
The Plebeianization of Utraquism: The Controversy over the Bohemian Confession of 1575

Zdeněk David
(Washington)

The proposal of 1575 to adopt as a law of the land the so-called Bohemian Confession (modelled on the Augsburg Confession) preoccupied the Bohemian Diet which sat, with two interruptions, from 21 February to 27 September. The move represented the high point of the attempts to legitimize Lutheranism and the Unity of Brethren in Bohemia in the sixteenth century. If adopted, the law would have terminated the existing establishment of mainline Utraquism, administered by a Consistory, and defined by the Four Articles of Prague (1419) and subsequent confessional statements, as the only legitimate religion for those dissenting from the Church of Rome.¹ The parliamentary move to give legal recognition to the Lutherans and the Brethren, which would have required the monarch's consent, was timed to coincide with the hour of need of the reluctant King Maximilian II (1564–1576). As the year 1575 opened, the King, who was simultaneously Holy Roman Emperor, was eager to placate the Bohemian estates in order to gain the Diet's consent to the coronation of his son Rudolf as King of Bohemia. The Bohemian Crown was to strengthen Rudolf's candidacy for an election as King by the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire which was to meet in Regensburg in the autumn of 1575. This, in turn, would be an essential step to the perpetuation of the Habsburg dynasty's imperial ascendancy in the Holy Roman Empire.²

1) The events of the Diet of 1575 are available in considerable detail, above all in Ferdinand Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse: Její vznik, podstata a dějiny*. (Prague, 1912) 86–94; also by Ferdinand Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu*, 6 vv. (Prague, 1950) 6:274–323; Kamil Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř podobojí v l. 1562–1575 a jeho historický základ", *ČČH* 17 (1911) 404–06, 411–16; and more recently by Jaroslav Pánek, *Stavovská opozice a její zápas s Habsburky, 1547–1577* (Prague, 1982) 101–19. For earlier presentations, see also Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy*, 12 vv. (Prague, 1855–1901) 12:228ff., and Anton Gindely, *Geschichte der Böhmischen Brüder*, (Prague, 1861–62²) 2:109ff. Important documentary sources are Sixt of Ottersdorfu, "Diarium o sněmu 1575, jenž zahájen byl 21. února a zavřen dne 27. září", and in "Diarium Bratří českých", *Sněmy české* (Prague, 1886), 4: no. 88, pp. 318–392, and 4: no. 89, pp. 392–464.

2) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy*, 12:245.

This paper interprets the campaign for the Bohemian Confession primarily as symptomatic of a social cleavage within Czech society between the nobility and the commoners. It seeks to answer the questions why the religious division opened up in Czech society along social lines, why the Utraquists gave political support to the legalization of Lutheranism and the Unity, and what were the consequences for Utraquism of the religious cleavage. It also questions the widespread view of historians that the outcome of the parliamentary action of 1575 meant a virtual demise of mainline Utraquism. For instance, Kamil Krofta has maintained that henceforth the Utraquist Consistory "... merely vegetated in a complete separation from, indeed in an enmity with, the large majority" of the Czech dissidents from Rome.³ The renowned legal historian Jan Kapras has maintained that after 1575 the Utraquists were vanishing: "... toward the end of the sixteenth century there were virtually no ... Utraquists remaining ..."⁴ Alois Míka implies that the exclusion of the *Compactata* from the laws of the land in 1567 already symbolized the end of Utraquism. Amazingly, he manages to give an otherwise substantial account of the events of 1575 without a single reference to the role of the Utraquist Consistory, or of Valdštejn's group. Ferdinand Hrejsa admits the Utraquists' post-1575 existence, but denies them the spirit of Jan Hus.⁵

Unravelling the record of the events of 1575 is at times complicated by the idiosyncratic character of the historical writings of the Unity of Brethren, which also tends to obfuscate the understanding of the previous efforts to bolster Lutheranism in Bohemia in 1539–1543. To illustrate the flavor of the Brethren's narratives, one may refer to their "diarium" of the 1575 Diet concerning Maximilian II's reception, on 4 or 5 March, of the Utraquist Consistory, which they called "the refuse [or sewage, *colluvies*] of the Czech or Utraquist party":

... when admitted before him they asked that His Majesty not deign to abandon them and said that they wished to reach an agreement with the Jesuits on everything, whereupon he deigned to reply that, since they were neither warm nor cold, they did not please him. Thus shamed, they left.⁶

Even the proven friends of the Unity among modern historians could not credit this account. Thus Hrejsa thinks such a coarse and tactless treatment

3) Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 417; see also Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 282; Josef Macek and others, *Československá vlastivěda, Dějiny* (Prague, 1963) 2,1:390.

4) Jan Kapras, *Právní dějiny země koruny české* (Prague, 1913) 2:536.

5) "Staroutrakvisté se hlásili k dědictví Husovu ... ale neměli již nic z jeho ducha." Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu*, 6:323. Alois Míka, "Z bojů o náboženskou toleranci v 16. století", *ČČH* 18 (1970) 375; 377.

6) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 102.

of the Consistory by the King unthinkable. Hrejsa also notes that the insulting treatment is verbatim repeated as having occurred also at the audience on March 15.⁷ The Brethren evidently made considerable use of their historical writings as ramparts for launching missiles against others in the form of set images.⁸

Krofta cites a similarly offensive statement concerning the Utraquist Consistory which the Brethren's diary attributed to Maximilian II when the King allegedly sent a message to the estates on 24 August that the Consistory would "gradually perish on its own, when there is nobody to administer it, and its current members die out".⁹ A continuing leitmotif from the history of 1539–1543 is a negative view of the Lutherans whom the Brethren seemed to abominate even more, if possible, than they did the Utraquists, although in this latter period there can be little doubt about the Lutherans' loyal support of the Unity's cause. Apparently the strait-laced Brethren viewed the Lutheran precept of *sola fide* as a license for amoral behavior. Unlike the events of 1539–1543 for which there is but one source, there are alternative sources for the 1575 Diet which can serve as possible correctives to the Brethren's accounts of the proceedings: particularly in the *Diarium* of Sixt of Ottersdorf.¹⁰

A Religious Cleavage

1.

The genesis of the parliamentary encounter at the Diet of 1575 between the urban advocates of Utraquism and the barons and knights, who were the champions of Lutheranism, had its proximate origin in the removal of the *Compactata* from the privileges of the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1567, and their replacement by a more general statement concerning the protection of the religious order established by the Diet, by agreements between the estates,

7) *Ibid.* 120–121. The statement is, however, accepted as an historical fact by the editors of *Sněmy české* (4:136).

8) *Ibid.* 102. The Unity's sixteenth-century writings, the histories in particular, might merit an examination from the viewpoint of the humoristic temper, running as a streak through Czech literature from the chronicles of Kosmas and So-Called Dalimil to Jaroslav Hašek and even the soft pornography of Vladimír Páral's novels. The Brethren's writings might assume a distinguished place in the tradition of this literary idiosyncrasy, a good start on a scholarly investigation of which was made in recent years by Robert B. Pysent of the University of London.

9) Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 414; *Sněmy české* 4:452.

10) For instance, concerning the cited incident, see *Sněmy české* 4:368. The principal source for the religious debates and events of 1539–1543 is the Brethrens' "Poznamenání a spolu shromáždění některých věcí pamětihodných přítomným i budoucím", dated 1579, MS. Prague, NK XVII C 3.

and by existing orders and customs.¹¹ The first attempt to legalize the exercise of Lutheran religion, or a dress rehearsal for the parliamentary events of 1575, occurred in May 1571 when the nobles under Supreme Justice [*nejvyšší sudí*], Bohuslav Felix Hasištejnský of Lobkovice, prepared a supplication to the King Maximilian II for a free exercise of religion under the Augsburg Confession, citing the precedents of Upper and Lower Austria for which Maximilian had given such a concession. Lobkovice also assured those members of the Unity who were among the noble estates that the Lutherans intended to work in agreement with the Brethren.¹² The Utraquist estates under Jan of Valdštejn on 23 May 1571 asked for a rejection of the Augsburg Confession, adding petitions for ordination of Utraquist clergy by the Archbishop, banishment of clergy not under the Consistory, selection of the Consistory by the estates, and the appointment of *defensores* from the estates to watch over the interests of the Utraquist Church.

The Utraquist Consistory and the Roman Archbishop of Prague had already on 10 May independently of each other signified their disapproval of the Augsburg Confession on the grounds that it stood for a foreign, German religion. Incidentally, this recurrent characterization of Lutheranism, as a foreign entity, by the Consistory and other champions of Utraquism was not meant primarily as an expression of xenophobia, but rather as a statement of fact that only the Utraquist and the Roman churches had a legal standing on Bohemian soil. In other words, what may have been legal in the German parts of the Holy Roman Empire was not *ipso facto* legal in Bohemia. The King temporarily closed the religious discussion on 29 May 1571 when he acquiesced to the Consistory's (and the archbishop's) arguments and ruled that approving the Augsburg Confession would violate his coronation oath. The latter prohibited religious innovation and protected only two parties (Utraquist and Roman), which observed traditional rules and orders.¹³

The drama of attempting to legalize the Augsburg Confession, under the name of Bohemian Confession, began at the Bohemian Diet of 1575 which opened its first session on 21 February. The parliamentary move revealed a sharp cleavage between the two noble estates (the barons and the knights), on the one hand, and the estate of towns, on the other hand. When the discussion of the religious issue opened on 7 March, most barons and knights, led again by the Supreme Justice, Bohuslav Felix Hasištejnský of Lobkovice, proposed the adoption of the Bohemian Confession.¹⁴ Most of the barons and knights also supported a legal recognition of the Unity of

11) *Sněmy české* 3:381.

12) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 43.

13) *Ibid.* 44.

14) Josef Riss, "Život a literné působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu", ČČM 35, (1861) 82.

Brethren, either under the Bohemian Confession or separately.¹⁵ In the Diet of 1575, according to Hrejsa, only two barons, in addition to the Supreme Chamberlain [*nejvyšší komorník*], Jan of Valdštejn, and three knights favored the continued a legal monopoly of Utraquism among those who dissided from Rome.¹⁶ Valdštejn, however, complained that the ranks of Utraquist supporters were artificially thinned. Some of the nobles (presumably knights), he contended, had tricked their constituencies into electing them by concealing their Lutheran proclivities.¹⁷ In any case, the main initial opposition to the legalization of the Augsburg Confession emanated from the estate of towns, which was headed in the Diet by Sixt of Ottersdorf, chancellor of the Old Town of Prague, and by Pavel Kristián of Koldín, also of Prague.¹⁸ Ottersdorf speaking in the name of the towns expressed their agreement with Valdštejn in favor of the established religion, Utraquism, and in opposition to any change in the legal religious status quo.¹⁹

2.

The divergence in attitude toward Utraquism between the nobility and the towns, however, had deeper roots than the political manoeuvring which culminated in the negotiations at the Diet of 1575. These roots can be viewed as partly historical, and as partly social. Historically, the Utraquist Church had maintained a special relationship to the towns of Bohemia (particularly the five towns which constituted Prague) virtually from the beginning. Thus already the original Four Articles of Prague of 1419 in the version cited by Vavřinec of Březová were proclaimed by: “We the mayor, councillors, and elders, as well as the entire community, of our capital city of the Kingdom of Bohemia, declare in our name and those of all the faithful in this kingdom ...”²⁰ As early as 1420, Prague and other towns experienced the unreliability of the higher estates, who showed much less determination than the towns to defend the Bohemian Reformation at a critical stage against King Sigismund. Hynek of Valdštejn was probably the only Czech baron who helped in the defense against Sigismund. Moreover, most of the high Czech nobility

15) Their petition (drafted 14 May 1575, but not submitted) called upon the Emperor to recognize their confession and church organization and was signed by seventeen barons and 124 knights. See Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:236.

16) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 60.

17) *Sněmy české* 4:374–375; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 231.

18) Author of the famous code of municipal law, *Práva městská království českého* (Prague, 1579, 1581, 1582), which received official status in 1579.

“Kristián (Glatovinus, Christianus, Koldín, z Koldína), Pavel”, *Rukověť humanistického básnictví*, 5 vv. (Prague, 1966–1982) 3:84.

19) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 111; *Sněmy české* 4:311, 325, 395; Riss, “Život a literární působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu”, 82.

20) Cited by Rudolf Říčan, ed., *Čtyři vyznání* (Prague, 1951) 39, n.1.

assented to Sigismund's coronation in Prague in 1420.²¹ A year later, in a highly symbolic act, the leading baron of Bohemia, Čeněk of Vartenberk had to undergo the ceremony of a dramatic humiliation because of the vacillation of his estate in 1420. Kneeling before the representatives of Prague, Čeněk confessed his sin against God and the city, and begged both for forgiveness. It was not the nobles, but the warriors of the city of Prague, who in 1421 secured Kutná Hora and twenty other towns for the cause of Bohemian Reformation.²² It is little wonder that the city of Prague subsequently assumed a special role as a champion of Utraquism, as well as protector of the Consistory. Even in 1564 the Consistory turned to the governments of the Old and the New Town of Prague in the matter of priestly ordinations. The Praguers promised to intercede with the King and in the Diet to obtain the services of another prelate, if the Archbishop of Prague continued to hesitate.²³

The ascendancy of the towns in political power during the wars of the Bohemian Reformation, which was subsequently reflected in their participation in the parliamentary process, endowed the towns with a sense of self-confidence and a feeling of sagacious distrust vis-à-vis the noble estates. On this superiority of the townsmen, Martin Kuthen of Špínsberk, *Kronika o založení země české* (Prague, 1539), a devoted Utraquist, could argue that the estate of the towns was more ancient than those either of the barons or the knights. For the estate of the towns originated with the foundation of Prague in A.D. 711, while that of the barons [*páni*] traced its origins only to the time of Duke Přemysl and the that of the knights to even later princely elevations.²⁴

On the perfidy of the nobles, Sixt of Ottersdorf in his historical work, *Knihy památné o nepokojných letech 1546 a 1547*, dwelt on the injury caused the Bohemian towns by their alliance with the barons and the knights during the quarrel with King Ferdinand I in 1546–47. The nobles, in a cavalier manner, let the towns bear the brunt of royal retribution for what had, in fact, been their joint responsibility. In this case, the towns' sense of grievance was directed more against the nobles, who betrayed them, than against the king,

21) Božena Kopiczková, *Jan Želivský* (Prague, 1990) 81–83; 97–98; 118.

22) Beroun, Slaný, Louny, Kadaň, Chomutov, Litoměřice, Bělá, Mělník, Kostelec nad Labem, Český Brod, Kouřim, Nymburk, Kolín, Čáslav, Chrudim, Vysoké Mýto, Polička, Litomyšl, Jaroměř, and Dvůr Králové, *vide* Kopiczková, *Jan Želivský* 140–141.

23) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:132; also Hrejsa recognizes the strength of Utraquism in royal towns, *vide: Česká konfesse* 59; Klement Borový, *Antonín Brus z Mohelnice, arcibiskup pražský; Historicko-kritický životopis* (Prague, 1873) 183.

24) Kuthen of Špínsberk, *Kronika o založení země české*, ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka (Prague, 1929), f. C2^b.

who actually punished them.²⁵ The scathing attack by Marek Bydžovský on Ivan the Terrible's harsh treatment of the citizens of Novgorod, Pskov and Tver in 1570–1571 may also be seen as a reflection of the high degree of estate consciousness on the part of Utraquist townspeople, transcending national and cultural boundaries and projected into a class solidarity with faraway Muscovy.²⁶

3.

While the special ties of the towns to the Utraquist Church are clear, the more puzzling question is the strong attraction of Lutheranism for the Bohemian nobles. What impelled most of the nobles to separate from the national community and to turn their backs on the entrenched religious traditions of the nation? Although the impression of the intensity of the nobles' interest in Lutheranism may be somewhat exaggerated due to the urban Utraquist bias of the principal source for the events of 1575, namely Ottersdorf's *Diarium o sněmu 1575*, it seems undeniable that a clear majority of the nobles pressed for the legalization of the Augsburg Confession.

Part of the answer may be traced exactly to the symbiosis between the towns and Utraquism. Because of the long-standing association of Utraquism with the urban commoners, some of the nobles' low regard for the common man also affected their view of the Utraquist Church. The social standing of the Utraquist ecclesiastical leadership was not likely to impress the nobility. While the Roman archbishops were drawn from the aristocracy, the Utraquist hierarchy was generally of non-noble origin. The authority of the Utraquist ecclesiastics was based on theological learning and scholarship, not on political, diplomatic, or military skills. An overt questioning of the value of hereditary nobility and an opposition to the appointment of nobles to episcopal positions had a long tradition in the Bohemian Reformation stretching as far back as Vojtěch Raňkův in the late fourteenth century.²⁷

The nobles, for their part, evidently found it problematic to show religious reverence to an institution whose leaders they perceived as socially inferior. The nobles' normal contempt for, and aversion to, the city-dwellers was sharpened by the towns' acquisition of political influence in the fifteenth century, and by their role as agents of economic and cultural modernization in the sixteenth century.²⁸ The gradual increase in the transnational loyalties

25) Sixt of Ottersdorf, *Knihy památné o nepokojných letech 1546 a 1547*, ed. Josef Teige, 2 vv. (Prague, [1920]). For instance *vide* 2:197–199; Riss, “Život a literární působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu”, 163.

26) Marek Bydžovský z Florentina, *Rudolphus rex Bohemiae XXI*, MS. Prague, NK XVI G 22 ff. 88^a–90^b.

27) Josef Tříška, ed., *Starší pražská univerzitní literatura a karlovská tradice* (Prague, 1978) 40.

28) Josef Petráň, “Skladba pohusitské aristokracie v Čechách”, and Anna Skýbová, “Česká šlechta a jednání o povolení kompaktát r. 1525”, in *Proměny feudální třídy v Čechách*

and in the national heterogeneity of the Bohemian nobility also widened their social distance from the towns, which acted as guardians of local national traditions.²⁹

An indication of the social problem was the nobles' apparent inability to deal courteously with the Utraquist authorities. For example, in 1571 Maximilian II reprimanded the nobles for their rudeness toward the Consistory. The King chastised them for writing in a menacing manner, and for addressing Utraquist Administrator, Martin of Mělník, in a discourteous way, denying him his proper title.³⁰ Two further incidents, though from later periods, are illustrative of the nobles' hostile interaction with the Utraquist clergy. There is on record the uncivil treatment of Administrator Václav Dačický by the Chancellor Zdeněk of Lobkovice in 1604, when the former tried to object against the Chancellor's describing his two daughters as "bastards" [*pankhartice*].³¹ In another notable incident in 1618, two burgher women of Prague interceding with Count Heinrich Matthias von Thurn for the Utraquist priest Jan Locika of Domažlice, threatened with exile from Prague, pleaded that they had entrusted their souls to him. The Count humiliated them by asking whether the same was true of their bodies.³² These are but two examples of the boorish behavior of Bohemian aristocrats vis-à-vis the townspeople.

Against this background, it is possible to speculate further about the attraction of Lutheranism for the nobility as well as, for a smaller number nobles, of the Roman Church. Part of the answer probably lay again in the *via media*, the ecclesiological centrism of Utraquism. One may advance two basic reasons why the Utraquist church did not appeal to the aristocracy on ecclesial grounds. On the one hand, unlike the Roman Church, it could not provide employment consistent with a noble status inasmuch as it embraced the ideal of clerical poverty. None in its clerical establishment could expect to lead the lives worthy of nobles, as the prelates of the Roman Church were able to do. On the other hand, the Utraquist authorities and their priests were unsuited for the same degree of domination as their Lutheran counterparts, inasmuch as the Utraquist clergy had the shield of a sacramental character,

v *pozdním feudalismu*, ed. Josef Petráň [Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philosophica et historica 1 (1976), Studia historica, 14] (Prague, 1976) 44; 74; 83–85.

29) Jiří Kovařík, "Proměny feudální třídy v Čechách v předbělohorském období", in *Proměny feudální třídy v Čechách v pozdním feudalismu*, ed. Petráň, especially 138–141; vide Míka, "Národnostní poměry v Čechách před třicetiletou válkou", ČČH 20 (1972) 214–215; 217; 220; 222; 227; and Josef Polišenský and Frederick Snider, "Změny ve složení české šlechty v 16. a 17. století", ČČH 20 (1972) 518.

30) Krofta, "Konsistoř pod obojí", 395 n.4.

31) *Sněmy české* 11 pt. 1:76; Vilém Slavata, *Paměti nejvyššího kancléře království českého*, ed. Josef Jireček, 2 vv. (Prague, 1866–1868) 1:47.

32) Pavel Skála ze Zhoře, *Historie česká od r. 1602 do r. 1623*, ed. Karel Tieftrunk, 5 vv. (Prague, 1865–1870) 2:180–81.

of the ecclesiastical rules of canon law, and of the constitutional guarantees of royal protection. Although the Utraquist Church had implemented the fourteenth-century reformist injunctions against clerical pride and ostentation, it had preserved much of the aura of “sacredness” of the Roman Church.

Lutheranism, to the contrary, seemed to offer a greater pliability and a wider scope for the assertion of the noble layman. Thus Vojtěch of Pernštejn (1532–1561) aspired to become a lay bishop of a Moravian Lutheran Church. Similar ambitions for personal aggrandizement and ecclesiological inventiveness could not be accommodated in the traditionalist Utraquist Church. Even the Unity looked askance at Pernštejn’s free-lance entrepreneurship in ecclesiology.³³ Also in a lesser matter, the Utraquist Consistory would voice its distaste over the zest with which the noble laymen threw themselves into composing the text of the Bohemian Confession in May 1575. The Utraquist Church did not sanction the writing of religious creeds by lay persons.³⁴ In short, the aristocracy could neither use the Utraquist Church as a welfare safety net (for its junior members), nor treat its clergy as its subjects. The Church did not seem to offer an adequate scope for the nobility’s self-expression, self-indulgence, or exercise of influence, and the aristocrats were casting envious looks at the career opportunities offered to their confrères in Lutheran and Calvinist lands abroad.

In a prophetic way, Jan the Elder of Valdštejn saw the onset of an even more radical split between the Czech nobility and the rest of the Czech nation at the Bohemian Diet of 1575. Defending eloquently and with determination the distinctive status of the Utraquist Church, Valdštejn raised his solitary voice to warn his fellow aristocrats against the unfamiliar path taken by embracing the Augsburg Confession. He argued that the hundreds of thousands of Bohemian Christians would not welcome a new and alien religion, but would rather cling to the established religious order sanctified by an ancient tradition. He summed up the Utraquist position succinctly saying: ‘... there is nothing for us in either a German religion, nor in what was published at Augsburg; ancient customs and diet decrees of the Bohemian Kingdom are good enough ...’.³⁵ The nobles in their elitist snobbery evidently did not care about the religious views or feelings of the common man as long as their own special interests were satisfied, and their particular tastes indulged.

33) “Z Pernštejna, Vojtěch”, *Knihopis českých a slovenských tisků*, 2 vv. (Prague, 1925) 2: pt. 6,91.

34) *Sněmy české* 4:412; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 128; see 120–121.

35) *Sněmy české* 4:393.

Utraquist-Lutheran Entente: Its Genesis

Having opened the participation in the Diet with the support of Valdštejn's adamant opposition to legalization of the Augsburg Confession and with an insistence on preserving the legal monopoly of Utraquism, the estate of towns executed a rapid about face in the endorsement of the Lutheran desiderata.³⁶ After Maximilian II permitted on 15 March a discussion of the Bohemian Confession by the party *sub utraque*, the towns agreed to participate in a commission of six members from each estate (plus two representatives of the University of Prague) which was to compose the new religious documents. The town representatives, elected on 17 March 1575, included under the leadership of Sixt of Ottersdorf, Matěj Bydžovský of Aventin, also from the Old Town of Prague, two representatives from the New Town of Prague, and one each from Žatec and Kadaň.³⁷ When the Diet reassembled after a recess from 26 March to 1 May, Ottersdorf participated in a commission of seven, which began its sessions on 3 May and completed the text of the Bohemian Confession and related documents on 13 May.³⁸ On 18 May, the estate of towns joined the barons and the knights in a petition to King Maximilian II to legalize both the Bohemian Confession and the Confession of the Unity, inasmuch as the Brethren had declined to accept the principles of Augsburg embodied in the former. The Brethren's Confession was submitted to the King separately on 22 May through their patron and Maximilian's personal physician, Dr. Johann Crato of Krafftheim.³⁹ The towns even participated in the deputation of six from each estate which pleaded with King Maximilian II on 22 August to reverse his decision against the legalization of the Bohemian Confession.⁴⁰

The question arises: why did the town representatives change their minds and shift their parliamentary support, with an almost unseemly speed, from Valdštejn to his Lutheran confrères? It certainly was not an instantaneous mass conversion from Utraquism to Lutheranism. The reasons for the towns' new and surprising willingness to back the legalization of the Bohemian Confession should be sought in pragmatic politics, which had raised the spectre of isolation in a hostile political environment. The new initiative was ultimately made possible by religious guarantees from the Lutheran estates, as well as from the monarch.

The perceptions of political danger, conducive to seeking allies, stemmed from both long-range threats, and more immediate ones. There

36) *Sněmy české* 4:394; see Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:282.

37) *Sněmy české* 4:328; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:232–233.

38) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:234–35.

39) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:297, 300; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:236.

40) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:242–243.

was increasing evidence of the general trend of repression against religious heterodoxy both in the Habsburg lands, and more broadly in Europe. Particularly vulnerable to persecution were those religious groups which lacked legal recognition. A graphic reminder could be found in the periodic, though incomplete, campaigns against the Unity of Brethren, especially the order of banishment from Bohemia in 1547. A possible suppression of the Lutherans, as long as they stood outside the law, would also weaken the Utraquists' position vis-à-vis the Roman Church. Curial intransigence and the cavalier treatment of the Utraquists by papal nuncios in the matter of ordinations by the archbishop of Prague in 1560s would make the Utraquists even more wary of confronting the Church of Rome alone.

The awareness of vulnerability to arbitrary repression, of the danger from the Roman side, and of the potential usefulness of Lutheran help, was dramatically heightened for the Utraquists in 1571. On the pretext of searching for Lutheran and Calvinist books, royal officials intruded into the colleges of the University of Prague. The Utraquist Consistory and the University faculty lodged emphatic protests against the invasion with the royal authorities, fearing that a campaign of suppression, like those in Spain, France, and certain German provinces, might be unleashed against Utraquism in Bohemia. Eventually, the Consistory and the University rector were entrusted with evaluating the books presented for sale in Prague book stores. Nevertheless, the episode brought home to the Utraquists the unpleasant possibility that they might be targeted in an offensive against heterodoxy launched in a Romanist zeal by the Habsburg dynasty. This anxiety helped to engender a certain sense of political solidarity with the Lutherans and the Brethren. Moreover, the Utraquists became very much aware of the lethal events unleashed by the champions of the Roman Church a year later in 1572 on the night of St. Bartholomew (24 August) in France.⁴¹ An insight into the authentic character of the risk of religious suppression also comes from the comments of papal nuncio, Giovanni Delphino. Writing from Prague to Rome on 22 May 1575, the prelate argued that, if the Bohemian Confession were fully enacted and the Lutherans and the Brethren recognized as the legitimate party *sub utraque*, then the real Utraquists could be legally banished from the Land.⁴²

There were, however, more cogent arguments of proximate danger, which helped to tip the scales and cause the rapid volte-face by the towns on

41) The events of 1571 and 1572 receive a substantial contemporary coverage in the chronicle of the Utraquist, Marek Bydžovský z Florentina, *Svět za tří českých králů: Ferdinand, Maximilán, Rudolf II*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár (Prague, 1987) 128–131; 146–161; and from Marek Bydžovský z Florentina, *Altera pars annalium seu eorum, quae sub Maximiliano rege contigerunt*. Státní ústřední archiv, Prague, fond Archív vyšehradské kapituly, inv. č. 796, kniha 358, ff. 158^a–162^b; 198^b–216^b; vide also Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:239.

42) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 175.

the issue of the Bohemian Confession. These were the warnings voiced on the very first day of the religious discussions, 7 March, by the barons and the knights. Directed mainly toward Ottersdorf (who had to go into temporary hiding to escape the nobles' wrath), their message was that, if the towns broke the united front against the king, and thereby separated themselves from the other estates, then, isolated, the fate of the towns of Austria would also be theirs. Indeed, in Upper and Lower Austria only the barons and the knights received religious liberty in 1568.⁴³ The preferential treatment of the nobility was particularly pronounced in Inner Austria (Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and Gorizia) where the governing Archduke Charles denied religious liberties to the towns in the 1570s, while granting them to the nobles. This became a prelude to a complete suppression of the urban dissidents from the Roman Church in the 1580s.⁴⁴ The Bohemian towns, moreover, had had a foretaste of what it meant to lose the political support of the nobility in 1547 when the king inflicted on them special penalties for the opposition of the Bohemian Diet to his pursuit of the Schmalkaldic War.⁴⁵

This pressure alone, however, does not supply a sufficient explanation for why the towns retreated, disclaiming any wish either to separate from the other estates, or to authorize Ottersdorf to speak in that sense.⁴⁶ What ultimately enabled the towns to support the adoption of the Bohemian Confession were the nobility's assurances that the Utraquists would not be obliged to conform with the new confessional document. Lobkovice stressed that the noble Lutheran party did not seek uniformity under the Bohemian Confession for all those *sub utraque*.⁴⁷ Thus the towns further agreed to participate in the elections of members to a Commission on 17 March 1575 that was to prepare the new confession and church rules, but again with the proviso that the freedom to adhere to Utraquism would not be curtailed by

43) *Sněmy české* 4:395; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 111; Riss, "Život a literné působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu", 82; Václav Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.", in *Česká politika* ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka, 5 vv. (Prague, 1906) 1:624.

44) See, for instance, Robert A. Kann and Zdeněk V. David, *The Peoples of the Eastern Habsburg Lands, 1526–1918* (Seattle, 1984) 50–51; Míka, "Z bojů o náboženskou toleranci v 16. století", 375. In a curiously prophetic way, this Inner Austrian approach or "Styrian Model" of Counter Reformation, the threat of which the nobles of Bohemia used in 1575 to intimidate the towns, would be eventually applied in Bohemia in an even more forceful manner by Archduke Charles's son Ferdinand. Concerning the "Styrian Model" of the Counter Reformation see Jaroslav Pánek, "Rekatolizace českých zemích", *FHB* 17 (1994) 336.

45) Sixt of Ottersdorf, *Knihy památné o nepokojných letech 1546 a 1547*, for instance 2:200–202; 209–215; 222–223; Riss, "Život a literné působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu", 163.

46) Sixt himself apologized and explained that a misunderstanding caused the negative impression produced by his original statement. *Vide: Sněmy české* 4:395; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 111; Riss, "Život a literné působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu", 82.

47) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 104; *Sněmy české* 4:392.

the adoption of the proposed Bohemian Confession.⁴⁸ Town representatives received additional guarantees in that respect. In a speech on 21 March 1575, Michal Španovský, a leading proponent of the Bohemian Confession, reaffirmed earlier assurances that the nobles did not seek a change in the religious status quo. As Ottersdorf explained, the towns originally had feared the religious proposal, but since the barons and the knights introduced an interpretation that was acceptable, the towns would cooperate with the nobles.⁴⁹ Thus the towns' parliamentary alliance with the Lutheran barons and knights was contingent on the latter's noninterference with Utraquism where it was established, especially in towns.

The townsmen, however, did not depend only on the guarantees of their noble colleagues in the Diet. There were also promises from Maximilian II that, regardless of the status of the Bohemian Confession, he was determined to preserve undiminished the interests of Utraquism. The King insisted on that proviso all along, and particularly at the audiences of 22 May and 6 July 1575.⁵⁰ On 30 August 1575 the Consistory and a Utraquist deputation led by Valdštejn would receive Maximilian's repeated assurances that the monarch would not permit any encroachments on the interests of Utraquism.⁵¹ In a more general way, Maximilian II would seek to promote a spirit of cooperation among the divergent religious interests by his urging of tolerance, if not trust. As an illustration one can take his speech at the audience of 2 September 1575, in which he emphatically called for an avoidance of conflicts between the Lutherans and the party *sub una*, between the Lutherans and Valdštejn's Ultra-Utraquists, and between the Lutherans and the Brethren. Despite historians' suspicions of his duplicity, hypocrisy, or lack of stamina, Maximilian apparently valued religious peace and felt a genuine revulsion against repressions, such as the St. Bartholomew's Night, or the proceedings of Duke of Alba in the Netherlands in 1567–1573.⁵² Whatever his innermost feelings, Maximilian undoubtedly contributed to engendering an atmosphere of confidence and forbearance which led to the political cooperation of the Utraquists with the Lutherans and the Brethren.

48) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:232–233.

49) "... rozmluvivše volení z měst spolu, dali odpověď skrze pana Sixta z Ottersdorfu: ... poněvadž to jináče slyší od pánův a rytířstva, ... a poněvadž pak jinačejší oumysl Jich M. jest nežli jsou spraveni, že rádi jim v těch prácech nápomocni býti ... chtějí. *Sněmy české* 4:329, also 328; Krofta, *Boj o konsistoř* 406 n.2.

50) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:301; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:241.

51) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 229; Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:310–311. The course of events would show that, in the end, the position of Utraquism was not diminished.

52) *Sněmy české* 4:142; 143; Josef Dostál, "Ohlas Bartolomějské noci na dvoře Maxmiliána II.," *ČČH* 37 (1931) 341; 344–345.

Hence, in the light of these agreements and understandings, if enacted, the Bohemian Confession and the Brethren's Confession would merely set the outer limits of the permissible deviations from the Roman Church. The legal recognition would cover the Lutherans and the Unity, but the Zwinglians, the Calvinists, the Anabaptists, and the Antitrinitarians (Arians) would still remain outside the pale.⁵³ At the same time, these laws would not compel all those who dissented from the Church of Rome to embrace either of these extremes (either Lutheran or the Unity). Instead, the new legal order would allow the existing intermediate confessional positions. In other words, the *via media* of Utraquism would be safeguarded.⁵⁴ This limitation on the effectiveness of the Bohemian Confession, however, was not necessarily clear to those outside the Bohemian parliamentary process. Even such a presumably astute and sophisticated observer as the papal nuncio, for instance, in his observation (cited above) assumed that the legalization of the Augsburg Confession would be tantamount to an imposition of Lutheranism on all those *sub utraque* in Bohemia.⁵⁵

The unlikely support by the Utraquist townsmen for the otherwise uncongenial legalization of the Bohemian Confession is, therefore, explicable by the fact that the Utraquists saw themselves, so to say, in the same boat with the Lutherans and the Brethren, and if the boat sank, all of them would go under. The Utraquists felt no more immune from a *Gleichschaltung* by the Roman Church than any of the other, more extreme dissidents. The king might be disposed to favour them in the short run, but for the long run they saw the balance of power between the estates and the king as a security for their autonomy and, indeed, for the very existence of the Utraquist Church. Therefore, an alliance with the Lutheran nobles was essential. The decision was analogous to that made by the Brethren on 15 March, who also had theological disagreements with Lutheranism. Despite the advice of their sponsor at the royal court, Dr. Crato, the Brethren chose not to break their coöperation with the Lutherans for fear of political isolation.⁵⁶ This willingness to form parliamentary alliances across confessional lines was reminiscent of the contemporary situation in the Polish *sejm* where the Catholics and the Uniats were ready to coöperate with the Eastern Orthodox in order to counterbalance the power of the king. Some of the Brethren looked more specifically at the Polish union of Sandomierz, or *Consensus Sandomiriensis*, of April 14, 1570, bringing together the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the Bohemian Brethren (exiled to Poland) into mutual peace and harmony, and

53) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:230.

54) See, for instance, Miloš Dokulil, "Meditace nad tolerancí", *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Brněnské univerzity*, B42 (1995) 30.

55) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 175.

56) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:285.

into a political alliance, while each of the three religious denominations preserved its distinctive organization and forms of worship.⁵⁷

This political astuteness would be expressed most concretely by the Bohemian town estate in 1609, the next time the Bohemian Confession became an object of discussion in the Bohemian Diet. When taunted by the party *sub una* for supporting the legalization of – to them – objectionable doctrines, the townsmen justified the parliamentary alliance with the Lutherans and Brethren nobility by their fear of political isolation, and by the instinct for self-preservation. If the priests not ordained by bishops (that is the Lutheran clergy) and the Brethren's ministers were banished, then – they feared – almost certainly the Utraquist clergy would either be banned or brought under the full jurisdiction of, and into full obedience to, the Roman archbishop.⁵⁸ This standard of liberal tolerance, though largely self-serving, is remarkable for the sixteenth-century, almost echoing Voltaire's dictum about defending the right to utter that with which one fundamentally disagrees.

Valdštejn's Ultra-Utraquists as Spoilers

Jan of Valdštejn and his small Utraquist faction among the nobles played an ambiguous rôle at the Diet of 1575. Having taken an unequivocally firm stand in favor of Utraquism and in opposition to the Augsburg Confession, Valdštejn's initial tendency appeared to be to act at least half-heartedly in harmony with the urban Utraquists. Yet, in the middle of the proceedings, he and his faction seemed to turn into spoilers working to upset the marriage of convenience concluded in the Bohemian Diet between the Utraquists of the estate of towns, and the Lutheran and Brethren of the estates of barons and knights.

Valdštejn on 7 March expressed his sharp objection to the Augsburg Confession, as formulating a religion valid in Germany, but not in Bohemia, and he coupled his plea for retaining Utraquism as the sole legal confession *sub utraque* with a proposal to restore the election of the Consistory by the estates.⁵⁹ After the towns changed their minds from opposing to supporting the discussion of the Augsburg Confession (in order not to break a united front with the majority of the nobles),⁶⁰ Valdštejn apparently agreed to go along with the prevalent sentiment in the Diet. The Brethrens' *diarium* makes the improbable claim that he was chastized in the following way by the Baron of Biberštejn, a member of the Lutheran party:

57) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:285; 287–288; 291; *The Cambridge History of Poland*, ed. W. F. Reddaway, 2 vv. (Cambridge, 1950) 1:345.

58) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 437.

59) *Sněmy české* 4:310; 322; 393.

60) *Ibid.* 4:394.

... you constantly take counsel with the party *sub una* against us. You deign to be a good Christian only when listening to the priest's sermon and, as soon as he leaves the pulpit, you hold and accept, as well as act upon, all the possible idolatries and papist heresies.⁶¹

On 9 and 10 March Valdštejn spoke in a conciliatory tone, and in favor of preserving unity. Nevertheless the Brethren's *diarium* depicts him as virtually out of his mind from rage following Maximilian's formal permission on 15 March for the Diet to compose the Bohemian Confession. Mercilessly the Brethren even poked fun at his medical problem of kidney stones.⁶²

On 22 May 1575 the King summoned Valdštejn and his associates for an evaluation of the completed text of the Bohemian Confession.⁶³ The assessment, entitled "A Declaration and an Avowal of the Holy, Ancient, Catholic [*obecná*], Christian Faith of the Communicants in Both Kinds [*Ohlášení a přiznání k svaté staré obecné křesťanské víře pod obojí způsobou přijímajících*]", was actually presented to the King on 4 June 1575 by Valdštejn and several "barons, knights, and townsmen of Prague". The Brethren's account notes sarcastically that the signatures included only two barons, a few knights, and one townsman, Jan Krejčí of Dražice.⁶⁴ The rather curious document stated that the Bohemian Confession contained many traditional and proper articles, but also some new and inadmissible ones; in addition, it omitted many necessary ecclesiastical rules and ceremonies. Yet the authors of the Confession claimed to adhere to the Consistory, and denied advocating unusual or unprecedented matters or religious innovations. Valdštejn and his colleagues, therefore, proposed that the authors and their clergy should meet in the principal church (apparently Our Lady Before the Týn) with the regular Utraquist priests, and receive from the latter, after confession, the body and blood of Christ, thus confirming their adherence to the true and legitimate Utraquist faith.⁶⁵

Tomek thinks that sheer sarcasm was involved in Valdštejn's proposal, and Hrejsa does not comment.⁶⁶ If taken seriously, the suggestion might have aimed at demonstratively unmasking the Lutherans, as not sharing the Utraquist faith, by their refusal to partake in the suggested ceremonies. A less likely possibility is that the Valdštejn group had in mind what used to be called "occasional conformity" in England from the time of the Glorious

61) *Ibid.* 4:395.

62) *Sněmy české* 4:324–325; 409.

63) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 179–180; *Sněmy české* 4:339.

64) *Sněmy české* 4:344.

65) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187; *Sněmy české*, 4:313; 343–344; 435.

66) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:238; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187.

Revolution of 1689 until the nineteenth century, that is, paying a lip service to the established religion by a periodic reception of communion. A petition added to Valdštejn's document contained his favorite and often repeated wish for an election of the Administrator and Consistory rather than an outright appointment by the king, as had become customary after 1562. The following were to participate in the election: estates *sub utraque*, university masters, the clergy of Prague, and representatives of provincial clergy, with the nominees confirmed by the king. The addendum also contained a plea for the institution of laymen from each estate who, as *defensores*, would assist the Consistory.⁶⁷

Shortly afterwards Valdštejn and his associates abandoned their genuinely or seemingly conciliatory position (partly dictated by Maximilian II's pleas for mutual forbearance), and adopted an open and uncompromising line against the approval of the Bohemian Confession. Seeking to mobilize opposition in the towns, they were directly challenging the policy of the town representatives in the Bohemian Diet who, as noted above, had for political reasons supported the adoption of the Bohemian Confession. Thus Valdštejn's colleague the Baron Zdeněk of Vartenberk, who served as the royal captain of the New Town of Prague, on two occasions (10 and 13 June) attempted to have the general town assembly condemn the Bohemian Confession. The attempt failed, partly because the townsfolk were reluctant to repudiate the stand of their Diet representatives.⁶⁸

Valdštejn and Vartenberk mounted their most concerted action when Maximilian II was preparing to issue his final decision concerning the fate of the Bohemian Confession. On 30 August 1575, the two barons led a delegation to protest against the proposed Confession, on the grounds that it introduced religious innovations, and instead urged protection only for the existing religion. The group included four knights (Zdeněk Malovec of Malovice, Jan Rašín, Jan Hýsrlé of Chody, and Holovský), and a substantial representation from the Old Town of Prague, in particular, the mayor [*primas*], Jan Krejčí of Dražice, two other burghers, as well as a large number of maltsters. The papal nuncio estimated more than sixty participants.⁶⁹ The Brethren in their *diarium* implausibly maintained that the participating brewers had been deceived by the mayor about the true purpose of their audience with the King.⁷⁰

On 31 August and 1 September Valdštejn precipitated a quarrel with the Lutherans when the Lutheran estates tried to persuade the Roman party to

67) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187; *Sněmy české* 4:344–345.

68) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:238–239; see also Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 184; *Sněmy České* 4:341.

69) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 228; *Sněmy české* 4:372; 454; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:245.

70) *Sněmy české* 4:454.

recognize the legitimacy of the Bohemian Confession as compatible with the recognized faith *sub utraque*. Valdštejn vehemently denied the legitimacy of the proposed confession, maintaining (with considerable justification) that the latter represented a departure from the Utraquist tradition which alone was covered by the previous legislation, as well as the agreements with the party *sub una*. Thus a disruption of the talks between the Lutherans and the Roman party occurred. The Lutheran nobles complained to the King about the matter on 2 September.⁷¹ The King, then especially hard pressed to secure his son's coronation, promised to reprimand Valdštejn for a breach of parliamentary etiquette, and actually did so on 3 September.⁷²

Thus – contrary to the view of Václav Novotný⁷³ – not all Utraquists were adamantly opposed to the legalization of the Augsburg Confession. Valdštejn's group represented an uncompromising purist position which contrasted with the more tolerant and practical, yet traditionally Utraquist, stand adopted by the estate of towns under the leadership of Sixt of Ottersdorf in the Diet of 1575. Valdštejn's purist attitudes, had they prevailed, would have had the effect of a political isolation of the adherents of Utraquism. The townsmen's rejection of Valdštejn's blandishments to oppose the Bohemian Confession should not be viewed as a religious stand, that is, as an expression of sympathy for Lutheranism, but as a political stand aimed at maintaining a parliamentary alliance with the nobility.

In fact, Valdštejn's stance played into the hands of the Roman party which also sought to separate the Utraquists politically from the other Bohemian dissenters from Rome. The Lutherans, in fact, asked the Roman faction in the Bohemian Diet, led by Baron Vilém of Rožmberk, to recognize them as belonging to the party *sub utraque* with which the party *sub una* had concluded past agreements of mutual toleration and respect, in particular the Peace of Kutná Hora of 1485. In its formal recommendation to the King concerning the Bohemian Confession on 30 August 1575 the party *sub una*, however, maintained that the Augsburg Confession was incompatible with the laws of the land and the ancient treaties and agreements which had regulated his party's relations to the party *sub utraque*. The proponents of the Augsburg Confession (under the name of Bohemian Confession), therefore, according to the Roman party, should not be considered as covered by the established traditional legal framework of the kingdom.⁷⁴

Within the Utraquist milieu of Bohemia, the relationship of Valdštejn's group to Ottersdorf's faction in the Diet was somewhat similar to the rôle played in the Catholic milieu of contemporary France by the intransigent

71) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:246; *Sněmy české* 4:373; 457.

72) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:247; *Sněmy české* 4:378.

73) Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.", 1:629.

74) Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 245; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 178; 226; 228–229.

Guises' faction vis-à-vis the more flexible and pragmatic *politiques* of Jean Bodin.⁷⁵

The Consistory: A Guardian of Utraquist Orthodoxy

A more fruitful division of labour – than that between Valdštejn's noble ultras and Ottersdorf's town moderates – developed in 1575 within Utraquism between the latter and the Consistory. The estate of towns in the Diet focused on creating the political preconditions for the maintenance of the Utraquist faith by fortifying in a broader sense the scope of religious tolerance through forging an alliance “on the left”. Hence it supported the legitimization of the Bohemian Confession. The Consistory was concerned with preserving the specific confessional integrity of Utraquism and thus focused on rejecting the Bohemian Confession from the doctrinal theological point of view. Thus each side could be viewed as concerned with its own proper sphere, respectively religious politics, and religious orthodoxy. If the deputies' attitude toward the Bohemian Confession could be politically permissive, the priests' stance had to be theologically negative. If the Utraquist Church were no longer to be the only officially defined and legally sanctioned body (outside the Roman Church), it became even more important to reemphasize its specific theological identity, especially vis-à-vis the newly proposed religious standard, the Augsburg/Bohemian Confession. Although the estate of towns and the Consistory may have appeared to work at cross purposes, each performed a meaningful function from the viewpoint of the Utraquist Church's interest and survival, and in practice their agendas were mutually supportive. Here again one may note an analogy with the behaviour of the Brethren, among whom it was the lay noble leadership in the Diet, not the clerical establishment, that supported the alliance with the Lutherans.⁷⁶

Standing on a theological, rather than a political platform, the Consistory's assessment of the Augsburg Confession was, therefore, consistently critical throughout the events surrounding the Diet session of 1575. Anticipating a discussion of the Augsburg Confession at the Bohemian Diet, the Consistory convoked a gathering of the clergy of Prague on 17 September 1574 warning that

the sectarians and other enemies of ours in all regions are mobilizing to defile the true religion, our own persons and especially the Consistory, and to introduce into this Bohemian

75) E.g. T. M. Parker, “The Papacy, Catholic Reform, and Christian Missions”, in *New Cambridge Modern History* v. 3: *The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, 1559–1610* (Cambridge, 1968) 52–53.

76) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:285; 287.

Kingdom new religious teachings, such as the Augsburg Confession. Therefore, see to it that you exhort the people to prayers for his Church, and you yourselves beg the good Lord asking him to foil their plans and turn them to nought, and that he should deign to confer on his Church a victory over them, inasmuch as these matters will be treated in the presence of His Imperial Majesty at the coming Diet gathering on St. Martin's Day.⁷⁷

According to the Brethrens' *diarium*, after Maximilian II gave permission to the commission, elected from the Diet, to draft a Bohemian Confession on 20 March 1575, the Consistory in a state of consternation sent a supplication to the King begging for protection. Claiming that the authors of the Confession were largely sectarians and Brethren [*sektáři a sborníci*], they firmly rejected any claim by these writers to exercise authority over their (Utraquist) Church. About the same time, the Administrator preached against laymen who were composing new articles of religion, and who claimed erroneously that Christ was in their midst: "Truly he is not among them, but he has left them and is in hiding, just as he had left the temple when he was about to be stoned ..." ⁷⁸ The King urged the Consistory not to protest publically against the preparation of the Bohemian Confession in order to preserve religious peace and calm. If the negotiators agreed among themselves, which he doubted, he would still not permit anything against the current state of religion.⁷⁹

Having received the completed text of the Bohemian Confession, the King on 22 May 1575 sent a copy of the document to the Administrator, Jindřich Dvorský, and representatives of Utraquist clergy for an evaluation.⁸⁰ On 25 May, the Consistory considered the text of the Bohemian Confession and concluded unanimously that its articles were inconsistent with the traditional religion and that in response to the King the deviations should be pointed out on the basis of earlier Diet decisions and religious treatises, as had been done previously in 1572. During the ensuing convocation of the clergy of Prague on 27 May, the Consistory exhorted those present to conduct prayers for the protection of the established traditional religion in view of the current discussion of religious issues by the Diet.⁸¹ The Consistory's formal reply to the King's request for evaluation of the Bohemian Confession was dated 4 June. In the Consistory's judgment, the document

77) Cited by Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 45.

78) *Sněmy české* 4:412; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 128; see 120–121.

79) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:285.

80) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 179–180; *Sněmy české* 4:339.

81) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 183–184.

sanctioned the Augsburg Confession and the Confession of the Brethren, both of which had been found contrary to “the true ancient Utraquist Christian religion, which is in agreement with the teachings of the holy prophets, of Christ the Lord, of the holy apostles, and with the teaching of the holy, catholic, apostolic Christian Church [pravé starobylé strany pod obojí křesťanské náboženství, srovnávající se s učením svatých proroků, Pána Krista, svatých apoštolů a s učením svaté obecné apoštolské církve křesťanské]”.⁸² For the content of the latter the Consistory refers to earlier confessional statements of the Utraquist Church and to the writings of its theologians, which had been submitted to the King in the form of extracts in a booklet in 1572. According to an independent report by a Lusatian historian Christophorus Manlius, this compendium included the classics of Utraquist theology ranging from Jan Rokycana and Jan of Příbram to Pavel Bydžovský and possibly Bohuslav Bílejovský.⁸³ Hrejsa assumes that the booklet was either one of Bydžovský’s treatises, or Bílejovský’s *Kronyka česká*.⁸⁴ In its own statement of 4 June, the Consistory singled out for special censure the grant of power by the Bohemian Confession to lay persons to ordain priests, and to compose confessional statements.⁸⁵

The Consistory also entered the fray around the King’s final decision on the fate of the Bohemian Confession. At an audience on 30 August 1575 the Administrator and the Consistory appealed to the King to protect the Utraquist faith to which – they asserted – the majority of Bohemia’s population adhered. They further cautioned that, if the Augsburg Confession were legalized, the Utraquist clergy would have to preach publically concerning its defects, and thus, against the King’s and its own wishes, disturb the tranquility of public life. In responding, Maximilian again stressed that he would not permit anything harmful to the Utraquist Church.⁸⁶ The Consistory’s next appeal of 9 September 1575 asked for clarification of the King’s decision which had been announced to the estates. The Consistory pleaded for the protection of the existing Utraquist parishes not only in towns, but also in the country where the noble patrons might wish to introduce improperly ordained clergy.⁸⁷

82) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187–189; *Sněmy české* 4:345–348; Slavata, *Paměti* 1:214–217.

83) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 188–189, (*vide* 89–90), cites the description from Christophorus Manlius (1546–1575), *Krátké a jisté paměti o jednání s strany náboženství, ktréž se dalo ode všech tří stavů Království českého na sněmě v Praze I. 1575*, MS Görlitz, Milich Library, Cod. Chart. 4, N. 71, ff. 26–28.

84) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu*, 6:303 n.815.

85) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187–189; *Sněmy české* 4:345–348; Slavata, *Paměti* 1:214–217.

86) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 228–229; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:245.

87) Slavata, *Paměti* 1:217–218.

Paradoxically, during the events surrounding the debate about the Bohemian Confession, the Consistory was not on good terms with Valdštejn despite his ultra-Utraquist stances. The main cause of friction was the baron's zeal for an election and oversight of the Consistory by the estates, which was emphasized in his statement of 22 May.⁸⁸ The Consistory responded in its assessment of the Bohemian Confession addressed to the King and dated 4 June:

Concerning the Prague Consistory and its organization ... we hold that this Consistory is above all an office of Your Imperial Majesty, it has remained under the authority and under special protection of Your Imperial Majesty ...⁸⁹

If the Consistory and the clergy were subordinated to the estates "then the clergy would be weak and very oppressed, and required to do what was ordained by the lay persons, and entirely deprived of its freedom in spiritual matters ..."⁹⁰ In its inquiry of 9 September, the Consistory again expressed its wish that "our Consistory and its regular clergy might not be withdrawn from the hands and the protection of Your Imperial Majesty and placed under the authority of others, particular lay persons ..."⁹¹ The ill-wishers of Utraquism rejoiced over the overt difference of opinion between Valdštejn and the Consistory. The papal nuncio seemed to be almost beside himself with *Schadenfreude* when he wrote to Rome on 22 May about the friction between the Utraquist churchmen and their allegedly chief aristocratic patron.⁹² Valdštejn's penchant for the institution of the *defensores* might have been yet another manifestation of the aristocratic yearning for an intrusive rôle in ecclesiastical administration.

Utraquist-Lutheran Entente: In Operation

Following three months of delay after the submission of the Bohemian Confession on 18 May, Maximilian informed the estates on 22 August that the document would not be signed into law, and as a final act, he reëmphasized on 2 September his countervailing reassurance to the Lutherans and the Brethren about his intention to preserve the religious status quo, including their own churches and clergy. Although the petitions of the Lutherans did

88) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 187; *Sněmy české* 4:344–345.

89) *Sněmy české* 4:347.

90) *Ibid.* 4:347–348.

91) Slavata, *Paměti* 1:218.

92) Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 413; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 175.

not reflect the Utraquists' specific interests, during all these proceedings the Utraquist estate of towns loyally supported the quest of the nobility for the legalization of the Bohemian Confession.

On 22 August 1575, the King informed a six-member deputation of Lutheran nobles and knights, headed by Lobkovice (no representatives of the towns or the Brethren were present this time), about the reasons why he would not approve either the Bohemian Confession, or the appointment of the Consistory by the estates. He cited the opposition of the party *sub una* and of the Utraquist Consistory, as well as the disagreements between the Lutherans and the Brethren, who had submitted their own Confession. Above all, the King cited the existing laws of the land which he had confirmed by his coronation oath and which bound him to recognize only the Roman and the Utraquist churches. He sought to avoid a legal confusion, such as had caused much strife in France and the Netherlands, but he was ready to give assurances that, as in the past, nobody would be harmed by him for matters of religion. Thus there was no need for the estates to ask for a change of the status quo. In the matter of the Consistory, Maximilian maintained that his ancestors had always appointed its membership, while the estates had performed only an advisory function in the nomination of candidates. Moreover, he could not accept a Consistory that (rather than a canonically consecrated bishop) would ordain priests.⁹³

The towns again loyally joined the two nobles' estates on the same day in the appeal against this decision with each estate sending six delegates. The spokesmen denied that there was a division among those who were not *sub una* on the approval of the Bohemian Confession. It was specifically affirmed that the towns agreed with the barons and the knights. It was noted that the only opposition came from two barons, Valdštejn and Vartenberk. The spokesmen also noted that the Diet of 1567, by the repeal of the *Compactata*, had terminated the legal monopoly of Utraquism, which had been invoked as an impediment to the adoption of the Bohemian Confession.⁹⁴ During further discussions on 24, 25, 26, 31, August and 1 September, the Lutherans asked for a separate Consistory, if the existing one should remain Utraquist. The towns continued to support the Lutherans in their repeated requests for the legalization of the Bohemian Confession, particularly in the negotiations of 26 August, when Ottersdorf and Matěj Bydžovský of Aventin represented their estate.⁹⁵

In his final solemn answer on 2 September, Maximilian persisted in his decision that the Bohemian Confession could not be adopted as a law of the Diet or of the land, above all, because of the opposition of the party *sub una*. He reemphasized his promise that the Lutheran estates would not be

93) *Sněmy české* 4:365–366; 4:447; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:242.

94) *Sněmy české* 4:367; 449–450; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:242–243.

95) *Sněmy české* 4:368–369; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:243–246.

disturbed in religious affairs, and specifically that he would not permit the Roman archbishop or the Utraquist Consistory to interfere with their clergy. He could further affirm that his son and successor would act similarly, although he did not consider the time opportune to give these assurances in writing. While he could not permit a Consistory, controlled by the Diet, he repeated his offer (originally made on 25 August), that several persons be selected by each of the estates who would watch over the interest of their clergy and would be authorized to complain to the king about any encroachments. To show his good will to the Lutherans and the Brethren, the King was particularly eager to allay any suspicion of sympathy for the alleged plan of the Holy League (between the Pope and the kings of France and Spain) to exterminate Protestants rather than the Turk. Thus he crowned his plea by deploring the events of St. Bartholomew's Night, stressing that he had reproached the French King for events crying out to God for punishment.⁹⁶ Subsequently, however, for diplomatic reasons, he softened the harsh censure of his Gallic confrere.⁹⁷

When the estates, in fact, proceeded with selection of laymen who would watch over religious equity, designating them as *defensores*, the towns again participated in this act, although the institution was to serve the interests of the Lutherans and the Brethren, not just the Utraquists. Ottersdorf held the first place among the five *defensores* elected by the towns on 13 September. On the same day, the other two estates also elected five each.⁹⁸ However, in the end, the institution came to nothing when the estates attempted to use the *defensores* to create a church organization according to the proposals attached to the submission of the Bohemian Confession.⁹⁹ Maximilian objected both to designating these persons as *defensores*, and to endowing them with any authority of enforcement. Clearly, the King was not ready to sanction an institution existing prior to 1562 that Valdštejn, among others, wanted to restore.¹⁰⁰

The events in 1575 thus resulted in a reasonable compromise. Lutherans and the Brethren, with the support of Utraquist townsmen,

96) "... jakož pak i k tomu upřímně a věrně i králi franskému, když jest ve Vídni u J. M. byl, raditi ráčil, v tom jemu předkládajíc příčiny jeho všelijakého neštěstí strany nezdržení víry a provedení nad admirálem a jinými tak hrozného oučinku, pročez jej pán Bůh slušně pokutovati a trestati ráčí." *Sněmy české* 4:379; also 4:460–462; Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 415; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:246–247. The specific reference to the French king is omitted from the German version of Maximilian's statement of 2 September 1575, see *Sněmy české* 4:239–242. See also Karel Stloukal, "Z diplomatických styků mezi Francií a Čechami před Bílou Horou", *ČČH* 32 (1926) 480–481; 33 (1927) 471; Dostál, "Ohlas Bartolomějské noci", 340.

97) *Sněmy české* 4:390. Vide Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:315.

98) *Sněmy české* 4:386–387; 463; Riss, "Život a literární působení Sixta z Ottersdorfu", 83.

99) *Sněmy české* 4:388; 463.

100) *Sněmy české* 4:390; 464; Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 417.

obtained freedom and protection for the practice of their religion. With the exception of their longed-for foothold in the Consistory, the Lutheran estates secured the practical effect of the Bohemian Confession. At the same time, the Utraquist religion remained legally safeguarded in its existing form and extent. It became clear that the towns' support of the Lutheran nobles' legislative objectives would not facilitate the spread of the Augsburg Confession, and would not encroach on the established interests of the Utraquist Church. As an expression of Maximilian II's determination to shield Utraquism, the Imperial Chancery – in response to a Utraquist petition of 9 September, 1575 – issued a decree on 16 September against the introduction of any religious innovations in royal towns.¹⁰¹ This decree was reissued by the King in Regensburg, after his departure from Prague, on 5 October. Evidently, these royal decrees were implemented in practice, particularly in Prague.¹⁰² Prior to this, on 26 September, Maximilian received Valdštejn and the Consistory in an audience, and reiterated in the presence of his son Rudolf, just crowned as King of Bohemia on 22 September, his intent to safeguard the Utraquist jurisdiction. Informally, he is said to have spoken on this occasion sarcastically about the Bohemian Confession, although the portent of Maximilian's extemporaneous remark might have been distorted due to his limited knowledge of Czech and his interlocutors' ignorance of German.¹⁰³ Hrejsa, however, suggests – in flat contradiction to the Brethren's claims of his alleged contempt for Utraquism – that the King personally found the Utraquist *via media* more congenial than any other religious approach, not excluding the Augsburg Confession or the Roman Church. In what seems an odd inversion of causality, Míka even maintains that Maximilian was actually forcing Utraquism on the Bohemian towns.¹⁰⁴

An even more notable act, offering protection to Utraquism in the rural areas, was the clarification issued on 30 November, 1575 by Maximilian II to the would-be *defensores*. The King stipulated that likewise in the countryside the Utraquist (or Roman) parishes could not be transformed into Lutheran ones, even on estates of Lutheran nobility. He wrote:

... concerning the parishes ... which have been traditionally ... of Catholic faith *sub una*, then also those *sub utraque*, which are administered by the Consistory of Prague, will remain in their original state ...¹⁰⁵

101) *Sněmy české* 4:474; Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 246; 446 n.3; and his *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:315.

102) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:319–320.

103) Hrejsa, *ibid.* 6:317–318; and his *Česká konfesse* 254.

104) Hrejsa, *ibid.* 6:27; Míka, “Z bojů o náboženskou toleranci”, 375.

105) “... strany far jich ... kteréž sou od starodávna ... víry katolické pod jednou bývaly, též také pod obojí, kteréž se konsistoří pražskou spravovaly, v tom prvním způsobu

Thus the nobles were enjoined from acting as manorial minireformers of religion, and from imposing their own religious confession on their subjects who might find their seigneurs' doctrinal and liturgical preferences uncongenial. Since Maximilian's son and successor Rudolf II (1576–1612) was bound by the same promise as his father with respect to religious toleration, the relative position of the religious groups, as it emerged from the informal settlement of 1575, would continue essentially unchanged during most of his reign (until 1609).¹⁰⁶

The Politico-Religious Balance of Power after 1575

While the nobles were free to pursue their own religious inclinations, the established religious traditions of the bulk of the Czech nation received protection from external interference. As a result the religious services in Bohemia, outside the German-inhabited areas, preserved their Utraquist character, as witnessed by the reactions, both positive and negative, of travelers from abroad. Thus Lutheran visitors from abroad, as late as the 1590s, could barely conceal their disappointment when noting that Bohemian worship did not differ significantly from the rites of the Roman Church, except in the German-speaking enclaves, such as Jihlava, where, indeed, Lutheran liturgical practices could be observed.¹⁰⁷ At the other end of the religious spectrum, the essential conformity of the church services in Bohemia with those of the Roman Church, that is, their Utraquist character, was noted with some wonder – even at the start of the seventeenth century – by Catholic travelers from western Europe who had been prepared to be scandalized by the presumed flagrant Bohemian deviations in religion.¹⁰⁸ This type of evidence, which is known in Russian historiography as *skazaniia inostrantsev* [reports of foreigners], is sometimes essential to document events in the eastern half of Europe, where internal evidence may have been altered or destroyed by the Counter Reformation, or by other forces of cultural vandalism.

For the continuing strength of Utraquism, the evidence is, however, supplemented and confirmed by the liturgical researches of Zikmund Winter

zůstanou ...” *Snemy české* 4:484; Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* 12:256; Kamil Krofta, “Od kompaktát k Bílé hoře”, in his *Listy z náboženských dějin českých* (Prague, 1936) 349.

106) Kamil Krofta, “Od kompaktát k Bílé hoře”, in his *Listy z náboženských dějin českých* (Prague, 1936) 349.

107) Jaroslav Pánek, “Čechy, Morava a Lužice v německém cestopisu ze sklonku 16. století”, *FHB* 13 (1990) 208–209. Fynes Moryson, travelling in 1591 is correct on the Utraquists' liturgy, but wrong on their ordinations; see his *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell* 4 vv. (New York, 1907–1908) 4:332–333.

108) *Tři francouzští kavalíři v rudolfínské Praze*, ed. Eliška Fučíková, (Prague 1989) 44–5; 144 n.2; also Anna Skýbová, “Cesta po Čechách v roce 1561”, *Český lid* 63 (1976) 99.

and most recently those of David R. Holeton. Holeton, in particular, has shown the prevalence of Utraquist worship in Bohemia into the seventeenth century, having meticulously analyzed the character of liturgical books used in Bohemian churches.¹⁰⁹ Even Hrejsa maintains that at least until the 1570s almost all the priests *sub utraque* in Bohemia had been ordained by catholic bishops in the historic succession. The researches of Inge Auerbach have shown the contrasting organizational and creative weakness of Czech Lutherans, generating hardly any institutional infrastructure or clergy who were Lutheran in an institutional, rather than theological, sense. These conditions resembled the situation of the Lutherans of Austria.¹¹⁰

The royal towns would continue to play an active role in protecting the Consistory of Prague and safeguarding its Utraquist character. Also Hrejsa, somewhat reluctantly, acknowledges that the clergy in towns continued to be Utraquist. The Consistory was to remain traditionally Utraquist for the next thirty-four years. The towns would be particularly influential in pressing for the restoration of the Consistory in 1594 after the defection of Administrator Fabián Rezek to the Roman Church, and again in 1604 after Administrator Dačický had been hounded out of office by Chancellor Zdeněk of Lobkovic.¹¹¹ The Utraquist Church for its part also was to preserve its middle class, or even somewhat populist, character. Its overriding concern for the common people [*lidé prostější*] would continue, and would be illustrated, for instance, by its clergy's care to maintain a steady supply of religious literature, written in Czech, for their use.¹¹²

The debate about the Bohemian Confession of 1575 and its outcome represented an important milestone in helping to define the religious balance of power in Bohemia, particularly among the estates *sub utraque*, and between them and the king. Despite the nobility's turn toward Lutheranism, the Utraquists (now largely urban in their leadership) could still more or less rely on their sustenance from a united estate party *sub utraque*. A relatively

firm alliance had been forged among all the dissidents from Rome, and the nobles were normally willing to include the Utraquists in their demands for

109) Zikmund Winter, *Zlatá doba měst českých* (Prague, 1991), 139–142, 144–145; for the seminal research of David R. Holeton, see his paper, “On the Evolution of the Utraquist Liturgy: A Precursor of Western Liturgical Reform”, *SL* 25 (1995) especially 66; and his “The Evolution of Utraquist Eucharistic Liturgy: A Textual Study”, *infra* Dr. Holeton is preparing a monograph on this topic.

110) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:274; Inge Auerbach, “Die böhmischen Stände unter Rudolf II: Zwischen Polarisierung und Konsens”, unpublished paper, delivered at a meeting on “Kultur und Bildung im rudolfinischen Königreich Böhmen”, University of Passau, April 1993 [*vide* FHB 17 (1994) 320]; and Winfried Eberhard, “Bohemia, Moravia and Austria”, *The Early Reformation in Europe* ed. Andrew Pettegree (Cambridge, 1992) 47.

111) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:274–275; and his *Česká konfesse* 419; *Sněmy české* 11:78.

112) See, for instance, Václav Cykáda, *Hody křesťanské* (Prague, 1607) ff.B1^b–B2^b.

religious liberty. As for the king, his protection would be often more useful to the Utraquists as a shield against encroachments from the Roman party rather than from the Lutherans. Of major interest is the significant, though largely unacknowledged, rôle of Maximilian II in facilitating the relative harmony among the four main religious groups: Roman, Utraquist, Lutheran, and the Unity. One may in particular recall his references to the religious strife in contemporary France and The Netherlands as deterrent examples for the Bohemian estates to avoid.¹¹³ His notable contribution to the establishment of the possibly unique religious tolerance in sixteenth-century Bohemia stands in stark contrast to the bigoted behaviour of his nephew Ferdinand after the Battle of White Mountain.

In a way, 1575 was a dress rehearsal for the religious arrangements under the Letter of Majesty of 1609 whereby the Lutherans and the Brethren would obtain full legal recognition, while the Utraquists by the Compromise [*porovnaní*] of the same year would once more be assured of their established positions. The experience of 1575 particularly helps to illumine the meaning of the events of 1609 from the viewpoint of Bohemian Utraquism, and makes their consequences, seen in the context of 1575, appear less menacing to, or traumatic for, the Utraquists. It was the pattern of coöperation with the Lutheran noble estates, the entente of 1575, that would facilitate the transition to a more formalized coexistence after 1609, and that would make even the loss of the Consistory less damaging and less ominous in its consequences for the Utraquists. The legal recognition of the Bohemian Confession by the Letter of Majesty would be coupled with a limitation of the Confession's applicability by the *porovnaní* in order to protect the current status of the Utraquist Church. For the Utraquists, the gain of the *porovnaní* would represent a reasonable trade-off for the loss of control over the Consistory, inasmuch as a legal guarantee (instead of informal assurances) would be secured from the king and the diet for its current extent, hence its prevalence, in the Kingdom of Bohemia.¹¹⁴ Even then the Consistory should probably be viewed less as a Protestant Holy Office, enforcing doctrinal uniformity, but rather as an ecumenical council, loosely confederating and serving the Lutherans, the Brethren, and the Utraquists. The composition of the transient body of the *defensores*, elected in September 1575 (with Utraquism represented by the town members) may be viewed as a preconfiguration of the religious balance of power in the post-1608 Consistory.

In surveying the aftermath of the events of 1575, it may be noted that the text of the Bohemian Confession itself had a somewhat curious history. Perhaps due to Maximilian II's initial wish on 18 September, 1575 not to rush

113) *Sněmy české* 4:366.

114) See, for instance, Josef Vávra, "Katořici a sněm český r. 1608 a 1609", *Sborník historického kroužku* Seřit 1 (1893) 3–28; Julius Glücklich, "Koncept Majestátu a vznik Porovnaní", *ČČH* 23 (1917) 110–128.

into print, followed by an explicit prohibition of its printing on 5 October,¹¹⁵ its publication took place only in 1579 and in 1583 and then not until in the closing years of Rudolf II's reign in 1608, 1609, and finally in 1610 together with the Letter of Majesty, the Compromise [*Porovnaní*], and other related documents.¹¹⁶ German translations appeared in 1584, 1609 (in Amberg), and an official one by the Bohemian estates in 1610 (in Prague). A Latin version did not become available in print until 1614 in Frankfurt, subsequently reprinted again in the same city in 1619.¹¹⁷ However, what passed under the name of Bohemian Confession in western Europe was usually not the Confession of 1575, but the Brethren's Confession published in Latin in 1573.¹¹⁸ It was the Brethren's Confession that found its way into the prestigious international compendium, *Harmonia confessionum fidei, Orthodoxarum, et Reformatorum Ecclesiarum*, edited by Salnar de Castres (Geneva, 1581). This work was shortly thereafter translated into English, and published in an edition by J. F. Salvart, as *An harmony of the confessions of the faith of the christian and reformed churches* (Cambridge, 1586).¹¹⁹ Thus when Richard Hooker would refer in the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* to the Bohemian Confession on the basis of *Harmonia confessionum fidei*, it was to the tenets of the Brethren of 1573, not to the 1575 version of the Czech Lutherans.¹²⁰

115) Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 6:315; 319; Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.," 1:630.

116) See Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 672–674; "Confessio", *Knihopis českých a slovenských tisků* II/3: 272–275.

117) Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* 675–681.

118) This Latin version, published in Wittenberg, was based on Czech original promulgated in 1564 and submitted to Maximilian II on his accession. The previous Brethren's confession was prepared in Czech in 1535 for submission to Ferdinand I, and published in Latin in 1538 also in Wittenberg; *vide* Jaroslav Bidlo, "O Konfessi bratrské z r. 1573", *Sborník prací historických k šedesátým narozeninám Jaroslava Golla* edd. Jaroslav Bidlo *et al.* (Prague, 1906) 246–278. An even earlier confession, *Apologia sacrae scripturae* was published by the Brethren in Nuremberg in 1511; *vide* Rudolf Říčan, *The History of the Unity of Brethren: A Protestant Hussite Church in Bohemia and Moravia*, trans. C. Daniel Crews (Bethlehem, PA, 1992) 100.

119) See *Harmonia confessionum fidei, Orthodoxarum, et Reformatorum Ecclesiarum*, ed. Salnar de Castres (Geneva, 1581) *Catalogus confessionum* 1:xxii–xxiii; also *An Harmony of the confessions of the faith of the christian and reformed churches* ed. J. F. Salvart (Cambridge, 1586) A Catalogue of the Confessions iv. This inclusion apparently occurred without the Brethrens' knowledge; *vide* Rudolf Říčan *et al.*, *Jednota Bratrská, 1457–1957: Sborník k pětistému výročí založení* (Prague, 1956) 68.

120) Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* VI.4.14. [Folger Library Edition of the Works 6 v.] (Cambridge MA and Binghampton NY, 1977–1993) 3:46–47; *vide* 6:265–66; 855. Hooker cites from Chapter 5.8 of *Harmonia confessionum fidei, Orthodoxarum, et Reformatorum Ecclesiarum* ed. Salnar de Castres (Geneva, 1581) 1:143; contained also in *An Harmony of the confessions of the faith of the christian and reformed churches* ed. J. F. Salvart (Cambridge, 1586) 219.

The Social Cleavage

As a result of the religious split in Czech society preceding the discussion of Bohemian Confession the emerging fault line in the dissenting religious community crystallized two major forces in Bohemia. On one side stood the nobles with their Lutheran (and a few Calvinist) chaplains, for whom they showed probably as much affection as for their hunting hounds; the sectarians (mainly the Unity of Brethren); and the Lutherans of the German enclaves. On the other side stood the bulk of the Czech-speaking nation of Bohemia which remained attached to Hus and to Utraquism, as defined in basic confessional documents from the Four Articles of Prague of 1419 to the Consistory's critique of the Bohemian Confession of 1575.

The revelation of the controversies of 1575 was not – as Krofta states¹²¹ – that the Utraquist Church separated itself from the vast majority of the nation (unless one thinks of the quaint Hungarian-style notion of a political nation of nobles), but rather that the nobility, by rejecting Utraquism, separated itself from the preponderance of the national community. This increasingly dysfunctional and parasitical class¹²² was attracted to various novel and exotic fashions, be they the flamboyance of the Italo-Hispanic style of the Roman Church, or the pliability of the Germanic style of Lutheranism and Calvinism.¹²³ The productive and creative core of the nation remained loyal to the homespun traditions of the Bohemian Reformation, exemplified by Jan Hus, and safeguarded by mainline Utraquism.

What may have appeared as a sign of deterioration, the desertion by the nobility, could be viewed from another angle as a sign of advancement. By jettisoning the ballast of the nobility's class interests and turning more clearly into a commoners' church, the ecclesiastical institution could be said to have become more modern and forward-looking in its intellectual concerns, as well as in its social composition. Turning from a feudal-agricultural to a more urban-commercial sponsorship, it became dominated less by arrogant and lordly warriors and more by rational and humanitarian middle-class scholars and thinkers. Thus mainline Utraquism could also reaffirm its original fourteenth-century roots in the academies of Prague and Oxford during the Bohemian Reformation.

In the long run, the shift in religious orientations, made evident by the events of 1575, may be viewed as symptomatic of a more fundamental watershed in Czech history, namely the passing of intellectual leadership from the nobility to the middle classes. Taking a broad view from the cusp of

121) Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř", 417.

122) Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.", 1:638–639; Anna Skýbová, "Česká šlechta a jednání o povolení kompaktát r. 1525", 91; 94; 95; 96 n.31, 108; Josef Válka, "Politická závěť Viléma z Pernštejna: příspěvek k dějinám politického myšlení doby jagellonské", *Časopis Matice moravské* 90 (1971) 63–86.

123) *Vide e.g.* Míka, "Národnostní poměry v Čechách", 226.

the third millennium it is difficult to find much of intellectual or inspirational value in the legacy of the various noble Lichtenštejns, Pernštejns, or Rožmberks with their contempt for the common man and their capricious narcissism. Zdeněk of Lobkovice's treatment of Administrator Dačický in 1604, for instance, does not reflect the moral sensitivity of a respectable man, but rather the coarse instincts of a despot of the ilk of Ivan the Terrible.¹²⁴ It would be hard to find inspiration from the anemic *Weltschmerz* of even a more attractive figure like Karel the Elder of Žerotín.¹²⁵

How much more impressive and worthy of emulation are those unpretentious public-spirited men and gentle scholars of the towns, the creators of lasting intellectual values, like the champions of Utraquism at the Diet of 1575, Sixt of Ottersdorf and Pavel Kristián of Koldín, or other personages from the urban milieu, such as Daniel Adam of Veleslavín, Marek Bydžovský of Florentin, Šimon Ennius Klatovský, Prokop Lupáč of Hlaváčov, Jakub Srnec of Varvažov, Jan Straněnský, Adam Zalužanský of Zalužany, or Václav Zelotín of Krásná Hora. It is the wisdom embodied in the literary legacy of these statesmen and searchers after truth that still today helps to define Czech political culture, as well as Czech national consciousness.¹²⁶

The significance of the debate over the Bohemian Confession may be summed up in four propositions. (1) The discussions in 1575 revealed a religious split following divisions between the social classes. (2) The Utraquists, despite their theological proximity to the Roman Church, viewed the party *sub una* as their principal political opponent, and accepted the Lutherans and the Brethren as political allies. The Utraquists' notion of "no enemies on the Left" does not support, however, the assertions in historical literature that the Utraquists served the Habsburgs as an instrument of the Counter Reformation.¹²⁷ (3) In a development, possibly unique in contemporary Europe, the settlement of 1575 broadened the scope of political toleration of religious bodies from the Utraquists and the adherents of the Roman Church (covered by the Peace of Kutná Hora of 1485) to embrace *de*

124) The Bohemian baron's insolence and brutality might also remind one of Idi Amin's more recent dealings with Archbishop Janani Luwum of Uganda.

125) *Vide e.g.* Noemi Rejchrtová, "Listy osamělého politika", in *Karel starší ze Žerotína, Z korespondence* (Prague, 1982) 7–38. The literary and artistic merits of sixteenth-century nobles, like Václav Budovec of Budov or Kryštof Harant of Polžice and Bezdrůžice (both of whom stemmed, incidentally, from the lower nobility), can be viewed as the proverbial exceptions that confirm the rule.

126) It is this legacy that in their perspicacity (after the sham of the Counter Reformation) the leaders of the national revival – the generations of František M. Pelcl, Josef Dittrich, and Antonín Marek – would resurrect and amplify at the dawn of the modern age in order to help to shape the minds of future generations and provide continuity with the past.

127) See, for instance, Václav V. Tomek, "O církevní správě strany pod obojí v Čechách od r. 1415 až 1622", *ČČM* 22 (1848) 463; Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.", 1:596; *Přehled československých dějin* edd. Josef Macek, František Graus, and Ján Tibenský, 4 vv. in 5 (Prague, 1958–1968) 1:335.

facto, if not *de jure*, the Lutherans and the Brethren.¹²⁸ Aside from the spirit of Kutná Hora, much credit for this expanded toleration belonged to Maximilian II, as both an inspirer and a guarantor of conditions under which the religious permissiveness could flourish in relative peace. (4) The denouement of the religious controversy of 1575 foreshadowed the radical alienation of the Bohemian nobility from the Czech ethnic nation in Bohemia that would become strikingly apparent during the subsequent century and beyond. The nobility's defection from the nation's religious majority would eventually help in relieving the nation of its distinctions of feudal class, and, in turn, shape the democratic character of the Czechs' modern political culture.

128) On the Peace of Kutná Hora as the political foundation of religious tolerance see Thomas A. Fudge, "The Problem of Religious Liberty in Early Modern Bohemia", *CV* 38 (1996) 64–87. See also Míka, "Z bojů o náboženskou toleranci v 16. století", 371, 380.