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THE PRAGUE INSURRECTION OF 30 JULY 1419

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THE EVENTS of what is usually called the first Prague Defenestration, on 30 July 1419, are reasonably well known: the radical Hussites of Prague's New Town—one of the four communities making up the city—marched under the leadership of their preacher, John Želivský, to the New Town Hall; there they asked the magistrates to release some Hussite prisoners; the confrontation suddenly erupted into violence, and a number of the Hussites stormed into the Town Hall, attacked the magistrates and anti-Hussite citizens who were there, and then threw them out of a window; those not dead on arrival in the street below were quickly finished off by the remaining Hussites. There are about three or four good sources for all this¹ and they agree on the main sequence of events; later historians have never felt obliged to do more than follow these sources, sometimes almost to the letter. Of course the events require interpretation, but here too everything seems at first clear enough, for 1419 was the central year of the Hussite Revolution, a year in which tension and turbulence were constant factors that could hardly fail to cause outbursts of violence from time to time. Furthermore about two weeks after the Defenestration, and probably because of it, King Wenceslas IV succumbed to a stroke of apoplexy, and in the entirely new tasks and opportunities faced by the Hussites after his death, the previous revolution in one of Prague's towns did not figure as the cause of any obviously decisive effects. Hence the writers of the kind of old-fashioned history that is sometimes praised as "readable" have not felt inclined to interrupt their story-telling by reconstructing the transitory situation in which the Defenestration could be seen as important, nor have more analytical historians done much better.

Thus František Palacký, the founder of the modern historiographical tradition of Hussitism, offers no more than the medieval chronicles he follows on the

¹The best sources are: I. *Anonymus de origine Taboritarum et de morte Wenceslai IV. R.B.*, in K. Höfler, *Geschichtschreiber der Husitischen Bewegung in Böhmen*, I, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, Erste Abth., II (Wien, 1856) 530-532.

II. The "R" text of the Old Czech Annalists ("OCA-R"), ed. F. Šimek, *Staré letopisy české z vratislavského rukopisu* (Prague, 1937), p. 19.

IIa. The continuation of the (Latin) chronicle of Beneš of Veitmil, ed. G. Dobner, *Monumenta historica Bohemiae*, IV (Prague, 1779), 67. This account has been unavailable to me, but it was used by V. Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy*, III (Prague, 1875), 637-639, and its data seem to have been taken over from OCA-R; See Pekař, *Žižka*, II, 144f.; Bartoš, *Husitská revoluce*, I (1965) p. 63, n. 50.

III. The "Hussite Chronicle" of Laurence of Březová ("Laurence"), ed. J. Goll, *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, V (Prague, 1893), 345f. Laurence does not give a detailed account; his value here is in part a function of the enormous value of his chronicle as a whole.

Sources of the second rank: IV. The Old Czech Annalists ("OCA"), ed. F. Palacký, *Starší letopisové češti*, *Scriptores rerum Bohemicarum*, III (Prague, 1829), 25.

V. *Chronicon Universitatis Pragensis*, ed. Goll, *FRB*, V, 580.

VI. The Chronicle of Bartošek of Drahonice, *ibid.*, p. 591.

VII. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemiae* (Prague [1766]), ch. xxxvii. (There are many editions of this work but no modern ones.)

VIII. *Chronicon Procopii notarii Pragensis*, Höfler, I, 74.

matter—and in fact somewhat less.² His successor, Václav Tomek, uses more sources and gives more details—his account is still the best—but he too refrains from analysis.³ In the present century Josef Pekař has, to be sure, characterized the Hussite coup as a deliberately planned action, but he has not tried to reconstruct the political background for so momentous an undertaking.⁴ Frederick Heymann has also drawn attention to the evidence of planning and indeed to the likelihood of collaboration between John Želivský and John Žižka, but like Pekař has not tried to relate this planning to a broader context of national revolutionary action. Such a context would involve the Taborite movement in the countryside as well as the events in Prague, but Heymann forces the two apart by his *a priori* notion that “Revolutions, almost invariably, are city-born”—hence the very possibility of a national movement is effectively denied.⁵ Indeed only one historian, F. M. Bartoš, has drawn the events in Prague into a close relationship with events in the nation at large—and specifically with the great, periodic, open-air congregations that made up the Taborite movement; but like other Czech pro-Hussite scholars he shrinks from exploring the implications of this relationship. To him the planned action was peaceful and religious in inspiration; the violence was only an accident, provoked by the hostile behavior of the town councillors.⁶ This good-hearted notion is of course entirely lacking from the account of the Communist scholar, Josef Macek, whose first-rate monograph on Tabor ought to have included a just appreciation of the relationship between the Defenestration and the subversive movement in the country; oddly enough, all Macek does is indicate his sympathy for the violence with which the Prague poor vented their class-hatred.⁷

This brief review of scholarly positions suggests that for most historians the Defenestration does not pose much of a problem, and if the present inquiry starts from the opposite premise it must not only offer a study of the facts but also a justification for going over the old material at all. In fact there is ample justification. For one thing the quite important account of the anti-Hussite *Anonymus de origine Taboritarum et de morte Wenceslai IV* (henceforth referred to as the “Anonymous Account”) sets the Defenestration into a very wide framework of national political action involving both Prague and the countryside; it relates the political action to the radical religious movement and makes everything appear the result of deliberate policy.⁸ It was of course in the author’s interest to do so—to present the religious movement as a subversive conspiracy—but perhaps he was right; at any rate there is much evidence in his

²*Dějiny národu českého*, III, i (2d ed.; Prague, 1870), 291-293.

³Tomek, *op. cit.*

⁴*Žižka a jeho doba*, III (Prague, 1930), 17ff.; IV (1933), 14f.; cf. II (1928), 92ff.

⁵*John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 62-64.

⁶*Do čtyř pražských artikulů* (Prague, 1925), pp. 30-32; (2d ed.; Prague, 1940), pp. 42-45. Cf.

⁷*Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí*, I (2d ed.; Prague, 1956), 200-202. Macek’s account the account in Bartoš’s *Husitská revoluce*, I (1965), 63, which I have not been able to consider. is distinguished by its use of a few excerpts from Želivský’s sermons, as quoted by B. Auštécká (below, n. 56), but he takes over her incorrect dating—two weeks too early for each sermon; his quotations are therefore not precisely to his point.

⁸The text in Höfler, I, 528-534. The work and its authorship are most fully discussed by F. M. Bartoš, “Z husitského a bratrského dějepiscetví. 1. Ztracená kronika o husitské revoluci a vznik kroniky Vavřince z Březové,” *Sborník historický*, II (1954), 83-97. Bartoš shows (p. 89) that the author wrote after 9 March 1422 (the death of Želivský) but probably not long after, and certainly before the end of 1424. No other source is demonstrably earlier.

favor and none against him. Then again, it will be seen that a careful study of the facts of the Defenestration itself reveals some details and suggests some inferences that no one seems to have attended to before. Finally, the sermon-outlines prepared by John Želivský for the period 16 April to 26 November 1419 survive and have been known to scholars since the early years of this century, but no one has used them as sources for a systematic reconstruction of the political situation in which their author figured. In fact it was not until 1953 that even the first half of these outlines was published—the second half is still in manuscript.⁹ We shall see that they throw a good deal of light, even though rather diffused, upon the course of events.

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I. *The Background*

By the end of 1418 the Hussite reform movement had begun to take on the character of a national reformation. The supreme guidance lay in theory and to a considerable degree in fact with the masters of Prague University, allied with a large section of the feudality, both barons and lesser noblemen, as well as with the Czech bourgeoisie of Prague and other royal towns. At the same time the movement included a radical wing whose allegiance to the national leadership was far from complete; it was led by priests—some trained at the University, others not—and by several petty noblemen. Particularly strong in parts of the Bohemian countryside, it also had much in common with the radicals in some of the Hussite towns, including the New Town of Prague.¹⁰ The King of Bohemia, Wenceslas IV, was not a Hussite, but he was not much of a Catholic either; his main desire was that all parties should co-exist without making trouble. Since he was not personally inclined to persecute the reform movement, and since both his queen and most of his Czech courtiers were quite favorable to Hussitism, the crown actually functioned as a kind of shield against Catholic reaction, not only that threatened by the Romanists in Bohemia but also the more serious menace coming from the papacy and the Emperor Sigismund, King Wenceslas's half-brother and heir presumptive to the Bohemian crown.

But in early 1419 both pope and emperor were prepared to force a show-down, with Pope Martin V ready to proclaim an anti-Hussite crusade and to begin judicial proceedings against King Wenceslas and Queen Sophia; Sigismund, for his part, had moved to the borders of Bohemia and was dealing directly with both Catholic and Hussite barons of the realm.¹¹ Wenceslas was virtually forced to take anti-Hussite action, and in the latter part of February he

⁹The manuscript codex IV F 23 of the Prague University Library has been edited by Amadeo Molnár: Jan Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání z roku 1419*, I (Prague, 1953); for the dating in 1419 see Molnár's preface, pp. 9-11. The outlines end with the Epistle sermon of 16 July, and it is with the Gospel sermon for this day that the second group of outlines begin, in MS V G 3, of the same library. See also notes 55 and 56, below.

¹⁰For all of this see my "Hussite Radicalism and the Origins of Tabor 1415-1418," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, X (1956), 102-130. Still the best account of the whole story in a major language is Ernest Denis, *Huss et la guerre des Hussites* (Paris, 1930 [orig. 1878]), pp. 173ff.

¹¹The best reconstruction is still that of V. Tomek, *op. cit.*, III, 627ff; see also F. M. Bartoš, *Do čtyř pražských artikulů*, n. 78, and J. Pekař, *op. cit.* IV, 192f.

ordered all of Prague's parish churches restored to their legitimate Catholic priests, with a similar program to be carried out in those parts of the realm controlled by royal burgraves and other powers who followed royal leadership. Hussite protests secured some relief in Prague, where the king decreed that three monastery churches would be reserved for Hussite services, but since he also insisted that neither side agitate against the other, the movement's capacity for growth was effectively curtailed.

Most of the Hussite leaders, including even those masters who were religiously radical, went along with the new situation, since the only alternative seemed to be revolt against the established authorities. But there were some who sought other solutions. In South Bohemia, where the most active radicals found themselves deprived of all their churches, some Hussite priests organized open-air congregations on the hilltops. The first was held on Easter Sunday, 16 April, on a hill renamed "Mt. Tabor," after the Palestinian site of Jesus' transfiguration,¹² but it was followed by a regular cycle of meetings which in time developed a quasi-permanent core of congregants—the Taborites. In Prague of course such possibilities were unavailable, but here too the more resolute radicals maintained a stubborn posture of defiance. Their leader was the renegade Premonstratensian John Želivský, who had come to Prague in 1418, preached at the parish church of St. Stephen's at the Pond (*na Rybníčku*), and had then been forced by the reaction to move to the monastery church of the Mother of God of the Snows, also in the New Town.¹³ For him as for other Hussites the cause of reform was epitomized by utraquism—the lay chalice, communion in both kinds—but he was also an advocate of the radical doctrine of infant communion as well as of other radical points: clerical poverty, zealous preaching, rejection of Roman traditions such as the cult of saints and of holy images, the excessive adornment of churches, the monastic orders.¹⁴ For him and for those he led Hussitism did not mean the mere reception of utraquist communion permitted by King Wenceslas, it meant the kind of permanent extension of the reform, by radical practice and agitation against the Romanists, that the king had expressly forbidden. Želivský's sermons were themselves acts of defiance, but more serious were the agitational activities of the radicals in the streets of Prague: demonstrative religious processions, the singing of polemical songs, and even a certain amount of brawling, with physical attacks on certain churches and priests.¹⁵ We may guess that the radical leaders' aims envisaged what actually happened: a condition of chronic turbulence in which the program of re-Catholicization was not allowed to take the shape of an accomplished fact.

But King Wenceslas remained firm in his policy. When a crowd of Hussites, led by the petty nobleman Nicholas of Hus, accosted the king to ask for relaxation of the restrictions on Hussite worship and of the prohibition of infant com-

¹²The chief sources for the congregation are the Anonymous Account, Höfler, I, 528f., and Laurence, pp. 344f., 400f. For the name see my "Chiliasm and the Hussite Revolution," *Church History*, XXVI (1957), 64 (n. 3).

¹³The best discussion of Želivský in a major language is by A. Molnár, "Želivský, prédicateur de la révolution," *Communio viatorum*, II (1959), 324-334.

¹⁴For the radical program see my "Hussite Radicalism," *passim*.

¹⁵Tomek, III, 632-635; cf. Denis, *op. cit.*, p. 202. The main sources are the *Chron. Procopii*, Höfler, I, 72f. and the *Chron. Univ. Prag. FRB*, V, 580.

munion, the king's answer was to banish Nicholas from Prague.¹⁶ And when the subversive agitation in the New Town became too much to tolerate, Wenceslas dismissed the pro-Hussite town councillors and installed a whole new body of zealous Romanists, who straightway proceeded to imprison some Hussites, to forbid all mass processions, and to force a transfer of the parish schools from the Hussites back to the Catholics.¹⁷ On 10 July Želivský noted that this was the time of his great persecution, together with his brethren,¹⁸ and although we do not know what if anything was actually done to him, we can be sure that the more resolute Hussites recognized the serious danger implied by the new phase of reaction. The Hussite magistrates of the Old Town and Little Town would no doubt be the next to go¹⁹, and then it would be the turn of the Taborite congregations. Želivský's sermon outline for 16 July insists on the need for vigorous preaching everywhere, including hilltops; it rails against the faint-hearted who waver in their commitment to the reform; it proclaims that "the commonwealth can never be well ruled unless the kings and princes are governed by the Word of God," and then it quotes with explicit approval the prophecy of Sap. vi, 5: "There will be a harsh judgement on those who rule." "To disobey an evil prince is to obey God," Želivský writes, and goes on to urge the community of Prague to give its exclusive obedience to Christ.²⁰ A week later we find him continuing his attacks on the prelates and the town magistrates, reminding his listeners of the Hussite martyrs of the past several years, and then explaining that although the gospels prohibit killing or even anger against one's fellow man, there is nothing wrong with anger against another's sin, anger that might involve killing—as for example Elijah killed the priests of Baal.²¹ What he did with these

¹⁶Laurence, p. 345.

¹⁷Anonymous Account, Höfler, I, 530; *Chro. Proc.*, *ibid.*, p. 73f.; Aeneas Sylvius, ch. xxxvi; *Chron. Univ. Prag.*, FRB, V, 580; OCA-R, p. 19. Cf. Tomek, III, 635.

¹⁸Molnár, *Kázání*, pp. 8f.

¹⁹Anonymous Account, p. 530.

²⁰MS V G 3, fol. 1^r ("Sed nunc prelati prohibent predicare, communicare populum, ne populus visitet missas, predicationes, sub excommunicatione. Cristus autem predicavit in heremo, in monte, in mari, et sic est nunc predicandum ubique"); fol. 4^r ("Sunt quidam homines desiderii parvi qui cum difficultas restat circa illud quod desiderant, tunc desistunt ab omni bono incepto") and fol. 7^r ("Ergo discipuli Cristi non debent fluctuare, licet alii fluctuant"); fol. 1^v ("Numquam comune [?] bonum regitur nisi dum reges et principes se verbo dei regant." ". . . quoniam iudicium durissimum in hiis qui presunt fiet. Hal Hal"); fol. 5^r ("Unde passiones propter inobedienciam in malo — ymo verius propter obedienciam deo suo in sic paciendo — est thesaurus securissimus Cristiano, quia non obedire malo principi est obedire deo. O utinam nunc comunitas Pragensis eligeret obedire ewangelio et servire domino Christo, et deos alienos relinqueret! Quia nec audicio nec predicacio verbi dei sufficient nisi unusquisque relictis omnibus sequatur dominum Ihesum Cristum.").

²¹MS V G 3, fol. 13^v ("Quid nobis proderit si occiderimus fratrem nostrum et cclaverimus sanguinem ipsius? Frater enim et caro nostra est. Quid profuit nostris prelati qui vendiderunt fratrem suum et occiderunt Magistrum Huss, cuius sanguinem volunt celare?"; fol. 16^v ("Nunc videamus qui sanctos doctores contempnunt sed alios innocentes accusant, et soli manifeste eis contrariantur. *Konsele odpowedyte!* [Councillors, answer!] . . . Nec iudicare nec audire volunt sine muneribus, si non alio modo, tunc potum carius vendunt. *Purkmystre odpowez, lupesnyku obcze!* [*Burgomaster, you answer, you plunderer of the community!*]"; fol. 19^v ("Sed ex malicia occidere est homicidium, ymo et consensus. Sicut clerus propria manu Cristum non occidit, sed clamabat consensiendo in corde, 'Crucifige! Crucifige!' . . . "Sic nunc factum est in Constancia, ergo omnes [sunt] homicide qui consenserunt ad mortem Magistri Johannis Huss, Jeronymi. Et ad mortem laicorum qui sunt decolati in antiqua civitate Pragensi. Et qui sunt in Holomucz combusti.")). The discussion of anger fol. 18^r sqq.; on f. 19^v Želivský writes, "Sed aliud est irasci fratri, aliud culpe fratris; non enim fratri irascitur qui peccato irascitur"; he then gives some biblical examples, including that of Elijah.

passages in his actual preaching can only be guessed; presumably he did not play them down.

We do not, unfortunately, have any direct means of tracing the Taborite response to the heightening of reaction in July, but we do know that on the twenty-second of that month the greatest of all the mass congregations was held on Mt. Tabor, with many thousands attending not only from South Bohemia but from all parts of the realm, including Prague. Hussite sources present the meeting as a great exercise in piety: the congregants confessed their sins, took communion in both kinds, and listened to evangelical sermons in an atmosphere of strict puritanism.²² But the New Town councillors had their spies at the meeting, who reported that the Hussites planned to elect Nicholas of Hus as their king, to elect a new archbishop, and to make war against Wenceslas.²³ The import of these stories will be considered below; here we shall note only that the next known event after the congregation of 22 July was the Prague insurrection of the thirtieth.

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II. *The Events of 30 July 1419*

The following review of the action is limited to what seems probably to have happened; other possibilities are discussed in the footnotes.

1. Early on Sunday, 30 July 1419, John Želivský preached from his usual pulpit, in the Carmelite church of the Mother of God of the Snows, in the New Town. The sermon ended about 8:30 A.M.,²⁴ and John then led the people in a

²²Especially Laurence, pp. 344ff., 400f., but also the account of Jakoubek of Stříbro, in F. M. Bartoš, "Sněm husitské revoluce v Betlémské kapli," *Jihočeský sborník historický*, XVIII (1949), 99, and, following Jakoubek, Nicholas of Pelhřimov, in Höfler, II (Wien, 1865), 478.

²³The Anonymous Account, which tells us of the New Town spies, says (p. 530) that on the basis of their information the New Town councillors warned the king of a Taborite plan to besiege him in his castle of Nový Hrad, on St. Wenceslas's Day (28 September). Laurence confirms the existence of spies and of rumors of plans to elect a king and archbishop (p. 402; see notes 46 and 47, below); in his other account of the same meeting he says Wenceslas feared it would be Nicholas of Hus who would replace him (p. 345; see note 49, below). It seems reasonable to put all these reports together.

²⁴There is no doubt about the date, the identity of Želivský, or the place; the Anonymous Account is the only source that says the sermon was preached at the Mother of God of the Snows, but there is no source at all to suggest that it was preached at St. Stephen's. As for the time, the Anonymous Account gives it so: "sermone finito, hora quasi tertiarum, fecit processionem." The canonical hour of terce originally fell in the third hour of the day, according to the old, Roman system of dividing both night and day into twelve parts ("hours") each. On 30 July, when the day "hours" were one hour and a quarter long, the third would have been from 7:00 to 8:15 AM (see in general G. Friedrich, *Ruhovět' křesťanské chronologie* (Prague, 1934), pp. 29-32). But in the high and later Middle Ages the earlier canonical hours tended to drift later and later into the day, and terce began at about 8:00 or 9:00 AM (see R. Klauser & O. Meyer, *Clavis mediaevalis* (Wiesbaden, 1963), p. 248) — on 30 July closer to 8; hence my timing at about 8:30. Some control over this calculation might be provided by two sources that give the time of the Defenestration itself — but unfortunately they disagree. The *Chronicon treboniense*, otherwise of no importance for us, gives it as "hora quasi XIII horologii, ante prandium" (Höfler, I, 50), while the OCA gives it as "The fourteenth hour, before the midday meal." The Czech annal originated in a translation from a Latin work of which the *Chron. treb.* is one copy (F. Mareš, "Chronicon Treboniense," *Český časopis historický*, V (1899), 135-143), but this fact does not make either of the two texts in question obviously more reliable than the other. But the Czech "fourteenth" is spelled out ("we čtrnáctú hodinu") while the Latin number is not, and it is very easy for a scribe or editor mistakenly to copy XIII as XIII.

procession, John himself carrying the consecrated eucharist in a monstrance and at least some of his followers carrying pikes, swords, and clubs.²⁵

2. The procession moved to the parish church of St. Stephen's at the Pond, also in the New Town (this was the church from which Želivský had been expelled in February). The Catholic priest was inside celebrating mass—we do not know if there was also a congregation. He had locked the doors and refused to open them, but the Hussites smashed them down, entered the church, and a priest—no doubt John Želivský—celebrated mass and gave communion in both kinds, according to the Hussite custom.²⁶

3. From St. Stephen's the procession moved on to the New Town Hall, a tower. It was now about 9:30 A.M. In the Town Hall were the Burgomaster (*magister civium*) John of Podvina, the Magistrate (*subjudex*) Nicholas, and three town councillors (*consules*)—Thomas the Tanner, Clement Št'astník, Řehák the Fuller. With these were the Magistrate's servant, one Sasín, and five citizens of the New Town: Čeněk Patriarchův, Řehla the Wood-Dealer, John Humpolec, Wenceslas Barbořin, and John Ryba (or Kabův), as well as others, unknown. All were anti-Hussite. The eight other councillors may have been present before and then have fled, at the news of the Hussites' coming.²⁷

4. The Hussites demanded that those who had been imprisoned by the magistrates for having promoted communion in both kinds should be released.²⁸ The magistrates, evidently speaking from one of the windows, refused; one account says that they also abused the Hussites (*insultaverunt*), another that someone inside threw a stone at the priest carrying the monstrance. In any case the Hussites were enraged; they broke into the Town Hall, assaulted those in-

On this slight basis I follow the Czech annal. Both it and the Latin text give the time according to a system of clock-measured hours similar to our own, except that the sequence of twenty-four ran from sunset to sunset; on 30 July the fourteenth hour, computed according to the table in Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 32, would begin at about 9:30. This is not in conflict with the timing of the Anonymous Account, for the move from the Mother of God to the New Town Hall need not have taken more than one hour. The total distance along the probable (see Tomek, III, 637) route was about 1200 meters — hence a fifteen or twenty-minute walk. There would thus be at least forty minutes for the Hussites to break into St. Stephen's and celebrate mass there and take communion — plenty of time. Accepting the data of the *Chron. Treb.* would of course set the Defenestration at 8:30; this would mean interpreting *terce* as in fact the third hour, hence about 7:30. Fortunately the one hour difference is not critical.

²⁵Both OCA-R and OCA (in this passage identical) say that the Hussites at the Town Hall used spears, pikes, and swords; Aeneas Sylvius refers to lances and javelins. The Anonymous Account says that Želivský, leading the procession, was followed by a mob carrying swords and clubs.

²⁶This is according to OCA-R and the *Chron. Proc.*; the Anonymous Account says only that the Hussites smashed up the parish-house of St. Stephen's, and Aeneas Sylvius says the same.

²⁷For the time see above, note 24. The names are given in OCA-R and, according to Tomek, in the Continuation of Beneš of Vietmil — there are some slight differences, and I follow Tomek's account. The OCA names only the Magistrate Nicholas but gives the total number of victims — thirteen. The Anonymous Account gives the same name, but also (wrongly) names the Burgomaster as Nicholas of Podvina; it gives the number of other councillors killed as three and the total number of victims as thirteen or fourteen. Aeneas Sylvius is the only one who says that some of the councillors had been present and fled; but his figures — eleven fled, seven remained — are wrong (see Tomek's lists, *op. cit.*, V (Prague, 1881), 83f. and *passim* — the usual number of New Town councillors, including the Burgomaster, was twelve).

²⁸The only source that says this or indeed any particular issue was under discussion is OCA-R: "they asked for the release of all prisoners who had been arrested as *utraquists*" ("žadajíce . . . aby ti všickni vězňové, kteřížto zjímání sú pod obojí zpuosobú, kteřížto přijímají tělo a krev Pána Ježíše Krista, byli propuštěni"). The exact meaning of this formulation is impossible to define — *utraquism* itself was probably not forbidden, and perhaps the quoted

side, and then threw about thirteen of them, including all but one of those named above, out of the window. Those not previously killed or killed in the fall were finished off by the Hussites in the street, and the bodies were beaten. One of the councillors, Řehák the Fuller, was killed in the kitchen (or perhaps the torture-chamber) of the Town Hall. During the violence John Želivský was standing by in the street, holding up the monstrance and urging his followers on. The actual militants may have been led by John Žižka, later to become the Hussites' greatest general. The dead, finally, were not looted; their hats and chains of office were left on their bodies.²⁹

5. The Sub-Chamberlain of the realm, John of Bechyně, subsequently arrived on the scene at the head of about three hundred mounted soldiers; presumably he had been located in the Castle, across the river, but we do not know who summoned him, or when, or just when he arrived. In any case when he saw the strength and resolution of the Hussites he withdrew.³⁰

6. The immediate results of the Defenestration were that the New Town Hussites could take over the Town Hall and summon all residents to rally there under arms; those refusing were threatened with death or banishment, and indeed many anti-Hussites fled at that time. Four military captains were elected at once; later on a new set of town magistrates was also elected, but for the time being the captains held the seal and other insignia of the town government and the Hussite militia was kept in permanent readiness at the Town Hall.³¹

7. At this time King Wenceslas was at Nový Hrad, about a mile away from Prague, and it was there that he heard the news. He at first flew into a violent rage, then allowed himself to be persuaded by his pro-Hussite courtiers and by the Old Town magistrates (all but five of whom were Hussites) to come to terms. He confirmed the new group of New Town magistrates in office, and in exchange the New Town community "humbled itself" to the king for the excesses

passage means only that the prisoners were *utraquists* — i.e., Hussites; their actual offense may have been something more illicit, like anti-Roman agitation or demonstrating in the streets. A different but not irreconcilable explanation is given by the Anonymous Account and the *Chron. Univ. Prag.*, both of which say that the cause of the killing was the anti-Hussite activity of the magistrates: they had sent spies to Mt. Tabor and had taken the parish-schools away from the Hussites (Anon.Acct.); they were prohibiting *utraquism* and mass processions (*Chron. Univ. Prag.*) — but here only the latter datum seems likely.

²⁹The "insultaverunt" is Laurence's story; a stone appears in OCA-R. The special fate of Řehák is given in OCA-R (the kitchen) and the continuation of Beneš (the torture-chamber) (*apud Tomek*, III, 637). Želivský's behavior is described by the Anonymous Account, Aeneas Sylvius, the *Chron. Proc.*, and the *Chron. Univ. Prag.* Žižka's presence is attested by Laurence (the act of violence was committed "per communem populum et Johannem Ziskam, regis Bohemie . . . familiarem"); by OCA-R ("John Žižka, King Wenceslas's most trusted courtier, was present at this defenestration and killing . . . by the community"; a marginal note in a later hand adds, "they gave Žižka the chief captaincy"); and by Bartošek of Drahonice ("per Ziskam et suos complices"). Since Laurence almost never gives information that is actually false, Žižka's presence seems probable; whether he was a leader or a bystander may of course be debated (on this see the detailed analysis and references given by Pekař, *op. cit.*, II 92ff. and IV, 14f.).

³⁰Laurence is the only source here.

³¹Laurence; he is followed closely by OCA-R. In OCA we read only that the Hussites garrisoned the Town Hall.

it had committed. Soon after, on 16 August, Wenceslas died of a stroke.³²

* * * *

III. *The Problem of Reconstruction*

The account just set forth raises a number of questions. It cannot have been by accident that a number of Želivský's flock had brought weapons to church, and the very least we can assume is that they had been instructed to prepare for a clash with the Romanists. Less certain but still likely is Heymann's guess, that the presence of John Žižka had also been arranged by Želivský, to provide fighting leadership.³³ The first move, to St. Stephen's, seems at first rather pointless, but then we recall that this had been Želivský's church before the royal reaction of February; by retaking it he was also taking the first deliberate step to restore the previous situation, in defiance of the king's will. Since it was not unusual in the later Middle Ages for the sermon to be preached apart from the mass—either before it or after it³⁴—we may guess that at first, in the Church of the Mother of God of the Snows, Želivský only preached to the people, and that the mass he celebrated at St. Stephen's was his single one for the day—again a demonstrative defiance of the royal order, a real as well as a symbolic de-Catholicizing of the church, which was now polluted. The next move, from St. Stephen's to the Town Hall, must have been planned—there is not the slightest reason to consider it a stop-off on the way home.³⁵ Indeed although we may believe that the Hussites were seriously concerned to free their imprisoned co-religionists, we need not suppose that this was their only aim. If we back off, so to speak, and look at the situation afresh, we are struck by the obvious probability that the planners of the whole affair had intended the liberation of the prisoners to be

³²Laurence, followed by OCA-R; also the Anonymous Account, which lays even more emphasis on the sympathy for the rebels felt by the people of Prague, the Old Town councillors (except for five), the Little Town councillors, and the member of the king's court. But OCA and OCA-R add that after the event "The Old Town councillors at once came to an understanding with their community, fearing lest the same thing happen to them." According to the Anonymous Account the New Town Hussites were "relying on the help of the Taborites" when they chose new councillors, and it names the new Burgomaster as "a prominent heretic, Peter, called Hus" — but cf. Tomek's list, *op. cit.*, V, 84, which gives the name as Peter Kus and also gives the names of the other eleven. Finally it should be noted that the Anonymous Account gives much more detailed information of the king's death and reproduces a "strong suspicion" that Wenceslas was smothered by his own courtiers.

³³Heymann, p. 63: "John Želivský now decided to act. He prepared himself, not without circumspection, for a major clash, procuring the help of a man in whom he could trust in case open fighting should result. This man . . . was John Žižka of Trocnov." And p. 64: "It was probably he [*scil.*, Žižka] who took charge in the final occupation and garrisoning of the town hall." Denis, *op. cit.*, p. 205f., also refers to Žižka as "the hero of the day." And cf. Pekař, cited above, n. 29.

³⁴R. Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Detmold, 1879), p. 629. For reasons that are not given, A. Molnár supposes that the sermon for the day was begun at the Mother of God and finished at St. Stephen's ("Želivský, prédicateur . . .", p. 328).

³⁵There is no clear conflict of views on this point, it is only a matter of impressions. Several historians describe the procession as moving from the Mother of God to St. Stephen's, and then, returning, to the Town Hall. Here Heymann offers a convenient example (p. 64): ". . . the procession . . . wormed its way through the streets of the New Town, back toward the Church of St. Mary in the Snow. But on the way the crowd stopped in front of the New Town city hall. . . ." It would be better to construct the account so: the procession went first to St. Stephen's then on to the Town Hall.

accomplished by capturing the Town Hall; it must have been for this that the people had been told to bring arms to the sermon.^{35a} In a word, the aim of the procession was probably identical with its result: the elimination of the anti-Hussite town government and its replacement by a Hussite one, installed by revolution.

All of this is not to say that the murder of the town councillors was planned. It is far more likely that Želivský had expected them to be absent. Defenestrated at 9:30, the councillors must have been on hand by at least 9:00, a time when, on Sundays, they would normally have been in church.^{35b} And yet there they were in the Town Hall, dressed in their hats and chains of office: they must have been having a meeting—perhaps a full one from which several then fled³⁶—and they must have asked leading anti-Hussite burghers to attend, for a number of these were among the murdered. We do not know why they had met: but the range of possibilities is not great: (1) they may have been planning a repressive measure, which the Hussites then frustrated by their own militant action; (2) they may have had advance notice of Želivský's plans, and were meeting to decide on defensive measures; (3) they may have been responding to an early report of the armed congregants at Želivský's sermon. The last raises the fewest problems, and a reasonable hypothesis would be that immediately on receiving such a report, the Burgomaster summoned all his fellow magistrates and dependable allies to meet at the Town Hall, and that the magistrates then sent word to the Sub-Chamberlain to come at once, to repress what was clearly an incipient revolution. Meanwhile the magistrates would hold the fort, armed in the majesty of their office. This would account for the hats and chains, for the lateness of the Sub-Chamberlain's arrival, and for the tactics of the magistrates. For these were presumably hard-headed, practical types, and they would surely have agreed to release the Hussite prisoners if that had been their only hope of escaping death. Instead they engaged the Hussites in talk, no doubt stalling for time. It was of course a mistake. In any event, whether they merely insulted the Hussites or actually threw a stone at the monstrance is not important;³⁷ the Hussites would have taken the Town Hall anyway. Further support for these surmises may be seen in the extraordinary competence with which the victors consolidated

^{35a}Most historians mention the weapons but, except for Pekař and — less clearly — Heymann, do not draw inferences from them. Denis, to be sure, explains them as precautions lest the magistrates try to disperse the procession, which was of course illegal (p. 205), a guess that may well correspond to part of the truth — but not all of it, for the Hussites were not content just to have a procession, they went on to the Town Hall. Bartoš, *Do čtyř pražských artikulů*, 2d ed., pp. 44f., omits any mention of the weapons, guesses that the reason Želivský was carrying a monstrance was "perhaps to soften the hard councillors," and indignantly rejects "Pekař's attempt (*Žižka*, IV, 15) to explain the attack on the Town Hall as a deliberately planned act." To Bartoš the crucial fact is that a stone was thrown at the Hussites — this provoked the latter's rage and hence the murders. And so: "The revolution that they had not wanted . . . stood before the Hussites as a cruel, inescapable, and indeed tragic . . . necessity."

^{35b}The usual hour for high mass was that of terce, beginning not long after 8:00 (see note 24, above; also Cruel, *loc. cit.*). Of course there is no definite information that the councillors attended high mass on Sundays, but it would seem likely. In any case they were not supposed to meet on the Lord's Day.

³⁶See the testimony of Aeneas Sylvius, above, n. 27.

³⁷See note 35a, above; Pekař, *loc. cit.*, simply says that such reports about a stone "are familiar enough as a partisan excuse for such deeds." He seems to me so obviously right that the matter can hardly be discussed, but neither the stone nor the more likely provocative language of the councillors would significantly weaken the case for a planned action.

their success, for the bloodthirsty mob was at once transformed into a responsible political community, capable of electing leaders and following them. At first the immediate necessities were attended to: the militia was created and the captains were chosen; but then the community managed to preserve a posture of readiness without committing further excesses—which we would surely have heard about—and soon after to choose a new panel of magistrates decent enough for the king to confirm.³⁸ All of this argues for discipline and planning.

At the same time it was a real revolution, an overthrow of the royal government in the New Town and in effect a liquidation of the whole anti-Hussite policy both in that town and, by resonance, in the rest of Prague. It was in short a political action of national significance. And if we wonder what sort of thinking and planning had preceded this action, we can only refer back to the Mt. Tabor congregation of 22 July. Here, waiting for us at the end of this long path of inference, is the explicit evidence offered by the Anonymous Account, whose author, writing closer to the events than any other reporter,³⁹ insists that there was only *one* movement of subversion, a “conspiracy” including the Taborites in the provinces and Želivský’s party in Prague. In fact, as F. M. Bartoš has convincingly argued,⁴⁰ it was probably this presentation of the matter that provoked the Hussite notary, Master Laurence of Březová, to compose his treatment of the same events, stylistically reminiscent of his predecessor’s but quite different in tendency. We need not accept either version at its full face value, but we shall see that the Anonymous Account is usually the more convincing.

It begins with a few lines describing King Wenceslas’s decision for reaction in February 1419 and its implementation. It then goes on at once to the response of the “Wyclifites”—a term that in context means those Hussites who refused to accept the new situation, in other words the radicals:⁴¹

Seeing these things the Wyclifites began to think of how they could infringe this order so that their sect might not perish because of the king’s disfavor. And about Eastertime [16 April] they congregated on a certain mountain about a half-mile or a little more from the castle called Bechyně, which mountain they called Tabor, whence these sectaries have since been called Taborites. It was on this mountain first, then next week on another mountain, that they celebrated their conventicles, continuously in this way. In a quarter of a year their pestilential band grew in number to 50,000, not counting women and children.

This last sentence thus takes us to the great meeting of 22 July, which is now described, with the information that there the Taborites “made this conspiracy,”

³⁸That these magistrates were not just a group of radicals picked up off the streets is evident partly from the fact of their status as members of various crafts (Tomek’s list, *op. cit.*, V, 84), partly from their failure to stand up against the Old Town leaders in the stormy days of October and November 1419, and partly from the fact that at the end of May 1420 the defensive alliance of Prague and the provincial radicals deposed these men, along with the Old Town councillors, and elected new ones, who were presumably better suited to the city’s revolutionary posture (Laurence, p. 374).

³⁹See Bartoš’s discussion, cited above, n. 8. It is possible that the Latin chronicle cited above, n. 1. (*Iia*), and hence too at least part of OCA-R, are earlier, but their dates cannot be closely fixed.

⁴⁰Above, n. 8.

⁴¹This whole discussion is based on the text in Höfler, I, 528-532.

that before they would give up their movement they would suffer death, without resisting, and they announced this resolve to the king. The author comments: "These were their words, spoken into the wind and with the wind passing away; for alas it was clear from their acts that they had a different intention, namely not to die but to kill all who were opposed to their sect." There follows a paragraph detailing the Taborites' action in destroying churches, capturing towns, and killing clerics, during the next three years; this is a kind of documentary parenthesis, and the author then returns to the context of 1419—indeed back to early July. King Wenceslas, seeing that the "sectaries of the Taborite conspiracy" were multiplying beyond measure, and rightly fearing that they planned to kill him, began to consider how he might be able to dissolve the "conspiracy of vipers, which indeed had diverse heads but tails tied together." This figure, drawn from the Song of Songs ii,15 and Judges xv,4, was a medieval stereotype for heresy;⁴² here the stereotype serves merely as a convenient way of epitomizing the author's judgement, for he goes on to tell what Wenceslas decided to do: to install a new set of anti-Hussite councillors in the New Town. These councillors then took a number of anti-Hussite measures, one of which was to send spies to the Mt. Tabor meeting of 22 July, and to relay the spies' reports to the king, who was warned that the Taborites planned to lay siege to him in his castle of Nový Hrad at the end of September. Because the councillors had done this, and because they had taken the parish-schools away from the Hussites, they were killed—and there follows the account of the Defenestration. It concludes with this complaint:

See how quickly the Wycliffites' mendacity was revealed. Hardly eight days had passed since they announced to the king from Mt. Tabor that they would rather be killed by others than kill others themselves; and now the opposite was so suddenly made evident.

Thus there can be no doubt at all that the author of the Anonymous Account saw Želivský as simply one of the leaders of the Wycliffite conspiracy, the Defenestration as an act of the whole radical movement. Nor was he the only one: clearly the New Town magistrates also felt themselves confronted by a single, nation-wide enemy, and it was for this reason that they took the otherwise odd step of sending spies to Mt. Tabor.

Those who would argue in an opposite sense will have to follow not the Anonymous Account but Laurence of Březová.⁴³ Here they will find the original open-air congregations presented as nothing more than the expedient resorted to by Hussites who could not get utraquist communion in their regular churches—quite possibly a true picture, but Laurence does not even mention the king's new policy of reaction that had brought the situation about. They will also find what may fairly be called an ostentatiously apologetic picture of all the congregations as purely religious actions, a point repeated until it becomes rather blunt; it is no doubt as a refutation of the hostile picture that Laurence is so careful to show that the congregants of 22 July were also purely religious—they "dealt

⁴²H. Grundmann, "Der Typus des Ketzers in mittelalterlicher Anschauung," *Kultur- und Universalgeschichte* (Goetz Festschrift; Leipzig & Berlin, 1927), p. 100.

⁴³See note 22, above.

with nothing except what pertained to the salvation of souls and to the reduction of the clergy to its original estate, that of the Primitive Church."⁴⁴ At the same time Laurence is the one who tells us that by about July the meetings were often attended by contingents from not only South Bohemia but also Plzeň, Prague, Domažlice, Hradec Králové, and even Moravia. (The 22 July meeting, the biggest yet, certainly drew from these places to make up the number of congregants, which Laurence sets at about 40,000; in fact he says that people came "from various parts of the realm."⁴⁵) And he also says that among those coming were some who merely wanted to have a look at so many people, others "to calumniate what was considered and done there, and to reveal these things to the enemies of the Truth."⁴⁶ Therefore King Wenceslas and the anti-Hussite barons began to fear that the congregants would, as it was rumored, elect a king and archbishop, and make war on their enemies.⁴⁷ All of this agrees with the Anonymous Account, except that Laurence is silent about the possible truth of the rumors, nor does he connect the meeting with the Defenestration. In fact that event is reported in an entry by itself, without any context; in the chronicle as a whole, which covers several years, it takes on the function of showing the first instance of Želivský's career of demagoguery and violence, a career that would eventually lead to his murder by the more moderate Hussites of Prague. Like the more conservative Prague leadership, Laurence is concerned to suppress any recollection that at the end King Wenceslas had turned anti-Hussite,⁴⁸ and while he cannot as a historian maintain total silence—thus he records the king's fear of being deposed—he can always resort to the poker-faced style of the annalist, jumbling instead of explaining. The odd thing is that modern scholars, following him as in general the best of our sources, have also followed his refusal, in these episodes, to reconstruct the context of meaning.

At another point in his chronicle Laurence specifies that King Wenceslas feared that Nicholas of Hus would be chosen by the Hussites to replace him.⁴⁹ This is the only definite lead we have to connect Nicholas with the Taborite congregations at this time; subsequently however he appears as the chief leader of the Taborite movement.⁵⁰ It will not be unjust, therefore, to suppose that he and others like him who thought in terms of national political action had assumed leadership of the movement at least as early as the beginning of July—when Wenceslas began his actively anti-Hussite policy. By this time, as we have seen, the movement that had begun as a local religious gathering, devised by

⁴⁴Laurence, p. 402.

⁴⁵*Loc. cit.*, and p. 345.

⁴⁶P. 402: some came "ut consideratis ibidem factis detraherent et emulis veritatis propalarent."

⁴⁷P. 402: "Quapropter cum ita ex singulis partibus in Thabor confluerent, rex Wenceslaus cum quibusdam inimicis veritatis baronibus ceperunt graviter ferre timentes, ne tanta populi multitudo regem et archiepiscopum, prout famabatur, pro defensione legis dei eligerent et sic eorum bona velut adversariorum per potentiam cui resistere non valerent, invaderent ac depopularent."

⁴⁸See, e.g., the text discussed by Heymann, p. 71.

⁴⁹Laurence, p. 345: "Quam ob rem [i.e., the congregation of 22 July] rex Bohemie Wenceslaus multum est turbatus, se de regali solio deiici timens et expavescens, Nicolaumque de Hus in locum sui substitui suspicando. . ."

⁵⁰Heymann, pp. 80ff., 96, & *passim*; Macek, *op. cit.*, I, 214; II, 40f. & *passim*.

South Bohemian priests who never appear outside their local context,⁵¹ had developed into a nation-wide organization, in effect a political phenomenon. Hence the rumors that came out of the meetings, hence too the evidence of large-scale organization and planning implicit in the meeting of 22 July, with its many thousands drawn from far and wide. Here as so often we must rely on our imaginations to supply what the sources omit: the background of conferences between leaders, assignment of tasks, establishment of a network of like-minded spirits, and the linking of these scattered foci of resistance by a constant flow of travel and letters. And of course even the religious character of the Taborite movement was thereby changed, for the utraquist communion and "evangelical" preaching were now not merely religious actions for the utility of the people, they were public manifestations of defiance, declarations that the king's program of re-Catholicization was to be not only evaded but nullified.

Against this background the significance of the Prague insurrection becomes much clearer. I know of no historian who has suggested that John Želivský must have been at Mt. Tabor on 22 July, but we know that a contingent did come there from Prague, and who would have led it if not the undisputed leader of Prague radicalism? Or at least, if for some accidental reason he did not, his close associates must have been on hand. Once there he or they must have conferred with such other leaders as Nicholas of Hus, and certainly they could not have failed to discuss plans for reversing the royal policy of reaction. The Hussites of course knew their king quite well—Nicholas had indeed been one of his courtiers—and they were also intelligent enough to recognize the basic facts of political life; they could hardly have decided otherwise than to convince the king, by manifestation of their power in acts, that a continuation of his policy would cause more trouble for him than its reversal. But no responsible leader could suggest mutinous action without planning for all its foreseeable results, including the possibility that the first step might require a second or a third before the desired effect was produced. Hence we need not suppose that the spies who told of a Taborite plan to besiege the king at the end of September were lying, or even that the reports about the possible election of Nicholas of Hus as king were without foundation. The spies might have heard plans for one contingency—a remote one, and hence the date more than two months away.⁵² And the Taborites might well have chosen Nicholas of Hus as *their* leader, even as early as July, and have laid plans for a possible assumption of power in the nation—and of course this would have involved the election of a new religious leader as well. Later on, in the Autumn, the Taborites presented precisely such a program to the Prague leadership.⁵³ Now, however, they must have hoped that they could achieve their ends within the framework of the existing government, and that King Wenceslas would once more play the role of inept drunkard that had been

⁵¹For the names of the first Taborite organizers, the priests Vanček and Hromádka, see Laurence, p. 357; cf. my "Hussite Radicalism," p. 110, n. 2, for the other activities of these men.

⁵²But Bartoš, *Do čtyř pražských artikulů*, p. 32, suggests that St. Wenceslas's Day was chosen because the Taborites had really decided to hold another congregation, near Prague, and had to plan it for after the harvest; also because they wished to present their demands to the Diet, which always met at the beginning of October. It was this plan that the spies distorted into a planned siege.

⁵³For the general context see Heymann, pp. 80ff.

so beneficial to Hussitism in the years before 1419.⁵⁴ And if we ask what would have been the most reasonable *first* move to reverse the royal policy, we can hardly think of a better one than eliminating the most active and odious anti-Hussite power in the realm, the New Town government. The councillors would not have to be killed, just removed, and the whole situation in Prague would be changed; once the king confirmed the coup, moreover, the whole royal policy of reaction would be fatally undermined. Since Wenceslas did confirm the coup even after the murder of the magistrates, he would probably have done so in the less horrible case, and the Taborites must have been able to foresee this. It only remains to add that if they did in fact decide for a coup they evidently took care not to let the spies hear them.

On this line of argument, Želivský, or his lieutenants, would have returned to Prague from Mt. Tabor (about 55 air miles) perhaps on Monday, would have begun planning a coup for the following Sunday, and everything would then have taken place as told above. The more reliable radicals would have been told to come to church under arms, and Želivský would have preached a sermon calculated to bring his listeners to a pitch of revolutionary readiness. Since we have some sources for his preaching at this time, we may now stop our dead reckoning and ask what sort of a sermon he actually did preach.

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IV. Želivský's Defenestration Day Sermon

At the beginning of this century Josef Truhlář discovered that two codices of the Prague University Library contained sermon outlines attributable to John Želivský.⁵⁵ He published some brief passages from them, and in later years two other scholars published studies of Želivský based on the manuscripts.⁵⁶ It was only in 1953 that Amadeo Molnár published an edition of one codex, the sermons from 16 April to 16 July 1419,⁵⁷ and although he has long had the edition of the second part, from 16 July to 26 November 1419, ready to go, publication

⁵⁴It is unlikely but conceivable and therefore worth mentioning, that Aeneas Sylvius here gives us at least a kernel of truth. In his *Historia Bohemiae*, ch. xxxvi, he writes that at the Mt. Tabor meeting of 22 July there was talk of marching against the king, but that the priest Wenceslas Koranda spoke against this, saying — and Aeneas quotes the speech — that in King Wenceslas the Hussites had a sluggish and drunken king, but also one who favored them; for who, during his reign, had dared to harm them? True he did not share their beliefs, but he did not disturb them either. The Taborites should rather pray for him. Koranda in fact played a leading role in the Taborite congregations of the Autumn, and had long been a prominent radical: he must have been at Mt. Tabor, and he might have expressed the rather reasonable sentiments Aeneas attributes to him. Hence the account may contain a truth — overlaid, to be sure, by a humanistic taste for personality, speeches, and striking episodes.

⁵⁵J. Truhlář, "Husitská kázání z let 1416-1418," *Věstník České Akademie*, VIII (1899), 287f. (MS V G 3); "Kázání kněze Jana Želivského z r. 1419," *Český časopis historický*, IX (1903), 198-202 (MS IV F 23).

⁵⁶B. Auštécká, *Jan Želivský jako politik* (Prague, 1925) — essentially a culling of politically significant passages from the sermons, rather than a reconstruction of the political situation; the work is moreover marred by the systematic misdating of the second group of sermons, after Trinity Sunday — all are dated two weeks too early. Evžen Stein's "Želivský jako náboženská osobnost," *Věstník Královské České Společnosti Nauk* (1947), 25 pp., is an analysis of the religious views expressed in the sermons of IV F 23.

⁵⁷See above, n. 9.

of this religious material has so far been unfeasible. The sermon outlines of interest here are those possibly connected with the Defenestration, hence in the unpublished codex. But the problem of working with manuscript material is only one difficulty in using these texts; more important is their character as Latin outlines of what would be preached more amply in Czech. Furthermore, although there is a great deal of such literature surviving from the Hussite period, very little of it has yet been published, and it is only occasionally possible to show where Želivský lifted passages or ideas from earlier writers. Thus a good deal of care must be taken in drawing inferences from the content, and still more, as we shall see, in applying a given text to a particular day or week.

The outlines belong to the genre of "Collecta de tempore"; except for certain prime festival-weeks like Easter and Pentecost, they follow the order of Sundays in the church calendar. Each Sunday's mass included a Gospel and an Epistle reading, and each of these readings was the text for a sermon—although Želivský often omitted the Epistle sermon. The key portions of the readings were isolated as themes, to be developed by agglomeration of scriptural and occasionally patristic passages, with a few lines of connective material or commentary added by the preacher. Thus prepared he could face his congregation with confidence, not because he now had a text he could read, but because he had the quotations and so-to-speak the footnotes for the sermon that he would largely improvise.⁵⁸ There is nothing mysterious about any of this but it is worth setting forth, to show why the sermon outlines cannot be taken as evidence for what was actually preached; at best they may suggest what the preacher said, at worst they are evidence of what was in his mind when he wrote them. But when did he write them? Probably not more than one or two weeks ahead: thus for example on Monday, 10 July, Želivský had finished one of his outlines for the following Sunday, but not the other; again, the sermon he prepared for 27 August contains a reference to an event that had occurred on the nineteenth.⁵⁹

When we come to Defenestration Day, 30 July, our problem is somewhat complicated by two independent reports of what he preached. The *Chronicon Procopii notarii pragensis* tells us that at that time John "was preaching on the Book of Revelation"—perhaps the bloodiest book in the Bible—but this is a very late source, written in the 1470's, and it is likely that Procop was merely taking as evidence for Želivský's preaching in 1419 a report by Laurence of Březová about his preaching in early 1420.⁶⁰ More considerable is the statement in the

⁵⁸There is a large literature on medieval preaching and on the relation between the written Latin text and the vernacular spoken sermon; for our purposes it will suffice to quote two passages from John Hus Bethlehem sermons of 1412 (I quote from V. Novotný, *M. Jan Hus. Život a dílo*, II (Prague, 1921), 131, n. 4): "Tunc ultra, prout videbitur in populo, loquendum est contra ydolatriam"; "Hec est epistole sententia. Et tunc secundum audienciam populi est amplius dilatanda."

⁵⁹For the 10 July note see Molnár *Kázání*, p. 8f. August 19, 1419, was the date when, according to the *Chron. Univ. Prag.*, p. 581, the Prague brothels were destroyed ("omnia lupanaria anihilata sunt"); in the sermon outline for 27 August (MS V G 3, fol. 69r) Želivský writes: "aliqui dicunt, quia male factum est, quod destructus est Krakow"—"Some say it was a bad thing to destroy Krakow (i.e., the brothel-street)." Cf. Auštěcká, *op. cit.*, p. 69, n. 73, for a mistaken understanding of this reference, based on her false dating of the outline to 13 August.

⁶⁰*Chron. Proc.*, Höfler, I, 74: "Johannes monachus apostata de Želiv tunc temporis fuit ibidem praedicator, qui praedicabat apocalipsim." Laurence, p. 360: "Johannes . . . olim monachus de Zelew, qui pro tunc apokalipsim beati Johannis praedicabat."

Anonymous Account that "on that day [Želivský] preached a sermon in which he vigorously incited the people to sedition in the city against the councillors and all who loyally supported them."⁶¹ Taken at face value this report would confirm the argument that the coup against the Town Hall was planned in advance, but it fits in too neatly with not only our argument but also that of the Anonymous Account; it is the kind of excessively welcome evidence that one does best to turn away from, at least until it is confirmed by other sources. At first, however, the other source—the sermon outlines—suggests the very opposite: the outline for 30 July is if anything unusually poor in fiery scriptural passages and suggestive commentary.⁶² There is one passage on the theme that those who do not honestly work have no right to eat, and this is then applied to the sacramental bread, to which have no right those who do useless work, those who work on Sunday, and "those who do not promote the common good, like kings and princes"—and here in the margin Želivský adds "iudices iurati," i.e., the town magistrates. But even if we add to this a few other passages attacking rich and idle prelates, monks and nuns, and otherwise expressing radical sentiments, we do not have very much. In between there are long stretches of nothing, and as for the "iudices iurati," even the earlier outlines have more vigorous comments on this theme.⁶³ Of course it is quite possible that this outline was prepared *before* the Mt. Tabor congregation.

Here we are pointed towards another line of reasoning. If Želivský had prepared the 30 July outline before going to Mt. Tabor, and if what was inferred above about the nature of the proceedings there is true, we would expect that on his return to Prague he would have set about preparing the outline for a really subversive sermon. If he did so on a separate sheet of paper his text is lost to us, but if he did his work within the framework of his *Collecta*, preserving the order of his series, we would look not to the sermon outline for 30 July but to the one for 6 August, as evidence of what he intended to preach on Defenestration Day.⁶⁴

⁶¹Anonymous Account, Höfler, I, 531: ". . . fecitque sermonem in illo die, in quo fortiter incitavit populum, ut seditionem in civitate faciant contra consules et omnes eis fideliter adherentes."

⁶²This is my impression based on a reading of the whole collection of sermons. A Czech translation of the text apparently scheduled for 30 July has been published by A. Molnár, *Výzva Jana Želivského* (Prague, 1954), pp. 107-121 (the Gospel sermon), 122-124 (the Epistle sermon).

⁶³For references to "iudices iurati" in the sermons of IV F 23 see Molnár's index to his edition, *s.v.* "Iudicia"; to the three he gives (fols. 109v, 173r, 185v), add fols. 116v, 168r, 170r. In the sermons of V G 3 before 30 July there are such references on fols. 16v (see n. 21, above), 20r, 20v. The passages I have referred to from the outline apparently for 30 July may be found chiefly on fol. 22v ("omnes inutilia laborantes non digne panem manducant. Omnes dominico die vendentes, querentes cum peccato panem, non sunt digni. Omnes non procurantes commune bonum, ut reges et principes [*in marg.*, iudices iurati]. Omnes ocia ducentes, ut in curiis nil laborantes. . . . Item omnes prelati cum populo non laborantes iuxta ewangelium, licet laborant quomodo spoliarent, non sunt digni pane.") Apart from this perhaps the most significant passage is a warning that to follow Christ will mean suffering (f. 23v): "Et si incipiemus ipsum [i.e., Christum] sequi, oportet nos statim defectum pati in corpore et in anima, quia multos permittit suos fideles relabi in paupertatem, in tribulationem, et in infirmitatem."

⁶⁴Here it may be noted that the dating of these sermons rests on two indications. One is according to the sequence of Sundays after Trinity Sunday (in 1419, 11 June), the other is according to the pericopes for each Sunday's mass, as given in the missal or other service book. I have not been able to consult a late-medieval Bohemian missal, but I assume that the various editions of sermons prepared by Czech editors follow one such. Elsewhere in Europe usage might differ, especially for the period after Pentecost; see, e.g., Leonhard Fendt, *Einführung in die Liturgiewissenschaft* (Berlin, 1958), p. 175: "Ueber die Ordnung der Lesestücke in der Römischen

To check this hypothesis we would look in that outline for unusually violent trains of thought, unusually powerful denunciations of the enemy—and that is just what we find, as will be shown below. But then we would also look—hoping against hope—for something in the outline that *must* have been written before 30 July. Such datable references are rare in these outlines, and it is enormously gratifying to find exactly what we need: after a discussion of how it is always the righteous who are persecuted by the vicious, not vice versa, Želivský observes, “And so the faithful community does not persecute the magistrates and councillors (*iudices et iuratos*), but these persecute the faithful Christians.”⁶⁵ The context will be considered below; here it is enough to remark that the sentence applied perfectly to the situation before 30 July, not at all to that afterwards; it is indeed hard to imagine the preacher making the statement after the “magistrates and councillors” had been defenestrated and butchered by the “faithful Christians.” None of this forces us to suppose that the outline was actually the basis for the sermon preached on 30 July, but it seems at least likely. Certainly whatever Želivský preached, the trains of thought implicit in the 6 August outline must have been in his mind during the last week of July.

One advantage of 6 August over 30 July was that its Gospel pericope (the reading in the mass) was highly suitable for Želivský’s purpose. Instead of the bland text of Mark viii,1-9—the loaves and fishes—it offered the powerful themes of Matthew vii, 15-21:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. . . . A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. . . .

At the same time the text alone did not produce the sermon. If, for example, we look at the outline on the same text prepared by John Hus in 1405,⁶⁶ we find that the implicit violence of the theme is not developed with any exuberance, that instead there is more emphasis on the need to bring forth good fruit than on the dreadful end awaiting the corrupt trees. Furthermore, as Laurence of

Messe an den Sonntagen nach Pfingsten herrscht keinerlei Wissen; man rät nur!” Thus, e.g., although the later fourteenth century *Missale ad usum Ecclesie Westmonasteriensis* (I, ed. J. W. Legg (London, 1891), col. 413f.) gives the pericope for the eighth Sunday after Trinity (6 August 1419) as Mat. vii, 15-21 (see my text below), the editor notes (III [London, 1897], p. 1489) that the late-medieval Roman missal, printed in Venice, 1490, assigns this pericope to the seventh Sunday after Trinity, and this same position is given to it in the modern Roman Missal (i.e., the eighth Sunday after Pentecost, = the seventh after Trinity). All of this is to suggest that no aura of inviolability attached to the sequence of pericopes—and this would be true even within a given region, for service books often travelled from one region to another. Furthermore, there is even a strong suggestion of re-arrangement in the MS codex itself. Thus, e.g., the sermon whose pericope would set it on 6 August is preceded by a folio entirely blank except for an apparently contemporary note in the lower left, verso: “sextus post trinitatis”; it is followed by a similar blank with a note: “Septimus post trinitatis.” Since the sermon is supposed to be the one for the *eighth* Sunday after Trinity, either of these notes, applied to the sermon, would upset the accepted dating—the second one would even confirm my reconstruction.

⁶⁵See note 75, below.

⁶⁶Anežka Schmidtová, ed. *Magistri Iohannis Hus, Sermones de tempore qui Collecta dicuntur* (Prague, 1959), pp. 381-393.

Březová was to remark,⁶⁷ Želivský was not distinguished for his learning; he composed his outlines almost entirely of scriptural passages, while Hus here relied overwhelmingly on Origen and Pseudo-Chrysostom, fathers who appear only a few times in Želivský's text. And it is just this reliance on the raw material of the Bible, very often the more savage passages of both Testaments—the Old more than the New—that gives Želivský's outline its distinctive character.

For one thing there are substantial stretches of the most ominous prophecies of God's vengeance. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Mat. xxiv,21),⁶⁸ a prospect that is richly developed by a series of passages from Jeremiah—"I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence" (Jer. xiv,12), and so forth in this vein, including Jeremiah's bitter warning against the false prophets who said everything would be all right.⁶⁹ A very long passage from Revelation, about the great battle between the armies of Christ and Antichrist, and Paul's warnings in II Thess.ii about the coming of Antichrist into the church, amplify the picture.⁷⁰ It also includes a text from the Lamentations:⁷¹

She [i.e., Jerusalem] weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. . . . All her friends have spurned her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction . . . all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

and Želivský makes this into a lament for Prague, adding "Sic timendum est de civitate Pragensi!"—"And we must fear the same for the city of Prague!"

But these passages only provide the background for another group, telling of the violent destruction of sinners in various special ways. Thus Ezekiel vi, 3-5:⁷²

Behold I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolated, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols: and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

And Proverbs vii,26: "For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her."⁷³ There are more such: e.g., Jeremiah xiv, 13-16, including the key words, "And the people . . . shall be cast out in the streets" (*erunt proiecti in viis*); Revelation xix,20: "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire."⁷⁴ It takes little effort to imagine the impact of these recurrent

⁶⁷Laurence, p. 360: ". . . quamvis non multa polleret sciencie doctrina."

⁶⁸MS V G 3, fol. 35v.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 35v-36r; the passages from Jeremiah include viii, 17-18; xxiii, 16; xiv, 11-12; xiv, 13-16. *Q.V.!*

⁷⁰The passage from Revelation on fol. 37r; the texts from Paul on fols. 36v and 39v.

⁷¹Lam. i, 2-4, on fol. 35v.

⁷²Fol. 38r.

⁷³Fol. 35r.

⁷⁴Fols. 36r, 37r; cf. 42r (II Reg. xxiii, 6-7).

images of men cast out, cast down, dying in the streets, the scenes of horror played out against the eschatological backdrop of the cosmic war between Christ and Antichrist.

But this is not all. In a noteworthy passage developing Origen's and Pseudo-Chrysostom's insistence that it has always been the bad who have persecuted the good, not the other way, Želivský repeats that the apostles and martyrs did not persecute, they were persecuted; the false prophets persecuted the true ones, not vice versa. Cain slew Abel, not Abel Cain; then he adds: "The canons, parish-priests, monks, and nuns persecuted Master John Hus, but Hus did not persecute them," and he concludes: "And so the faithful community does not persecute the magistrates and councillors, but these persecute the faithful Christians."⁷⁵ Logically this statement would imply that the faithful should bear up meekly under even more persecution, to imitate their pious models, but logic is for intellectuals, not for the masses or their excited leaders. It is not hard to imagine Želivský himself and then his listeners being inflamed by these words with a desire for vengeance—God's vengeance, so amply set forth in the sermon—and seeing as the prime objects of this vengeance the persecuting town councillors who had been put into office on 6 July, the very anniversary of Hus's martyrdom. The murder need not have been planned; all that was needed was the confrontation between the religiously excited crowd and the hated magistrates, ensconced in their high tower. At once the lurid pictures of the sermon would have come to life, the crowd would be eager to execute judgement upon the servants of Antichrist, and Želivský, the dedicated evangelical reformer, who well knew the Christian value of non-resistance to evil, would be right there with his flock, urging them on. "Peril is never overcome without peril," he had written, and had added: "Therefore against a great peril there must be a great preparation."⁷⁶ Preparation was indeed necessary, and if Želivský did not preach the sermon whose outline has just been discussed, he must have preached one very much like it.

Not least of the virtues of the above picture of the insurrection is the light it throws on what came after it. The death of King Wenceslas IV on 16 August found Prague well prepared to exploit her immediate opportunities and to help fill a power vacuum that was destined to last a long time. First the magistrates of both Old and New Towns took over the royal rights of appointing superior judges and of controlling customs collections,⁷⁷ while the mob played its part by smashing up holy images, destroying a number of monasteries, persecuting and driving out the more odious Romanist clergy, and puritanically destroying the entire red-light district. Soon after, when the Hussite and Catholic Estates had to arrange for the Emperor Sigismund's entry into his inheritance, Prague appeared

⁷⁵Fol. 39r: "Apostoli et martires nemini fecerunt persecucionem, sed persecucionem sustinuerunt. . . Sic falsi prophete veros prophetas, sic enim Cayn persecutus est Abel, non Abel Cayn; Ysmael Ysaac, non Isaac Ysmahelem; Ezau Iacob, non Iacob Ezau; Iudei Cristum, non Cristus Iudeos; heretici cristianos, non cristiani hereticos. Canonici, plebani, monachi, moniales Sanctum Iohannem Huss, sed non Huss canonicos. Sic non persequitur communitas fidelis iudices et iuratos, sed iudices et iurati persecuntur fideles cristianos."

⁷⁶Fol. 37v: "Numquam periculum sine periculo vincitur. Ideo contra magnum periculum magna preparacio est necessaria."

⁷⁷Perhaps the best account of all this is still that of Tomek, *op. cit.*, IV (2d ed.; Prague, 1899) 1ff.; see also Heymann, pp. 69ff.

alongside them—an unwonted position—and offered her special demands as preconditions for Sigismund's acceptance. This was the Prague of the magistrates, masters, and solid citizens. Želivský's Prague united with the Taborites, two of whose national congregations were scheduled for the capital itself on October and November, to try to win the city for the radical program, including election of a Hussite prince and secession from the Roman Church. Although the attempt failed, with disastrous results for all, Prague still retained enough capacity for action to take the lead, in 1420, in organizing the nation to resist Sigismund and fight off the anti-Hussite crusade he led; for several years thereafter Prague was the prime power in Bohemia. Tabor, organized as a civil and military society, was the second power.

All of these developments have their roots in the emergence of the Taborite congregations as national political organizations, in July, and in the transformation of Prague from impotent passivity to Hussite militancy. The Prague insurrection of 30 July was part of the first phenomenon and the chief cause of the second.

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