macek, 90-91.

³³⁷ Bartos, 116.

³³⁸ Macek, 90-91.

³³⁹ Ibid., 92.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 92.

³⁴¹ Bartos, 117.

³⁴² Ibid., 120-121.

thereafter represented in the diet's legislative structure by the towns and gentry.³⁴³ The remnants of the brotherhood armies found refuge at Rohac's castle called Zion.³⁴⁴ The Council of Basel was delighted by the victory of Lipany and it celebrated the destruction of the brotherhood armies.³⁴⁵

And Emperor Sigismund, now with the brotherhoods out of the way, stressed his claim to the crown of Bohemia.³⁴⁶ But the battle of Lipany, much to Sigismund and the council's dismay, did not change the religious goals of the movement, and even the nobles insisted on the Four Articles as the basis for a settlement with the emperor.³⁴⁷ This was due to a widespread fear among the populace that Sigismund would end Utraquism if he was allowed to come to power.³⁴⁸ And therefore, in order to gain the support from the diet for his ascendancy, Sigismund granted many of the demands the Hussites proposed at the negotiations at Brno, which took place from 20 May through the end of July of 1434.³⁴⁹ And in another fortuitous occurrence for Sigismund, Korybut (his competitor in efforts to gain the throne) was killed in the battle of Ukmerge on September 1st of that same year.³⁵⁰

The next diet was held in early October of 1434, and it elected Rokycana as the archbishop of the Czech church.³⁵¹ At around the same time, a meeting between Sigismund and the Bohemians was held at Szekesfehervar in Hungary. It was at this meeting that the Emperor was supposed to have concluded a peace treaty with the Hussites. However, many of the prelates present saw the election of Rokycana as a violation of previous terms that stipulated

³⁴³ Ibid., 121.

³⁴⁴ Macek, 92.

³⁴⁵ Bartos, 117.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 121.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 122.

³⁴⁸ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 302.

³⁴⁹ Bartos, 129.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 130.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 117.

that the Bohemians were to adhere to the council in every respect. To cool tensions between the Czechs and the council, Sigismund presented the Hussites a signed document of concessions, while quietly assuring the prelates at the council that all these concessions were simply a means of attaining the crown of Bohemia. He promised them that after his ascension, all such concessions would be retracted.³⁵²

The peace treaty was finally signed at Jihlava on 5 July of 1436. The Czechs were allowed to keep Rokycana as archbishop, but were denied permission to defend the gospel at Jihlava, or to publicly explain their reasons for reentering the Catholic Church.³⁵³ The peace also included the Prague diet's acceptance of the First Compactata of November 30th, 1433. The compactata included four agreements: it 1) provided for communion in both kinds for the laity, 2) allowed free preaching for the Hussites, including accepting Czech ordinations, 3) instituted punishment of mortal sins, to be meted out by ecclesiastical authorities for the clergy and secular authorities for the laity, and 4) maintained that priests were not to be in a position of control over secular rulers or own excessive property. It also ordered that Catholic leaders were to live in peace and harmony with the Hussites and vice versa, and that the Utraquist Church would be part of the Catholic Church. In addition, it reaffirmed that Rokycana was to be the Utraquist Church's first bishop.³⁵⁴ This day was especially symbolic since it was the anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus himself.³⁵⁵ However, the agreement wasn't finalized until the Prague Diet of May 1437, when the last delegation ironed out issues related to Compactata and the treaty was sent to the council at Basel.³⁵⁶

³⁵² Bartos, 117.

³⁵³ Ibid., 133.

³⁵⁴ Peter of Mladonovice, *John Hus at the Council of Constance*, tr. by Michael Spinka, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 71.

³⁵⁵ Bartos, 133.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 147.

Shortly thereafter Sigismund returned the Bohemian crown jewels and land records to Prague, as a gesture of goodwill in preparation for his ascendance to the throne. The jewels and land records had been taken in exile after Wenceslas's death. The defeat of the Taborite forces had led to the eventual capitulation of every Bohemian town over to the authority of Emperor Sigismund, and he was crowned King of Bohemia on 14 August 1436.³⁵⁷

Sigismund quickly seized power over the fortress of Prague and began a campaign of vengeance over his enemies. First, Sigismund removed many Hussites from their positions at the diet, giving Catholics their positions instead.³⁵⁸ In addition, conservatives were appointed to all the prominent churches in Prague,³⁵⁹ and fourteen monasteries were given back to the religious orders who resided in them before the revolution.³⁶⁰

The priest, Ambrose, seeing the threat to the Hussite movement, declared a state of emergency in the town of Hradec Kravlove, and Zdislav Mnich was made commander of the army there.³⁶¹ However, the rebellion in Hradec Kravlove was poorly supported, and the citizens of Tabor had made an agreement of obedience to the Catholic Church, in exchange for neutrality between the King's forces and those of Hradec Kravlove.³⁶² Zladaslas Mnich soon overthrew Ambrose and sued for peace with Prague. However, Ambrose managed to escape, and he fled to Rohac's fortress at Zion castle to join the remnant of the brotherhood armies.³⁶³

³⁵⁷ Ibid.,135.

³⁵⁸ Bartos, 135.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.,143.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 145.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 135.

³⁶² Ibid., 138.

³⁶³ Ibid., 139.

Meanwhile, Sigismund continued his corrupt reign, reinstating the peasant taxes back to their old levels after funds from the Council dried up after the peace at Jihlava.³⁶⁴ He also made a number of unsuccessful (and secretive) attempts on Rokycana's life, in revenge for his role in delaying his return and for insisting on the chalice. On 21 November, Rokycana was forced to accept the Catholic mass, and he decided to abdicate his bishopric in protest.³⁶⁵ Rokycana had also refused Sigismund's requests that he attend the Council at Basel, because he feared that he would be arrested and executed there as a rogue bishop.³⁶⁶ In fact, although Rokycana's bishopric was tolerated for a time, it was never formally confirmed by the council.³⁶⁷ He later escaped to Hradec Kravlove to join Hussite forces there.³⁶⁸ He was replaced by the Catholic Wenceslas of Drachov on December 13th, and Prague experienced its first high mass Christmas (which included images of the saints), in many years. Only communion to children and preaching in the vernacular were allowed to remain from the Czech mass.³⁶⁹

But by the spring of 1437, Sigismund began to recognize a growing internal dissent and he therefore attempted to walk a middle ground on religious matters. The king had notices posted in all the chapels that stated that those partaking of communion in both kinds were Christians and were not allowed to be called heretics (in direct response to accusations that were being advanced by visiting Catholic monks). However, Peter Payne was unwilling to adhere to the new synodical restrictions, even with the king's policy of tolerance, and he was banished from Bohemia.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 139.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 140.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 144.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 156.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 144.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 140.

In the Summer of 1437, Sigismund, upon hearing of the presence of Rohac, Rokycana, and others at Zion castle, sent his army there to rid himself of the last remnants of the Hussite armies. After the Hussites managed to hold off Sigismund's forces for several months, the castle's defenses were breached,³⁷⁰ and it was captured on 6 September.³⁷¹ Rohac and some sixty survivors were taken to Prague where they were imprisoned, tortured, and finally hung on September 9th, 1437.³⁷² Rohac's defeat was the final chapter in the Hussite struggle.³⁷³

As the year moved on, Sigismund's health deteriorated and he was increasingly opposed by the Bohemian people due to his corrupt reign and especially due to the execution of Rohac and his men. Feeling threatened and in imminent danger of assassination, Sigismund decided to leave Prague and spend his final days with his daughter and her husband, Albrecht of Austria, in Znojmo. Sigismund died there on 9 December, 1437.³⁷⁴

The Hussite movement had a huge impact on the 15th Century Church, and its reverberations could be felt for centuries thereafter. A new Czech Utraquist Church had been established, and it was not until after the Thirty Year's War in 1620, that Roman Catholicism was again reinstated in Bohemia. And this freedom from Church control made the Hussite Revolution an important precursor to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century.³⁷⁵ In fact, Martin Luther was deeply inspired by the victory of the Czech people at the Council of Basel. He wrote in "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," that he hoped that the German people (in a similar way) could also liberate themselves from the authority of the Catholic Church.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁰ Macek, 92.

³⁷¹ Bartos, 145.

³⁷² Macek, 92.

³⁷³ Ibid., 94.

³⁷⁴ Bartos, 147.

³⁷⁵ Macek, 94.

³⁷⁶ Bartos, 153.

CHAPTER 8 THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY

Earlier Eucharistic Theories

The eucharistic controversies in 15th century Bohemia did not arise out of a vacuum, but had their roots in the writings of many earlier theologians. For instance, on the more conservative side, Marsilius of Padua (1275-1347) saw the administration of the sacraments as necessary for salvation. He put the function of this administration in the hands of the priest, but preached that the grace of the sacrament was bestowed by God alone.³⁷⁷

In the late 14th Century, Wyclif's beliefs of remanence were an outgrowth of his training as a philosophical realist in the Augustinian and Anselmic tradition. Along with the belief in real universals that this philosophy teaches, came the belief that no real thing can be annihilated³⁷⁸ (as had been taught by Duns Scotus and Ockham).³⁷⁹ And it was this belief that drove Wyclif's view that the substance of the bread remains in the sacrament.³⁸⁰ As mentioned before, Wyclif denied transubstantiation in his *De Eucharistia*, and he used Berengar of Tours' writings from the Synod of Rome in 1059 to substantiate his views. Wyclif sought to show that since transubstantiation was refuted in the 11th century, its acceptance as orthodox doctrine within the Catholic Church was something relatively recent.³⁸¹

Wyclif's belief in remanence led him to preach the spiritual (but not bodily) eating of Christ's body and blood in Holy Communion. In a sermon Wyclif wrote on John 6, he stated,

³⁷⁷ Peter of Mladonovice, *John Hus at the Council of Constance*, tr. by Michael Spinka, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 7.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁷⁹ Hudson, 144.

³⁸⁰ Peter of Mladonovice, 27.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

*“here it is needful to men to wite, that ther ben two maner of metis, goostli and bodili. But bodily is well knowun, **but neded we here to knowe how we shulden goostli ete Christ.** For no man that hath witt dredith, that Crist spekith not here of body etyng and drinking of his fleish and his blood; for ellis no man shulde be save, for no man is an etene to fede him this bodily of Crist. And herefore it were to wite, how men shulen goostli feede hem thus. For Crist tellith in his wordis how men shulen ete him goostli, and to this witt seith Crist here, that the wordis that he spekith to hem ben spirit and liif. For sich is witt of his wordis. Thes wordis, in ther own kynde, ben siche as weren hise othere wordis, **but wit of thes wordis here is spiritual.**”³⁸²*

And Wyclif maintained that the theology of transubstantiation was a creation of the medieval Church, and was not true to the beliefs of the primitive Church, which he believed had always held to the coexistence of both the spiritual presence of Christ’s body and blood and the substance of bread and wine. Furthermore, transubstantiation was “against reason and faith and man’s wit.” He wrote,

*But is was seid in eelde tyme, before that the freris comen inne, that as Cristis is God and man, so this oost is breed and Goddis bodi but on deivers manere..Ne Goddis bodi is the beste thing that is in place of this oost, for there is the Trinite, that is betere than Goddis bodi; and Cristene men axen not what is there, but what is that as Crist spekith. **And thus; betwixe the pope and freris, faith of the gospel is putt abac, and newe thing is feyned bothe agenz resound and faith and mannis witt,** with all proof; and unnethis dremying mai maynteyne it. Thus wole the pope declare Goddis lawe and susteyne pees.³⁸³*

Frequent Communion Advocates and Utraquism

Another change advocated by many of the earlier reformers was frequent communion, because it also lessened the distance between priests, who partook of communion every day, and the laity who went to communion only a few times a year. One practical reason why the church hierarchy opposed frequent communion was because it made the priest work harder with no additional remuneration.³⁸⁴

³⁸² John Wyclif, *Selected English Works of John Wyclif*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, MA. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), 111.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 422.

³⁸⁴ Luetzow, 41.

Fifteenth Century advocates of frequent communion had many Bohemian predecessors, including John Milic of Kromeriz, who preached frequent communion in the 1360's,³⁸⁵ and Adalbert Ranco, who advocated the same doctrine in the 1370's.³⁸⁶ Ranco believed that very pious parishioners should be allowed to partake of communion every eight days if they had undergone adequate preparation for the sacrament.³⁸⁷ Germans, such as Matthew of Krakow also held to frequent communion.³⁸⁸ In the 1390's, Matthew of Janov advocated daily communion for the laity at St. Nicholas Church in Old Town Prague, where he was pastor.³⁸⁹ Janov blamed the lack of frequent communion for the priestly haughtiness which he found so prevalent and distasteful, and he also advocated frequent communion for women, who were an inspiration to him in piety for the faith.³⁹⁰ Janov also believed that communion was the key to regeneration in this life and his views strongly influenced both Jakoubek and Nicholas of Dresden.³⁹¹

Utraquism was in many ways an outgrowth of Janov's stress on frequent communion, and his love for the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.³⁹² While Janov never preached for Utraquism,³⁹³ both Utraquism and frequent communion share the same goal of removing the inferiority of the layman vis-à-vis the priest.³⁹⁴ And so what frequent communion was to Milic, Janov, and the others in the 14th Century, was what the chalice was to Hus and his

³⁸⁵ Kaminsky, 13.

³⁸⁶ Luetzow, 45.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 46.

³⁸⁸ Kaminsky, 34.

³⁸⁹ Luetzow, 50.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 57.

³⁹¹ Kaminsky, 113.

³⁹² Luetzow, 56.

³⁹³ Ibid., 62.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 62.

fellow reformers in the 15th century: it elevated the religious life of the laity and protested against an often unworthy and corrupt clergy.³⁹⁵

Realists vs. Nominalists

Ironically, Cardinal D'Ailly, one of the prosecutors at Hus's trial, also advocated an unorthodox theology regarding the eucharist. D'Ailly advocated the theology of "impanation," which had been held by Ockham before him. "Impanation" was the belief that no transubstantiation occurred when the eucharist was consecrated, but instead the Lord was physically present beneath or within the bread and wine. D'Ailly's theories were crucial in the forming of Luther's own eucharistic theologies a century later. D'Ailly, Luther, and Ockham were all nominalists, who believed, in contrast to the realists, that there were no universal or ideal forms. It is interesting to see how the nominalist philosophies of these theologians influenced, at least to some degree, their theologies of "impanation".³⁹⁶

But it is also important to understand that the conflict between D'Ailly and Hus was a conflict between nominalist and realist philosophies. In D'Ailly's mind, one could not believe in transubstantiation if one was a realist (like Hus or Wyclif). And so he hammered Hus during the trial to follow the logic of his own realist philosophy. D'Ailly believed that realism could only manifest itself in a remanist view of the eucharist: the same view that Wyclif held. If the substance of an element (in this case the bread and wine) could never be annihilated, as Wyclif and other realists believed, how could the substance of bread and wine be totally changed into the body and blood of Christ? But despite the harsh questioning by D'Ailly, Hus held firmly to his transubstantiationist beliefs.³⁹⁷

Hus's Eucharistic Views

³⁹⁵ Kaminsky, 34.

³⁹⁶ Peter of Mladonovice, 59.

³⁹⁷ Kitts, 367.

Hus also held to the doctrine that the consecration of the eucharist was performed by the priest *ex opera operato*.³⁹⁸ This meant that the priest had the power bestowed upon him by his ordination to administer the sacraments, but that it was God who was in fact changing the sacrament from its elements into the body and blood of Christ.³⁹⁹ But he also felt that the priest sinned grievously if he did so in an unworthy fashion.⁴⁰⁰ Hus used Malachi 1:6-7, which showed God's disdain for offering polluted bread as sacrifice, as support for this position.⁴⁰¹ He also believed that the recipient of the eucharist also sinned if he accepted communion from such a priest.⁴⁰² In his treatise, "The Six Errors," that was later inscribed on the wall of Bethlehem Chapel, Hus attacked the "insane priests" who claimed to "create the body of God" and who exalted themselves above the Virgin Mary who gave birth to Jesus, due to their power of consecration. Hus felt strongly that only God could be the creator of his own body.⁴⁰³ Hus wrote,

"Such a blasphemy the priests commit who talk as if they were the creators of the God, and as if they created the body of God in the mass. That is a lie: for they do not create Him whom the Virgin Mary bore. He was created by God alone and was given birth by the Virgin Mary...Nor do they create another body of Christ, for he never had another body, nor will he ever have. "To Create" is to make something that did not exist before so that it may exist. Thus God alone is Creator, because he made this world out of nothing; for it had not existed before. Therefore, we believe in the almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, but do not believe that the priests are creators."⁴⁰⁴

And in his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Hus wrote, "the king sits in the midst of the twelve; Himself he holds in his hand. He, the food, partakes of himself."

³⁹⁸ Peter of Mladonovice, 190.

³⁹⁹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 187.

⁴⁰⁰ Peter of Mladonovice, 190.

⁴⁰¹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 24.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁰³ Peter of Mladonovice, 60.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 246-247.

And in this way he showed that Christ himself was in control of the eucharist (his own body) and not the priest.⁴⁰⁵

Hus's Defense Against Accusations of Eucharistic Heresy

As mentioned before, Hus was also deeply concerned with the problem of simony in relation to the sacraments. In a letter written by Hus to Archbishop Zbynek in which he defended himself against accusations leveled by the local Bohemian clergy, Hus reiterated that no demand for payment should be made for anointing with chrism, for baptisms, or for masses.⁴⁰⁶ In the same letter he wrote,

“[in the accusation] this is stated: ‘Remanence, alas! Is still held by many in this city!’ I wish that Your Paternity [the archbishop] would note that and order those adversaries to point out and identify those remanists. For by saying that, ‘remanence, alas! is still held by many in this city,’ they contradict the synodical edict of Your paternity, in which it is declared, that your Paternity, after diligent inquiry, could find no one erring about the venerable sacrament. They, however, say that remanence is still held by many. Let them show those many if they speak the truth, and we shall believe them. If they do not show them, they fall into the snare which they prepared for my feet,” that is, the calumny and defamation of your diocese and particularly of the city of Prague. Furthermore, since they themselves are pastors who should bring the erring sheep back, and lead them in the way of truth, and do not do it: the destruction of the Lord which overtakes them they have brought on themselves.”⁴⁰⁷

Notice how deftly Hus shows that the accusations made against him are really accusations against the archbishop himself, since Zbynek had already certified as to the lack of remanist teachings in his diocese. He also puts the onus on his accusers by asking that they themselves identify the remanists. Furthermore, if remanists were found, Hus questioned why these pastors had not disciplined these heretics previously!

⁴⁰⁵ Schaff, 271.

⁴⁰⁶ John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, tr. by Matthew Spinka, (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 25.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

On September 1, 1411, Hus wrote his appeal to Pope John XXIII, and said this in his defense,

“I faithfully truthfully and steadfastly assert that I have been wrongfully indicted at the apostolic see by the enemies of truth. Indeed, they have falsely indicted me and are indicting me that I have taught people that in the sacrament of the altar the material substance of the bread remains. Falsely, that when the host is elevated, it is the body of Christ but when it is laid down, then it is not; falsely that a priest in mortal sin does not consecrate.”⁴⁰⁸

And therefore, unless Hus was an out and out liar (a possibility which seems unlikely given the other descriptions of his highly ethical character), it seems that the accusations of remanence made against him were fabrications designed to discredit him.

Utraquism

The limiting of the cup to the priesthood was a Church doctrine that was instituted in the 13th century, and may have originally been driven by a concern that the transubstantiated Blood of the Lord might be spilled by the often clumsy and unrefined laity. Since the doctrine of the Lateran Council of 1215 had instituted transubstantiation, it became crucial that the Blood of our Lord not be desecrated by possible spillage. So, in a way, transubstantiation drove the doctrine of withholding the sacred cup.

The theology of withholding the cup was probably first introduced by Alexander of Hales in 1245. Hales felt that withholding the cup was also a good way to teach the laity that all of the Lord’s body was present in both species of bread and wine, as had been held by Anselm.⁴⁰⁹ Jean de Gerson, the chancellor of the University of Paris, and one of the most accomplished theologians at Basel, also used Acts 2:42, 46 to show that the breaking of bread (possibly to the exclusion of wine) was practiced in the early church. And like Hales, he warned against spillage and the problem of the sacred blood getting into the beards of the

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁰⁹ Schaff, 200.

partakers. Aquinas also used the gospel story of the feeding of the bread to the five thousand as support for the doctrine of withholding the cup (but not the bread).⁴¹⁰ Others feared that in Utraquism the sacred blood might be inadvertently frozen or turned into vinegar, and many worried that serving the cup would remove the pastoral distance between the laity and the priest, and thereby endanger priestly authority.⁴¹¹

It is certain that Hus, at least late in his life, held to the administration of the eucharist in both species.⁴¹² Earlier, Hus had actually opposed the serving in both species in his earlier *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*.⁴¹³ But by 1415, this view had changed, and he wrote a treatise advocating the administration of the eucharist in the form of both bread and wine.⁴¹⁴ In a letter Hus wrote to John of Chlum on January 4th, 1415, he specified that “the gospel and St. Paul’s letter sound definite and that it [Utraquism] had been practiced in the primitive Church.” Hus was probably referring to the gospel accounts in Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, John 6:54, and Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor. 10:16.⁴¹⁵ Also in his letter written to Wenceslas of Duba and John of Chlum somewhere between the 18th and the 21st of 1415 (and referencing 1 Cor. 11:26), he wrote, “O Saint Paul! You say to all the faithful: ‘As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’”⁴¹⁶ It seemed clear to Hus that scripture and the primitive church expected communion to be administered in both kinds.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 200.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 201.

⁴¹² John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, 140.

⁴¹³ Schaff, 272.

⁴¹⁴ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 241.

⁴¹⁵ John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, 140.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 179.

Jakoubek of Stribo is commonly recognized as the originator of Utraquism in Bohemia,⁴¹⁷ which he started to administer only a few weeks after Hus left for the Council of Constance.⁴¹⁸ Hus had requested that Jakoubek hold off from offering the cup before he left for Constance, but on October 28th of 1414, Jakoubek began instituting the practice.⁴¹⁹ He started Utraquism at four churches in Prague: St. Adalbert (in New Town), and St. Martin –in –the-wall, St. Michael, and Bethlehem Chapel (all in Old Town),⁴²⁰ and he was soon followed in this practice by his fellow priests Nicholas of Dresden and Christian of Prachatice.⁴²¹ Janov had previously used Matthew 26:27, Luke 14:16, 1 Cor. 11:28, and John 6:53 to support frequent communion, and Jakoubek used the same verses to support Utraquism,⁴²² as would Rokycana in later years.⁴²³ Jakoubek also found support for the practice in Gratian’s *Decretum*, and like Wyclif, found that the withholding of the cup was a relatively new practice (only around 200 years old).⁴²⁴ Jakoubek also preached the hotly contested doctrine that the eucharist was necessary for salvation, and he therefore advocated the serving of communion to infants and children.⁴²⁵

Historians have long debated the source of the resurgence of Utraquism in Bohemia. Some commentators have theorized that Utraquism may have been reintroduced by Jerome of Prague after his 1414 visit to Orthodox Churches in White Russia.⁴²⁶ The Orthodox Church had been highly esteemed by Wyclif, and it was also held in high regard by the Bohemian reformers, who felt it was closer to the primitive Church than the Western Church

⁴¹⁷ Luetzow, 61.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁴¹⁹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 256.

⁴²⁰ Kaminsky, 99.

⁴²¹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 256.

⁴²² Kaminsky, 105.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴²⁴ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 256.

⁴²⁵ Kaminsky, 233.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

was. But there has been little evidence to support the speculation that 15th Century Bohemian Utraquism may have been continually practiced in some parts of the country since the 9th Century, when the country was converted from the east. It seems that this eastern influence of Utraquism had been long forgotten by the 15th century.⁴²⁷

The Eucharist at Hus's Trial

Sadly, the conservative priest, Palec, received news of the widespread practice of Utraquism in Bohemia, and used this information against Hus at his trial in Constance.⁴²⁸ Indeed Palec, Hus's old friend, became the prosecution's most cooperative witness. Hus wrote, "No one does me more harm than Palec. May the almighty God forgive him! He, Palec is the ringleader of them all, a [veritable] pointer dog. He insisted that all my adherents be cited and recant."⁴²⁹ In June of 1415, Palec visited him in jail where Hus confronted him about his accusations. Hus wrote about the encounter, "He said [to me] in the prison that all who had attended my preaching hold that after the consecration the material bread remains."⁴³⁰ In a letter to his friends in Constance, Hus similarly chided Palec for stating in front of the Council that "all who have attended [Hus's] sermons [were] infected by the error concerning the sacrament of the altar."⁴³¹

Hus was also appalled that the Council had decreed on 15 June 1415 that the practice of Utraquism was heretical.⁴³² Five days before, the archbishop of Milan explained the council's opinion on Utraquism,

"Though Christ had at the Last Supper administered the venerated sacrament in the two species of bread and wine, yet nevertheless the laudable authority of the holy canons and the approved custom of the church have established that communion should

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 100.

⁴²⁸ Luetzow, 233.

⁴²⁹ Peter of Mladonovice, 251.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 251.

⁴³¹ Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, 184.

⁴³² Ibid., 179.

be administered only to those who are fasting. Similarly, though in the primitive church, the faithful received communion in two kinds, yet it was afterwards decreed that priests should receive communion in two kinds, and the laymen of the species of bread only. As therefore this custom was wisely introduced by the church and the holy fathers, and has long been observed, it is to be considered as a law, which cannot be contested or changed except by the authority of the Church. Therefore, no priest shall under penalty of excommunication, administer communion to the people in the two kinds, those who have committed this offense shall, if they do penitence, be re-admitted into the bosom of the church. Those who harden their hearts and refuse to do penance shall be considered as heretics, and the aid of the secular arm shall be demanded for their punishment.⁴³³

However, it was also church policy that the priest was not allowed to refuse to take both kinds in communion. And this begged the question as to why it was sacrilege for a priest to take only one kind, but not the laity. Was there a special status to priest communion?⁴³⁴

Resistance to Utraquism also occurred within Prague, especially from Master Havlik, the preacher at Hus's old church, Bethlehem Chapel. In a letter that Hus wrote to Havlik, he urged him to follow Jakoubek's practice of serving in both species. He wrote to him about the practice of Utraquism,

“For no scripture is opposed to it, but only a custom which I suppose has grown up by negligence. We ought not follow custom, but Christ's example and truth. Now the Council, giving ‘custom’ as the reason, has condemned the lay participation in the cup as an error. Whoever should practice it, unless he recover his senses, shall be punished as a heretic. Alas! Now malice condemns Christ's institution as an error!”⁴³⁵

However, despite the resistance by Havlik, Jakoubek's innovation soon became the norm in Prague,⁴³⁶ and he was excommunicated by the council for this heresy.⁴³⁷ When the news of Hus's execution reached the city, the Hussite church reacted in kind, and all priests who would not administer in both species were exiled from Prague.⁴³⁸ And by Feb. 1416, all the

⁴³³ Luetzow, 266.

⁴³⁴ Kaminsky, 114.

⁴³⁵ Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, 180-181.

⁴³⁶ Luetzow, 343.

⁴³⁷ Schaff, 201.

⁴³⁸ Luetzow, 343.

churches in Prague were run by Utraquists.⁴³⁹ On March 20, 1417, the university masters also declared their support for the chalice. And Cenele of Vartanburg, a leading Bohemian noble, led to charge to spread Utraquism throughout Bohemia.⁴⁴⁰

In addition, other priests such as Aenea of Sylvania (like Jakoubek before him), began preaching that the partaking of the cup was necessary for salvation.⁴⁴¹ This was an idea that was supported by a strict literal interpretation of John 6:53,⁴⁴² “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.’”

However, Utraquism was soon viewed as a threat to good order, and King Wenceslas later limited it to three churches in Prague, including the radical St. Mary of the Snows.⁴⁴³ But it is important to see that many of the moderate advocates of Utraquism, the so-called Calixtines, had no intention of attacking the dogmas of the Catholic Church through the practice of Utraquism. On the contrary, their intent was to attack the authority of the Church, and Utraquism was simply a symptom of that protest.⁴⁴⁴ The Bohemians soon nicknamed the Concillors of Constance the “Doctors of Custom” since they based their withholding of the cup on custom and not scripture.⁴⁴⁵

Further Accusations of Heresies at Hus’s Trial

Hus was also falsely accused of refuting the dogma of *ex opere operato*. The question of whether the sacrament was invalid if offered by unworthy priests was a pivotal one, because if it could be shown to be true, it would immediately invalidate the often corrupt sacramental

⁴³⁹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 299.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁴⁴¹ Schaff, 201.

⁴⁴² Kaminsky, 110.

⁴⁴³ Luetzow, 346.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 356.

⁴⁴⁵ Schaff, 243.

system of the Catholic Church.⁴⁴⁶ In a letter written by Hus where he defended himself against accusations that he had abandoned *ex opere operato*, he said, “All those who attended my sermons well know that I preached the exact contrary, saying that a bad priest administers the sacrament in the same fashion as a good one, for it is the divine goodness that acts by means of a good or evil priest.”⁴⁴⁷ Hus’s belief that God acts in the consecration regardless of the worthiness of the priest was consistent with classic Augustinian theology and with the prevailing beliefs of the day. However, Hus also espoused that an unworthy priest ministered the sacrament to his own damnation.⁴⁴⁸

Other accusations that were brought up by the Council included that the blood of Christ was being carried around Bohemia in unconsecrated bottles and receptacles. People were also reported to be taking communion from the priest’s hand and eating it themselves. Likewise, a cobbler was reported to be hearing confessions. In short, the council was trying to make the case that religious practice in Bohemia had gone completely out of control, and that this sad circumstance was the result of Hus’s ministry.

And to further compound the council’s fears, Christian of Prachatice has also been sent to the council from the Bohemian court to determine if it was the right time to offer communion in both kinds to the laity. At Constance, he defended Utraquism, and the shocked council threatened him with arrest, and forced him to leave the city in secret.⁴⁴⁹

Ties to Wyclif

Many of the accusations at Hus’s trial attempted to tie him to the theologies put forward by Wyclif, since it made the council’s prosecutorial duties all the easier when they could

⁴⁴⁶ Luetzow, 3.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁴⁴⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 59.

⁴⁴⁹ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 240.

simply tie Hus's beliefs to those of a known heretic.⁴⁵⁰ But, as stated before, Hus's and Wyclif's eucharistic theologies were quite different. Wyclif wrote that, "Christ is not in the altar identically, truly, and really in his proper corporeal person," but Hus held to transubstantiation throughout his entire career.⁴⁵¹ At his trial, Hus was repeatedly questioned by the Cardinal of Cambrai, who interrogated him in detail regarding his eucharistic theology. And even though Hus adamantly denied that he had ever taught remanence, or held to the position, it still remained as a charge on the list of heresies for which he was convicted.⁴⁵² The eucharistic charges against Hus were as follows:

"Further Article 17, which holds that the aforesaid John Hus, both in the said month of June in the year of the Lord 1410, and also before and after, preaching to the people congregated on various occasions in the said chapel as well as in various other places in the city Prague, composed, taught, disputed about, and as far as he could defended many errors and heresies both from the said books of the said quondam John Wyclif and from his own impudence and deceit; and above all the following, namely, that after the consecration of the host there remains on the altar the material bread or the substance of the bread. Further article 18, which holds that a priest in mortal sin does not consecrate the body of Christ, does not minister nor baptize."⁴⁵³

Bohemian Opposition to Transubstantiation

However, even though Hus opposed remanence, the doctrine was preached by other Hussite priests. Much of the native Czech opposition to transubstantiation began in 1406, when Stanislav of Znojmo wrote a treatise in defense of John Wyclif's *De Corpore Christi*. In the treatise, Stanislav openly espoused the concept of remanence of the material elements (bread and wine) in the consecrated sacrament. At the time he wrote this treatise, Stanislav was not aware that the Church had spoken dogmatically on the subject. This had occurred

⁴⁵⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 56.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁵² Peter of Mladonovice, 168

⁴⁵³ Peter of Mladonovice, 266.

over a century before at the Lateran Council in 1215. It was there that the council specifically excluded the possibility of remanence.⁴⁵⁴

Stanislav, of course was preceded by Wyclif, who denied transubstantiation in 1381. In fact, the first three of twenty-four heresies listed against him by the “Earthquake” Council in 1382 had to do with errors regarding the eucharist.⁴⁵⁵ This council was so-named because of an earthquake that shook London during its proceedings. The earthquake was viewed by the Wyclifites as an indication of God’s displeasure with the tenets of the Catholic theology espoused there. The Catholics, of course, saw the tremor as a demonstration of God’s anger at Wyclifite heresies.⁴⁵⁶ At that council, Wyclif was condemned for writing, 1) “that the substance of material bread and wine remains after the consecration in the sacrament of the altar, 2) “that accidents do not remain without a subject after the consecration in the same sacrament” and 3) that “Christ is not in the sacrament of the altar identically, truly, and really in his own bodily person.”⁴⁵⁷

Furthermore, Wyclif saw transubstantiation as a “novella ecclesia,” a fable, and an idolatry. He believed that one cannot separate accident and essence; that transubstantiation necessitated transaccidentation. To Wyclif, Christ in the elements was like sunlight in a glass.⁴⁵⁸

He was also opposed to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and felt that Christ in the eucharist should not be honored beyond recognizing the spiritual presence of God within Holy Communion. I think Hudson is correct in saying that Wyclif’s eucharistic theology was a combined result of his 1) interpretation of the biblical texts, 2) his realist philosophy, and 3)

⁴⁵⁴ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 22.

⁴⁵⁵ Schaff, 50.

⁴⁵⁶ Hudson, 144.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁵⁸ Schaff, 53.

“an attitude of materialistic skepticism (the bread and wine undergo no change that is perceivable to man’s senses).”⁴⁵⁹

In 1405, Stanislav was accused of preaching remanence.⁴⁶⁰ And Archbishop Zbynek, who by this time had been secretly denounced in Rome for tolerating heresy, had to allow an investigation of the charges. Stanislav was denounced by a prosecutor named Stekna at the episcopal court, and a four person panel found him guilty of remanence. Stanislav responded that he only wrote his *De Corpore Christi* as an academic discussion, and that his work was incomplete. The court allowed Stanislav to “complete” his treatise and read it to a private audience at the Carolinium.⁴⁶¹ Stanislav’s flip-flop was deeply resented by Jakoubek and the other reformers, and Jakoubek wrote his own treatise defending remanence.⁴⁶² Nevertheless, at the Synod in Prague in February 1406, the archbishop ordered that transubstantiation must be declared from all the pulpits in Bohemia.⁴⁶³

Hus then wrote his own version of *De Corpore Christi* also in 1406, which corrected Zbynek’s definition of transubstantiation. In the treatise, Hus defended the use of the word “bread” which the archbishop had prohibited, but he defended the doctrine of transubstantiation, explaining that the substance of Christ’s body is not seen, but only the accidents of bread and wine. According to Hus, having faith in the sacrament meant having faith in the presence of the true body and blood of Jesus.⁴⁶⁴ He also quoted Augustine, stressing that one must, “Believe and thou hast eaten.”⁴⁶⁵ In fact, in his *Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer*, Hus translated the Matthew version of the prayer as “non-material bread”

⁴⁵⁹ Hudson, 143.

⁴⁶⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 24.

⁴⁶¹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 70.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

instead of the “daily bread,” further supporting his transubstantiationist views. Hus also stated his belief that the sacrament was not necessary for salvation, but it should nevertheless be taken in obedience to Christ’s ordinance.⁴⁶⁶

In another treatise, Hus rejected the remanence of Wyclif, stating, “the Lord Christ by his power and word, through him, causes that which is the bread to be his body; not that at that time it began to be his but that there on the altar begins to be sacramentally in the form of the bread what previously was not there and therein.”⁴⁶⁷

He also believed that unrepentant partakers only received the accidents of bread and wine and not the body and blood of Christ. And in doing so he made the substance of Holy Communion dependent on the worthiness of the believer.⁴⁶⁸

In the Autumn of 1408, persecution once again arose when a German master, Ludolf Meistermann, accused Stanislav and (the previously mentioned) Stephan Palec of remanence.⁴⁶⁹ Meistermann used Stanislav’s *De Corpore Christi* as his main piece of evidence.⁴⁷⁰ Against the normal custom of sending heresy complaints to the university hierarchy, Meistermann circumvented the local authorities by sending a letter of accusation directly to the Roman curia. Despite efforts to avoid prosecution, the two reformers were forced to travel to Rome to be tried. They were imprisoned by Cardinal Balthassae Cossa, but were released by Pope Alexander V after they agreed to recant all of Wyclif’s teachings. The experience of the imprisonment and the trial led both to become staunch enemies of the reform movement: Palec, as mentioned before, became a chief witness for the prosecution at

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁶⁷ Schaff, 53.

⁴⁶⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 27.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁷⁰ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 81.

Hus's trial.⁴⁷¹ On May 14th 1408, charges of remanence were also brought up against another young master, Matthew of Knin, who was a student of both Hus's and Stanislav's. Matthew was tried by the local archdiocese and was also forced to recant, although he was also allowed (like Stanislav before him) to make the recantation privately in front of the university masters.⁴⁷²

Taborites and the Eucharist

Taborite views on the eucharist varied widely from priest to priest and town to town within the brotherhood. For instance, Bishop Nicholas of Pehlimov followed closely to Wyclif's view of a spiritual presence, and he also protested the adoration of the sacrament, considering it idolatrous. However, some left wing Taborites priests such as Wenceslas Koranda of Plzen and John Capek denied the real presence altogether,⁴⁷³ seeing the sacrament a merely a memorial of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.⁴⁷⁴ Much of the Taborite theologies were heavily influenced by the Free Spirit Pikards, a religious sect from France that moved to Bohemia in the late 1410s in search of religious freedom. The Pikards denied the real presence, and they also refused to stand when the eucharist was elevated.⁴⁷⁵ As one might suppose, Jan Pribram, a defender of transubstantiation, and the leader of the conservative Utraquists in Prague, avidly opposed the Pikards' eucharistic views.⁴⁷⁶

The Pikards had a huge impact on Martin Huska's beliefs as well,⁴⁷⁷ and he was strongly influenced by the Pikard layman Sigmund of Repan.⁴⁷⁸ Like Janov and Jakoubek before him, he took a literal understanding of John 6:53, and preached the necessity of communion in

⁴⁷¹ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 28.

⁴⁷² Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 83.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁴⁷⁴ Bartos, 27.

⁴⁷⁵ Kaminsky, 355.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 422.

both kinds for salvation.⁴⁷⁹ He also held that since Christ was ascended and in heaven, he could only have a spiritual presence in the eucharist.⁴⁸⁰

But Huska went much farther, since his sacramental theology was heavily influenced by his radical chiliast beliefs. Huska prophesized a Taborite society where the sacraments would be no longer needed. He wrote, “Then there will be no need for baptism with water because they will be baptized in the Holy Spirit, nor will there be the tangible sacrament of the holy eucharist, because they will be fed in a new angelic mode-not in memory of Christ’s passion but of his victory.” Huska expected an immanent appearing of Jesus, who would then offer his people a Supper of the Lamb.⁴⁸¹

On 10 December 1420, Huska also managed to push through the Taborite diet three premises which followed his view of the eucharist, “1) In the bread and the wine of the eucharistic sacrament, there is not contained the presence of true God and man, in a sacramental form, 2) The true God and man is not to be adored in the sacrament of the eucharist with the cult of worship, and 3) Before the sacrament of the eucharist the knee is not to be bent, nor other signs of divine worship shown.”⁴⁸² Huska also believed that the consecrated bread should be taken by the laity and divided up among the people.⁴⁸³ And he felt that a priest’s attempt to bring the body of Christ into the host was sorcery.⁴⁸⁴ Huska beliefs were mirrored by another Taborite priest, Peter Kanis, who preached of the mere spiritual presence of Christ in the “dead” bread and wine.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 422.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 424

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 405.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 407.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 420.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 425.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 427.

These beliefs led to incidents where consecrated wafers were taken out of monstrances and then stepped on by Huska's and Kanis's adherents.⁴⁸⁶ Some of the Pikards even became a fanatical sect called the Adamites. This sect lived on an island near Tabor advocating nudity and free sex, and thinking themselves unable to sin.⁴⁸⁷ Persecution followed the reports of these incidents and soon Huska was left holding his services in taverns.⁴⁸⁸ Bishop Nicholas of Pehlimov reacted to these excesses by publicly defending the "real presence" in the Taborite town of Pisek. And he later expelled the Pikards and ordered that Taborite communion practices align with those of Prague.⁴⁸⁹ As stated earlier, Huska was subsequently captured and executed in August of 1421.

After the death of Wenceslas IV, the Taborites added the sacrifice of the mass to those Catholic "trappings" that they rejected: such as the precious vestments, the lavish decorations in the church, the Latin language, the numerous prayers, and the votive masses.⁴⁹⁰ But the Taborites did not formally refute the sacrifice of the mass theologically, and the issue was often ignored.⁴⁹¹ In fact, many of the Taborites' eucharistic practices varied from church to church. Some Taborites allowed the adoration of the sacrament, while others avoided it but did not reject it outright.⁴⁹² Nor did the Taborites uniformly deny the real presence, but instead stressed the communal aspects of communion, such as the "love feast."⁴⁹³ And rather than taking hard and fast theological stands, they jettisoned the more devotional aspects of

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 427.

⁴⁸⁷ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 301

⁴⁸⁸ Kaminsky, 427.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 428.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 471.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 472.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 425-426.

communion, such as the elevation and the reserving of leftover consecrated bread for the next day.⁴⁹⁴

A synod of all the Hussite churches was held in May of 1422, and was led by the conservative, Jan Pribram. It held to all seven sacraments, but included the innovations of Utraquism and child communion. The synod also stressed the divine presence in the eucharist, and defended the mass, but it denied the laity the right to hold liturgical vessels. But most importantly, it attempted to solidify eucharistic beliefs in response to the Pikardists with two decrees. The first of which was,

“Let all priests believe with most faithful heart and confess with most sincere voice, that the whole Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, with his own body and blood, is with us in his real presence in the most divine sacrament of the eucharist, under the form of bread and likewise under the form of wine. And let them announce to the people that this is to be faithfully held and believed by all.”

And the second was, “It is to be held and believed that Christ, true God and true man, is in the visible sacrament of the Eucharist according to his own nature and corporeal substance, and according to his natural existence—the very same one in number that he took from the Virgin Mary and according to which he resides in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

And we say that all and singular tractates, writings, and pamphlets contrary to this orthodox formula and faith are to be condemned; and we declare to all Christian faithful that they have been condemned, and we demand that they flee from such writings, tractates, and pamphlets as from pestiferous ones, fermented by heretical pravity.⁴⁹⁵

As one might expect, this statement, which outlined a substantial presence of Christ, could not be accepted by the Taborites.⁴⁹⁶ The previous Synod contained an eight point eucharistic formula, which was artfully written by Pribram, and it only held to the “real presence” so the Taborites could accept it.⁴⁹⁷ But this year’s formula could only be accepted by those who believed in either transubstantiation or consubstantiation (the belief the both Christ’s body

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 337-338.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 462.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 463.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 473.

and the substances of bread and wine were present within the eucharist).⁴⁹⁸ In response, a Taborite “spiritual presence” eucharistic theology was clearly formulated by John of Zatec in that same year.⁴⁹⁹

But in June of 1423, (with the Pikard crisis behind them) an agreement was once again hammered out in an eight point agreement between the Prague and Taborite divines in regard to the eucharist (with similarly vague language as had been created two years before). Notice the inclusion of language which specified that Christ’s body was **not** present dimensionally. It said:

- 1) Let all faithful Christians believe with a faithful heart, and profess with sincere voice that in the most divine sacrament of the eucharist, under the form of bread and likewise under that of wine, the whole Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, with his own body and blood, is with us in his real presence.
- 2) Christ is in the perceptible sacrament according to his natural corporeal substance, which he took from the Virgin Mary.
- 3) In the Eucharist, the visible consecrated host, there dwells corporeally the fullness of divinity.
- 4) **The substance of the body of Christ is in the sacrament of the eucharist in the quantity of substance, but is not there dimensionally.**
- 5) The substance of the body of Christ is in the sacrament of the Eucharist to the extent that the substance is in the body itself.
- 6) The substance of the body of Christ is in the visible sacrament in the quantity that it is substance, and in the quantity that it is body; thus it is in the sacrament substantially and corporeally. **But it is not there dimensionally or in a dimensive or extensive sense.**
- 7) Christ, true God and man, is at one and the same time in many distant places and in communicants, according to its true, natural, and substantial body in which he resides in heaven; for he is in every duly consecrated host. **Be he is not there extensively or dimensionally.**
- 8) That same Christ, true God and man, who is believed in that venerable sacrament, is to be adored in it with kneeling and all honor due Christ.⁵⁰⁰

The Taborites were also allowed to create their own two points, which, however, were binding on no one. They were:

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 463.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 465.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 473.

- 1) The sacramental bread, remaining bread in its nature, is sacramentally the body of Christ.
- 2) The sacramental bread, remaining in its nature is not identically the body of Christ, that is, understanding identity in its material sense.⁵⁰¹

However, even with this agreement, Tabor kept a low grade attack on the eucharistic beliefs of Prague for many years afterward. One such critic was Nicholas of Biskupec, who was also an outspoken opponent of the Roman mass that was said at Prague. He noted that the multiplication of masses (where many masses were said on many different altars) only served to confuse everyone, and that many uneducated priests saw the sign of the cross as having magical powers. He also objected to the masses for the dead in purgatory, and believed that such masses could only lead to simony by the priesthood.⁵⁰² But he did allow adoration of the Blessed Sacrament if the laity's prayers were directed towards Christ in heaven.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 474.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 471.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 492

CONCLUSION WHAT WAS THE REAL MOTIVATION BEHIND THE HUSSITE UPRISING?

It has often been said that the *raison de la guerre* for the Hussite wars was the chalice. But was this really the case? Were the peasants risking their lives on the field of battle against seemingly insurmountable odds just so that they could receive both body and blood on Sundays?

Social historians have often seen the Hussite conflict in solely secular and economic terms. In their view, the Hussite War was a war of class struggle pitting the upwardly mobile burghers against the ruling and often unproductive nobles. Or they saw the conflict as a peasant uprising where the average man rose up against the exorbitant rents and tithes imposed upon him by the nobles and the Church.

But it seems that neither of these theories captures the driving factors behind the rebellion. This final chapter will make the case that the Hussite conflict was essentially a religious struggle in which all the Bohemian people fought for the right to worship God as they saw fit, without being encumbered with the corruption and interference that was so indicative of the medieval Church. It will show that the Hussite conflict was a fight against 1) church corruption, 2) church persecutions, and 3) a church hierarchy that often distanced the believer from God.

Church Corruption

It is important to understand that church corruption in the Middle Ages was nothing new. Long before the time of Hus, poets such as Dante and Petrarch,⁵⁰⁴ assailed the corruptions of

⁵⁰⁴ Benito Mussolini, *John Hus*, (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1929), 1.

the clergy. Concubinage among the newly celibate clergy,⁵⁰⁵ the buying the buying and selling of benefices,⁵⁰⁶ and the selling of indulgences, left the false impression among the laity that nearly everything the clergy did was somehow tainted. Dante even saw the preacher as mere a showman for money, rather than an ordained minister called by God to preach the gospel. In one of his poems, he wrote of this huckster-type persona,

The preacher now provides himself with store,
Of jests and gibes; and so there be no lack,
Of laughter, while he vents them, his big cowl,
Distends, and he has won the meed he sought.⁵⁰⁷

Wyclif also led the fight against church corruption in the late 14th Century. But interestingly, he saw the church corruptions as an outgrowth of insincere theologies such as the transubstantiation of the Eucharist. In his *On Simony*, Wyclif wrote,

“And I say that this is unintelligible because all philosophers of this sect [transubstantiationists] are ignorant of their own words when they speak of accident or its nine classes, which they explain in various ways so that just as they venerate what they do not know, so they preached what they do not understand...but prompted by God, the people anxiously seek to understand what the sacrament of the altar is since it is not in every way the body of Christ; and neither the people nor the instructor understand what this accident without a subject is...and correspondingly man’s acquisitive appetitive nature is seduced to misfortune or danger in the accumulation of temporal goods, which are equivalently accidents from the cleric or bishop, as I said above, to the extent that to get them they can excommunicate without limit, or grant indulgences and other spiritual gifts which they pretend to have.”⁵⁰⁸

And,

“for just as the intellect of the church is deceived on the question of the Eucharist in its speculations, so its emotional nature is deceived in its external action by the same sect.”⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵⁰⁸ John Wyclif, *On Simony*, tr. by Terrence A. Mc Veigh. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 112.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 108.

In other words, according to Wyclif, the doctrine of transubstantiation is a lie that is promulgated by the church, and it in turn begets other moral corruptions, such as simony, excommunications, and indulgences.

Hus, on the other hand, did not see a clear connection between theological beliefs and church corruptions. It seems clear that Hus's efforts were predominantly designed to rid the Church of its ethical abuses, rather than a campaign of sweeping theological change.⁵¹⁰ In explaining the plight of the average Christian in Bohemia, Hus wrote, "One pays for confession, for mass, for the sacrament, for indulgences, for churching a woman, for a blessing, for burials, for funeral services and prayers. The very last penny which an old woman has hidden in her bundle for fear of thieves or robbery will not be saved. The villainous priest will grab it."⁵¹¹

Hus started his ministry by railing against such priests from his pulpit at Bethlehem Chapel. And his popularity among the people grew even greater due to his strong stand against the indulgence sale. This anti-corruption message resonated with a populace that was tired of being nicked and dimed by forced tithes, and by clergy who demanded payment for every sacrament. Furthermore, the people had lost respect for a clergy that was that often a poor example of the Christian life, and who had often entered the priesthood to obtain benefices rather than to preach the gospel.

In fact, it seems that one finds the real Hus not in the debates over Church structure or the eucharist, but in his outrage over the corruptions of his fellow priests, especially during the indulgence sale. Hus wrote,

⁵¹⁰ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 75.

⁵¹¹ Macek, 16.

“They preach that whoever gives money receives forgiveness of his sins and salvation from eternal torment. That is not right, that the one gives money and by such barren repentance of his sins reaches Heaven immediately after his death while another who does not pay must suffer the greatest torment for his sins, even though he has committed fewer than the other. Let us make it still more obvious. Let us suppose that there are two men, one of whom for fifty years has sinned mortally with all the lusts of his fleshly will and has never repented his sins: the other lives virtuously and has not yielded to any mortal sin. Let us further suppose: the first dies without the deep repentance that could wipe out his sins, soon after he has given the Pope money: the other dies too with far greater repentance of his little daily sins, but has not bought his salvation from the Pope. And see, the one goes straight to heaven, according to the teachings of these wretched cheats, because he has given money: the other must suffer the torments of Hell simple because he has not bought his exemption from the Pope. Whence has the Pope such iniquitous power? Is not God’s justice completely overthrown by such a doctrine? With such godless words the greedy teachers of Antichrist canvass the people of Christ and are to blame that men leave the paths of truth and set their hopes on indulgences and money, whereby they are cheated of eternal happiness. And if one confronts their false teaching with the Holy Scriptures, one is a heretic!”⁵¹²

In his famous book, *De Ecclesia*, Hus also made the case that these “simoniac” priests used the illegitimate and unbiblical powers of excommunications, suspensions and interdicts as tools of force to defend their corrupt practices of indulgences and forced payments for sacraments. He wrote, “those simoniacs buy and sell excommunications, suspensions and interdicts, and with these as their weapons they feed and defend their simony most powerfully. And a proof if not necessary, for this simoniac trafficking is patent even to the eyes of the rustics, who are bound, vexed, oppressed, and plundered by these selfsame simoniacs.”⁵¹³

And while Hus’s stand won him many enemies among his fellow priests, it also (at least in the beginning) won him admirers within the Church and nobility. Early in his ministry, Archbishop Zbynek and King Wenceslas were strong supporters of cleaning up the clergy.

⁵¹² Roubiczek and Kalmer, 126.

⁵¹³ John Huss, *The Church*, 298.

Also in *De Ecclesia*, Hus quoted St. Bernard in lamenting the fact that the pope, the supposed heir to St. Peter, displayed none of Peter's humble qualities. He wrote, "He is Peter who is not known to go about in processions, ornamented by gems or silks, not clad in gold or carried by a white horse, or compassed about with soldiers, and surrounded by bustling servants. Without such things, Peter believed he was able to fulfill sufficiently the salutary commandment: 'If thou lovest me feed my sheep.' In things like these you [the Pope] are not Peter, but Constantine."⁵¹⁴ And it is also interesting to note that Hus's concerns about the moral decay of the pope, bishops, and Magisterium in Rome were later reflected in the reforms of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517).⁵¹⁵

Church Persecutions

There seems to be little doubt that the execution of Hus was the spark that turned a smoldering Bohemia into a raging fire. The council had falsely accused Hus on the vast majority of charges against him. It had refused him an attorney, refused to remove the charges which Hus denied, refused to let him speak, used witnesses who lied outright about his teachings, and it also tortured him severely. Hus's execution left no doubt in the Hussites' minds that the Catholic Church was devoid of justice.

And it is also important to see Hus's personal persecution as simply one of many (Martin, John, and Stasek, not to mention Jerome) that the Bohemians had to endure from a corrupt and "simoniac" Church hierarchy.

This perception of being constantly persecuted, led the Hussites to make the protection of prelates a major plank in their revolutionary agenda. In fact, of the Four Articles of Prague,

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁵¹⁵ Didomizio, 247.

it was the first article which allowed clerics the freedom to preach the Word of God as they saw fit. And the first article also protected priests from being jailed or executed for heresy.

A Church That Moved the Believer Away From Christ

It also seemed to the Hussites that the Church was designed to separate the believer from God rather than bring him closer to Christ. The priest said mass in a language the average man could not understand, he “made God” through the power of consecration that only he possessed, and then withheld the sacred blood of the Lord, which he then partook himself. Instead of being man’s means of communing with Christ, the Church became an obstacle. And it was the Taborite preachers who sought to break down these barriers by serving communion in both kinds, bringing back the “love feasts,” and sharing property in imitation of the primitive Church.

Hus also sought to remove the obstacles in the Church by attacking its institutional structure. His reforms stressed adherence to the scriptures as a means of keeping the church in line with the apostolic teaching, and included an ecclesiology that saw the Church as the world body of the elect, rather than a rigid bureaucracy of clergy.⁵¹⁶ Hus’s Augustinian view of predestination allowed him a theology of the Church that could be freed from the centrality of the church structure with its stress on blind obedience to an infallible pope and his cardinals.⁵¹⁷ Such an “invisible Church” would be obliged to obey only those leaders who were true to God’s Word.⁵¹⁸

Hus was truly a man before his time. It is quite interesting how many of Hus’s reforms were approved by the Second Vatican council, such as the serving of both species of the eucharist to the laity, and the saying of mass in the vernacular. Even the ecclesiology of

⁵¹⁶ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 76.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

Vatican II can see its roots in the views of Hus and the other reformers, since the writings of that council described the Church as a body comprised of the people of God.⁵¹⁹

So What Did Utraquism Mean to the Hussites?

No one can deny that Utraquism was a highly unifying element in the Hussite uprising. Hussite priests would lead the Bohemians into battle by carrying a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament in it, calling the monstrance an “ark.”⁵²⁰ The army was also led by a banner which portrayed a red cup in a black field.⁵²¹ In this way, the eucharist was the symbol of the Hussites as God’s chosen people, just as the Israelites had the Ark of the Covenant in earlier times.

The uniting bond of Utraquism was an emotional and unifying element among the people. Its importance can be seen in the popular Bohemian hymn “It is Christ’s Institution.” Its lyrics contain, “Even though the whole Christ is under each of the species, still he is not superfluously given to the people in both kinds: but rather this is fitting, and very beneficial to the people – to do both; eat his body and drink his blood.”⁵²²

But it is also important to see that Utraquism was equated with Christian freedom. Like frequent communion before it, it symbolized the layperson’s coming of age as a vital member of the church. And that lay person wasn’t ultimately concerned as to whether Utraquism was good sacramental theology, nor did he really care whether it was or was not a biblical practice. Instead, it meant that he had arrived as a valued saint in the Church: a Church where he would be nurtured by the priests and the sacraments into a growing faith in his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

⁵¹⁹ Didomizio, 247.

⁵²⁰ Luetzow, 267.

⁵²¹ Spinka, *John Hus: A Biography*, 256.

⁵²² Kaminsky, 98.

Ultimately, Utraquism became a larger symbol than simply two species of communion. It symbolized freedom from corruption, freedom from persecution, and freedom from a Church that divides rather than unites. The Bohemians weren't fighting economic liberation, or even for the chalice. They were fighting for the freedom to worship God as they saw fit, the freedom from being fleeced by greedy divines, and the freedom from being crucified for worshipping their crucified Lord.

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