

INTRODUCTION

The 2004 Prague Symposium

The sixth international symposium on the Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice met at the Vila Lanna in Prague from 23-25 June 2004 with the support of the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The symposium heard the presentations of almost thirty scholars, eighteen of which are presented in this volume. The studies in this volume cover a wider spectrum of topics than usual with papers on subjects ranging from the eve of the Bohemian Reformation to the uses made of it during the Bohemian national revival of the nineteenth century as well as by the communists in the twentieth. Most papers consider questions that have never before been dealt with in English and many treat topics for the first time in print.

Recent months have seen the creation of a BRRP web page (www://brrp.org) on which all volumes of the journal have been posted through the efforts of Professor David Mengel of Xavier University in Ohio. This has facilitated a much wider access to the journal which otherwise has a relatively small print run of which most copies are to be found in national and university libraries which, quite understandably, do not include journals among their material available for inter-library loan.

Missing among the contributions to this volume of BRRP is that of Dr. Jakub Kostowski of the University of Wrocław who died tragically in an automobile accident. He will be much missed at future symposia.

The eighth symposium of the BRRP will be held at Vila Lanna in Prague from 17–20 June 2008. We hope to have BRRP VII available in print and on the website for that event.

Utraquism and the *Via Media*

An important theme, characterizing the BRRP symposia, is to establish the nature of mainline Utraquism. Part of the approach leads through an exploration of the writings of its theologians, confessional statements, and polemics with the Roman Church, the Lutherans, and the Unity of Brethren. Another line of investigation leads through the recovery of the liturgical heritage of Utraquism in the areas of ritual, church music, and ecclesiastical art. The results tend to counter the church's negative imaging in historical literature that primarily stems from its distinctive religious orientation. Its *via media* ran initially against the ingrained principles of the chief protagonists emerging from the Reformation era (post-Tridentine Catholicism and fully reformed Protestantism), and then, more importantly, against the later ingrained conventions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century secular historiography.

Historians, who were impatient to see the Utraquist Church disappear, announced and dated the demise of Utraquism prematurely and variously to 1517, 1524, 1539, 1564, 1575, 1593, or 1609. Some have maintained that the Utraquist Church virtually vanished through a cooptation of its leadership by the Roman

Church;¹ others saw its virtual end in an irresistible attraction of Lutheran doctrines for the Utraquist clergy.² Neither of these scenarios was in fact correct. The reservation of the Utraquist leaders toward the Roman Curia prevented a symbiotic relation with the Archbishop of Prague, and the Utraquist Church continued to maintain its administrative and judicial independence of the Roman Church throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century. The alleged Lutheran influences on certain Utraquist leaders, on a closer examination, involved secondary matters, not the core doctrines of sacramental theology and ecclesiology. Thus it is not necessary to conjure up a struggle between an imaginary Old Utraquism and an unlikely Neo-Utraquism, or to postulate a chaotic oscillation between Rome and Wittenberg within Utraquism. The Utraquist Church, in fact, continued to maintain its steady course, the *via media* vis-à-vis Roman authoritarianism on the Right, and with respect to Lutheran biblical reductionism on the Left.

This is not to say that by the mid-sixteenth century there were not individual Czech theologians accepting authentic Lutheranism, just as there were atypical cases of Czech champions of the Counter Reformation. Of course, there was also the significant group of the Unity of Brethren which stood close to the Protestant Reformation. It is, however, one thing to recognize the existence of such exceptional groups, and another matter to present them as the norm of Czech society. What can be said is that the mainstream, flowing out of the Bohemian Reformation and represented by the Consistory, remained loyal to Utraquism as defined by Jakoubek of Stříbro, Jan of Přebor, and Jan Rokycana in the fifteenth century, and reaffirmed in the face of the Protestant Reformation by Bohuslav Bílejovský and Pavel Bydžovský in the 1530s and 1540s.³ The Utraquists, despite their relative latitudinarianism, remained essentially united on this platform, and the twentieth-century attempts to divide them into Quasi-Catholic Old and Quasi-Lutheran New Utraquists should be viewed, in agreement with Josef Pekař, as unhelpful, even misleading, and ultimately impossible.⁴

The process of Utraquism denial and its deleterious effect on the Czech sense of religious roots goes back to the trauma of the third decade of the seventeenth century. It can also be argued that the crucial reason why the inhabitants of Bohemia exhibited a docility toward the Counter Reformation regime,

¹ See, for instance, Ludvík Němec, "Utraquists," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1967) 14:505; Václav Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.," in *Česká politika*, ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka, 5 vv. (Prague, 1906) 1:621.

² Alois Kroess, *Geschichte der Böhmisches Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Vienna, 1910) 1:212-213; Novotný, "Náboženské dějiny české ve století 16.," 1:620.

³ On the roles of Bílejovský and Bydžovský see Zdeněk V. David, "Central Europe's Gentle Voice of Reason: Bílejovský and the Ecclesiology of Utraquism," *Austrian History Yearbook* 28 (1997) 29-58; idem, "Pavel Bydžovský and Czech Utraquism's Encounter with Luther," *CV* 38 (1996) 36-63.

⁴ Josef Pekař in Bruno Zwicker, "Byl Pavel Stránský Český bratr?" *ČČH* 39 (1933) 356, n. 1: "The undersigned editor considers the term *Neo-utraquism* – propagated in our scholarship by F. Hrejsa – as substantively unjustifiable, indeed, as outright inappropriate and as conducive to deceptive notions. *ČČH* will gladly offer place for an eventual discussion of this question." ["Podepsaný redaktor nemá termin *novoutrakvismus*, v naší nauce F. Hrejsou rozšířený, za věcně oprávněný, ano přímo za nevhodný a svádějící ke klamným představám. *ČČH* poskytne ochotně místo k event. diskusi o té otázce."] As examples of confusion resulting from such attempts see, for instance, Hrejsa, *Česká konfesse* (Prague, 1912) 59, 61; Kamil Krofta, "Boj o konsistoř podobojí v l. 1562–1575 a jeho historický základ," *ČČH* 17 (1911) 302-303. See also David, "Central Europe's Gentle Voice of Reason," 56.

which could be mistaken for acquiescence, was the loss of conscious historical memory of their real religious identities – a collective religious amnesia. The evidence of their ecclesiastical past was mutilated or destroyed by a guileful absorption into an alien Tridentine Catholicism. From this point of view, the Czechs had been subjected to a grand larceny of their religious heritage from both sides of the fundamental religious divide. The current captor, Rome, as well as their would-be rescuers, the Reformed churches, portrayed the past inhabitants of Bohemia as either true sons of the Roman Curia, guilty only of minor misbehaviour, or as true children of the Reformation, marred only by a few national oddities. Neither picture corresponded to historical truth, which was that in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century the normal state for a Czech was to be a Utraquist, and only exceptionally a Protestant (Lutheran or Brother), or an adherent of the Roman Curia. The pseudo-reality of the Roman/Protestant view involved a denial of the historical existence of a real Utraquist Church with its distinct ecclesiology and liturgy. Victimized by this disinformation, the disoriented Utraquists had nowhere to turn to recapture the image of their true identity. Their own traditional ecclesiology had vanished with the alienation of the Utraquist clergy and institutions by Tridentine Catholicism, and the Utraquists had not been accustomed – while the memory still lingered – to look abroad for kindred sojourners on the *via media*.

The counterpart to the sullen resentment of Rome's iron rule was the relatively feeble effect of Czech Lutheran emigration on the spiritual life of Bohemia. This failure also has been cited as a sign of the Counter Reformation's victory.⁵ The cause of this phenomenon was not necessarily the pressure or the effect of the Counter Reformation, severe as the latter undoubtedly was. Instead, it might be attributed to the fact that the émigré propaganda did not resonate with the Czech religious psyche, which would find the full fledged Reformation just as uncongenial as Counter Reformation Catholicism. In other words, neither the Counter Reformation nor the Protestant Reformation resonated with their customary behaviour, or sensitivity to ethical and aesthetic values, which had been formulated over quarter of a millennium. It is doubtful that such ingrained habits could be eradicated in the period of the Counter Reformation's comparatively short *durée* (to take advantage of Fernand Braudel's terminology⁶). The Czechs knew what they were not, but – due to the collective religious amnesia – they did not know what they should be. As Marie-Elisabeth Ducreux has pointed out: "In this country [Bohemia] that accomplished the first Reformation in Europe a century before Luther, an obligatory conversion to Catholicism thus probably contributed to the laicization of people's consciences."⁷

Despite the efforts to trivialize or even deny the genuine existence of the Utraquist Church, Utraquism made a fundamental theological contribution in the field of ecclesiology, akin to that of the Church of England. Like the *Ecclesia*

⁵ Ivana Čornejová, *Tovaryšstvo Ježíšovo* (Prague, 2002) 109-10, 185, 193.

⁶ Braudel referred to such historical events, contrasted with *la longue durée*, as "crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong backs," cited in *Blackwell's Dictionary of Historians*, ed. John Cannon (Oxford, 1998) 50.

⁷ Marie-Elisabeth Ducreux, "Reading unto Death: Books and Readers in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia," in: *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early-Modern Europe* ed. Roger Chartier trans. Lydia J. Cochrane (Princeton N.J., 1989) 196. See also Franco Venturi, *The End of the Old Regime in Europe, 1768–1776*. Vol. 1: *The First Crisis*, tr. R. Burr Litchfield (Princeton, N.J., 1989) 170-1.

Anglicana, Utraquism stood out as a model of a national church, emerging in the milieu of distinctly Western Christianity, and with a traditionalist emphasis on the antiquity and historical continuity of their doctrine and institutions. While seeking to preserve much of traditional religious orthodoxy, both aimed at eluding the ultrabureaucratic and imperious style of ecclesiastical governance exemplified by the early modern papacy. At the other end of the ecclesiastical spectrum, against Luther's or Calvin's biblical reductionism, the Utraquist Church, like the *Ecclesia Anglicana*, defended the historical tripod of Western Christendom, namely the Bible, Aristotelian rationalism (in its scholastic and/or patristic incarnation), and the extrabiblical ecclesiastical tradition.⁸ Like the Church of England, Utraquism would oppose the reason and reasoning to the unquestioning discipline of ecclesiastical autocrats, as well as to the unreflective impetuosity and rigorism of the chiliasts and other sectarians.⁹ Like Anglicanism, Utraquism would be excoriated as representing an incomplete Reformation.¹⁰

As a result, Utraquism and Anglicanism, which shared a common religious *via media*, have become targets of negative imaging in historical literature primarily due to their distinctive religious orientation. The *via media* ran initially against the ingrained principles of the chief protagonists emerging from the Reformation era (post-Tridentine Catholicism and fully reformed Protestantism), and then, more importantly, against the later ingrained conventions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century secular historiography. The latter wished to see a lawful progression from Catholicism to Protestantism to secularism, and had no use for intermediate positions."

In the Bohemian case, a process of historiographic deconstruction gave birth to a concept of the largely Lutheran Neo-Utraquism and required a disassembly of Utraquism by positing its "other" as an "Old Utraquism." The latter was portrayed as virtually indistinguishable from Roman Catholicism and often presented as a subterfuge, designed to stave off the impact of the Protestant Reformation. This dialectical sally was necessary in order to account for the fact that the Bohemian Reformation continued to display phenomena which were not merely incompatible with, but diametrically opposed to, the Protestant stance. Since such cacophonous features could not, so to say, be swept under the rug, and simply ignored, the coming to life of Neo-Utraquism also gave birth to its fraternal antipodal twin, which by and large received the name of Old Utraquism. Thus, the dichotomy emerged between so-called Old Utraquism and Neo-Utraquism.

The Church of England was subject to an analogous process of "deconstruction," questioning its integrity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Some historians saw the *Ecclesia Anglicana* as an incoherent

⁸ On these characteristics see W. David Neelands, "Hooker on Reason, Scripture and 'Tradition'," in Arthur S. McGrade, ed., *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* [Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 165] (Tempe, AZ, 1997) 75-94.

⁹ The similarity between Utraquism and Anglicanism is noted without elaboration by Jarold K. Zeman, *The Hussite Movement and the Reformation in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, 1350-1650* (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1977) xvi; and by Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250-1450* (New York, 1992), 81. On the Anglican acceptance of scripture, reason and tradition, see for instance Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (Minneapolis, 1989) 63-67; on the traditionalist national emphasis, Donald R. Kelley, "Elizabethan Political Thought," in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1993) 71.

¹⁰ Richard Hooker, *The Folger Edition of the Works* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993) 6: 10.

assemblage of Crypto-Puritans and of Crypto-Catholics, and the existence of true Proto-Anglicans or Anglicans was questioned. The assertions that in the late sixteenth century there were no real Utraquists, only Lutherans (“Neo-Utraquists”) and Romanists (“Old Utraquists”) in Bohemia, thus found a partial parallel in English historiography. For instance, Arthur G. Dickens has similarly minimized the role of real Anglicans in Elizabethan England in favour of the relative extremes of Puritanism and Roman Catholicism: “Parker and Jewel were in a very real sense forerunners of the “balanced” Anglicanism of Hooker, yet even so the vast majority of Elizabethan Englishmen were either Roman Catholics or Anglican Puritans.”¹¹ Patrick Collinson chimed in speaking of the Elizabethan settlement: “...it is not easy to identify very many Anglicans who were positively attached to those features of the church that distinguished it from other churches of the Reformation...”¹² The difference is that, while for Bohemia the skepticism about the *via media* has been the standard disposition, characteristic of Catholic, Protestant, liberal and Marxist historians, for England it is but one among several variants.¹³

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¹¹ Arthur G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1991²) 368.

¹² Patrick Collinson, “Puritans,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (New York, 1996) 3:366.

¹³ See, for instance, the concept of “parish Anglicans” in Alexandra Walsham, “The Parochial Roots of Laudianism Revisited: Catholics, Anti-Calvinists and ‘Parish Anglicans’ in Early Stuart England,” *JEH* 49 (1998) especially 627, 630-3.

